

quaderni di assorestauro



YEAR07NR01  
MARCH2018

# RESTORATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE: TECHNIQUES AND SUSTAINABILITY

## 18<sup>TH</sup>-24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018



18  
20 MARCH  
MILANO



21  
22 MARCH  
FERRARA



20 MARCH  
PIACENZA



23 MARCH  
PADOVA



21 MARCH  
MIRANDOLA  
S. BENEDETTO



23  
24 MARCH  
VENEZIA

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POLITECNICO  
MILANO 1863  
DIPARTIMENTO ARCHITETTURA  
E STUDI URBANI



SCUOLA DI SPECIALIZZAZIONE  
IN BENI ARCHITETTONICI E DEL PAESAGGIO



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18 MARCH  
20  
MILANO

## MILAN AT THE ROMAN TIMES

### Two pilot projects: Amphitheatrum Naturae and the Basilica of S. Lorenzo Maggiore

Federica Alberga

The city of Milan is famous all around : it is one of the C apitals of fashion and design, the main Italian economic centre, headquarter of the Italian Stock Exchange, an important centre in publishing, theatre and music, a melting pot of cultures.

Milan is surely linked to the modernity; its skyline, the modern architectures, the efficiency, but rarely its history is mentioned and, above all, the ancient one.

Founded from a Celtic tribe at the beginning of the VI century B.C., Milan gained more importance when it became the capital of the Western Roman Empire with the name of Mediolanum. This important past left in the city marks that show the stratification of its magnificent monuments, more or less visible, from the archaeological to the architectonic and artistic ones.

The management of this enormous cultural heritage has followed during the time different steps: from the end of the XIX century when studies, researches and excavations revealed, for the first time, that rests of that Roman monuments survived the spoliations and the construction overlapping; until the post-war period when, during the reconstruction works, a portion of the Imperial Palace, the "Erculee" thermal baths and early Christian episcopal complex, was recovered.

The attitude of the city towards its archaeological heritage was not always finalized to the best conservation and fruition of the assets because the interventions had to adapt to the frenetic rhythms of a city in full economic boom. As Guido Piovene said in his Viaggio

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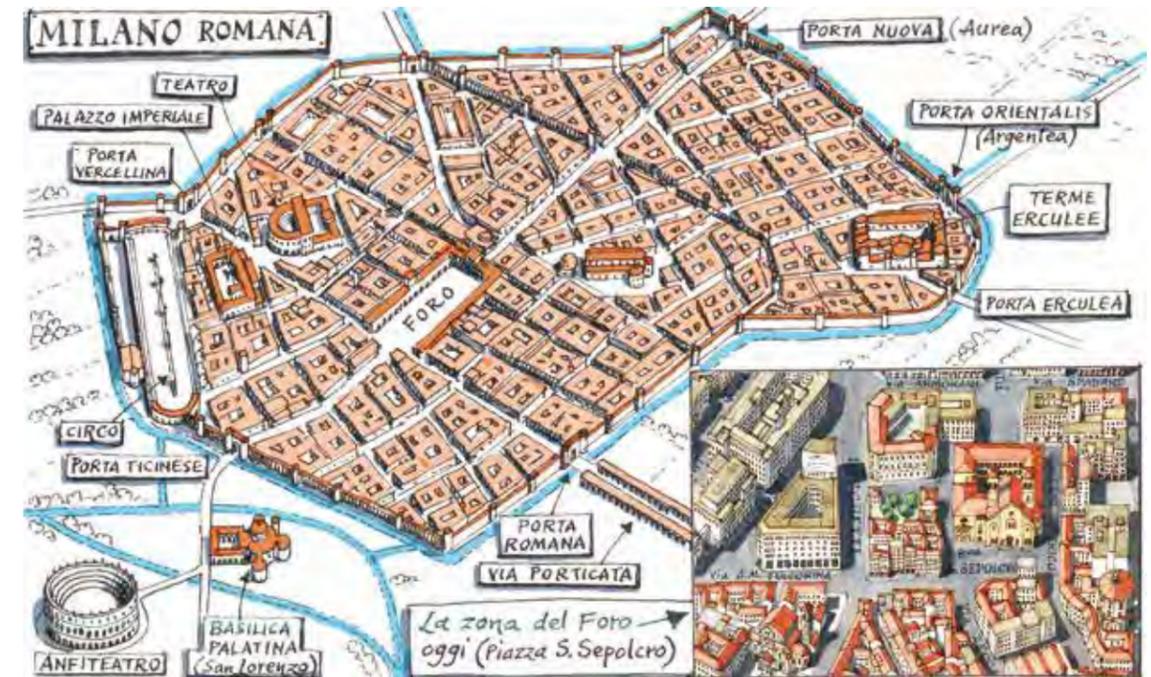


