

INTERVIEW WITH LUIGI FRANCIOSINI

ARCHITECTURE AS A DIALOGUE: CONTEXT, MATTER, AND THE FABRIC OF TIME

By Michele Fasolo

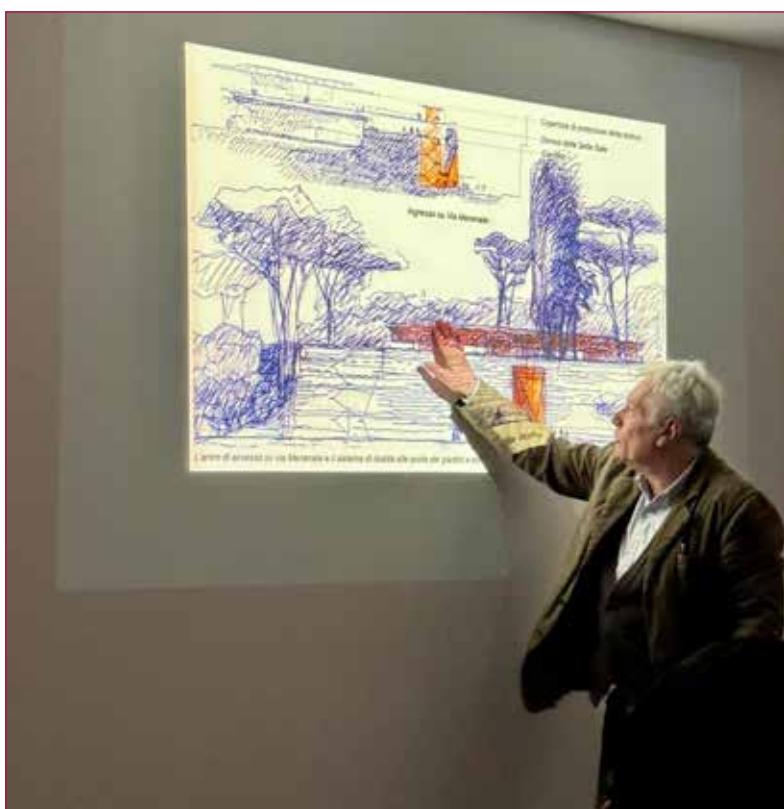


Fig.1 - Luigi Franciosini, architect.

Luigi Franciosini on the deep connection between place, matter, and the balance of conservation and innovation. From the Porta Vecchia in Sutri to the Sette Sale project in Rome, architect Luigi Franciosini explores the intricate relationship between context and matter, shaping an architecture that neither erases history nor fossilizes it. In this exchange with Archeomatica, he reflects on the transformative dialogue between past and present, the creative interplay of conservation and innovation, and the essential role of imagination in revealing—rather than concealing—the layered complexity of archaeological and urban landscapes.

Luigi Franciosini: the relationship with context, the influence of territorial roots, the tension between conservation and innovation, and the central role of imagination in pursuing a continuous “dialogue” with history and matter. From the Porta Vecchia in Sutri to the recent challenge of the Sette Sale project: bridging past and present by revealing—rather than concealing—the layered complexity of one of Rome’s most historically and architecturally rich sites. A conversation with Luigi Franciosini by Michele Fasolo. Exploring the vision of an architect

EDUCATION AND TERRITORIAL ROOTS

Let's begin with your background and formative experiences. At what stage in your career did you, architect Franciosini, first grapple with the challenges of designing within archaeological contexts? What drew you to this field as a primary area of research and practice—though not the exclusive or predominant focus of your work? How have your roots in Alto Lazio, where you grew up, shaped your sensitivity to these issues?

My training evolved over time, almost organically. It was not the result of a predetermined

choice but rather a gradual process that took shape through experience. Growing up in Alto Lazio—the historic Etruria—I developed an innate sensitivity to places imbued with the presence of ancient ruins and archaeological remnants. As a child, for instance, I would play within an amphitheater, using it as a sports field, unaware that its walls and trenches “exuded time and history.” Those spaces bore the essence of material memory—because matter is history. In such places, stone becomes the fundamental narrative element.

Only later did I come to understand that these sites would profoundly influence my architectural thinking and approach. As I became increasingly aware of my physical surroundings, I realized the importance of understanding “where you are” when designing: the environment is an intricate composition of nature, history, topography, and materials. This connection to place unfolds gradually, revealing insights into what should be done and how to do it. Over time, this awareness transformed into a critical consciousness: I came to perceive history not as something static but as a continuum of transformations. In this sense, my roots taught me that an architectural project cannot be conceived in isolation—it must engage in a dialogue with collective memory, topography, and materiality, which together define a territory’s identity.

ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION AND DESIGN SENSITIVITY

How has your experience as an educator influenced your perspective on improving architectural training, particularly regarding the conservation of

historical and archaeological sites? Could you elaborate on the concept of “re-recognition and activation” of the ancient as a pedagogical tool for new generations of architects?

I often remind my students that perceiving and feeling a place is not enough; one must translate those sensations into a critically interpretative approach, enriched by historical knowledge, technical expertise, and dialogue with skilled artisans. Imagination, in this context, becomes a formidable tool—one that synthesizes historical and constructional data with creative vision. “Re-recognition” entails identifying a site’s foundational elements and understanding how history has been embedded in its walls, artifacts, and landscape. “Activation,” in turn, means employing architecture to generate a renewed narrative, fostering both functional and sensory engagement without erasing pre-existing meanings.

