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## Archaeology and urban planning

Francesco Fazio

When Andrea Carandini, Francesco Infussi and Ugo Ischia wrote in *Urbanistica* n. 88 about archaeology and urban design, their reflections traced different perspectives about the view of new urban archaeology experiences in Italy and their consequences on architectural and urban planning practices. They wrote during a period of time when urban transformations and protection of archaeological heritage seemed to be linked although often in contrast: efforts for protection of heritage and at the same time destruction of historical traces due to urban growth. More than fifteen years later, the contradiction of this situation is still evident but many issues have been investigated and new practices have been introduced. Consequently, a reflection about the peculiarity of archaeology as urban planning theme is useful, looking also to the way in which this theme has been approached in recent urban planning experiences and to possible perspectives.

### Archaeology as urban planning issue

In contexts like the Italian one a reflection about the relationship between archaeology and cities is inevitable. Every kind of master plan or urban project in cities having archaeological relevance must face situations whose complexity increases with the growth of possible cases of superposition between archaeological remains and structures of contemporary cities. Focusing on the links which exist between archaeology and urban planning it is easy to notice the

peculiarity of this issue as regards its role in the debates. On a side, archaeology is normally regarded as similar to other 'invariants' (see environmental values or historical heritage), on the other side, archaeology is regarded as different 'by nature' when compared to other historical traces, especially when one considers its different roles in urban changes. If to find new uses for them is the most common way to achieve conservation of historical buildings, often the only necessary condition considered in dealing with archaeological traces is the absence of any use. Going from the single trace to the urban context this usually means systematic subtraction of large urban parts from a domain of possible transformation. The usual consequence of this condition is strong physical separation between archaeological areas and urban contexts and deep diversity in languages and practices of different institutional subjects, leading to dividing archaeological protection from urban development. There is nothing new in saying that archaeology must be regarded as an autonomous terrain but that at the same time it must be considered like many others in the decision making process; but this second statement, for different reasons, is not a shared point of view neither between architects and planners nor between archaeologists, given that it would mean the abandonment of the idea that archaeology can be regarded only as a 'specialistic' matter. The most common consequences of this controversial view are well known: lack of cooperation between different enterprises and institutions, increase of time and costs,

low quality of interventions, and, most of all, the degraded conditions of many archaeological traces, when they are far from the most celebrated monumental areas. A new reflection on the relationships existing between archaeology and planning must consider both meanings of the term 'archaeology', as a discipline and as the subject of this discipline. Considering archaeology in the light of urban changes, what seems to be fundamental is that the common aim of the two different disciplines of archaeology and urban planning must be twofold: protection of archaeological traces and general requalification of cities. This kind of perspective could help to show how the diversity of possible situations can lead to change many common approaches in conservation as well as many common urban planning practices and procedures. As it has happened for a very long time with historical cities, master plans have faced archaeology with indifference or renunciation. Abandoning the idea to define interventions on archaeological areas only based on a monodisciplinary and internal view (a perimeter "where just the Superintendent decides") or worse as a simple scenario for urban changes ignoring historical values, means considering the present and possible different relationships between archaeological ruins and different urban forms. This relationship (that can be physical, functional, or symbolic) allows to define different fields according to conditions of both different ruins and urban contexts, leading towards different strategies for plans and projects.

### Master plans and archaeology

A new awareness in planning practices for archaeological cities has started producing more concrete changes. To single out current behaviours and innovations, it's useful to consider a synoptic view of some experiences where archaeology has been treated as a specific theme for master plans, comparing different contexts distinguished by different relationships between archaeological remains and urban forms. Some big archaeological Italian cities, such as Naples, Syracuse and Rome, can offer many starting points for reflection; but also smaller Italian cities like Aquileia or Pozzuoli, or others where the hidden archaeological substrate assumes an urban importance, like many cities and towns in Emilia-Romagna (particularly Modena, Cesena, Faenza, and Forlì) constitute a good point of reference for reflection. Though they cannot be considered 'statistically representative', the examination of these cases can be useful to explore novelties. Two issues seem to be essential: master plans' rules and procedures in archaeological areas, relationships between archaeology and urban planning and design. The nature of archaeological remains often determines the master plans' articulation. Among cities and towns in Emilia-Romagna, for instance, the remains can be defined by their belonging to two major categories of urban and/or territorial structures: ancient cities buried beneath the urban structures which have been gradually built during the centuries, persistent territorial and urban structures related to the Roman centuriatio. Therefore master plans face only two issues: the

