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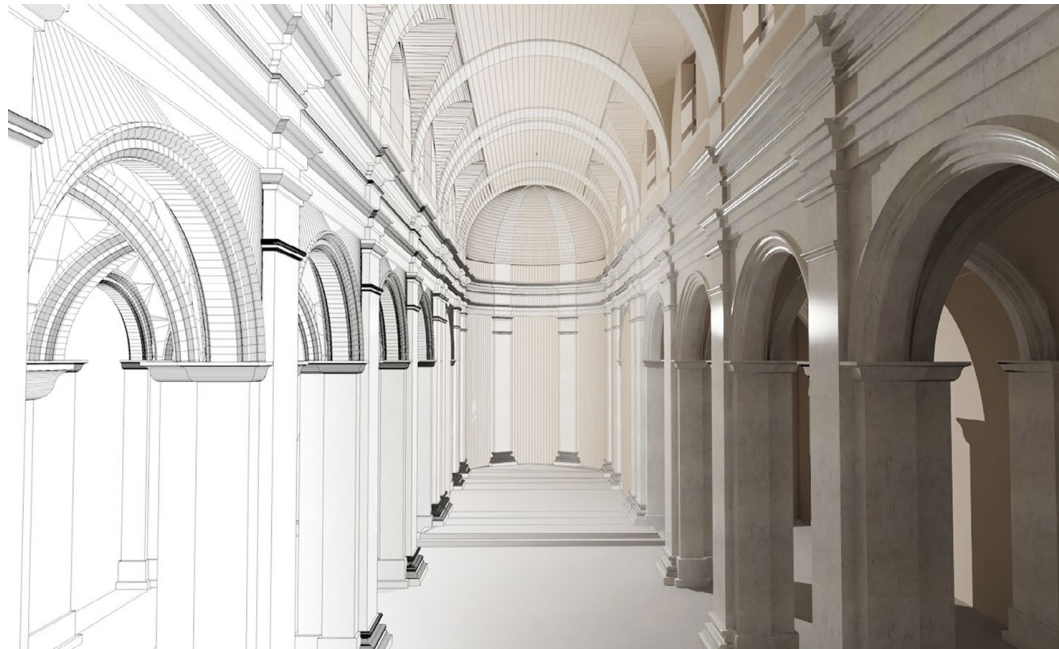


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Drawings guardians of memories

This study, starting from the representations of a number of projects kept in Palermo in public and private archives, seeks to highlight their role not only in the knowledge of little-known architecture, but above all their value as custodians of memory and bearers of knowledge. “The architecture in the drawer”, that which remains on paper and not debased by compromises, not only takes on a “material” value but above all an ethical value because making visible the thought and operative practice of an architectural scholar is a moral act.

Analytical and critical redesign, in this sense, contributes with its natural slowness, which is synonymous with reflection, to nourishing knowledge of the project, of making architecture, of compositional and figurative processes and, last but not least, of the constituent principles of an architectural thought.

Through the analysis of a number of drawings

preserved in two archives containing projects by Salvatore Caronia Roberti and Salvatore Cardella, the aim is to show part of the points of a timeline, in this case coinciding, describing themes and modes of architecture making in Palermo, with the awareness that many significant passages are left out.

Thus a drawing of a timeline, open and welcoming, which however identifies two substantial points in its development; two graphical stages that may constitute further reflections that assist architectural historiography and above all the knowledge of what has often been relegated to an unknown fate.



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Keywords:
Representation; Project; Archives; Redrawing;
Memory

INTRODUCTION

Palermo is a strange city; hospitable and repelling, magnificent and horrible, open and, at the same time, closed. The culture it expresses is identical to the city's image, its heart [1] and its contradictions.

It is a city of intelligence and malfeasance, of necessary and opportune deployments that give no escape except to those who reject them with the force of work and intellectual honesty.

For a period, Palermo's architectural culture saw academics, intellectuals and professionals lined up on one side towards that which procured visibility, power and money, and on the other some who practised the craft with all the difficulties involved.

The academy was, on the one hand, a welcoming place, magnificent and open to those who pandered to the cultural positions of the time, and on the other hand, repulsive, horrible and closed to those who tried to say something new.

Salvatore Caronia Roberti (1887-1970) and Salvatore Cardella (1896-1975) were two architects, somewhat antithetical, who marked the history of architecture in Palermo in the period between the two great wars.

The former was tied to tradition while seeking a renewal of language through his own refinements, the latter, on the other hand, starting from an adherence to futurism, attempted to bring new life to the architecture of that period. Both refined masters of drawing, they can be considered the two significant poles of the period between whose extremes Palermo's architectural culture of the time developed.

After the Second World War, both continued to design and realise architecture; Salvatore Caronia Roberti, pursuing his theories, arrived at an uncertain and tired post-war rationalism imbued with a sought-after refinement of detail, Salvatore Cardella, on the other hand, with extraordinary coherence, still tried to 'say something new'.

BETWEEN TRADITION, REGIME AND MODERNISM. SALVATORE CARONIA ROBERTI

Salvatore Caronia Roberti was one of the most influential figures in Palermo's architectural culture in the period between the two great wars. A favourite pupil of Ernesto Basile, he remained, at the master's death, the only 'active' exponent of the Palermitan school of architecture conducted up to that time by the greatest exponent of Art Nouveau in Italy.

The curricula of the architects working at that time show that Caronia Roberti was, between the 1930s and 1940s, the most senior figure among the engineers/architects working in Palermo and in the school of architecture, and was therefore able to express himself due to his greater experience, but certainly not with as much vivacity.

Caronia's architectural production was fertile and copious from the year of his graduation in Engineering in 1910, when he was engaged as a member of the technical office of the Rutelli company in the construction of numerous small villas in Mondello, a seaside resort very close to the city which, being marshy, was reclaimed in order to colonise the land with the aim of transforming it into a new outlet for the city.

In some of these projects, the expression of the Palermitan architect's *modus operandi* is linked on the one hand to Basile's teachings and on the other tending to seek his own linguistic autonomy from the master. This can be seen in one of Caronia's first works, the Villino Barresi (fig. 1) in Mondello in 1910, described by Anna Maria Fundarò as follows: 'a villa built at Piano Capo Gallo, in a singular position, right on the rocks and with the whole view of the gulf and the beach of Mondello in front: a cautious architecture, combining materials that are not perfectly coherent, such as the body with the pitched roof and the terrace roof, with a turret in between, placed in rough contact, which nevertheless seeks its own elegance, and finds it, in the skilful use of materials, in the play of coloured ceramic tiles to emphasise the roof, or again in a certain insistence of plaster striations, in a desire for strong colours that the blue of the nearby sea was to exalt togeth-



Fig. 1 - Salvatore Caronia Roberti. Villino Barresi in Mondello, 1910.

er with the chiaroscuro of the covered veranda" (Fundarò 1996, p. 10). The 'prudence' the scholar speaks of highlights Caronia's small steps towards its own autonomy.

