

To be more free - 1. A small early design project by Ludovico Quaroni: the Villa Tuccimei in EUR

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Abstract: Between 1938 and 1942 the Mostra dell'Abitazione Italiana (Italian Housing Exhibition, IHE), was planned and designed as a special sector of the E42 programme. Intended to present to the widest international audience the quality of the housing of the upper bourgeoisie of an ideal 'new Fascist City', it was programmed and designed as an experimental application of the new urban planning concepts and regulations. In this framework the young Ludovico Quaroni was engaged with the design of two Villas for eminent people, villa Gagliani and Villa Tuccimei. Both designs deal with the research of 'an other modernity', Mediterranean synthesis of vernacularity and classicism. Villa Gagliani design is openly depending on the Le Corbusier line of 'vernacular' modernity represented, for example, by the Villa 'le Sextant' at Mathes. Villa Tuccimei design, on the contrary, is a passionate investigation about the possibility to pursue a modern, Mediterranean and classical architecture. At the centre this Quaroni's investigation is the architectural order as to conclude the experience began with the Piazza Imperiale project.

Keywords: another modernity, venacularity, Patio house, classical, Mediterranean.

*I will stop being an original poet,
it requires a lack of freedom: an elaborate style is too restrictive.
I shall adopt well-tested literary guises, to be more free.*
Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Trasumanar e organizzar*.

The Italian Housing Exhibition at the E42

By October 11, 1936, the National Federation of Residential Building Proprietors, whose president in the Province of Rome was the engineer Paolo Tuccimei², had officially declared to the Universal

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2. Information on the Mostra dell'Abitazione are chiefly deduced from CAPANNA 2004 (1), pp. 84-99; and from images and texts on CALVESI, GUIDONI, LUX 1987, pp. 524-528. Alessandra Capanna personally gave me a copy of the succinct presentation which was attached to the preliminary design of the Villa Tuccimei by Ludovico Quaroni. For that and other precious helps, which were indispensable to me for beginning my study, I thank her sincerely. Nevertheless we both had to regret that in the Villa Tuccimei file, included in the E42-EUR Archive already passed to the public records of the State Archive, there is no original drawing. Therefore my considerations on the project and my digital reconstruction of the Quaroni's design for Villa Tuccimei are deduced from the few and very elementary drawings and the only photograph of a

1942 Exposition Authority (E42)³ their interest in participating in the creation of the new Exposition district. I think it would have been fairly easy to come to some agreement – the vast design project for the new City within the City, E42 (soon to be renamed EUR, the Universal Exposition of Rome), included provisions for a residential quarter of the highest quality. This was to exemplify the Italian (and also Fascist, obviously) model of interpreting the city on the basis of a mixture of urban composition, landscaping and a special 'Italian' building art that carefully selected elegant yet inexpensive materials (we are in the years of Autarchic Self-Sufficiency) and sought viable architectural solutions that would wed a disciplined rational abstraction to a balanced form of Mediterranean monumentality (Figg.1, 2). The residential model, (Fig. 3, 4) which was named the Italian Housing Exhibition (Mostra dell'Abitazione Italiana), was of no great size; it fitted nicely into the extensive grid of streets and avenues of E42 and its landscaped hills (Fig. 5), which formed a natural backdrop to the artificial stretch of water that the Romans immediately dubbed 'the EUR pond', despite the rhetorical theatricality of its jetting fountains and broad flights of steps that should adorn it. The entire housing settlement was to occupy no more than ten of the almost four hundred hectares that made up (and still make up) the total surface area of EUR. It called for the construction of two hundred and fifty residential buildings (for around a thousand inhabitants) for the most part in the form of single-family or multi-family villas, although there were also plans for a ten-storey building of superimposed villas (a type of construction clearly derived from Le Corbusier), some stepped buildings on the slopes of the hills, four multi-storey city-style buildings and some palazzine, the modern apartment blocks typical of Rome, their size and distribution finally formulated by the 1931 General Development Plan.

plastic model, various time published in the older studies on Ludovico Quaroni the Architect, among which stands out the TAFURI 1964; other references are TERRANOVA 1985 and CIORRA 1989.

3. The State Agency E42 was established on the 26th December 1936 and was entrusted to a General Commissioner, Vittorio Cini, industrialist and philanthropist.

White City vs White Village

Even though in 1940 Plinio Marconi, in *Quaderni della Roma di Mussolini* (An Inventory of Mussolini's Rome) described E42 rather ecstatically – and I'm not sure how right he was – as a larger version of the Prater of Vienna⁴, I expect that the architects called upon to design the various buildings of the Housing Exhibition, and the creators of the general programme, could not help but make comparisons, at least in their minds, between their own project and that of the creators and designers of the Weissenhof. A comparison with the 'White Village' of the Werkbund, created by the absolute vertex of modernism more than ten years before in Stuttgart, would have been seen by the designers of the Italian Housing Exhibition in different individual ways: by many of them as something they were adamantly opposed to, by others as an opportunity for debate, by a few as an interesting source of competition and in some rare cases – perhaps only in the case of Adalberto Libera and Mario Ridolfi – as an exploration of some form of linguistic continuity with the masters of Weissenhof. To be sure, the aims of the Housing Exhibition and of the Weissenhof could not be less alike; in Stuttgart the mission was to convey the designers' commitment to an architecture that was industrialised, prefabricated and low-cost, for the mass society, classless and social-democratic. That is to say an architecture for a new type of citizen who was without doubt a worker or a bourgeois of limited means, but intellectually aware of the new-found dignity of his position in the society of central Europe, whose history, whose recent past and economic conditions, in a word, everything, had been defeated by the war. The Weissenhof architects actually had in mind – in some ways designed – a man belonging to a new culture, who understood how to find an exacting aesthetic quality in the restricted space, the poor quality of the materials and the severity of the industrial design of the places he had to live in. In the E42 Housing Exhibition, on the other hand, «luxury housing best conforms to the image of the district under construction, E42, and the objectives of the Proprietors' Consortium, which originated within the National Fascist Association of Residential Building Proprietors are in compliance

4. CAPANNA 2004 (2), p. 23.

with the self-representational ideals of the regime».⁵ In the 1939 official prospectus entitled E42 Mostra dell'Abitazione, the Exhibition was so described: «Its aims are to create the best in a city residential district, with buildings of a high quality in the nobility of their architecture, the excellence of their materials and the efficiency of their facilities, and at the same time, an urban organisational scheme that is in line with the most modern rational criteria».⁶ In Stuttgart, the plots in the tiny settlement (twenty buildings, about sixty residential units) were almost all very small, with the houses built on the contour line of a small hill, rather like a fortified medieval village, self-contained, defending its own distinctiveness – beautiful in the first model designed by Mies Van der Rohe (Fig. 6). It was crowned by the inevitable Stadtkrone, Mies' hallmark, a splendid declaration of a new, hopeful urban reality. In E42, on the other hand, even the smallest buildings in the Housing Exhibition were on large plots, averaging two thousand square metres, never less than 1500, with a covered surface, even for single-family houses, of at least 250 square metres⁷; the plans however grossly exceeded even the minimum dimensions in the case of independent villas, as we shall see. A tardy attempt to enlarge the settlement by building popular housing for the post-war years (one bureaucratic procedure after another the Mostra dell'Abitazione Italiana realization process reached the year 1941, when the war was already in full swing) was basically dodged by Marcello Piacentini and Cipriano Efisio Oppo, the most influential members of the E42 project committee. Moreover, the Italian Housing Exhibition was certainly not envisaged as a self-contained settlement, as on the contrary was the White Village of Stuttgart, confined at the foot of its hill by a long white perimeter wall that ran along the Ratheustraße (Fig.7), which almost seemed to protect with a sort of undemanding boundary a helpless, precious yet-to-arrive community. In fact the Italian Housing Exhibition was intended to be the first shred of the 'normal' fabric of a great city, the Fascist City, whose lavish and perfect example was being built in E42, the white City, well-defined within its

5. CAPANNA 2004 (1), p. 99.

6. FEDERAZIONE NAZIONALE FASCISTA DEI PROPRIETARI DI FABBRICATI 1939, p.36.

7. *Ibidem* p.41.

five-sided limes in stark contrast with everything else in the territory and in the history of Italy was less of an example. As the Weissenhof, also the Italian Housing Exhibition had its own Stadtkrone, but it was a tribute to the 'Conciliation' between Church and State entered into by Mussolini ten years previously; it was actually an impressive church, dedicated to saints Peter and Paul, designed by Arnaldo Foschini. Its dome served as a Landmark, away from which some of the main avenues of E42 ran: a system part baroque, part 19th century, yet which resorted to the rhetoric of mechanised modernity. However also in the Italian Housing Exhibition project – at least in the preliminary design – the curtain wall of a large multi-storey condominium emerged as prominent feature; it was a set of superimposed villa houses, an homage to Le Corbusier may be designed, but not built, by Mario Ridolfi. But that sort of Immeuble-villa was not conceived as the 'secular' crown of the new residential quarter; it served merely to strike a balance at a distance with the church, and was not intended to compete with it. In contrast to the Weissenhof, the Italian Housing Exhibition above all was totally open to the magnificent new city panorama of E42, to which it belonged, and looked out from the upper gallery of the vast open-air theatre designed by Gaetano Minnucci, whose staircases descended in stately fashion down to the waters of the lake. The satiated bourgeois city quite literally lent itself to be the setting for the great sound and light show (with stentorian voices, I imagine) that the regime was preparing to stage before the audience of the world.

The badly-lit corner where E42 met the market; and the future

The fact that none of the architectural projects designed by a band of excellent Italian architects had actually been implemented, has placed the Italian Housing Exhibition in a badly-lit corner as far as critics were concerned. The monumental roads and squares, the marbles and imposing buildings constructed in E42 during the Fascist period were, for the critics, the main dishes of a grand cuisine in which the Italian Housing Exhibition was but a minor recipe, set aside as soon as written. Yet within the life span of E42, the presence of the Italian Housing Exhibi-

tion, as Alessandra Capanna realised⁸, marked an important event, as the major architects of the Universal Exposition, especially those who had a much clearer view of the future (a future even beyond Fascism) began to develop the transformation of E42 from a political, symbolical, commemorative monument to a place where one could experiment with new ways of conceiving, designing and creating the modern city. Or rather, a place to experiment with new ways of conceiving, designing and creating the diffused quality of the modern upper-class city. I would advise the reader to take a look at the studies of Alessandra Capanna mentioned above for an accurate description of all the different stages of the project and the administrative and architectural controls that were activated as the Italian Housing Exhibition was set up. Suffice it to say that the sequence decided for the implementation of E42 – a general, more abstract plan followed by a detailed plan and finally the actual architectural designs – in the case of the Italian Housing Exhibition, had ‘access to the market’ as we would say nowadays, that is, it was open to a large number of private individuals (and in theory also to public companies) who wanted to establish a place for themselves in the larger design. It was no longer a final match ending with the declaration of a winner of an open competition for the design of a great public works programme, as was the case with all the monumental buildings of E42, but instead an ongoing process leading to the setting up of a highly qualified Commission, which would supervise, according to a precise time scale, the private design projects – by many diverse hands – which had previously been accepted as complying with the general aims of the planning programme. In my opinion, this was the first experimental step in the process of city construction provided for and legally defined by the new National Planning Law that was being put into effect in those very years (the law was passed in 1942). I believe this was demonstrably confirmed by the fact that the principal drafters of the law were at the same time the people responsible for the E42 programme.⁹ Thus the authors of the Rome Universal Expo-

8. See note 2, here.

9. Giuseppe Pagano, Luigi Piccinato, Marcello Piacentini, among others, were part of the National Committee (Commissione Nazionale), technically coordinated by Virgilio Testa, which, under Giuseppe Gorla, Ministry of the Public Works (Ministro dei Lavori Pubblici) defined the Planning Law (Legge Urba-

sition, E42, by deciding to set up the Italian Housing Exhibition by means of an indirect quality control procedure, made known the less advertised but more ambitious aim of their programme: that of being a preliminary experiment carried out under safe conditions (one could say ‘laboratory conditions’) on the planning and control processes involved in the kind of urban project provided for under this innovative legislation, which had fixed its sights on defining the architectural future of Rome itself. In a speech given on the Capitol on April 20, 1939 in the presence of Mussolini, Senator Cini, the General Commissioner of E42, announced that work “on the new quarter has moved into the construction stage” and added: «all the work will be permanent and functional: areas for building, public services, parks, gardens, bridges, roads, squares and buildings. All of them will be able to be utilised immediately; only a small part of the total expenditure will be forfeited on provisional projects»¹⁰ – that is, on the non-permanent installations of the exposition. It is therefore no surprise that in 1951, after the end of the war, Virgilio Testa, the major drafter of the new National Planning Law was called on by the new democratic government to head the EUR (former E42) Authority, and instead of getting rid of its gigantic public holdings in land and buildings, he reaffirmed its continued relevance. As soon as he took office, he extended to the whole area of EUR, the painstaking planning procedures that were based on the inter-relationship between Plan and Market, and which had been put to the test with the Italian Housing Exhibition; they had been interrupted by the outbreak of the war, but were now ready to be implemented. This re-implementation had actually been foreseen, and between 1940 and 1943¹¹, despite the war, care had quickly been taken to create the infrastructures and identify the building plots for the Exhibition’s residential programme, which under Mussolini had taken second place to the monuments that celebrated the Fascist regime. What was sought was the assurance that, after the war, the setup procedures would be respected

nistica) approved on the 17th August 1942, n. 1150, still in force in Italy.

10. FEDERAZIONE NAZIONALE FASCISTA DEI PROPRIETARI DI FABBRICATI, p. 28.

11. “In fact the urban infrastructures, necessary to serve the building plots, continued to be build also during 1943, as for the recapitulatory notes of the Architectural Office of the E42 Agency, which periodically listed the state of the works for each construction site of E42”, CAPANNA, 2004 (2), p. 25.

and the programme extended to all the unoccupied areas of E42. This was, in fact, what happened; on the road network of the Italian Housing Exhibition and on its building plots a fabric of small detached houses and luxury apartment blocks was created, which rapidly took the place of the upper-class villas and the more rationalist-type buildings originally envisaged in the plans for the Exhibition. With very few adjustments, the Plan and Market relationship model had been used to create the largest integrated city district of modern Rome, with its residences, facilities and private and public offices – the EUR quarter (Fig. 8).

