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**Original Article: FEATURES OF EXPOSURE OF DISPLACED MONUMENT  
(ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMPLEX IN THE CAMPUS MARTIUS IN ROME)**

**Citation**

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**Abstract**

Violation of the principle of conservation of the monument at the historic site (in situ) resulted in a substantial loss of the archaeological relationship between architectural objects and a noticeable loss of their plastic expression. Article focuses on the value of the ensemble (archaeological complex in the Campus Martius in Rome) and its place in contemporary culture.

**Keywords:**

The architecture of ancient Rome; Campus Martius in Rome; Mausoleum of Augustus; the exposition of the architecture; archeology.

Historical consciousness formation, occurrence at the beginning of the 19th century of architectural monuments restoration, occurrence at the end of the 19th - at the beginning of the 20th century of the term "architectural monument" changed attitude to cultural heritage. The worked out at the end of the 18th century in situ principle, i.e. the monument conservation principle in archaeological context, was recognized, however, its application was complicated with prolonging values differentiation process. It

is known that sculpture works and Egyptian obelisks were displaced, many architectural constructions were subjected to destruction and disassembling. Public interest to individual aspects of antique and decorative and artistic value of architectural monument led to significant artistic and architectural and archaeological value losses. In respect of this the fate of the Mausoleum of Augustus archaeological complex and the Ara Pacis in the Campus Martius is significant.

The Campus Martius ensemble in Rome has the richest history, connected with individual monuments displacement. The occupation layer and rearrangement increase changed the pedestrian and transport route situation, determining urban landscape perception angles; some relief features and whole architectural constructions appeared concealed under the ground.

Strabo described the ensemble impressively: "...and the Campus size amazes, since, despite the great number of people, who play the ball there, roll the hoop or do wrestling, nevertheless there at the same time remains a site for free chariot races and other horse exercises. Then artworks, surrounding the Campus Martius,

the ground, covered with the green lawn for the whole year, and hill crowns over the river, extending to its bed, bring into sight the image of a theatre set, all this presents a show, which is difficult to stop looking at. ... and around — many porticos, parks, three theatres, an amphitheatre and magnificent temples, situated one after another, ... the Romans, considering this site as the most sacred, erected sepulchral monuments of the most famous men and women there” [1; p. 220].

Many constructions of that time interweave into a dense fabric of urban development today, composing its plastic and meaningful dominants. The ensemble elements are connected with the occupation layer. Excavations, connected with loss of values, were conducted in areas, which were of the greatest interest. So the Mausoleum of Augustus is ditched from all sides and hopelessly isolated from archaeological context. It is surrounded with an exposition pit in the form of crater with “green” slopes and descents to the original marks of day surface. Two Egyptian granite obelisks, which once flanked the entrance to the Mausoleum, were displaced to the Quirinal (Piazza del Quirinale) and to the Esquiline (Piazza dell'Esquilino). The deformation of perception of the Campus Martius ensemble became the repeated subject of disputes, caused by the Ara Pacis displacements at first in 1930s, and then in 2000s. The discussion revealed the problems of monument conservation on historic site, displaced object architectural and archaeological context loss, object embedding into another context and mutual monument adaptation into its surroundings.

Repeated excavations and, under the guise of saving, — the individual monument fragments seizure began from the first half of the 16th century. It is considered likely, in particular that the engraving (depicting the swan with spread wings, surrounded with a big part of frieze, decorated with flowers and scrolls) by Agostino Musi (1490-1540), known as

Agostino Veneziano, made in 1532, reproduces the third panel from the left on the southern side, now lost.

The typical for that epoch episode of “salvation” is dated 1560s, when the cardinal Giovanni Ricci of Montepulciano wrote four letters to the secretary of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, informing about the finding of reliefs “with the depicted in marble triumph”, and persuaded him to purchase them for Cosimo I de' Medici. The cardinal Ricci considered that these panels belonged to the Arch of Domitian. The panels were sawn lengthwise and widthwise for easier transportation. Only one the “Tellus” panel (Latin: Tellus - the ancient Roman earth mother goddess, which was also called Tellus Mater and called on in prayers together with Ceres) reached Florence in 1569, at the time when the other ones were sent to the villa of the cardinal Ricci (the Pincian Hill, the future villa of Medici). Five of them, richly decorated, were built in the retaining wall of the terrace, and in 1780 were carried to Florence and restored by the sculptor Francesco Carradori.

