

Giovanni Michelucci: Heritage of Pompeii and Post-War Reconstruction

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ABSTRACT

In 1932 Giovanni Michelucci visited Pompeii and Ercolano. The experience of the archaeological site played a key role in the development of Michelucci as an architect. The deepest sense of that lesson learnt in his youth resurfaced after 1944. Involved as he was in the debate on reconstruction, for Michelucci the inseparable relation between society and the city revealed by the remains at Pompeii was an unavoidable inspiration. The writings and designs submitted for the reconstruction of the Ponte Vecchio area (1944-1945) converge towards a new urban vision, one where the memory of the past is distilled in its deepest components and substantiated in the present.

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KEYWORDS

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Introduction

Even though history and critique books acknowledge the importance of the trips to Pompeii and Herculaneum (1932) in the cultural development of Giovanni Michelucci, no study has delved yet into the relationship between ancient architecture and his projects.

Architecture history and critique books unanimously recognise the importance this visit to Pompeian ruins had in Michelucci's pre-1944 architectural projects. Indeed, the trip gave a new perspective on the relation between the typological interpretation of the Roman domus and Michelucci's private mansion designs.¹ The heritage of Pompeii in the development of his urban vision is equally unknown even though the article "Lezione di Pompei" [A lesson from Pompeii] Michelucci wrote with the poet Roberto Papi in 1934 in *Arte Mediterranea* may be regarded as a first conceptual reasoning on the city.² Therefore the architectural critique lacks an organic analysis of Michelucci's position and its development around Pompeii before and after the war. Indeed, a systematic approach could let us assess the effect that a theoretical reflection of Mediterranean civilization, expressed in Michelucci through the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum, had on his post-1944 projects, thus providing a consistent vision between the city and architecture in between speculative reasoning and applied design.

This study fits precisely in this context and tries to give a comparative view of some of Michelucci's writings in which the architect traces back the experience of his trip to Pompeii with writings and designs made for the rebuilding project (never realised) of the Ponte Vecchio area in Florence between 1944 and 1945.

The assumption suggested here finds its grounds in an exhaustive analysis of archive sources, for the most part unpublished, kept at Fondazione Giovanni Michelucci in Fiesole³ and a review of the designs kept at the Centro di Documentazione Giovanni Michelucci in Pistoia.⁴

A hypothetical reading

The experience at the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum marked a fundamental moment in the way Michelucci's theoretical approach developed.

The key pillars of his work, space and the human being, are deeply rooted in the way he regarded the architectural arrangement of space in the two Roman cities.

The impressions conjured by the remains of the two deserted cities, immediately described in his 1934 article, accompany Michelucci in time in the form of a subtle yet relentless reasoning that will emerge after the war in the notes he used for university lectures and interviews. There, he

1. As concerns the relation between Pompeii and the projects prior to the second post war, see: Amedeo Beluzzi and Claudia Conforti (eds), *Giovanni Michelucci* (Milano: Electa, 1986). Claudia Conforti, Roberto Dulio and Marzia Marandola (eds), *Giovanni Michelucci 1891-1990* (Milano: Electa, 2006).

2. Giovanni Michelucci and Roberto Papi, "Lezione di Pompei", *Arte Mediterranea* 1 (1934): 32.

3. Fondazione Giovanni Michelucci (FGM) in Fiesole, Florence. The documents cited in the essay are held in the Archivio delle Lezioni Universitarie (AL) of the Fondazione Giovanni Michelucci. The cited lectures are taken from the folders: *Lezioni universitarie sulla città antica*, Envelope III file A. FGM, AL, III a 20 (Bologna, n. d.); FGM, AL, III a 32 (Bologna, n. d.), and *Lezioni universitarie vari argomenti non databili*, Envelope III file B. FGM, AL, III b 60 (n. p, n. d).

4. Documentation Center Giovanni Michelucci, Pistoia (CMPT).

explained the sense of that lesson he learnt before the war and finally made clearer only through the experience of rubble and reconstruction.