What was lost

What was lost, however, was significant: an entire collection of small-scale but generally high-quality design projects, most of which had only reached their preliminary stages, drawn up by a group of architects, many of them youngsters, with a flair for working under pressure and devoted to seeking out the kind of modern architectural language that suited an idealised Roman bourgeoisie: the sort of upper middle class who wanted to appear solid and upstanding on the social scale, with dignity yet without reserve close to the seat of power, well-to-do; people who knew how to maintain a daily lifestyle, well-marked out and equally distributed between times and spaces of domestic and social activities which were conducted with self-restraint, alternating with moments of ostentatious dynamism. This was however a form of minor architecture, which had to take into account, by its very nature, questions of private economics, and of the personal tastes of the private clients. It meant also that the designers could have much more freedom to adopt a personal architectural language, one that was assuredly more expressive and problematical than that employed for open competitions for public works. The fact that all those designs were never brought to fruition meant that for us as architects, the most significant part of the Italian Housing Exhibition was never realised, a part whose importance we today would have been able to appreciate as an example of an architecture much less conditioned by official Piacentini-style precepts and the accepted formal appearance of modern Roman architecture, which at the end of the thirties formed a considerable part of modern Italian architecture. The Milanese school, which had made major contribu-

tions to architectural debate in the early thirties, had lost much of its impetus, due to the ability of Marcello Piacentini to act according to the principle of *divide et impera*. The various Roman movements, by then dominated by Piacentini, were united (each in their own way) in their desire to establish the special, consciously 'Mediterranean' identity of Italian architecture, in contrast to the Modern Movement, by then banished from Europe, although much of its language and styles had been learnt by Italian architects, confronted and compared by them to the strictest forms of academic traditionalism. I wonder what the official German position on the Rome Universal Exposition would have been – and especially on the Italian Housing Exhibition – if we take into consideration the oppressive neo-traditionalism of the Nazis and the scorn poured on the Weissenhof by the pre-Nazi, and then Nazi, ideological incitement of Schulze-Naumburg¹², when the white Village of Stuttgart was openly charged with cultural treason, of being 'Mediterranean', even of being imbued with some Arab-type perversion, and thus racially unsound (Fig. 9). Even without appealing to the distance, in critical terms, that divides ourselves from those days, it is impossible to imagine that the contemporaries of Piacentini were unaware that the linguistic distance between most of the designs for the Italian Housing Exhibition and those of Mies van der Rohe's Weissenhof was much less than the unbridgeable gulf that divided them from, say, those of the Kochenhofsiedlung (Die Holzsiedlung am Kochenhof), the model residential district envisaged by Paul Bonatz and Paul Smitthenner¹³, which after a tortuous planning period, saw the light of day as a counterpart to the Weissenhof only in 1933, in time to receive the official approval of the Nazi regime (Figg. 10, 11).

12. Paul Schutze-Naumburg, *Häusliche Kunstpflege* (The Art of the House-care), was edited in 1899, in the book *Kunst und Rasse* (Art and Race) in 1928 and *Das Gesicht des Deutschen Hauses* (The Aspect of the German House), in 1929.

13. However they were both great architects, worthy of great consideration; particularly Paul Bonatz, who designed the Stuttgart Central Station, was an important reference of the very young Quaroni who, even in his last years recalled the debt his Piazza Imperiale design owes to the Kunstmuseum of Basel, realized by Paul Bonatz with Rudolf Christ in 1936, which was visited by Quaroni shortly before his participation to the Piazza Imperiale design competition; GRECO 1987.

Ludovico Quaroni at the Italian Housing Exhibition; a Mediterranean play in two parts

Among the projects which never reached the construction stage¹⁴ were two by Ludovico Quaroni (Fig. 12), who at that time was twenty-eight and a recent co-winner, with Saverio Muratori and Francesco Fariello, of the competition for the design of the Piazza Imperiale in EUR, which was revised together with Luigi Moretti, another ex equo winner of the same competition. The first of Quaroni's two small projects for residences, designed in 1939, called Villa Gagliani, was on a plot belonging to a set of building areas which formed the south edge of the Housing Exhibition. The young architect had been commissioned by Luigi Gagliani, a pilot in the First World War and an esteemed activist in the Fascist 'revolution'. From the few drawings (Figg. 13, 14) that have survived – more like notes for a project rather than a fully defined one – there emerges a clear affinity for the kind of spontaneous architecture that had had been kept alive since the twenties in the studio of Le Corbusier and Pierre Jennaret, and which came to a head in Europe with the construction in 1935, at Le Mathes, on the south-east Atlantic coast of France, of a villa called 'le Sextant' (Fig. 15). From it Quaroni certainly derived the general geometry of the ground plan and the partial use of fair-faced stone for the Villa Gagliani.¹⁵ Naturally, the experts on Ludovico Quaroni's architecture cannot help but notice the striking similarities with the little holiday house called Villa Maspes built by him in 1938 in Porto Santo Stefano (Figg. 16, 17); the family relationship can be clearly seen in the extremely simple internal distribution of space, the use of natural fair-faced stone as finishing material, and the general deliberate low-key approach, close to the 'natural' language of Italian spontaneous architecture. In fact, Quaroni was referring to this small house when he stated in 1985: «With the Porto Santo Stefano

14. The design commitments were entrusted by the buyers of the plots generally, but not always, to young architects, provided they had an emerging profile. Among them: Mario Ridolfi, Adalberto Libera, Giorgio Calzabini, Giuseppe Samonà, Enrico Del Debbio, Vittorio Ballio Morpurgo, Rossi De Paoli, Luigi Piccinato, Mario De Renzi, Ignazio Guidi, and, naturally, Ludovico Quaroni.

15. Le Corbusier's interest in spontaneous architecture, apart from in his writings and travel notes, was already discernible, if one read between the lines, in his 1925 designs for his parents' house at Corseaux-Vevey, on Lake Geneva; it culminated, perhaps most famously, in the villa of Madame H. de Mandrot, and in the design for the Villa Errazuziz on the Pacific coast of Chile, both dating from 1929.

house the original Le Corbusier-influenced model had already been adapted to the demand for parsimonious frugality and for a house I would be happy to live in, looking out on to the olive trees and the vastness of the sea».¹⁶ Here, in these very few words, Quaroni shows his interest in the 'vernacular' design projects of Le Corbusier and, at the same time, his personal take on them as a natural vehicle for expressing the 'Mediterranean-ness' of a poverty-stricken yet poetic Italy. Was this a small light signalling that Neo-realism which would be the aesthetic and social theory underpinning the social awareness of the post-war era? For my part I am convinced that Quaroni's interest in architecture 'without architects' was governed by his constant preoccupation to find a means of expression that was more fruitful than the language which the architects of the time (and not only of that time) were compelled to use, as they were forced to take sides in a battle between two opposite 'styles' or design practices, each of them being seen as ethically obligatory by the militants in both camps. Indeed, long after the post-war period it seemed that Quaroni was perfectly in agreement with what Adolf Loos famously remarked about the architects of his day: «peasants have culture... architects have none».¹⁷ This did not mean that the Viennese master was committed to redeeming the condition of the peasant population of the Austrian mountains, but instead showed his interest in how they designed and built things: basically, economically, intelligently, at their very roots totally free from the stereotypes of the bourgeois city, and therefore revolutionary as regards what was taught in schools and remarkably replete in fascinating aesthetic and practical ideas for the architect of the new era. However, Quaroni's youthful concentration on Le Corbusier's 'vernacular' or rather 'natural' architecture to my mind can be seen as the other side of the argument in which he and Muratori, in their own different ways, were seeing themselves engaged with the rhetorical version of Piacentini's architectural classicism, and attempting, with some ingenuousness and youthful arrogance, to challenge him on his own terms. Both in his discovery in Asplund of a modern tradi-

16. TERRANOVA, 1985, p. 117.

17. A more literal translation of the famous sentence is: "the architect, as every city dweller, has no culture. He lacks the certainty of the peasant, who, on the contrary, has his own culture" Loos, 1910.

tion that was simultaneously classicist and traditionalist¹⁸, and in his youthful enthusiasm for Le Corbusier's 'vernacular' I seem to see Quaroni's passionate conviction that a classicism acquired without any form of academic filtering, and minor and spontaneous architecture ("peasants have culture...") are both inseparable parts of a single cultural process, a process that is basic, economic and intelligent, where minor and major architecture are only different genres in terms of function, complementary modulations (or types, as Muratori would say) of the same language. Here the Mediterranean travel journals of the young Le Corbusier, more so than those of Gunnar Asplund, spoke clearly to those young architects, as they still do to us today, fixing on the same pages and in the same rooms of our memory the images of popular architecture alongside those of Greek temples, seen and drawn under the same sky of their common origins. The same sky, in fact, that shone over the only historical point in time when the symbolic features of the sublime, codified ancient monumental models were also an expression of the mobile creativity of language of a great, single, popular culture. Ludovico Quaroni was only a little younger than the architects of Group 7; Figini, Pollini, Rava, Terragni, Libera and the others were more or less eight years older. They were among those who, in the late twenties, put new life into the old debate on modernity and tradition in Italy, confidently insisting, like many other young and not-so-young architects¹⁹, on the Mediterranean, and therefore popular and pan-national²⁰ roots of modernity, in stark contrast with the strictly and stylistically national beliefs of the conservative custodians of the Italian tradition. Figini and Pollini had made their design for the Villa Studio for an Artist (clearly influenced by the lessons of Mies van der Rohe), which was presented like a manifesto at the V Triennale in 1933, a demonstration of Mediterranean identity and Rationality, and therefore of the absolute confor-

18. Nordic classicism was analysed theoretically by Saverio Muratori in the issue *Il Movimento architettonico moderno in Svezia*, in "Architettura" 1938, but openly followed by both young architects (and Francesco Fariello) in their original design for Piazza Imperiale.

19. There are a great many essays on this topic: among the most recent I would like to mention LEJEUNE e SABATINO (eds) 2010; *Mito Mediterraneo*, n.1, 2011 of the review "Firenze Architettura", Centro di Editoria del Dipartimento di Architettura. 2011; *Paesaggi d'architettura mediterranea*, n. 7/8, 2003 of the review "ArChItTeTTurA", Agorà Edizioni, 2003.

20. SABATINO 2013.

mity between the abstract language of modern architecture and the principles of popular styles of construction. Many years later, Figini defined 'natural architecture' (that which was conceived and created without architects) as conveying a message of morality, logic, life and style.²¹ The few years age difference between Quaroni and Figini and the cultural environment surrounding the young Roman architects – among the Group 7 members, only Adalberto Libera had graduated from Rome – would have been enough to justify for Quaroni a different interpretation of the interrelation of modernity, classicism and popular architecture. But as well as this, he felt an uncontrollable dislike for any involvement of architecture in militant or exclusive commitments, which from the start, by rejecting the 'other', actually cut the investigation of modernity off from any possibility of being extended to the whole universe of historical figures and forms, and denied it any admissible freedom to reprocess them and so give richer meanings and sentiments to the new architectural world. All this Quaroni was ready to express conclusively for the first time between 1939 and 1940, in the two small residential design projects, different from but complementary to each other, that he created, after the stately experience of the Piazza Imperiale, for the Italian Housing Exhibition of E42.²² The projects, considered as distinct parts of a single process of expressive research, would have given a more or less complete picture of the subtleties, intuitions, complexities and also the contradictions and uncertainties that always formed part of Quaroni's design thinking and architectural narration.

21. See FIGINI 1949, FIGINI 1950.

22. It can be of some interest to detect the temporal sequence of the two Quaroni's designs – villa Gagliani and Villa Tuccimei. The building plot in which Quaroni designed Villa Tuccimei, called "pompeiana" (plot G11 in the "Capanna" reference plan) is already present within the group of three villa con atrio in the first version of the Mostra dell'Abitazione Master Plan; it is the Master Plan version which included the great linear building with stacked maisonette dwellings inspired by the Le Corbusier's Immeuble villas and clearly represented in the plastic model, made not after 1939. The Villa Gagliani plot (plot U1 in the "Capanna" reference map) appears only in the Master Plan version of July the 10th 1940, when, under a strong demand of more plots for Villas, the stacked maisonette building was cancelled and the park behind it was destined to allocate a new series of building plots for mono or bi-familial houses. Therefore, the Villa Gagliani project should be designed by Quaroni only after or about July 1940. On the other hand also the project design of Villa Tuccimei was finally presented in the fall of 1940, as for the dates of the official presentation letters. Therefore the two project have been designed at the same time or almost at the same time as parts of a jointed research about the architecture of modernity between rationalism, classicism and natural language. See also TERRANOVA 1985, p. 117.

An architectural language that was richer, since it was ever-changing, and more genuine, because more uncertain, than the simplified paradigms of Piacentini and the vertiginous intellectualities of Saverio Muratori.

Villa Tuccimei design; going where?

In this framework, given the state of the extant documentation is rather difficult for me to add something more about the Villa Gagliani design, a part the obvious observation that it was designed by Quaroni following the maybe only Le Corbusier's line that was, at that time, much distance away from the Five Points. Something more complex, however, can be gleaned from his second residential project for E42, the Villa Tuccimei, which he designed in 1940, just before he was called up for military service and sent to Libya. This was therefore the last project designed by Quaroni during Fascism, the last professional undertaking of the first phase of his work as an architect, which was packed with all sorts of language experiments in diverse directions²³, culminating in the unparalleled success of the Piazza Imperiale competition. For everyone, not only for Quaroni, the war fell like a heavy curtain across the present and the years preceding it. But the design of that house with a patio drawn by Ludovico Quaroni just before leaving for the front, instead of presenting us with something that is somewhat conclusive, dramatic, powerful, prophetic or clearly hopeless, from the first glance imparts the puzzling image of a work that is precocious – a diffident, barely hinted-at first step; but going where? The design project for Villa

23. Manfredo Tafuri, in his book *Ludovico Quaroni e lo sviluppo dell'architettura moderna in Italia*. 1964, Edizioni Comunità, p. 46, affirms: "1937 was a critical and dramatic year for Quaroni if one considers the series of various projects that he drew up, their expressive quality, and the origins of their imagery, from the neo-classicism of the Headquarters for the National Health Fund for businessmen, to the 'rationalist' classicism of the new Palace of Art on the Oppian Hill, where an early form of American Mies van der Rohe could be observed, to the proto-neorealism of the Customs buildings in the Alpine passes, to the academising rationalism of the urban planning solution for the new station of Ostia Lido, to the classicist exasperation of the Chapel in the Foro Mussolini, until the final downfall of the project of projects, E42. [*italics are mine*]". For Tafuri all this stylistic enquiry, this ever-changing experimentation, this impressive number of linguistic investigations compressed into such a short space of time, is the symptom not only of a restless conscience but of a suffering one; the success achieved in the Piazza Imperiale design competition is described almost as a collapse into a mortal illness, into a moral evil. But what vividly glows in the Tafuri's words is anyway the richness and the latitude of the linguistic experimentations of Ludovico Quaroni in those crucial years.

Tuccimei is only a little better documented, yet not adequately, than that for the Villa Gagliani (I am still hoping that the Quaroni Archive, in the Olivetti Foundation in Ivrea, will soon be opened) (Figg. 18, 19, 20, 21); apart from meagre drawings of the ground floor plan, some elevations and a section, we have a reasonably accurate perspective and a photograph of a scale model that is particularly intriguing. The project was carried out at the beginning of 1940 for an important client, the engineer Paolo Tuccimei, who we already met on the first page of my writing as the president of the Fascist Association of Residential Building Proprietors of the Province of Rome, which had an important role in the creation of the Housing Exhibition. The house of Engineer Tuccimei had therefore a very privileged position on the overall site plan. It was sited on a plot of three villas (Figg. 22, 23, 24) which were separated from the others, and which were supposed to be designed in a modern interpretation of an antique Roman domus, complete with atrium and internal garden, as had been decided in the general planning regulations of the Italian Housing Exhibition. The three villas looked out over the slope that led to the road along the lake – today's Viale America – and were grouped round a small public park, which opened on to the sloping perspective that led down to the main road. But of the three villas, Tuccimei's would be the only one to have a crucial part to play in the spectacular naturalistic landscape of the open-air theatre that formed the backdrop to the west end of the lake. One of the other two domus villas was designed by architect Enrico Del Debbio – a double villa for two high functionaries of the Italian Consortium for Aeronautical Exports, Signors Brizzi and Simen – and the other by engineer Tommaso Garavini for the prefect of L'Aquila, Guido Cortese.

