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Letters, sketches and drawings for the story of a negotiation: the architectural compromise in the Francesco Berarducci's San Valentino church

Cartas, bocetos y dibujos para la historia de una negociación: el compromiso arquitectónico en la iglesia de San Valentino, de Francesco Berarducci

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ABSTRACT

The architectural process, from the concept to the actual building itself, is a long sequence of compromises, reconsiderations and unexpected events that require mediation strategies and the balancing of the attitudes of the architects. The relationship between the client and the designer represents a significant part of the architectural process as it has a considerable influence on the end result.

This study investigates episodes of formal negotiation between the architect Francesco Berarducci (Rome, 1924-92) and the client of the San Valentino church in the Olympic Village in Rome (promoted in 1960). It examines archival documents such as letters, sketches and drawings of the cross correspondence between Berarducci and the priest. The aim is to investigate the involvement of the religious client in the decision-making process, resulting in the final consistency of the church, and to individuate the mediation strategies at the base of the professional skill of Berarducci.

KEYWORDS

Religious architecture, Francesco Berarducci, client, architectural compromise, traditional sources.

RESUMEN

El proceso arquitectónico, desde el concepto hasta el edificio mismo, es una larga secuencia de compromisos, reconsideraciones y eventos inesperados que requieren estrategias de mediación y el equilibrio de las actitudes de los arquitectos. La relación entre el cliente y el diseñador representa una parte importante del proceso arquitectónico ya que tiene una influencia considerable en el resultado final.

Este estudio investiga episodios de negociación formal entre el arquitecto Francesco Berarducci (Roma, 1924-92) y el cliente de la iglesia de San Valentino en la Villa Olímpica de Roma (promovida en 1960). Examina documentos de archivo como cartas, bocetos y dibujos de la correspondencia cruzada entre Berarducci y el sacerdote. El objetivo es investigar la participación del cliente religioso en el proceso de toma de decisiones, que resulta en la consistencia final de la iglesia, y también individualizar las estrategias de mediación en la base de la habilidad profesional de Berarducci.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Arquitectura religiosa, Francesco Berarducci, cliente, compromiso arquitectónico, fuentes tradicionales.

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INTRODUCTION

Letters, sketches and drawings relating to architectural projects make up the documents in the archive of Francesco Berarducci (1924-89), recently donated to the MAXXI Architettura Collections by his heirs, and the result of a rich and fruitful project production that lasted for over 40 years. Berarducci's professional activity and his intense research, teaching and cultural activities, already studied in the reference literature (Muratore et al. 1988; Rossi 1991; Alfani 1994; Alfani et al. 1994; Berarducci 1995; Benedetti 2000), are able to enjoy a new season of study thanks to the availability of these archival documents (Longhi and De Lucia being printed; Astone 2022).[1] In this context, among the documents related to the design and construction of religious buildings, as well as some critical and didactic reflections, it is possible to study his relationship with the client. The religious architectural process, from the concept to the built buildings, is a long sequence of compromises, reconsiderations and unexpected events that require mediation strategies and the balance of the attitudes of the architects. The virtuous or unfortunate relationship between the client and the architect represents an important part of the architectural process, as it has a considerable influence on the final result. The churches that Berarducci designed - Nostra Signora di Bonaria in Ostia Lido (designed in 1968, built between 1983-84), San Valentino in the Olympic Village in Rome (designed in 1976, built between 1979-86), Sant'Agostino di Canterbury and Nostra Signora del Suffragio in Torre Maura in Rome (1996-98), as well as the church of Santo Stefano in Quartu Sant'Elena in Sardinia (designed in 1972, built between 1972-76) tell different stories of clients and design processes, each sufficient for an autonomous narrative of architectural compromises, some of which have already been studied elsewhere (Longhi and De Lucia, being printed).

This paper examines the case study of the church of S. Valentino in the Olympic Village in Rome (Fig. 01). In our discussion, this case is particularly interesting for three main reasons: firstly, the parish priest's close involvement in the design of the church; secondly, the extensive correspondence between the architect and the parish priest, including sketches and notes, and thirdly, the historical moment of the church's construction. The church, designed and built between 1979 and 1986, belongs to a particular period in Italian religious architecture. The great season of architectural competitions following the end of the Second Vatican Council, in which the search for new religious architecture was unleashed through impressive initiatives of architectural experimentation (competitions for parish centres in Ascoli Piceno in 1966, Rome, Turin, Cattolica and Ravenna in 1967, in which Berarducci took part, winning the competition in Rome) (Spazio 1967; Gresleri 1967 and 1968; Pontificia Opera 1968; Zito 2011), was now over. A return to more thoughtful and cautious research in the field of religious architecture had begun. The large quantity of innovative and exuberant projects of the previous season hadn't responded adequately to the search for a new post-conciliar architectural language, failing to integrate the liturgical and pastoral needs of the communities with the post-modern architectural style (Abruzzini 1996; Sanson 2008; Scalesse 2008; Longhi 2010; Santi 2011; Lopez-Arias 2019; Santi 2019). At the end of the 1970s, the controversial results of the various competitions, in which the figure of a specific reference client was effectively absent, led to a greater presence of clients in the architectural processes with specific requests and indications, and to greater caution on the part of architects. Berarducci's career is a particularly good example of this architectural dynamic: after the debated and controversial winning project of the 1968 Roman competition for the church of Santa Maria di Bonaria (Pontificia Opera 1968; Benedetti 1968; Chiesa al Lido 1984; Benedetti 1990; Pontificia Opera 1990; Abruzzini 1996; Benedetti 2000; Lambertucci 2016), Berarducci began, with the church of San Valentino, a design phase characterised by a more rigorous relationship with tradition, with typological research in line with the precepts of the liturgical reform, and a return to a «spiritual serenity that leads to certainty of intention and calmness of formal language» (Berarducci 1990, 14-15).

Fig. 01. Francesco Berarducci, church of San Valentino in the Olympic Village, Rome (Italy), 1960-87; frontal view.