For emerging architects, it is crucial to engage directly with the material reality of structures—to understand their depth, imperfections, and the traces of time—while simultaneously leveraging contemporary technological advancements. They must be taught to see things not only for what they are but also for what they can become. This, in my view, is the fundamental role of architectural design in archaeological contexts: not to confine history within a museum display but to reinvigorate it, fostering an active dialogue with the present.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TERRAIN, MATERIALS, AND LOCAL TRADITION

In your design interventions within historically significant

sites, how have you approached the relationship between terrain, built form, and local materials—elements that distinctly characterize your methodology?

I firmly believe that the land itself and the original materials—from local stone to the very earth that composes the landscape—play a foundational role in architectural identity. Every site expresses itself through its forms and materials, which are not merely technical components but repositories of layered narratives. I regard tuff and peperino as a “landscape of stone,” embodying a deeply rooted artisanal knowledge. Observing ancient structures, such as the Church of San Pietro in Tuscania, has reinforced my understanding that the use



Fig. 2 - Restoration and structural consolidation of the Porta Vecchia in Sutri (1994), in collaboration with engineer P. Uliana.

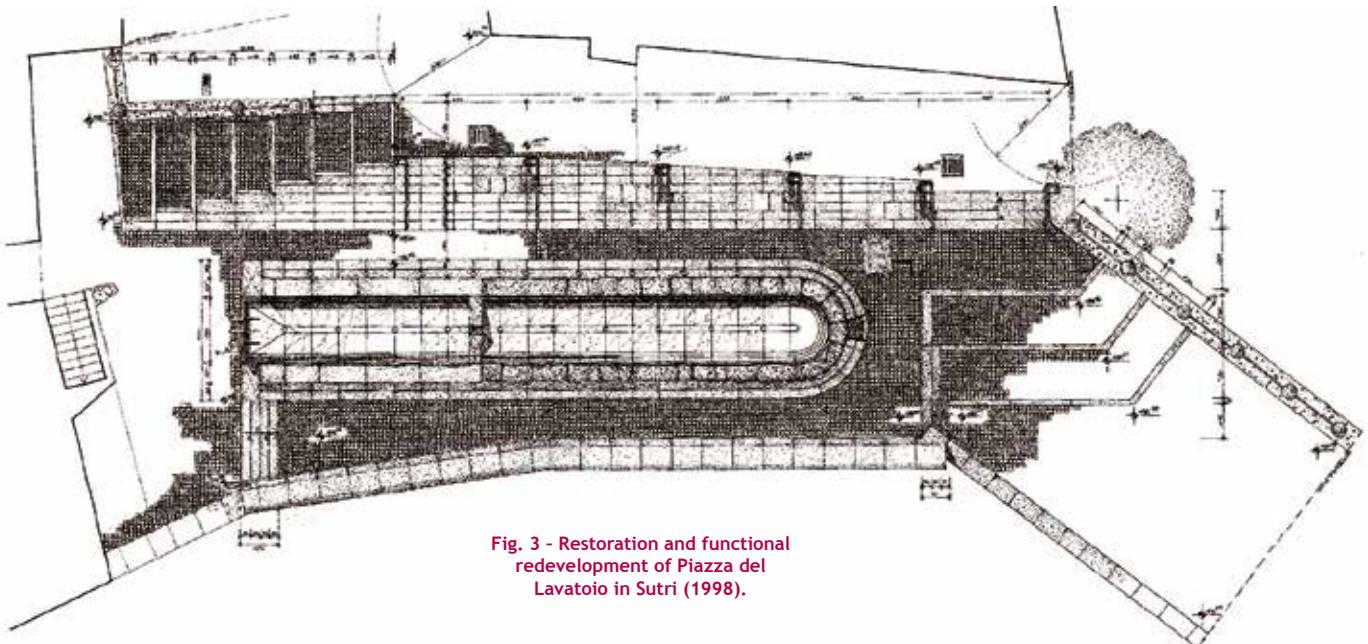


Fig. 3 - Restoration and functional redevelopment of Piazza del Lavatoio in Sutri (1998).

of construction techniques and materials has always evolved through an ongoing experimental process. This perspective informs my approach: on one hand, I meticulously analyze traditional building practices to comprehend the underlying logics and craftsmanship passed down through generations; on the other, I respond with innovative solutions to address

contemporary structural and functional needs. Architecture should never be self-referential—it must resonate with the site's historical and material context. It is an act of what I call positive “submission”: every project exists within a larger framework—the place, its history, its materials—which ultimately gives it meaning.

CONSERVATION AND INNOVATION

How do you navigate the balance between conservation and innovation in your work? What technical, pragmatic, and aesthetic challenges have you encountered? What risks do you consider most significant, and what solutions best define your design approach?

Framing “conservation and innovation” as a binary opposition can be misleading. Archaeological contexts, by their very nature, preserve traces of time, yet history itself is a continuum of transformations and stratifications. Studying antiquity reveals that innovation often occurs incrementally, through successive refinements. In contrast, today’s rapid technological advancements can sometimes impose an accelerated pace of change, requiring careful calibration to avoid forced juxtapositions between traditional techniques and contemporary demands.