The close relation between the two events is clearly reported by Michelucci during a conversation with Franco Borsi. The historian asked the architect to narrate his own urban planning experience in Florence, and Michelucci replied as follows: "By way of introduction I would like to say that the war has radically changed my mindset but most important was the discovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum."⁵

Before 1944 Michelucci's view of the ruins was purely speculative. The articles on the city published until then resonate with his experience in Pompeii and Herculaneum and delve into some themes that were mentioned in passing already in his "Lezione di Pompeii" [A lesson from Pompeii]. A pivotal element among such topics is the inseparable tie between the urban form and society. The 1942 article "Elementi della Nuova Città" [Elements of the New City], published in *Lo Stile* in the same year opens by explicitly describing the relation between the urban configuration and society using an image that undoubtedly owes tribute to the famous trip: "By looking at a city destroyed to its foundation and whose architectural essence was unknown to us, it would be possible to recreate the private and collective life patterns of its inhabitant."⁶

The theoretical insight developed by Michelucci at the time did not have an equally groundbreaking effect in his architecture designs. The built work reflects a vision shared in those days by part of Italian culture, where modernity and Mediterranean tradition merge in a review of typology and form. See, for instance, Michelucci's project of Villa Contini Bonacossi at Forte dei Marmi (1939). In a note taken after the war Michelucci remembers his trip to Pompeii and writes: "I still had in mind a marvellous example: I was charmed by its truth and still I could not derive any real lesson about the relation between the work and time; I took a model to find inspiration and then my work failed. ... My work failed in spite of tangible progress."⁷ [Figs. 1-2]

Only after seeing the rubble, after dawn on 4 August 1944, when German mines tore apart the bridges on the Arno and the districts around Ponte Vecchio, could the Pompeii lesson turn from a purely theoretical exercise into a proactive lesson, consistently resonating in this architectural and urban designs. The memory of this trip, having settled in his mind, re-emerged in Michelucci's innovative design work. His proposals for the sections of Florence to reconstruct did not imitate Pompeii in form or



FIG. 1 G. Michelucci, Pompeii, (n. d.) (FGM)

5. Franco Borsi, *Giovanni Michelucci, intervista* (Firenze: LEF, 1966), 89.

6. Giovanni Michelucci, "Elementi della Nuova Città". *Lo Stile* 23 (1942): 3.

7. FGM, AL, III b 60.

style but evoked its urban and social feel.

His post-war writings on Pompeii, his compositions about the reconstruction issues and the designs for the Ponte Vecchio area project converse in a completely new urban vision, where the memory of the past is distilled in its deepest components and substantiated by the present.

Michelucci and antiquity: a controversial debut

Michelucci's steps towards antiquity may be divided into three crucial moments; the years of his academic development ended in 1911, his period in Rome between 1920 and 1935, and his 1932 trip to Pompeii and Herculaneum.

The first contact with the ancient world took place at the Florence Academy of Fine Arts, where a young Michelucci started his education in art and architecture. The teaching on ancient art at the Academy regarded the past as an undifferentiated element, as an extraordinary array of forms and fragments that could be reused, without any type of critical approach, in architecture. The memory of this curricular approach was described by Michelucci⁸ years later, with genuine aversion and as the source of serious errors, corrected only after his first direct experience in Rome with ancient ruins.

The influence of the Roman ruins inspired Michelucci towards an independent interpretation of the heritage of ancient architecture. It should be noted that this was not a full-fledged critical reinterpretation of the models to be consciously adopted in his work. His interpretation of the architecture happened only after the fact. The memory of imperial Rome came back on very different occasions far apart in time, including during his farewell speech to the Faculty of Architecture of Florence (1948),⁹ during an interview with Franco Borsi (1966) in *Brunelleschi Mago* (1974),¹⁰ Michelucci's critical text on the work of Filippo Brunelleschi, and again during an interview with Fabrizio Brunetti (1981).

In the Twenties Michelucci moved to Rome. During his stay he often went back to Tuscany, where he finally moved back in 1935 to build the Santa Maria Novella (1935-1937) railway station. In Rome, Michelucci discovered the boldness and grandeur of this architecture which academics had seen as an example of the rhetoric of monumentality. Michelucci's said in his farewell to the Faculty of Architecture in Florence: "I have to confess that I particularly love the part of Roman architecture that is still standing, stripped of the "architectural" cladding, by now fallen to the ground, that



FIG. 2 G. Michelucci, Pompeii, (n. d.) (FGM)

8. As concerns his academic training, see: Borsi, *Giovanni Michelucci, intervista*; Fabrizio Brunetti, *Intervista sulla nuova città* (Roma: Laterza, 1981).

