

STRATEGIES FOR RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

Implementing the conservation plan in Naples

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ABSTRACT

The research project presented is the synthesis of two theses of Specialization in Architectural and Landscape Heritage, developed between the Universities of Genoa and Naples under the supervision of Prof. Arch. Giovanna Franco, Stefano Francesco Musso and Renata Picone. The study explores the theme of adaptive reuse, applied to the religious heritage of Italian historic centres, in the case study of the Monastery of Saints Severino e Sossio in Naples. The tested tool is that of the Conservation Plan, used as a means to investigate design issues and to guide decision-making processes thus by identifying in a clear and organic way the context, the relationships and finally the significant problem areas of the artefact, to successfully manage the ongoing processes and any changes in the scenario.

KEYWORDS

strategy, conservation, historic centres, religious heritage, conservation plan

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In the contemporary debates, the concept of resilience is a well-established topic in many fields, stating, albeit with different meanings, the response capacity and adaptability of a system to external changes. The theme of resilience «[...] assumes a strong symbolic value in a historical period in which the most frequent interpretation access of what defines the world's economic, political and ecological condition is provided by another word, crisis» (Cresti, 2014) representing a strategic approach applicable on any scale, from the individual to the community. In the field of architecture, the theme of resilience refers to «a particular kind of intelligence capable of remodelling itself compared to the complexity of the events that are deconstructing cities» (Infante, 2013, p. 49). Adaptive reuse, in its more general significance, the act of finding a new use for a building (Cantell, 2005), entered the architectural debate during the post-industrial era, raising many doubts about its applicability to historic buildings and the conceptual and substantial distance from the restoration principles (Zargaran, 2017).

Certainly, the idea of reusing heritage buildings is not an invention of our century. What has changed, within the conservation movement, is the 'doctrinal and theoretical awareness' of the modality with which it occurs and, consequently, of the potential damages or benefits that the community can derive from it. For instance, if the values of the buildings affect the conservation intervention, then the issue of proper reuse can be reduced to the precise identification of these latter. This is an extremely shifting concept as well, if it is assumed that symbols and meanings are variable and transitory, they belong to the communities and cannot be identified on the basis of a cultural presumption, but by means of an acknowledgement. However, if on the one hand, this is true, on the other, it is equally true that a removal deletes a document and does not document itself. Therefore, a choice in cultural terms by those who plan the interventions is, in any case, an obligation (Musso, 2017).

In historical centres, those that are identified as values are often also the most fragile points of these systems. The urban fabrics of the historic centres are bearers of symbolic and iconic values intrinsic in their conformation and arrangement of the architectures contained in it. A type of degradation, not purely physical but in any case 'tangible', affects the system of relations between the different parts (the open spaces, the relationships between the built environment, the balance between the various functions, the connective tissue) and it manifests with the disuse of some parts of the city or with the inappropriate use of some elements (De Vita, 2011). To the opposite extreme, if not controlled, tourism also generates a factor of decay and depersonalization of the historic centres. In this sense, the adaptive reuse of heritage in consolidated historical urban contexts, intended as the implementation of micro strategies designed to seek new purposes for an existing building, while respecting its integrity in terms of form, character and layout, can serve a dual function: environmental sustainability and rebirth of the historic centres. Furthermore, on the basis of scientifically and culturally prudent plans, proper reuse of historical urban fabric episodes would rather allow to ward off the spectrum of any possible extreme solutions to the problem, in terms of abandon-

ment of the historic centres as well as ‘touristification’ or gentrification of the same.

The Conservation Plan tool | Conservation plans have solid literature in Anglo-Saxon countries: they were born overseas in 1982, in a publication written by J. S. Kerr and updated within its seventh edition in 2013, the reference point of the Australian conservation. Kerr, starting from the principles enshrined in the Burra Charter, outlines the logical, methodological and cultural process for the preparation of a Conservation Plan. The Conservation Plan represents a tool to preventively evaluate and direct interventions on the built heritage, in particular, for those typologies that present a certain complexity. In this sense, it moves away from both a preventive maintenance plan, as it is a document that underlies the planning, and from a feasibility project, nor is it limited to being a declaration of interest. The preparation of the Plan starts with an accurate survey of the current state, of the context and of the relationships established by this with the artefact, then are analysed both the physical elements and the values associated with it, intended as all the different aspects (aesthetic, historical, scientific, social or spiritual) that make up the notion of cultural value as a measure for the conservative interventions, but also the framework of issues to be solved and constraints to be taken into account. In order to trace guidelines for the choice of the intervention methods to be adopted together with the ones for the fruition and the future management, surely in a strategic, multidisciplinary and highly participatory perspective (Jonker, 2016; Fig. 1).

Except for the exemplary case of the Conservation Plan of Giancarlo de Carlo’s University Colleges in Urbino, developed within the international program of the Getty Museum entitled *Keep it Modern*¹, the Conservation Plan tool is hardly used in Italy. Despite its great methodological potential in solving particularly complex contexts, such as those of many of the Italian historical centres. Here, the complexity of the design approach linked to the historical buildings intensifies in the case of the religious heritage, which is widespread: the symbolic and cultural values associated with these artefacts are bonded to a spiritual dimension, and however intangible, they appear much more defined, immutable and easily in contrast with use values that differ from the original one.

The historic centre of Naples | The ecclesiastical architectural heritage represents an important percentage of the historical assets present on the Italian territory, drawing not only the physical geography of the urban centres but also characterizing them, defining their intangible identity (Fig. 2). The urban fabric of the city of Naples contains a religious, as well as cultural and artistic heritage, which consists of a significant number of churches, worship buildings and monasteries. For this reason, in the 17th century, it was called the city of the five hundred domes. The phenomenon of urban monasticism, born since the fifth century A.D., with a strong hermit character and with no intention to directly affect the ‘*progressionem urbis*’, ended up conditioning the development of

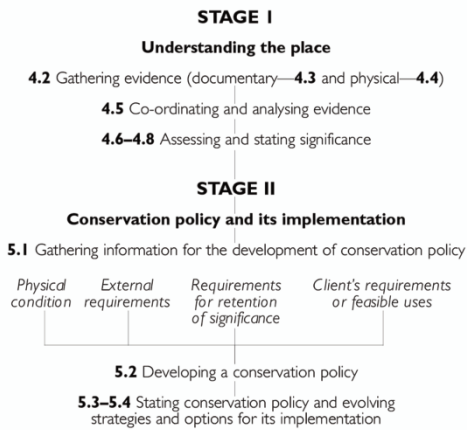


Fig. 1 | Basic elements and logical sequences for the preparation of a Conservation Plan (credit: J. S. Kerr, 2013).