underground and the systems of territorial signs. A "simple" situation, compared to the ones found in Naples, Aquileia, and, most of all, Pozzuoli and Syracuse, where the variety of remains and urban forms is much bigger. Thus, differences between master plans must be related to these aspects. In these cases, master plans express operate with a list of historic preservation regulations or the prevision of different forms of controls exercised by the Soprintendenza (the peripheral, at the regional level, state administration of the Italian Ministry of Cultural Goods): to sum up, with procedures more than rules for possible transformations. This is strongly linked with the uncertainty of archaeological knowledge in urban contexts: the structure of the master plans is strongly related to how this is formed and organized; procedures are clearer when master plans have also been based on urban archaeological risk assessment maps or urban archaeological potentiality maps. Actually, among three different forms of inserting archaeological data in master plan documents, i.e. historic preservation regulation maps, archaeological maps, archaeological potentiality maps, only archaeological potentiality maps are built purposely for their direct use in urban planning, because they allow to articulate procedures according to different probabilities of running into new archaeological discoveries. These maps, especially in Emilia-Romagna, are going to constitute ordinary procedures in many cities, supported by different regional and provincial laws and initiatives. Where archaeological potentiality maps are present, master

plans derive their regulations from different areas as they are organized in the maps. Even if depending on the different contexts, the master plans we are commenting are usually 'defensive' of historical urban structures, regulating excavations and surveys, and often also 'proposal makers' for the centuriated territories whose structural and infrastructural organization quite directly comes from the Roman age (see Cesena). In this case regulations are similar to usual landscape regulations: signs of centuriatio are not considered as they were bearers of informative potential but as a sign of an ancient territorial order and they are not considered, moreover, as a reference for urban growth for expansions are not allowed in those areas. So there is no need to face the matter of integration of the archaeological remains in the new urban forms. In other cases the absence of potentiality maps and the bigger articulations of archaeological remains involve more complex links between archaeological knowledge and master plans, sometimes leading to a more complex design: in these cases not only direct but also indirect implementations are envisaged, with different plans designed in cooperation with the Soprintendenze in archaeological areas which are already known (Aquileia, Pozzuoli) or in particular areas where archaeological surveys must be continued during the successive phases of the implementation of the master plan (Syracuse, Naples). Furthermore, the utility of these dynamic forms of archaeological research is really remarkable, whether what is concerned is a document in a master plan

or a preventive survey for every single urban transformation; also, they reduce the risk of compromising archaeological conservation or urban renewal, indicating areas where different degrees of caution must be considered, and, most of all, force different institutions to cooperate. This is a fundamental condition: uncertainty in urban archaeology always imposes continuous control by conservation authorities during interventions, whatever the nature of these interventions, a control which is made easier, of course, when interinstitutional relationships are consolidated. The influence of local contexts and interinstitutional relationships on archaeology and planning has direct consequences on the articulation of the choices made by the master plan, with a prominent role of archaeology in it and the prevision of specific design issues. Some master plans only confirm the actual configuration of archaeological areas, or they merely assume valorisation projects which are already defined by the conservation authorities. This happens when the relationship between urban contexts and archaeology is considered to be already solved. In this case the provisions are not dedicated to design new connections between archaeological remains and the city, but only contribute to define general conditions, to continue archaeological researches and valorisation activities, both with specific rules and orienting the urban growth in areas without ruins. In other situations, where there is a stronger connection between archaeology and settlements, master plans

differentiate themselves according to types of remains. However often one can find a sort of identification between archaeological areas and green areas (as showed by common expressions like 'archaeological park'), also because archaeological contexts are rarely endowed with uses different from fruition. Plans have recourse to green areas as a design element also when, for instance, the reconnection of separated archaeological areas is realized by proposing new paths or systems of an environmental value. However, master plans can also explicitly assume that archaeological areas are a fundamental structure for urban renewal and general urban design. Among the most important recent Italian experiences, in the general scheme for the new master plan of Syracuse, Sicily, the prevision of the new Parco delle Mura Dionigiane cannot be seen just as a 'green' rehabilitation of a Greek monumental context as it contributes to create a new margin for the city, based on a new designed relationship with archaeology. New interventions introduce service functions close to the green areas containing archaeological remains: the city enters the park not only allowing 'green' fruition but also with local facilities, promoting the social knowledge of archaeology by multiplying the daily chances to meet archaeological remains. This is an attitude which can be found in other European examples and particularly in Cordoba, Spain, where urban expansion is structured around detailed archaeological knowledge, which is possible thanks to the archaeological risk map: thus, the form of the new urban expansions is

