

“...large and misshapen bones from notable bodies”

The amphitheatre of Lucca: ruin, spontaneous reuse and restoration

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opposite page

Fig.1
The amphitheatre
today

Abstract

The amphitheatre is one of the monuments part of the heritage grid of Lucca. The amphitheatre of Lucca is a form-symbol of the identity of the city which has been preserved through the continuous transformations of the urban space. During the centuries the old cunei are converted into dwellings, the entire Roman structure amplifies its oval shape, becoming urban space and the referential matrix for the connection to the Fillungo and to the San Frediano complex.

The amphitheatre of Lucca represents a unique case in the national scene. Having survived the passing of time, albeit with modifications, it registers in its physical matter the transformations, in its structure the evolution, and in its appearance the choices that have been made in response to the evolution of the needs of those who through use have marked its path to preservation.

It is a monument which, although part of the heritage grid of Lucca, suffers even today the lack of an organic study aimed not only at the knowledge of these evolutionary “features”, but also, and especially, to its safeguarding. The amphitheatre of Lucca is a form-symbol of the identity of the city which has been preserved through the continuous transformations of the urban space, a shape that appears as stable in the various plans, axonometric views and maps of the city, as in the 17th century engraving, *Nova et accurata*, by Jodocus Hondius, where the oval form of the monument is projected in such a way as to shape the street system and blocks of buildings.¹ The amphitheatre is a topical place in Luccan history. Bartolomeo Beverini in his *Annales lucenses* mentions how: “in Lucca the ruins next to the house of the Buonvisi, close to the old prison, have been preserved, and bear witness to the magnificence of ancient works; now occupied by private buildings, and to a great extent buried under a heap of rubble: yet a stone circle remains interspersed by columns and arches in small terracotta bricks, and a grid of walls bare of ornaments; in the way in which we can see in Rome the remains of ancient monuments, as large and misshap-

¹ ASLu, Fondo Stampe.

² «extante tamen subinde corona lapidea ad columnarum intervalla fornicibusque e laterculo coctili, ac muris opere reticulato, caeteris ornamentis detractis [...] ad eam formam, qua Romae veterum operum reliquias cernimus, veluti speciosorum corporum ossa magna et deformia». B. Beverini, *Annalium lucensis urbis*, 4 voll., Lucae, Francisci Bertinii 1829-1832, pp. 31 e ss.

³ On the descriptions of Lucca, cfr. E. Pellegrini (ed), *Descrivere Lucca. Viaggio tra note, inventari e guide dal XVII al XIX secolo*, Pisa, Ets 2009.





Fig. 2
View of the
amphitheatre -
Francesco Gandini,
Viaggi in Italia, 1831-
32 (aquatint)

opposite page

Fig. 3
Axonometric view
of the city - Pierre
Mortier, *Nouveau
Théâtre d'Italie*, 1704
(copper engraving)

en bones of notable bodies”². It was the local erudites who prepared the ground for the understanding of the history of the amphitheatre³, contributing to give it a specific identity, punctuated by certain moments, such as its abandonment, first, then the reemployment of its materials, and finally its spontaneous reuse, stages which would be subsequently sifted into the literature. For example in Civitale, who outlines the description of the city through a series of documents, amongst which the amphitheatre:

“by what can be seen, it was undoubtedly a very beautiful theatre such as those that were constructed in ancient days in the most noble cities for the purpose of spectacles and public games, comedies and performances, jousting and the like, as the Coliseum in Rome, on the shape and proportions of which this one was commissioned. It can be seen today from the two remaining pillars that its entrance was from the east, and from its ruins the rows for sitting spectators; and though it has been denuded of its ancient ornamentation, it can be deduced that it was an expensive, beautiful and magnificent work. All around it were marble columns with their handsome pedestals, capitals, friezes, architraves and pillars, which were used for building the ancient churches of Lucca, to the point that nothing was left but the coarse wall that surrounded it, which is wide three fourths of its length by its diameter, and does not appear in all its perfection due to some houses towards San Frediano that impede it”⁴.

What Lucca shares with other sites is the fact that the ancient amphitheatre represented a resource ready for use, a structure to be integrated into the construction of the medieval and modern city, as can be seen in the 16th century *Veduta assonometrica della città* engraved in Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg’s *Civitates orbis terrarum*⁵.

¹ ASLu, Fondo Stampe.

² «extante tamen subinde corona lapidea ad columnarum intervalla fornicibusque e laterculo coctili, ac muris opere reticulato, caeteris ornamentis detractis [...] ad eam formam, qua Romae veterum operum reliquias cernimus, veluti speciosorum corporum ossa magna et deformia». B. Beverini, *Annalium lucensis urbis*, 4 voll., Lucae, Francisci Bertinii 1829-1832, pp. 31 e ss.

³ On the descriptions of Lucca, cfr. E. Pellegrini (ed), *Descrivere Lucca. Viaggio tra note, inventari e guide dal XVII al XIX secolo*, Pisa, Ets 2009.

⁴ G. Civitale, *Historie di Lucca*, edited by M. F. Leonardi, 2 vols., Roma, Istituto storico italiano per l’età moderna e contemporanea 1983-1988, pp. 132-133.



