

Editorial
by
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*Echte Tradition bleibt verborgen; ... und wird im Verfall erst in ihrer Größe sichtbar.
The authentic tradition remains hidden; ... only in its decline is its greatness
manifested.* Gershom Scholem¹

“Vitruvius’s Migrations” are the ideal continuations of the first issue on the theme of “Gli ordini in architettura”² edited by me for “L’architettura delle città”.

As the title says, this issue is a collection of contributions dedicated to those visits, incursions, *migrations* in dramatically contemporary terms, which classical architecture and its logic of orders accomplished in other than traditional fields, be it for geographic and the relative cultural diversity, be it for diversity of expressive techniques, though oriented towards architecture, be it for exceptional opportunities for intervention that seemed to exclude recourse to those illustrious precedents. But always, as I observed in the editorial of “Gli ordini in architettura” (Orders in Architecture) the center of interest is “the search for the creation of meaning through architecture.” And, as corollary, it is the ability of classical tradition to become interpreter and answer to the expressive needs of the contemporary world.

In this regard Hugh Petter discusses the events of a key character in this class of problems, such as Edwin Landseer Lutyens. The rediscovery of the classical tradition, previously arose in England, in the Palladian version, with Inigo Jones (1573-1652) and the publication (1715-1725) of “Vitruvius Britannicus” by Colen Campbell, motivates Lutyens, after an apprenticeship within the Gothic Revival and the Arts and Crafts Movement, towards an increasingly free and inventive use of classical architecture, “in architecture Palladio is the game”, and of the architectural orders, “that timeworn Doric order... you can’t copy it. To be right you have to take it and design it”.

1. The English from the epigraph in *Il canone americano (The Daemon Knows. Literary Greatness and the American Sublime)*, by Harold Bloom, Rizzoli 2016 (Spiegel & Grau, New York, 2016). Original in Gershom Scholem, *Zehn unhistorische Sätze über Kabbala*, Zürich, Rhein-Verlag, 1958.

2. MICARA 2015.

It is amazing how Lutyens, within that tradition but also conforming to a very different architectural panorama, has delicately managed to interpret institutional questions, symbolic and expressive of such a complex issue as the plan for New Delhi, the new capital of the British colonial empire in India, and for the residence of the Viceroy.

This exceptional ability to manipulate the language of classical architecture so as to adapt it to various design opportunities, nevertheless has not prevented Lutyens from achieving extraordinary linguistic and expressive heights, extracting from tradition forms and deeper and greater abstract meanings, such as in the Memorial dedicated to the fallen in the Great War, most notably Thiepval (1928-32) and Whitehall (1919-20).

The expressive necessity to work on the order without reproducing well known and established models is equally felt by the Baroque culture in Italy, and particularly by Francesco Borromini. The drawings published by Giovanna Spadafora highlight the research and intense activity, through the design of architecture, rightly called heuristic, which tends to overturn the traditional boundaries between grammar of orders, invention of the architectural space, definition of details, moldings and cornices. All, without distinction, has undergone a complete transformation that crosses the various dimensional scales, leading to a “interscalar figurative continuity” in which one asks oneself whether the folds and curves designed by Borromini “refer to façade elements or are tiny moldings in the cornice of a door.” This fascinating ambiguity is also highlighted by the peculiar graphics in the drawings, especially the horizontal and vertical sections, where the hatch that conventionally designates matter, fullness, instead constitutes the void, the space that excavates and gives form, by “removing” matter; like an artisan wood-carver, that Francesco Borromini in fact was. Ambiguities which reached its highest level in the drawings of the profiles for the Accademia Albertina, now abstract and absolute forms produced by a dramatic visionary research.

The long and complex history of the Persian *talar*, that I reconstructed by me even in its implicit meanings, and showing the amazing parentage in modern and contemporary architecture, highlights another aspect inherent in the ensemble of values expressed by architectural orders. As mentioned in the headnote the authentic tradition often remains hidden, an undercurrent that only occasionally comes to light, at times wondrous, as in Ludovico Quaroni's design for the Opera House, as if choosing the right time and interpreter.

The drawings and three-dimensional reconstructions by Lucio Valerio Barbera, accompanying his essay, justify that splendor, emerging in the urban scene, the internal and external spaces that are created, in the materials and in the details. A splendor that nevertheless must be investigated in the figure of Ludovico Quaroni for the sudden re-emergence of themes which the artist seemed to have abandoned for many years, at least from his designs for E42 in EUR.