Fig. 2 | Density of the ecclesiastical heritage on the Italian territory (credit: S. Melis and D. Vertone, 2018).

the city. This was in fact favoured by the intervention of the Angevin dynasty, which consisted in the promulgation of the installation of new religious foundations endowed with conspicuous privileges, such as concessions, land donations and huge subsidies for the construction of monasteries and churches. The monastic complexes were preferably built within the urban area, usually close to the city walls, in marginal areas not yet totally built up, allowing the potential acquisition of the neighbouring territories which consequently became the new urban sprawl directions.

The privileged position of the ecclesiastical orders in the real estate field led to the so-called ‘right to insula’: the vast possessions of the religious orders were rented to farmers and usurers, providing them great revenue and the economic power to further expand on the territory. They finished up owning, as Giannone underlines in the Civil History of the Kingdom of Naples of 1732, two parts out of three of the incomes to the point of «buying the whole city» (Colletta, 1985, p. 15). In this period, alongside, or better, leaning against the magnificence of these religious constructions, sprouted Naples’ alleys. These were characterized by fairly random minor buildings, mainly aimed at recovering living space, both in height, with the first superfetations, as in-depth, with the excavation of tunnels and galleries for the retrieval of building materials. From the eighteenth century onwards, the uncontrolled development of the city together with the housing emergency led to the blockade of ecclesiastical construction and to a widespread sense of anticlericalism, which then resulted in the suppression of the monastic orders. Yet, it is in this period that the peculiar image of the historic centre of Naples got outlined, the duality and the constant dialogue between sacred and profane, between public and private, between open and closed spaces, small oases within the chaos, characterizing it as a unicum in the world (Rossi, 2007).

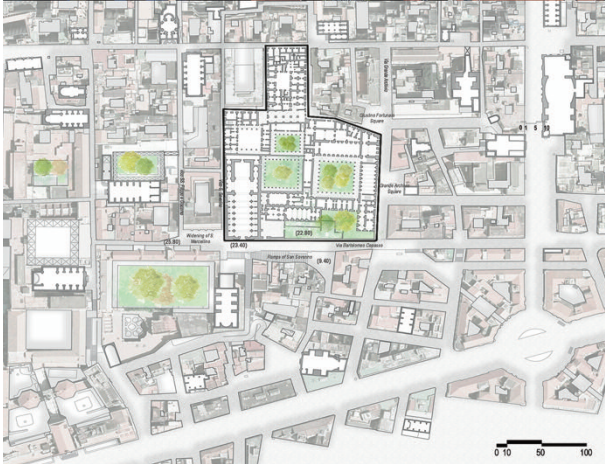
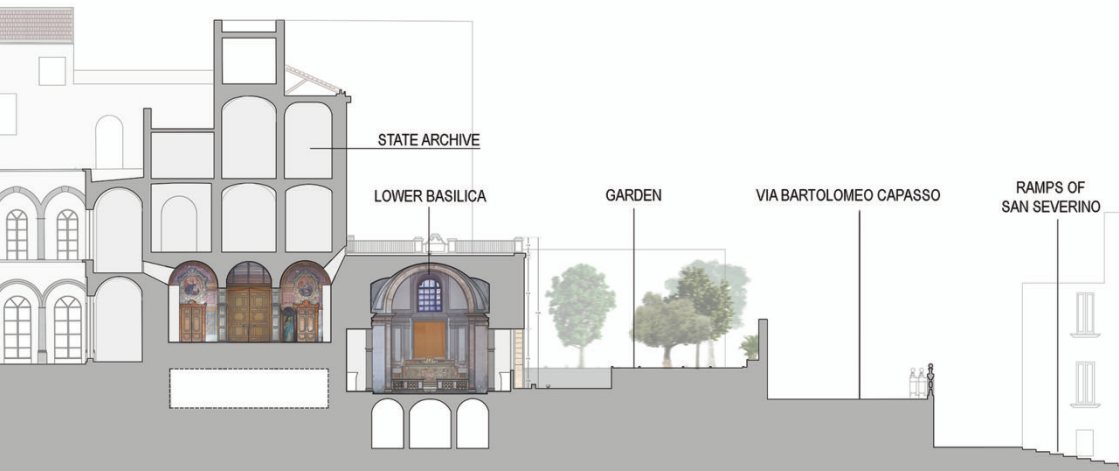


Fig. 3 | Bird's eye view of the Complex of Saints Severino and Sossio (credit: M. Facchini, 2019); Urban layout of the Complex of Saints Severino and Sossio in which the ground floors indicate churches and monasteries in the fabric of the historic centre (credit: personal elaboration of the Authors, 2019).

Fig. 4 | Section view of the spaces of the ante-Sacristy and Lower Basilica (credit: personal elaboration of the Authors, 2019).



The Monastery of Saints Severino and Sossio | The Monastery of Saints Severino and Sossio represents a fundamental asset within the urban fabric of the historic centre of Naples. Built in the fifteenth century on a Roman pre-existence dating back to the tenth century A.D., the complex occupies an entire insula of the urban fabric at the apex of the Monterone hill, followed by the orography and altitude variations, with one top access and another access on the slopes of the hill. The so-called ramps of San Severino and San Marcellino allow overcoming the aforementioned altitude variations by connecting the upper part of the city to the lower part. Near to the Monastery, there are two other large conventual complexes, that of Saints Marcellino and Festo and the Jesuit one of the Gesù Vecchio, configuring the area as a sort of monastic citadel (Fig. 3).

The complex in question, the only one belonging to the Benedictine order, consists of an Upper Basilica, a Succorpo or Lower Basilica, a courtyard with a garden and four raised atria or cloisters around which the actual monastic space develops. The complex preserves in its structural elements and characters of ecclesiastical and secular architecture, presenting still legible today the classic Renaissance convent structure and setting itself up as a significant example of the splendour of the Neapolitan Baroque, unique for the level of some artistic expressions contained therein. The first plant of the monastery was to be located between the Platano's cloister and the current lower church, oriented transversely with respect to the latter, which still retains the trace of the ogival arches in the southern walls (Pessolano, 1978).

The Succorpo, with a single aisle with five niches on each side, served as Basilica for the monks during the construction of the Upper Basilica. In fact, this transitory use preserved it from Baroque alterations, making it what Roberto Pane has identified as one of the few examples of purely Renaissance churches in the Neapolitan area (Pane, 1937). The Upper Basilica represented an extremely ambitious program that engaged the forces and finances of the Order for about two centuries: about 80 meters long and 40 meters wide, with a single-nave Latin cross, with seven chapels on each side and two chapels in the presbyterial part. Furthermore, it is characterized by extensive and extraordinary use of marble, which covers all its architectural structures, with vaults and domes frescoed by important painters of the time.

