

LC. #04 ARTICLE INVITÉ



Le Corbusier. *Saint-Sulpice*.
Huile sur toile 146x114 cm.
FLC 96

**The cat and the ball of yarn.
Interweaving the threads of the history and restoration
of the Villa Savoye (1970- 1986)**
Susanna Caccia Gherardini and Carlo Olmo



FIG. 1
Villa Savoye, 1984.
FLC – Fondation
Le Corbusier, Paris

THE CAT AND THE BALL OF YARN. INTERWEAVING THE THREADS OF THE HISTORY AND RESTORATION OF THE VILLA SAVOYE (1970- 1986).

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Abstract: The essay, the first of two writings, reconstructs the events of the generation of historians who between the seventies and mid-eighties studied and interpreted the written and designed works by Le Corbusier. This picture is part of the reading of different phases of the restoration of villa Savoye conducted by architect en chef Ivan Gury after the first operation by Jean Dubuisson, leading to a season of infinite authorial restorations of the modern. The authors deal with the complex issue of the interpretation of Le Corbusier's works during the formation phase of the history of contemporary architecture, when the sources are almost all accessible and the literature on the subject explodes. The text investigates unpublished materials and documents, offering a new interpretation both of the villa Savoye and of the texts on the French-Swiss master.

Keywords: Historiography, Le Corbusier, villa Savoye, restoration, micro-history.

Résumé: L'essai, le premier de deux écrits, reconstitue les événements de la génération d'historiens qui, entre les années 70 et le milieu des années 80, a étudié et interprété les œuvres de Le Corbusier, écrites et projetées. Cette image s'inscrit dans la lecture des différentes phases de restauration de la villa Savoye menée par l'architecte en chef Ivan Gury après un premier achèvement par Jean Dubuisson, ouvrant une saison de restaurations infinies du moderne d'auteur. Les auteurs abordent également la question complexe de l'interprétation des œuvres de Le Corbusier dans la phase de formation de l'histoire de l'architecture contemporaine, lorsque les sources sont presque toutes accessibles et que la littérature sur le sujet explose. Le texte explore des matériaux et des documents inédits, offrant une nouvelle interprétation à la fois de la villa Savoye et des textes sur le maître franco-suisse.

Mots-clé: Historiographie, Le Corbusier, villa Savoye, restauration, micro-histoire.

Resumen: El ensayo, el primero de dos escritos, reconstituye los acontecimientos de la generación de historiadores que, entre los años 70 y mediados de los 80, estudiaron e interpretaron las obras escritas y proyectadas por Le Corbusier. Esta imagen forma parte de la lectura de las diferentes fases de restauración de la Villa Savoye dirigidas por el arquitecto jefe Ivan Gury tras una primera realización de Jean Dubuisson, abriendo una época de interminables restauraciones de autor de lo moderno. Los autores también abordan la compleja cuestión de la interpretación de las obras de Le Corbusier en la fase de formación de la historia de la arquitectura contemporánea, cuando las fuentes están casi universalmente disponibles y la literatura sobre el tema se dispara. El texto explora materiales y documentos inéditos, ofreciendo una nueva interpretación tanto de la Villa Savoye como de los textos sobre el maestro franco-suizo.

Palabras clave: Historiografía, villa Savoye, restauración, micro-historia.



FIG. 2
Villa Savoye, Scaffoldings
during restoration works, 1966
(picture by Félix Thyès).
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Le Corbusier, Paris.

Ouverture

In the sixteen years covered by this paper historians of architecture and conservation could experience the deformation and modifications generated by shifting from one text to another, and how, almost in a mockery of history, *la longue durée* (of the Savoye) was affirmed by the persistence of the first reception (which in our case arose from the complicity between critic and author) and the many metamorphoses of its *mise en scène* which, as Georges Duby taught us, would generate alongside the event what the French historian called *une partie légendaire*,¹ up to the almost paradoxical situation of introducing the villa “à l'épreuve de sa restauration”. A unique reversal of authenticity and evidence, but also one of the most complex expressions of a *histoire du temps présent* capable of mobilising the most diverse and varied fields of investigation and at the same time claiming its social role as guarantor of the *mémoire* played by conservation³.

This paper operates on three levels, attempting to investigate them and relate them to each other. The first concerns discovery, the set of rules and the first studies of Le Corbusier's archive, the second focuses on the second restoration of the Villa Savoye, and the third on the construction of an architectural historiography which, starting with studies on the architect of La Chaux-de-Fond, would characterise an entire generation of studies on modern architecture. It does so by seeking to investigate a process that first assumes extensive use of the source (of everything that can be a source⁴), and then making the relationship with the source its own epistemic legitimacy. Up to the point of overturning the relationship between matter and narration at the very end of this period. But it also does so by re-establishing, with the second restoration, the consolidation of that *retour à l'origine* that would mark an entire season of restoration of the modern and more besides, and finally by shining a light on its debts with social historiography, ethnography and linguistics while still remaining suspended between the reworking of the reminiscence.