In the engraving which visibly amplifies this process of appropriation of the ruins by the urban fabric, the amphitheatre is represented by a continuous curtain of oval-shaped buildings. Well before this slow process of re-conversion into dwellings, at the time of the Gothic Wars, the amphitheatre, because of its strategic position in relation to the new walls, was fortified and took on a defensive function.⁶

After the first use of the monument for defensive purposes, the entire complex went through a period of abandonment and plunder, which included the removal of ferrules and brick jambs. In the same period the dismantling of the *cavea* took place, transforming the monument into a proper quarry, an echo of which remains in the name of the nearby “Piazza degli Scapellini”. In Lucca the phenomenon of plunder was in full force already in the High Imperial Period. In the II century A.D. the Forum of Lucca, which was the main square of the Roman city, was in partial disuse and suffered the same sort of material plunder.⁷

This plunder finished by turning the monument into a ruin. A ruin which, however, had in its structure the possibility of a new function: thus was initiated a progressive transformation of the monument into dwelling settlements. New infills were made in addition to those carried out for defensive

⁶ For an interpretation of the urban fabric, cfr. D. Albani, *Lucca. Saggio di morfologia urbana*, Lucca, Accademia Lucchese, 1990 (reprinted in its original form).

⁷ See the manuscript notes by D. De Nobili, *Del primo recinto di Lucca et delle sue restaurazioni et ampliamenti*, BSLu, ms. 1097; L. Moriconi, *Note diverse spettanti all'antichità di Lucca dalla sua fondazione fino all'anno 1300*, BSLu, ms. 35. On this, cfr. P. Sommella, C. F. Giuliani, *La pianta di Lucca Romana*, «Quaderni dell'Istituto di Topografia antica», VII, 1974. On the walls of Lucca, cfr. M. A. Giusti, *Le mura di Lucca come parco urbano nei recenti interventi di valorizzazione*, in *Programmi di recupero e riutilizzo dei sistemi difensivi: Mura e Forti*, edited by F. Meneghelli, G. Perbellini, Atti del Convegno (Verona, 17 January 2004), Verona, 2004, pp. 23-31; M. A. Giusti (ed.), *Le Mura di Lucca dal restauro alla manutenzione programmata*, Atti del Convegno (Lucca, 17-19 May 2001), Firenze, Alinea editrice, Lucca 2005.

Fig. 4

View of the amphitheatre - Georg Christoph Martini (known as the Saxon), *Reise von Roma*, 1725-45 (watercoloured pencil drawing)

opposite page

Fig. 5

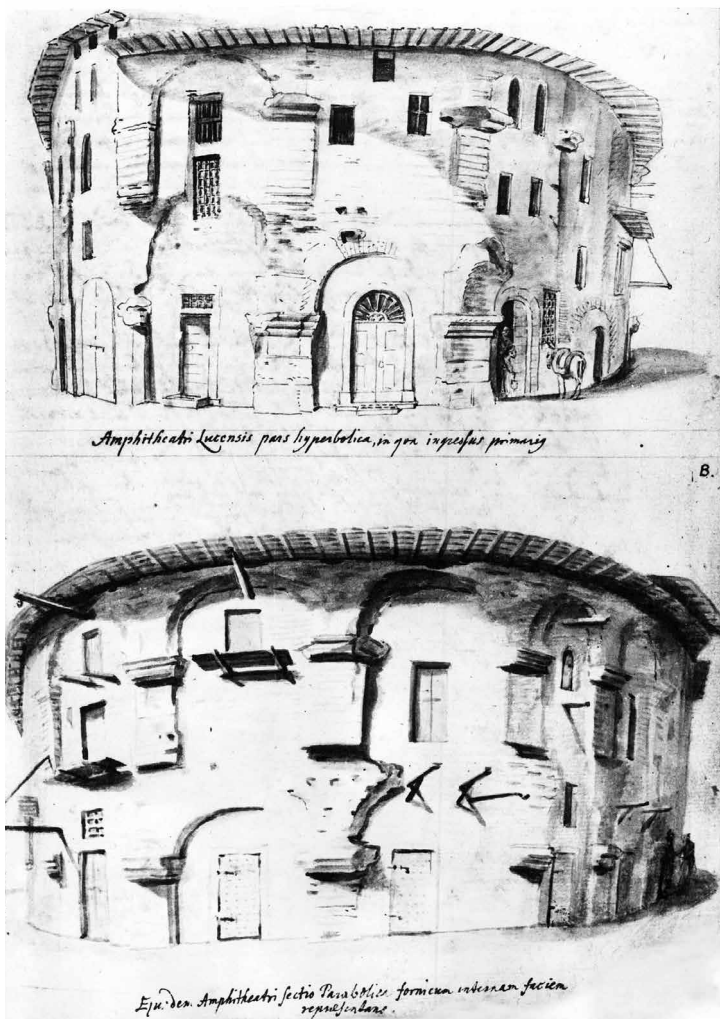
Amphitheatre Square, 1890
 "Pianta dimostrativa l'Antico Anfiteatro Romano, e sue adiacenze, posto in questa Città di Lucca L.go d.to alle Prigioni Vecchie, in data 16 agosto 1830, e 18 dicembre 1834 providamente fu determinato di formare una nuova piazza per i mercati, estratta in copia autentica dalla primitiva mappa fatta nell'anno 1819 dall'infrascritto perito ing.e Cardinali, in questo giorno 6 luglio 1835, da noi sottoscritti, Giocondo Gini, Tommaso Carridinali, Periti Ingegneri incaricati" (Archivio de' Notari, p.II, n. 3095)

⁶ See the manuscript notes by D. De Nobili, *Del primo recinto di Lucca et delle sue restaurazioni et ampliamenti*, BSLu, ms. 1097; L. Moriconi, *Note diverse spettanti all'antichità di Lucca dalla sua fondazione fino all'anno 1300*, BSLu, ms. 35. On this, cfr. P. Sommella, C. F. Giuliani, *La pianta di Lucca Romana*, «Quaderni dell'Istituto di Topografia antica», VII, 1974. On the walls of Lucca, cfr. M. A. Giusti, *Le mura di Lucca come parco urbano nei recenti interventi di valorizzazione*, in *Programmi di recupero e riutilizzo dei sistemi difensivi: Mura e Forti*, edited by F. Meneghelli, G. Perbellini, Atti del Convegno (Verona, 17 January 2004), Verona, 2004, pp. 23-31; M. A. Giusti (ed.), *Le Mura di Lucca dal restauro alla manutenzione programmata*, Atti del Convegno (Lucca, 17-19 May 2001), Firenze, Alinea editrice, Lucca 2005.