The development of the basilica is organized according to a rectangular system, in which the cloistered daily life is marked by the succession of the 'church-sacristy-cloister-garden' spaces. On the side of the Basilica is the Sacristy, a large vaulted room completely frescoed, embellished with rich wooden furnishings and opus sectile floors, and some rooms used for religious functions. Three vaulted and frescoed spaces, punctuated by decorated piperno stone arches, give access to as many rooms: one, abundant of stratifications, probably intended for baptisms, the Sala del Tesoro, adorned with rich stuccos, and a boudoir of neoclassical taste, connecting to the Lower Basilica (Fig. 4). Currently, the Complex is divided into two parts that do not communicate with each other, the largest of which houses the State Archive of Naples since 1835, while the remaining, consisting of the spaces most closely related to the

religious function, is owned by the Fondo Edifici di Culto (FEC). Obviously, being intended for public use, the part of the Convent used as Archive has had continuous ordinary maintenance as opposed to the remaining part of the Monastery. To this was added the gutting of the urban fabric perpetrated in the years of the Renovation for the construction of the current via Bartolomeo Capasso, which altered both the southern access of the complex and the altimetric relationships between the various parts, significantly changing the conditions (Fig. 5).

The reason for a Conservation Plan | Many of the interventions that concerned the Complex between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were able to solve problems due not only to the passage of time but to the critical issues of the building, accentuated by abandonment and neglect and by traumatic phenomena that occurred, as seismic and war episodes and adaptations to new use destinations (such as that of the Archive), which have been extremely invasive, with the aim of buffering the emergency situations that gradually emerged, without a programmatic vision of the times and methods, often accompanied by major economic efforts by the public administration. Also the current management of the building, apart from sporadic events, is not particularly synergistic. In fact, it is divided between the State Archive and several other associations and institutions dealing with the part of the Complex belonging to the FEC (such as the Touring Club that allows the opening of the Upper Basilica to the public on certain days of the week). Unfortunately, this is at the expense of both the conceptual and substantial unitary image of the Convent, currently lost. Therefore, it is not possible, as it originally happened, to walk through the Complex. Moreover, the clear separation of the two parts and the distance between the intended uses have compromised, over the centuries, the vision of the Monastery as a single architectural organism. Also, the restoration project of the State Archive, included in the interventions by the Grande Progetto Centro Storico di Napoli – Valorizzazione del Sito UNESCO² for the part under the management of the FEC, pointed out the importance of reopening this path, but still has not found implementation.

The proposal to seek a systemic approach that could hold together problems and solutions at different scales was born from the global analysis of the interventions that have taken place over the years in relation to the current state of conservation of the property, as well as to the management of the latter, and found in the Conservation Plan a valid methodological tool. Compared to punctual and circumscribed interventions, which cannot find sufficient strength to carry out a real process of global enhancement, the idea of using a strategy that tries to hold together the general scale of problems before approaching to the specific scale of the intervention, allows to have a synthetic picture of both the first ones and the seconds, to then orient them in a more conscious way, also in a logic of optimization of the financial resources that can be retrieved. The methodology is therefore preferred to the solution of the individual specific case, in order to also address the interventions that could not deepen within the Plan.

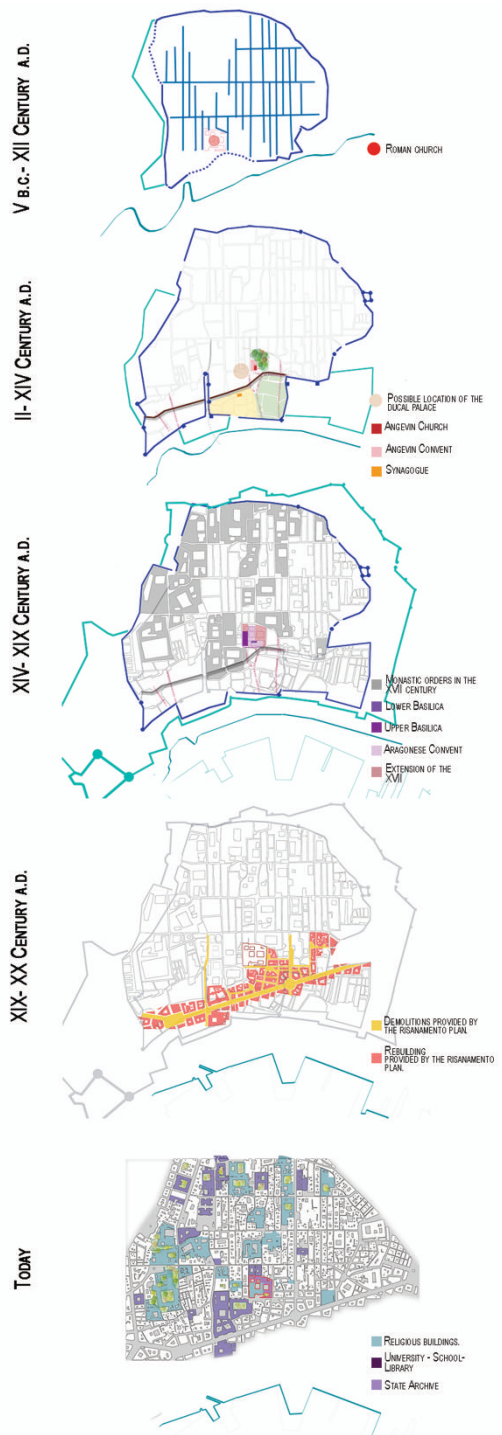


Fig. 5 | Historical evolution of the Monastery in relation to the urban fabric of the historic centre of Naples (credit: personal elaboration of the Authors, 2019).



Fig. 6 | Logical process for the preparation of a Conservation Plan (credit: Vancouver Heritage Foundation, 2016).

The methodology | The holistic approach to understanding the artefact required the research and the analysis of the different aspects that define or influence the cultural meaning of the property in question, as well as the material aspects regarding it. The on-site survey, crossed with indirect knowledge, made it possible to achieve a more detailed overview of the physical and historical consistency of the artefact and the issues concerning it (Fig. 6). The methodology underlying the preparation of the Plan, in summary, consisted of:

- Analysis of indirect sources, conducted in Libraries and Archives;
- Comparison of the data obtained with the study of historical cartography to outline the development of the Complex in relation to the urban fabric of the historical centre;
- Reconstruction of the historical evolution of the Monastery on an architectural scale;
- Reconstruction of the geological and landscape context;
- Analysis of direct sources through inspections, metric and photographic surveys, drone aerial photographs and thermal imaging camera surveys;
- Definition of the area of intervention, intended as critical area functional to the general restoration of the Complex;
- Understanding of the monument in its physical, architectural, historical and symbolic consistency through direct and indirect techniques and analyzes;
- Detection of the state of degradation and instability and systemic analysis of the problems encountered;
- Definition of the historical, artistic and cultural but also social and urban significance of the Monastery;
- Definition of the potential and identification of future stakeholders;
- Identification of the main problems affecting the measured values, in terms of critical issues and vulnerability factors;
- Formulation of the policies to be adopted, intended as the delineation of an intervention masterplan indicating management, responsibilities, iterations and suggestions on an urban scale and intervention criteria on an architectural scale;
- Identification of macro-categories of intervention, as methodology and eventual so-

lutions to be verified, establishing an order of preference that will be related to the resources available.