I experienced this delicate balance firsthand while working on the Porta di Mezzo in Gallese, where cyclopean blocks and peperino from different epochs coexisted in a palimpsest of stratifications. The structure



Fig. 4 - Restoration, consolidation, and enhancement of the Porta di Mezzo in Gallese (1998), in collaboration with architect R. d’Aquino and engineer P. Uliana.

had suffered a partial collapse and required urgent stabilization. I recognized the necessity of “listening” to the edifice—understanding its material composition, the forces at play, and the underlying construction logic—while simultaneously integrating a technologically advanced intervention to ensure its longevity. This project underscored a dual responsibility: on one hand, a cultural duty to engage with history; on the other, an ethical obligation to guarantee safety. Achieving this balance meant merging respect for the artifact with the implementation of effective and considered architectural solutions.

METHODOLOGY AND CHALLENGES IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS

Each archaeological project presents unique challenges, yet the underlying methodology, rationale, and social significance remain consistent. Are there any projects you hold in particular esteem? How have you addressed the structural and historical complexities within them?

Rather than having a singular “favorite” project, I view each intervention in an archaeological setting as an opportunity to engage with historical layering. One particularly resonant experience was the restoration

of the Porta Vecchia in Sutri, where we dismantled a deteriorated pier and unexpectedly discovered a still-functioning Etrusco-Roman drainage system—an element that explained the structural failure of the Renaissance masonry. This revelation prompted us to devise a precise and technically sophisticated stabilization mechanism, allowing the structure to retain both its integrity and its historical narrative. Even after four decades, it remains a testament to the successful resolution of a complex technical challenge. In all my projects, the methodology hinges on an exhaustive process of reading and critical-

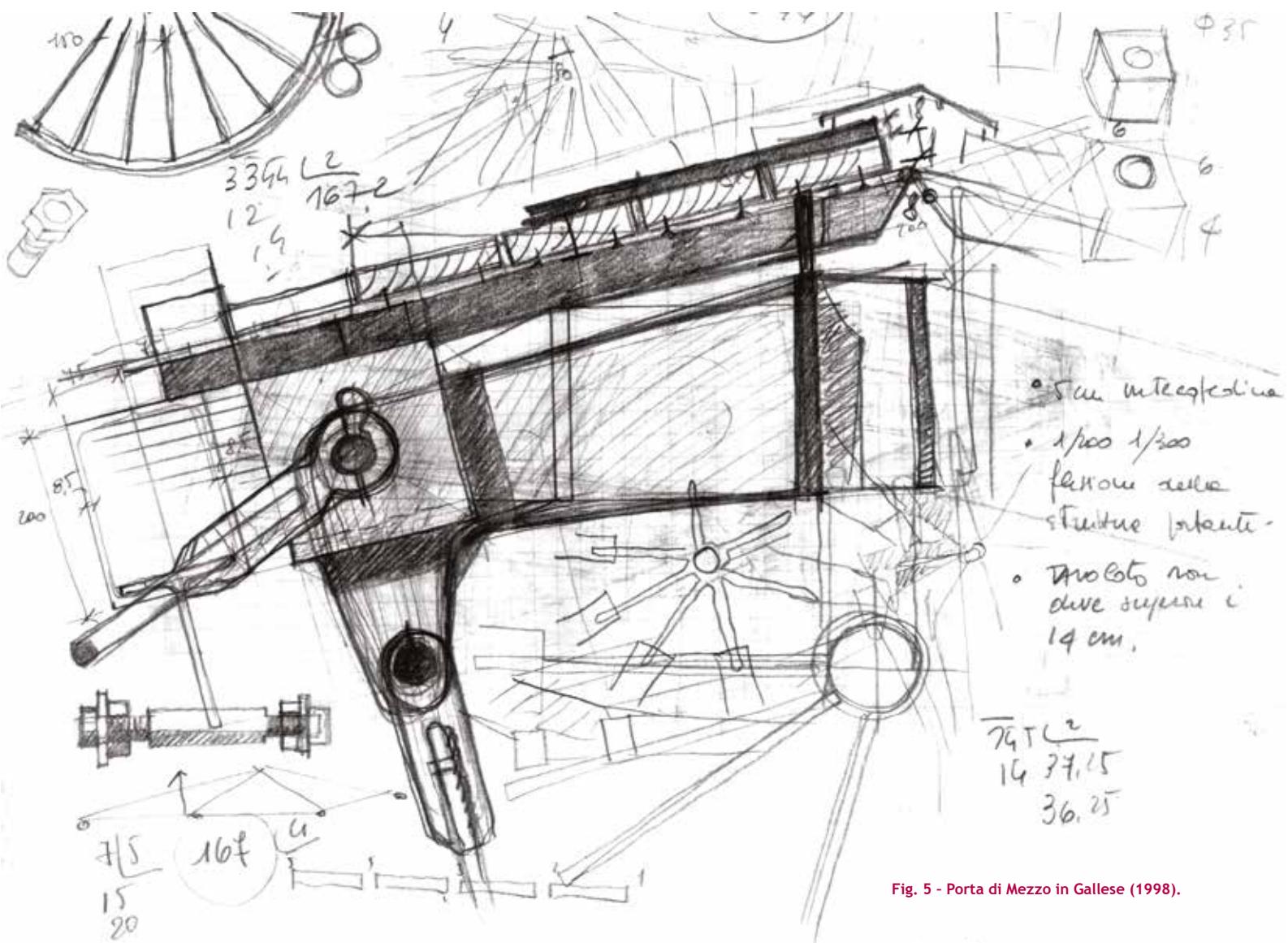


Fig. 5 - Porta di Mezzo in Gallese (1998).

ly interpreting the constraints, remnants, and data provided by archaeology and architectural history. In such contexts, stratification is the rule, not the exception. Our role as architects is to decode these layers, enhance their significance, and simultaneously avoid freezing them into a single, immutable interpretation. We are continuously required to reconcile a passion for history, the imperative of structural safety, and a collaborative dialogue with artisans, structural engineers, and conservation specialists.

CRAFTSMANSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

Do you believe that contemporary architecture still retains an artisanal component that adds value to archaeological contexts? Have certain techniques or technologies significantly influenced the execution of your interventions?

Absolutely, craftsmanship re-

mains fundamental. I have learned immensely from observing carpenters, blacksmiths, and stonemasons—artisans whose hands reveal the intrinsic logic of materials. Each worked stone encapsulates a slow transmission of knowledge, a heritage we must preserve, even as we integrate advanced technologies. Industrial innovation, while invaluable, risks detaching us from this tactile sensitivity. However, I believe that the conscious application of new technologies can complement and enhance traditional craftsmanship.

In antiquity, construction techniques evolved gradually, incorporating innovations over time. Today, however, technological advancements demand immediate, high-performance solutions, creating a stark contrast with historical methodologies. This requires an acute awareness to avoid imposing interventions that feel “forced” within

the historical fabric.

On the other hand, modern technologies—such as 3D scanning, augmented reality, and non-invasive structural consolidation—can enhance the preservation, safety, and readability of archaeological sites, provided they are applied with respect for artisanal traditions and historical contexts.

THE ROLE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGIES

How would you assess the overall role of modern technology in the conservation and enhancement of archaeological sites?

Do you perceive risks in their application, particularly concerning the authenticity of these spaces?

Technological advancements proceed at an extraordinary pace, whereas archaeology reminds us of the slow passage of time. The widespread use of digital tools and engineering solutions, if not carefully calibrated, risks distorting or even severing our sensory and physical connection to historical sites. The greatest danger, in my view, is the potential loss of direct material perception—the weight of the stone, the nuances of light, the very scent of time itself.

However, I do not reject technology; on the contrary, when thoughtfully implemented, it becomes a powerful ally in documenting, protecting, and narrating the stories of archaeological sites. The key lies in “listening” to the existing context. When technological innovation emerges from a deep understanding of pre-existing construction logics, it has the potential to make archaeological sites more accessible and secure without compromising their authenticity.



Fig. 6 - Enhancement interventions on Via Biberatica, Via delle Torre, and the Giardino delle Milizie within the Trajan's Markets complex, Rome (2000), in collaboration with architect R. d'Aquino and engineer P. Uliana.



Fig. 7 - Enhancement interventions on Via Biberatica, Via delle Torre, and the Giardino delle Milizie Rome (2000).



Fig. 8 - Enhancement interventions on Via Biberatica, Via delle Torre, and the Giardino delle Milizie Rome (2000).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ARCHITECTURE IN HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

In light of your research and professional trajectory, what fundamental principles would you recommend to architects working in historically significant contexts?

can contexts? Is there a specific archaeological site that you consider exemplary for future interventions?

Rather than advocating for rigid rules, I believe in fostering an attitude of active listening and dialogue—with the site, its ma-

terials, interdisciplinary specialists (archaeologists, historians, engineers, craftsmen), and history itself. An architect must cultivate an imagination that extends beyond mere visual impression and is instead rooted in a profound understanding of