The project for the expansion of the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome was in 1983, just preceded in 1982 by the project for the Palazzo per uffici e abitazioni (office and residential building) in Via Maqueda, for the Bishop Curia in Palermo, and perhaps announced in the competition project for the Mosque and the Islamic Cultural Center in Monte Antenne in Rome in 1975. These projects recall themes relating to architecture of the orders and the classicism that Quaroni had no longer addressed since the trauma of the war.

In 1984 Quaroni justified as “a joke that of the adjective *postantico* (post-ancient) applied to the project for the Opera in Rome.”³ He goes on to analyze the term because «... even witticism may hide a ‘profound’ truth ... the adjective *postantico* certainly refers to a quality that is no longer proper to ancient architecture, and in this sense may be equivalent to ‘modern’. But relates somehow ... to ancient, albeit not within it. They are two opposite truths, in a sense, yet bound to each other by something: from their relationship with the old and by their being now. The excessive use of the word ‘modern’ is such that it no longer has any meaning: *postantico* certainly means rejection, refusing that word. But *postantico* also means an architecture that does not refuse some connection with the past, in the sense that it accepts the profound experience that architects have known and been able to acquire, in millennia, the ‘atmosphere’ of the place, considering this term even in the extended meanings including, along with the temperature of the seasons and the day’s length, how they are reflected in the experience of architecture.»⁴

In *Premessa: relazione del 31 marzo 1985*, outlining the project,⁵ Ludovico Quaroni apologises for having «taken the opportunity to have

3. QUARONI 1984, p. 38-39.

4. QUARONI 1984.

5. ORLANDI 1986, p. 108-124.

a bit of fun, putting to the test, in my advanced season, my quality as 'composer' *ad libitum*, the Latin word alluding to fun and to the 'libido' in designing». ⁶ Recognizing "that the game was a success", he precedes the reproductions of the project drawings with a series of so-called *Omaggi* (Homages). These homages, a sort of rhetorical *captatio benevolentiae*, also present in the previous project for the multifunctional complex in Via Maqueda in Palermo, containing charcoal hand drawings, portray giants prospects and orders "in the style" of architects of classicism such as Perrault or Sanmicheli or architects who refer to classic, such as Poggi or Michelucci. The instrumental and artificial character of the operation is obvious. It is a conscious reference to a tradition from which Quaroni now feels, despite everything, distant after the season, long ago, of E42 in EUR.

This distance also justifies the adjective *postantico* which Quaroni considers necessary to define his project. An adjective that would not have been necessary, especially in its sense of *post-* if Quaroni had considered himself one who carries forward a living tradition, even brilliant and innovative.

Because this is the point that needs be clarified. If one compares Quaroni's position and that of a great representative of the classical tradition, such as Edwin Lutyens, of the previous generation, but of a country, like Italy, just on the border of central Europe, that is the place of birth and development of the "Modern", one can measure their relative distance. In a caustic review by Edwin Lutyens of the English translation of *Vers une architecture* by Jeanneret-Le Corbusier (1920), fatal inspirational text of the Modern, published in the book that Mary Lutyens dedicated to her father, ⁷ commenting the last chapter, *Architecture ou Révolution*, Lutyens writes: «As one reads this book one is always amused, sometimes excited, sometimes angry, at the boil of M. Le Cobusier's emotions, but one never doubts his sincerity. His final prophecy is Architecture or Revolution; and we might welcome it, if by Architecture he did not mean mass-made cages suitable for machine-made men. To avoid Revolution, great patience and long-suffering must be endured. To produce Architecture, it is the same. Sacrifice is essential and the worship of the absolute directed towards

6. ORLANDI 1986, p. 108.

7. LUTYENS 1928.

an inconceivable and ever-growing perfection».⁸ These are the values of a great and authentic architectural tradition within which Lutyens operates. Tradition, in its best sense, does not mean repetition, flatly retraced by the architect well beaten paths, now worn; but rather continuous evolution, experimentation, innovation, originality, just as again Lutyens's architecture of well shows, oriented towards an *ever-growing perfection*.