The definition of the area of intervention | What has been chosen as an intervention area, maintaining a strategic vision of the intervention, and indeed precisely in order to comply with this purpose, is the part of the Complex now belonging to the FEC, in particular, the Lower Basilica, and the rooms of the ante-Sacristy: this appears as the weak link of the complex due to its state of degradation and abandonment. In a general vision, it is necessary to act primarily on these environments, in prospect of a restoration and re-signification, in order to be able to mend them to the rest, with the aim of restoring a sort of continuity, not only spatial and in terms of usability, but also and above all conceptual, to the whole Complex (Fig. 7).

The understanding of the Monument | The study of the direct sources, advanced through empirical methods and visual evaluations, has made it possible to systematise the architectural elements and the decorative apparatuses present in their techniques, materials and state of conservation to identify a framework of hypotheses which will then be supported by specific and in-depth analyses (Fig. 8). The main phenomena of degradation and instability found can be placed into three macro-categories: a widespread state of degradation affecting vaults and walls inside the Lower Church, consisting in the presence of saline efflorescence, concretions, biological patinas and stains affecting the surface finishes, with phenomena of detachment of the plaster and erosion of the marble systems, attributable to rising damp and infiltrations; static instability expressed in a large crack pattern that affects in particular vaults and walls of the ante-Sacristy spaces, underneath the rooms destined for the State Archive; the consequent deterioration of the surfaces' finishes, attributable in part to the aforementioned movements affecting the structure.

The definition of values | The definition of values represents a fundamental step within the preparation of a Conservation Plan, for the purpose of its future validity and for a correct setting of the conservative criteria. The Monastery has a fundamental importance in the fabric of the Neapolitan historical centre, for the close relationship, it has had since its foundation with the orography and the formation of the city, containing within itself archaeological, historical-artistic and documentary evidence of the Renaissance splendour and the Neapolitan Baroque (Fig. 9). Beyond its value as centre of worship and point of reference for the Christian religious community, the Monastery still preserves in its structural elements and characters of ecclesiastical and secular architecture that allow understanding the different cultural and social aspects of the Benedictine monasticism. In this sense, the physical elements, such as the decorative apparatuses and the few liturgical furnishings and objects left on-site, are manifestations of intangible values: in the Benedictine liturgy, sacred objects are meant to

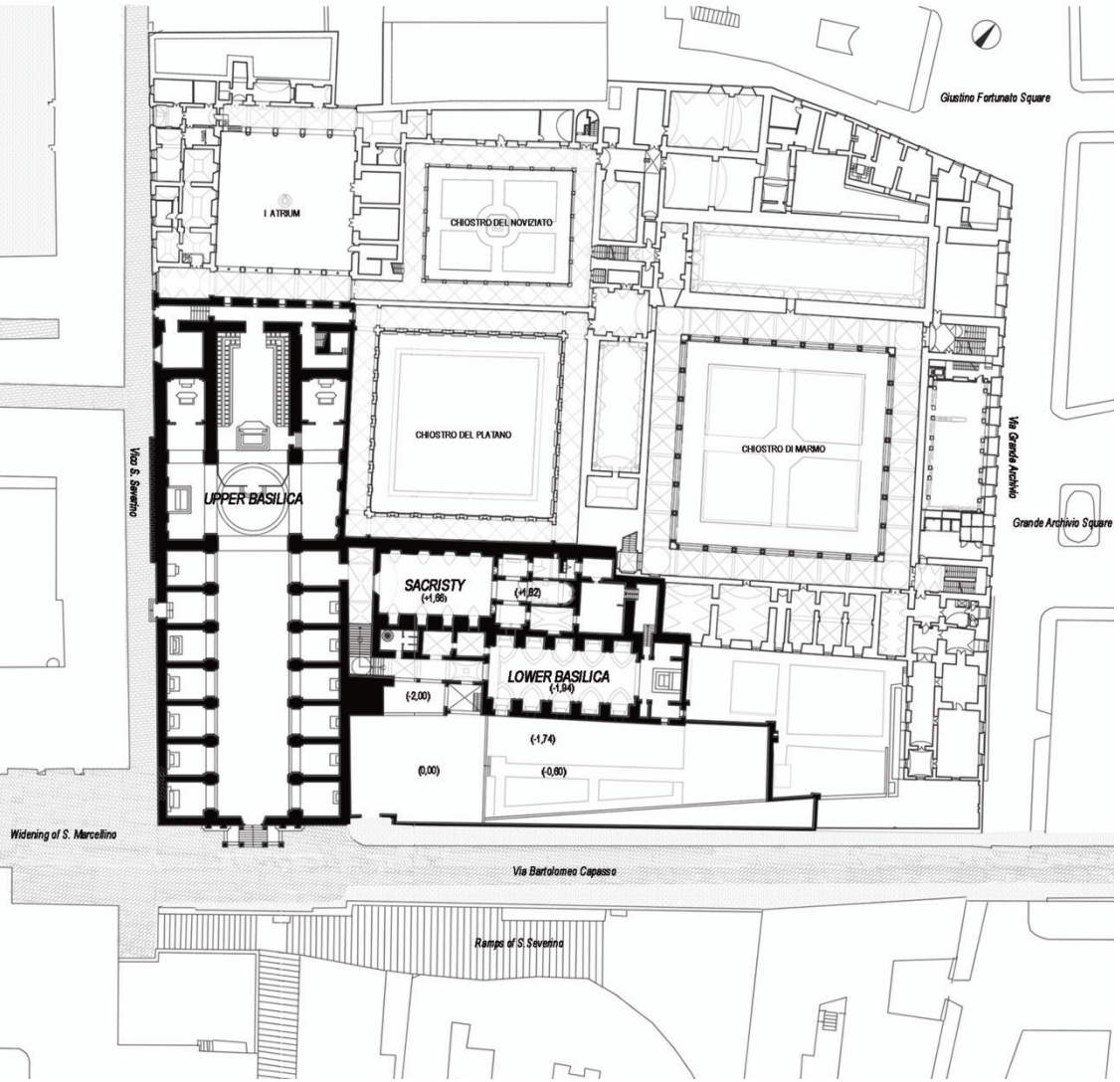


Fig. 7 | Plan with delineation of the area belonging to the FEC (credit: personal elaboration of the Authors, 2019).