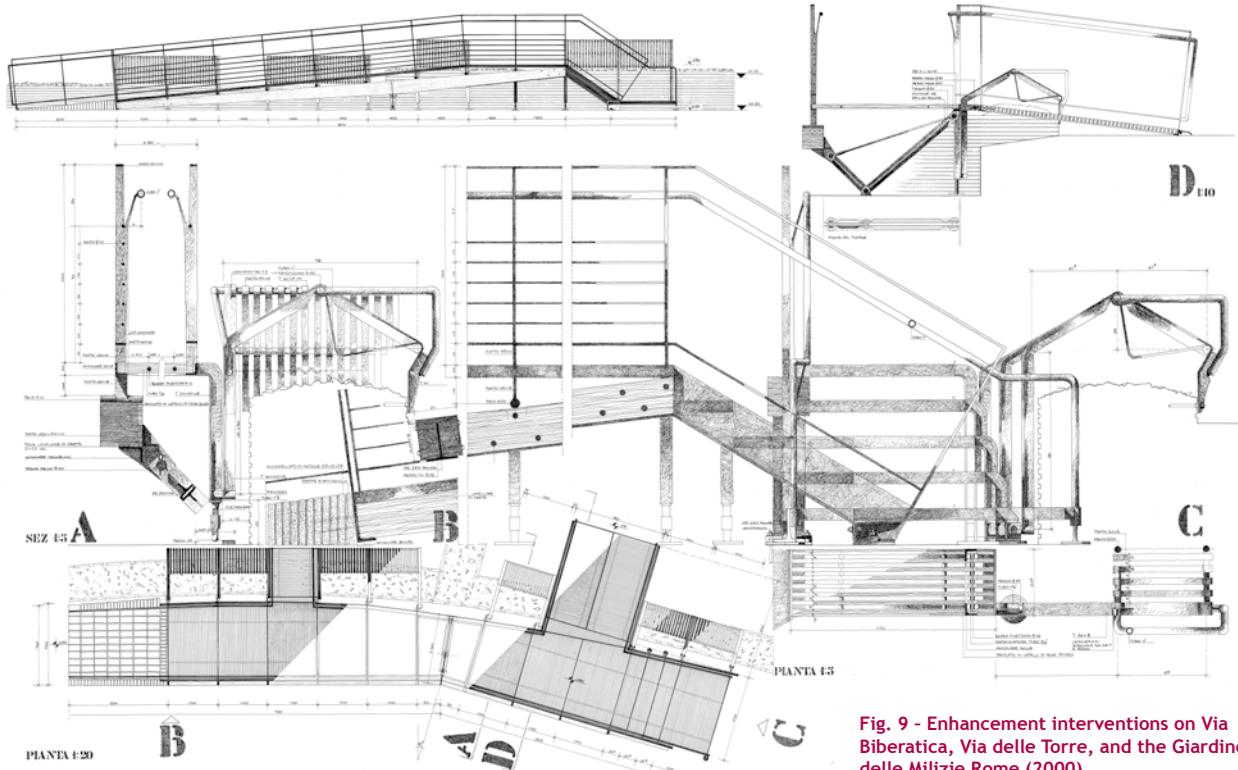


Fig. 9 - Enhancement interventions on Via Biberatica, Via delle Torre, and the Giardino delle Milizie Rome (2000).



Fig. 10 - Restoration and structural consolidation of the hypogeum within the Giardino delle Milizie context (2002), in collaboration with architect R. d'Aquino and engineer P. Uliana.



Fig. 11 - Restoration and structural consolidation of the hypogeum within the Giardino delle Milizie context (2002)

context. Before imposing one's own vision, it is essential to comprehend existing construction logics, topographical configurations, and collective memory.

Striking a balance between conservation and innovation is crucial, requiring a critical interpretation of the site's latent potential. Ultimately, the architect's task is to narrate a "great story of time, always within the framework of temporality." As I often tell my students, every design decision impacts the material history of a place and shapes future perceptions of its heritage. This represents both a moral and a practical "risk" that the architect must consciously embrace.

As for exemplary models, Italy is replete with them—often in subtle, lesser-known forms. These are interventions where historical stratification is clearly articulated, and contemporary additions assert themselves without overwhelming the ancient. I have sought to embody this approach in the Sette Sale project: rendering historical complexity perceptible while simultaneously delineating the contemporary intervention with precision.

INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION AND THE ICADA PROJECT

You have been involved in the International Center for Architectural Design and Archaeology (ICADA), an initiative fostering interdisciplinary dialogue between architecture and archaeology. Could you elaborate on the significance of this project?

From my perspective, interdisciplinarity is essential: archaeology benefits from architectural vision, while architecture

requires the scientific rigor of those who study the past. ICADA—and similar initiatives—serve as platforms for continuous exchange, where diverse competencies converge. Without such dialogue, we risk losing the crucial link between heritage conservation and its accessibility and revitalization. No single discipline holds all the answers; only through collaborative efforts can we calibrate interventions, blending historical fidelity with architectural sensitivity.

INFLUENTIAL MENTORS AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Which mentors have most profoundly shaped your architectural philosophy and professional approach?

I have been deeply influenced by the writings of Louis Kahn, whose reflections on history and the profound essence of architecture have left an enduring impact. His poetic and evocative language resonates strongly with my own perspective.

Similarly, the philosophical discourse of Martin Heidegger, particularly his exploration of "dwelling" and the interplay between being and space, has been profoundly enlightening.

My academic foundation was shaped by Arnaldo Bruschi, a historian of architecture who instilled in me the ability to critically analyze historical stratifications.

Another pivotal mentor was Mario Ridolfi, a master architect-builder who demonstrated that architecture is not merely about conceptual design but is fundamentally about materiality, weight, proportion, and construction. Observing Ridolfi, I grasped the power of drawing as a means of describing architecture, while also understanding

that the creative phase must never be divorced from the tangible responsibility of construction. Even today, certain academic circles remain fixated on the notion that architectural imagination and representation can exist in isolation, detached from the realities of building. This is a grave error, one that creates an irreparable divide between thought and concrete action, between form and the responsibility of realizing it.

THE FIGURE OF EUPALINOS AND THE ROLE OF THE ARCHITECT-BUILDER

You have often referenced Eupalinos and his symbolic importance in architectural practice. What does this figure represent to you?

Eupalinos of Megara, a 6th-century BCE engineer and architect, is remembered by Herodotus for constructing the aqueduct-tunnel in Samos—an extraordinary feat for its time. He also appears in Paul Valéry's philosophical dialogue *Eupalinos ou l'Architecte*, where he is depicted as the "ideal" architect-builder. In Valéry's vision, Socrates and Phaedrus discuss Eupalinos and his sleepless nights, tormented by the weight of choosing among infinite design possibilities; yet by morning, the builder achieves clarity, translating his vision into reality.

This ability to transform intellectual uncertainty into tangible form—to envision the completed work before the project has even begun—is the highest challenge for an architect. Eupalinos embodies the ultimate responsibility of the discipline: thought, vision, technique, and construction inextricably linked. Today, in an era of increasing disciplinary fragmentation, this unity of intent risks being

lost, making his example all the more relevant.