Fig 1. Map of Roman Milan

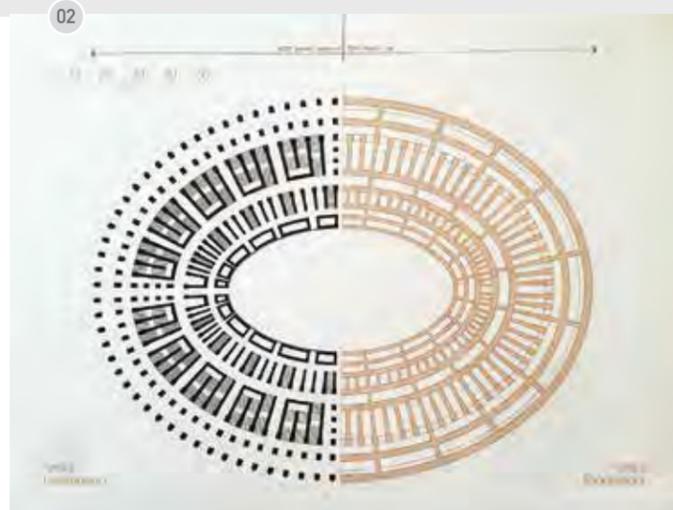
Source: [http://milano.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/18\\_febbraio\\_25/milano-rinasc-antico-foro-romano-mediolanum-piazza-san-sepolcro-pedonalizzata-auto-parcheggio-leonardo-8b8efaf0-19f8-11e8-abf0-5b172331e2b.shtml](http://milano.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/18_febbraio_25/milano-rinasc-antico-foro-romano-mediolanum-piazza-san-sepolcro-pedonalizzata-auto-parcheggio-leonardo-8b8efaf0-19f8-11e8-abf0-5b172331e2b.shtml)

Fonte: <http://milanoarcheologia.beniculturali.it>

in Italia (1957) “[...] Milano è una città utilitaria, demolita e rifatta secondo le necessità del momento, non riuscendo perciò a diventare antica”.<sup>(1)</sup>  
In conclusion, for a long time this heritage was not managed in the proper way or it has just been forgotten.

(1) Trad: “Milan is an utilitarian city, demolished and rebuilt according to the needs of the moment, for this reason not succeeded in becoming ancient”.





**Fig 2. Reconstructive proposal of the Amphitheatre. Axonometry**  
Source: <http://milanoarcheologia.beniculturali.it>

**Fig 3. Reconstructive proposal of the Amphitheatre. Plans**  
Source: <http://blog.urbanfile.org/2016/05/01/milano-porta-ticinese-se-si-ricostruisce-lanfiteatro/>

**Fig 4. The Amphitheatre and its context**  
Source: <http://milanoarcheologia.beniculturali.it>

**Fig 5. The Amphitheatre. In red the ruins and in orange the excavation campaigns**

Nowadays Milan is living another season, characterized by the rediscovery of its historical treasures, the so-called “Milano Romana”, thanks to the collaboration of different public and private entities coordinated by “Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per la città metropolitana di Milano” and by the Superintendent, architect Antonella Ranaldi.

This ambitious project is composed by some initiatives such as “Milano archeologia per Expo 2015. Verso una valorizzazione del patrimonio Archeologico della città di Milano” following by “Mediolanum MMXV”.<sup>(2)</sup>

The aims of these projects are linked to the study, the relief, the conservation and the development of some Roman monuments or Archaeological rests such as S. Eustorgio, S. Lorenzo Maggiore, the Imperial Palace, the Roman Theatre, the Roman Forum, the Circus the Amphitheatre, and how to make in communication these places.

### FINANCIAL SOURCES

It is important to make a focus about the kind of financing of these activities, represented by the sponsorship.

The new Italian “Codice dei Contratti Pubblici”<sup>(3)</sup> improve the public/private partnerships, also for the protection and valorisation of cultural assets. The article 19, establish the threshold value of 40.000 euros as the limit, below which no specific formalities are required for awarding the sponsorship. Over the limit value, the procedures for accepting a private sponsorship are simplified. The Public Administration needs to give evidence of a proposed sponsorship or to the sponsorship search notice, through its official website, for a period of thirty days.