The church of S. Valentino is an effective case study to investigate the complicated relationship between the client and the designer: stories of compromises and negotiations, intrusions into professional domains, balances and synergies. To this end, the analysis of the archival documents will analytically focus on the main themes of the dialectic between the client and the architect. This will make it possible to highlight the most recurrent requests of the client, the possible compliance of the architect and the mediation strategies in the design process, with the aim of also stimulating a critical reflection on the professional field of competence of the various stakeholders in the process (in this case, the priest and the architect).

The study aims to establish a methodological approach that can be applied to other case studies from different historical periods and fields of research, in which the archival documents allow a systematic analysis, in order to attempt a historical and analytical reading of the client-architect relationship in the context of religious architecture.

INVESTIGATION OF A CLIENT-ARCHITECT RELATIONSHIP: THE CASE OF THE CHURCH OF S. VALENTINO IN ROME

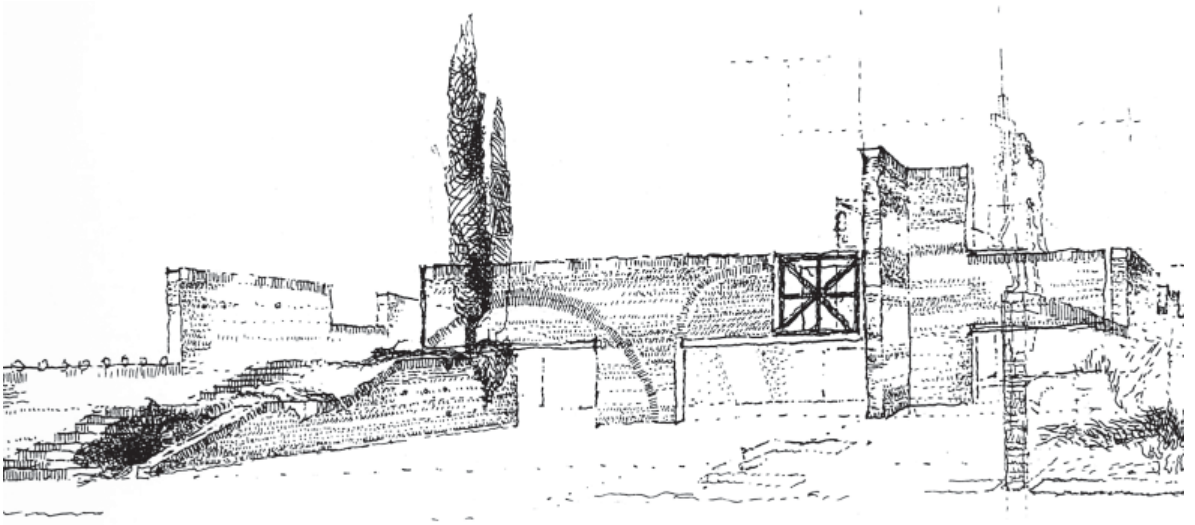
The church of S. Valentino in the Olympic Village in Rome is a building not far from the rationalist sports quarter of the city. Unlike Berarducci's earlier church of Nostra Signora di Bonaria, which was heavily criticised for its extreme compositional experimentalism, this church was an immediate architectural success.

As said before, the church is a demonstration of a return to architectural tradition: it is based entirely on the concept of Roman ruins with the use of brick, travertine marble and figurative quotes as a reference to ancient Roman basilicas, as well as the geometric decoration of the floor and the iron details (Fig. 02) (De Rubertis 1987; Alfani et al. 1994; Berarducci, 1995; San Valentino 1998; Muratore 2006; Ribichini et al. 2021). It was precisely this relationship with antiquity that led to the building's nomination in the In/Arch Prize (I premi nazionali 1989) and the selection of this church as the cover for the Guide of the Roman Church (1990) published by the Pontificia opera per la preservazione della fede e la provvista di nuove chiese in Roma (Berarducci 1990).

With this church, Berarducci establishes the end of his confidence in concrete, abandoned in favour of brick, and completely opens the structure to the light through the use of a modular structure, with wells of light and a dematerialised roof with steel beams (Campagna and Melograni 1989; Acocella 1992). His architectural poetics is clearly visible in the use of linear paths to make up the parish complex, linking the church, the pastoral places and the neighbourhood with a tidy sequence of open and closed spaces, passages, stairs, views and filters. This linear orientation of the spaces, supported by a geometrically inlaid marble floor, defines a longitudinal liturgical layout where the intimacy of the assembly is mainly due to the material and luminous composition of the space and not to the arrangement of the pews and liturgical elements (Pontificia Opera 1990; Borroni et al. 1990; Purini 1993; Alfani et alii 1994) (Fig. 03).

The Vicariate of Rome requested and financed the construction of this church to resolve a complicated urban situation in the Roman district, built for the 1960 Olympic Games and then converted into a residential area. The plan of the district is a very interesting case of post-war Roman architecture, with the collaboration of architects such as Vittorio Cafiero, Adalberto Libera, Luigi Moretti, Vincenzo Monaco and Amedeo Luccichenti. Luigi Moretti presented a design for the church of the new parish dedicated to San Valentino, erected in 1962. It was not, however, realised and, after some problems in the choice of the final site (Spagnesi 2011; Gresleri 2010), the initiative was taken up directly by the Vicariate of Rome, which awarded the project to Francesco Berarducci, already known in the Roman Curia for previous religious projects. The design of the church is documented from the spring of 1979, and the construction was carried out between 1985 and 1986 (with the dedication of the church on 23 November 1986) (Longhi 2017).