Models and references

It was therefore a theme-based project: a house with an internal court, closed in on itself, inevitably classical and Mediterranean, a style which, in the years following the first world war – years of classicist and Mediterranean novecento taste – had attracted much attention. This was an excellent chance for Quaroni to develop and express (more openly than in the Villa Gagliani and with more freedom than in the Piazza Imperiale designs) his attitude as a modern architect towards classicism,

considered as natural and symbolic language of architecture. Quaroni, like all the young Italian architects, was certainly perfectly familiar with the ancient history of the courtyard house, but also with recent early-modern forms, studied in the sequence which we, much younger architects than he, learned during our education: first the bungalows of Voysey, then the large English houses of Lutyens, followed by the housing designed by Garnier for industrial cities. Yet as one studies the design for the Tuccimei House, one feels that once again Le Corbusier, with his reflections on and on-site sketches of the Casa del Noce in Pompei, had supplied the early conceptual ideas for young Quaroni's researches. In any case, he certainly could not avoid coming to terms with the movement for 'Italian-style houses' run by Giò Ponti in the pages of his journal, whose name, 'Domus' evoked the ancient Mediterranean and Roman traditional style of housing. He most probably paid particular attention to the project for a 'Pompeian-style House' (Fig. 25) designed by Ponti himself and published in 1934, the year Quaroni graduated. The decorative light-heartedness, the playful stylistic nonchalance and compositional accessibility of this project were undoubtedly alien to the seriousness of the architectural mentality of Rome and especially to the self-educated micro-environment of Quaroni – and Muratori and Fariello! – but he would have agreed that the task of introducing the Milanese middle classes to a cultivated, modern domestic architecture, to which Giò Ponti had dedicated himself in those years, foreshadowed the task that the Italian Housing Exhibition set itself as regards the Roman middle classes, represented in E42 as the Italian bourgeoisie tout court. Any reference to Giò Ponti would naturally invoke the experiments of Bernard Rudofsky, who was a design colleague of Ponti and a master of 'Mediterranean-ness'.²⁴ In his years teaching as a professor at the Rome Faculty of Architecture between the 1960's and 80's, Quaroni never ceased to show an interest in and admiration for Bernard Rudofsky, mischievously hinting at feeling more than a little compatibility with him. It was Quaroni, in his private library in 1964, who first

24. Daria Guarnati in her issue *Espressione di Giò Ponti*, in GUARNATI 1954, pp. 23-36, writes: Giò Ponti summarized it with directness and concision: "The Mediterranean taught Rudofsky, Rudofsky taught me" quoted by Andrea Bocco Guarnieri, in his issue *Bernard Rudofsky and the Sublimation of the Vernacular*, in LEJEUNE, SABATINO 2010.

showed me Rudofsky's book *Architecture without Architects*, which had just been published. His acquaintance with Rudofsky, in those post-war years, was undoubtedly due to their mutual friendship with Luigi Cosenza, with whom Rudofsky had, many years before, designed the splendid showpiece of the Villa Oro in Naples. In 1940, however, their relationship was purely 'literary', carried on in the pages of architectural journals; for example, Quaroni could appraise Rudofsky's designs for a house on the island of Procida, (Fig. 26) which had been published in *Domus* in 1938, quite some time before he began work on the Villa Tuccimei project. But for a young Roman architect in those days, who was designing a house with a patio, in the midst of the debate on the Mediterranean house, it would have been almost mandatory to also take into account the project for the Casa Coloniale (Fig. 27) of Luigi Piccinato (who at the time was the young up and coming 'Roman' town planner of the moment, and Piacentini's favourite pupil), which was built and exhibited at the V Triennale of Milan in 1933. The Casa Coloniale is one of Piccinato's architectural projects that makes one regret that he dedicated himself increasingly and exclusively to urban planning. However, notwithstanding the miraculous balance that Piccinato effected in that project between a modern emphasis on function and a Mediterranean-style geometrical solidity, between a walled enclosure and free-flowing space, Quaroni overtly opted for a dialogue with the 'Pompeian House' of Ponti rather than Piccinato's modern colonial designs; and through Ponti's design he indirectly linked his own researches to that of Rudofsky. Then immediately, to avoid any misunderstanding, he named his project 'Pompeian House'. But with his house-with-patio project, the not yet thirty-year-old Ludovico Quaroni had to face the challenge of some other recent, bold and sophisticated designs. If somehow we detach the classicist idea of the domus from its Mediterranean historical (and geographical) identity, I think that an important place in Quaroni's frame of reference would be occupied by an extraordinary design project in northern Europe: the house with atrium, known as Oivala, (Figg. 28, 29, 30) which the Finnish architect Oiva Kallio had designed and built for himself on an island in the gulf of Bothnia between 1924 and 1930. In a recent article on Rudofsky, Andrea

Bocco Guarnieri²⁵ mentions this house and a house with patio designed by Georg Muche in 1923²⁶ as possible precedents for Rudofsky's two patio-house projects, one on Capri, from 1932 (designed along with Giò Ponti) and the other already mentioned for Procida, from 1935 (published in 1938). This essay of Bocco Guarnieri is extremely interesting, and the points he makes should be looked at in some detail, given the linguistic distance between the two projects by Rudofsky and the northern patio houses described by Guarnieri. Yet if we look at Quaroni's designs for the Villa Tuccimei, even though he is attempting to engage in a dialogue with Giò Ponti and to take into account certain morphological choices made by Rudofsky, I cannot help feeling that, for the Villa Tuccimei, he established a more direct, discriminating, linguistic and ideological dialogue with the architect of the Oivala house himself. On the other hand, taking into account Quaroni's artistic progress in those years, one can well believe that he could have come across and made a thorough study of Oiva Kallio's designs when, along with Muratori, he was investigating Nordic architecture, – its naturalism and classicism – as a possible source of 'another modernity'. We should keep in mind that Oiva Kallio, a Finnish architect born in 1884, seven years before Eric Bryggman and fifteen before Alvar Aalto, was almost exactly the same age as Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz (both born in 1885), and reached the apex of his professional life in the same years as did the two Swedish masters. He, concurrently with them, created certain significant proto-modern works which were well-published at the time, and which marked the passage from classicism to modernism – which both he and Lewerentz however found a difficult process.

25. GUARNIERI, 2010, note 47, p. 236.

26. The Georg Muche's Patio House (that should be more properly called Central Hall House) was designed and realized for the Bauhaus Exhibition of 1923. The author, a Bauhaus scholar, designed the house as the ideal nest for himself and his wife Elsa, but it was realized as expression of the Bauhaus principles. Walter Gropius and Adolf Meyer participated to the realization deciding its technical aspects, László Moholy-Nagy was responsible for the industrial objects design. Marcel Breuer, a Bauhaus student at that time, designed the furniture. Farkas Ferenc Molnár introduced the Muche's house as the final subject of a symbolic drawing cycle intended to describe the building up of the modern man. As a paradox, then, the adoption of the central hall was certainly intended as a functionalist idea and not as a re-visitation of the historical (and Mediterranean) architectural culture. Walter Gropius exalted its rigorous functionalism, Ferenc Molnár made a figure of the mechanical culture out of it as opposed to the figure of the young Apollo in the Arcadia which was the starting image of his symbolic cycle toward the mechanical man. We are far away from the Rudofsky and Gio Ponti conceptions, definitely at the opposite side of them.

Prominent among these is his project for the office building of the Pohja insurance company, to which the office building projects of Alvar Aalto – the Kansaneläkelaitos above all – owe so much. So it was comparatively easy for Quaroni to light upon the Villa Oivala design during his exploration of the works of the northern masters, and to pause before it – a work that was to all appearances minor, domestic, intimate – as if he had come upon an unexpected self-portrait of an artist.

What is a Domus?

As is always the case, a design project begins with an understanding of the building regulations. Those concerning the piece of land assigned by Tuccimei to Ludovico Quaroni for the construction of his villa were set out in article 3 of the Building Regulations for the ‘Housing Exhibition’ Area. According to its title, the article sets out the rules for the ‘area destined for the construction of houses with interior gardens’ and «comprises three plots for three separate houses, forming a single complex in the same architectural style». The height of the houses was not to exceed ten metres, and they had to have only two storeys and comprise no more than two separate dwellings. A basement floor could be permitted as long as it was used exclusively as a service area, and not for habitation. Also and most importantly, ‘the buildings shall have a central court (patio) with the houses arranged around it’. Also: «Particular care must be taken with the arrangement and construction of the internal courtyards». The text of the Note explaining the building regulations was even more explicit on the subject of the ‘internal courtyards’: «Here there is no desire to revert to ancient forms; but to create instead a house built round an internal space, closed off from the street, which is completely different from the special reception or ceremonial space, which in the ‘Nordic’ house is designated by the Hall and in the Pompeian house by the Atrium and sometimes by the Peristyle. Naturally, the shape, concept, distribution, structure and materials must be completely modern; therefore the courtyard or patio can be designed in various different ways: closed under glass, or open to the sky (creating obviously other ways of closing off the rooms), surrounded by porticoes or projecting roofs, closed off on all sides or open with galleries or passages leading to other gardens or

terraces on the lower slopes of the hill on which the house is built». In this description of the range of possible solutions to fuel the imagination of the designers, I cannot help but see the hand and penchant for design of Gaetano Minnucci²⁷, one of the prime creators of E42. And by specifying Nordic as well as Pompeian architecture (the Hall and the Atrium) as points of reference, he seems to be asking them to invoke the harmonic vibrations of the strings of modernism, held taut, by the best of the Roman designers, between rationalism and classicism.

The designers of the other two patio-villas, Enrico Del Debbio and Tommaso Garavini decided to build their villas with two floors above ground, thus simplifying their construction, functions and accessibility, while perfectly matching the building regulations. In doing this, however, their projects parted company with the more scholastic and representational scheme of the domus, and principally, with the image of the atrium house as a natural type of Mediterranean dwelling, the modern linguistic model for which had been firmly established by Giò Ponti's Pompeian-style house and Rudofsky's design for the house on Procida, both of which had only one floor above ground. But at the risk of appearing pedantic, one of Palladio's exquisite smaller villas, which gives the impression of embracing a more reverent archaeological ideal of an ancient Roman house, the Villa Poiana I mean (Fig. 31), was it not perhaps designed in such a way as to appear to be a single-storey house, simple, without any flaunting of classical orders on the outside, but very similar to the layout of an atrium house on the inside?

Mediterranean Order of the North

Also the little house of Oiva Kallio was designed as single-storeyed, like the Mediterranean villa of Rudofsky, thus giving the impression of an 'artisan' or at least a 'local' creation, and laying claim

27. Gaetano Minnucci, (1896-1980), architect-engineer, was a refined designer with a deep European culture. The high quality of his modern architectural design was recognized by "Gruppo 7" which included his project for the Villa in Via Carini (Rome) among the very few modern architectural works quoted by the "Manifesto del Razionalismo Italiano". He was responsible of the realization of the "Città Universitaria" and of the E42 in Rome. He was very highly considered by Marcello Piacentini and was full professor at the Faculty of Architecture of Rome up to the end of the years Sixty, where he assumed also the Pier Luigi Nervi Technology Course when Nervi, in 1962, retired.

to the naturalness of its pedigree. Actually, the great affection for the Villa Oivala expressed by educated and ‘unpretentious’ public opinion in Finland even today, and the exhibitions, websites and the loving restorations that are carried out, are all centred on the possibility of reconstructing by hand the details of the villa’s architecture. And this collective affection is brought to such an extent that today, this small wooden house hidden away in the woods of a rocky islet opposite Helsinki appears to have become a work-site for an on-going interest in Finland’s modern cultural identity, a proud demonstration of the equal importance in it of classicism and national ‘vernacularity’, to use a rather ugly modern term. Anyway, for what concerns the Villa Tuccimei references, one cannot avoid noticing that, despite the enormous distance separating the geography of Antiquity and the Baltic sea, that little Finnish house was the only one, among all the single-storey atrium houses which could inspire Quaroni, to use a classicist architectural order, to mark the rhythm of the atrium space and of the entire building. Here, in Oliva Kallio domus, the ‘order’ is expressed in its minimal architectural terms, as in an illustration by the Abbé Laugier or Filarete: a slim wooden pole with the very slight natural entasis of a birch sapling, and an ‘abacus’ – two squared slabs that join the pole to the cross-beam. This was enough to celebrate the little house with a sort of native classicism without betraying the natural text of the place, but placing one’s own common habits into a space formed by the steady measures, the luminosity and the preordained sight sequences of a true Pompeian houses, those that touched the Le Corbusier’s intellect (Fig. 32): *«Et vous voilà dans le cavedium (atrium); quatre colonne au milieu (quatre cylindres) enlevant d’un jet ver l’ombre de la toiture...; mais au fond, l’éclat du jardin vu a travers le peristyle qui étale d’un gest large cette lumière, la distribue, la signale»*.²⁸ Beyond the atrium of the Finnish house there lays not the brightness of the Pompeian sky but the gloom of a northern forest and the dense array of birch trunks – a further connection between the tree-like ‘order’ of the house and the natural world surrounding it. Here, in the far North, classicism shows itself to be universal, able to enliven any context, any material condition, just as tonal

28. LE CORBUSIER, 1923, p. 149.

music is always able to express counterpoint or harmony whatever the timbre, therefore the materials of the instruments and the way they are made, both in ancient and modern times – the pipes of Pan, the double reed flute of Tityrus, the woodwinds, brass, strings, keyboards and all the different voices, both human and machine-made – and whatever the sound chamber in which the music vibrates and spreads – an harbour, a room, a theatre, a garden, or, in fact, a wood.