In 1859, when the foundation (basements) reinforcement works of the San Lorenzo in Lucina Palace (on the Via del Corso), which belonged to the duke Fiano, were being carried out, the altar fragments were discovered again at the depth of 5.5 metres, but not all of them were earthed because of the proximity to the Palace and fear of damaging the building walls. Some sculptural fragments were earthed from the ground and “saved”. A panel with a relief was among them, depicting penates, as well as many other frieze fragments, decorated with flowers. All the restored panels were remained at the Palazzo Fiano until 1898, when the duke sold them to the National Museum of Rome (Museo Nazionale Romano).

The excavations were interrupted in 1903 that provoked a new wave of motions and requests about the Ara Pacis saving. The risk of four-floor building collapse, which appeared already during the first

excavations, which affected the basements and the foundation, was very high. It was necessary to avoid the threat for the residential house, in which moreover was the first Roman cinema. The idea of all the house demolition to the ground level, a grandiose excavation production and the altar extraction from the soil, its disassembling, displacement and assembling on a new site was accepted. This decision met approval among archaeologists, but the problem was not only in the huge cost, but also in “urgency”, since the anniversary was coming — the year of Augustus (September 1937 - September 1938).

Finally, in February 1937 the decision about the excavations resuming was made on the government level. Giuseppe Moretti, the head of the Cultural Heritage of Rome department, was appointed as the director. The building works were entrusted to the Milan company “Rodio & Co.”, which had patented a soil freezing technology by entering liquefied carbon dioxide into soil several years before. However, this technology, needed during excavations in swampy soils, in soils with particularly complex and changeable structure, was known, since it was successfully applied during the underground building in Paris in 1907 and in Moscow in 1936. What was new was the carbon dioxide liquid applying and the freezing system simplification, which further decreased the temperature and created the growing “ice barrier” much more quickly.

Thanks to such preparation, in a peculiar ice sarcophagus, the Ara Pacis archaeological excavations, interrupted in 1903 at the depth of 7.5 metres from the day surface level, could be continued. On the 29th of April 1937 the relief with the “flamines” procession and also many fragments, among which sacrificial table side pillars and the part of the Augustus figure, was discovered. Some of the panels were also extracted, belonging to the exterior decoration of the podium, which

was in general decided to leave on its historic site for indefinite time.

As an archaeologist G. Moretti was authorized to make an exposition in 1937-1938. Moretti had to act in severe circumstances, when politics was mixed with archaeology, but he expressed his doubts concerning recomposition with the altar displacement. To the 2000-year anniversary of Augustus, the Ara Pacis, recreated with the authentic blocks, was covered in a pavilion, created by the design of the architect V. Morpurgo.

The contemporary history of exposition design formation were peculiarly interwoven with the Campus Martius history. The pavilion eastern facade was decorated with anew made stone tablets with document texts, in which the Augustus characterizes his power and political activity. This is the literary monument called “Res gestae divi Augusti”, which was mentioned by Suetonius and Cassius Dio. According to the contemporary texts in the exposition of the new Ara Pacis Museum the bronze boards with the engraved list of Augustus acts on them were on pilasters, flanking the entrance to the Mausoleum of Augustus.

No remnants of this list came to us, though excavations were repeatedly conducted on the Mausoleum site. The first copy of “Res gestae” was found on the site of the ancient city Ankira (the modern Ankara). It was stamped on the wall of the Temple of Augustus and Rome and was comparatively well preserved. The Ankira inscription consists of two parts: the Latin text and the Greek one, which represents the translation from Latin. It was discovered still in 1555. The second document was found in Apollonia in the 19th century, the third copy of the monument was discovered on the site of the former Antioch (in 1914 and 1924). These monuments comparison allowed to reconstruct the Latin text, which decorated the Morpurgo pavilion facade, and then, after disassembling, the stone tablets became the part of the new pavilion facing.