Ludovico Quaroni also was working within this set of values in the '30s. But it is in the decline of that tradition that its authentic greatness, now represented by the extraordinary design for the Opera Theatre in Rome, finally becomes evident.

The migration of the classic order to America researched by Anna Irene Del Monaco in the figure of Paul Philippe Cret, architect born in Lyon but working in the U.S. and teaching in Philadelphia, is a still different and very interesting case. We are here in the mainstream of modern international classicism, which has spread from the École des Beaux Arts in Paris in the nineteenth century to the entire advanced world. The version that Paul Cret declares of such classicism presents highly original characteristics. His French education reflects the rational approach that Jean Nicolas Louis Durand (*Précis des leçons d'architecture*, 1802-1805) and Julien Guadet (*Eléments et théorie de l'architecture*, 1901) gave to architecture. This cultural outlook led Paul Cret to exercise an essential classicism, averse to compulsive citation of Vitruvian orders, attentive also to typological and functional aspects, a very present component in international classicism. The result is a style, also called *stripped classicism*, which reaches its monumentality interpreting the idea rather than the forms of the Classic and found success in the research for a modern classicism, even in Europe in the '20s and '30s. It is no coincidence that I spoke of style, but reflecting on the diversity in attitudes towards classicism with respect to Edwin Lutyens or Quaroni in the '30s. Their architectural tradition is a very broad idea of the relationship with classicism, which allows also significantly different approaches in how design themes are addressed. Their research does not let itself be circumscribed within one idea of 'style' which assumes a consistent and even predictable approach over time. But here is the propensity, entirely American, to

8. LUTYENS 1928, p. 287.

transform a movement, an architectural trend in style, with its very well defined characters and formal variants. In this respect the well-known 1932 exhibition at the MOMA in New York “The International Style” is exemplary, in which Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson labelled the Modern Movement in architecture, with all of its complexity, as a style, the International Style, which would spread in the U.S. with well identified and precise formal characteristics.

The writing of Franco Purini has its own independence from the themes touched on in *Vitruvius' Migrations*. It constitutes, in the words of the author, a review after 50 years, of *La torre di Babele*, the book published by Ludovico Quaroni in 1967.⁹

Nevertheless Purini's analysis focalizes a crucial moment in the development of Quaroni's thought that constitutes so much of this issue of ADC. With *La torre di Babele* in fact Quaroni took leave, still *in fieri*, as Franco Purini says, from town-planning as addressed and taught until then, in the «attempt to lead attention back to the urgency and the possibility of restoring the city's its lost formal structure».¹⁰

Hence the discovery of the form of the ancient city, moreover, never forgotten beginning with his first book *L'architettura delle città*¹¹ (The Architecture of the City), and reposed in the first part of the corpus of images accompanying the text with the title “L'armonia della città antica”¹² (The Harmony of the Ancient City). But from here also a progressive approaching and questioning the figure of “tomorrow's unknown architect” and “new figurativeness of urban architecture”¹³, leading Quaroni to imagine and describe almost in an eidetic manner (“writes and in realty designs”, as Manfredo Tafuri says in his introductory report to the Ancona conference¹⁴) a new city. Presently, this book undoubtedly constitutes the visionary pinnacle of Ludovico Quaroni's theoretical path and of a generation of architects trained in those years in the Faculty of Architecture in Rome. A path that will be concluded ten years later, in 1977, with the publication of *Progettare un edificio*¹⁵

9. QUARONI 1967.

10. QUARONI 1967, p. 20.

11. QUARONI 1939.

12. QUARONI 1967, p. 148-177.

13. QUARONI 1967, p. 238 e 239.

14. Seminar dedicated to the work of Ludovico Quaroni, Ancona 1985.

15. QUARONI 1977.

(Designing a Building). From here, to put it briefly, the development of Quaroni's thinking will more and more often return to issues related to cities and ancient architecture until that "joke... the adjective *postantico* applied to the project for the Opera in Roma" quoted above. But the circle is not closed; because, as Franco Purini says, commenting on the skyscrapers in the painting by Erastus Salisbury Field, reproduced on the cover of *La Torre di Babele*, whose completeness contrasts and contradicts the incompleteness of the Tower of Babel, "the whole is necessary and visible with maximum intensity only in the fragment." And why, similarly, as mentioned in the headnote, «the authentic tradition remains hidden; ... only in its decline is its greatness manifested».