⁷ On the reuse of ancient materials in the area of Lucca, cfr. J. A. Quirós Castillo, *Tecniche costruttive dell'architettura ecclesiastica lucchese. L'alto medioevo*, «Sacrum Luce. Arte Sacra nel territorio lucchese», <http://sacrumluce.sns.it/mv/html/sacrumluce.html>

⁸ T. Kuroda, *Lucca 1838. Trasformazione e riuso dei ruderi degli anfiteatri romani in Italia*, Lucca, Pacini Fazzi 2008.

⁹ A. Simonetti, *L'anfiteatro di Lucca*, «Rassegna lucchese», 1906; P. Mencacci, M. Zecchini, *Lucca Romana*, Lucca, Pacini Fazzi, 1982, pp. 64 e ss.; G. Ciampoltrini, *Lucca: ricerche nell'area dell'anfiteatro*, «Bollettino di Archeologia», 1992; F. Giuliani Cairolì, *Lucca, il teatro e l'anfiteatro*, in *Atti/Centro studi e documentazione sull'Italia Romana*, vol. 5, 1973-1971, pp. 287-295.



purposes and various *cunei* (wedge-shaped divisions separated by *scalae* or stairways) were re-adapted.⁸ An interpretation of the early transformation phenomenon was made through a series of archaeological investigations, carried out initially in the Eighties, which contributed to the understanding of the structure of the amphitheatre, confirming in many cases the reconstructive hypotheses. In particular, the graphic simulations included in *Lucca Romana*, supported by a series of stratigraphic analyses, have validated in part the theory that this "integration" of ruin and dwellings did indeed initiate at an early stage.⁹ An in-depth study is currently underway, that this paper wants in part to acknowledge, whose aim is to explain the events related to the architectural structure, including its transformations, as well as its relationship to the surrounding context¹⁰. During the Middle Ages the amphitheatre was on the one hand erased, "re-absorbed" as it were by the urban fabric, through the withdrawal of deco-

rations and other architectural elements that acquired new meanings in other contexts as part of the city's churches, or more commonly, through the recycling of materials in both public and private buildings, while on the other its spatial substance was re-utilized through varying private and public functions, most notably as the city prisons¹¹.

The amphitheatre, which had acquired a place of honour in the maps of local erudites and scholars, saw in fact part of its premises assigned to the Carceri del Sasso prison complex and to the Salt Storehouses. In 1553, the part of the amphitheatre still being used as a prison was accurately described in the *Martilogio nuovo dei beni stabili*, a document kept in the Public Assets and Buildings section of the State Archive of Lucca¹².

Thus, while individual *cunei* are slowly converted into dwellings ("grottos"), the entire Roman structure amplifies its oval shape, becoming urban space and the referential matrix for the connection to the Fillungo and to the San Frediano complex.

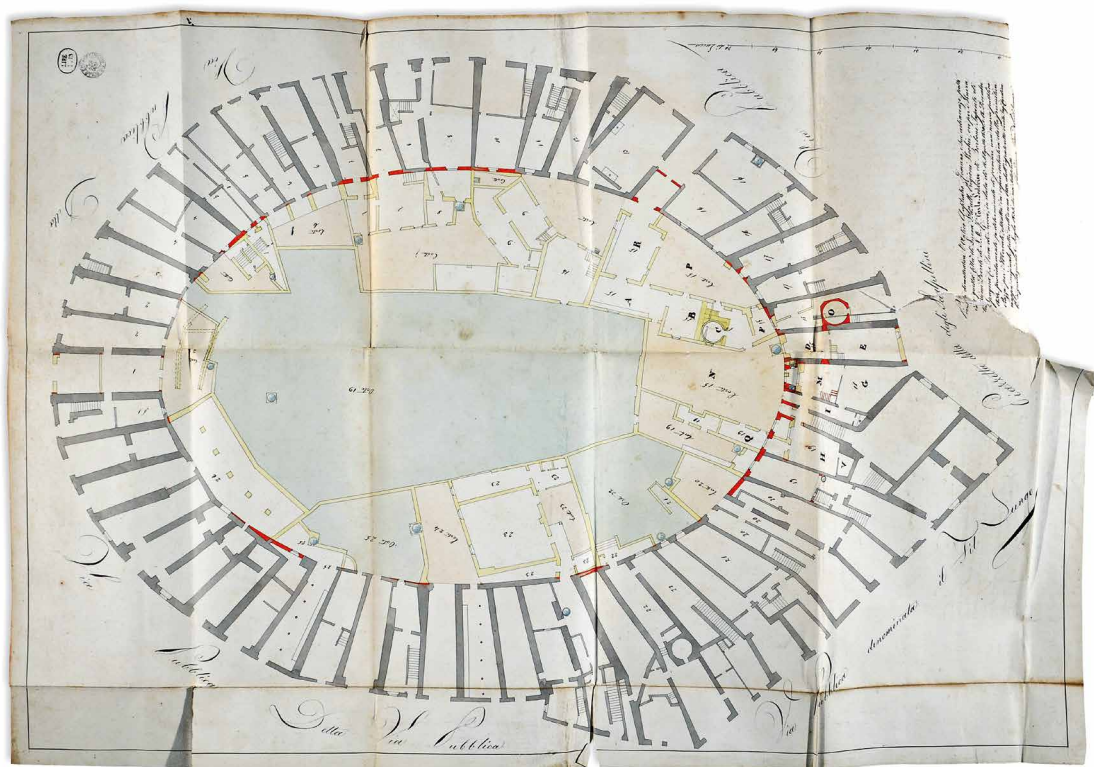
After the relocation of the prisons, the caves used as storehouses were called "old prisons", a name that was still in use at the end of the 16th century to identify the section of the street that passed along that side of the perimeter of the amphitheatre. Thus while the caves were used for shops and dwellings, especially on the ground floor, the arena itself was being subdivided into private lots.