LANDSCAPE AND MEMORY

Your work often reflects on landscape as an identity-defining element. How do you perceive the concept of landscape, and how does it influence your design process?

Landscape is not merely a picturesque backdrop but the manifestation of a millennia-old history—a record of continuous human intervention and adaptation in dialogue with nature.

I reject the hedonistic notion of landscape as an aesthetic composition to be admired passively. Instead, I see it as a dynamic memory, shaped through an ongoing dialectic between natural forces and civilization. This awareness guides my work: whenever I design within a context rich in landscape stratifications, I strive to recognize the rigor and density of these processes, as well as the enduring

marks left by previous generations upon the territory.

EVOLUTION AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

How do you envision the evolving relationship between architecture and archaeology in the coming years, particularly in response to economic and tourism pressures on archaeological sites? What research directions and emerging trends do you find most promising for the future of architecture in this domain?

Economic and tourism-related pressures are undeniable and, at times, aggressive. However, I do not believe that tourism should be opposed outright; rather, we must manage it through architectural solutions that mediate between accessibility and the preservation of historical and landscape equilibriums. It is entirely possible to design spaces that enhance comprehension and accessibility



Fig. 12 - Restoration, protection, and enhancement of the late-antique villa of Faragola (Ascoli Satriano, Foggia) (2004), in collaboration with architect P. Porretta and engineer P. Uliana.

without turning archaeological sites into mere attractions devoid of depth and authenticity. Future research must follow a dual trajectory: on one hand, rigorous and methodologically sound conservation practices; on the other, the intelligent integration of digital technologies—such as augmented reality, 3D scanning, and digital mapping—to enhance the visi-

tor's experience while maintaining historical integrity. The challenge is to preserve the connection between design and memory, resisting the reduction of historical sites to mere simulations. The dialogue between architecture and archaeology is inherently symbiotic—only modern academic and institutional structures have created a divide. A more humanistic appro-

ach would reveal their natural complementarity and mutual enrichment.

THE SETTE SALE PROJECT

The Sette Sale restoration and enhancement project, located on the Oppian Hill within a complex archaeological framework, posed a unique challenge. What methodological approaches guided your intervention in a site defined by historical stratification?

For the Sette Sale project, Cristina Casadei and I began by conducting a thorough topographical and historical analysis, focusing on the cistern's spatial and functional integration within its broader urban context. Rather than merely examining it from the ground up, we sought an alternative perspective: imagining the site as "water" flowing through the vast cistern, observing it from above before descending into its depths. This conceptual approach allowed us to better understand the layered structure of the hill, the successive historical overlays, and its connections with adjacent architectural elements, such as Trajan's Baths.

Our objective was to reactivate the perception of a monument that, despite its historical significance and privileged location with a view of the Colosseum, had remained largely overlooked. We developed a design strategy that incorporated pathways and potential descent routes, enabling visitors to experience the complexity of the site's historical layers without imposing a singular, rigid reconstruction.

URBAN NARRATIVE AND HISTORICAL CONNECTIVITY

How did you address the integration of the Sette Sale complex with the surrounding urban