Many of the church's architectural and liturgical features are due to the important role played by the parish priest who was the client, don Dino Fortunato,



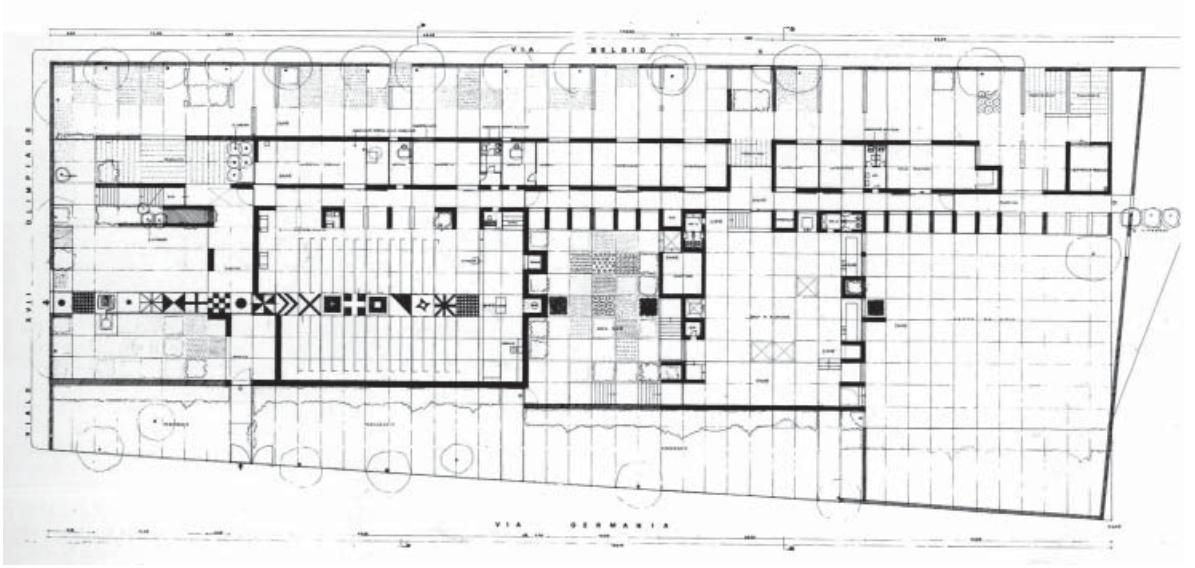


Fig. 02. Francesco Berarducci, church of San Valentino in the Olympic Village, Rome (Italy), 1960-87; sketch of the first elaboration of project by Francesco Berarducci: churchyard and principal facade, 1979 ca.
Fig. 03. Planimetry of the parish complex project.

who largely influenced the architectural, liturgical and artistic choices of the project. Fortunately for us and for the subject addressed here, the archival documents include letters and requests from the client: more than twenty letters sent by don Dino to Berarducci, between 1979 and 1987, full of requests and considerations to ensure that the construction of the new church would be a success. Berarducci's replies are only two, calm and compact, until the last critical moments.

To continue the narration of this relationship between the client and the architect, a systematic reading of the archival documents is proposed in order to individualise some precise analytical criteria: in particular, the most prominent themes in the client's requests are pointed out in order to define categories of dialectical processes. A critical reflection on the possible legitimacy of the requests and on the mediation passages is then proposed. This approach also aims to define a comparative framework that can be applied to other case studies.

The numerous requests made by the client can be divided into four main groups:

1. Liturgical requests concerning the arrangement and use of liturgical elements and the needs relating to worship;

2. Requests relating to the needs of ordinary and daily pastoral life, including aspects of the management and security of the building;

3. Requests concerning the habitability of private areas of the complex reserved for the residence of the clergy;

4. Arbitrary architectural requests of the client, justified only by his ambition and artistic sensibility.

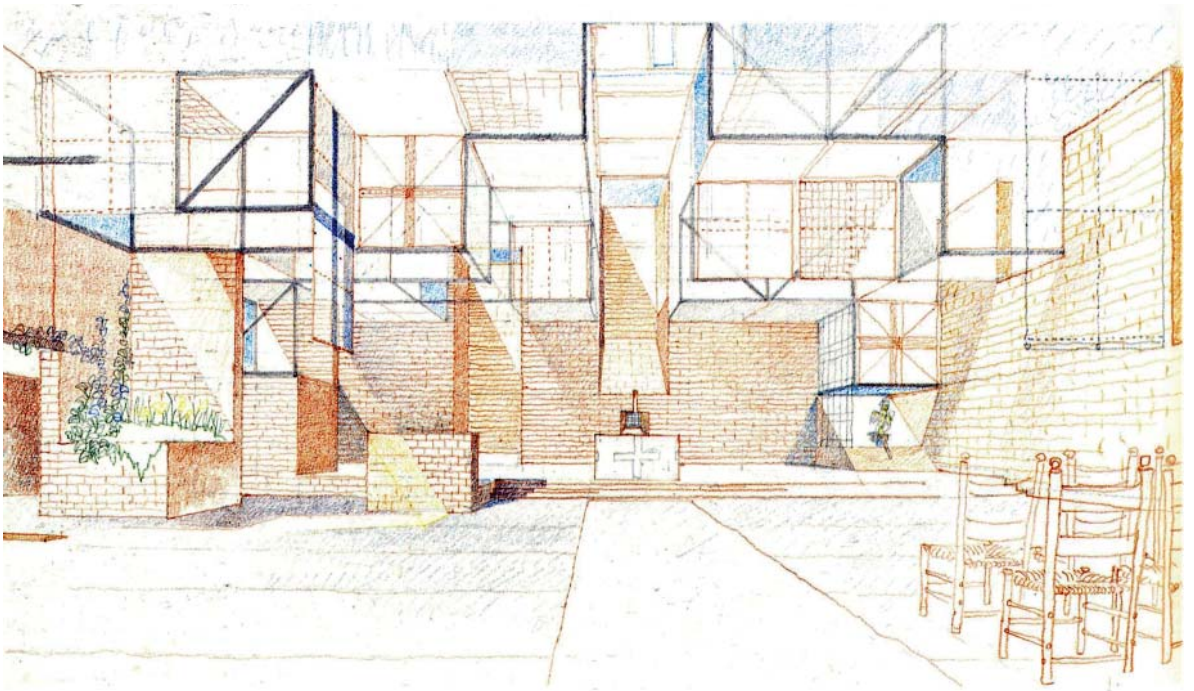
This catalogue clearly illustrates the existence of different spheres of action between the architect and the client: where is the limit of the power of action of the two stakeholders? How does negotiation lead to an architectural compromise? How to manage the areas of respect between these two different professions which have to get along in order to achieve a good result in functional, liturgical and artistic terms? Let us look at the four types of requests.