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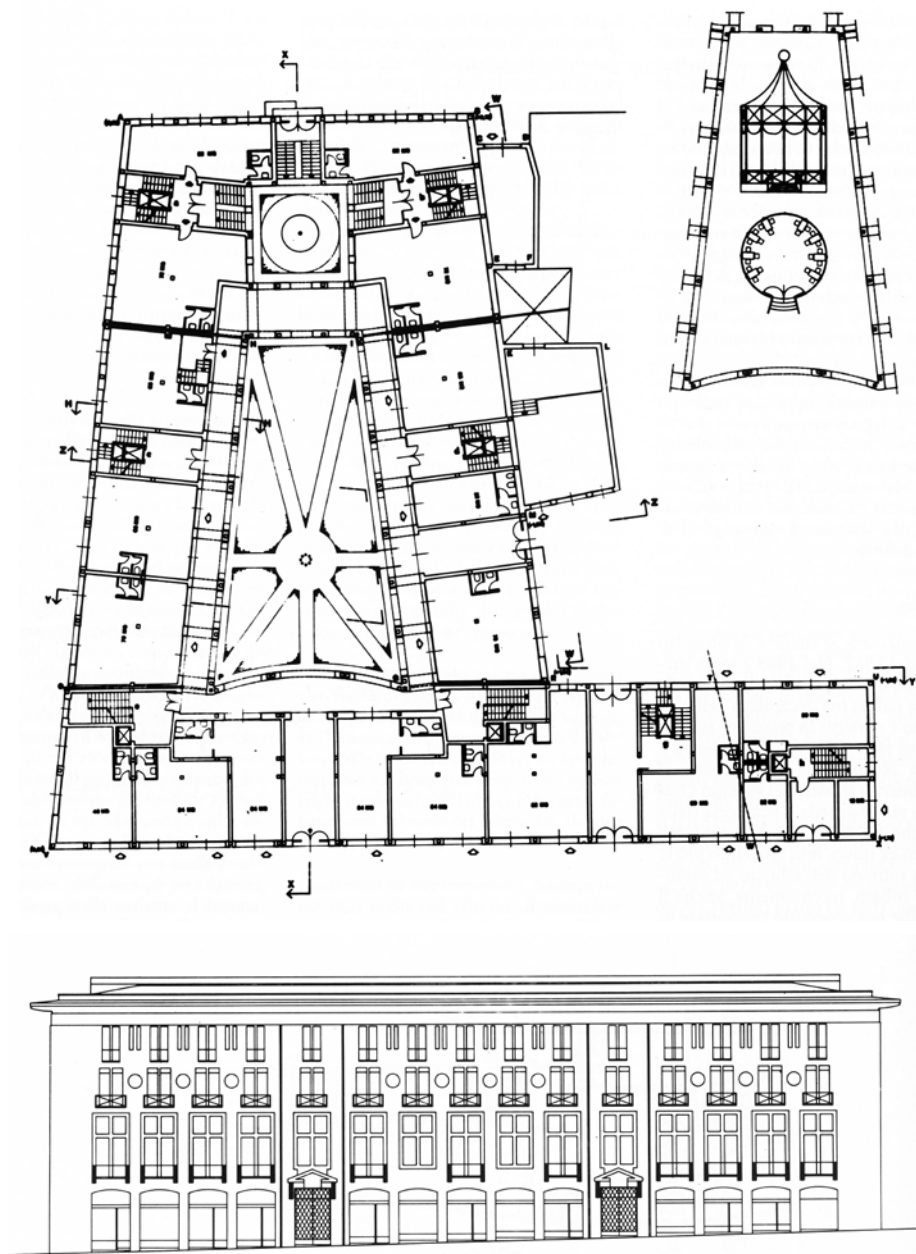


Fig. 1. Ludovico Quaroni, Multifunctional Building on Via Maqueda, Palermo, 1982. Drawings.
1. 1. Ground Floor Plan; 1. 2. Elevation on Via Maqueda.