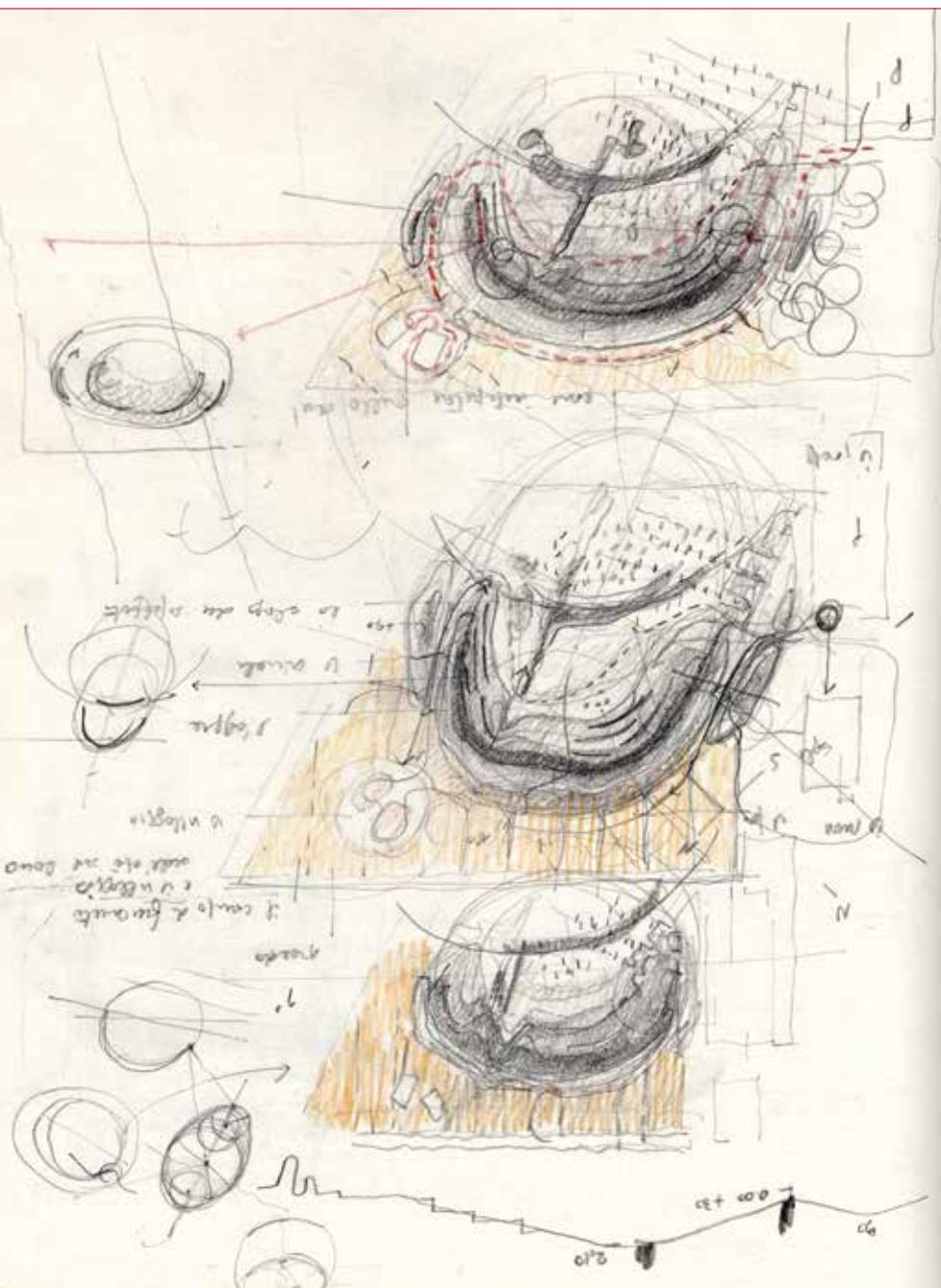


Fig. 13 - Enhancement of the archaeological area of the Trinitapoli Necropolis (2024), in collaboration with architect C. Robbe and architect C. Casadei.

fabrics and historical structures, particularly in relation to Trajan's Baths? In what ways has the site's urban narrative been reconnected to its archaeological setting?

Why has this monumental cistern, extensively studied by architects and archaeologists—including Servius, Piranesi, and Vasi—remained obscure despite its central role in Rome's ancient water system? The Oppian Hill, located near Trajan's vast thermal complex and adjacent to the Domus Aurea, is an exceptionally evocative site that has been rendered “invisible” by successive urban transformations.

From the Sistene urban planning initiatives to the extensive interventions of 19th-century Rome, the Esquiline district has undergone significant modifications. The papal projects established axial routes and infrastructural connections that often disrupted historical continuity, while the later development of Rome as the capital further altered the topography through new road networks (such as Via Merulana and Via Mecenate). As a result, the Sette Sale remained isolated. In our project, we sought to conceptually—and, in the future, physically—reconnect this fragmented heritage, allowing for a renewed reading of the historical ties that once structured this part of the city. Rome is composed of dispersed “fragments,” which, when reconnected, can recover a collective historical narrative rather than existing as isolated monumental enclaves.

SPATIAL, FUNCTIONAL, AND SYMBOLIC INTEGRATION

How did the Sette Sale project integrate historical-architectural elements with functional

requirements while also fostering a spatial and symbolic interpretation of the site?

Our intent was to reveal the site's layered complexity without reducing it to a didactic exhibit. The idea was for visitors to rediscover the stratification of the Oppian Hill not only by walking across its surface but also by descending into its depths, much like the water that once filled the cistern. We envisioned a descent shaft that would enable visitors to traverse different historical levels, leading them to the very heart of the ancient architecture.

Functionally, our proposal incorporated walkways and vertical access systems (elevators, staircases) designed to make the various historical strata perceptible. This vertical circulation was conceived not only as a means of accessibility but also as a symbolic representation of the water's flow—an experiential journey into the past. The ultimate goal was to allow history to resonate without imposing a singular interpretative framework, leaving room for multiple narratives and individual contemplation.

PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORKS AND DESIGN CHOICES

The project references Goethe's concept of a “suspended truth,” interpreting the architectural intervention as one that seeks to “make history resonate” rather than rigidly defining it. How does this vision translate into your design choices? Similarly, how does Ricoeur's philosophy of temporality manifest in the visitor's experience?

I interpret Goethe's notion of “suspended truth” as an invitation to resist absolute historical determinism. Visitors should not be confined within a singular narrative but should instead be encouraged to engage with the site through their own interpretative lens. In the case of the Sette Sale, we deliberately avoided a philological reconstruction of the cistern, opting instead for a design approach that alludes to its depth and its symbiotic relationship with water.

Similarly, Ricoeur's concept of temporality as a layered, non-linear phenomenon informed our design strategy. The visitor's experience of ascending, descending, and moving through



Fig. 14 - Enhancement of the archaeological area of the Trinitapoli Necropolis (2024).

gh walls from different epochs fosters a dynamic perception of history—one that raises questions and stimulates imagination rather than dictating a singular understanding of the past.

CONSERVATION AND TRANSFORMATION

How did you reconcile the dual imperatives of conservation and transformation in this project? How did you balance the reversibility of the interventions with the need for a lasting impact?