1. Liturgical requests

From the very first stage of the design of the church, Berarducci imagined a liturgical set up far removed from those designed in the previous church of Nostra Signora di Bonaria and Santo Stefano in Quartu Sant'Elena where the presbytery area was curved and enveloping. In this case, the liturgical elements were concentred in a plenary presbytery with a frontal set up, at the end of a longitudinal axes. However, the priest started very early with requests and suggestions: the most significant request was the central position of the tabernacle, on the same axis as the altar and the entrance to the church. This is an inappropriate position in a parish church which resulted in a very small space between the tabernacle and the altar, limiting the possibility to celebrate the eucharist around the altar and to concentrate on the Holy Sacrament for personal prayer. The architect's preliminary design placed the tabernacle in a more segregated spot, with autonomous architectural volumetry, as suggested by the liturgical guidelines, but don Dino's requests were satisfied, except for the sculptural apparatus:

> I would like it [the tabernacle] to be central. I am thinking of something on some rocks, with an orderly disorder, and a suitable marble or stone cross (you know better than me), with the tabernacle in the centre, something like a Golgotha, with the Blood of Redemption converging in the tabernacle. That is the idea. You will make it right (AFB/DF-B, 08/07/1979).[2]

The request for a plenary presbytery went on to indicate specific position of the other liturgical elements. The ambon, initially designed as an extension of the presbytery towards the assembly (Fig. 04) with a length of more than two metres, creating a connection between the celebration area and the assembly, was cut at the request of priest: «I would very much like the ambon not to extend but to remain enclosed within the area of the presbytery, without interfering with the presbytery steps» (AFB/DF-B, 15/03/1981). A few months later the request was reformulated as follows:



O SONO LA VIA
LA VERITA E LA VITA

> I remind you again —therefore— of my previous request: it seems more than sufficient that the ambon extend one metre beyond the steps: two would be cumbersome. To break up the long line of steps, one metre should be enough (AFB/DF-B, 16/06/1983).[3]

The mediation point was a mortified architectural sign with an extension of the ambon by one metre toward the assembly.

Moreover, a request was made to move the celebrant's seat, initially expected to be in a niche on the left side of the rear wall of the presbytery, behind the ambon, to the middle of the rear wall, between two apses containing the tabernacle and the baptismal font. The position of the baptismal font was also controlled by the client, this time with the support of the parish council:

> Considering that baptisms take place on the altar, this is what they [the parish council] would like to do (and I think this is an excellent idea): place the baptistery in the niche instead of the seat, which could be placed between this niche and the tabernacle. Perhaps with a large inscription: here the sons of men become the sons of God. This is an excellent and meaningful solution (AFB/DF-B, 13/08/1979)[4] (Fig. 05).

It is interesting to note a specific letter from the client concerning the lettering to be engraved on the liturgical furniture, specifically chosen by the priest for the baptistery, the tabernacle, the altar and the ambon (AFB/DF-B, 30/10/1985).

2. Requests related to the needs of ordinary and daily pastoral life.

The priest's requests concerning the needs of ordinary and daily pastoral life are of particular interest in a reflection on the sphere of action and competence between the priest and the architect. Certain formal architectural initiatives may be uncomfortable and unsafe for the users of the parish, and some of these practical matters may be unclear to the architect. In the majority of cases, it is the parish priest who has a clear vision of the practical needs and the difficulties of parish administration, and this is why priests and architects would work together in an effective synergy, so that the architecture truly meets the functional needs of the community.

In the case of the church of S. Valentino, don Dino Fortunato asked for several alterations to Berarducci's project, limiting some architectural naiveties that would have been considered ineffective, if not dangerous. Being a serious and conscientious professional, Berarducci agreed to each request, understanding the limits of the designer in relation to the responsibilities and difficulties of managing a parish. These are just a few of the priest's requests.

Concerning the exterior of the parish complex (Fig. 06):

–He asks that an open yard in front of the church be avoided and suggests that the church be fenced in to protect it from intrusion by thieves and against vandalism. The fence would also create a safe area for children and their parents (AFB/DF-B, no dated and 15/03/1981).

–He suggests that the steps in the yard be removed or blocked off securely to prevent young childrens or thieves from entering the private areas of the church (AFB/DF-B, no dated and 22/07/1979). For the same reason, he asks that the side entrances to the complex lead only into the public area and not into the private and pastoral area (AFB/DF-B, 08/07/1979).