determined as a 'negative' in areas of concentrated archaeological remains but organized according to a strong reciprocal integration which will be better defined by successive studies. The three models recognised in the observation of how archaeological areas are considered in master plans could be defined, respectively, as the maintenance model, the park model, and the design regulating layout model. They can also go with a further type of intervention, which is needed to give 'daily' uses to archaeological areas or structures when these uses are allowed (because of the conditions of the archaeological remains, regarding their conservation state or their urban and social role). This intervention is really of a rehabilitating type. In this case archaeological remains can be regarded as urban facilities, not only reserved for particular kinds of citizens, as visitors are. This model can be found in the new master plan for Naples, in the renewal areas of the historical centre, and mostly in Spain where in the last decade it has been successfully applied in Tarragona, in particular after the rehabilitation of the Roman cirque located in the core of the historical centre. Those kinds of operations, even though they cannot be directly exported elsewhere, constitute a very important precedent not only for their direct influence on urban contexts where they have been developed but also as a solicitation for the cultural debate about the possible relationships between archaeology and cities.

#### **The case of Rome as a crux**

A context of extraordinary complexity like Rome can be seen of course both as

an exceptional and as a summarizing field for different connections between archaeology and the city, where contradictions and opportunities are shown at the maximum level, as numerous at least as the possible crossings between different conditions of ruins and different interpretations of the term 'city'. Monuments, still used infrastructures or facilities or buildings, but also indecipherable fragments or excavations fields seen as urban voids: all these categories may vary according to the quality and definition level of urban contexts, in a situation that can be the synthesized recognition of the presence of congested and abandoned areas. Most central archaeological areas are rooted in the general consideration, whilst many peripheral areas of minor impact but of extremely important value have been negatively affected by undesigned urban growth: in many cases important complexes or single elements have been subtracted from public knowledge and fruition because of carelessness, absence of even minimal informative structures, or bad integration in urban renewal processes. New interventions should solve these different problems, each one reflecting a different theme, in the general frame of the new master plan for Rome. Procedural aspects of this master plan, relationships between the master plan and the archaeological remains in Rome, and connections between knowledge and design are issues that have already been discussed by the professionals who prepared the master plan, so that there is no need of a new analysis of the plan. Maybe one can remark how archaeology explicitly enters

the urban design process in two fundamental aspects: the role of preventive archaeological knowledge and the role of the urban project in public and private debate and decision making. In both cases the new master plan for Rome is innovative. A fundamental novelty can be found in the type of archaeological protection which is proposed by the plan, which goes beyond mere conservation by regulations inspired by historical coherences, and in the extensive prevision of impact assessment studies for urban transformation. An important novelty is also in accommodating special urban projects for interventions regarding areas where the presence of archaeological remains is known or supposed.

Filling a paradoxical gap, the new master plan for Rome is featured by a preventive research aiming at reducing archaeological risk and promoting valorisation of archaeological remains by a new integration between archaeology and new interventions. This is a big innovation, given that by now there is no planning rule that imposes a valorisation project. This project, even though sometimes previewed, is often substituted by the prohibition of any modification of the archaeological remains, leading to a physical conservation obtained only because the ruins are isolated from urban context, which often causes a successive neglect. The new master plan for Rome was conceived in a design process that includes the necessary resources to integrate valorisation of archaeological remains and urban transformations as two distinct aspects of the general urban renewal process. It was a very

important jump. The master plan will impose frequent exchanges between different operators: archaeologists, restorators, architects, and planners will be 'forced' to dialogue for every urban intervention, much more than today. The real effectiveness of this procedure will certainly appear only after its concrete application. So particular attention must be paid to the capacity of answering by projects, being aware that the extraordinary variety of archaeological contexts and urban forms make Rome a city expected to be able to give not only 'correct' answers (a sort of 'damage reduction') but also innovative answers. The above mentioned novelties of the master plan for Rome will modify the situation of the central areas of the city, particularly in the Strategic Sectors, but most of all they will promote valorisation and reconnection in peripheral areas between the urban fabric and major historical and environmental systems. To confirm this forecast, there will be the need of developing the studies started with the Quality Guidelines, a pillar work that recognizes the conditions of archaeological remains and investigates all the essential parameters so as to integrate them in the city, and, in addition, the need of finding specific sectors where to define general headlines for future coordinated projects, whose extension appears to be wider than the present Strategic Sectors: one could say, indeed, that from an archaeological point of view every principal consular road is a strategic sector in Rome, fundamental to reveal major archaeological systems as fundamental ingredients of the urban renewal.



