Chapter 1

Communicating Architectural Heritage: CAH

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ABSTRACT

This research addresses the strongly felt need associated with Cultural Heritage objects, particularly with architectures of Tomaso Buzzi, which in the process of concrete research opened up and imposed an interesting methodological and practical enquiry. In fact, the research confronts the problem of how to communicate – through virtual means, which happen to be the only workable ones – of unbuilt projects or complex architectures. The objective of this is to effectuate a Virtual Comeback of the architectural object through digital means. This study aims at a hyper-mediial acquisition, composed of digital objects recreated by means of more advanced techniques of ICT communication.

INTRODUCTION

As far as the dissemination of architectural objects is concerned, special attention will be given to virtualization of unbuilt projects or complex architectures. The aim to bring to life existing architectures only in the minds of those who designed. Definitions worked out will concern approach modalities, communication typologies, quality standards of elaborated models, integration of different data typologies as well as the sources of the object analyzed. All these procedures serve the aim of integrally cognizing the object in question. The research, therefore, constitutes an attempt at studying and standardizing the processes of two-dimensional and three-dimensional acquisition and a three-dimensional visualization. As discussed at length in the above sections the research project will be focused on the development of methods and technologies – critically analyzed and assessed – for the acquisition, elaboration, construction and evaluation of 2D/3D models which will make up the digital archive of virtual heritage (Brunetaud, De Luca, Janvier-Badosa, Beck, 2012).

The two case studies chosen belong to the works of an Italian architect from the 1900, Tomaso Buzzi (Cassani, 2008). The choice fell on two different and particular cases: The Scarzuola, last work by the

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architect; the competition for Santa Maria Novella station in Florence. These are different examples because one was carried out, without ever having executive designs; the other one ever built. The two examples wants to investigate how new technologies can make accessible what is not.

LA SCARZUOLA: TOMASO BUZZI’S “DREAM OF STONE”

While visiting Umbria in 1956 Tomaso Buzzi discovered a small, abandoned Franciscan monastery called La Scarzuola near a small town called Montegiove in the Terni province. Awestruck by the location and encouraged by the fact that it was near Rome, he bought it. The ancient medieval monastery included a small church—with a porticoed entrance. There was a large courtyard in the front surrounded by stone walls and terracotta aedicules marking the Stations of the Cross. Next to it, there was a small, two floor cloister with several rooms. The architect wanted to turn it into his studio and home and so the monastery underwent a lengthy yet creative restoration process based on strict conservation criteria. The variations and additions made during the project were all intended to achieve a harmonious sense of volume and proportions. Several rooms were annexed to the former monastery as well as a large garden, designed by Buzzi: some areas were turned into an Italian garden with avenues, topiary, water games, nymphaea and rose gardens.

However, it was in the valley next to the monastery that Buzzi created his greatest work. As far back as 1957, he began to design and create this “unusual folly” that he continued to work on right up until his death: a building complex (never completely finished), the Buzzi city, fruit of his imagination and a representation of his past experiences. When the visitor enters the city he has a scenic view of the entire complex (Alpago Novello, 1985). From a distance, Buzzi’s city looks like an incredible combination of different architectures that spring up spontaneously without a specific plan, a sequential complex of mutual penetration and aggregation. In fact, its genesis lies in his lightning-swift, hurried sketches and oral indications.

Figure 1. Scarzuola. General views of the complex. The Theatrum Mundi, the Acropolis and the Umbrian countryside; the Acropolis and the Theatre of the Bees.
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