The design 'gymnasium' of the small villas in Mondello marks the period of the beginning of the architect's copious activity. Immediately after graduating, he designed no less than 18 single-family dwellings in the seaside resort between 1910 and 1915. Caronia's fervid industriousness, which continued until late in life and was only interrupted during the two great wars, marks a timeline of Palermo's architectural culture.

The relationship between tradition and innovation is the key to examining Caronia's architecture, at least for part of his production.

The project for the Banco di Sicilia in Palermo, because of its process marked by various design versions, can be taken as an example to show Caronia's path characterised by a linguistic research tending towards his own autonomous language. In 1971, in what can still be considered the first real 'guide' to 20th-century Palermo, Gianni Pirrone wrote: "The Banco di Sicilia headquarters can be considered Salvatore Caronia's work par excellence; in it, the influences of secession are expressed more fully and in the same interpretative sphere of a returning neoclassicism; The compact, closed mass is only punctuated by the iteration of a module in which the pilaster strips and the recesses of the tall windows are based on a slender play of surfaces and on the unique chromatic alternative of white and grey stone cladding, giving

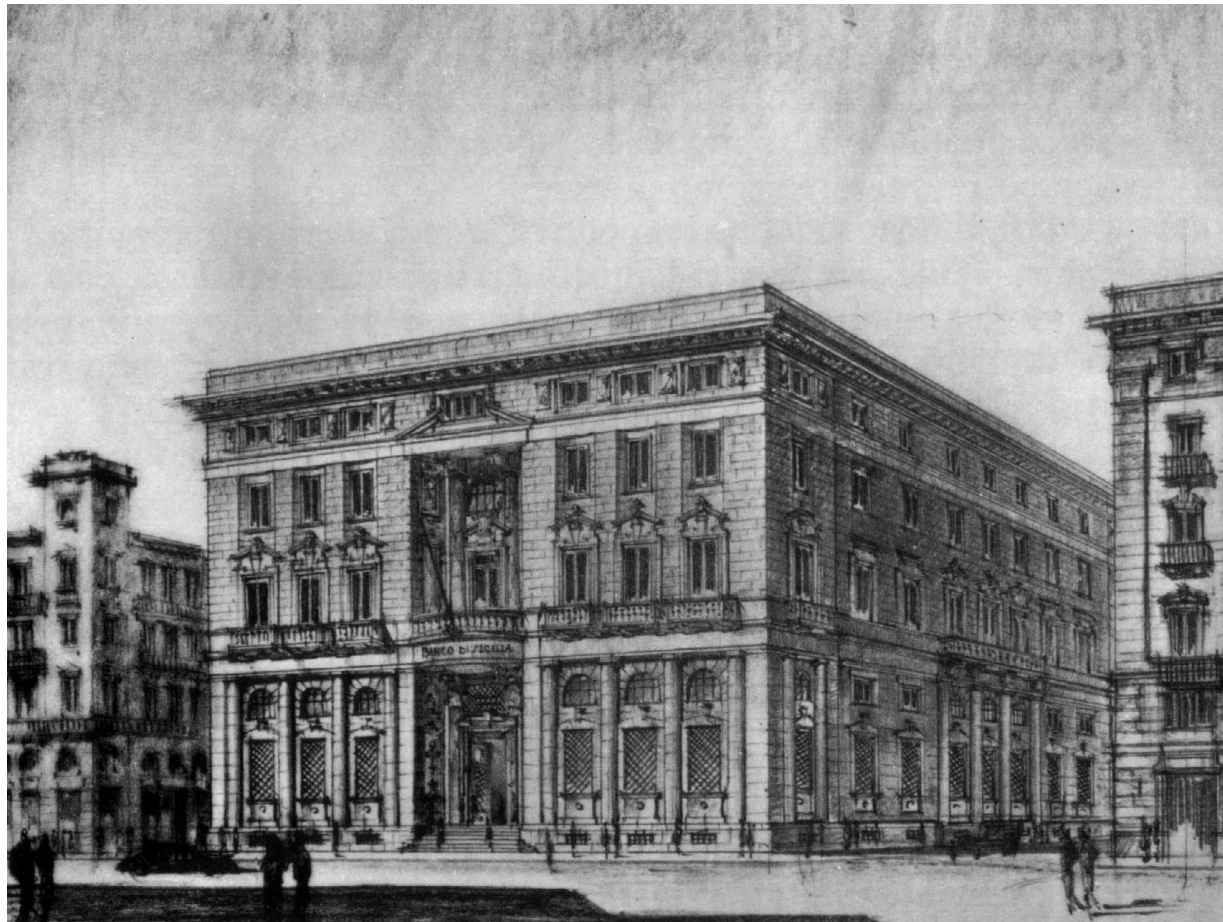
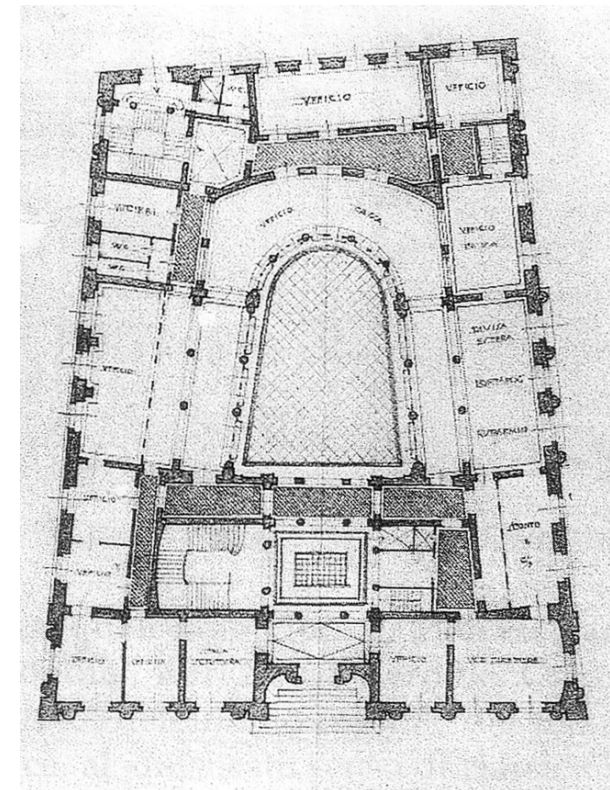


Fig. 2 - Salvatore Caronia Roberti. Project for the headquarters of the Banco di Sicilia in Palermo. Perspective of the first version, 1931.