Quaroni's Order(s)

So Ludovico Quaroni chose to design an atrium house with one storey above ground, just as Gio Ponti, Rudofsky and Oiva Kallio had done. But he chose to measure out the internal space and indicate the dimensions of the exterior by turning to architectural orders, as only Oiva Kallio, of the three, had done, making the column the generator of the architectural language that was intrinsic to the atrium house. The decision to create a large stately house (almost eight hundred square metres of covered area, excluding the patio) but restricting it in volume to a single storey above ground meant that Quaroni had to discuss it with Tuccimei, since he had to convince his client to move almost all the service functions into the lower ground floor (or more accurately, the basement) together with the garage for the two cars that the family apparently had been regularly allocated (even in those days). The architect's choice naturally meant additional costs of construction, and a series of functional complications in solving the problem of the two superimposed floors; the access to the basement from outside was awkward, and the underground areas, which included part of the servants' quarters, ironing rooms and kitchens, could be rather unsanitary. However, Quaroni's decision to include architectural orders in the Villa Tuccimei design after his vernacular Le Corbusier-type experiment of Villa Gagliani design, meant that he wanted to discuss again with himself about the relationship between modernism and classicism, and at the same time spark a debate with the project for Piazza Imperiale, which was already in progress, with his young colleagues and, not least, with Piacentini, whom he regarded as the authoritative source of that design's linguistic orientation. The Building Regulations for the Italian Housing Exhibition and their explanatory Notes did not actually oblige the ar-

chitects to use architectural orders, and although Enrico Del Debbio's design for one of the other atrium houses did in fact involve an order, a sort of simplified Doric, the design for the third house, by Tommaso Garavini, had no kind of direct reference to classical column models, but only a regular cadence of square pilasters on the ground floor, which was doubled on the upper floor in a series of little pillars and a grid of undefined material (Figg. 34, 35, 36). We know from Quaroni's own words that he regarded as vulgar the use of square-based pilasters, that he considered 'rough and curt' adaptation of columns, as he declared in the long confessional conversations that were published in Antonino Terranova's book: «... twentieth century Italian monumentalism [...] was looking for a shortcut, and found it by smoothing away all the extrusions and protrusions from an ancient building and replacing the columns with big square pilasters [...]. The day when Fariello, Muratori and I were advised and recommended to go back to symmetry, centrality, to a traditional symbolic style that reflected the destinies of the new Italian Empire, and we accepted the idea and 'where it was going', then on that day the door was open to columns and capitals».²⁹ Yet on the basis of Quaroni's own memoirs one would be justified in thinking that this return to architectural orders, in all the senses in which an Italian architect understands the term, was for him in no way an unwelcome imposition; it was more likely to have been, for Quaroni, a liberating vindication. See with what passion he expressed himself in 1985 when talking about Renaissance architecture in Rome: «The column became the key element in Roman architecture: sunlight managed to bring out all its important properties, and so it was made cylindrical, but with tapering, and when appropriate, with entasis, and made of travertine, which absorbs water perfectly, leaving the parts that are less worked darker and more 'ancient' (when no wretched washing, sandblasting or polishing has been applied) and then we have a dialogue between columns, semi-columns, cloisonné columns, real or fake, with pilasters, semi-pilasters, recessed pilasters used to bring more or less forward, as necessary, the main columns on the right and left of a doorway, and to allow the light to rebound, directly or reflected, from a pilaster to a

29. TERRANOVA 1985, p. 117.

column or vice versa, and to let the shadows alter the design of the real shadows, increasing the opulence of the image».³⁰ I also remember how he described the 'redesigning of the column' exercises he gave to his new pupils of the first year, when, as a very young assistant, he began teaching in the Rome Faculty of Architecture. «The discussion on the column starts here», he said, and began at once to enumerate all the possible metamorphoses of the column and its combinations, mentioning in passing the limitless repertoire of the Renaissance, of Michelangelo, of the Baroque, of the late Baroque, that ran through his head and which turned his idea of 'order' into a field for unrestricted experimentation with figures and proportions. In this way he had an 'anti-classical' attitude towards the classical 'order' in its five tones: Doric, Tuscan, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite, in that he thought of it as the subject matter par excellence of architecture, thematic material, in other words, that is available to every designer, to enable him to find variations, both subtle and unrestrained, within any debate or endeavour where the classical order, stability itself, is the first term, while imagination, creativity or a talent for the outrageous would be the second term, the seed of modernity, which can only be fertilised by being sown in the compact soil of classicism. Quaroni's constantly increasing lack of satisfaction with his work as an architect and an architectural theorist (because, for him, as he said, «another way to overcome my disappointment with architectural design is to write about it»³¹) it lies, I believe, in his regret at not having the courage to face that challenge, nor having the temperament to plainly state his reasons when it was time to do so. This to my mind is the source of that joy, of almost rediscovered artistic innocence, with which, towards the end of his days, he spoke and wrote about his latest projects, and in particular, of his designs for the expansion of Rome Opera House, that scandalous, sensational and definitive variation on the theme of classical order.

30. TERRANOVA 1985, p. 59.

31. TERRANOVA 1985, p. 53.

Discussions

The discussion of the column begins, says Quaroni, but, in his designs for the Villa Tuccimei, he was certainly in his inner mind continuing the dialogue with his partners on the Piazza Imperiale project, Francesco Fariello, Saverio Muratori and Luigi Moretti. Collaboration between the four of them during the final phase of the project must have been difficult, and revealed the incompatibility in the personalities of those four young architects as they grappled with such an important commission. According to what Quaroni later said, the relationship of the first three, who were younger, with Luigi Moretti, who was a little more adult, was not an easy one and must have been instrumental in the break-up of the Quaroni-Fariello-Muratori group, and roughly brought to an end the thoughtful partnership that up to then they had cultivated in a kind of scholastic isolation. Moretti was older, and in Quaroni's words, more 'political' and 'capable' than they were: «he was a strange person, politically unbeatable, yet enormously cultured».³² The crucial part of their discussion to try to agree on the definitive design centred on the architectural order, on the size of the columns, and the material they were to be made of. Moretti ruled out the most distinctive feature of his three younger partners' design, the uncompromising continuity of the colossal order that ran all the way round the enormous piazza. «The double order was imposed to us by Moretti for the Theatre»,³³ explained Quaroni. Moretti wanted the theatre to have two superimposed orders, thus altering the whole rhythmic aspect of the square. But as it turned out, as Quaroni went on to say, «only the theatre was identifiable, and Moretti was right in wanting it to be much higher». To Antonella Greco's question: «Why did you choose to adopt a combination of yours and Moretti's projects?», Quaroni replied: «For political reasons, because he had the backing of the party, and also because he was a better architect».³⁴ He was adamant, however, that «the only columns that worked were the tall ones on the entrance, that were the same height as the colossal order of our early version of the design». Then

32. GRECO 1987, p. 284.

33. GRECO 1987, p. 285.

34. GRECO 1987, p. 286.

Quaroni recalled how he had shown his growing distancing from the 'neo-classical' issue of the arrangement of the orders (which had been so stubbornly argued over in the small group of contentious designers), mentioning the unexpected and irreverent proposal he put forward during the debate: «it's what I sketched again some years ago, with the frontage of the four museums, half draped in a Bernini-like curtain, carved in red marble and supported by bronze cherubs [...] this was vetoed, as soon as I said it, by the others». Naturally (Fig.55).

Quaroni's five Orders (?)

The new house of Engineer Tuccimei was an example of 'Minor Architecture'³⁵ and obviously too small to serve as an appropriate venue in which to stage a satisfactory response to the difficult set of unresolved questions brought up by the Piazza Imperiale project (the digital reconstruction of Villa Tuccimei is presented in the Figg. from 37 to 45 together with some additional specifications). However, it was an opportunity to show signs –or hints – of the beginnings of a more genuine exploration; more genuine primarily because it was not officially 'recommended or suggested', but also because the project was for a private house, and its design could reflect the discrete privacy of domestic life, even if elegantly and openly displayed. Carefully studying the few drawings for that small project that have survived, I am convinced that, almost as if to nonchalantly showing his indifference to the neoclassical arguments that raged round the Piazza Imperiale project from which Moretti emerged the victor, Quaroni chose to start anew by rather cheekily opening a dialogue directly with the earliest authors of the Architectural Treatises, skipping over any later designers, including his beloved great Nordic classicists (and with them, naturally, the young and not so young gang of partners of recent times). The heart of the Villa Tuccimei is obviously the unroofed atrium, the patio over which converges the impluvium with four large projecting roof sections, typical of the ancient Roman domus (the Quaroni's Orders are

35. For Quaroni's concept of Major and Minor Architecture see to the Quaroni's dissertation on the theme in the book: TERRANOVA 1985, pp. 58-69.

illustrated in the Figg. from 50 to 55). The entablature of the atrium portico is supported by twelve small columns, whose details – the simple hint of a capital, the tapering at a little more than a third of the height and the lack of bases, seem lifted bodily, if naturally reduced in scale, from the order recently used on the walls of the Piazza Imperiale. But there are also columns marking the main entrance to the house, which faces west towards the gardens that descend the slopes of the hill; five columns line the path to the front door. Finally a single column divides in two a long portico that looks out from the living room towards the western gardens. Three groups of columns, which clearly all have the same diameter at their bases and at their collars, group for group are at different heights, and yet possess the same precise details: capital, base, and tapering from more or less a third of the height. They belong to the same ‘order’ in three proportional varieties; strangely, none of the three is proportionally identical to either of the two (major and minor) used in the Piazza Imperiale, from which they derive. In this way, by setting them in lines as the ancients did, four variations of the same order can be placed side by side, each one of which could be seen as an extreme simplification and interpretation of a classical order, the lowest as Tuscan, then as the height increases, Doric, then Ionic; the fourth column, Corinthian, the most slender, could be based on the proportions of the order of Piazza Imperiale. But the order of Piazza Imperiale is presented, with identical proportions, in two very different dimensional declensions, that we can call, like Quaroni did, Giant and Minor. If we then include both the Piazza Imperiale orders, the Giant, the only one Quaroni liked, and the Minor, we have five declension of these facsimiles of the ancient orders, the last and taller of which we can give the task of representing the Hellenistic Composite order. Of course this is a game or, if you prefer, a play. But isn’t it? Don’t the three varieties of columns included in the design for Villa Tuccimei suggest the simultaneous presence of the three basic orders typical of ancient monuments? Quaroni was a serious person because he was not doctrinaire; he knew that in Aristotelian term ‘play’ was the brother of joy and virtue. And what is architecture if not joy and virtue, and therefore a play? And yet an order without its entablature is incomplete; it’s just a column. At this point, as we too enter into young Quaroni’s play, we should not

be surprised that each of the five groups of columns in his design has a different entablature, as one would expect for five different orders. The columns at the entrance have a entablature which has the look of stone, perhaps of concrete but in any case covered in plaster, following the very ancient practice of plastering a wall and painting it white to give it the appearance of stone. The entablature here is tall, divided into the canonical three parts: architrave, frieze and cornice, where the frieze is an empty space between two simple beams which act as the architrave and the cornice respectively. This is the colonnade at the entrance; and so Quaroni's order presents itself to the visitor in its full ceremonial guise and form, even when we peruse the rather meagre drawings for the project. The entablature of the four-sided portico of the atrium, on the other hand, is more difficult to decipher. Looking carefully at the plan and the single cross section that remains, however, we can make out that instead of an allusion to a classical stone entablature, the 'horizontal lines' of the order are reduced to a very simple system of thin cross-beams which can only be made of double-T steel girders. With this rather hesitant quotation, Quaroni brings Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz into his game, and their example remain indelibly fixed in his memory. He was undoubtedly impressed by the order and the steel trabeation of the Heliga Corset Kapell designed by the two Swedish masters, and he kept such a clear image of them in his mind that it survived for decades after the war, and exploded into red granite and gold in the final designs for the Rome Opera House, forty years later. Here in the atrium of the Villa Tuccimei the reference is tentative, almost concealed. But the frail, industrial-style entablature is enhanced by the mass of the horizontal guttering that runs above it and almost forms the profile of an ancient cornice, with the outline of a regular echinus or a coarsened, reversed moulding. The third cornice, on the single column on the west front, coincides with the perimetral structure of the roof. The photo of the scale model of a previous version of the project, in which that solitary column is in the foreground, tells us nothing more. Therefore we can suppose that also in this case the entablature was in steel, without the gutter that embellished the one in the patio, but vigorously moulded as an upside down scotia surmounted by a flat cornice. Finally, the two orders of the Piazza Imperiale adopt exactly the same

entablature which runs all around the four sides of the Piazza. Therefore, the combination of each of the two columns, Giant and Minor with that entablature creates two orders proportionally very different: the Giant having a proportionally very small entablature, the Minor a proportionally very heavy one. Five orders; Quaroni's five orders, elaborated as in a continuous exercise from Piazza Imperiale to Villa Tuccimei, between 1938 and 1940. Between his 27th and 29th year of life.

Roman Realism

The design project of the Villa had two stages that can be made out in the documents now in the Italian State Archives. The preliminary project proposal was presented to the E42 administration by the proprietor, Engineer Tuccimei, on February 28, 1940. The war between Germany, Britain and France had broken out six months before, in September 1939; Poland was annihilated in one month. On February 16, 1940, there came the Altmark incident in Norwegian territorial waters, which would lead to the invasion of Denmark and Norway in April of that year. On the western front there was a menacing lull known as the 'phony war'. Italy was in a kind of limbo – entry into the war was feared, or wished for. Quaroni was aware that he would be among the first to be called up. The Villa Tuccimei project, in this first stage, consisted of «three site plans, two cross-sections and elevations, one of insolation (sic); three perspective drawings, an estimate and a written report; a scale model 1 metre by 0.74». The second stage – or version – was presented on November 11 1940. Italy had entered the war on June 10, and France was defeated by Germany soon after. On September 13 the Italian campaign in North Africa began, and on October 28 also Greece was invaded. Quaroni had probably been already called up; he was about to leave or maybe had already left for Africa just as the definitive design project (as the second stage or version is called in the official documents) was being delivered. According to the covering letter written and signed by the president of the Consortium of Residential Building Proprietors of the Rome Universal Exposition, this consisted of: «three ground plans, four elevations, two cross-sections, a perspective drawing in colour mounted on plywood». No scale model, then. Of the coloured perspective drawing mounted on plywood today there is

no trace. Among the documentation left to us we have, for the first and second stages, only a ground floor layout (Fig. 18), the elevations West and East and a cross section from South to North (Fig 19), a perspective in form of a pen sketch (Fig. 20) and a single photograph of the scale model (Fig. 21) that is the most precious of the documents in our possession (more detailed discussion on documents and design phases are in the comments to the Figg. 20, 21 and 21 bis and to Figg. from 38 to 42). The picture of the model tells us much, but unfortunately it shows only the West and a hint of the South elevations; the South elevation, together with a hint of the East elevation is more eloquently presented in the perspective seemingly drawn in pen. Thus the North elevation can be hypothetically reconstructed only on the basis of the ground plan and the cross section. But some words shall be spent about the regular ashlar-work shown by the model picture like the perfect wall of an ancient monument. It was a wall covering certainly more costly than the flat plaster finish which was eventually decided upon, but much more inspired by an unexpected concept that was inherent in the project: 'realism'. I use this word deliberately. In Rome, an inversion of meaning between realism and myth seems to have come about; in all other cities and urban contexts, even in Italy, 'realism' means accepting, for a project theme, the present, living context of a territory, seen as the outcome of its local history, as opposed to ancient and modern myths. In Rome, on the contrary, 'realism' can mean taking the presence of myth as the main theme of all projects, or rather the myths – contaminated and corrupted though they may be – that percolate down to our petty present times from the most ancient past of a place, in opposition to new 'idols' which are foreign to it, and which are restrictive, unserious and often only possess a simulated form of modernity. That ashlar-work – in no way rough-hewn or cyclopic, however excessive and pedantic for a middle-class house set amidst greenery – tries to include the small scale of domestic life in a 'real' Roman setting, trying to cause – with a drastic swerve – that difference in scale and co-presence of opposite meanings that are the essence of the 'vernacularity' of Rome, depicted by Pinelli (Fig. 21 bis D) as an affectionate, unwitting game played among incomprehensible ruins, but engraved as a majestic drama full of awe-inspiring, intoxicating nostalgia by Piranesi (Fig. 21 bis E).