The continuity of the *cunei*, simple units developed in depth, and the versatility of the load-bearing structures, allowed through simple adaptations

¹⁰ This research is based upon the work carried out by the Istituto Superiore Sant'Anna as a part of the project *Tecnologie informatiche per la conoscenza e la comunicazione di Lucca romana*, Cfr. L. Camin, M. Carrozzino, R. Leonardi, A. Negri, *Nuove tecnologie per la conoscenza e la comunicazione di Lucca Romana*, 2010 in www.luccaromana.com. The study of the amphitheatre of Lucca was initiated within the PRIN (Progetti di ricerca di Rilevante Interesse Nazionale) "Architettura e identità", under the direction of Prof. F.P. Di Teodoro, Facoltà di Architettura, Politecnico di Torino, the first results of which are included in two essays by S. Caccia, "La bella curva dell'anfiteatro di Lucca". *Il ripristino della forma nei restauri sette-ottocenteschi*, in H. Burns, M. Mussolin (eds.), *Architettura e identità*, vol. II, Firenze, Olschky 2013, pp. 393-402; S. Caccia, *Reimpiego e restauro dell'antico: l'anfiteatro di Lucca nel palinsesto urbano*, in F. P. Di Teodoro, L. Corrain (a cura di) *Architettura e identità*, vol. I, Firenze, Olschky 2013, pp. 183-197.

¹¹ On the question of "old prisons", cfr. ASLu, *Protettori e visitatori delle carceri*.

¹² ASLu, *Beni e Fabbriche pubbliche, Martilogio nuovo dei Beni stabili*, 1553.



next page

Fig. 6

View of the
amphitheatre from
the outside - Richard
Pococke, *A description
of the East*, 1745
(engraving)

¹³ An analysis of the dwelling typologies present in the amphitheatre was recently carried out by the Japanese scholar Taisuke Kuroda, placing the Luccan example within the wider context of the transformation and reutilization of ruins of Roman amphitheatres in Italy. Based upon the hypothesis regarding the reconstruction of the Roman amphitheatre set forth by Paolo Sommella and Cairoli Fulvio Giuliani in 1974, he developed an interpretation of the various interventions which occurred over the centuries thanks to a series of superposed surveys, cfr. Somella, Giuliani, *La piana di Lucca romana...*, cit.; Kuroda, *Lucca 1838...*, cit., pp. 66 e 67.

¹⁴ P. Mortier, *Nouveau théâtre d'Italie, ou, description exacte de ses villes, palais, églises, &c. et les cartes géographiques de toutes ses provinces*, Amsterdam, 1704.

¹⁵ G. C. Martini, *Reise von Rom, nach Livorno und durch Toscana*, 1725-45, BSLu, ms. 106. For the printed edition of part of the manuscript, cfr. G. C. Martini, *Viaggio in Toscana* (1725-1745), translated by O. Trumpy, Massa-Modena, Aedes Muratoriana, 1969, pp. 114-115.

¹⁶ D. Poulot, *Naissance du monument historique*, in «Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine», XXXII, 1985, pp. 418-450.

¹⁷ R. Etlin, *L'air dans l'urbanisme des Lumières*, in «Dix-Huitième Siècle», 9, 1977, pp. 123-134.

to use the spaces as dwellings, storehouses or shops. The common trusses placed at fixed intervals permitted these spaces to gain height through the addition of wooden lofts set onto the load-bearing walls of the vaults¹³.

On the via Fillungo side, the reuse is connected to the construction of buildings that lie outside the composition of the amphitheatre, such as the tower-house of the Totti and *palazzo* Moriconi, which overlooks piazza Scalpellini.

While the relationship between the ring-shaped structure and the surrounding buildings intensified, the process of appropriation of the structures of the amphitheatre continued, not only through the adaptation of *cunei* into dwellings, but with the subdivision of the interior of the arena into vegetable gardens. The phenomenon is easily recognisable, for example, in the *Axonomic view of the city*, published by Pierre Mortier in his *Nouveau Théâtre d'Italie* (1704), in which the “subdivision” and steady occupation of the internal area is underlined.¹⁴

In those years the “stranger”, Georg Cristoph Martini, in his *Viaggio in Toscana*, thus described the monument: “Of the beautiful antiquities nothing is left but the ruins of an amphitheatre, called the Old prisons. [...] and on it were built houses and churches [...] (but) some arches and large blocks of marble can still be seen. [...] The perimetral wall is entirely missing and it must be deduced that the magnificent construction has suffered the fate of many others [...]. The street that surrounds the construction, from the side that I show in my drawings, is none other than the internal corridor of the amphitheatre, and the houses, which form the other side of the street, were built on the foundations of the external facade, which has now completely disappeared [...]”.¹⁵