9. Giovanni Michelucci, *La felicità dell'architetto*, (Pistoia: Libreria Editrice Tellini, 1981).

10. Giovanni Michelucci, *Brunelleschi mago*, (Pistoia: Libreria Editrice Tellini, 1974).

did not mirror, if not partially, the overall picture."¹¹ The lack of decoration, having dropped off over the centuries, reveals the Roman architecture's structure: "after having studied and hated Roman architecture... I saw the basilica of Maxentius, the temple of Minerva Medica, I saw the structures free from decoration for the first time."¹² The aspect of Imperial Roman architecture that interested Michelucci was its structure, which had been completely ignored in academic teaching. The memory of his experience in Rome was filtered through his Florentine culture.

Filippo Brunelleschi's architecture channelled the lesson of Roman ruins, as suggested in a few pages of *Brunelleschi Mago*. Through the biography *Vita di Brunelleschi* by Antonio Manetti, Michelucci recalls the trip to Rome made by the Renaissance master, though indirectly he also remembers his experience in the Capital in a weave of different time references. The remains of the Basilica of Maxentius and the Temple of Minerva Medica stripped of the original décor and claddings revealed to Michelucci,¹³ and Brunelleschi, the structural logic behind that architecture, the forces at play among the different supporting elements, between "the bones and the organs".¹⁴ The concept that inextricably links Roman architecture—space and structure—merges in Michelucci's later architectural works. In the sanctuary of Beata Vergine della Consolazione, San Marino (1961-1967), the memory seems to emerge of the commanding interior spaces sought by ancient Roman architecture, the structural continuity between the elevation and the roof, and the complex interplay between mass and space. The architecture that celebrated the feats of the Empire is too far removed from Michelucci's Tuscan spirit to really open a breach in his heart; conversely, the "dimmer tone"¹⁵ of Pompeian architecture, its harmonious and humane proportions, teach Michelucci a fundamental lesson in architecture and civility.

The path to correctly interpreting the relationship between the present and the past, or the sense of tradition, goes through interpreting the space, as Michelucci explains in a note for a university lesson, remembering Herculaneum's ruins: "Space is the *measure* of a civilisation, it is the measure of human understanding or inability to understand, it is the expression of values ... *tradition*, finding spaces that were and still are humanely comforting after twenty centuries."¹⁶

Pompeii and Herculaneum, a lesson in civility

The perspective through which Michelucci looks at the ruins at Pompeii and Herculaneum is not that of a romantic artist, nor is it that of an archaeologist or an historian. Instead, he tries to capture the relation they entertain with the contemporary human being and grasp the teachings they still reverberate after centuries. In the ruins of long abandoned cities Michelucci finds an unfading sense of the present, a masterful lesson of architecture that still stands after centuries. The lesson of Pompeii is

11. Michelucci, *La felicità*, 22.

12. FGM, AL, III b 60.

13. The assumption deriving from these two works is mentioned in a note by Michelucci, FGM, AL, III b 60.

14. Antonio Manetti, in Michelucci, *Brunelleschi*, 76.

15. Michelucci, Papi, "Lezione," 32.

16. FGM, AL, III a 32.

a lesson in civility and, consequently, architecture. At Pompeii, writes Michelucci in his 1934 article, everything is built and focused to serve the community, made to the measure of its humanity. The perfect harmony that permeates Pompeii is the product of its proportions made to suit human beings. Michelucci understands the meaning of *human measure* and discovers the *sense of humanism* regarded as a sort of chromosome that stems directly from the Pompeian civilisation, follows the history of mankind across time and space borders to reach modernity.¹⁷ This is where one of the key pillars of Michelucci's poetics, the centrality of the human being in the project, comes from. Every creative act in Michelucci is targeted to making spaces thought for human beings and their needs, be they physical or psychological. At Pompeii, writes Michelucci, all parts of the city bear the grandeur of their psychological function, and as a whole they are humane and not rhetorical: functional.¹⁸ A veiled invective emerges against the international functionalism of northern Europe, which Michelucci contrasts with a type of humanistic functionalism: "Pompeii is an essential lesson for



FIG. 3 G. Michelucci, Pompeii, (n. d.) (FGM)

today's architect who needs concrete examples to return himself and his art to a perfect function."¹⁹ Michelucci continues, Pompeii "awakens"²⁰ in contemporary people the idea that civilization means, "living a beautiful life"²¹ and that it belongs to civilized men: "the man who comes to know the morality of his acts,"²² arranging what he needs following a principle of logical harmony, i.e. "governing the essential in accordance to beauty."²³ He continues in the same article: "If at the first expression of the now compromised word "rationalism", if everything that is necessary could be considered beautiful, within the limits of a mechanical beauty, now that we have moved past this dried-up god, we cannot truly call *beautiful* that which is not human."²⁴