Manfredo Tafuri; a never ending dialogue

The loss of the ashlar-work, and who knows what other compromises, great or small, at the behest of the proprietor, and above all with himself, are perhaps the reason behind what Quaroni said at the end of his career as an architect: the Villa Tuccimei «was an attempt to get back to the type of the ancient Roman domus, but the architecture was too contaminated by elements that derived from the language of rationalism».³⁶ Here Quaroni, in 1985, finally reopens the dialogue with Manfredo Tafuri, a dialogue that appears to have taken place between 1962 and 1963 during long conversations in his studio, among the drawings from his archives that he showed and explained to Manfredo, accompanied by the precious repertory of his own memory. In 1964 Manfredo wrote about it in his famous book *Ludovico Quaroni e lo Sviluppo dell'Architettura Moderna in Italia* (Ludovico Quaroni and the Development of Modern Architecture in Italy). More than any of the young intellectuals of the time, Tafuri was strongly committed in a moralistic way to renewing the struggle that the pre-war rationalist architects had waged against the Fascist school, and in the first part of the conversations, included in the first chapters of the book, he literally chastises Quaroni for his betrayal of rationalist architecture and his subservient and cowardly stance as regards Piacentini and his architecture. As he builds up to a climax of criticism, Tafuri writes: «At the end of 1937, with the open competitions for the Universal Exposition buildings came the final downfall of Quaroni and his group». Quaroni acquiesced in Tafuri's attempts to label him as the Great Fallen Transgressor, who had now repented of his sins, and admitted to some of us youngsters, those closest to Manfredo Tafuri, that he avoided passing by Piazza Imperiale, as one avoids returning to the scene of a crime. This is all quite understandable: at the beginning of the 1960's, when he was about to start teaching at the Faculty of Architecture in Rome, Quaroni felt it was still extremely necessary that he be accepted as a master by the youngest and most culturally committed students of the left, and not only by them alone. In 1985, however, Tafuri's 'suspicion' that Quaroni «had erred even in judging his own actions» during the last

36. TERRANOVA 1985, p. 117.

years of Fascism, was overturned. Or made clear. Quaroni seemed to think that his error had not been his ambiguousness and lack of commitment as regards the Modern Movement, but because he had polluted, with an excessive dose of rationalism, the prodigal eagerness of his youthful search for a new architecture for Rome, which bridged history and modernity.³⁷ «The theme of the 'domus'», Quaroni tells us, «was one that I had explored in certain drawings I made while a prisoner of war, but without going into enough detail. Today I would be interested in tackling it again with the experience I have since gained, just to see what would come of it. It is a shame, in fact, that the domus-type house has been entirely forgotten in Italy; the expanded size of noble houses during the Renaissance destroyed all those features that now, in Pompeii and Herculaneum appear as no more than a mirage to anyone who manages to imagine what the 'wisdom' of the Romans must have been, when it still existed». The 'wisdom' of the Romans; we seem to hear echoes of what Le Corbusier said when he described his emotions on stepping over the threshold of a domus in Pompeii: *«de la rue de tout le monde et grouillante, pleine d'accidents pittoresques, vous êtes entrés chez un romain»*.

The bonds of a rigorous Fate

I will leave the most accurate description of the Villa Tuccimei project to the images drawn from my attempt to make a three-dimensional reconstruction of the Villa from the surviving documents. I rely above all, however, on the description Quaroni himself left us in his explanatory Note, which he included, or had someone include, in the presentation of the 'definitive' design project, and which can be found below in the Appendix. A couple of curious facts: nowhere in the Note does he refer to the green-house, which is the most prominent feature linking the interior of the villa to the outside, and like some elegant diaphragm provides a veiled view towards the Theatre and the lake. Nor

37. In this light it can be affirmed that the book edited by Antonino Terranova, *Ludovico Quaroni, architetture per cinquant'anni*, reveals to be an long, final, captivating answer to the Tafuri's book of twenty one years before; or better it could be considered its complete re-writing by the very Quaroni's hand, who often directly speaks through it.

does he mention the architectural order. While he gives a long yet vague description of the plants to be included in the garden outside, gives us no details of the architecture of the atrium, of the internal court as he calls it. Of course, the project was incomplete, as Quaroni explained twenty-five years later; it was an idea hastily sketched out while the world seemed to be falling in ruins around him. Knowing Ludovico and his works and his magisterial artistry, it is not difficult to imagine what second thoughts and further details he might have added, or what further disappointments he might have incorporated into his innate pessimism. The project is left to us like the ectoplasm of something that was never born, destined to be ever incomplete, a shadow of the fates that the ancient poets knew of, that the real heroes encountered in Hades: «*si qua fata aspera rumpas...*» – ‘if thou canst burst the bonds of rigorous fate’, as Virgil sadly said. Along with Quaroni, we can, less pitifully perhaps, regret that the project remained in an embryonic state, a possible foundation stone of ‘another modernity’; Quaroni’s modernity. Yet the seed was strong and healthy, ready to blossom forth powerfully forty years later, with the Rome Opera House.

Appendix. Ludovico Quaroni: Explanatory Note for the final design project of Villa Tuccimei

Plot G11 slopes slightly down towards the lake area and is the last one in its zone before the open air theatre. The two roads that border it above and below have a difference in altitude of about four metres. The upper road runs level and straight from the square of the church to the southern extremity of the Exposition site; the lower one is more sloping and bends as it follows the curve of the theatre and the gradient of the ground. To the right the plot is bordered by a stretch of public gardens, which here forms a wide re-entry and acts as a natural boundary for the building plot (G-C-B-F). The ground, apart from two cuttings that access the service areas, a larger one running NE and a smaller one SW, has been left as a natural slope, which is very gentle and helps to maintain the difference in height that is needed, on the SE, to allow light and air into the basement rooms. The surrounding smooth lawn has areas of rough-hewn paving stones and is dotted here and there by rocky outcrops; on and around it grow high trees, bushes

and flowers. These are planted in a natural and practical arrangement so as to create areas of shade where needed and to frame the house and surroundings; the trees and shrubs are chosen for their ample shady foliage, and are a mixture of deciduous and evergreens, mostly laurel, holm oaks, cedars, monkey puzzles on one side, and lemon trees, magnolia, almond trees and sycamores on the other. The flowers are also planted in a natural way, in keeping with the type and style of the garden, and rotate according to the season; they include a mixture of climbing varieties such as ivy, bougainvillea, American vines, wisteria and passion flowers, which cover the fences round the garden. The square-built house is in the Pompeian style, with a square internal court, its roof in four sections sloping inwards, draining rainwater into the courtyard. The walls are built of tufo stone in double courses, coated on the outside with white Roman stucco, with coloured parts under the porticoes. The roof is made of small Roman tiles, and is slightly raised above the walls. Two porticoes stand in the shadow of the roof; one towards the living room and the other towards the entrance hall, from which there is direct access to the service stairs or straight into the atrium, which opens on to the courtyard and separates, to the right and to the left, the dayrooms from the bedrooms. The rooms beyond the atrium are in the classical sequence: two studies, one large, the other smaller, the sitting room, the dining room, which has a small goods lift connecting it to the kitchen and pantry below, then the library, the living room, and the wife's bedroom with attached dressing room and bathroom. This is followed by the husband's bedroom, also with bathroom and dressing room, then a pair of rooms sharing a bathroom and a smaller pair for the domestic staff. Finally, a small room for meters and tools and a cloakroom with attached toilet for visitors, accessed from the entrance hall. The single set of stairs from the entrance hall leads down to the lower ground floor where there is a storage room, a toilet with washbasin, the laundry room, ironing room, pantry and kitchen. Behind the house a cutting leads to the two-car garage, the apartment of the driver, the boiler room and coalhouse.

NOTE: The rendering of Casa Tuccimei's 3d reconstruction have been personally elaborated by Prof. Lucio Barbera; such as the layout of the iconographic and picture documents of this essay.

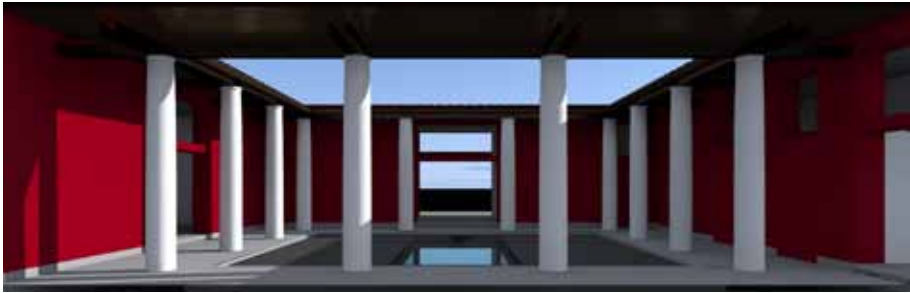


Fig. 52. Casa Tuccimei: Inner Patio

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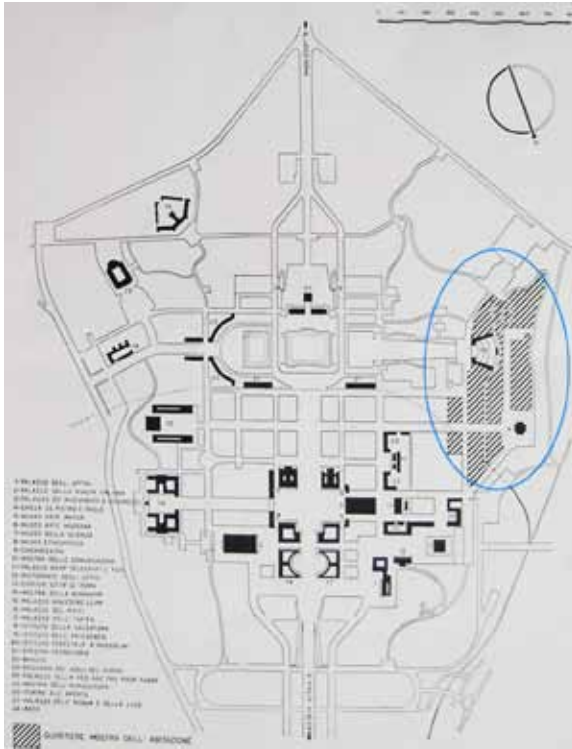


Fig. 1. The Italian Housing Exhibition (IHE) in an official general Plan of E42 with indication of the main official buildings and infrastructures to be realized by the E42 organization (1938). From the book "La Mostra dell'Abitazione nell'E42", FEDERAZIONE NAZIONALE FASCISTA, 1939.



Fig. 2. The Italian Housing Exhibition in an official general Model of E42 with indication of the main official buildings and infrastructures as well as the buildings to be realized by the foreign participants to E42 (1938). The Model is published with a sentence of Mussolini, who initials it, saying: "The Italian sectors of E42 are destined to stand for centuries". FEDERAZIONE NAZIONALE FASCISTA, 1939.

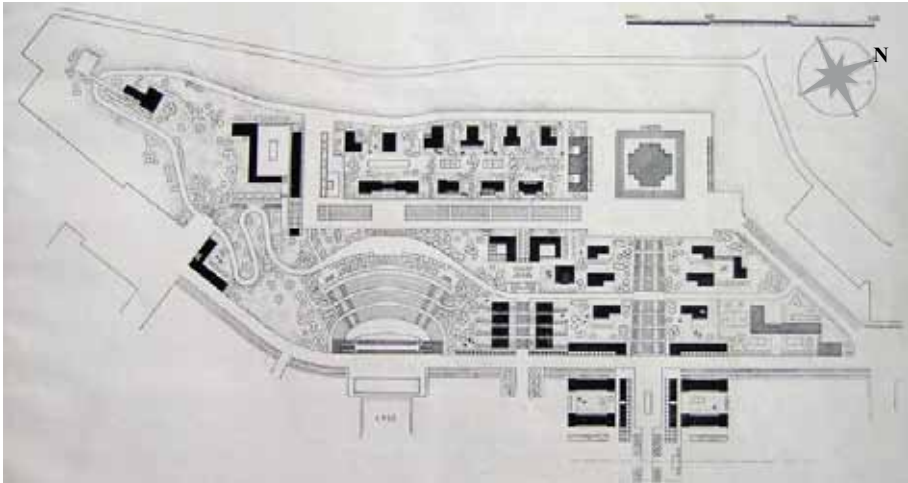


Fig. 3. IHE general Plan (1938). FEDERAZIONE NAZIONALE FASCISTA, Rome 1939.

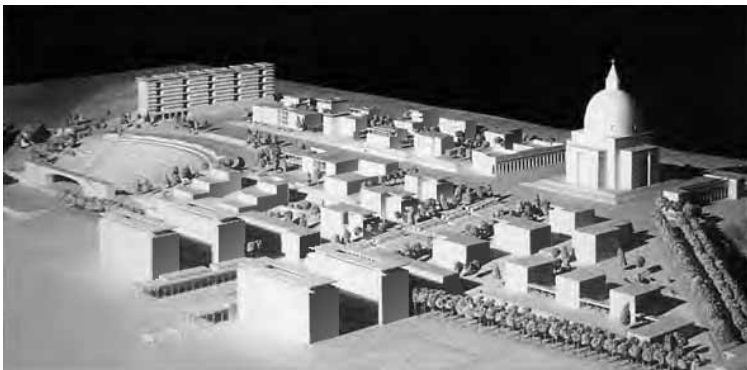


Fig. 4. IHE General Model (1938). FEDERAZIONE NAZIONALE FASCISTA, 1939.

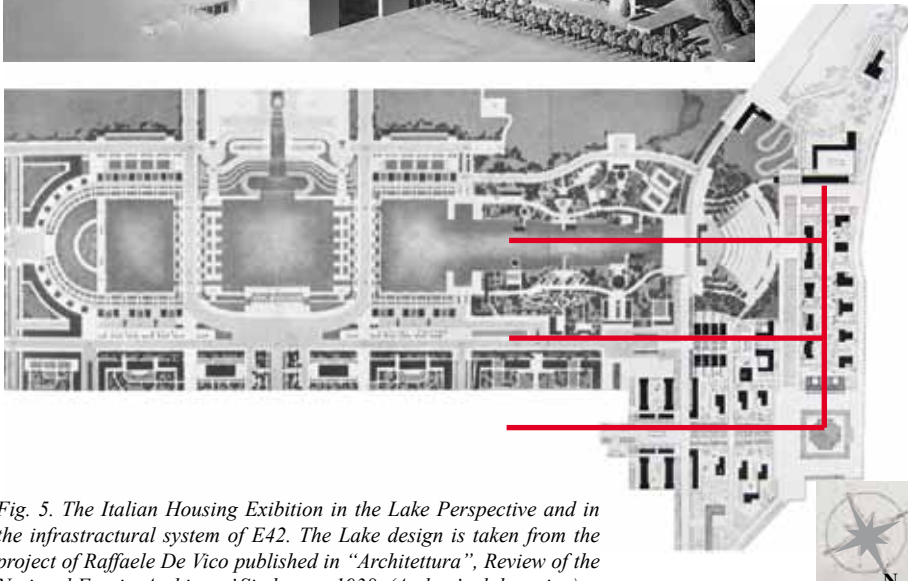


Fig. 5. The Italian Housing Exhibition in the Lake Perspective and in the infrastructural system of E42. The Lake design is taken from the project of Raffaele De Vico published in "Architettura", Review of the National Fascist Architects' Syndicate, 1938. (Author's elaboration).



Fig. 6. Mies van der Rohe, first model of the Weissenhof of Stuttgart.



Fig. 7. The Weissenhof of Stuttgart seen from Rathenaustrasse.



Fig. 8. The area of the Italian Housing Exhibition in the present EUR quarter; note the exact permanence of the original streets' pattern and the almost identical subdivision in plots; in red the plot originally destined to Villa Tuccimei.



