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The recent loss of Federico Bucci leaves a large void in the architectural and educational culture of Italy. As well as being a historian who wrote key texts on, among others, Luigi Moretti and the American Albert Kahn, he was an active critic and regular contributor to journals covering the contemporary scene. As a teacher he emphasized the need to understand the past in order to grasp the present, and this translated into a passionate interest in defending architectural patrimony. In addition, he was an administrator as Pro Rector in the Milan Polytechnic.

So it was entirely appropriate that he was selected for the UNESCO chair running the POLIMI Polo Territoriale di Mantova in 2012, a role which he handled with gusto, transforming a provincial and peripheral university town into a centre of international standing, drawing students and visiting faculty from many parts of the world, while engaging with the local population and emphasizing that this city with a great past – Leon Battista Alberti, Andrea Mantegna, Giulio Romano – could be a living present in numerous seminars and manifestations. Bucci understood 'patrimony' in a broad sense. Not just the past works of geniuses working for princes and the church, not just seminal works of modern architecture by 'masters', but also as a day-to-day matter of vernacular architecture, urban spaces and even the rural surroundings with their agricultural landscapes and villages constructed over the centuries. The central pitch of his pedagogy, the philosophy guiding the school in Mantova, was that modern designers needed to understand the forces behind patrimony so as better to engage with it when making modern insertions.

I believe that Bucci thought of the urban fabric of Mantova as a primary text, and that he considered the city itself to be an extension of the classroom, a university without walls. In the same spirit he opened the doors of the academic institution to the general public in energetic cultural events such as the annual MANTOVARCHITETTURA celebrations which brought together not just architects, but also artists, authors and commentators on the state of culture from diverse countries.

It was in the context of another remarkable congress, itinerant exhibition and accompanying book *Basilicata/Puglia 9 itinerari x 100 architetture del '900* that Bucci and I met for the first time in Matera in autumn 2019. We were both members of the selection committee of jurists and both contributed texts to the finely produced compendium volume (the whole programme piloted by Mauro Saito,

Antonello Pagliuca, and DOCOMOMO colleagues). Among other things, this was an opportunity to visit Ludovico Quaroni's chiesa di San Vincenzo de Paoli (1951) in Borgo La Martella and to discover first hand an unsung masterpiece, the Cine-Teatro Duni by Ettore Stella (1946-1948) in Matera itself.

At one of the lunches I found myself sitting opposite a jovial and energetic individual who turned out to be Federico himself. He mentioned his role in Mantova, offered me his card and said "One day we would love you to come and visit". I replied enthusiastically as Mantova has always fascinated me especially as seen through the lens of Alberti. And so it happens that in summer 2021 I received the invitation to deliver the inaugural lesson, that September, in the school. Travel was still difficult and threatening on account of Covid so I delivered my talk *Alla Luce dell'Architettura / In the Light of Architecture* via Zoom. It nearly did not happen as the internet in our village in France was cut so after a dash of twenty-five kilometers to a nearby town and some ingenuity with my wife's mobile phone, the talk was delivered on time and projected in the marvelous eighteenth century Teatro Bibiena on a giant screen, with students wearing masks and with security spaces between them. With a little help from Alberti's "Occhio Alato" and a selection of architecture through the ages, I conveyed the dual message to these first year students: learn to SEE by observing but also sketching; never forget that LIGHT is one of the primary materials of architecture in any epoch including our own.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAjAkVavpuc>

At the end Federico Bucci bounced up onto the stage full of enthusiasm and said "well Professor Curtis come to Mantova in person and experience the marvelous light here directly in this place and its buildings". A week later he video phoned from Rome. He was wearing a mask and restated the enthusiasm of himself and the students for my talk, including the power of my photographs and drawings. This was the last time I had contact with Federico and it remains as a haunting memory of this individual who shared my passion for architecture of all times.

Federico Bucci should have the last word. In his essay in the *Basilicata/Puglia* catalogue he warned against ideological distortion and concluded with these words: "Ora più che mai, la storia dell'architettura italiana ha bisogno di un meticoloso approfondimento: si dovranno studiare le opere, i maestri e le scuole al di là di ogni aspetto ideologico e valorizzare la ricchezza delle singole identità regionali del Novecento, come dimostra brillantemente questa iniziativa dedicata a Basilicata e Puglia". Bucci concluded with a citation from Huizinga which he applied to Italian modern architecture of the twentieth century: "non é andato perduto, né per ora, né per i tempi a venire".