The building of the architect V. Morpurgo was situated to the north of the modern one and was considerably smaller. Moreover, the buildings on the embankment, still more breaking the visual relation of the Square of Augustus with the Tiber, were demolished not long before its erection. Possibly there were no arguments about the violation of the Mausoleum of Augustus ensemble environment at that time. However, the monument displacement had far-reaching consequences. Lateral axial monument composition appeared broken. In ancient times it was going from the west to the east, i.e. from the Tiber, passing by the solar clock with the obelisk (Horologium), built in 10 B.C., and further to the Altar, which was on the meridional Via Flaminia (now the Via del Corso). The flights of stairs rise repeated the relief rise in this direction. The axis in the anew created exposition is specified with the road along the embankment; now the Altar flights of stairs were rising from the south-west to the north-east.

The Ara Pacis displacement violated the special language of ancient monuments exhibition, connected with uncovering and the part of occupation layer removal. Arbitrariness of marks and of these objects horizons perception dilutes accepted conventions, thanks to which the power of imagination of viewer allowed to mentally recreate the relief around the Mausoleum of Augustus.

Perverse understanding of artificial integrity of exhibition object as stylistic completeness led to significant losses. Monument volume perception, without external compositional relations, limited with its visible plasticity, was distorted. Perception of clearly outlined object silhouette was not formed. Dark, perceived against the light in daytime, the ceiling detracted from the authentic perception of the monument, which was once placed in the open. Main tonal accents appeared concentrated on the southern side of light front of pavilion enclosing constructions, and the shades from these constructions on

the exhibit suppressed the perception of its plasticity and light and shade modulations. In the evening time the expressive double rhythm of pavilion pylons dominated, while the altar played only the role of luminous background. And the scale appeared deformed, being determined with the system of orders and the plasticity of monument reliefs.

The city council press release to the opening of the new pavilion in 2006 assesses the former pavilion architecture: "The pavilion was placed along the Tiber embankment for the purpose of the imperial myth reviving. Actually a tight, improper construction of stone case, intended to protect the monument, only created the risk ... the whole number of ... influences destructed it" [2]. The idea to replace the already ramshackle construction by V. Morpurgo (1938) to a more modern one appeared in 1995. The decision was made not to announce a competition, but to appeal directly to the American architect Richard Meier with the offer to elaborate the building design — the Ara Pacis Museum.

The light comes in the new pavilion in huge amounts through the ceiling light lamps in the ceiling and vertical enclosures, glazed with large hardened glass sheets. The glass quality provides optimal conditions of the monument and temporary expositions perception for the staying in the interior visitors and creates comfortable conditions of stay.

At the same time, the glass according to Meier assurances intended to restore the compositional relation of the Mausoleum with the Tiber area of water, on the contrary, creates the sharp contrast with surroundings. Huge stained glass windows create glare and reflect the Mausoleum of Augustus. The building scale aggression (exaggerated as a result of true tectonics concealment), white surfaces lightness, the sash rhythm and graphics complicate the monument perception.

The same travertine applying had good result (Italian: travertino, Latin: lapis

tiburinus - stone of Tibur) that also during the construction of buildings on the Emperor Augustus Square in 1930s erected by the design of M. Piacentini that significantly reduced the contrast between the pavilion architecture and its surroundings. The applying succession of "Res gestae" tablets from travertine, which comprised the part of the former pavilion eastern wall, is still more intensified.

The wall, bricked from travertine panels at the entrance area, with the cut facing, passes from outside to inside, determining the visitors flow movement. The local stone applying reduced the contrast between modernist architecture and historical monuments, created intermediate scale and emotional warmth, needed for tuning to the perception of delicate work in ancient masters marble. Moreover, the wall is the background for ancient busts perception in a communicationally distributive "behind ticket check" area. Only the functionally essential elements of the entrance area and the busts are illuminated with artificial directional light. Three perpendicularly placed to the light front partitions play the part of dark wings, creating a light adaptation effect during the Altar perception and forming a light and space exposition scenario. This technique is essential for reduced contrasts compensation. Perceived light intensity restoring is essential, since intensity of light, falling on the Altar is reduced with a solar control glass and shutters. This technique, however, is not significantly efficient, since, as in the Morpurgo pavilion, dominating tonal relations specify shades from pavilion enclosing constructions on sunny days. The shades cross the exhibit and create a powerful rhythm of parallel lines, changing its direction during day.