Fig. 3 - Salvatore Caronia Roberti. Project for the Banco di Sicilia in Palermo. Plan of the I version, 1931.



the whole a monumental classicism which, however - as Caracciolo perhaps acutely pointed out in a positive opinion in 1940 - we believe is detached from the academic components typical of certain architectures of the 'regime', to which this work could easily lead" (Pirrone 1971, p. 14). Pirrone's words anticipate the knowledge of the numerous drawings made for the Banco di Sicilia project; the reference to the secession was well identified by Maria Clara Ruggieri Tricoli in 1987 in her volume dedicated to the architect and, with regard to the Banco di Sicilia project, by Ettore Sessa in a wide-ranging essay in 1997 in

which the scholar also identifies references to the Slavic filiation of the Wagnerschule (Sessa 1997). The latter essay, the only one on the building in Via Roma, describes the project phases with references to other works by Caronia after tracing his figure especially in relation to his master Ernesto Basile. The process for the construction of the building, completed in 1937, was long and complex because there was a change in the site of its construction; in 1912, in fact, the banking institution had purchased an area in that part of Via Roma where Angiolo Mazzone's Palazzo delle Poste would later be

built, but after various administrative vicissitudes, which lasted until 1934, it opted for the urban area where the Banco di Sicilia now stands. The earliest drawings inform us that Caronia began work on the project in 1931; they are the ground plan of the mezzanine floor and a perspective (figs. 2, 3) that shows a very compact volumetric and symmetrical mass with a large caesura in the centre, concluded by a broken gable. The large break strongly marks the entrance and the representative rooms on the upper floors. The lexical layout is composed on the ground floor of tall columns surmounted by a Doric capital that

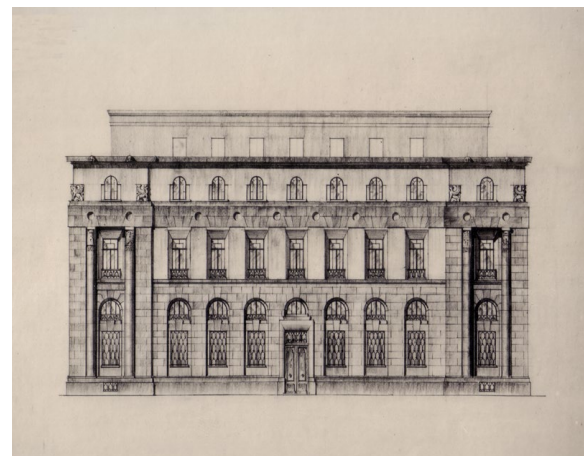


Fig. 4 - Salvatore Caronia Roberti. Project for the Banco di Sicilia, August 1932. Perspective detail, version II.

Fig. 5 - Salvatore Caronia Roberti. Project for the Banco di Sicilia, August 1932. Perspective, variant IIa.

Fig. 6 - Salvatore Caronia Roberti. Project for the Banco di Sicilia, August 1932. Front, variant IIa.

are repeated, for one span only, on both Via Zara and Via Cassa di Risparmio where, in the central part of the elevation, they are repeated four times to mark the 'rhythm' imposed by Caronia. In 1932, the designer worked out several variants, mainly related to the elevations; in four of these, dated 'August 1932', the most important aspect is that the volumetric mass is, compared to the previous version, less imposing while re-

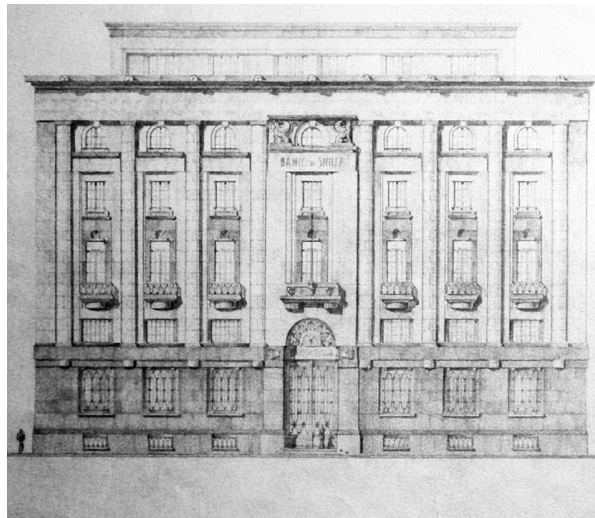


Fig. 7 - Salvatore Caronia Roberti. Project for the Banco di Sicilia, December 1932. Front, variant IV.

taining the same number of storeys (figs. 4-6). Caronia decisively retracts the top floor - which is somewhat excluded from the composition of the elevation - and slightly the fourth elevation to give greater prominence to the semi-column/architecture system of the front layout.

In a drawing of December 1932 (fig. 7), the revised proportions of the elevation are evident, which led Caronia to revise the entire layout by modifying the height of the plinth and annexing the fourth floor within the bays.

This expedient will define the volumetric mass until the final design. From the same year, dated August 1932, are a perspective, a perspective detail and two elevations, which present some inconsistencies such as, for example, the coupled half-columns present in the elevation to emphasise the entrance on Via Roma and absent in the perspective, the Doric capitals in the perspective and the 'revisited' ones, probably depicting the Sicilian provinces, in the elevations and finally an entrance on Via Cassa di Risparmio present in the perspective and absent in the perspective. Roundels above the capitals and lion heads appear for the first time both above the inscrip-

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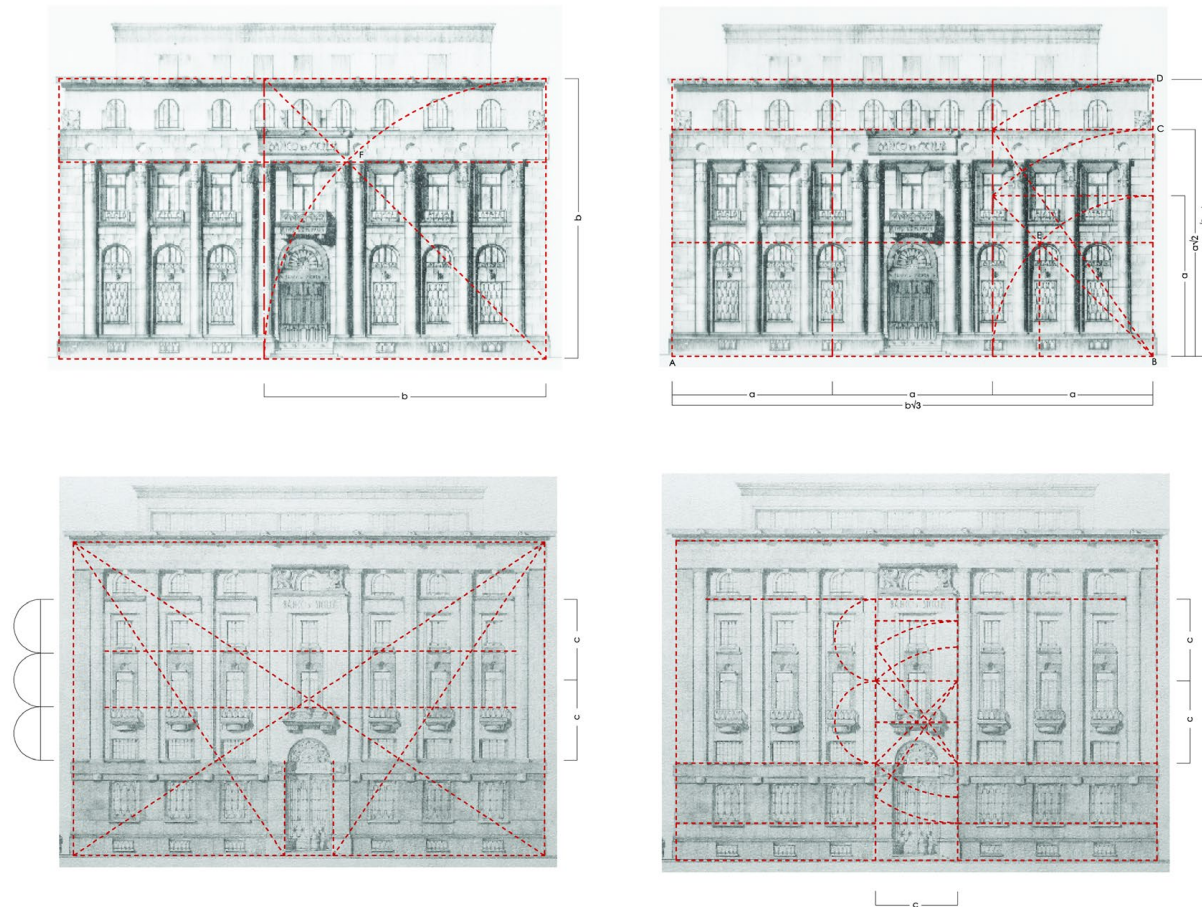