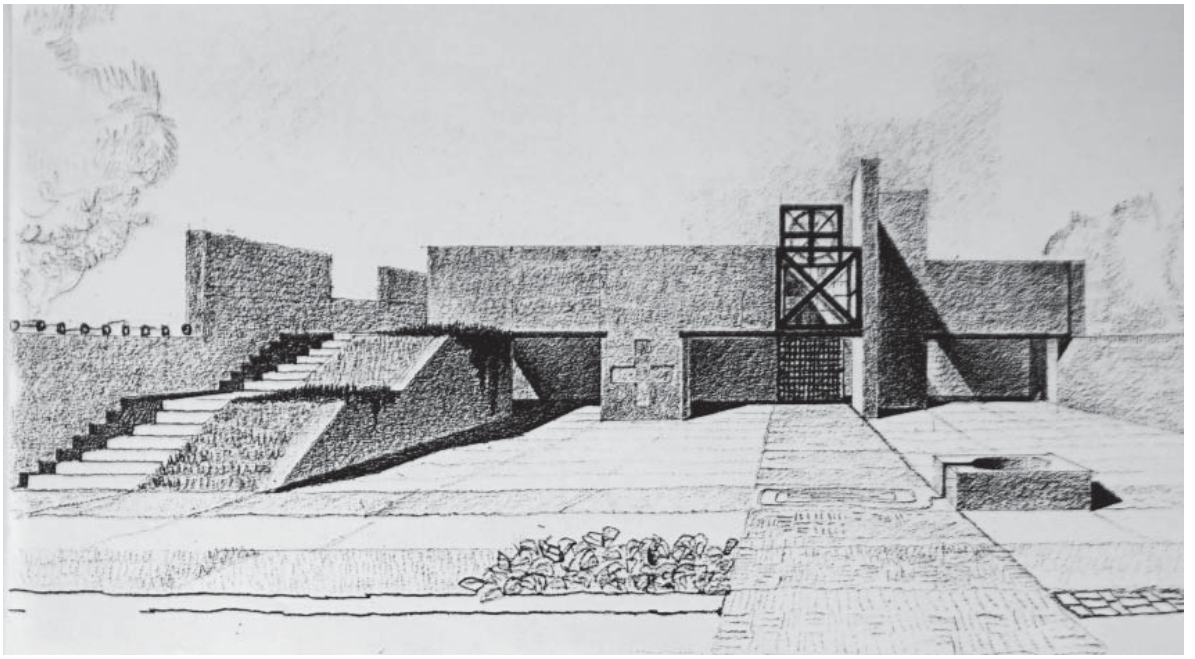
–He is very concerned about the tub in the courtyard as it would be very dangerous for children and the elderly and asks that it be removed (AFB/DF-B, 22/04/1986).

–The open area of the yard should be a portico, «as in ancient churches», to allow people to rest before and after religious ceremonies and to hang the noticeboard (AFB/DF-B, 08/06/1969).

–The basketball court in the churchyard should be of regulatory size, to organise matches and tournaments for the young parishioners (AFB/DF-B, no dated).

Other requirements concern the interior of the parish complex:

Fig. 04. Francesco Berarducci, church of San Valentino in the Olympic Village, Rome (Italy), 1960-87; internal perspective view of the presbytery project by Berarducci.
Fig. 05. Internal view of the presbytery.



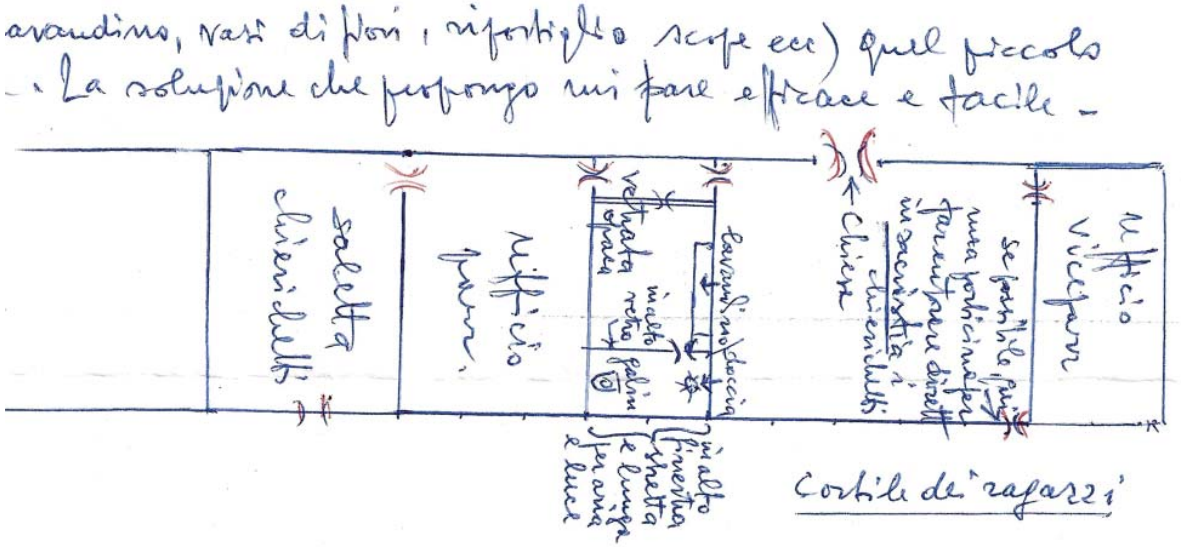


Fig. 06. Francesco Berarducci, church of San Valentino in the Olympic Village, Rome (Italy), 1960-87; sketch of the initial project of the churchyard and principal facade, undated.
Fig. 07. Don Dino Fortunato, proposal sketch of the internal distribution of the church.

–The interior of the church, except for the presbytery, must be on one level, with no differences in height that would make it unsafe (AFB/DF-B, 27/04/1979).

–The floor of the church must be squared off by a decoration so that the pews can be positioned orthogonally (AFB/DF-B, no dated). However, the floor of the church must be different from that of the choir and presbytery, which must be more precious, avoiding the use of carpets and footrests (AFB/DF-B, 22/07/1979). It would be better for both floors to be in polished stone to facilitate cleaning operations (AFB/DF-B, 15/03/1981).

–At the entrance to the church, a small area must be left free to set up the Christmas nativity scene (AFB/DF-B, no dated).

3. Requests concerning the habitability of private areas of the complex

In principle, the requests of priests regarding the habitability of the private areas of the complex are legitimate, as it is they who are the real beneficiaries of these spaces. However, excessive involvement of the priest in the design process can result in requests and suggestions getting out of hand, especially when the priests consider the parish complex as their property and not as a place where they will live only on a temporary basis. On this subject, Berarducci wrote:

> Relations with Roman parish priests are not easy because they are marred by a deep-rooted misunderstanding. Priests believe that the church is their property, and this belief often has unpleasant consequences in terms of qualitative, distributive and even liturgical demands, sometimes arbitrary and unjustifiable. Unfortunately, the relationship is aggravated when, in many cases, the priest does not have the experience and the ability to distinguish between spiritual and architectural problems and relies on inappropriate advisors and less ingenuous than him (AFB, LL).[5]

In our case, don Dino's requests are acceptable enough: a large apartment for him, all on the first floor, also including rooms for his sister and for the maid, as well as space for a closet, laundry room and private office; a small apartment for three nuns («which he feels to be absolutely necessary, almost more than the assistant priest» (AFB/DF-B, 25/04/1979)[6] equipped with a common work area and a small bathroom in each of their rooms; a garage accessible from the street for the car, etc. (AFB/DF-B, 25/04/1979; 08/06/1979; 09/06/1979; 22/07/1979; 13/10/1979).