All three paths run through the biographies of very different actors, the establishment of a temporal scanning, the modern, which precisely in that period became a true form of identity and at the same time a *mémoire obligée*⁵, gradual awareness of the complex nature of documents and a set of sources that the Villa Savoye⁶ produced, generated and ordered in those sixteen years⁷. If each document is not only a past, present or the presence of an absence, the architecture of the villa and its restoration do not report a present as a horizon and emotion as a vehicle⁸, but also the existence of a source that is not “representation” but manipulated matter, *sursignée*, for a long time deprived of a function, almost a paradigm of architecture's resistance to the linguistic storm that runs through contemporary studies. It is this twofold path, the history and restoration of this architecture *sans public*, that places the status of what a document is at the centre of a truly unique game of exchange.



FIG. 3
Villa Savoye, Detail of the
stair, 1966 (picture by Félix
Thyes). FLC. Paris.



Des crayons aux mots

A catalogue on the organisation of Le Corbusier's library prior to 1930, edited by Paul Venable Turner, was published in 1970⁹. The very same Turner who, in a note to an article a year later, reported how Maurice Besset had completed his catalogue with Le Corbusier's *livres de chevet*: the Bible, Cervantes and Rabelais¹⁰. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the paper years were consolidated through a text on the books in Le Corbusier's possession, published by *Fondation Le Corbusier*, which in the same year published a short brochure on its legal and organisational status¹¹. Writing was once again the focus of a second text published that same year, suspended between memories and anecdotes¹². But by this time memory had started to give way to the written text.

The library marks the fragile start of a hegemony of papers on the work - transcribed in the literary genre of the still prevailing tyranny of artistic literature and in particular of one of its expressions - the monograph - which brought the historiography on Le Corbusier to the centre of contemporary debate on literary genres.

The biography, which moreover at that time represented the essentially Nietzschean narration of a heroic modernity that re-evaluated both author and critic, contrasted with a historiography that at the time was rediscovering avant-gardes, movements, journals and the collective dimension of artistic, and especially architectural, work. It would suffer the full criticism of Giovanni Levi years later.¹³

In this sense, the historiography on Le Corbusier represents an exemplary case study that all researchers would like to investigate. Biographies - with the consequent glorification of individual action that the construction of the Le Corbusier character implies and facilitated by the accompanying rhetoric - are in fact intertwined with monographs that examine themes and individual projects. Two approaches that also come with different writings and narrative structures: high popularisation and investigation which starts to pose the problem of philology as the legitimisation of its argument. The difference can be seen, for example, in the nature and number of footnotes¹⁴, which were absent up until then even in texts by the most important art and architecture historians: a frontier that was also crossed in those years by historians of contemporary architecture. Besides others.

FIG. 4
Villa Savoye, Scaffoldings
details during restoration
works, 1966 (picture by
Félix Thyès).
FLC. Paris.



After Besset's text, which is more than a simple biography and Stanislaus von Moos's *Le Corbusier Elemente einer Synthese*, constructed without access to the Fondation's archives¹⁵, seven biographies on Le Corbusier by *professional* historians or critics were published between 1969 and 1975, not counting those by Hervé, Jean Petit¹⁶ and Yukio Futagawa¹⁷, and those by Franchetti Pardo¹⁸, Carlo Cresti¹⁹, Stanislaus von Moos²⁰, Robert Fourmeaux Jordan²¹, Charles Jencks²² Stephen Gardiner²³, Peter Serenyi and Martin Pawley²⁴. The architectural works analysed in the monographs were La Tourette²⁵, Ronchamp²⁶, Pessac²⁷, and L'Unité in Marseilles²⁸, while the almost one hundred articles published in that same period covered the villas of the Twenties up to Firminy²⁹. It was the few thematic articles though that raised the problem of a text that seeks evidence (with all its rhetoric³⁰) in the archive and its narration through *mise en intrigue*, as Paul Ricoeur would write, which cannot disregard existing arguments. Texts by Turner³¹, Corboz³² and Taylor³³ raised the problem of documentary evidence, up to the first book that was not only entirely based on archival work but in which the text that included the archival materials on which it was based, at the foot of the text, was *Le Corbusier e L'Esprit Nouveau*³⁴. But what of the Villa Savoye?