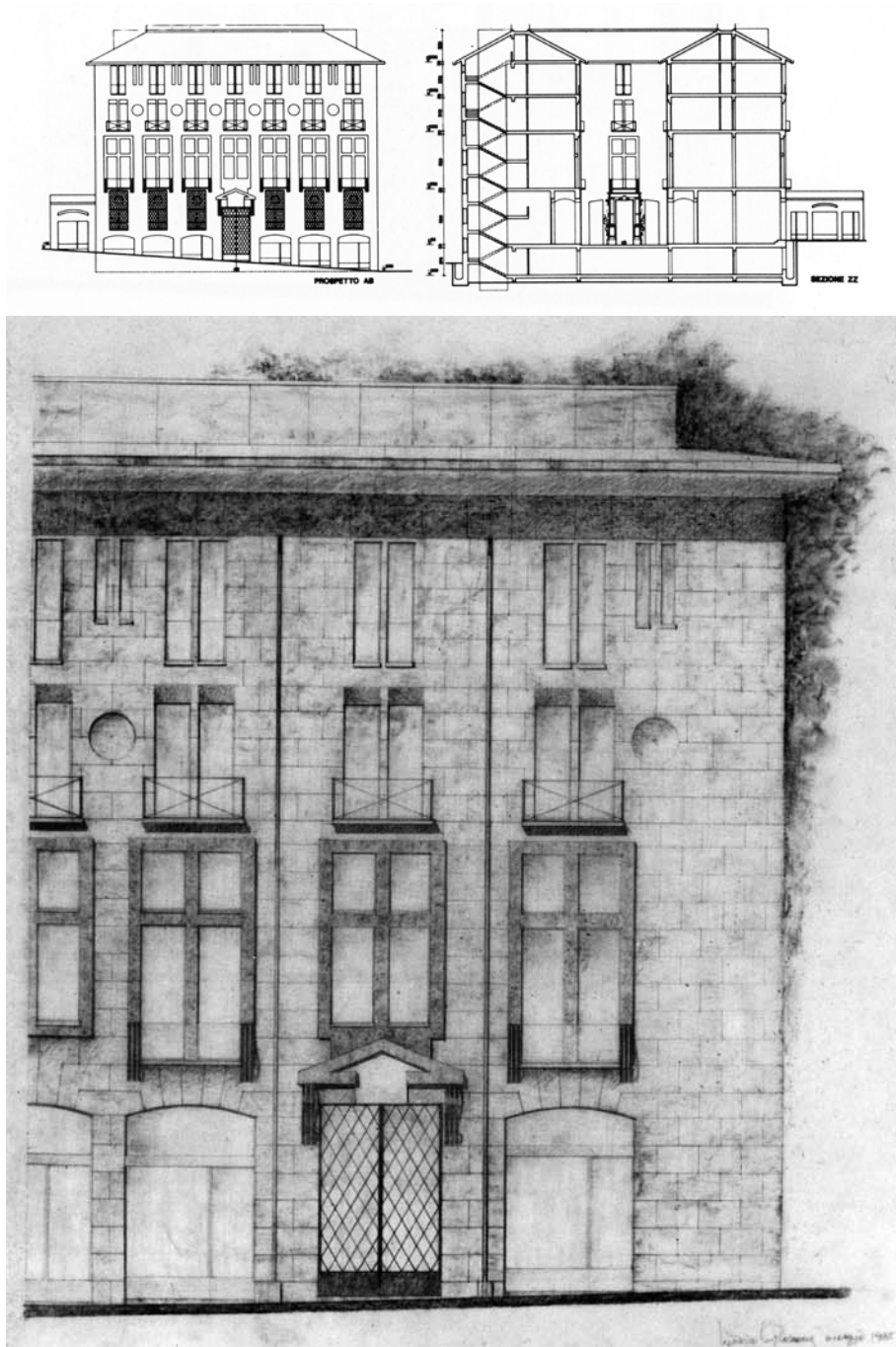


Fig. 1. Ludovico Quaroni, Multifunctional Building on Via Maqueda, Palermo, 1982. Drawings.
 1. 3. Elevation along Salita delle Capre and cross section on the courtyard; 1. 4. Elevation detail.