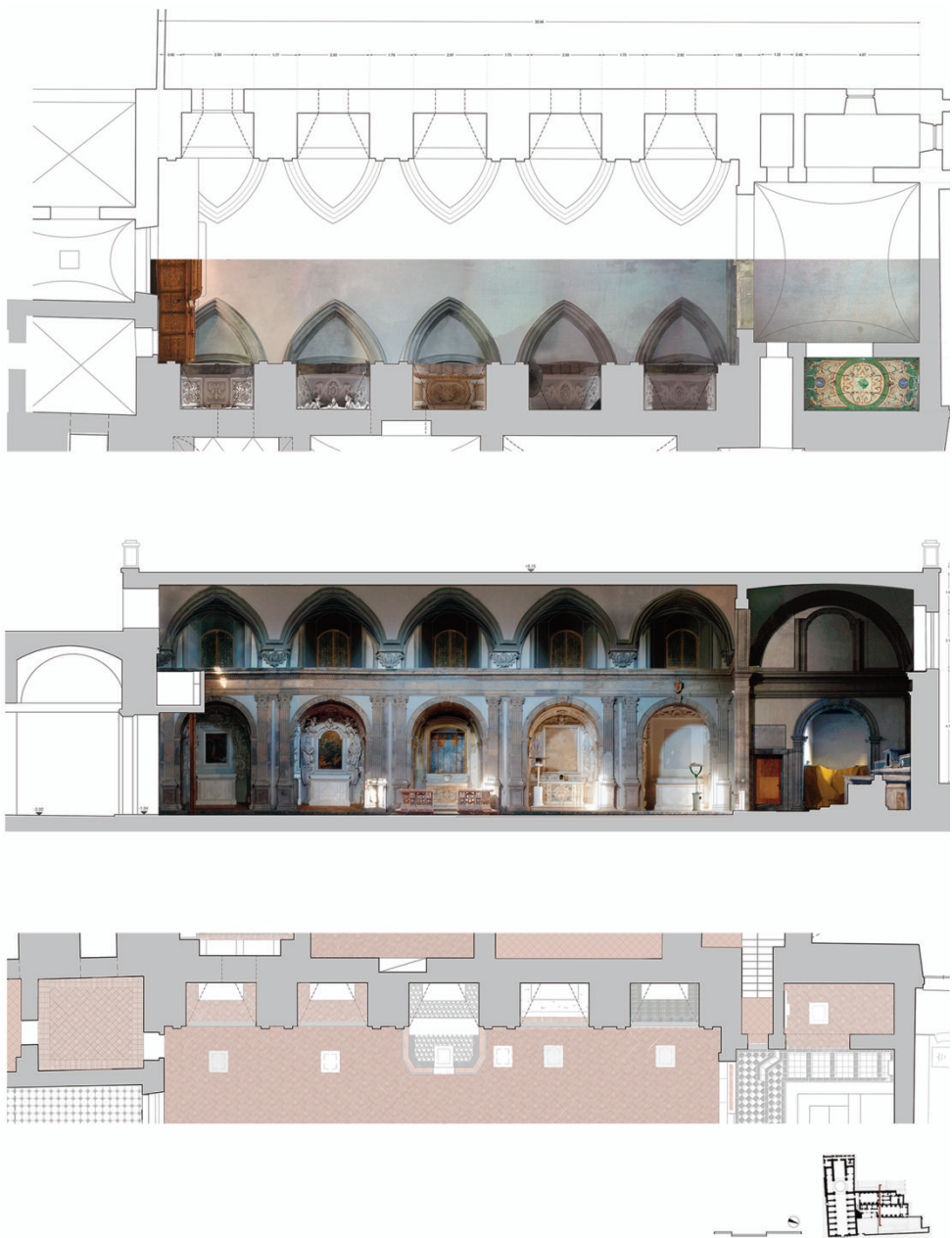


Fig. 8 | Synthetic representation through photo-insertions and reproduction of the decorative apparatuses of the Lower Basilica (credit: personal elaboration of the Authors, 2019).



bring the faithful closer to the ascensional dimension, inasmuch expression of celebratory community customs, as well as ornamental arts and architecture, become formal expression of the intangible reality, hence bearing a strong symbolic value within it.

Potential, critical issues and stakeholders | An accurate and multilevel analysis of the potential and the criticality of the building, on both an architectural and urban scale, allows to significantly reduce the margin of error in planning the interventions and in choosing a correct destination of use. The methodology used, availed itself of hard data analysis with territorial maps and drafting of fishbone diagrams. This, for instance, led to a summarized vision of the strong potential of the Monastery to be im-



Fig. 9 | The Upper Basilica (credit: M. Facchini, 2019).

plemented in order to relink it in a future network of tourist-cultural attractors, already present on-site but lacking in organization and coordination, to which is added the proximity of the 'Federico II' University and the State Archive. In the immediate surroundings of the building, there are few commercial activities and a lack of well-defined public spaces: San Marcellino's widening and the ramps of via Capasso are degraded and dangerous, devoid of any type of attraction. In this sense, the position of the Monastery's garden is strategic, as one of the few green spaces in the historic centre in close proximity to the road.

Moreover, to the analysis of the hard data was then associated a map of the possible stakeholders, between public and private promoters and receptive and cultural op-