4. Arbitrary architectural requests of the client

This last group of requests analysed in the archive documents speaks of an abuse of the role of the priest who makes requests based purely on his personal feelings, negating the architect's professionalism. Don Dino Fortunato repeatedly tries to be involved in the architect's formal and stylistic decisions, intervening in matters that have nothing to do with him, such as the size and model of the benches in the church (AFB/DF-B, no dated), or the decoration of the flooring and the ceiling (AFB/DF-B, 15/09/1985). He also makes suggestions regarding the construction materials, asking for the use of tufo to be avoided because it is «ugly, horrible, hardened mud», preferring concrete, marble or terracotta (AFB/DF-B, 16/06/1983).[7] He speaks about the colour of the floor, white or ochre, not black, as well as the structural elements of the ceiling (AFB/DF-B, 15/09/1985).[8] He chooses white marble for the floor of the presbytery, so that it will be precious, etc. (AFB/DF-B, 22/04/1986).

On two occasions, he even goes so far as to send sent drawings and sketches to communicate his design concept:

– One concerning the internal distribution of the church. He proposes a sequence of space according to a layout he considers «efficient and easy» (AFB/DF-B, 16/06/1983) (Fig. 07).

– Another is a draft of the cross on the façade. His cross is a big orthogonal element in white travertine. He also offers a technical description: «on the roof, in the corner: three big blocks of travertine, obviously white to obtain the intended effect: a big cross, white, squared, that will be seen from everywhere [...]. With a steel beam inside» (AFB/DF-B, 22/04/1986).[9]

Although the priest knows that he might come across as being overly ambitious in these requests,

he is totally unaware that he is overstepping his role. In some passages he is almost insolently threatening: «If you don't do it right, I will certainly do it later (they tell me I'm stubborn, like every good Venetian). But it would be a pity to carry out after and not during the construction» (AFB, letter of don Dino Fortunato to Eng. Alessandri, Construction Manager 28/01/1985).[10] And after months spent satisfying requests and not replying to letters, Berarducci finally decided to reinstate his professional dignity.

THE FORMULATION OF AN ARCHITECTURAL COMPROMISE

> «Rev. Monsignor 'don Dino'. You have written me many letters, all of which I have kept, expressing your valuable advice and numerous requests during the construction of the Church of S. Valentino in the Olympic Village. Looking back over your correspondence, I think it is fair to say that all your wishes have been honoured and fulfilled, even when their interpretation in terms of construction and aesthetics was not easy. Now that construction is almost complete, with results that I consider, immodestly, exceptional, it is I who write to you with a request. A single request, which you are already well aware of! But which I wish to put down in writing: I desire only that the work does not deteriorate, that, with this in mind, you are able to resist the pressures of glib 'advisors' and generous yet inappropriate donations, and above all, that you are able to resist your own urges! And should you feel that the strength of such resistance is failing you, then please always feel free to call on me! I, with the help of the Lord, will always be at your disposal to solve the problem in the best possible way and without betraying the spirit of the work. From the most severe to the smallest of problems, even for things which might seem insignificant (one of the most important architects of this century said 'God is in the detail'). When the work is completely finished, many specialised magazines will publish the results; therefore, it will become public and will belong to a larger community, not only because it was partially financed by the Italian government, but because it is recognised by official culture. Consequently, it must be respected, without alteration» (AFB, letter of Berarducci to don Dino Fortunato 01/12/1986).[11]

After months and months of letters, this is Berarducci's reply, which reveals his only concern: the future management of the church. A general reading of the correspondence in the archive shows that, despite the priest's lively insistence, the more pressing requests concerned the liturgical and pastoral aspects, while the arbitrary wishes in terms of art and architecture can be considered marginal. The liturgical and pastoral requests were easily accepted by Berarducci and it is the precise instructions of the client that resulted in an architecture that was very different from previous churches by Berarducci. It is important to note that this architectural dynamic can only be understood in the light of the archival documents, which allow a diachronic reading of the process; on the contrary, this attitude could be interpreted as a spontaneous change on the part of the designer. Perhaps Berarducci's professional expertise led him to recognise the specificity and the role of the priest involved in the process and avoid prioritising his skills over the priest's competence. This is a plausible, but weak, assumption given the architect's professional competence in the field of religious architecture and his involvement in diocesan activities.

It is much more likely that Berarducci was extremely cautious in the architectural process in order to avoid the negative criticism he had received in relation to the church in Ostia, where he felt freer to express his architectural and liturgical ideas. Berarducci's personal commitment to the success of this church in the Italian architectural landscape is extremely clear from his words, which tell us a lot about his architectural psychology: a professionalism characterised by an obvious ability to mediate and care for details, but above all, provided by the clarity of mind to understand that architecture is a public matter and buildings —seen, as they grow as sons— must be given to the community and shared with the rest of the world.[12]

However, in order to be completely reassured about the future management of the church, Berarducci decided to draw up a written agreement,

using his only strength, the economic aspects, to impose his wishes. The written agreement, signed by the architect and the priest, reads as follows:

> Given that to complete the work on the church of S. Valentino in Rome it is necessary to submit a further variant of the project to the Municipality of Rome to allow the construction of works for a total amount of approximately 100 million. Furthermore, this variant and the related amount cannot be financed by the vicariate but must be funded entirely by Rev. Monsignor Dino Fortunato.
> This said, the following agreement is entered into between Monsignor Dino Fortunato and the architect F. Berarducci:
> F. Berarducci undertakes to draw up the variant of the project in the shortest possible time, offering his professional work free of charge (with the exception of a modest reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses), intending to contribute, also financially, to the best outcome of the work.
> Monsignor Dino Fortunato, acting also in the name of the pastoral council of S. Valentino, undertakes to respect and enforce, rigorously and unconditionally, all the architectural and furnishing indications suggested by Berarducci, even those that are apparently insignificant. To this end, a provisional list of indications that can be implemented immediately is annexed hereto, while others will be communicated.
> It is understood that this commitment constitutes an irreversible agreement between people in good faith, but the church has long known men and their sins and has long taught that even people of honour and in perfect good faith can sometimes, despite themselves, be non-compliant, forced by circumstances, like Don Abbondio, or by the strength that comes from their own misunderstanding.
> If this were to happen, regardless of the wishes or justifications, the agreement would lose its value and the F. Berarducci would find himself forced to request the liquidation of his professional fee, the amount of which is roughly indicated [...] below as: 11,175,000 Italian lire in total (AFB, LL).[13]

A list of the most significant actions is reported below:

> −definitive arrangement of church benches and small weekday chapel benches
> −eliminate all other seats in the church and chapel
> −remove all additional pews from the church
> −remove red cloth behind chapel crucifix
> −eliminate chapel spotlights
> −eliminate red background behind picture of San Valentino
> −arrange the mailbox differently and paint it dark red
> −eliminate magazine rack at church entrance. Study another solution if necessary.
> −eliminate window decals from the catechism room
> −arrange triangular candlesticks appropriately
> −paint the candlesticks black
> −eliminate the cardboard boxes containing the candles!
> −eliminate vases and plants scattered throughout the church (they must all be grouped around and behind the planter)
> −eliminate the two vases from the sides of the side entrance to the portico
> −replace the handwriting on the offering boxes with tape writing
> −arrange all notices on a single panel (larger if necessary) on the porch.
> −eliminate all the pots embedded in the earth by the side entrance
> −arrange the presbytery furnishings (cross, candles, spotlights, etc.)
> −altar tablecloth without folds
> −above all, once everything has been arranged and is permanently in place, do not change anything for any reason!!!! Ask the architect for a solution if necessary,!!!» (AFB, LL).

CONCLUSION

At the end of this narrative, there are some main conclusions to be highlighted in a critical reflection on the contribution.

The first concerns the specific case study: a general reading of the archival documents makes it possible to understand that, despite the large number of requests from the client, the most consistent part of them relates to the liturgical and the pastoral aspects. Berarducci decided to satisfy the liturgical requests probably because of previous criticism of his work, despite the indications of inconsistent respect for the liturgical prescriptions of the Second Vatican Council; while the pastoral requests were sometimes

satisfied as a gesture of respect for the role and the competence of the priest.

As for the behaviour of the architect: Berarducci shows an architect's typical concern for the future and for the solitude of the buildings left to the communities and destined to be used and transformed over time. Moreover, the reading of the dynamics of the mediation between the client and Berarducci in the case of the design of this church shows his personal and professional abilities but can only be understood in the light of his entire production in the field and the previous design processes.

As regards the methodological approach, it consisted in a systematic reading of the archival documents by cataloguing the relationship between the client and the architect on the basis of the subjects of their argumentation. This allowed a more objective approach to the study of the topic, which can be applied to other case studies —in relation to the adequate availability of archival sources— in order to identify common themes.

The last point is a broader methodological reflection. If it is true that this type of analysis, carried out on past cases, could be extremely interesting in the study of the client-architect relationship, more recent analyses will become increasingly difficult. Today's ephemeral, digital correspondence by email and smartphone will limit historical analysis by reducing the presence of archival documents, which are fundamental source of information. The discipline of history will have to adapt traditional research methods to new sources, legitimising new types of study and new approaches.

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NOTES

1. The work of consultation and study of the documents by the author was conducted in 2018 during the period of document cataloguing before the effective donation of the archive to the MAXXI Architecture Collection. The research was aimed to the writing of the paper *Percorsi di architettura, tra biografia e contesti: le chiese romane di Francesco Berarducci (1924-1992)* signed by Andrea Longhi and Giulia De Lucia in the volume *Roma:*

arte sacra e spazi di culto. 1968-2018 (Longhi and De Lucia, being printed). As regard the current archival position of documents citated in this contribution, refer to the online catalogue of the MAXXI Architecture Collection.

2. «Non abbiamo parlato del tabernacolo. Ci terrei molto fosse centrale. Io avrei in mente qualcosa su dei massi, in ordinato disordine, una adeguata croce in marmo o pietre… (o sa Lei meglio di me) e al centro il tabernacolo: quasi un Golgota e il sangue della redenzione che si raccoglie nel tabernacolo».

3. «Preferirei vivamente che l'ambone non sporgesse ma restasse incluso nel presbiterio, senza spezzare l'ampia e bella gradinata separatoria». And «Le ricordo ancora —perciò— quanto già Le chiesi: mi pare più che sufficiente che l'ambone si protenda, oltre i gradini, di un metro: due sarebbero ingombranti. Per rompere la lunga linea dei gradini, 1 m. può bastare».

4. «Chiedono una sistemazione più consona e significativa al battistero. Tenuto conto che i battesimi si fanno all'altare, ecco come essi chiedono (e mi par idea ottima) di risolvere: al posto del seggio —che si può benissimo porre tra quella nicchia e il tabernacolo— sistemare bene il battistero, magari con la scritta: qui i figli degli uomini diventano figli di Dio. È soluzione ottima e significativa».

5. «I rapporti con i parroci dell'area romana non sono facili anche perché viziati da un equivoco che si è radicato. Quello di aver generato la convinzione della proprietà della Chiesa da parte del parroco, con conseguenze a volte meschine, sulle pretese quantitative e distributive e perfino liturgiche, a volte arbitrarie e ingiustificabili. Purtroppo, i rapporti si aggravano quando, in molti casi, il parroco non ha l'esperienza e la capacità di discernere i problemi spirituali e quelli architettonici, affidandosi a consiglieri inadatti e meno ingenui di lui».