Fig. 9. The proto-nazi and anti-mediterranean photomontage to scoff at the Weissenhof as arab village.

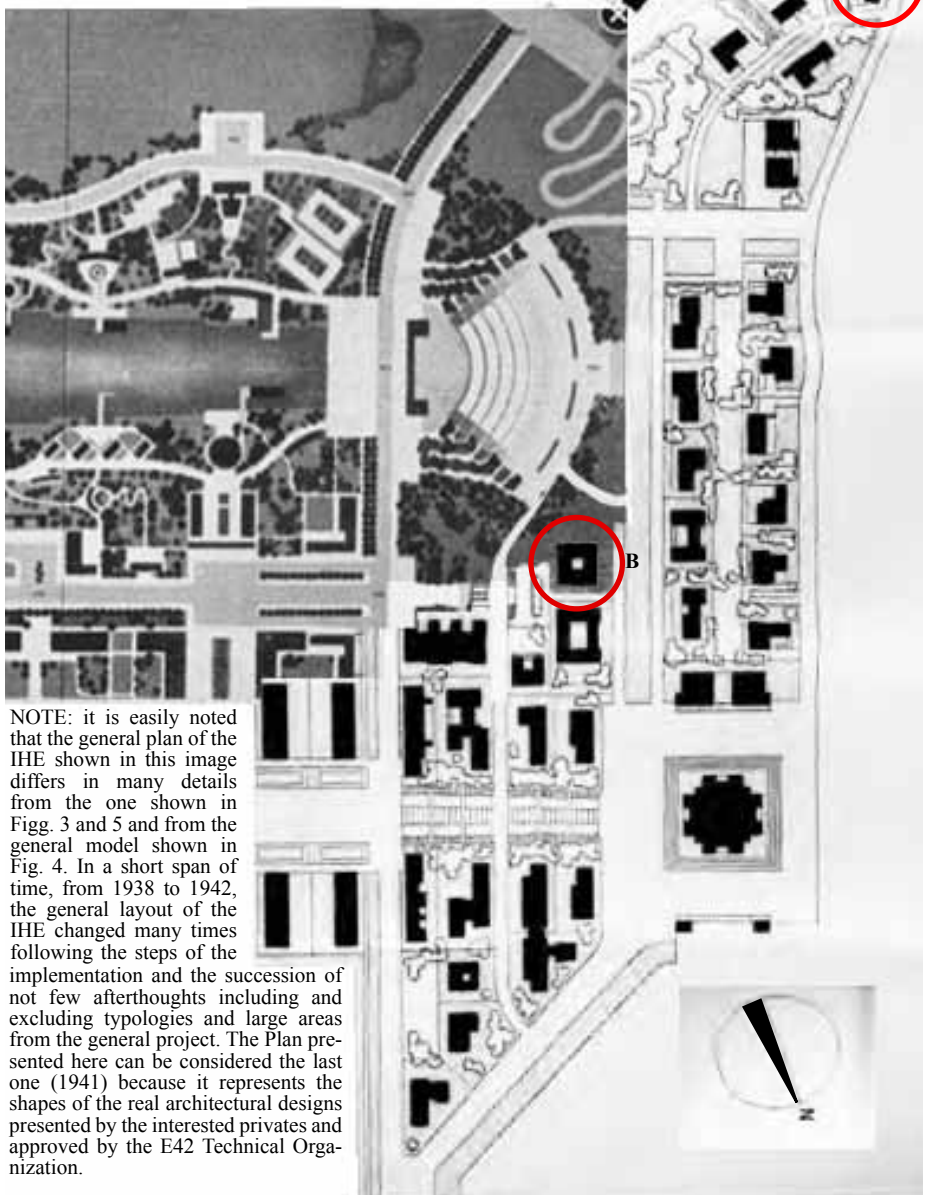


Fig. 10. Sunday Ticket to the Kochenhof Exhibition. A repairing note: the Kochenhof Siedlung, realized under the auspices of Paul Bonatz and Paul Smitthenner; great German architects, was intended to be a realistic answer to the modernist Weissenhof. It proposed a rationalized timber construction against the industrial prefabrication proposed in the Weissenhof. In the authors' conception this was the precondition for the possibility to develop "an other modernity" based on the evolution of the German housing tradition. As we can read in the Sunday ticket (fig. 10) the Kochenhof Siedlung Exhibition was open on 23 September 1933; Hitler had already taken power on January of the same year. Thus the Kochenhof Siedlung was used as a 'propaganda' issue against the western international modernity. Today, far from the ideological fight for modernity, we can't help but consider the threads that link the Kochenhof project to some conceptions of the Italian postwar Neorealism and, more strictly, to the experience of the American Levittowns.



Fig. 11. The Kochenhof Siedlung.

Fig. 12. The red circles indicate the plots of the two Villa designed by Ludovico Quaroni for the Italian Housing Exhibition (IHE). The 'A' indicates Villa Gagliani, which most probably was designed few monthes before the Villa Tuccimei, shown in plot 'B'. The two Villas were designed between 1939 and 1940 (see text).



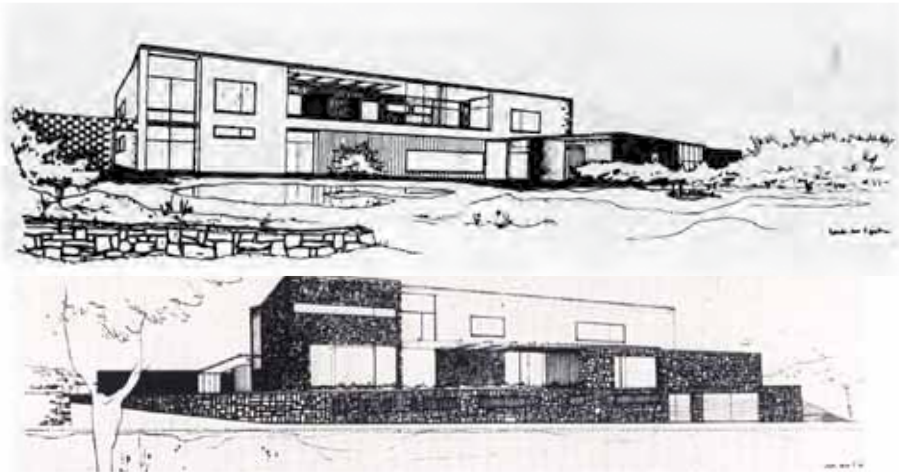
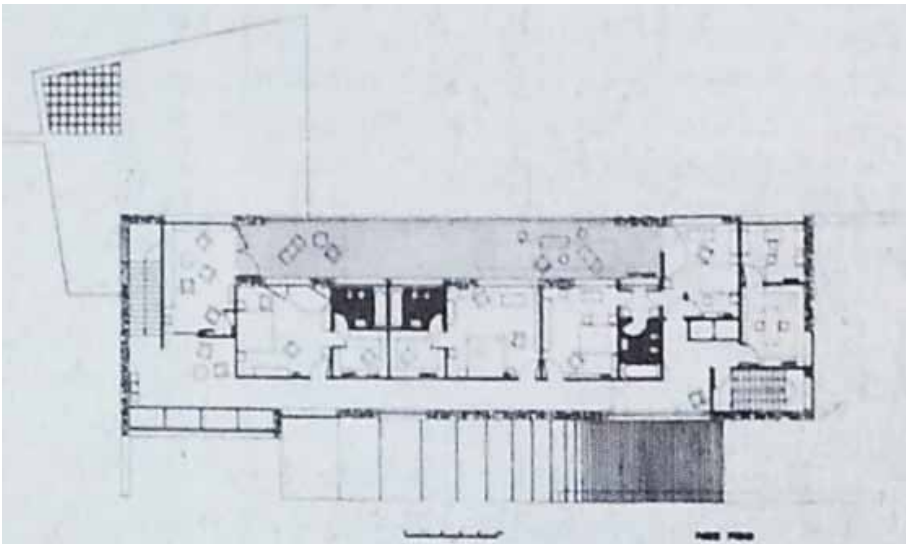


Fig. 13. L. Quaroni, Villa Gagliani views.



Notwithstanding the very poor graphic quality of the Villa Gagliani documentation, its dependence on the Le Corbusier 'Le Sextant' house design is evident. The evidence is even clearer in the Villa Maspes design by Quaroni, built in Porto Santo Stefano in 1938, one year before the Villa Gagliani design (see Figg. 16, 17).

Fig. 14. L. Quaroni, Villa Gagliani ground floor layout.

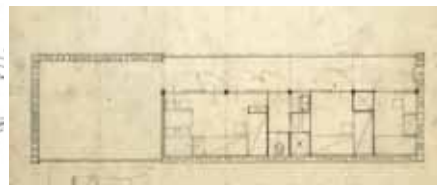


Fig. 15. Le Corbusier and Pierre Jennaret, view and floor plan of 'Le Sextant' house, 1935.

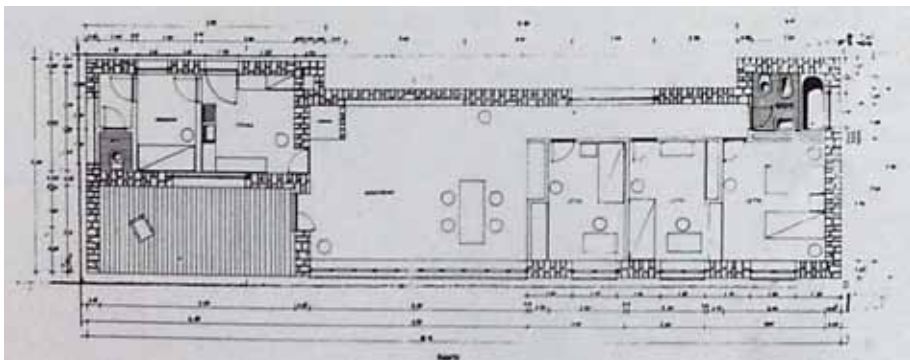


Fig. 16. L. Quaroni, Villa Maspes at Porto Santo Stefano, floorplan.



Fig. 17. L. Quaroni, Villa Maspes at Porto Santo Stefano, view.

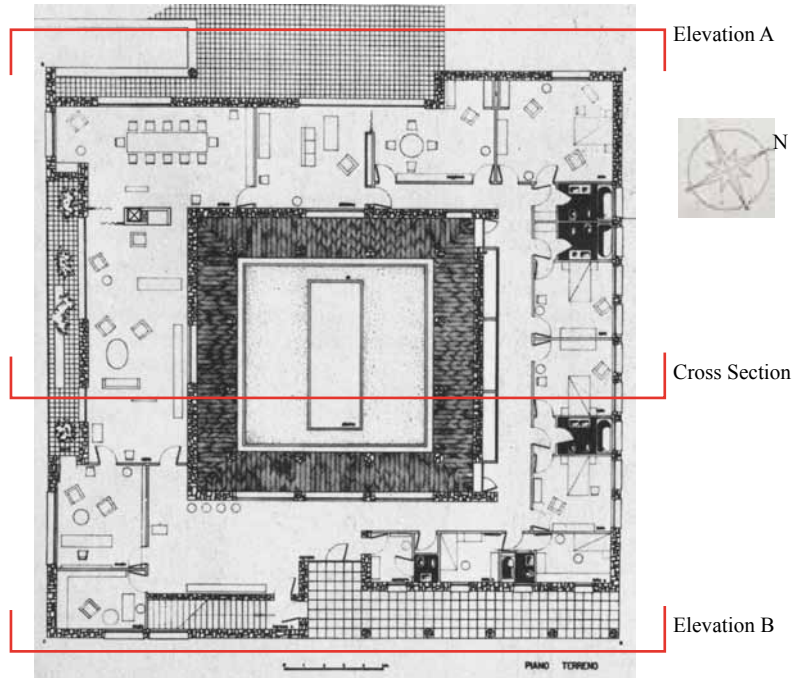


Fig. 18. L. Quaroni, Villa Tuccimei, ground floor. From original documents.

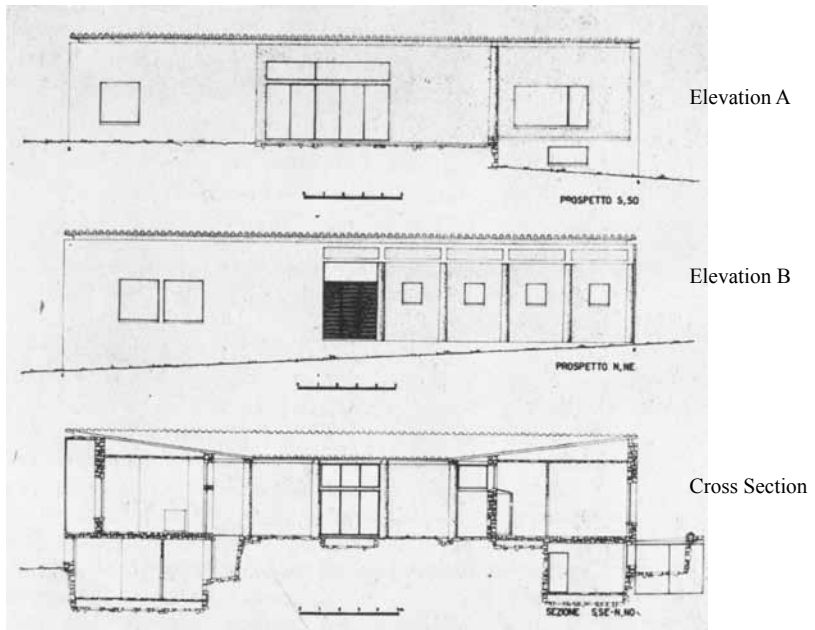


Fig. 19. L. Quaroni, Villa Tuccimei, two elevations and a cross section. From original documents.

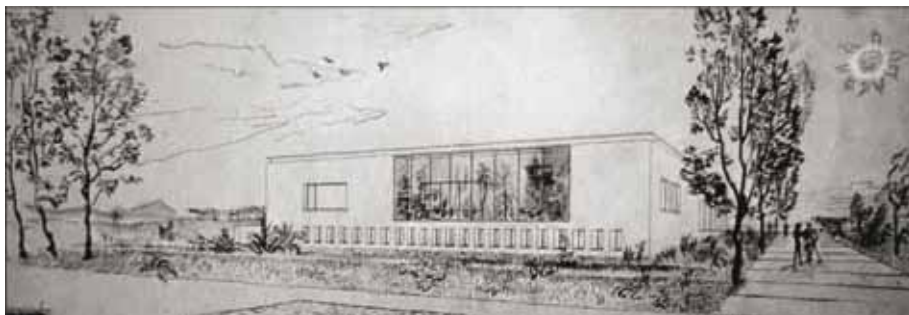


Fig. 20. L. Quaroni, Villa Tuccimei, view from the garden. From original documents.