## Urban planning for archaeological cities

In an effort to capture the full picture of the most important solicitations coming from recent examples, the necessity of an integrated vision of archaeology and urban transformations gives as a result a direct consequence. Every intervention must be seen as a chance for research and valorisation of archaeological remains, as well as archaeology has to be considered as one of the major subjects for a master plan, not as a specific theme independent from urban strategies or outside its competence. Therefore, the integration of archaeological knowledge with planning generic knowledge is a fundamental condition achievable by a general recourse to archaeological potentiality assessment: in this way it is possible to pass from building control to preventive evaluation of plans and projects, a shift which must be encouraged by regional and provincial laws and technical supports. But a narrow consideration of preventive evaluations, as mere input data for avoiding unforeseen events, would imply unacceptable limitation. Considering the fundamental meaning of urban archaeology, as a scientific support for the comprehension of the history of cities, archaeology must envisage different ways of integrating the remains in the city through the instruments of master plans. This issue means considering the attribution of meaning and value to the archaeological remains as the result of a collective knowledge process. Reflecting about the relationships which link collective knowledge and value, it is easy to understand how the major 'use' for an archaeological remain is the knowledge of it, which is necessary to

start the process that leads this remain from a condition of fragment to a new role in the city structure.

Therefore, if one considers the Italian situation, one of the most important aims for a master plan is to reveal all the archaeological areas now abandoned in a city. In this sense the entire proposal of a master plan assumes the role of a knowledge project for archaeology, that can be defined and explicitly showed with results on the entire urban image, similar to the examples of Tarragona and Athens, even with their contradictory aspects.

To sum up, a master plan for an 'archaeological city' [must define projects and not only procedures. So the identification of different 'urban archaeological contexts' is an essential base for the issues regarding definition, to provide models of interventions and offer specific design instruments, which trespass simple protection regulations. Therefore, master plans must face every archaeological area, not only the consolidated ones, as a design sector, promoting the conditions to link in a system all the related interventions. Certainly, the definition of a general model, everywhere effective or imposed as a rule for an entire city, would be an impossible and absurd attempt. But if a master plan has the ultimate role of a shared decision, its knowledge function is fundamental even if its unforeseen elements are not eliminable. Possible situations are as many as the forms of the stratified relationship which exists between archaeology and the city: non-stratified archaeological areas for they stand outside of present urban sectors; inner areas in urban contexts (consolidated or in

definition) without any relation with urban stratification given that they constitute a hidden substrate; stratified areas as a 'second nature' for the urban stratification process. All these situations represent different design possibilities that suggest different kinds of solutions. The master plans' construction process can be the precise moment to define a general frame based on dialogues between different disciplines, determining general relations between archaeology and the town and defining criteria for the local projects. First, the plan should define new proposals for the border areas, but it could also admit partial renewal of archaeological remains with compatible functions, or it could assume ancient directions as a layout for new interventions. A high level of attention must be on the increase legibility, on the restoration of major archaeological systems at an urban level and on the promotion of single remains' comprehension throughout the accesses' and paths' reconfiguration and the systematic prevision of informative structures. Moreover, the reductiveness of answers only based on the remains' isolation, even with protective intents, must be finally recognised; particularly when it is structured simply on a fence, and most of all when it is considered as a generally valid and necessary intervention rather than as a temporary or peculiar solution but. The large amount of 'urban lost chances' demonstrates this clearly. Built on these principles, master plans can express a sort of 'cultural project' for archaeology, starting from a critical synthesis of the suggestions coming from archaeological researches and urban renewal, as a

strategic and structural aspect of the idea of the town that every plan must express. Single interventions then can be based on usual master plan's implementations, like controls and regulations for maintenance operations when it is possible to operate in a condition of reduced uncertainty; or on the contrary with specific programs and projects, for instance in situations where the urban and archaeological stratification requires a detailed design definition.

As the examined examples illuminate, the integration between different disciplines does not need a strong modification of the institutional frame, though it is affected by many limits, provided that archaeology and town are regarded as integrated sectors, as they actually are, and both considered in planning process. In some contexts these seem to be possible objectives. Now it is necessary that these initiatives lose their exceptional feature to become ordinary procedures in every urban sector with high archaeological potentiality. Every design discipline not only has to give technical solutions to modification questions, but also to promote the birth of ideas about the town's future with the conditions for their realisation. Master plans can represent a primary point, for they include the process of definition of a shared idea of transformation which can allow the town to attribute new meanings to its history, while encouraging the conditions for their knowledge according to methods and techniques of design practice.