The Villa Savoye followed the same course, but differentiated the media. Yukio Futagawa's popular and iconographic text, with an introduction by Richard Meier, was published in 1972³⁵. In 1975, William Curtis developed an Open University course on the Villa Savoye, evocatively titled *Le Corbusier: The evolution of the architectural language and the crystallization in the Villa Savoye*³⁶, while that same year Tim Benton launched a study of the preparatory drawings for the design of the villa³⁷, which would find its final outlet years later in the introductory essay to Garland's volume on Le Corbusier³⁸ and even more so in the first edition of *Les villas de Le Corbusier et Pierre Jeanneret*³⁹.

Historiographical revisionism, critical contextualism and a philological foundation began to intertwine, with texts by Benton, Curtis, Gabetti and Olmo anticipating the radical turning point of the next eight years. However, this opened up a contradiction. Namely, a historiography that replaces the lack of an examination of the work with archival investigation and increasingly uses philology as an almost exclusive way of pursuing loyalty to the memory, but ultimately this would start an interminable quarrel with the truth in history, which would find its topos years later and in the *bataille de Ronchamp*⁴⁰.

FIG. 5
Villa Savoye, Restoration works, 1966 (picture by Félix Thyès). FLC. Paris.



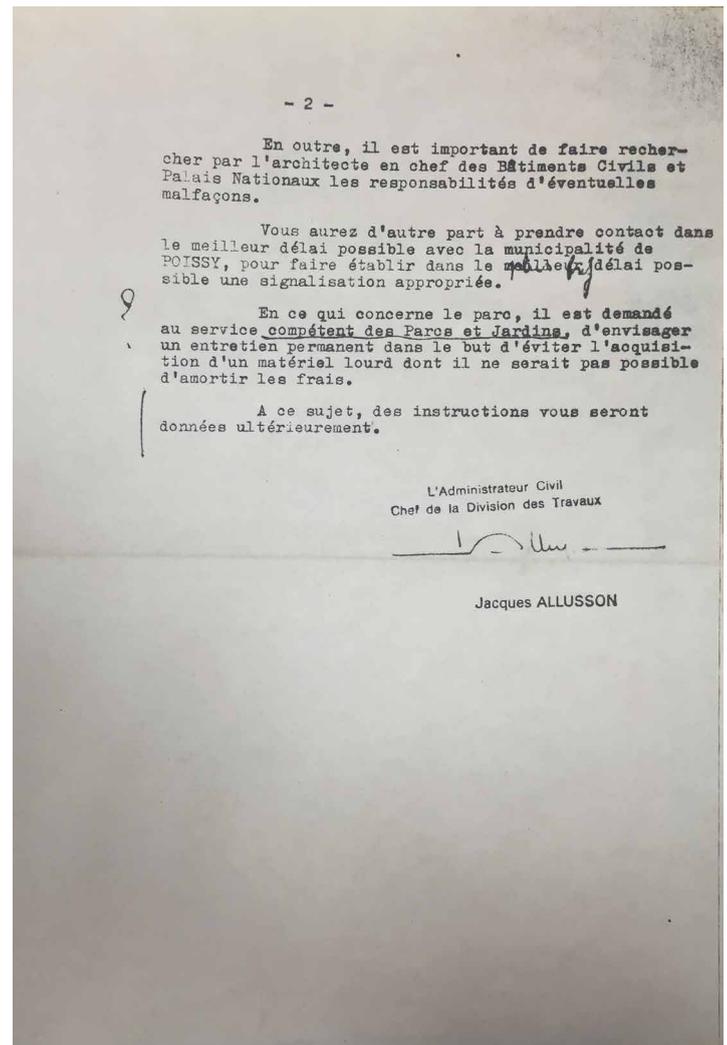
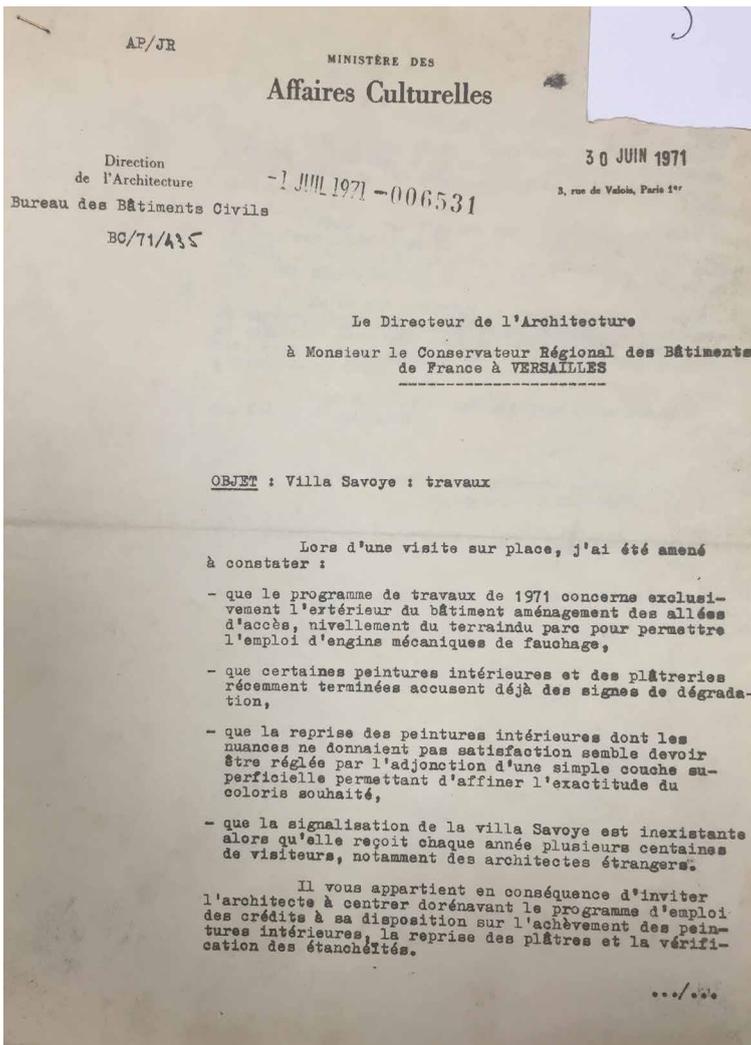
What emerges is also a twofold interpretative path, which is also less and less convergent: between an architectural historiography that searches for its own paradigms and narrative structures in the papers - Tim Benton's recent work on Le Corbusier's agendas is exemplary in this sense⁴¹ - and a restoration capable of anticipating one of the most debated themes for decades, and not only by restorers: *le retour à l'origine*⁴². In the resolve (and illusions of the restorers), a modern view *d'ailleurs*, without ideological, avant-garde or aesthetic charges to defend⁴³. Ultimately it would be the word, not the material, that would test the interpretation, only to be overturned in the material called to confirm the word after 1986, the object of the *remise en état*. Restoring the status that every translation (historiographic or material) gives to the "name test"⁴⁴.