The bond between the human measure and psychological function of architecture is clarified in the post-war period when Michelucci remembers his trip to Pompeii and Herculaneum during university classes and conferences²⁵. More than twenty years later, Michelucci remembers the pergolas, porticoes, textures of the walls, and the uninterrupted views between the open and closed spaces. The view through the architecture, internal and external spaces are in a constant relationship through the openings of the *domus* on the gardens and patios²⁶ [Fig. 3]. Now Pompeii's measure is both human and it is the "inner measure."²⁷

It was clear that his perception of the locations at Pompeii and Herculaneum occurred through movement: "I walked one afternoon in

17. This view is shared by Michelucci and his intellectual friends who in those years revolved around the Florentine review *Il Frontespizio*, directed by Piero Bargellini.

18. Michelucci, Papi, "Lezione," 32. Michelucci gets into an argument with functionalism in his article "Architettura Umanistica", *Il Frontespizio* 1, no. XI (1940): 39-43. In his article Michelucci argues in favour of a clash between the "machine civilization" and the "humanist civilization".

19. Michelucci, Papi, "Lezione," 30.

20. Michelucci, Papi, 29.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. There are not dates for the lessons and conferences referenced but they took place after Michelucci moved in 1949 from the Faculty of Architecture of Florence to Faculty of Engineering of Bologna.

26. FGM, AL, III b 60.

27. FGM, AL, III a 32.

Pompeii (an event that was, I repeat, important for my life as an architect and as a man), I walked through the streets of Pompeii: I wasn't looking for anything, I was wandering."²⁸ And walking the streets of the buried cities, Michelucci starts to direct his thinking on architecture towards the concept of *space* instead of *form*, but it was only through a vision of the compact medieval fabric of Florence torn apart by the bombs that the vision he had among the ruins really became clear. The theme of *man*, central to his 1934 article, is joined by his thoughts on *space* in his writings on Pompeii and Herculaneum after the war. This critical evolution determined the compositional and theoretical shift between his pre-war works and the designs he proposed for the rebuilding project. In the memory of Michelucci the image of Pompeii, made more dramatic by being in ruin, is that of a filter where nature, architecture and the human being are bound by an inseparable continuum, just like in a biologic organism. The *domus* in Michelucci's view bears the genetic code of the city, "they carry the genes of the city spirit like the cell has the form of its organism."²⁹ This concept is further delved into in his post-war

writings, where Michelucci evokes the image of the site in which the section of the houses emerges and connects with the ground and the city in a continuum: "The home creates an exact integration, one thing brings out the others / its section connect the city and the ground."³⁰ [Fig. 4]

The *domus* in ruin emphasise their open structure, permeable to a relentless exchange of spaces and relations. The issue of physical continuity as a reflection of the continuity in human and spiritual relations is quite recurrent in Michelucci's writings after his visit to Herculaneum and Pompeii. Starting from the article "Elementi di città" [Element of the City] his reflection on the symbolic meaning of the enclosure, meant both as a physical limit—a material separation between the building and the environment—and as a social divide, is ripe and will be finally clarified in his post-war writings.

The physical continuity between *domus*, theatres, and tombs reflect a civil society where there is no fracture between private and public interests, everything is built around the human being. In the ancient city the theatre and tombs share an "urban bond and are both Elements of the city,"³¹ conversely, in modern cities—continues Michelucci—the theatre, the graveyards and the houses are all closed structures that do not open to the outside.³² This view came to full maturity only after seeing the rubble in Florence, the facades collapsed from the buildings, which as opposed to Pompeii, reveal the human misery of those spaces hidden