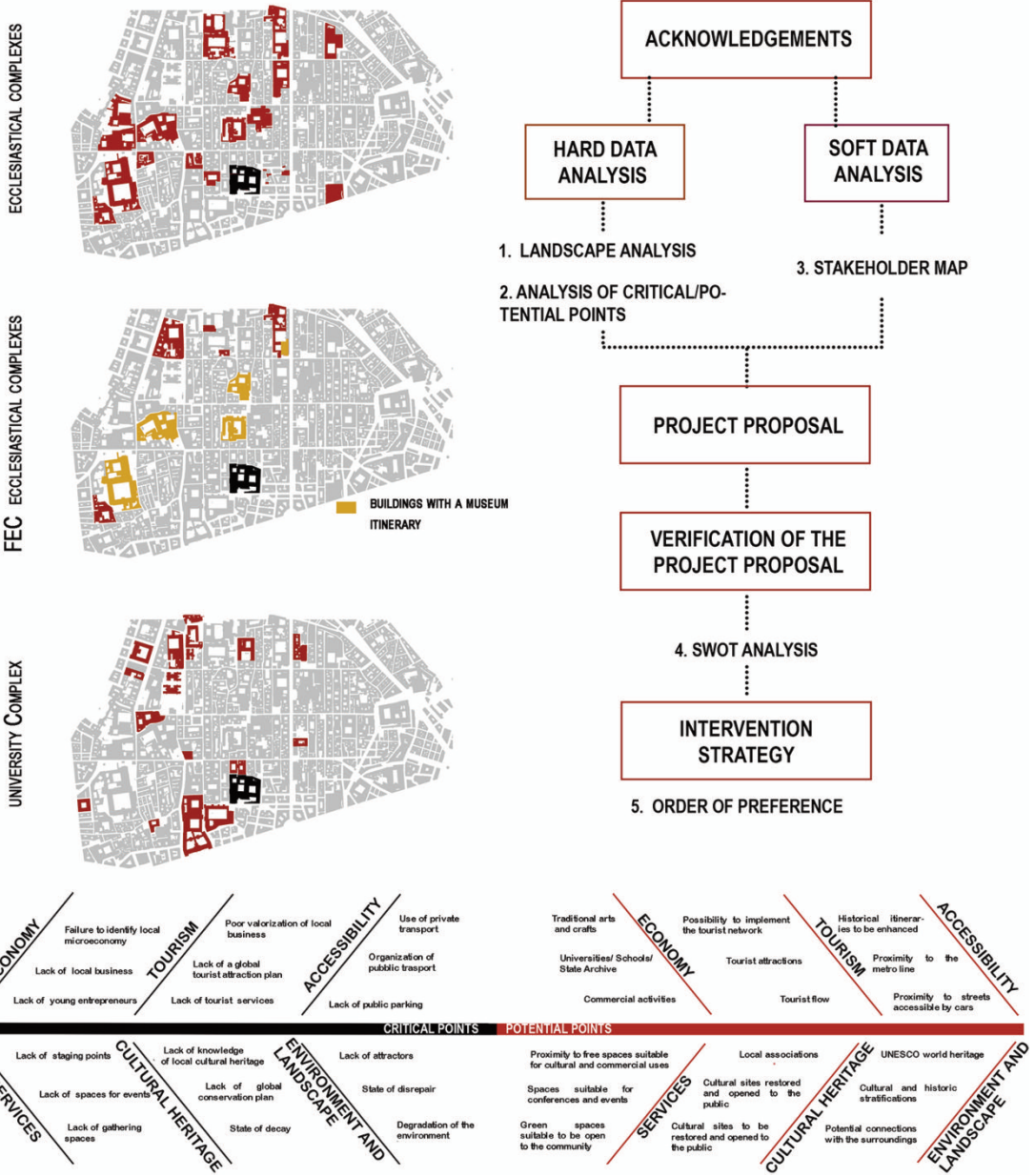


Fig. 10 | Applied methodology and Hard data analysis: fishbone diagrams and spatial analysis (credit: personal elaboration of the Authors, 2019).

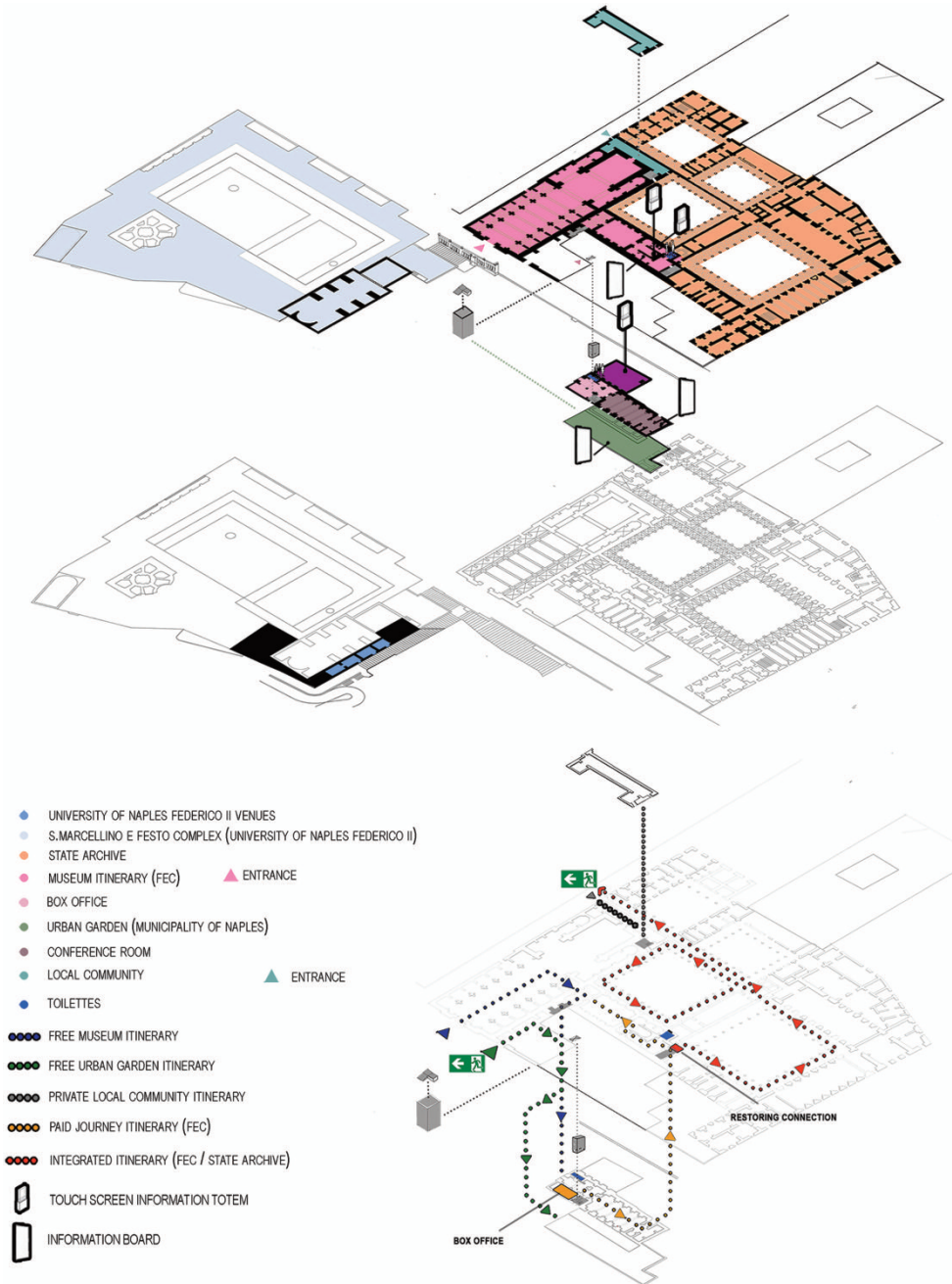


Fig. 11 | Intervention Masterplan: functional distribution and paths (credit: personal elaboration of the Authors, 2019).