By the end of the 18th century the amphitheatre, except for the perception which resulted from the amplification of its shape into the urban space, was inexorably losing its legibility as an autonomous architectural structure – it would only be called a monument decades after that¹⁶ –, contrasting the aesthetic isolation of noble architecture, which had become dominant especially in France, with the so-called urban planning of the age of Enlightenment, in which the isolation stemmed in part from questions of identity (architecture for all - La Monnaie) and not only from a rising hygienism¹⁷. It was Michele Ridolfi who in the 18th century reported on the conditions of the structure and declared his attempt to save the amphitheatre from “the voracious teeth of time”, as can be read in his manuscript correspondence which is part of the vast *corpus* of documents kept in Lucca¹⁸. Ridolfi was a painter, but also secretary and, most importantly, head of the conservation activities of the recently founded Commission for Fine Arts Monuments. He carried out in the Duchy a fundamental role in implementing important initiatives which helped define the terms and boundaries of what today could be called the heritage approach to architecture: with the formulation, for example, of rules and regulations regarding the export of works of art, and especially with the carrying out of a complete inventory of the entire artistic heritage.¹⁹

Ridolfi is both a witness and a participant of a change in “point of view” on conservation at the *tournant du siècle*. The significance of the study of ruins which was best exemplified by the *rendu* of the French *pensionnaires* in Rome, becomes the object of study of architecture in an urban context, progressively concentrating on certain monumental complexes the significance and interest of both local scholars and commissioning persons or entities (public, noble, ecclesiastic). These are buildings that have acquired symbolic value, and which represent the summary of what may be called an identity-making process²⁰, which gained a special meaning with the transition from the autonomy of the small Luccan state to its absorption by the Grand-Duchy, first, and later by the unitary Italian state.²¹

The excavations Michele Ridolfi had wished for began under his direction in 1819, by appointment of the Bourbon ruler. Ridolfi, fresh from one of many Roman journeys, where he had absorbed so much antiquity, presented his “archaeological-antiquarian” thought to the Duchess and suggested the need to carry out studies that, on the one hand, reveal the exact form of the structure, and on the other guarantee its knowledge and understanding, as well as the transmission to future generations of a monument which had been “barbarously mutilated in times of ignorance”.²² The series of essays produced, documented by the five reports sent to the Royal Secretariat, bear witness to the will of recovering the lost identity, in a sort of pre-Romantic way, of a structure that had become illegible as a consequence of the interventions, and resulting transformations, carried out upon it. The excavations were supported by an accurate survey conducted by Lorenzo Nottolini, who was the Royal Architect since 1818.²³

From Ridolfi’s writings one can deduce a special attention to information regarding the materials used and a conception of architecture as a physical artifact, which bears the traces of his interest for the work done in the 18th century by the scholar and erudite Giacomo Sardini, who with his still unpublished *Architettura ne’ bassi tempi* (“Architecture in the Middle Ages”), had attempted to carry out research into the technical peculiarities of the city’s constructions. His was an attempt to systematically study the history of Luccan art, following a cultural approach which considered that analyzing the constructive features of Medieval architecture would help in building the consciousness of a local identity.²⁴

In 1830 Charles Louis Bourbon decided to commission Nottolini with the restoration of the structure, with the idea of “relocating the market which is usually in Piazza S. Michele to the Roman Amphitheatre, also known as the Old Prisons”. The procedures for the “expropriation” from the many owners which with the passing of time had occupied the *cavea* with vegetable gardens, stables, storehouses and shacks, proved to be long and complex (the procedures went on for more than five years according to the agreements kept at the *Archivio de’ Notari* (“Notarial Archive”) of Lucca).²⁵ Nottolini’s survey of the site, as well as the less known *Pianta dimostrativa l’Antico Anfiteatro Romano e sue adiacenze* (“Map Showing the Ancient Roman Amphitheatre and its Surroundings”), carried out in 1835 by Gio-