Fig. 8 - Graphical analysis of the elevations of the Banco di Sicilia's design solutions. Top, analysis of the profiles dated 'August 1932', bottom, analysis of the profiles dated 'December 1932'. Graphic elaboration by M. Villa.

tion on the entrance arch and in the cornice. On the first two levels, as in the 1931 version, the openings are united in a single design in which the former, rectangular in shape, are surmounted by the latter, with a chest balcony and concluded by a round arch. The gap between the two windows is emphasised by a sort of keyhole in which an eagle is depicted in bas-relief. The windows on the piano nobile have a slanted jamb, an expedient that allows Caronia to emphasise the floor itself through a vibra-

tion of the skin of the building that concludes the interior of the bay. The system concludes with a high entablature, punctuated by roundels placed on an axis with the columns, the central part of which is emphasised by the building's 'titling' system, whose width is equal to that of the entrance bay measured at the outer edge of the columns. Bas-reliefs depicting winged lions conclude the main layout on which the last two floors are superimposed and treated with less detail. By examining the drawings, one can deduce that Caro-

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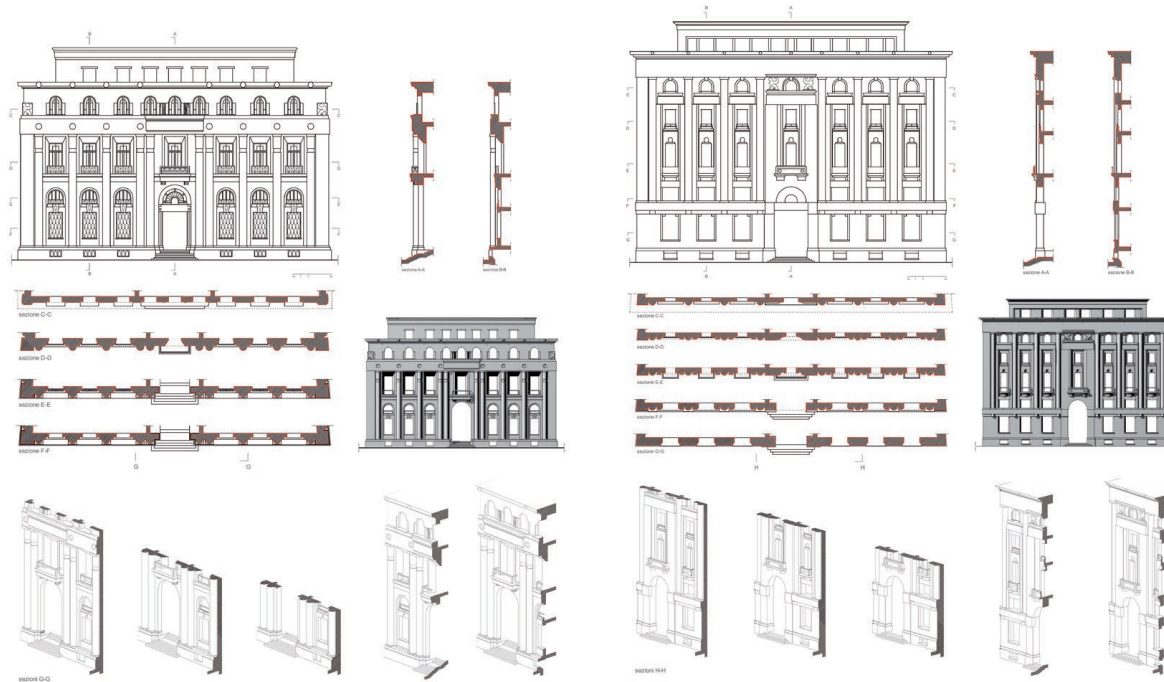


Fig. 9 - Digital graphic analysis of the elevations of the Banco di Sicilia's design solutions. Left, analysis of the profiles dated 'August 1932', right, analysis of the profiles dated 'December 1932'. Graphic elaboration by M. Villa.

nia moves "in small steps" as Ettore Sessa rightly stated: "The mutating formalism through which S. Caronia perpetuates the same design principle, with imperceptible conceptual variants (starting from the end of the third decade of the 20th century) and substantial figurative declinations, reaffirms, with the progression from large to small scale, an artistic will of monumentalist vocation, but not traditionalist" (Sessa 1997).

The graphic analyses carried out on the design hypotheses of August and December 1932 (fig. 8) made it possible to identify the geometric matrices of classical origin adopted by Salvatore Caronia Roberti to study the composition of the elevations and their parts, but also to emphasise the vibrations of the skin of the building he imagined in order to create shadow effects on the surfaces, understanding light as the real material of architecture (fig. 9).

A BREAKTHROUGH OFTEN DENIED. SALVATORE CARDELLA

Architectural drawings kept in archives, besides being patently historical evidence, take on at least three expressions of meaning. The first is that they are the manifestation of an idea, something that has never had any temporal boundaries, the second is the imaginative process underlying any representation of architecture, and last but not least, the third is that they contain a design process, often never implemented, that could have changed the images of places and cities that have often remained anchored in building programmes that are difficult to look at today. It is well known, without hiding behind the finger of hypocrisy, that public architectures that remain in the drawer are the result of political decisions, business deals between a few people or

sometimes personal issues. Sometimes, however, this is not the case, fortunately.

Salvatore Cardella suffered, for example, a number of injustices in the course of his career, both professional and human; among these was the outcome of the competition for ideas for the monumental entrance to Via Roma in Palermo in 1922, which the architect himself mentions in a biographical note entitled 'A life in the trenches'. This is a crucial moment in his professional life that will relegate Cardella to an absolutely unmotivated future in which he will be forced, in various ways, to fight unjust marginalisation.

Compared to the others, Cardella's project (fig. 10) manifested an extraordinary modernity that was not recognised by the jury, which blindly stated that the design idea addressed 'a future that will never come'.

The commission consisted of Salvatore Caronia Roberti, Francesco Colnago, Arduino Colasanti, Gustavo Giovannoni and Antonio Zanca; the latter's Salvatore Cardella was assistant professor of Elements of Architecture and Design at the Faculty of Engineering in Palermo.