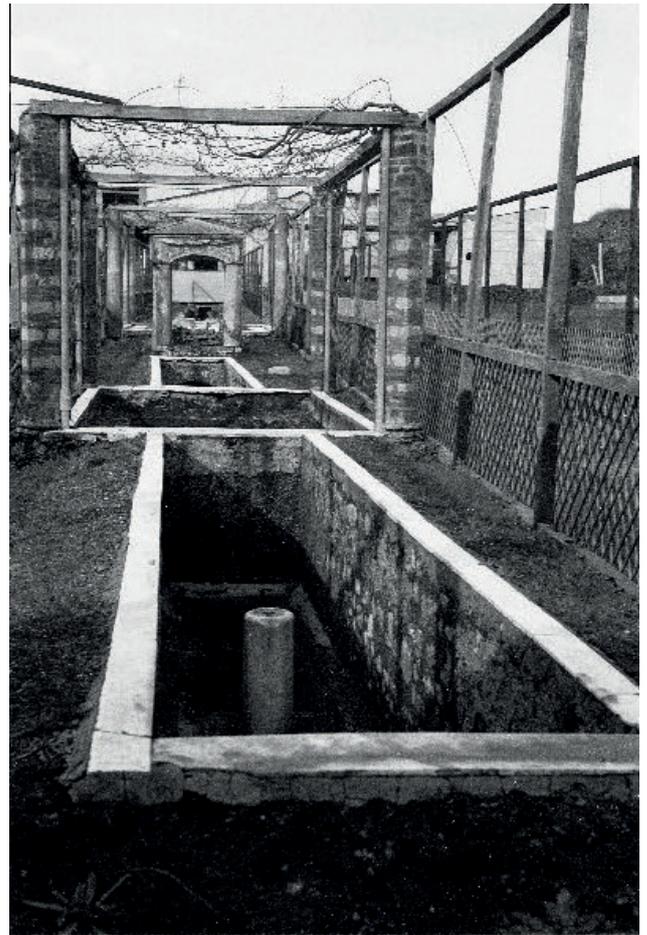


FIG. 4 G. Michelucci, Pompeii, (n. d.) (FGM)

28. FGM, AL, III b 60.

29. Michelucci, Papi, "Lezione", 28.

30. FGM, AL, III a 32.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

behind the building fronts, thus making the division between public and private even more evident.

From here Michelucci starts his thorough meditation on the relation between the building and the city and the building and the environment, a feat that will take him throughout his career as an architect. "The rubble itself suggested to me infinite new ways to experience and see the spaces."³³ According to Michelucci, the new architecture should express the environmental and spiritual continuity revealed by the collapse: "That sense of liberation, the breaking of the secular barriers should emanate from every building."³⁴ This reflection led Michelucci to progressively overcoming the traditional typology of the building as determined by an enclosure, which after his experience among ancient ruins and war rubble is regarded as the negation of community, to finally arrive in the Sixties to a concept of a completely open building, lacking any facades. A good example is the Church of San Giovanni Battista, at Campi Bisenzio (1960-1967). The unbreakable bond between human beings, architecture and the city will soon become the embodiment of Michelucci's urban theory, which reverberates in his project with growing clarity, first in his designs for the reconstruction of the Ponte Vecchio area, and then in his urban ideas for the refurbishment of the Santa Croce district (Florence, 1966-1968) after the flood and then from the Seventies to his death in the urban visions that Michelucci himself dubbed *Elementi di città* [Elements of the City].

From ruins to rubble

The day after 4 August 1944 the city of Florence asked Michelucci to submit his proposal for the post-war reconstruction of the demolished areas around Ponte Vecchio. The architect did not come up with a full urban plan, though he made a sequence of sketches³⁵ (1944-1945) that represent his vision of the city.

Michelucci made several surveys in the areas hit by the explosions. During his walks Michelucci focused his attention specifically on two images that, when juxtaposed, are the building blocks of his reconstruction project.

The first is the medieval towers slashed apart by the mines, which, writes Michelucci, display the innermost structure of the homes as though they were on a theatre stage: "abandoned homes, beds, chests of drawers, like interior scenes in a theatre. In the medieval towers, the wall opened by the bombs show what had been hidden for centuries, the innermost structure of the objects, the houses."³⁶ The collapsed facades



FIG. 5 G. Michelucci, Rubbles, Florence, (n. d.) (FGM)

33. Michelucci, *La felicità*, 38-39.

34. Michelucci, 40.

35. The designs for the reconstruction of the Ponte Vecchio area are stored at the Centro di Documentazione Michelucci of Pistoia.

36. FGM, AL, III b 60.



FIG. 6 G. Michelucci, Rubbles at Borgo S. Jacopo seen from Lungarno Acciaiuoli, Florence, (n. d.) (FGM).

show the contradiction between the interiors that are often humble and the facades: "The walls were a deception; behind the pretence of wealth there hid undignified living conditions."³⁷ [Fig. 5]

The second image is the urban space brought to light by the collapsed buildings. The empty space highlights an organic city, whose structure is intimately connected with the river and the hill.³⁸ [Fig. 6] "The rubble gave space to the river the view of which had been interrupted by the medieval towers still standing ... The destruction of Via dei Bardi highlighted the vicinity and possible connection between Boboli gardens to and the centre."³⁹