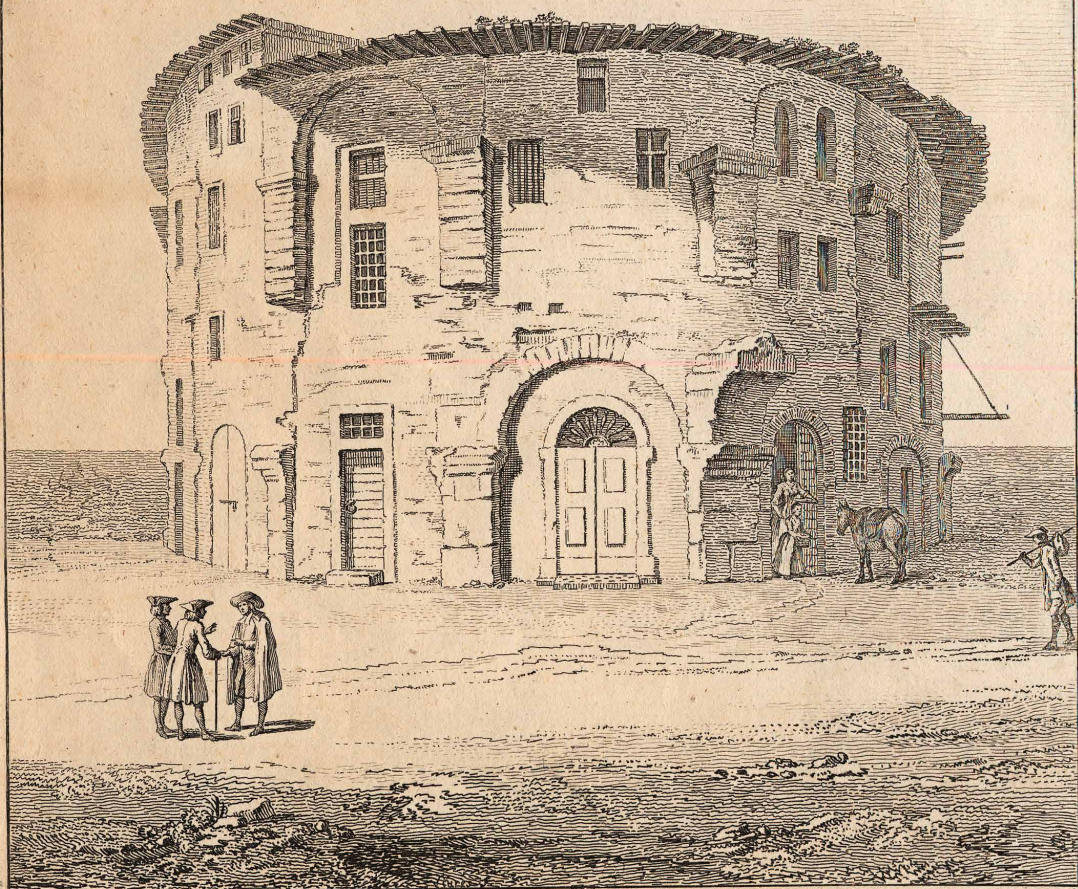
¹⁸ “I will speak first of our ancient Amphitheatre, reduced since 1839 to a comfortable and vague square in its interior, due to a wise provision from our Prince, implemented through an honourable Commission [...] the same that, after having rid the beautiful Piazza San Michele of those undignified dwellings and shops, provided for the recovery of the entire beautiful elliptical form with which this monument was built. [...] Several renowned writers have written about our Amphitheatre, among which the erudite Targioni-Tozzetti in his *Voyages*: for this reason it seems that nobody who wishes to write on this subject should ignore the one in Lucca, which still shows its majestic and honourable parts [...] I believe to be, after Targioni-Tozzetti, the first to have given thought to that ancient and noble building”, E. Ridolfi (ed.), *Scritti d’arte e antichità di Michele Ridolfi*, Florence 1879, p.137 e ss.

¹⁹ For some background on Michele Ridolfi, cfr. G. Morolli (ed.), *Basiliche medioevali della città di Lucca: la guida inedita di Enrico Ridolfi* (1828-1909), Milano, Silvana, 2002; B. Nicastro, *Due manoscritti inediti di Michele Ridolfi. «Sul metodo dell’encausto» e «Sulla tintura dei panni»*, Lucca, Pacini Fazzi, 2002; C. Marchese, *Michele Ridolfi e il restauro dei dipinti a Lucca - (1819-1854)* - tesi di dottorato in storia del restauro / tutor- Ettore Spalletti, Antonella Gioli, Pisa, 2010.

²⁰ Something done, for example, by Maurizio Carta (*L’armatura culturale del territorio. Il patrimonio culturale come matrice di identità e strumento di sviluppo*, Milano, Franco Angeli 2002, especially pp.25 and subsequent pages), not without raising many doubts, particularly on the connection between identity and development.

²¹ On restoration in Lucca cfr., M. A. Giusti, «... nunc in pristinum decorem restituit» contribuiti sul restauro a Lucca nell’Ottocento, Torino, Celid, 2000; Id., *Restauro a Lucca. Temi orientamenti metodi*, Lucca, Pacini Fazzi, 2000.

²² “However barbarously mutilated in times of ignorance, there remains enough to make a precise drawing, especially of its plane and cross-section [...] it would therefore be convenient if Your Majesty would give the appropriate orders so that, under the guidance of an active and intelligent person, excavations be carried out in various directions, both inside and outside of the building, with the purpose of determining with the greatest precision the spaces that were occupied by the arena, the podium, the stands, the aisles, the external loggias, as well as the stairs used to climb to the upper parts of the building”, E. Ridolfi (ed.), *Scritti d’arte ...*, cit., p.141.

