

Exhibition

Alfredo d'Andrade, *tutela e restauro*

Turin, Palazzo Reale and Palazzo Madama, June–September 1981

The old buildings hold no secrets from the insight of his mind; his eye pierces inside the thick walls and penetrates under the ground; if it cannot see, it predicts. The most trivial details serve him as a guide and offer him a clue; feeling in the dark the surface of old stones, he can often tell their age by the marks left by the chisel and the gradine. He brings to life the ways of the old masters as if he had grown up with them.

Thus did Camillo Boito describe his fellow architect Alfredo d'Andrade (1839–1915), a prolific late nineteenth-century architect-restorer in northern Italy. Differing from Boito, who is remembered especially for his restoration charter (1883) and his writings that have contributed to the formation of modern Italian conservation concepts, d'Andrade has remained practically unnoticed and virtually unstudied. Apart from some contemporaries and his son and biographer Ruy, few historians even mention his work. It was, however, significant and extended over a great part of northern Italy, namely Piedmont, Liguria and Val d'Aosta, where he acted as a government representative and superintending architect from 1884 to his death in 1915.

The exhibition organized in Turin in the summer of 1981 by the *Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici del Piemonte* was a complete revelation to many. A substantial selection of original documents, drawings, sketches, letters, models, photographs and paintings illustrating d'Andrade's life and work had been brought together from official archives, museums and family papers. This material was displayed on 150 large panels and divided into two parts. The larger section on d'Andrade as a restorer and conservator was presented in Palazzo Reale, while a smaller display dealing with his work in constructing a complete fortified medieval village for the 1884 Turin Exhibition was to be seen in Palazzo Madama.

Research in the archives and family papers has proved extremely fruitful, though some important

sources still remain to be explored, i.e. his correspondence and diaries. Results of this research have been published in a well-illustrated exhibition catalogue, *Alfredo d'Andrade, tutela e restauro* (Vallecchi, Florence, L20,000), containing articles by some 40 contributors under the editorship of Maria Grazia Cerri.

D'Andrade originated from a wealthy Portuguese family and was born in Lisbon on 26 August 1839. He went to Italy for the first time when he was 14, subsequently spending increasingly longer periods there against the wishes of his father, who wanted him to continue the family business in Portugal. By 1864 d'Andrade had established himself in Italy permanently. His interests were first directed towards painting, especially of landscapes and historic buildings. He studied in Genoa, Turin and Rome, working hard and making intensive tours mostly in the north of Italy, the part of the country that specially appealed to him. After exploring the Roman landscape, he started making archaeological-painting expeditions in his favourite Liguria.

Even though by 1863 he had assured his father he had transferred his interests completely to architecture, he continued painting, gaining official recognition. In 1867 one of his works was selected as part of the Italian representation in the Paris World Exhibition. In the following year d'Andrade was appointed a member of various commissions, and in 1882 he was invited to collaborate in the realization of the 1884 Turin Exhibition. This was a decisive moment in his career, and from then on historic architecture became his main occupation. In the same year he had been invited to join a commission to report on the condition and possible restoration of the Porta Soprana, Genoa; in connection with this he made study tours to Carcassonne and Aigues-mortes to examine these important fortifications. Later his tours were to take him to various parts of Europe to study old buildings and their treatment.



As a painter, d'Andrade was naturally drawn towards consideration of documentation. From the 1860s he had been recording historic buildings, first making measured drawings and later often using photography; these records were included in the first Italian list of protected buildings in 1902. D'Andrade's special interest was castellated and fortified buildings, but churches and vernacular houses were part of the cultural landscape he wanted to document and protect. For the Turin exhibition he became responsible for building a full-size model village illustrating and documenting Piedmont's architectural heritage. On his suggestion, all the buildings were medieval in order to form a unified image, but they were based on accurate documentation and nothing was invented. If changes were necessary, they were done in such a way that the architectural concept was not lost. The structures were lightened by making them hollow, but otherwise they were built to last on d'Andrade's insistence. Decorations, mural paintings and metalwork details were all copied, and his idea was to have artisans working and selling their products in the village shops—an idea that was copied in later exhibitions elsewhere in Europe.

To d'Andrade, the village represented a Piedmontese counterpart to Viollet-le-Duc's dictionary of French medieval art. It was of great importance in drawing attention to local medieval history, up till then hardly recognized, and its special merit was in showing the beauty of small medieval houses in the region. D'Andrade also promoted the protection and conservation of these buildings against destruction and thoughtless modifications.