Within the dramatic situation of reconstruction, the memory of Pompeii and its filtered image seems to re-emerge with a new meaning and put together with the images of Florence's rubble. "The houses gutted by the explosions reveal a new relationship between the Arno, the houses, and the streets; behind the missing facades, a direct relationship is established showing a unit pattern, testament to a former unity."⁴⁰

Before being about architecture and urban planning, in Michelucci's view, rebuilding Florence is a political and moral challenge. The memory of the past civilization becomes the inspiration for a better present. Michelucci neglects the form of the two Roman cities and remembers the loyalty of their space, a clay and stone reflection of the civilization that had produced it. The city in the architect's eye is reborn symbolically from the rubble and is there precisely to preserve that memory. "In my

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Michelucci, *La felicità*, 40

40. FGM, AL, IIIb, 60.

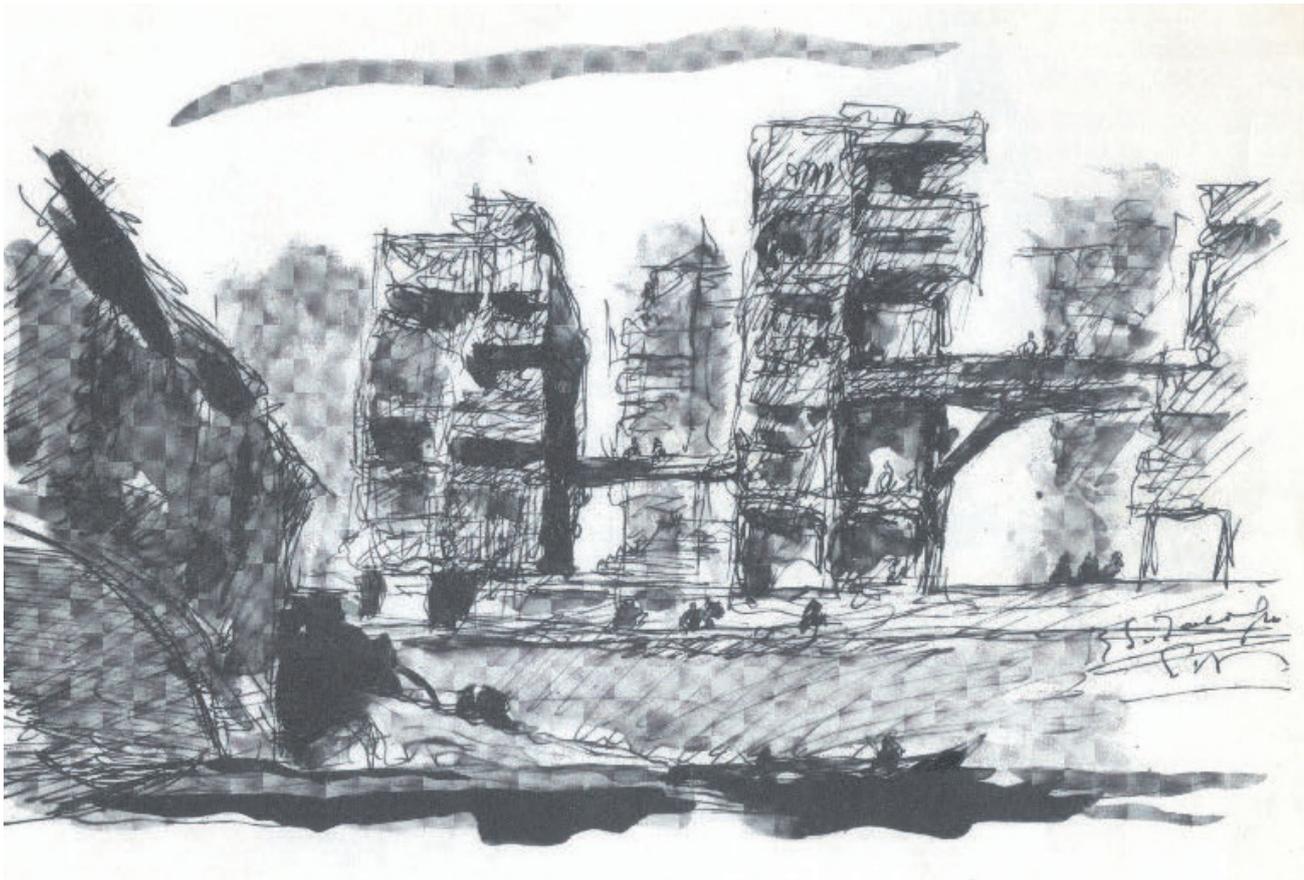


FIG. 7 G. Michelucci. Study of a view on Borgo S. Jacopo seen from Lungarno Acciaiuoli (n. d.) (n. 292 CMPT)

understanding true architecture had to be sought in that rubble ... the rubble themselves suggested countless solutions ... Well, those seemed to me the right time and place for a symbol of past genius—(the corner at Ponte Vecchio) ravished by the war, all of its most intimate elements now visible—to give meaning and set the example of true 'reconstruction'.⁴¹