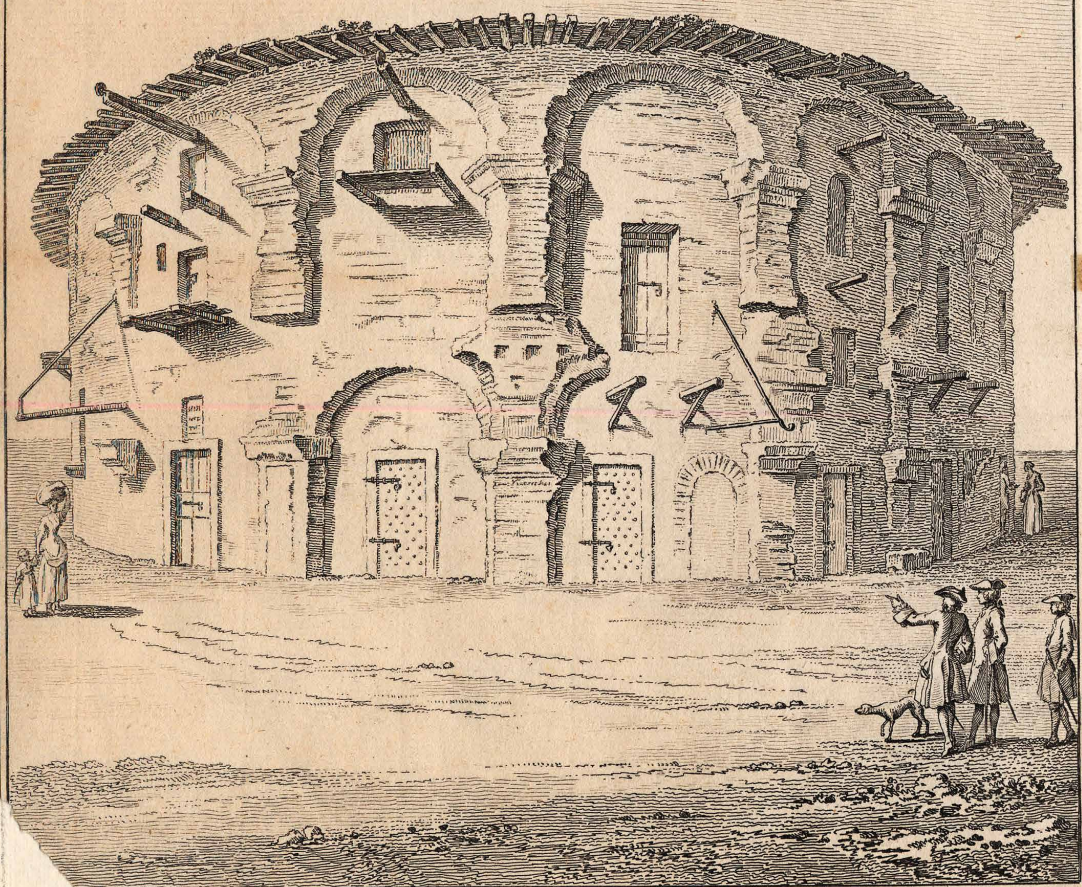


A VIEW of an AMPHITHEATRE at LUCCA.



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of the otherside of the

29 1/2



A VIEW of the other side of the AMPHITHEATRE
at
LUCCA.

opposite page

Fig. 7

Reconstruction of
the Amphitheatre
- Pierre Mortier,
Nouveau
Théâtre d'Italie,
1704 (copper
engraving)

²³ G. Morolli, *L'ingegneria romantica di Lorenzo Nottolini, 1787-1851 fantasie tecnologiche e realismo territoriale nella Lucca della restaurazione*, Firenze, Istituto di storia dell'architettura e restauro dell'Università di Firenze, 1981, pp.135-174; G. Morolli, "Ordinazioni di vie e ponti, argini e fiumi: il beneficio del Nottolini ai lucchesi". *Il ducato come grande dimora: dagli argini del Serchio alla redenzione delle paludi*, in E. Daniele, *Le dimore di Lucca. Arte di abitare i palazzi di una capitale dal Medioevo allo Stato Unitario*, Firenze, Alinea, pp.17-40.

²⁴ On Giacomo Sardini, cfr. S. Caccia, E. Pellegrini, *Le tentazioni del barocco. I disegni capricciosi dell'archivio Sardini di Lucca*, Pisa, Ets, 2006; S. Caccia, E. Pellegrini, *Nobile viaggiare - Luoghi, uomini e cose nel taccuino di Giacomo Sardini*, Pisa, Ets, 2008.

²⁵ ASLu, Archivio de' Notari. Su Lorenzo Nottolini, cfr. M. Dezzi Badeschi, R. Evangelisti, V. Regoli, P.C. Santini, *Lorenzo Nottolini Architetto a Lucca*, Lucca, Libreria Editrice Baroni, 1970.

²⁶ The map is annexed to the definitive expropriation order, drafted by the notary Eugenio Lucchesi. *Pianta dimostrativa l'Antico Anfiteatro Romano, e sue adiacenze, posto in questa Città di Lucca L.go d.to alle Prigioni Vecchie, ove per i Veneratissimi Decreti di S.A.R. Carlo Lodovico di Borbone Infante di Spagna e Duce di Lucca, in data 16 Agosto 1830, e 18 Dicembre 1824 providamente fu determinato di formare una nuova pubblica Piazza per i Mercati, estratta in copia autentica dalla primitiva mappa originale fatta nell'anno 1819 dall'infrascritto Perito Ing.e Cardinali, in questo giorno 6 luglio 1835, da noi sottoscritti Giocondo Dini, Tommaso Cardinali, Periti Ingegneri Incaricati*, ASLu, Archivio de' Notari, p.II, n. 3095, Tommaso Cardinali, Giocondo Dini, 6 July 1835.