The words of the architect from Nissa are eloquent to make one understand the condition in which he found himself. "In such a gloomy climate, I entered the competition for the Monumental entrance to Via Roma. Between me and the Director of the 'Institute of Elements of Architecture', for whom I was acting as assistant, contrasts of views had already manifested themselves. During the elaboration of my project, I could not, therefore, invite him to submit my work to him. A conflict would certainly have ensued. He would have demanded that I had traced the Arab-Norman forms he had adopted in his small villa in Palermo. I, on the other hand, did away with all the styles of the past, and adopted - something unheard of in Sicily and perhaps even in the whole of Italy - the reinforced concrete structure, attributing to it the most appropriate forms. But on the eve of the presentation of my work at the competition, I necessarily had to invite him to my studio. Then the complete breakthrough occurred. He told me that I let him take responsibility for the path I had taken. Those were the times when the 'barons of

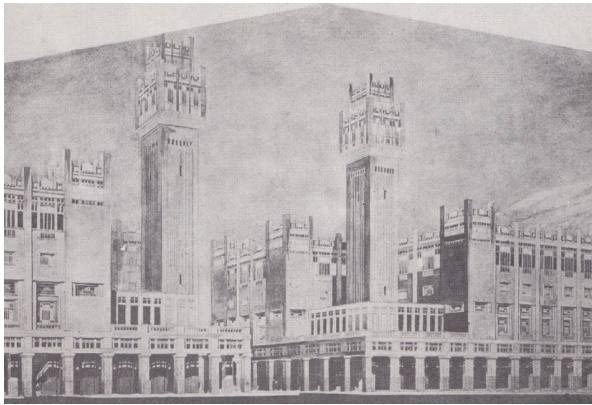


Fig. 10 - Salvatore Cardella. Perspective for the competition for the monumental entrance to Via Roma in Palermo, 1922.



Fig. 11 - Giuseppe Capito. Perspective for the competition for the monumental entrance to Via Roma in Palermo, 1922. Winning project.

the Italian university' made their assistants into slaves rather than servants. To oppose ideas, then, was considered an act of 'lese majesty' [...]. From that moment on, my university position had become untenable' (Cardella, 1982).

The competition was won by Giuseppe Capito with a design based on a traditional Baroque style whose perspective is eloquent (fig. 11).

To understand the cultural climate in which Cardella operated, the words of Maria Accascina are eloquent, who stated in the pages of *Architettura*: "Locally, it was, as we have said, the period of the maximum efficiency of eclecticism, not al-

ways sustained either by the inventive vivacity of Ernesto Basile or by the constructive wisdom of a Damiani: there was an attempt to establish a link between our era and the past by simply adopting the external forms of architecture. Cardella sought this, instead, in the abstract works always immanent in any architectural style, looking for ways in which structures and decorations can express individual or collective feelings and practically demonstrating how any architecture must be able to signify the tragic or lyrical feeling that suggested it. In these funerary aedicule projects, he implemented a complete stripping down of the architectural organism to the bareness of the masonry framework to adapt it to the expressive content of the work, which was precisely the signification of a funerary sentiment of totalitarian renunciation.

Cardella's drawings, [...] show a reaction to the peaceful local bourgeoisie, a reaction that was also supported theoretically at the time, as he considered architecture to be a 'language of the spirit' and therefore not functionalism or carnivalesque eclecticism' (Accascina, 1940).

The isolation to which Salvatore Cardella was relegated is counterbalanced by a design production of great interest that distinguishes him from contemporary Sicilian architects through a highly personal and well-balanced vocabulary and syntactic system; from the very early 1920s are his original designs for sepulchral monuments (figs. 12, 13) that show a language certainly far removed from the classicisms of the architects of his contemporaries in which polished and massive blocks support towering elements "in a vain effort of liberation" (Rossi Barbera, 1926).

The academic contrasts and consequent marginalisation led to Cardella's rejection in 1926 in the examinations for tenure, sanctioned by a jury chaired by Gustavo Giovannoni. The architect from Nissa, despite the constant disappointments and the university ordeal, would continue his battle not only through his projects but also through an intense publicity activity in the pages of the magazine *Il Tempio*, founded by his brother Giovanni, and with the printing of the volumes *Estetica dell'architettura* and *Il Rinnovamento dell'architettura*.

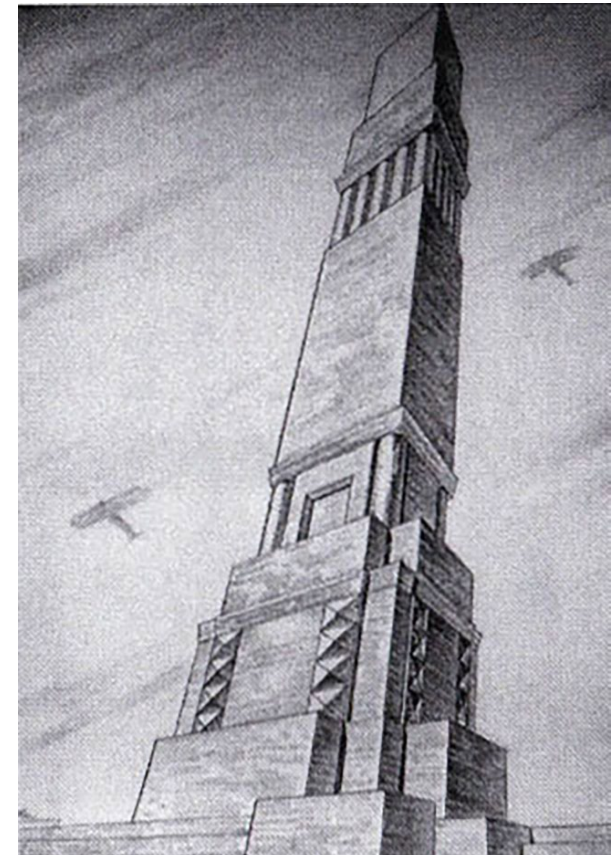


Fig. 12 - Salvatore Cardella. Commemorative Obelisk, 1920. Perspective view in pencil and Indian ink on paper, unrealised.

1932 is a very important year for Cardella not only because, after much effort, he will be awarded a professorship with unanimous votes, but also because he will participate in the national competition for the 'Churches of the Diocese of Messina'. The competition, as Clementina Barucci (2002) states, "as well as for the importance of the proposed theme, that of religious buildings, had a considerable resonance and constituted one of the significant moments in the architectural debate of the early 1930s".