Michelucci abandons mimesis targeted at the form of an irretrievably lost past. The remains of the towers, at once the projection of a past time and a possible future, turn into a canvas on which the architect can redesign a city bustling with humanity, lacking all walls and enclosures, suspended between death and life, construction and destruction, ruins and building sites. The city designed by Michelucci is a mirror of present history, it shows without deceit its renewed physical and social structure, a reflection of such ideals and justice and liberty that had guided the people to liberate Florence.⁴² His space, and the space in Pompeii and Herculaneum, is a consistent, or better, *loyal* expression of the human ideals that produced it; just like in ancient cities, space is a *measure* of the civilisation that created it, it is the expression of its values. Michelucci's intent, then, is to redesign space, rather than rebuild volumes. His perspectives and sections tell about the physical and conceptual ties among the parts of the city, they resonate with a harmonious connection between human work and nature that one perceives by observing the foundations of the *domus* in Herculaneum.⁴³

The rubble and the ruins emphasise the image of the city as a filter, free from all enclosures and dividing walls that, in his 1942 article "Elementi

41. Michelucci, *La felicità*, 37.

42. Michelucci, *La felicità*.

43. FGM, AL, III a 32.

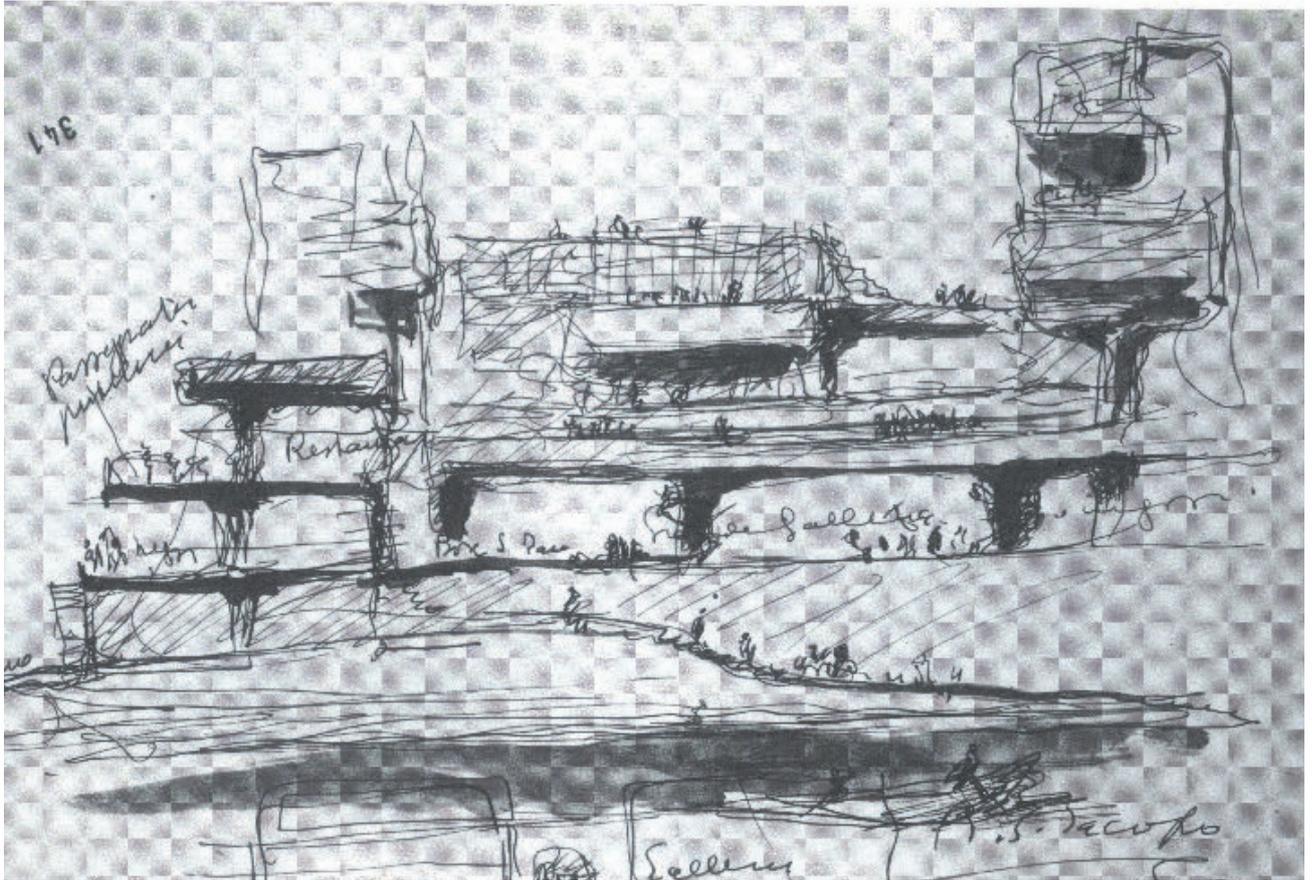


FIG. 8 G. Michelucci. Study for Borgo S. Jacopo: arcades for offices and shops and pedestrian walks along the river seen from Lungarno Acciaiuoli (n. d) (n. 341, CMPt)

della Nuova Città” [Elements of the New City], are regarded as a hindrance to individual liberty. [Fig. 7]

Urban locations and the landscape interact ceaselessly, the sections sketched by Michelucci outline inner and outer spaces that flow uninterruptedly one into the other, merging into never-before-seen complex organisms. Staircases and loggias connect the buildings to the river and the hill, giving a tangible application to the continuity between nature and the work of human beings seen for the first time in the streets of the cities at the foot of Mount Vesuvius. Every single building represented in Michelucci’s urban visions embodies the *sense of the city*, in the lesson taught by Roman *domus*.