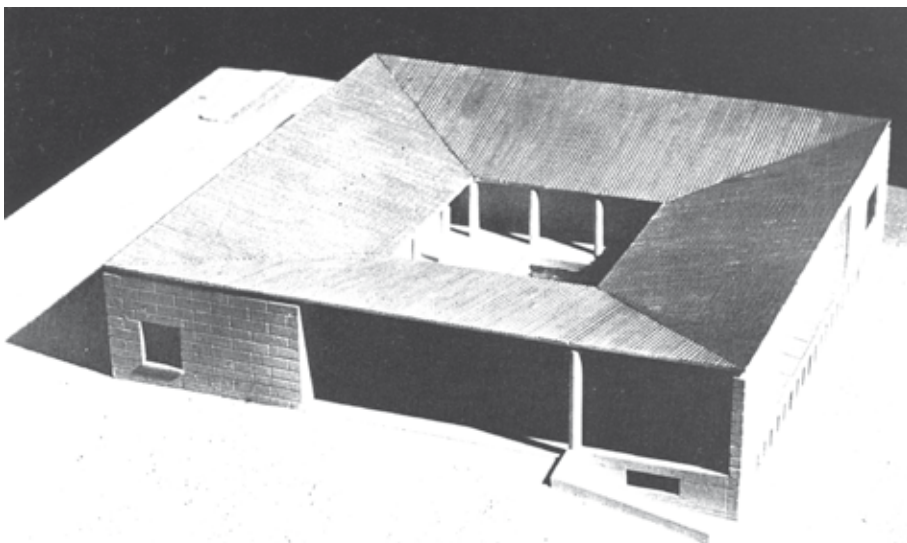


Fig. 21. L. Quaroni, Villa Tuccimei, a plastic model. From original documents.

NOTE: the only documents belonging to the Villa Tuccimei design so far published by the main Quaroni biographers and critics (Manfredo Tafuri, Pippo Ciorra and Antonino Terranova) are shown in the Figg. 18, 19, 20, 21. They have been lent to them directly by Quaroni. We are always hoping for some new findings in the Ludovico Quaroni Archive now in the hands of 'Fondazione Olivetti', presently in a reorganization stage. In the EUR (E42) Archive nothing about Villa Tuccimei is found but: 1) the precious information that the project had two phases or variants; 2) the list of the documents presented for each phase; 3) the official presentation report of the last phase, most probably by the hand of Quaroni (see text). Analyzing the few documents in our hands we can assume that the ground floor plan (Fig. 18) belongs to the second and last phase together with the elevations and the cross section shown in the Fig. 19. The view from the garden (Fig. 20) is a rather ambiguous document. It could belong to the first phase because one window is missing on the right side of the large greenhouse window, clearly present in the final ground floor plan (Fig. 18) and in the picture of the model (Fig. 21). Certainly the model, because of the windows' positioning, should belong to the last phase. But the drawings of the last phase elevations and the presentation report do not show any sign of the ashlar-work on the external walls. More over the only mention of a model is in the presentation list of the first phase. Nevertheless it is difficult to assign the view from the garden (Fig. 20) to the same phase of the model. Maybe the model belongs to an intermediate elaboration. In the digital reconstruction we decided to refer to the drawings of Figg. 20, 21, but got also suggestions from the view Fig. 20 and the Model of Fig. 21.

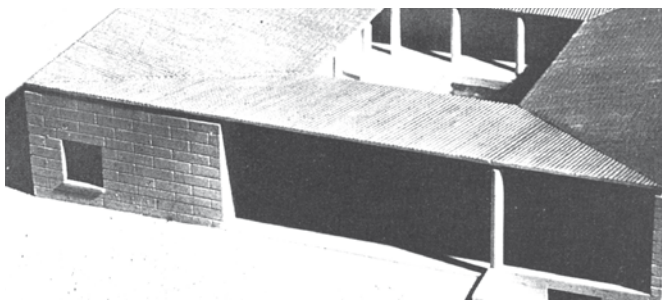
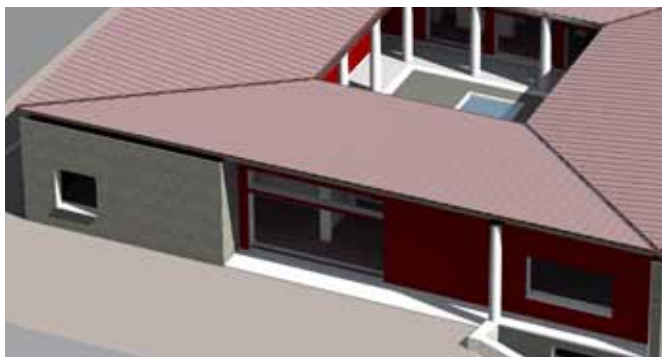


Fig. 21 bis. With much regret we renounced to consider the version finished with the ashlar-work as the final Villa Tuccimei design. As hinted at in the text, it is very probable that the young Quaroni could not overcome the cost problem of a rather oversized veneer; the building had to be built at the expenses of Mr Tuccimei, not at the expenses of the E42 organization. However we couldn't help but try what taste the project would acquire with a stone cladding. But which stone? Travertino (A) or Peperino (B)? which of the two classical stones of Rome? Better to let the old model (C) continue with telling us his blurred suggestions. With these suggestions Quaroni leads us into the realm of the Roman Realism, in which the material patterns of the Myth lend their stones and monumental ashlar-works to the scene of the vernacular life (like in D, a B.Pinelli's drawing) and plunge all of us, as well as Quaroni, into the pit of an invincible, obscure nostalgia (like in E, a drawing by G.B. Piranesi).

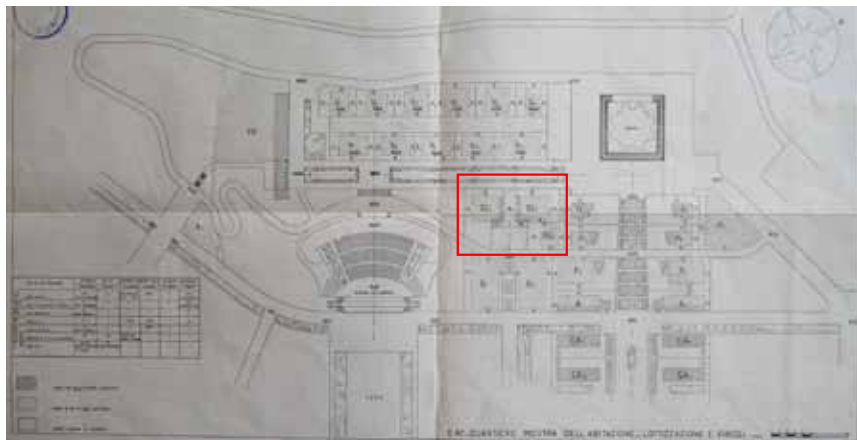
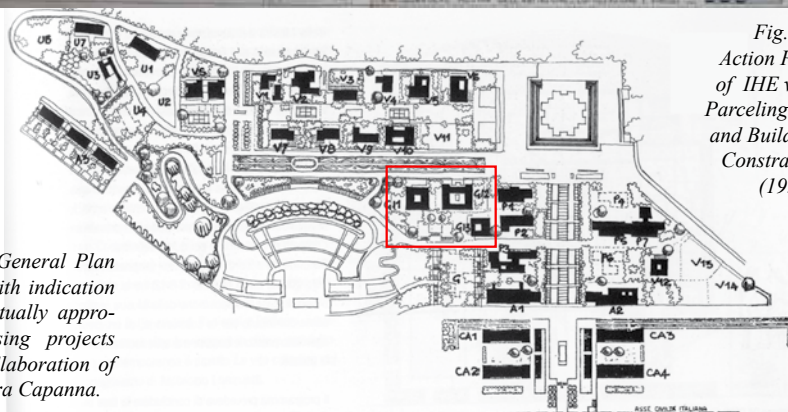


Fig. 22.
Action Plan
of IHE with
Parceling out
and Building
Constraints
(1938).

Fig. 23. General Plan
of IHE with indication
of the actually approved
housing projects
(1942). Elaboration of
Alessandra Capanna.



The Quaroni's design for Villa Tuccimei was primarily guided by the article 3 of the *Building Regulations for the 'Italian Housing Exhibition' Area*, most probably written by Gaetano Minnucci (see note 26). That article indicates an area which comprises three plots for three separate houses with interior gardens, forming a single complex "in the same architectural style". The Regulations added: "Particular care must be taken with the arrangement and construction of the internal courtyards" with explicit reference both to the modern Hall architectural concept and to the "Atrium" of the ancient housing tradition. Fig. 22 presents the three houses area (in red) within the Action Plan of the Italian Housing Exhibition that came together with the Building Regulations. (1938). Fig. 23 presents an elaboration by Alessandra Capanna who pinpointed every private project actually approved, and redrew the last stage of the General Plan (1942). Fig. 24 is a general view of the three houses; it was elaborated by the Technical office of the IHE evidently on the basis of the preliminary design ideas of the three architects, L. Quaroni, E. del Debbio and T. Garavini (from the E42 Archive; 1939?).

Fig. 24



The indications of the Building Regulations were consonant to a rather popular architectural research of those times about the Mediterranean courtyard house. Here some examples Quaroni most probably observed.

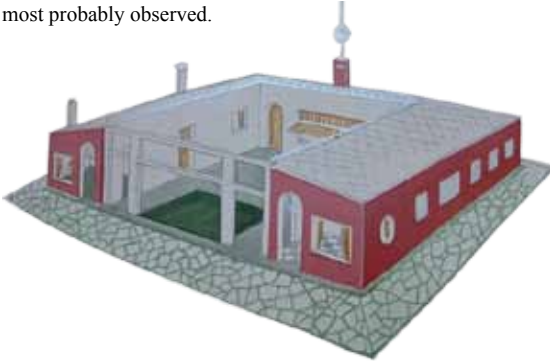


Fig. 25. Gio Ponti, *Villa alla Pompeiana*, view and floor plan.



Fig. 26. Bernard Rudofsky, *House in Procida*, crayon rendering and floor plan.



Fig. 27. Luigi Piccinato, *Colonial house*, courtyard view and floor plan.



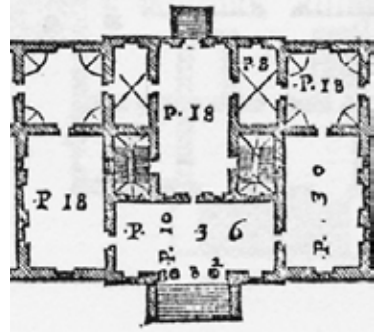
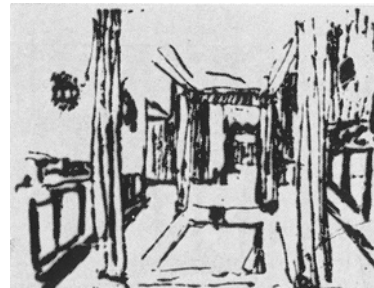
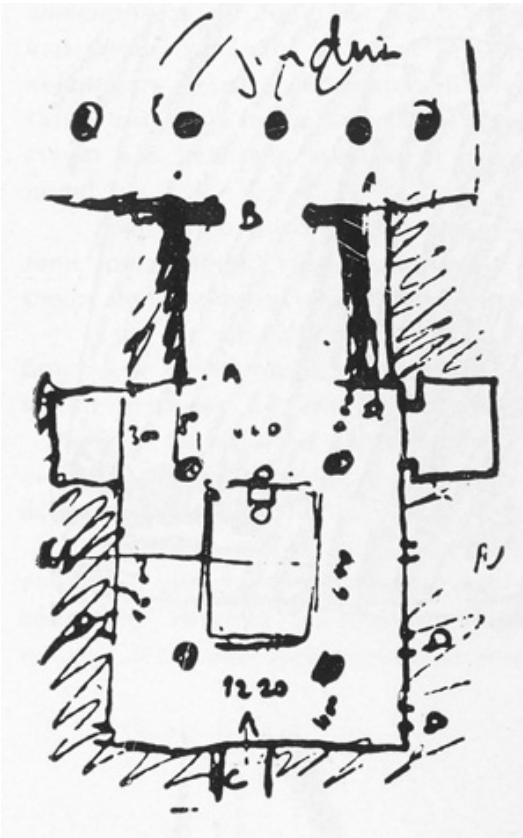
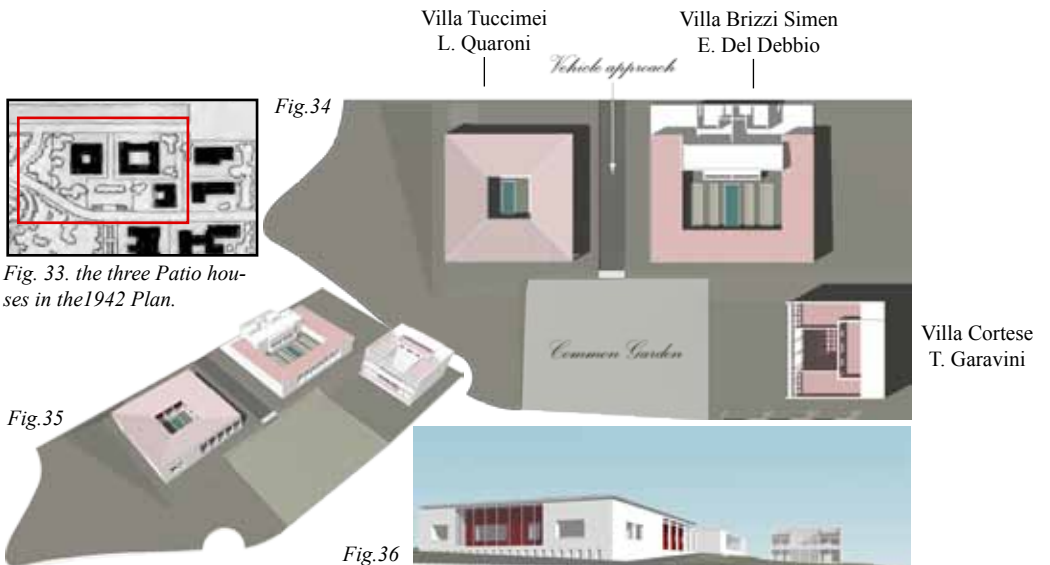


Fig. 31. Andrea Palladio, Villa Poiana, frontal view and floor plan.