But how does historiography move forward? Above all, by replacing the examination of the artefact with the examination of its design, and surveys of the built architecture with sketches, drawings and notebooks that can assist with research into the genesis of the work by focusing on the author's intentions and the historiographic issue of authorship. Work that would become systematic with the recent work by Danièle Pauly⁴⁵. What is increasingly interesting is the possible reconstruction of the design process and not the material configuration of the work, including the construction site. And this, as said, years after the essays by Roland Barthes on *La mort de l'auteur*⁴⁶ and Michel Foucault on *Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?*⁴⁷. Thus, almost paradoxically, the foundation of a discursive tradition would mark the new season in the history of architecture.

But how does restoration move forward? Between the tyranny of image and syntagma (*villa blanche*) and historicism *au second degré*, given that the ruin is of a restoration, albeit almost dictated on 3 June 1965 by the author.

Contradictions that include what is still a no-man's land between historiography and restoration: the oblivion into which the state of the villa entered, while it is *l'image* that *prend position*, that of *villa blanche*, that marked the true form of appropriation of the image *d'une chose absente* (that of the Villa Savoye as it was represented in *Cahiers d'art* 1930⁴⁸) and that appeared in all contemporary publications. An architecture that was not only independent from the state the villa was in, first restored and then returned to its state of ruin, paradoxically turned oblivion into an opportunity to radicalise beliefs and mythologies about its unity, coherence and above all uniqueness.

FIG. 6
Villa Savoye, Restoration works, 1966 (picture by Félix Thyès). FLC. Paris.



It is in the travellers' diaries, while the gradual reduction of the second restoration to a *entretien vigilante*⁴⁹ brings into play an old metaphor of its designer: architecture as "*une image de la technique*" which Le Corbusier had wanted to create in 1963, when he himself promoted the Savoye as a prototype of a *blanche* modernity.⁵⁰

Papers in place of stones, images in place of ruins.

The Loss of History and the Rediscovery of Origins was the title Keuth Loftin gave to an article in 1980 on the restoration of the Villa Savoye, as well as a reading of the historiography that was accumulating, changing the historiographic paradigm⁵¹. The process of transcribing the villa into a Weberian idealtyp (as it was already in *Précisions*⁵²), demands that the object of study (and subsequently of restoration) was not history or reception, but the origin, recovering, and not always consciously, the splendid reading of this procedure first given by Pierre Hadot, attributing it to metanoia⁵³, and then Foucault, when authorship was made to depend on the response that can be given to the *origine*.