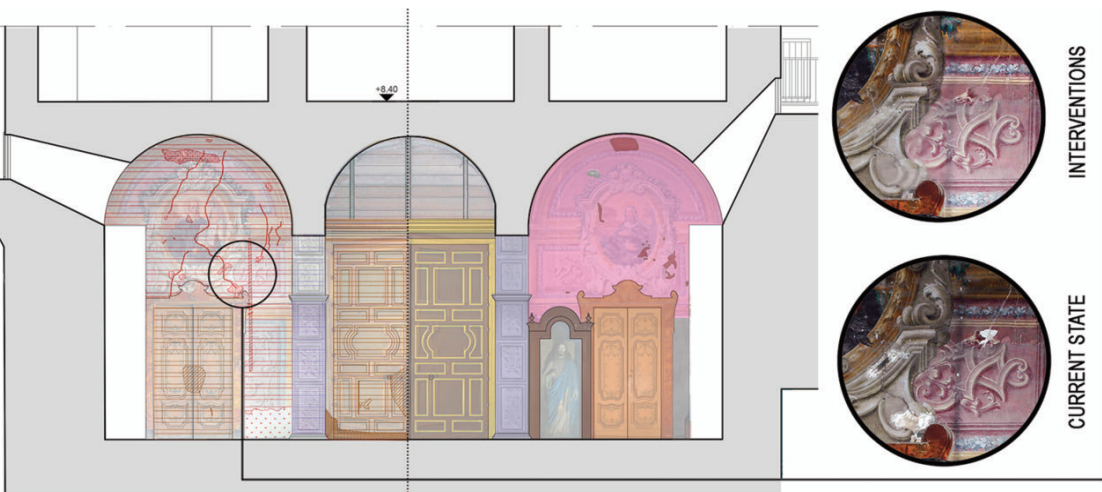
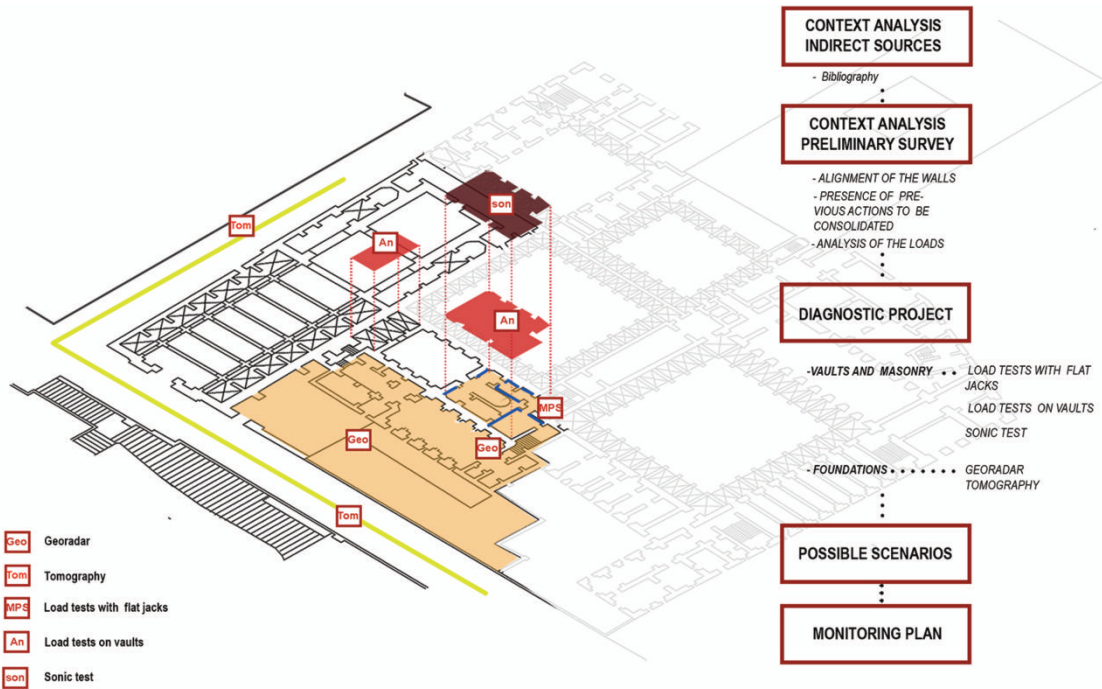


Fig. 12 | Diagnostic project (credit: personal elaboration of the Authors, 2019).

Fig. 13 | Mappings processed on photographic supports in UNI 11182:2006 lexicon for the setting of intervention protocols for the conservation of surfaces and simulation of the interventions (credit: personal elaboration of the Authors, 2019).

erators, but above all among possible users, in order to evaluate if there are a knowledge base and consensus regarding the actions to be taken. The comparison with the latter category has revealed the poor knowledge by the local population of the Monastery, in its artistic, historical and architectural consistency, but also a great curiosity and a more than positive response downstream from the provision of information and awareness-raising actions. Furthermore, the usage of spaces for various community-based uses exposes the need for gathering places on the territory (Fig. 10).

Intervention masterplan | The crossing of hard and soft data has made it possible to outline a projectual hypothesis that holds together an architectural and urban scale at the same time. The intended use identified, which partially incorporates the guidelines of the Grande Progetto UNESCO, expands the existing offer with a cultural centre that on one hand recounts the characters of the Benedictine monasticism in a museum itinerary and on the other opens its spaces to the community, placing an urban orchard within the garden, recalling its ancient vocation, a multipurpose room addressed to the users of the State Archive and other institutions present in the Lower Basilica and a reception area with a canteen service for the most in need.

The itineraries inside the museum have been divided into three types, based on the mode of use and the extension: in the first case, complete and free access to the Upper Basilica is foreseen, while in the second the itinerary is configured in the spaces owned by the FEC which, with the support of augmented reality, narrate the story of the Complex since its foundation and reconstruct the life of the Monastery in the uses and stories related to its architecture, also reproducing what has been lost or stolen. Finally, a third itinerary, provides for the integration of the Monastery museum's itinerary with that of the State Archive, allowing the full usability of the Complex.

The museum, thus conceived, could be part of a network of cultural centres owned by the FEC in the historic centre of Naples, with the possibility of creating iterations between them through thematic itineraries that may engage the tourist in visiting more sites also allowing the acknowledgement about specific aspects of these latter. The idea is that of relating the new cultural centre to the nearby areas, catalyzing a process of regeneration of its urban surroundings and also involving the ramps of San Marcellino and San Severino through the inclusion of activities, in the spaces owned by the University facing the latter, related to the functions of the Museum and the Archive, in a further extension of the itinerary, thus configuring the Monastery as the link between the two poles of attraction of the University and the State Archive. The outlined hypotheses should then be verified by SWOT analysis before moving on to structuring the interventions, establishing an order of preference, and at the same time working on the image of the project itself – brand identity, graphic design, etc. (Fig. 11).