The partnership with the financial operator can be agreed after this period of time, due the financial and moral requirements given by the Law.

The article 115 of the Code refers specifically to the Cultural Assets, confirming the validity

of the article 9 and the role of the Ministry of Culture (MIBACT) to control the Sponsor from the design phases to the intervention on site. The so-called Project Financing can also be extended to the management of the cultural assets for a due period of time after the restoration, according to the agreement. The simplification of the public-private partnership originates from the necessity of managing and preserve the huge Italian Cultural Heritage, widening the participation of the private sector.<sup>(4)</sup>

Three kinds of contracts are available: the “pure sponsorship”, which refers to a direct private grant; the “technical sponsorship”, related to funding the restoration process from the design to the worksite; the “mixed” one, resulting by the combination of the previous.

Among the projects suggest by the “Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti, Paesaggio”, for which are used this kind of private financing, especially the first one, are remarkable the cases of “Amphitheatrum Naturae” and the one developed on S. Lorenzo Maggiore.

### AMPHITHEATRUM NATURAE

The Amphitheatre, whose ruins are accessible from the Antiquarium “Alda Levi”, is hidden in a block of buildings among de Amicis street, Conca del Naviglio street and Arena street. It was the third largest amphitheatre in the world, after the Flavian’s in Rome and the one in Capua and it was built during the I century A.C., out of the city wall. According to the reconstructions, it should have an elliptical shape of 115x125 m and an height of around 38 m, divided on 3 levels and a final attic floor.

During the V century, the monument was disassembled and part of it was used to build other constructions such as the foundation of the near Basilica of S. Lorenzo Maggiore.

Nowadays, the Amphitheatre ruins are collocated in an urban park. The project proposed by the Soprintendenza, called “Amphitheatrum Naturae”, consists in recreating the shape of the missing building through vegetation, terrain modelling and green elements. It will be used trees of box, cypress, privet, and other historical species.

(2) For further information about these and other project it refers to website [www.milanoarcheologia.beniculturali.it](http://www.milanoarcheologia.beniculturali.it)

(3) D.Lgs 50/2016.

(4) Art. 19 -115 of D.Lgs 50/2016; Circolare MiBACT – Segretariato Generale, n. 28 of 17/06/2016 “Sponsorizzazione dei Beni Culturali”; D.M. 19/12/2012 “Norme tecniche e linee guida in materia di sponsorizzazione dei Beni Culturali”.

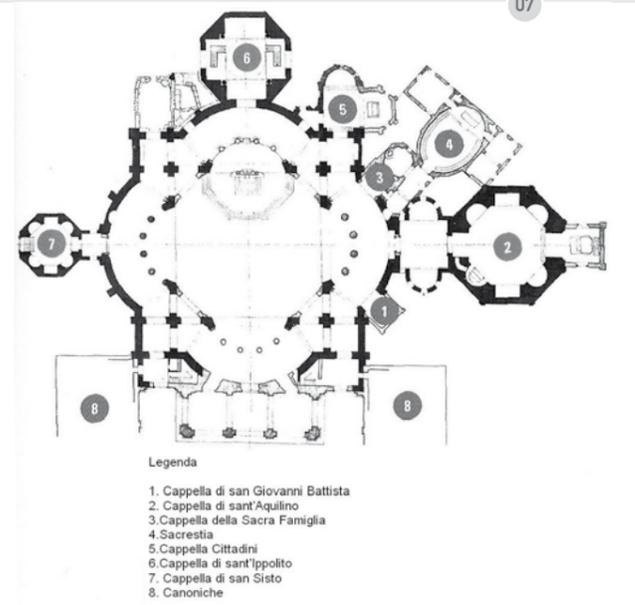


Fig 6. Foundation floor of S. Aquilino's Chapel made by the stone block of the Amphitheatre

Source: <http://milanoarcheologia.beniculturali.it>

Fig 7. The Basilica of S. Lorenzo Maggiore. Plan

Source: <https://www.geometriefluide.com/pagina.asp?cat=paleocristiana&prod=san-lorenzo-milano-storia>

"The care, custody and maintenance of historic sites can find new design solutions in the symbiosis of ruins and greenery, with a landscapist, romantic, architectural approach respectful of the principles of conservation, authenticity, reversibility. While adding or integrating architectural elements is not a very convincing solution, greenery opens the way to creating overtly transient settings capable of improving the enjoyment and enjoyability of a landscape of archaeological ruins. Of course, some precautions must be taken; for instance, trees must be planted into buried vats to avoid contact and the risk of root infestation, and vestige-friendly species must be chosen... Vegetation, terrain modelling and green furniture can be designed purposefully for archaeological sites..."

