THE ANALYSIS OF DIRECT SOURCES FOR THE PRESERVATION PROJECT, A CASE STUDY

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The aim of the research was to provide a diagnostic insight, useful for the development of the conservation project which will necessarily take into account the multitude of values registered on buildings.

The case study for our research is represented by the Town Hall of Besozzo (Varese, Italy), located in the city centre of the village and its first construction phase is dated back to the XIV-XV century. It shows a complex palimpsest which is the result of the numerous transformations occurred during its life: enlargements, super elevations, demolitions, inner spaces subdivisions and use changes.

Currently a project has been issued for the reuse of the building which assigns new spaces for the town offices to the northern wing recently acquired.

Archaeological diagnosis, under good conditions, is a method to discover the physical history of any type ofbuilding, based on the materials used in construction (stone and bricks, in the case of the Town Hall of Besozzo), techniques, the ‘architectural forms’ and the vertical, horizontal and surface stratification.

Archaeological reading not as a mandatory practice, but a valuable tool to consider other possible ‘points ofview’, to confirm otherwise ‘hypothetical’ assessments and to justify further investigations, as well as torediscover new stability or instability within the building itself. A tool that can draw attention to the‘complexity’ of the evolutionary processes of construction, respecting the real physical structures and materialcomponents that constitute an unrepeatable specific context, for in-depth knowledge of ‘the whole story’, inorder to optimise specific methods of ‘care’ and conservation.

For the case study of the Town Hall of Besozzo, given the fragmentary nature of the information, it wasdecided to use dating methods for historical buildings (stratigraphic survey

of the elevations, identification ofmasonry techniques and their chronotypology, mensiochronological analysis of the bricks, the technotypology and chronotypology of the apertures) in order to collect more information and to be able to proceed with aproject for conservation and reuse.Such analysis includes: geometric survey, photographic rectifications of facade and inner sections, nondestructive diagnostic investigations, bricks, mortar and plaster chemical-physical analysis.

Owing to a lack of meaningful archival documentation, the elevation's stratigraphic reading and the methodsfor dating historical buildings proved to be an invaluable resource for the comprehension of the building's transformations.

Cross-referencing readings of indirect sources carried on the building with the results of the in-depth analysis made it possible to rebuild the growth of the structure from its origin to the present days.

Blending the results of these dating techniques produced the complexity of the stratigraphic reading whichhas been conveyed with adequate hatching on the rectified images (U.S. – Stratigraphic Unity) while schematic 3D reconstructions exemplify the chronological sequence of the building activities.

Individuation and comprehension of the building constructive phases made also possible to understand which were the different uses of each room inside this domestic architecture thus providing the client and the bodies in charge of protection with valuable data for the preservation project.

The reconstruction of the formation process of the building by its construction phases is closely tied to theconcept of a layered palimpsest, understood as the unique, irreproducible deposit of material culture that willguide the future project of conservation and reuse. With respect to all of the analyses carried out such a projectwill therefore be more attentive to the differences than to similarities and claim awareness of the singularity, specificity and irreproducibility of every sign of time and man, read on the *materiasignata*.