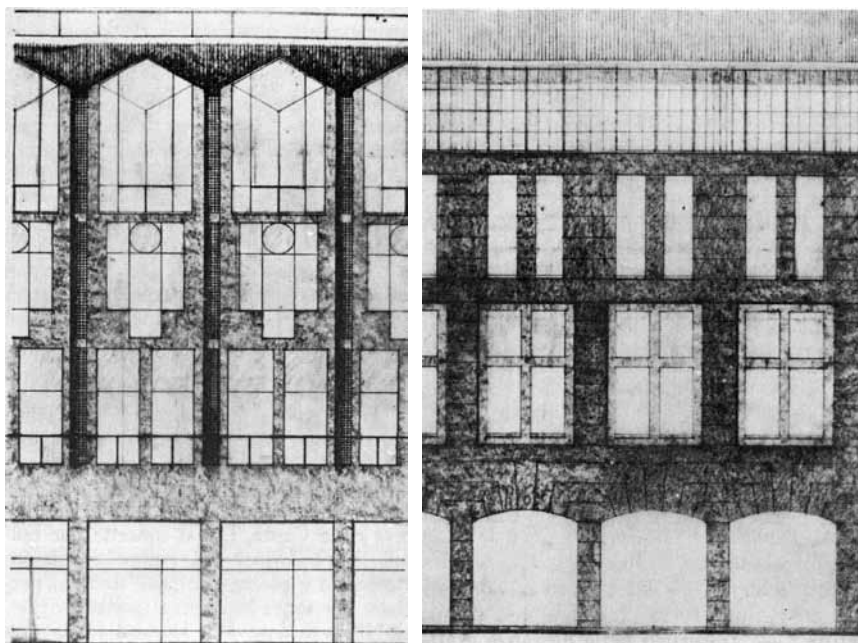


Fig. 2. Ludovico Quaroni, Multifunctional Building on Via Maqueda, Palermo, 1982. Homages.
2. 1. Homages to «Art Nouveau»; 2. 2. Homages to «crociera».



Fig. 3. Ludovico Quaroni, Multifunctional Building on Via Maqueda, Palermo, 1982. Views.
(Photos: Anna Irene Del Monaco); 3. 1. View on the elevation on Via Maqueda.; 3. 2. View on the courtyard



*Fig. 3. Ludovico Quaroni, Multifunctional Building on Via Maqueda, Palermo, 1982. Views.
(Photos: Anna Irene Del Monaco).
3. 3. View of the elevation on Salita delle Capre; 3. 4. View of the elevation on Via Maqueda.*

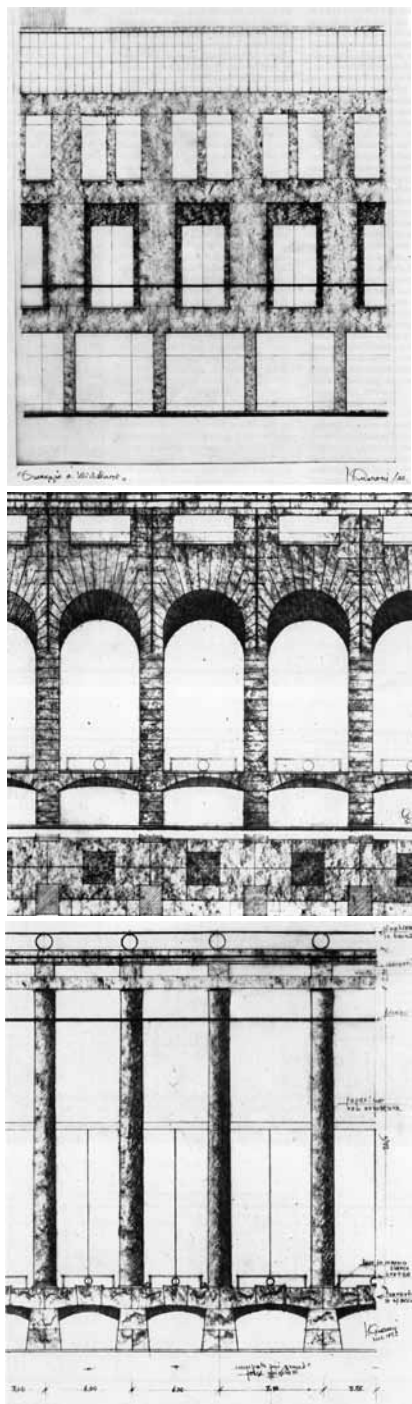


Fig. 4. Ludovico Quaroni, *Design for the extension of the Opera Theatre, Rome, 1983.*

Homages and studies of details

4. 1. *Homage to Michelucci.*

4. 2. *Homage to Poggi.*

4. 3. *Elevation detail.*