The idea of more spacious pavilion also appeared doubtful. Exhibitions taking place there are highly prestigious in modern life of Rome and eclipse ancient monument values in eyes of the overwhelming majority of people.

At the same time the permanent exposition, organized on the ground floor, devoted to the monument history, its restoration, its surroundings, plant motifs botanical systematization of its decor and so on is quite interest. A model in the museum exposition shows the landscape of the Campus Martius western part as it was in 14 A.D., in the year of the Divine Augustus death. Thanks to this model, made according to the hypothetical reconstruction by von Hesberg in 1994, one can imagine an ensemble, formed under the direct command of Augustus and his fellow fighter Marcus Agrippa. Objective uncovering of history makes it possible to ascertain that the monuments displacement led to the loss of many compositional relations of the ensemble.

Some of them can be partly reconstructed by creating the pedestrian area of the Tiber embankment. The design of underground transport tunnels and a green pedestrian area along the Tiber was discussed in the press [3, 4]. It was supposed that the works had to be started in spring 2011 (the works have not been started for the present) and completed in spring 2013. The pedestrian interconnection of the embankment and the museum complex and also the visual relation of the architectural monuments and the Tiber spaces will be improved. Almost total demolition of the travertine wall, being the part of the new pavilion, is planned by the design and a small waterbody is proposed to be created on the site of the fountain. The infinite series of cars disappears and the green area on the area from the Cavour bridge to the Regina Margherita bridge will be reconstructed. The creation of a new underground multi-storey car park for 308 places is proposed by the design.

"Corriere della Sera" also presents another design, connected with the museum complex [3]. It is a question of tender concerning organizing a pedestrian area on the Emperor Augustus Square around the Mausoleum. The works are taking place at present.

“Corriere della Sera” reports about the meeting of the Italian Ministry of Culture and the City Council of Rome officials, who discussed a design of vertical planning and the southern part of the square improvement by the architect Francesco Cellini [5]. The rearrangement initiative was from the Veltroni government in 2006, and the basement for it were excavations, which exposed 700 metres of the road, which connected the Mausoleum of Augustus and the Pantheon. Wide stair ramps and stairs will connect the ancient road marks and modern pavements. Works production is estimated in 17 mln euros and will be completed by 2014, i.e. to the 2000-year anniversary from the day of the Augustus death. The Deputy Minister of Culture Fr. Giro also stated a risky idea contrary to main restoration principles about “the mausoleum of the first of Caesars reconstruction” that will demand extra 10-15 mln euros. It was decided to return to the mausoleum the former “luxury and greatness” later, and now to assign 4 mln euros for ruins regulation so that it will be possible to open them for visiting.

These transformations were met positively in comparison to the new pavilion construction. It was completed as far back as in 2006, however, the arguments about its appropriateness, aesthetic characteristics of new construction and its future continued. The present mayor of Rome G. Alemanno characterized it as “disgrace for the city”, the example of “how one must not build contemporary architecture into cities similar to Rome”. During the election campaign he offered to disassemble the pavilion and to move it to some remote district of Rome [6]. Also his offer to organize a referendum is mentioned in the series of articles so that “the citizens decide themselves either to leave the new construction or not”.

“Corriere della Sera” cites in this article a famous politician opinion, who at one time held the post of the Deputy Minister of Culture in the Berlusconi government, an art critic and a television anchorman,

Vittorio Sgarbi, who called the Meier creation “gas station in Texas” [6]. His revealing article “ARA PACIS Museum: terrible and useless” was published in “Il Giornale” [7].

He says that a similar construction in the historical centre is nothing but an offence for the city and citizens. Besides the architect, he convinces the powers that be on all levels, anyway concerned in affair, starting from the former mayor of Rome F. Rutelli, the construction initiator, with his “dreams about glory” and finishing the S. Berlusconi government, which ignored that what was going on and did not use its power. V. Sgarbi criticizes the new construction architecture in this article, accuses the design author of that he uses the altar in his own interests “out of vanity”. Instead of opening the ancient monument with its wonderful low reliefs to the city, the architect hides it into a bulky clumsy parallelepiped. Here Sgarbi refers to the M. Fuksas, P. Portoghesi and other authoritative architects opinion, and also a series of art theorists, public figures opinion, who had the same views with him earlier and far from always and not in everything.