In line with this idea, I suggested to create a viridarium to revive the archaeological park of the Roman amphitheatre of Milan. An unprecedented Amphitheatrum naturae of ancient topiary species (boxwood, myrtle, privet, cypress), the large elliptical garden replicating the shape of the missing amphitheatre will match and integrate the archaeological finds on site, that is, some stretches of the radial walls of the Roman monument".

From: Antonella Ranaldi, Green Archaeology. Landscapes, gardens, ruins. Integrating voids and images in archaeological sites, QA\_A06\_02 Lebanon

The area in which this experiment of natural reconstruction will be realized, is given in load for use from the Municipality to the Soprintendenza for 5 years, in order to realize the intervention. It will be financed thought the benefit deriving from advertisements collocated on a blind wall of De Amicis street.

This project, strictly connected to the Basilica of San Lorenzo, represents the desire of the Soprintendenza to create a unique itinerary from the archaeological park, to the church and the Park of the Basilica.

### THE BASILICA OF S. LORENZO MAGGIORE

The Basilica of S. Lorenzo Maggiore is located close to the Amphitheatre and represents one of the most ancient church of the city. It was built when Milan was the capital of the Roman Empire, around the end of the IV century and the beginning of the V, in a strategic position: out of the city wall, near Porta Ticinese, the main access to the city from Pavia. The construction history of the church is very complex and a lot of details and information are unknown yet.

In front of the Basilica, The "Saint Lorenzo columns", sixteen Corinthian columns, represent the edge of the old "quadriportico" at the entrance of the church.



Fig 8. The Basilica of S. Lorenzo Maggiore and its chapels

Source: [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilica\\_di\\_San\\_Lorenzo\\_\(Milano\)](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilica_di_San_Lorenzo_(Milano))

Repeatedly revised to face destructions, fires, collapses<sup>(5)</sup>, S. Lorenzo maintains its tetraconch central plan with an ambulatory on the ground floor, to which corresponds the matroneum on the upper level. Arrond this central plan, various chapels had added during the time: S. Aquilino's, S. Ippolito's, Cittadini's, S. Sisto's, S. Giovanni Battista's and Sacra Familia's.

The restoration of the monument is necessary because of the inadequate maintenance and the dated previous interventions (Ambrogio Annoni in 1913 discovered the stone blocks deriving from the amphitheatre under the S. Aquilino's chapel and Gino Chierici, from 1936 to 1940, coordinated the restoration of all the building).

This necessity has paved the way to the cooperation between Monsignor Gianni Zappa, parish priest of the church, and the Soprintendenza, to promote the harnessing of the

**Fig 9. The Basilica of S. Lorenzo Maggiore. A mosaic in the S Aquilino's chapel: "Jesus, on a throne, teaches his apostles"**

Source: [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilica\\_di\\_San\\_Lorenzo\\_\(Milano\)](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilica_di_San_Lorenzo_(Milano))

Photographed by Giovanni Dell'Orto

(5) The present dome was built in 1573 after the previous collapse of the vault following the design by architect Martino Bassi.



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church and the harnessing of the rests present under the altar of the S. Aquilino's chapel. In this period, the pilot project is starting. It is based on the restoration of the S. Aquilino's chapel with its magnificent mosaics thanks to the financing from a private sponsor through the benefit deriving from advertisement (TMC Pubblicità). The first intervention is on the mosaics, the frescos and the ancient painting in the chapel.

In conclusion, the intervention of all the church (consisting also on the restoration of the decoration elements, the resolution of the humidity problems, the illumination system and the creation of an exhibition itinerary of the finds through the matroneum will be divided in more steps, in more construction sites, for which is necessary finding sponsors and financings. One of these private sponsors will be "Fondazione Cariplo" and some of the works in the church will be realized thanks to the private fundraising.

**Fig 10. The Basilica of S. Lorenzo Maggiore. Internal view**

Source: <http://www.ciponline.it/mestre/cappella-di-santaquilino-i-lavori-di-restauro>



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