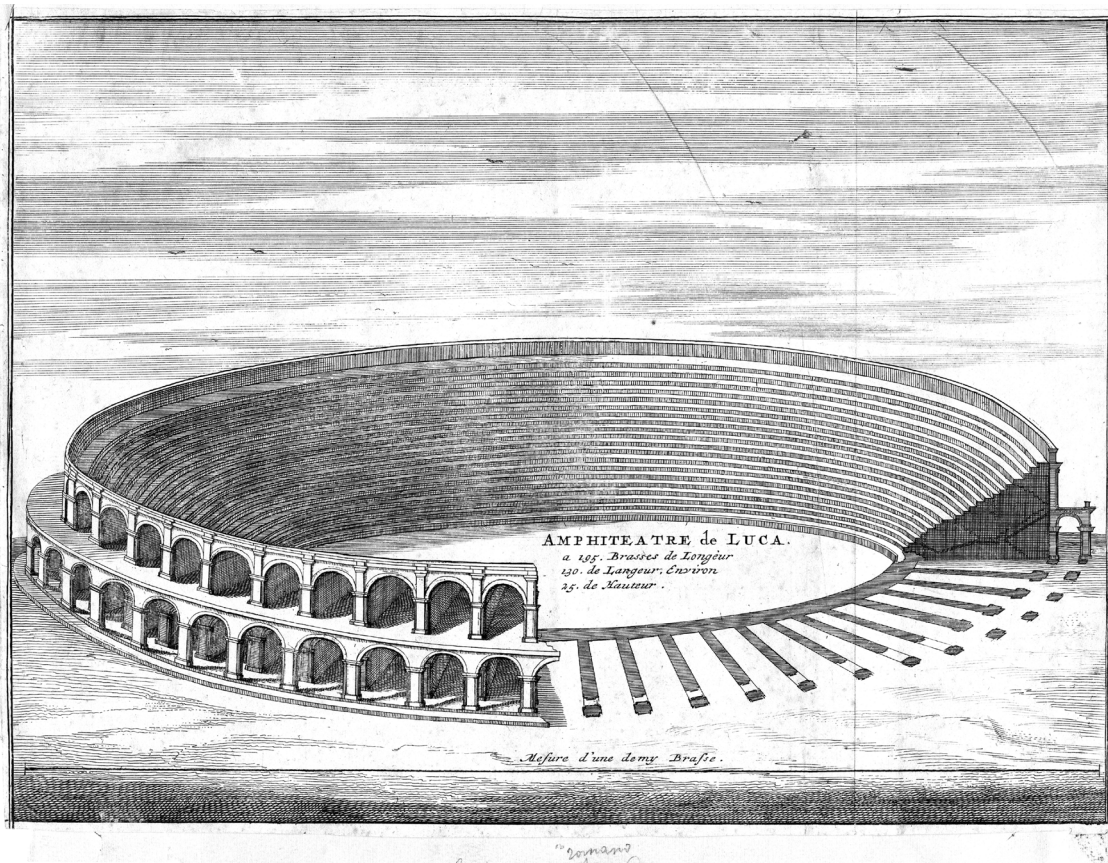
condo Dini and Tommaso Cardinali, are fundamental documents for understanding the state of the structure before the restoration works.²⁶ In the map the connection between the organization of the Roman structures and the additions over the centuries are clearly recognizable: the buildings to the East, which interrupt the continuity of the oval, and the accessory structures built within the ring. It can be understood in this sense how the interventions carried out on the amphitheatre over the centuries preserved, following a precocious conservation approach, the stratification of historical periods. The operation commissioned by Charles Louis permitted, according to Enrico Ridolfi, by "cleaning the area of the vegetable gardens and shacks that occupied it", to see once again "the handsome curve of the amphitheatre". It was decided at the same time to stone pave the new square thus obtained, opening it to the city with «four entrances at the far end of the two axes, three of which correspond exactly to them, while the fourth (on the little square known as that of the "scalpellini", or chisels) is slightly off-axis due to the obstacle presented by an old *palazzo*».²⁷

From the manuscript register kept in the archives of the Royal Secretariat, which keep track of the works begun in 1834 and concluded several years later, but also from the above-mentioned *Pianta dimostrativa*, which includes demolitions and reconstructions, the history of the interventions can be measured in minute detail: pushing back of the perimetral walls, plugging and new openings.²⁸

The architect avoids any intervention of an archaeological nature, and consolidates the Mediaeval genealogy of the amphitheatre. The series of openings from the dwellings towards the interior of the square is solved by Nottolini through the establishment on the lower floors of shops and warehouses with access arches and the orderly placing of windows. This orderly placing of facades does not respond to any rule regarding the equilibrium of the heights of the single buildings, which therefore present, through their discontinuous structuring, the slow process of stratification. Nottolini does not attempt a restitution, or historical falsification through reconstruction, which could have perhaps been carried out in accordance with the precepts for the good practice of archaeological philology. The project developed by Nottolini, after his return from Rome, where he had attended academic courses and participated in the restoration of some monuments, reveals the decisive influence of Giuseppe Valadier, an architect who was a key player in the architectural, and especially restoration culture at the time, and to whom Nottolini, as a disciple, would address letters of deep-felt devotion.

The work had centred on the liberation of the arena from all disorderly constructions, the reopening of four accesses, and on the consolidation of part of the brick vaults.

The intervention on the amphitheatre thus underlines not only a continuity in its use, but also, and especially, a historical continuity which connects Antiquity to the Middle Ages, and unravels, through so many legible



“stories”, the “recovered” monument. The will to perpetuate the Mediaeval tradition is the concrete expression of a symbolic assertion of the values of the past, aimed at planting in the civic consciousness the principles of identity. It is an intervention that is constructed and accompanied by the progressive acquisition of a consciousness which ascribes value to the “original” features of Luccan Mediaeval architecture, recovered and analysed in light of the studies carried out by Ridolfi himself, and subsequently by his own son Enrico.

²⁷ E. Ridolfi, *Guida di Lucca*, Lucca, Giusti 1877, pp. 109 e ss. Regarding Palazzo Moriconi, cfr. I. B. BARSALI (Ed.), *I palazzi dei mercanti nella libera Lucca del '500: immagine di una città-stato al tempo dei Medici*, Lucca, Pacini Fazzi 1980.

²⁸ *Pianta dimostrativa l'Antico Anfiteatro Romano, e sue adiacenze, posto in questa Città di Lucca L.go d.to alle Prigioni Vecchie, in data 16 agosto 1830, e 18 dicembre 1834 providamente fu determinato di formare una nuova piazza per i mercati, estratta in copia autentica dalla primitiva mappa fatta nell'anno 1819 dall'infrascritto perito ing. e Cardinali, in questo giorno 6 luglio 1835, da noi sottoscritti, Giocondo Gini, Tommaso Carrdinali, Periti Ingegneri incaricati, Archivio de' Notari, p.II, n. 3095. ...*



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Fig. 8 |9

The amphitheatre's details

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