The call for bids, formulated by the Architects' Union and Alberto Calza Bini, who was to be pres-

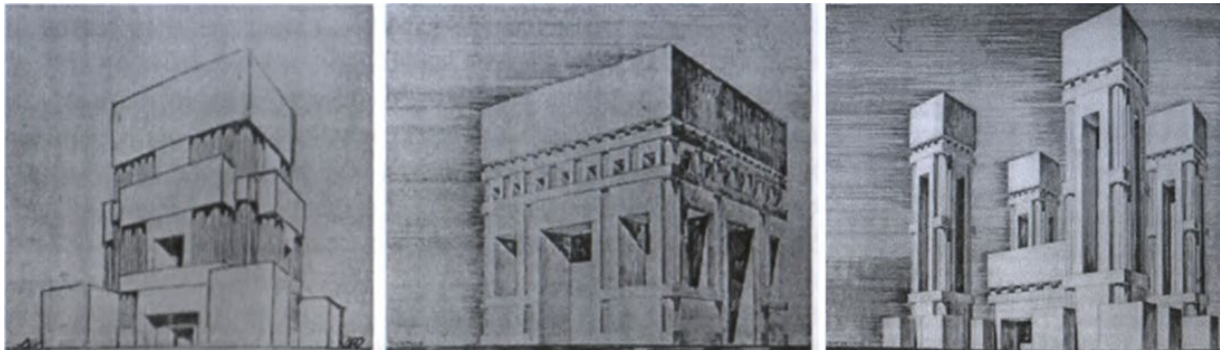


Fig. 13 - Salvatore Cardella. Sepulchral monuments, c. 1920. From left to right, Sepulchre, Ossuary, Temple of Death; unbuilt.

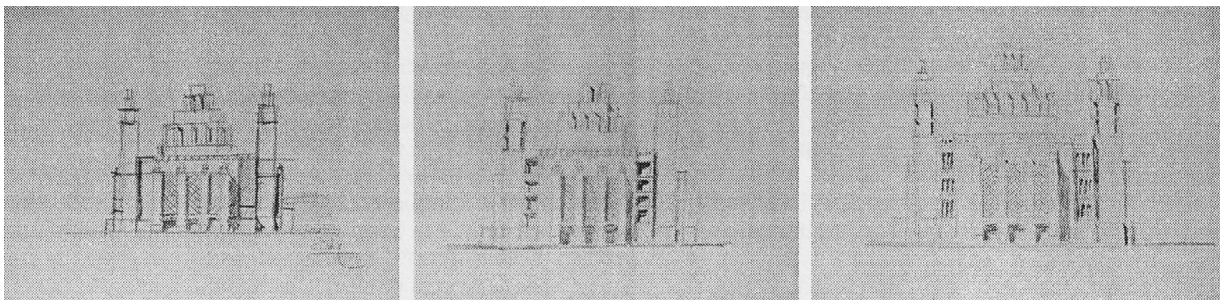


Fig. 14 - Salvatore Cardella. Studies for the elevation of the church of San Filippo Neri in Messina, 1932.

ident of the two juries coordinated by Marcello Piacentini and Enrico Calandra, was divided into eight competitions divided into two groups. The first series involved five different competitions; the first, by invitation only, for two churches to be erected in the municipality of Spadafora and, the other, in the Paradiso area, the second for two others planned in Castoreale Bagni and Galati, and the third, reserved only for Sicilian architects, for two churches in Messina, one dedicated to San Filippo Neri and the other to Gesù and Maria. Salvatore Cardella participated in the latter. His first sketches for the church of San Filippo Neri are dated 9 March 1932 and concern planimetric diagrams and elevation studies (fig. 14) from which the *ascending* character that Cardella wanted to give the building is evident. From the archive drawings, five versions of the project can be deduced that substantially reshape the

aesthetic values of the architect from Nissa; the entire composition is marked by dense horizontal and vertical lines in order to “push, to bring upwards ever higher the Faith, the Temple of Hope of Prayer, the column, the pillar that holds up [because] the impetus given to the soul by the mystical impulse is needed” (Cardella, 1932). Cardella’s words make it clear, on the one hand, how much the design theme he tackled was permeated by the spiritual character characteristic of his work and, on the other, how he intended to express his architecture as a true work of art through the study of form and composition of the wall mass. The first floor plan, based on an octagonal layout surrounded by semicircular niches on the oblique sides and square chapels on either side of the central hall (fig. 15), shows “Cardella’s desire to obtain a perfectly symmetrical and harmonious

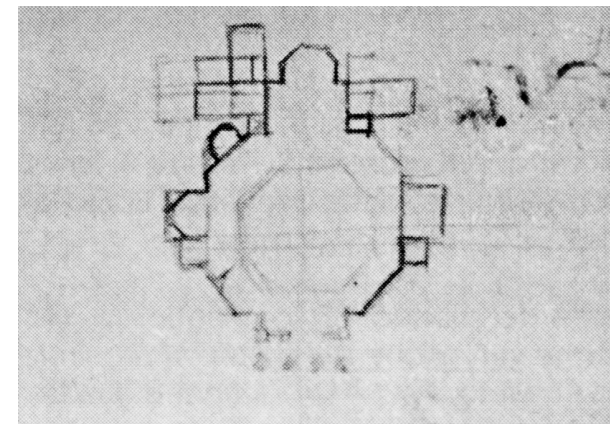


Fig. 15 - Salvatore Cardella. Plan of the church of San Filippo Neri in Messina, 1932.

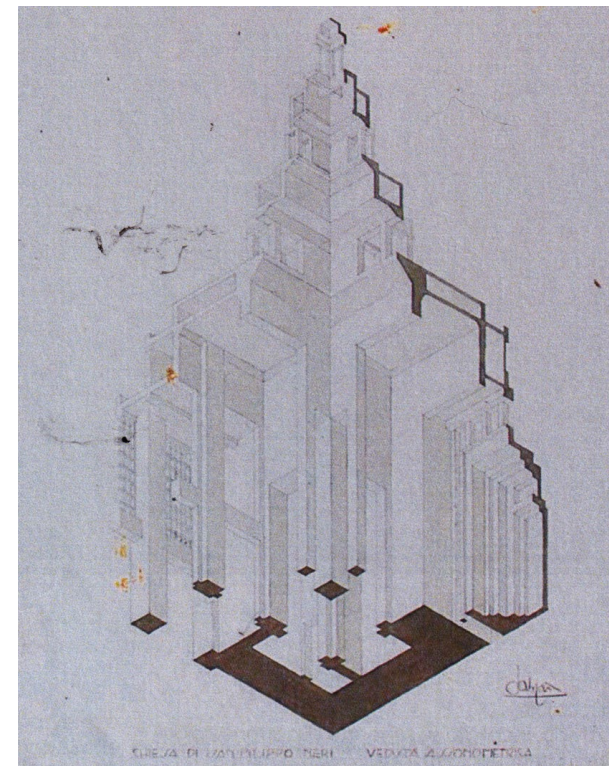


Fig. 16 - Salvatore Cardella. Axonometric cross-section of the church of San Filippo Neri in Messina, 1932.

distribution of the elements present; also because symmetry with respect to two orthogonal axes confers a greater expression of balance and harmony than that provided by a single axis, and the forms inspire a greater feeling of concord, peace and recollection" (Cardella, 1931; Pagliaro, 2013).

In later designs, Cardella abandons the octagonal shape of the plan, preferring the Greek cross scheme inscribed in a square, resulting in four angular rooms, two of which, opening onto the side naves and endonarthex, house two subsidiary rooms with the stairs to the bell towers, while the others, on the opposite side, house the sacristy and rectory.