Elaboration of guidelines for interventions on an architectural scale | On an architectural scale, the Plan identifies, on the basis of the already identified macro-cate-

gories, as many categories of intervention. The logic of the Conservation Plan aims to consider the latter on a larger scale by investigating their relationships, in order to orient the interventions in the most proper and accurate way. In this sense, rather than providing definitive solutions to the individual problems encountered, the setting of a survey plan and a series of interventions is outlined, moreover, to be verified and validated in light of the latter. As regards, for example, the macro-category of structural consolidation, it has been foreseen a first set of in-depth indirect investigations, consisting of bibliographic and archival analysis from which to deduce the static history, followed by direct analyzes aimed at finding informations on the consistency of the materials, the presence of previous consolidations, the effective alignment of the walls and the analysis of the loads acting on the structures, so as to be able to have a clear picture of the dynamics that occurred to the building, in support of a correct reading of the crack patterns.

For the partiality of information that has been possible to access, there are still too many doubts for a correct evaluation of the phenomena acting. Therefore, since only on the basis of an adequate profile of knowledge, will it be possible to set up an adequate intervention plan, it has been outlined a diagnostic survey based on non-destructive and minimally destructive tests on the walls to which has been added a cross-reference of geophysical prospections which results will give three-dimensional data that might lead to definitively identify the foundations and the possible effects on the stratigraphy. Based on the current framework of open questions, it was possible to outline some different scenarios, in a logical deductive process, for which were given methodological and conceptual guidelines for the setting of future interventions (Fig. 12). The problems related to humidity and infiltrations were approached with the same criterion aforementioned.

Furthermore, as regards the interventions for the conservation of the surfaces, given the complexity and richness of the decorative apparatuses present in the Monastery, a first expeditious survey was carried out to quantify and define the different types of surfaces to be taken in consideration in the conservative intervention. As a result, it was possible to draw up 'intervention protocols' for each identified case. The deterioration pathologies present, assessed through visual inspection during the site surveys, were detected with the help of UNI 11182:2006, through mappings drawn up on photographic material and graphs at different scales, in relation to the level of detail necessary for the evaluation of the phenomena. All the different intervention protocols aim at eliminating the degradation of the artefact but not the traces of its passage through time. Therefore, preserving the memory through historical elements, mainly carrying out punctual cleaning and protective treatments, calibrating the intervention in relation to the state of decay and to the surface on which the operation takes place. Methods and techniques for pursuing the intervention have been oriented by an approach aimed at maximizing the compatibility with the artefact, seeking for the most sustainable solutions both from an ecological and biological point of view (Fig. 13).

Conclusions and future perspectives | Approaching the study of a theme such as that of the Monastery of Saints Severino and Sossio may appear, in the beginning, discouraging and disorientating. First of all, because of the complexity of the palimpsest itself and second of all, for the massive amount of info and documentation linked to it. On the other hand, despite the quantity, the documentary material results so fragmentary and confusing making it impossible sometimes to find specific information, which on many aspects appears incomplete and lacking. Similarly, the Monastery seems to have experienced a rapid process of oblivion in its recent history. As if time, together with man's carelessness, had let the dust cover the memory of a place, once a centre of art and culture, to the point of erasing it from the maps.

A fate common to that of the Complex applies to many other sites in the historic centre, which, deprived of their original function, hardly manage to relate with the present use-values and get into processes of abandonment. At the same time, the cultural and landscape heritage is recognized by the European Commission (2014) as one of the fundamental resources for sustainable development. Moreover, it is identified as 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986) for local identity and social cohesion. But if symbols and meanings, as previously stated, belong to the communities as well as the onus of their recognition, one wonders what to do when a community seems to no longer identify itself within its cultural heritage. Given the increasing interest in circular economy, which is changing the intervention concept on heritage from pure conservation to an infrastructural vision that considers it as a driving force behind regeneration processes on an urban scale, the participation of the community appears as *sine qua non* condition that needs to be awakened raising cultural awareness to overcome the dichotomy between conservation and valorization. Mere conservation, often detached from any valorization initiative due to the public administration's lack of available resources, ends up «denying to the asset itself its expressive capability of witness-bearing civilization values» (Barile and Saviano, 2012, p. 114).

Cultural actions should foresee processes aimed at ensuring the survival and the growth of the relationships characterizing the heritage and representing the expression of its cultural significance. In this sense, the so-called 'place-based' approach, understood as the involvement of the local communities through their knowledge, collaborating with all the actors on the territory and promoting inter-institutional cooperation, represents a systemic vision of the valorization processes on the territory and 'bottom-up' initiatives identify a form of empowerment of the local communities towards heritage on the basis of a recognition and a sense of belonging, which translates into more aware valorization practices and with more effective 'top-down' projects results (Daldanise et alii, 2019).

Starting from this assumption, the research aims to outline a methodology intervention flexible and adaptable to various complex cases, in particular, that of the disused ecclesiastical heritage, identified in the Conservation Plan. This design process, still not much experienced in Italy, is proposed as a potential strategy to simplify the

dialogue between the various figures that contribute to its definition, where the role of the technician becomes also that of coordination and awareness-raising.

In this scenario, the Conservation Plan can represent a valid tool for the management of ‘bottom-up’ processes, configuring itself as a table of confronts between communities and public administrations for a clear structuring of the values, of the recognition or non-recognition of these latter ones by the community and of the problems that affect them, in order to develop shared conservation policies, perceived as binding by a plurality of actors, that can be translated into future participatory projections and, in this respect, more consolidated and effective.

Notes

1) The project was presented within the volume: Borgarino, M. P., Bazzoli, N., Del Curto, D., Mazzolani, M., Sansonetti, A. and Trois, A. (2019), *I Collegi di Giancarlo De Carlo a Urbino – Piano di Conservazione e Gestione*, Mimesis Edizioni, Milan.

2) Entrusting of the renovation and refunctionalization works of the former Convent of Saints Severino and Sossio, the housing of the State Archive, aimed at expanding the use and valorization and divulgation of particularly valuable artistic resources, on the basis of the final project place made up of contest as based as for the art. 203, comma 2, of the Italian Legislative Decree 163/2006 and subsequent amendments – Regional Operational Program FERS Campania 2007-2013 – Axis 6 Urban Development and Quality of Life – Operational Objective 6.2, Naples and the Metropolitan Area – Grande Progetto Centro Storico di Napoli, Valorizzazione del Sito UNESCO.

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