The same mythopoeic root of the *retour à l'origine* that organises practices and then clashes with the paradox that the *origine* itself not only cannot be practised (only Le Corbusier had achieved this by proposing an invented origin in drawings

FIG. 7-8
Letter by J. Allusson to the local conservator of historic buildings of France in Versailles, 30 June 1971.
IFA - Centre d'Archives d'Architecture du XX^eme siècle, Paris - Fond Hourlier.



he had chosen from the four designs for the villa!), but it produces an authentic paradox: the freezing of the function that was the original substance of the design (living, producing, showing⁵⁴) and opening up to the infinite season of a potential architecture that exists as a “metamorphosis” without object that would accompany the entire complex season of restorations of the Villa Savoye up to 1998⁵⁵.

What actually emerges is a “twofold” realism – its existence as a work and its existence through the representation given to it by the papers⁵⁶- which makes the “Villa Savoye” document perhaps one of the most complex and ambiguous texts to investigate due to the succession of restoration campaigns and its emphasised exemplary nature as a *fabrique* of a modernity independent of contemporaneity. All of these games were played with the representations that historiography would make of the *function-auteur*, to return to Foucault⁵⁷ and the difficulty of defining the nature of the document being worked on: architecture, drawing, representation, reception, as well as survey, construction site, mortar, and colours. There is certainly a risk that everything could become a document.

But the common thread of that “*retour à l’origine*”, to the arche, is the process of the symbolic re-appropriation of an asset that is now public, that has cultural value irrespective of the meanings that resulted in its construction (housing) and that has now entered into an almost indefinite polysemy, removed not only from the use for which it was built, but from the theory of values ordered by that use. At least Le Corbusier went further by replying to Madame Savoye and describing the villa as the *Panthéon de la modernité*⁵⁸!

This polysemy often undermines the invoked realism of the design by Le Corbusier (and Pierre Jeanneret, Albert Frey, Ernst Wiessmann), translated into matter by the Bertocchi company and the many artisans called to the construction table⁵⁹, creating the conditions for a hyperealism that characterises the events of the villa to this day. What started to be glimpsed between the late Sixties and early Seventies was the very use of the *retour à l’origine* to propose ever new theories on authorship, touching on Mircea Eliade’s “archetypes and repetitions”, as in the case of the abuse of metaphors⁶⁰. Then again, what does a recurring ruin, whose origin is investigated by historians and restorers in different ways, imply if not a dialectic between archetype and repetition?

FIG. 9
Villa Savoye, facade,
end of Seventies.
IFA - Centre d’Archives
d’Architecture du XXeme
siècle, Paris - Fond Hourlier.



La *remise en état*, the first definition to appear since 1961, is perhaps the closest syntagm to *retour à l'origine*, but not surprisingly it emphasises its contradictions: there would come a time when the work has outlived the author, and is no longer Madame Savoye's residence: but merely a public and then meta-historical time. A timeless state that can therefore be placed at the basis of the antinomy between the villa, which presupposes housing, and the villa as a palimpsest (what Le Corbusier proposed after all in Buenos Aires) capable of hiding not only the absence of an intended use, but, at least up until 1998, also excluding the nature of a public asset which had prevented its sale and demolition and then allowed the inclusion of the villa among the monuments of the twentieth century to be preserved as early as 1964: thus creating an authentic hypostasis.

A hypostasis that exists irrespective of its material existence (continually manipulated by the restoration work carried out to this day), the child of two memories, one *commandée* and the other *manipulée* by the villa, where historiography appears *commandée* by the *fonction-auteur* and the restoration *manipulée* by the image, the *Maison blanche*. Hiding a precocious affirmation of a transcription-translation that is only more cultural, and not more interpretative of the work, in the very years when cultural studies were appearing on the scene⁶¹! But the Seventies also set forth another process: the attributions of meaning recognised to the work through studies on the genesis of its design were constructed while a *rezeptionsgeschichte* prevailed, from the interpretative polysemies now set in motion by increasingly openly analogical literature⁶².

These two paths are somewhat separate but somewhat linked. The story of *villa blanche* conceals the confrontation between two words – testimony and reminiscence – whose history is the very essence of the historical and conservative knowledge with which the architecture is imbued. The *villa blanche* is called on – for example – to bear witness to a cultural and artistic season, that prefigured by Guillaume Apollinaire's *Méditations Esthétiques*⁶³, but it also incorporates all of the reminiscence, as defined by Ricoeur⁶⁴, which first Hervé and then Giedion would guide and that Giedion would definitively introduce, first in *Cahiers d'Art* and finally in the first edition of *Space Time and Architecture*⁶⁵.

Resorting to isolating a work and translating it into a "monograph"⁶⁶, as we have just seen, appears to be an attempt to escape this dichotomy, attributing to a reduction in scale "confirmed and legitimised by images" the power of evidence of the document

FIG. 10-11
Villa Savoye, details of decay, end of Seventies. IFA - Centre d'Archives d'Architecture du XXème siècle, Paris - Fond Hourlier.