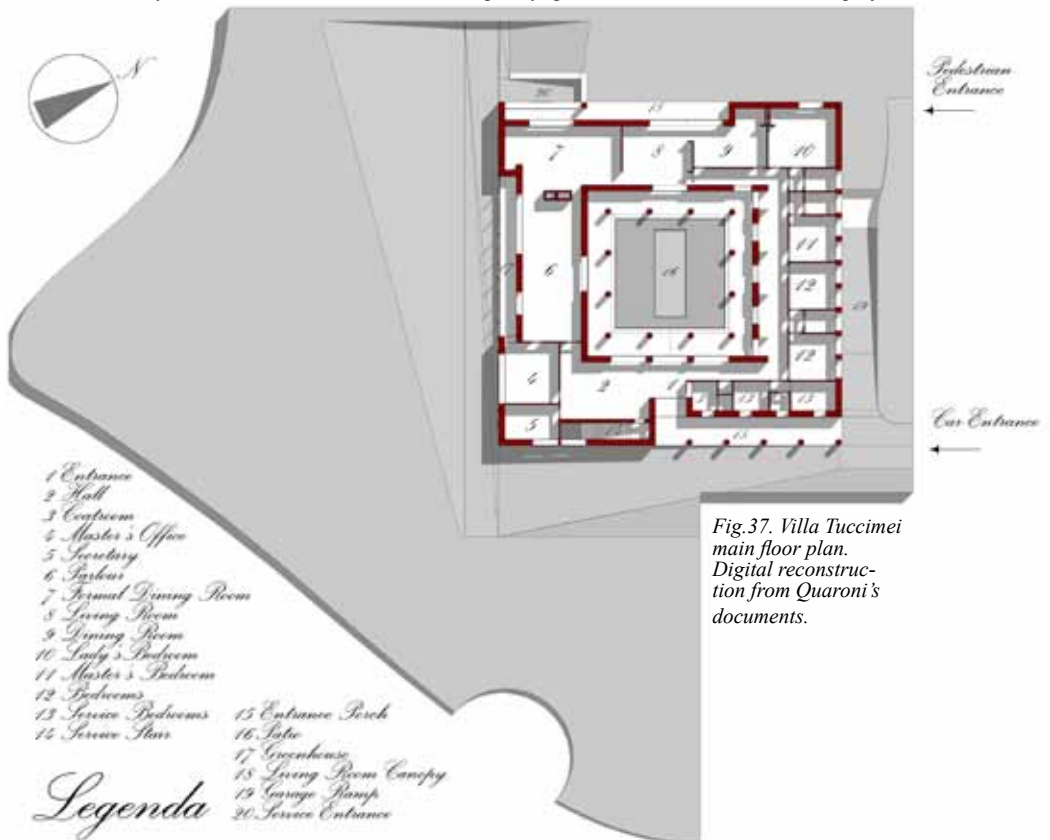
Certainly, strong suggestions came to the young Ludovico Quaroni also from the History of Architecture. It is possible that, at the price of a somehow awkward internal organization, he decided to limit the elevation of the Villa Tuccimei to only one floor because the *ideal* Roman Domus is considered a *one floor courtyard house*. Also some Palladio Villas indeed seem to conceal the second floor in order to look "more Roman" (Fig. 31). But in that time Quaroni was attracted by the synthesis attempted by Le Corbusier between classicism and vernacularity, as we noticed dealing with Villa Gagliani design. And the Le Corbusier's sketches and notes about the Casa del Noce in Pompei were well known as an important medium to widespread a modern interpretation of the Atrium Type House: "Et vous voilà dans le *cavedium* (atrium); quatre colonne au milieu (quatre cylindres) enlevant d'un jet ver l'ombre de la toiture....."

Fig. 32. Le Corbusier, sketches from the Casa del Noce, Pompei.





Figs. 34, 35, 36
Plan and views of the three Patio houses with the shapes of Quaroni, Del Debbio e Garavini projects



Assumed that the stone cladding of the external walls was only a beloved - by Quaroni - idea dropped down before the final presentation of the project, then, taking in mind the declared "pompeian" character of the Villa, which was its final veneer? Gio Ponti qualified his "Villa alla Pompeiana" (see Fig. 25) also with a red colour that wrapped up all the external walls. Quaroni, instead, wanted to envelop the external wall of the Villa with an ashlar work. Thus we can think that the unavoidable Pompeian Red Ochre color was destined to qualify the internal spaces of Villa Tuccimei, particularly the Patio walls. Only those? The geometry of the Villa plan is a square, approximately 29x29 m. We can distinguish in it two kinds of external walls: those which lay on the square perimetre and others that lay on a backward alignment. This is evident in the Greenhouse front, in which the two different alignments confront with each other through the glass transparency (Fig. 38). Thus the backward aligned "external" walls seem to belong more to the internal limbs of the Villa than to the external protection of them. Therefore we dare imagine that also the backward aligned "external" (or semi-internal) walls could be painted in the Pompeian Red Ochre as the Patio walls. When the ashlar work was dismissed it was certainly substituted by a normal painted plaster. Two different colours could be enough to mark the difference between the external protection and the semi-internal walls. Unfortunately the Quaroni wooden model does not help us and a coloured drawing on plywood belonging to the final phase is lost (so far).



Fig.38



Fig.39



Fig.40

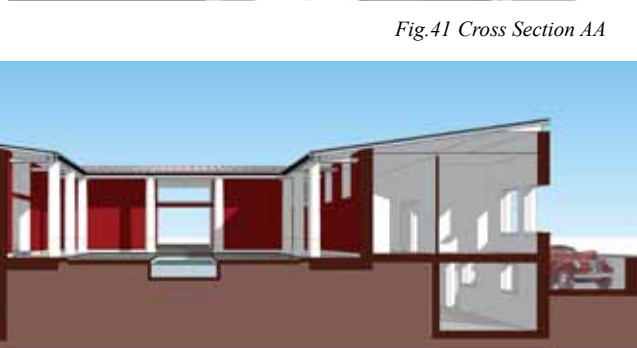


Fig.41 Cross Section AA





Fig. 42. Il palazzo dell'ex Istituto Archeologico Germanico sul Monte Caprino



Fig. 43. The highest lodge of the former German Archaeological Institute on Monte Caprino.

A plausible conjecture

Ludovico Quaroni was often very critical towards the architects of the present and of the recent past. However, he used to praise the architecture of the nineteenth century building of the former German Archaeological Institute that crowns that crest of the Capitol Hill known, since a long time, as Monte Caprino (Goats' Hill). I could notice it when I happened to accompany him more than once, in 1962, to visit the construction site of his project for the renovation and restoration of the Palazzo Orsini on Monte Savello, designed by Baldassare Peruzzi in 1519 on the ruins of the Theatre of Marcellus (first Century before Christ). Obviously, coming out from the bowels of that fascinating Roman two-thousand-year-old construction yard, I was not in the right mood for appreciating the possible refinements of the former German Archaeological Institute arising in front of us from the side of the most fatal of the Seven Hills. On the contrary, in those moments, the German palace seemed to me one of the many architectural encroachments of Ancient Rome, consumed with the typical, euphoric shallowness of the late nineteenth century architects. In front of my deafness to his appreciation of that German piece of architecture, one day, walking out from the arcades of the Theatre of Marcellus, Ludovico induced me to take some more steps to better examine the building in question looking at the Monte Caprino crest giving our backs to the Church of San Nicola in Carcere. From that point of view he pointed to the highest floor and loggia of the building: six Tuscan columns in peperino stone aligned in front of a recessed external wall, painted in Pompeian Ochre. "It is one of the most beautiful loggia in Rome," he said; and I tried to think that he was referring more to the location of the loggia in the Roman townscape than to its architectural features.

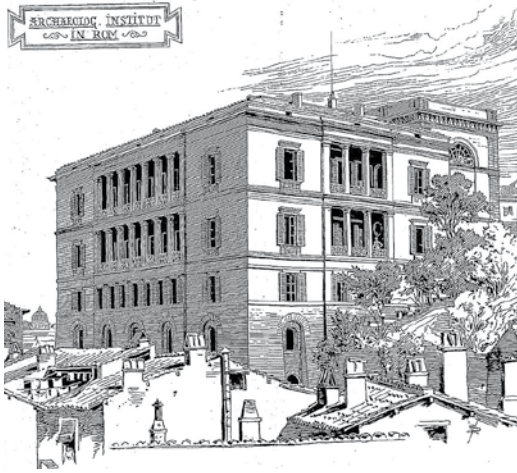


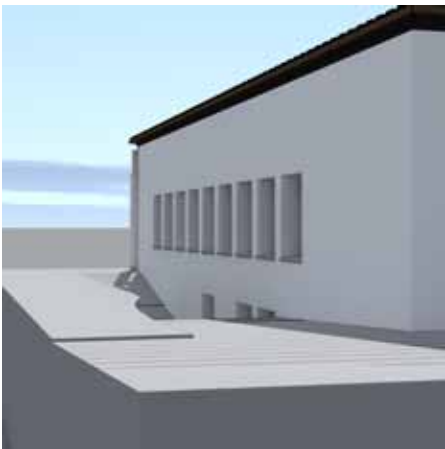
Fig. 44. Paul Laspeyres, l'Istituto Archeologico Germanico.



Fig. 45. Ludovico Seitz, pittore.

Several decades later, while I was studying and redesigning Villa Tuccimei, that episode suddenly jumped out of my memory. In the Technical Report of the project Quaroni is quite clear about the treatment of the recessed external walls “under the porticoes”, which we discussed in the notes to Figs. 38, 39, 40, 41. He writes: “The house is designed in Pompeian style, with a square internal court, its roof in four sections sloping inwards, draining rainwater into the courtyard. The walls are built of tufo stone in double courses, coated with white Roman stucco, but with coloured parts under the porticoes.” The coloured parts under the porticoes of a house “designed in Pompeian style”, I add, could not be painted than in a Pompeian Ochre: just like the beautiful loggias of the German Archaeological Institute. Ludovico Quaroni was certainly a tireless “Curious” in the literal meaning that Tullio De Mauro precisely defines in his Italian Dictionary: the “Curious” is eager to know, to know for intellectual vitality, for the love of knowledge. But the undeniable similarity of highest floor and loggia of the old German Archaeological Institute with the “Pompeian style” of Villa Tuccimei and the Quaroni’s insistence on the quality of that German building seemed to me the result of something more than pure intellectual curiosity. It appeared to me more like a sentimental affection whose terms only Quaroni could really explain. But Quaroni was gone. Then I attempted a conjecture, a sort of puzzle to put in order with the help of Sofia Quaroni, daughter of Ludovico: the Caffarelli properties on the Capitol Hill, in whose boundaries the German Archaeological Institute was built, had been leased to the kingdom of Prussia in 1823 and definitely by the kingdom in 1853. Those were the years in which the colony of the Nazarenes - German painters - led by Friedrich Overbeck, was established in Rome. Despite their propensity to Catholicism, they received the first important assignments, in 1815, by the Prussian Consulate who was then based in Palazzo Zuccari, where the Nazarenes decorated the reception room of the now Hertziana Library. Later, in the sequel of Peter von Cornelius, painter from Rhineland, therefore Prussian since 1815, the young Bavarian painter Alexander Maximilian Seitz, grand-grandfather of Ludovico Quaroni, in an unspecified year moved to Rome, where he began working with Overbeck. In Rome, in 1840, was born his son Ludovico Seitz, also painter, grandfather of Ludovico Quaroni. A few years after the foundation of the Empire of Germany, in 1873 the area of the Granarone Caffarelli on Monte Caprino became the seat of the German Archaeological Institute, designed by a young German architect of Huguenot origin: Paul Laspeyres, born in Halle in 1844, almost perfectly equal in age to Ludovico Seitz (the grandfather of Quaroni). The Roman community of German artists and architects in the second half of the nineteenth century certainly constituted an important cultural and social entity whose cohesion, despite the religious divisions, was certainly cemented by the recent, successful imperial venture. Besides the German Embassy and the German cultural institutions, certainly the Vatican and the Catholic Church formed a firm and strong reference for the German Community of artists; a reference both professional – the decoration of the churches – and cultural – the extraordinary artistic heritage of the Holy See. Not by chance Ludwig Seitz (the grandfather of Quaroni) painter of large frescoes on religious subjects – just think of the Chapel of the Germans in the Loreto Basilica – was appointed Director of the Vatican Art Galleries. Less fortunate, the architect Paul Laspeyres, his equal-in-age designer of the German Archaeological Institute, prematurely died of consumption in Rome not before devoting his short life to studying the great Italian architecture of the Early Renaissance. Only a strongly reliable and very objective evidence will distract me from the conviction that through his mother, Sophie Seitz, and through the memory of the old friends of the German artistic community of Rome, Ludovico Quaroni received a living echo of the skill, the sensitivity and the culture of that fragile late romantic architect who came to die in Rome in search of the Mediterranean sun and architecture. Certainly for Ludovico Quaroni he ideally continued to live at the highest loggia of his German palace on Monte Caprino. That’s why, I believe, Ludovico wanted to pour his remembrance into the few drawings of Villa Tuccimei; almost mysteriously.

View 1



View 2



View 3



View 4



View 5

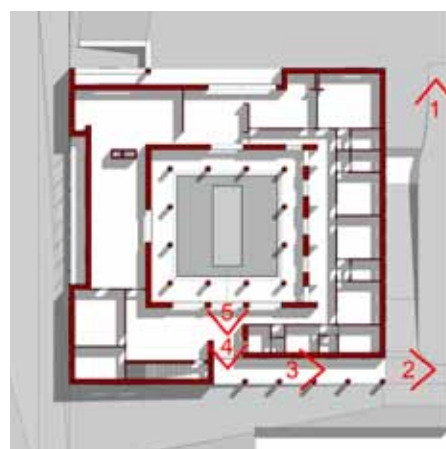


Fig.46 Entry sequence

Fig.47



the pine trees are from G.van Wittel the couple and the young miss from E. Hopper all the brats found in these images are from W. Homer

Fig.48



the ash tree from Raffaello Sanzio the lady from C.D.Friedrich the girls at the window from B.E.Murillo the landscape from J.H.W.Tischbein

Fig.49



the perplexed lady the old gardener the anxious mother at the window are from E.Hopper the oak and the landscape from G.Bacigalupi the stone walls from a Gabii monument the murmuration of starlings taken from the Internet could naturally belong to an autumnal Roman sky.

The Quaroni's Five Orders

fig. 46, 46a Villa Tuccimei Patio

fig. 47 Villa Tuccimei Entrance

fig. 48 Villa Tuccimei Canopy

figg. 49, 50 Piazza Imperiale

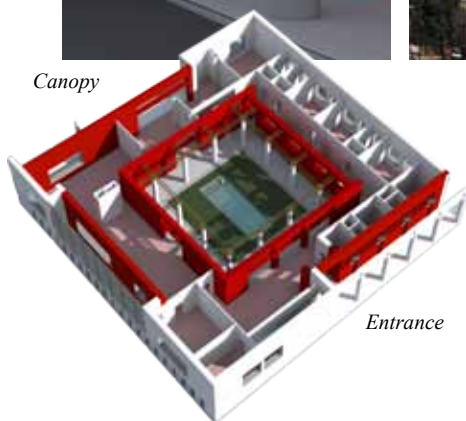
Giant and Minor Order



Fig. 50



Fig. 50a



Canopy

Entrance

Fig. 51



Fig. 52



Fig. 53



Fig. 54

Within the small environment of Villa Tuccimei Quaroni wanted to “classically” build up a compendium of three “orders” (Figg. 46, 47, 48), each of them characterized by a different columnar height and a different entablature (here presented in a proportional and dimensional comparison). It was clearly the completion of the stylistic exercise begun with the two “orders” of Piazza Imperiale (here presented in a proportional and dimensional comparison). Note the oddity of the Piazza Imperiale entablature that identically runs above two columns of very different dimensions, Giant and Minor (Figg. 49, 50). This was the outcome of the late introduction of the Minor order in the Piazza Imperiale design under the Luigi Moretti’s pressure (see text). I suppose this was the reason why Quaroni liked better the Giant solution.



At this point, taken by the “Order’s game” of Ludovico Quaroni, tempted by the carelessness of his intellectual plays, we decided to represent the Ludovico Quaroni’s Five Orders mocking up the *Regula delli Cinque Ordini dell’Architettura*. The Scholar Dandy with the Measuring Pole is taken from a 1607 engraving at the British Architectural Library, London, the Archadic scene on the background from a painting of Marco Ricci (1710). Ludovico Quaroni would dare much more, I fear, he who in the years Seventies drew the following sketch to remember a solution of his for the Piazza Imperiale, “half draped in a Bernini-like curtain, carved in red marble and supported by bronze cherubs” (interview given by Quaroni to Antonella Greco, 1985).

Fig. 55



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FIGINI 1949

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FIGINI 1950

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