Sgarbi also mentions the commission in his publication, which according to him was created to at least somehow legalize the design of the American architect. The architect Leonardo Benevolo, oppositionally inclined, was assigned its head. However, the commission, having no power, influenced the result in no way, if not to consider some insignificant amendments, introduced in the approved design.

The another edition of the same 2006, “Il Tempo”, publishes an article, also devoted to the new complex opening [8]. The mayor of Rome, W. Veltroni quotations, reflecting his view and his interpretation of what that the new Ara Pacis will become to the city, are interesting in this article. Particularly, he says that “not only that is beautiful in Rome that left behind us” and that “the capital,

unconditionally, should keep its history and archaeology, but at the same time it should be able to adopt new...". His position is also uncovered in an interview for a presentation disc, distributed at the pavilion opening. The complex, designed by Meier, is for Veltroni the symbol of Rome — the city, in which the interrelation of two dimensions: the past and the present is realized. It is expressed in the first place by connection of great archaeological, artistic and historical heritage with contemporary architecture and innovative technologies.

The mayor of the Italian capital reaction to the fuss, which arose around the complex, is given in the article: "emergence of discussions is absolutely fair, and the Ara Pacis as any other contemporary construction should not be freed from this, but all discussions and debates should lie in the aspect of aesthetics and culture and not touch other spheres..." [8].

The pavilion architecture succession is emphasized in relation to the idea of the monument in the interview (on the already mentioned presentation disc) of Roberto Morassut, the mayor of Rome urban planning adviser: "The essence of the Ara Pacis new architecture ... is in the magic of ancient altar with the reliefs, decorating it; in the feeling of calmness and appeasement, which you feel near it; in the possibility to see the Mausoleum of Augustus and the Tiber embankment in a different way, being at the same time in the space of multifunctional high-technology construction. ... getting to the altar, surrounded with vast space, flooded with sunlight, everyone felt tranquility and harmony, conceived in the monument. It is such the feeling our ancient ancestors wanted to convey ... Huge power is concentrated in the Altar of Augustus. It is intensified thanks to that environment, which was created by Meier ... and which the Morpurgo pavilion was already not able to ensure". R. Morassut considers that the mystical essence of the monument is better revealed in the conditions of pushing aside,

when it is enclosed in "frame" of high-technology design.

In sum about 10 years left from the moment of decision-making about the new Ara Pacis museum complex erection and to its opening. Construction was either delayed or stopped, finding different reasons for that. The building works started only by 2000, though it was initially suggested to complete them by this term. And before they had time to start, in May 2001 they were frozen according to the initiative of an inspector, who was responsible for archaeological actions, Adriano La Regina, who supposed that the Porto di Ripetta remnants, namely the 18th century stairs, could be under the Tiber modern embankment. The excavations did not give results and the construction was resumed in 2002 [9].

Naturally the financial side of the question was not left without attention. Though an inspection, initiated by a regional public prosecutor's office, took place after the new museum opening (February 2007). The public prosecutor's office was interested in the fact of construction budget growth from 7 mln to 14 mln euros. According to the inspection results it was declared that "technical and administrative actions were assessed as right" [6].

The fate of the museum complex monuments became the focus of public contradictions. These moral collisions, differences in the understanding of historical authenticity, the ambiguity of the future vision, roles of new technologies in the uncovering of classical values, ambiguity in the understanding of these values itself.

Violation of the principle of monument conservation on historic site (in situ) led to significant compositional relations loss of the whole ensemble of urban landscape and development on the site of the ancient Campus Martius, significant losses of occupation layer archaeological interrelation with ancient monuments and

the significant loss of plastic values by them.

Dependence in the assesment of monument and forms of its exhibition on political and economic conditions lead to unreasonable, rash decisions and irreversible consequences for historical object. The development of axiological approach in restoration and exhibition will allow to optimize protection and monument values uncovering.

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