FIG. 12
Villa Savoye, details of decay, façade, end of Seventies.
IFA - Centre d'Archives d'Architecture du XXème siècle, Paris - Fond Hourlier.



FIG. 13
Villa Savoye, details of decay, plaster, end of Seventies.
IFA - Centre d'Archives d'Architecture du XXème siècle, Paris - Fond Hourlier.

one is called to work on⁶⁷. It is perhaps no coincidence that the prevailing source at that time in the already hypertrophic literature on Le Corbusier was photography. Photography as a testimony to Le Corbusier's ability to see and to Le Corbusier as a photographer⁶⁸, but also as a representation that prevents us from crossing the Sargasso Sea being generated by "tout est source"⁶⁹. The 61 images of the architectural promenade taken between 2002 (and the work of Barbara Mazza⁷⁰), 2012 (and the exhibition *Construire l'image: Le Corbusier et la Photographie*⁷¹), and 2018 (and the work of Zaparain, Ramos Jular, Llamazares on *La promenade photographique de la Villa Savoye*⁷²) assumed the status of a source capable of existing autonomously also in the production of form.

The *Villa Blanche* is undoubtedly a rhetorical construction, and the power of images appears - and this is not an absurdity - all the stronger the more historiography moves towards a legitimisation through papers and ignores the constructed work⁷³. But if the construction of the images of his works for Le Corbusier was part of a strategy, both professional and intellectual, for the construction of his biography after he was deprived of the possibility of redesigning the Savoye⁷⁴, *la villa blanche* as a historiographical and conservative topos arises from the need for research that legitimises itself through the simulacrum of the built work: those photographs which, while Le Corbusier was alive, were the reading (almost always retouched⁷⁵) legitimised by the Swiss architect.

The period between 1979 and 1982 marked the greatest ambiguity as to what constitutes a document for research on architecture and the Savoye in particular. Papers, photographs, drawings, notebooks, *livres noirs* and agendas exchanged roles



and legitimacy, along with the work itself, which moreover in those years was the subject, as mentioned, of the CEBTP's first "scientific" investigation into the material with which the villa was made. But literature on the villa did not pursue this approach of calculations, correspondence, accounts, techniques and materials until very recently⁷⁶.

A few years later, Lawrence W. Speck, in a lucid article, seized on another polysemy reflected in the magic mirror of *villa blanche*. The reference to mainstreaming, in this case of rationalist architecture, tends to exclude or ignore important elements of the building if they do not fully support a now consolidated "*mainstream point of view*"⁷⁷. The linguistic reduction of the built work necessarily leads to its trivialisation, and as Ellwood writes to a *politics of myths*.

The mechanism set in motion is the reduction of physical identities to cultural identities: *villa blanche* selects and reorganises functional elements for the new representation of rationalism, after rationalism – from Kaufman's texts to Aldo Rossi's introduction to Boullée's *Architecture* – had become an almost genealogical writing.

But can a collective memory really be deposited in a work of architecture, an archetype, that can be unveiled through almost any kind of investigation and point of view or various types of "coring", an architecture whose status actually oscillates between representations, narratives, ruin and icon - and that thinks it can resolve the most disturbing steps of a continuous reconfiguration of the work, using images as a reference? Or do cognitive (and epistemological) procedures diverge because they are no longer

FIG. 14
 Villa Savoye, details of decay, interiors, end of Seventies.
 IFA - Centre d'Archives d'Architecture du XXème siècle, Paris - Fond Hourlier.

capable of making sense of the investigations they conduct, fascinated by a paradoxically self-sufficient philology, or reassured by an *origine* that seems capable of excluding even the author, as is the case in many passages of religious literature that would be evoked and eventually simplified by the fortune of Mircea Eliade's text?

Acknowledgements of the intentionality of actions that have left traces, but also of voluntary or involuntary "oblivions", and of the structural diachronic nature of the interventions to the villa that can be read, for example, in the *comptes rendus* of the construction sites of Dubuisson and Gury, propose a further, delicate passage. For historiography, the actions that have left traces are increasingly obsessively sought in the projects, drawings and texts that accompany them and which, all together, should be able to recount beliefs, attempts, renunciations, and paths taken and then abandoned, which in any case are found in otherwise inexplicable project waste.

For those involved in the subject of architecture, the actions that leave traces instead reveal how the configuration of the work does not represent the transfer of the design into architecture, but how additional relational and technical actors and cultures intervene: the result of a process that is both negotiated and authoritative⁷⁸. The analogies that intervene not as a support, but as an alternative to these textual elements, represent primarily interpretative shortcuts.