In the city envisaged by Michelucci, architecture, the city and landscape converge—like in Pompeii and Herculaneum—in a single vision of space, where the human being, unflinching in his designs, is the absolute protagonist, the means and the end of the New City. Michelucci’s designs for the reconstruction project reflect the memory of long walks in Pompeii and Herculaneum, among houses, tombs and the theatre where the human being is sovereign, where “every space belongs to it: just like silence, shadow and the sun”.⁴⁴ If the contemporary human being—writes Michelucci—was the master of the streets, squares and public areas, there would no longer be a fracture between houses and the city, enclosures would disappear and the modern city would inspire a sense of freedom and be comforting

44. FGM, AL, III a 20.

to human beings, just like Herculaneum and Pompeii.⁴⁵ [Fig. 8] Modern city walls are now regarded by Michelucci not only as material boundaries between the built-up space and the environment but also as cultural walls, as social walls, as hindrances to the natural flowing of life. The enclosure takes a symbolic, rather than physical or spiritual, value; not only does it affect the image of architecture and the city, but also to the social existence of the community: "I thought – and think – that if a *sensitive diaphragm* was to replace the façade, thus revealing the inner structure of a building, then a new relation would stem between the home and the street; the street would become an extension of the home () this would imply a society where the chance for a dignified life is made clearer by this *sensitive diaphragm* where collective life is once again an extension of private life ... creating a *sensitive diaphragm* means being morally bold, showing who we are, what is right and what is wrong."⁴⁶

Clearly, a "*sensitive diaphragm*" as a façade is first and foremost an ethical position, a choice of democracy and intellectual honesty and not an architectural intention. Therefore the image of a sensitive diaphragm seems to stem from critical thinking, whose origin must be found in the reflection of the Pompeian civilization and the impression caused by the rubble in Florence. Theoretical speculation is vigorously reflected in Michelucci's designs. The portrayal of architecture through the section emphasises the lack of enclosure, just like in the ancient ruins the buildings designed by Michelucci as an architect resonate with their relation between the inside and the outside, they display their measure, both the physical and the psychological, that is, their *inner measure*: the human being is back at the centre of the space.

With his ideas for the post-war reconstruction project Michelucci replies to the same urge with which ten years prior he closed his article "Lezione di Pompei": "Let our architecture tell that we have served this life and reveal, first and foremost, the human being."⁴⁷ [Fig. 9]



FIG. 9 G. Michelucci, Pompeii, (n. d.) (FGM)

45. Ibid.

46. FGM, AL, III b 60.

47. Michelucci, Papi, "Lezione," 32.