In historic contexts, architecture must be measured and deliberate. Every new insertion should be characterized by reversibility or, at the very least, by minimal and non-intrusive interventions. In the Sette Sale project, the proposed walkways were designed to be lightweight and demountable, ensuring that the perception of the ancient architecture remained undisturbed. Naturally, some degree of intervention is necessary to enhance accessibility and safety. This balance is achieved by prioritizing the pre-existing construction logic and ensuring that contemporary structures serve the historical narrative rather

than dominating it. The goal is not to impose self-referential forms but to introduce discreet architectural elements that facilitate the understanding and appreciation of the monument.

URBAN NARRATIVE AND HISTORICAL CONTINUITY

Despite its historical significance, the Sette Sale remains overshadowed within the context of the Oppian Hill. How did you address the challenge of reintegrating the monument within its urban and archaeological framework?

For centuries, the cistern has been recognized as an exceptional feat of hydraulic engineering, yet successive urban transformations have rendered it nearly invisible within the city's fabric. The Oppian Hill, once an integral part of Rome's monumental network, has been progressively fragmented by infrastructural interventions that have altered its topographical legibility.

Our approach sought to reconstruct these lost connections conceptually and, where possible, physically. By proposing new circulation routes, we aimed to integrate the Esquiline,

the Oppian Hill, Trajan's Baths, and the Domus Aurea into a coherent and legible archaeological network. This strategy is essential for revitalizing Rome's stratified urban history, preventing significant sites like the Sette Sale from remaining isolated and perceived as detached relics.

Rome is composed of fragmented historical layers that, when meaningfully connected, can recover a collective spatial narrative. The Sette Sale, rather than being an isolated structure, must be understood as a crucial node within this broader framework—a place where engineering ingenuity, urban infrastructure, and historical evolution intersect.

WALKWAYS AND VISUAL INTEGRATION

The inclusion of walkways often raises concerns regarding their necessity and visual impact. Even if modular and reversible, do you believe these structures might be perceived as intrusive or incompatible with the site's historical atmosphere?

This concern is entirely legitimate. Any contemporary intervention in an archaeological setting runs the risk of being perceived as intrusive. However, I believe that a well-calibrated design—prioritizing lightness, transparency, and reversibility—can minimize any sense of architectural imposition.

Our intention was never to compete with the pre-existing historical elements but rather to introduce new structures that function as interpretative tools—discreet but essential mediators between past and present. The walkways were conceived to allow visitors to engage with the site dynamically, offering new perspectives



Fig. 15 - Luigi Franciosini, architect.

while maintaining a respectful distance from the ancient architecture.

The fundamental principle guiding our intervention is that the contemporary must remain distinguishable yet complementary. When architecture acknowledges its role as a supporting element rather than the protagonist, it fosters a balanced coexistence between historical authenticity and modern functionality. If executed with sensitivity, these new elements enhance rather than detract from the archaeological experience, facilitating accessibility while preserving the integrity of the site.

SPATIAL FILTERS, PERCEPTION, AND CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVE

The use of spatial filters—screens, diaphragms, and layered structures—to evoke the site's original spatiality is a compelling design strategy. However, do you think this approach risks imposing a contemporary aesthetic narrative that might overshadow the historical one? This is indeed a critical question. There is always a risk that contemporary interventions might inadvertently impose an aesthetic language that competes with or overshadows historical narratives. However, when deployed with precision and deep contextual understanding, these elements function not as impositions but as interpretative devices that allow the visitor to engage with spatial voids, historical distances, and movement pathways that might otherwise remain imperceptible.

The objective is not to 'showcase' contemporary architecture but to create a framework through which history can reso-

nate in a meaningful and legible manner. Goethe's notion of 'suspended truth' serves as an important reference here: the idea that historical interpretation should remain open-ended, allowing space for imagination and personal engagement rather than dictating a single authoritative reading.

Similarly, Ricoeur's concept of temporality as a layered, non-linear experience is directly reflected in our design choices. The visitor's journey through the site—ascending, descending, and transitioning through spaces of varying historical depth—creates a narrative that is both fragmented and coherent, inviting individual interpretation

rather than imposing definitive meaning. Architecture, in this sense, does not dictate history; it facilitates its ongoing dialogue with the present.

I often remind my students that an archaeological site, if left unexamined, remains an undetermined space—neither beautiful nor ugly, but merely dormant. It is the act of engagement, both intellectual and spatial, that animates history and brings its latent complexity to the surface. Thoughtful architectural interventions should not seek to redefine the past but rather to reveal its depth, allowing history to emerge as an active presence within contemporary urban life.

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ABSTRACT

The interview with architect Luigi Franciosini explores the intricate dialogue between architecture, archaeology, and landscape, focusing on the delicate balance between conservation and innovation. Drawing from his experiences—from the Porta Vecchia in Sutri to the Sette Sale project in Rome—Franciosini discusses architecture as an act of "listening" to the material, historical, and topographical layers that define a place. He advocates an approach rooted in contextual awareness, craftsmanship, and interdisciplinary collaboration, where technology serves as a tool to reveal, not obscure, the historical fabric. Emphasizing the concepts of "re-recognition" and "activation," he proposes a design philosophy that views history as a living continuum—a "suspended truth" open to interpretation, imagination, and renewal..

PAROLE CHIAVE

ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION; ARCHAEOLOGY AND ARCHITECTURE; LUIGI FRANCIOSINI; CONTEXTUAL DESIGN; MATERIALITY; SETTE SALE PROJECT; PORTA VECCHIA SUTRI; CRAFTSMANSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY; INTERDISCIPLINARY METHODOLOGY; LANDSCAPE AND MEMORY.

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