Image historiographies, like purely cultural ones, can in fact "misrepresent" the intentions of the producer, artist or scholar, and even call into question the authorship of the work. The case of the Villa Savoye, and of the uncertainty even in naming the recovery actions, at the very time that this private house was transformed into a public asset and collective memory and removed from its author, Le Corbusier, is in this sense truly significant⁷⁹!

Indeed, two processes collided. The Villa Savoye, conceived as an example of anti-historicist modernity, became the object of transcriptions into icons, even more so when what prevailed was a genealogy constructed of images, as a comparative reading of the illustrations in the well-documented monographs mentioned⁸⁰. On the other hand, the Fondation's archive was created as a workshop of values - like almost all paper archives⁸¹ - as an essential support for stories that look at the subjectivity of the work and its authorial genesis. Paradoxically, it was the intertextual reading anticipated by *Qui était Le Corbusier*⁸² that would lead historiography to address an even eighteenth-century discussion on the source and juridical model that inspired it.

The clash would no longer be between games of belonging, but over the source or the document and how the relationship with the evidence is constructed. The narration of the villa, almost ingenuous and naïve, even in the texts of the Sixties, would increasingly tend to affirm the primacy of the *mise en intrigue*⁸³, or, to use another reference, of traces and plots⁸⁴ that would increasingly constitute the palimpsest not only of historical investigation, but also, in a paradoxically opposite way, *of the action of conservation*. With a suggestion that cannot be ignored: what fostered the construction of the authorial myth (for example in this period the biography was not inclusive: even Pierre Jeanneret, and not just Frey⁸⁵ and Weissman, are still to this day waiting for their complete collocation in the monograph on the Villa Savoye⁸⁶) was the aesthetics of reception or, indeed, a reception that became laden with aesthetic or aestheticizing values in ever increasing forms, which would make the Savoye imbroglione even more tangled and its writing increasingly relativistic. But we need to take a step back.

The loss of narrative words and the crisis of the object⁸⁷.

The 1977 issue 3/4 of the *Journal of Jewish Art* published a text that marked a further step, and not only in the construction of the already vast imagery of the Villa Savoye⁸⁸. The article presented a curious interweaving of reception theory, art anthropology and a text that was losing its thread⁸⁹. The essay brings together an appropriation - the Villa Savoye transformed into a National Library - and a *Rezeptionaesthetik*, pedagogical sub species: the container that should educate those who use the shell of a public asset to beauty. That essay, which was almost overlooked, raised problems that would mark the literature on the villa: an allegorical appropriation of the most important work by the French-Swiss architect (not a copy, quotation or reference)⁹⁰, together with an appropriation as a learning practice that exchanges matter and paper. The Villa Savoye can, precisely due to the shift to metaphor that took place, even while Le Corbusier was alive, become the protagonist of an allegory in which modernity plays the same role that classicism did for Le Corbusier and the reception of the villa can present itself as an academy, but this time a "scholastic" academy of modernity⁹¹. And once again re-propose the archetype that the villa would materialise.

The allegorical appropriation that Michael Levine takes to an extreme seems to give credence to an essential passage by Gombrich: the succession of styles masks the existence of just two interpretative categories: classical and non-classical⁹². Hence the almost unequivocal use of Renaissance metaphors (Albertian or Palladian) to describe the Savoye: metaphors fostered over the years by Colin Rowe up to James Ackerman of *The Villa as Paradigm* and in time Tim Benton up to the last⁹³. Ackerman transforms the icon (the villa set in a Virgilian dream⁹⁴) into a "milestone of modern architecture"⁹⁵, decontextualising it but highlighting the root of that transmigration into allegory. With an observation that reinforces the reductionism that the villa was

undergoing, “The villa is less defined in form... because the requirement for pleasure demands less precision!”⁹⁶ Le Corbusier might not have agreed, but that sentence seems to have been written by Marshall McLuhan in *Understanding Media!*

Thinking about a paradigm, Ackerman actually grasps the core of an ambiguity that was at the root of the Savoye project and which the conjuncture of the early Eighties exalted: “The mythical nature of the ideology of the villa frees the type from its concrete constraints of utility”⁹⁷.

In that period, in addition to the already widespread forms of an aesthetic reception of the villa, an entire issue was dedicated to Le Corbusier in 1979 by perhaps the most ideological magazine of all artistic literature: *Oppositions*⁹⁸. It was an essential issue, for its editorial staff and its university placement, precisely because it endorsed the existence of an invisible academy of modernity distinct from the events of contemporaneity, but even more so because it marked the passage of hermeneutic reflection from History to Theory that leads us to share what Camus wrote in 1938 “*la théorie fait du mal à la vie*”⁹⁹.