6. «Chiedo vivissimamente di poter ricavare un appartamentino, per quanto piccolo, per tre suore di cui sento assoluta necessità, quasi più del viceparroco».

7. «Voglio anche accennarle al tufo, architetto. Mi pare tanto tanto brutto, orribile, fango indurito, friabile, sempre risulta sporco. (...) Meglio sarebbe allora —e più economico forse— cemento e cortina di mattone, come le abitazioni di qui».

8. «Del resto, già il pavimento sarebbe oscuro con il travertino. A me... mi viene un'idea: grigliato bianco avana che richiamerebbe le belle fasce bianche di travertino, e sfondo (pannello?) rosso come i pilastri, come le capriate. Che ne dice? Ci faccia un pensierino: probabilmente l'effetto sarebbe anche migliore e viceversa. Nero no, per carità!».

9. «Nel colmo, sull'angolo: tre bei blocchi di travertino, bianco naturalmente, otterrebbero l'effetto voluto, una bella croce, bianca, squadrata, sarà vista da ogni parte (...). Con una sbarra di ferro all'interno».

10. «Se non fate per bene voi, dopo lo farò certamente io (mi dicono che son testardo, come ogni buon venetaccio) Ma perché farmi spendere ciò che si eviterebbe in via di esecuzione? Sarebbe un peccato!».

11. «Rev. Monsignor *don Dino*. Molte sono le lettere che lei mi ha scritto e che conservo, nelle quali sono espressi i suoi preziosi consigli e le sue numerose richieste durante i lavori per la realizzazione della chiesa di S. Valentino al Villaggio Olimpico. Ripercorrendo tale corrispondenza credo di poter affermare che tutti i suoi desideri sono stati rispettati ed esauditi, a volte anche con non facili interpretazioni costruttive ed estetiche. Ora che l'opera si avvia alla conclusione con dei risultati che, immodestamente, ritengo eccezionali, ora sono io a scriverle e a pregarla di considerare il mio desiderio. Un unico desiderio, a lei già ben noto! Ma che voglio rimanga scritto: desidero solo che l'opera non si deteriori, che a tale scopo lei possa resistere alle pressioni di facili *consiglieri* o di generose quanto inopportune offerte, soprattutto desidero che lei possa resistere a se stesso! E qualora dovesse sentire che la forza di tale resistenza le venisse meno, allora abbia sempre la opportunità di interpellarmi! Sarò, con l'aiuto del signore, sempre a sua disposizione per risolvere il problema nel migliore dei modi e senza tradire lo spirito dell'opera. Dal più grave al più piccolo dei problemi, anche per quello che a lei potrebbe sembrare insignificante. (uno dei più grandi architetti del nostro secolo ebbe a dire *Dio è nel particolare*). Quando l'opera sarà interamente finita molte riviste specializzate ne pubblicheranno i risultati; quindi, essa diverrà pubblica e apparterrà ad una comunità più grande, non solo perché è stata realizzata anche con il contributo dello stato italiano, ma in quanto opera riconosciuta dalla cultura ufficiale. Per questo dovrà essere rispettata, senza alterazioni. Sicuro della sua comprensione e del suo impegno la saluto e la ringrazio calorosamente».

12. This concept will be forth formulated in general terms by critics by Daniele Vitale in the introduction of the volume of Rafael Moneo that cites: «Buildings, as all the things built by humans, once realized will be separated by feelings and passions that conducted them up to that moment, from the contingences, the intentions and from models. They firstly born on the base of a request and a need, in relation to a place and a society, in a system made by tensions and conflicts: but conflicts subli-

mate and became form. At the end, only the object, the manufact, remains» (Vitale 1999, 11).

13. «Premesso che per completare i lavori della costruenda chiesa di S. Valentino in Roma è necessario presentare, al Comune di Roma, una ulteriore variante di progetto per permettere la realizzazione di opere per un importo complessivo di circa 100 milioni. Premesso inoltre che tale variante e il relativo importo non può essere finanziato dal vicariato ma dovrà risultare a completo carico del rev. Monsignor Dino Fortunato. Tutto ciò premesso, tra il monsignor Dino Fortunato e l'arch. F. Berarducci si stabilisce quanto segue: l'arch. F. Berarducci si impegna a redigere il progetto di variante nel più breve tempo possibile offrendo gratuitamente la sua opera professionale (a meno di un modesto rimborso delle vive spese di studio) intendendo contribuire, anche finanziariamente alla migliore riuscita dell'opera. Monsignor Dino Fortunato, anche a nome e per conto del collegio pastorale di S. Valentino, si impegna a rispettare e far rispettare, rigorosamente e incondizionatamente, tutte le indicazioni architettoniche e di arredo suggerite dall'arch. Berarducci, anche quelle apparentemente insignificanti. A tale scopo si allega un elenco provvisorio di alcune indicazioni che possono essere immediatamente attuate, altre ancora saranno comunicate. Si intende che questo impegno costituisce patto irrinunciabile tra persone in buona fede ma la chiesa conosce da tempo gli uomini e i loro peccati, da molto tempo insegna che anche le persone d'onore ed in perfetta buona fede possono a volte loro malgrado essere inadempienti, costretti dalle circostanze come don Abbondio o dalla forza che proviene dalla loro incomprensione. Se ciò dovesse avvenire, indipendentemente dalle volontà o dalle giustificazioni, il patto cadrebbe di valore e l'architetto F. Berarducci si troverebbe costretto a chiedere la liquidazione della sua parcella professionale, che a titolo indicativo di seguito trascrive: 11.175.000 lire totale».

SOURCE OF IMAGES

Fig. 01, 05. Archive of the author.
Fig. 02-04, 06-07. MAXXI Architettura Collections, AFB.