In 1884 d'Andrade was asked to provide examples of decoration from medieval and renaissance buildings as models to be used in the training of industrial designers; later he was nominated a member of the commission responsible for this activity. In 1889 he refused the appointment of Commissioner of Antiquities and Fine Arts in Liguria, pleading his administrative incapacity and unwillingness to remain an outsider when work was being done. The following year he was nominated technical director of restorations in Liguria and Piedmont, a title changed later to Architect-Engineer-Director of the Provincial Administration for Ancient Art. Until the end of his life he was to be found on numerous commissions, such as those dealing with St. Mark's, Venice and the reconstruction of the campanile after its collapse in 1902, the restoration of Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome, the construction of the facade of Milan cathedral, the arrangement of Umberto I's tomb in the Pantheon, the competition for the Vittorio Emanuele monument in Rome, etc. He was also a member of the Central

Commission of Antiquity and Fine Arts in Rome, an appointment offering him the possibility of influencing Italian legislation on historic monuments.

D'Andrade had few collaborators, and he himself worked on the drawings and travelled around the country to control the work on site. All the drawings made by his assistants were sent to him to be checked, but generally he did not sign his drawings except when he foresaw a public debate on a project. In such a case he would prepare a complete set of carefully detailed drawings containing all the relevant historical data; these were signed to indicate the proposals were his personal responsibility. An example of this is Porta Soprana, Genoa; his proposed restoration of the gateway involved the demolition of houses obstructing the view of the monument, and as these were of relatively recent construction he was satisfied that nothing valuable would be lost. The project was approved and executed.

Personally d'Andrade preferred the Middle Ages, but he had a good knowledge and appreciation of all periods. In restoring Palazzo Madama in Turin he excavated and displayed the Roman remains, restored the medieval structure, and cleaned and repaired Filippo Juvarra's eighteenth-century facade. Thus all the building's historic values were respected in this project which lasted almost two decades and was d'Andrade's most important. The initial documentation was carefully done, and the stratigraphic excavation was carried out according to modern principles. A hard battle was fought with the royal family for another archaeological site, where a Roman theatre was threatened by the construction of a new wing to the Palazzo Reale. In this case d'Andrade lost the battle, but what remained of the theatre was carefully conserved.

As a result of his training as a painter, d'Andrade paid particular attention to the patina of age, texture and colour. On the other hand he was also concerned about the condition of a building; for this reason his actions were sometimes in contradiction to pure conservation. For example, in the Sacra di S. Michele adjoining S. Ambrogio di Susa, Piedmont, he provided new buttresses in the style of the building although they had not existed previously; they were regarded as necessary for the stability of the monument. On the other hand, in the Roman Torre di Pailleron, Aosta, he integrated the form in an unobtrusive manner, distinguishing clearly between the new structure and the original. In private restorations he could be rather free, as in his own Castello di Pavone: this project included a rebuilding of towers and collapsed parts as well as additional constructions in an historical style.

D'Andrade was well read and widely travelled, and he was conversant with English and French restorations and conservation concepts. An inevitable comparison with Viollet-le-Duc was made easier last summer in Turin, where there was also a small exhibition of the French architect's work. D'Andrade's strong and expressive drawings differ from Viollet-le-Duc's more delicate draughtsmanship; but both were somewhat flexible in their attitudes to historic buildings, and decisions were made case by case rather than according to rule. Internationally, d'Andrade may not have reached Viollet's level, but in

his contemporary national context he was an influential figure. Less inventive than his colleagues Luca Beltrami in Milan or Alfonso Rubbiani in Bologna, he was greatly appreciated by Camillo Boito. Above all, d'Andrade loved his buildings; and after his death the Italian Government permitted the tombs of the architect and his wife to be moved to Castello di Pavone, where he had lived and worked. And in 1981 Turin remembered this largely forgotten architect in an impressively conceived tribute to his achievements.

JUKKA JOKILEHTO

Books received

The following books have been received; it is hoped to include reviews of them in subsequent issue.

Bowyer, J., *Handbook of Building Crafts in Conservation*. London 1981: Hutchinson.

Drange, T., Aanensen, H.O. and Braenne, J., *Gamle Trebus, Reparasjon og Vedlikehold*, Oslo-Bergen-Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget 1980 (Norwegian text and captions).

Hosmer, Charles B. Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age: from Williamsburg to the National Trust 1926-1949*, The University Press of Virginia 1981.

Dimacopolous, J., *An Anthology of Greek Architecture: Domestic Architecture in Greece, 15th-20th Centuries*, Athens 1981 (Greek text and captions with English summary).

Thompson, M.W. *Ruins, their Protection and Display*, London: British Museum Publications Ltd. 1981.