The upward ascent is resolved by means of corbelled structures that descend to the stepped dome surrounded by windows that welcome the light according to a gradual transition that begins with the shadows of the aisles; the upward effect is also readable, of course, in the elevations. On this subject, in the project report found in the archives Cardella writes: "According to the process described, therefore, the architectural ascension takes place without degenerating into the Gothic cuspidal spasm. On the contrary, it proceeds with a rhythm governed by that feeling of serenity that wants to accompany the spiritual overcoming and that finds - as we have said - its most suitable image in the horizontality of the architraves, the attics and the terraced roofs. Well, just as the spiritual surpassing is realised in the gradual ascent of the architectural masses, so the clarification of the Faith is realised in the passage from the external basement niches, heavy with shadows, to the open culminating loggias, or in the passage from the niches themselves to the crown of culminating pillars, which almost sing, with their vertical ascent, the supreme prayer of triumph" (Cardella, 1932).

Some of the images of the three-dimensional model show the manner of Cardella's representation, who did not limit himself to the orthogonal projections and perspective required by the competition announcement, but with a very personal way of drawing expressed his architecture of Faith (figs. 16, 17).

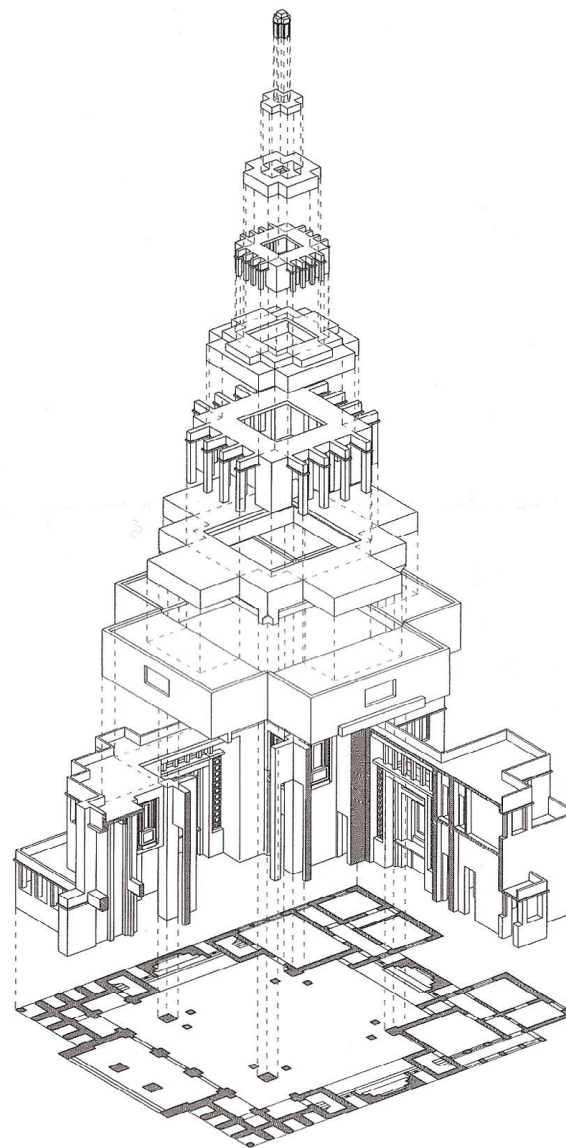


Fig. 17 - Axonometric exploded view of the church of San Filippo Neri in Messina, 1932. Graphic elaboration by M. T. Pagliaro.

The first sketches for the church of Gesù e Maria delle Trombe also bear the same date as those for the church of San Filippo Neri, proving that Cardella worked on the two projects at the same time; they are a perspective view drawn in sanguine with a very low point of view. This is a Novecento perspective, much used by Italian rationalist architects, in which the horizon line coincides with the ground line, which allows a quicker control of the vanishing lines of the parallel lines. In the drawing, Cardella fields some surfaces not so much to highlight shadow effects as to study the relationship between the parts and the volumetric composition of the masses in which the tall side bell towers are evident, a solution that the architect from Nissa will abandon in the subsequent design phases (fig. 18).

The common theme of the two churches is essentially that of the corbelled structure, while the planimetric layouts are totally different; in fact, in this case, Cardella adopts the St. Peter's cross scheme, i.e. the inverted Latin cross, in which the transept is interposed between the façade and the nave and in which the side chapels open (fig.19).

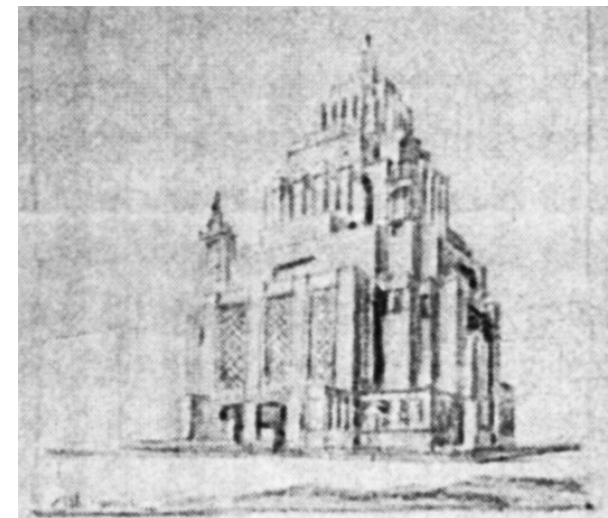


Fig. 18 - Salvatore Cardella. Perspective study for the church of Gesù e Maria delle Trombe in Messina, 1932.

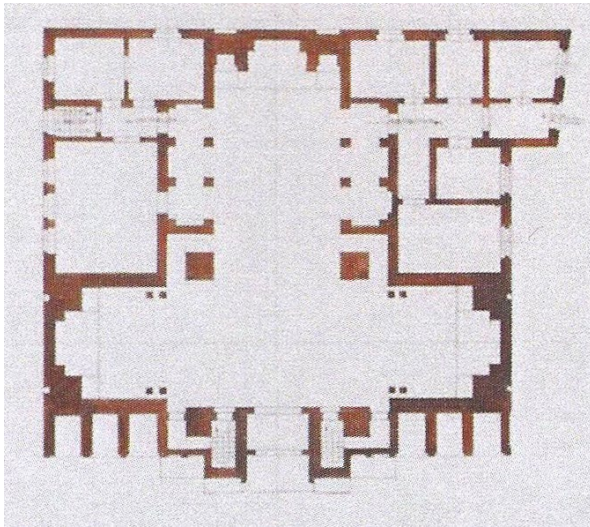


Fig. 19 - Salvatore Cardella. Plan of the church of Gesù e Maria delle Trombe in Messina, 1932.

In the project report, it is not clear why Cardella chose this planimetric scheme, while both the use of the structure, which allowed for the absence of intermediate supports, and the deliberate lack of decorative devices in favour of the sharpness of the wall masses in order to achieve the ethical character of the architectural composition are emphasised. "But a particular sentiment, the A. [Author] aimed at having sacred religious buildings express. Precisely, the Church, in addition to offering a sacred nest to prayer, thus making itself the supreme nourisher of hope, the only landing place for all of life's defeats, must have an ethical purpose: that is, the purpose of arousing in man the sentiment that leads him to feel worthy of himself, and thus to make himself better, that is, to surpass himself. But just as spiritual surpassing occurs by degrees, so by degrees the architectural masses must surpass all heights. According to this inspiration, the result is a movement of masses - which could be defined as steps or shelves - which also shapes the culminating domes' (Cardella, 1932).

In order to graphically express the plans of the churches designed by Cardella, it was decided to

<http://disegnarecon.univaq.it>

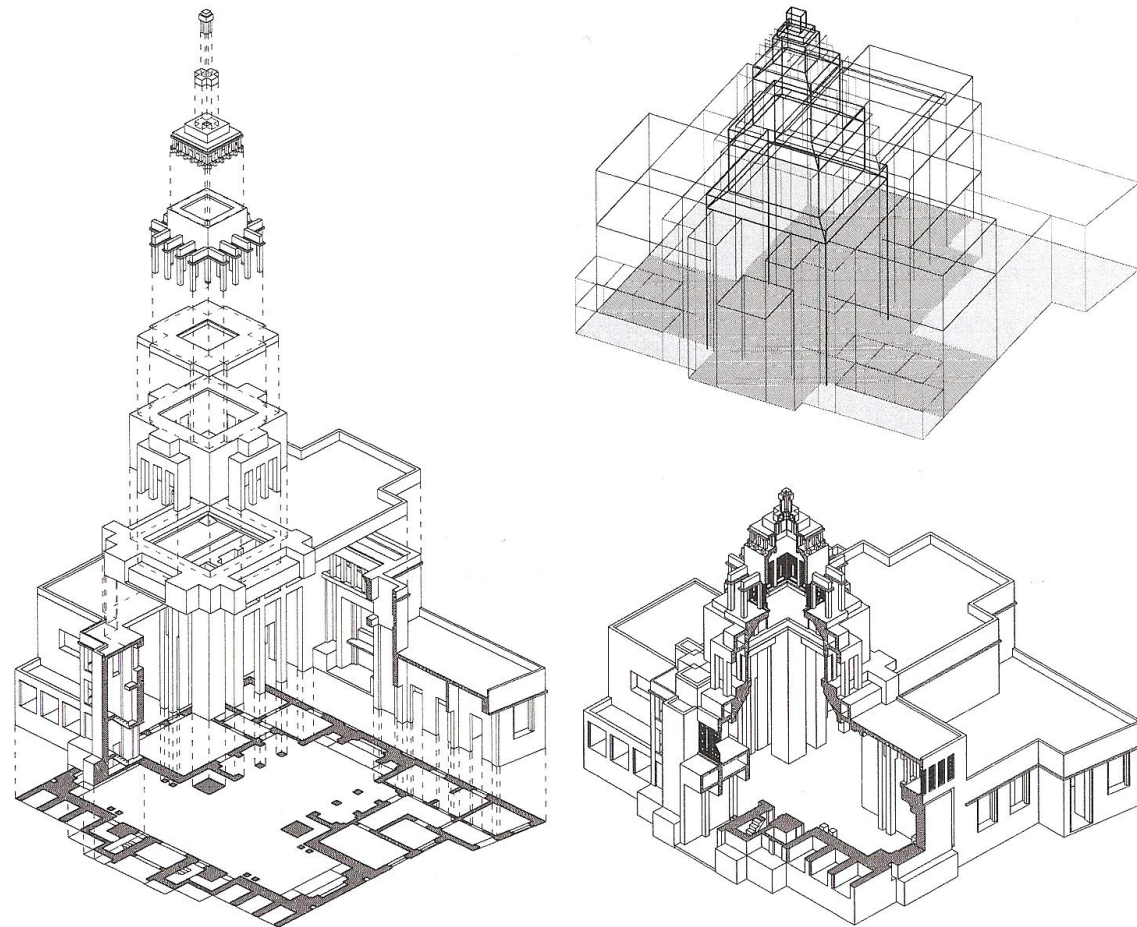


Fig. 20 - Axonometric exploded view of the church of Gesù e Maria delle Trombe in Messina, 1932. Graphic elaboration by M. T. Pagliaro.

use axonometry as the exclusive way of representing the design idea. In fact, it is well known that drawing is essentially expressed through three types of elaborations, the analytical, the conventional and the synthetic. The axonometric diagrams and exploded views summarise and narrate the ideas of the architect from Nissen, the relationships between plan and elevation, expressing the concept of the ascent of man and architecture towards the sky (fig. 20).

Axonometry therefore as synthesis, paraphrasing the title of an extraordinary 1979 article by Bruno Reichlin in which he states that "axonometry is on the side of the architectural workshop of production; while perspective is on the side of consumption" (Reichlin, 1979).

After the end of the Second World War, Salvatore Cardella designed and constructed a number of buildings that not only testify to the consistency of his work, always striving for the new, but also

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underline, once again, a deliberate distance from his contemporaries who had once isolated him.

CONCLUSIONS

Studying and graphically interpreting archive drawings takes on different meanings that are not only hermeneutic but above all ethical. If on the one hand the redrawing of unrealised architecture always exposes the inconsistencies between different representations of the project, on the other hand reading archive drawings induces us to strengthen and recover our memories.

A recent exhibition, opened in March 2023, concerning a collection of archive drawings was titled 'The Plague of Insomnia', borrowing part of Gabriel García Márquez's book, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

"Thus, life will yield us more. But the Indian explained to them that the most frightening thing about the disease of insomnia was not the inability to sleep, since the body felt no fatigue, but its inexorable evolution towards a more critical manifestation: the loss of memory. It meant that when the sick person became accustomed to his waking state, childhood memories began to be erased from his memory, then the name and notion of things, and finally the identity of people and even the consciousness of his own being, until he was submerged in a kind of idiocy without a past' (Márquez García, 1968).

In Márquez's words, it is not the simple physical illness, insomnia, but the spiritual illness that accompanies it, forgetfulness, that is the real dramatic issue; there is a condemnation, not even too hidden, of a society that has lost the authentic values of life in pursuit of a progress 'of quantity rather than quality'. In the frantic race towards work or gain, man forgets the values of the most authentic things that are often found in those of the past.

The archives and the images stored in them are among them.

NOTE

[1] Reference is made to Alberto Savinio's well-known book, *Ascolto il tuo cuore, città*.

CREDITS

Although the positions expressed in the article are the result of common elaborations, the paragraph Between Tradition, Regime and Modernism Salvatore Caronia Roberti, the Introduction and Conclusions are to be attributed to Francesco Maggio, while the paragraph A breakthrough often denied. Salvatore Cardella is to be attributed to Alessia Garozzo. This essay is an extension and translation into English of the paper presented by the authors at the IMG 2023, Imaging Heritage conference. We would like to thank the Director of the Department of Architecture, Prof. Francesco Lo Piccolo, and the Head of Scientific Collections, Prof. Ettore Sessa, for providing part of the iconographic material and architects Maria Teresa Pagliaro and Marcella Villa for providing their graphic materials. This work was financed by the European Union - NextGenerationEU - MUR D.M. 737/2021 funds.

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