The *malaise* of periodization¹⁰⁰, which saw *le temporalités* that the work had and that it was embodying slip away in favour of an all-too-anticipated presentism, seems to have found an prestigious incipit in this unknown essay. Moreover, in a cultural climate that marked another twofold process alongside the allegorical appropriation: the replacement of the investigation of the work with drawings and the almost definitive naturalisation of the sources.

The Fondation itself promoted the publication of Le Corbusier's papers. It did so directly between 1977 and 1982, promoting exhibitions – with *Projets d'architecture de Le Corbusier*¹⁰¹ – and endorsing the publication of unpublished drawings¹⁰² and documents¹⁰³, until reaching the limits of the 1983 publication of the 32 volumes of the Le Courbusier Archive by Garland¹⁰⁴. The investigation of the extremely rich material universe of Le Corbusier's works – which saw one of his most precious documents on the Villa Savoye published in 1979 – gave way to a search for the unpublished and a twofold process of enhancement.

Drawing is certainly not chosen out of laziness! Architectural drawing places the emphasis on authorship. Drawing emphasises authorship because it isolates graphic representation in architectural design and traces it back to a single author, who becomes its *princeps* and primary source of recognition. Drawing also generates a paradoxical contradiction: leading architecture back to art and reducing it to a substantially formal and genealogical interpretation: almost enclosing it in a frame, as might be the case for a drawing. But with a footnote.

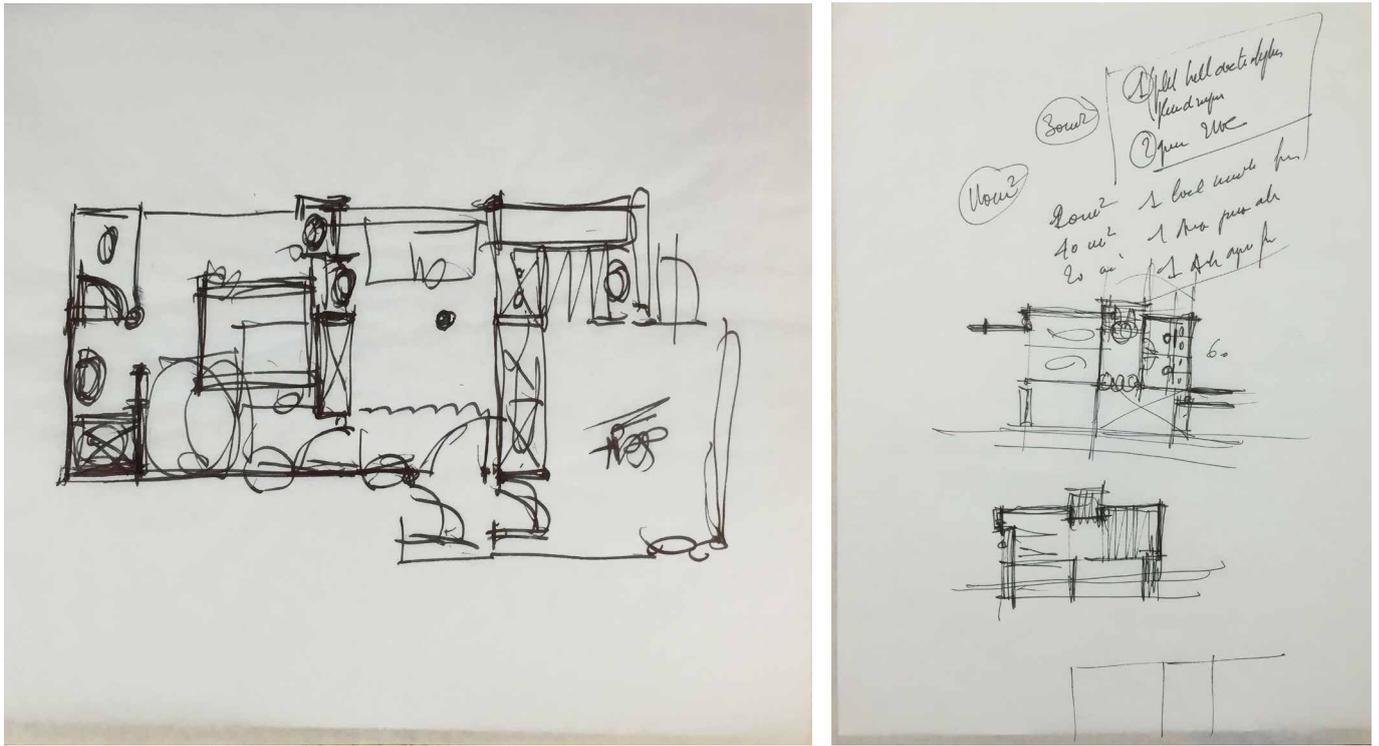
Enhancement of the archive really sees that presumed individual memory take on the role of the sole workshop of values, further radicalising the sovereignty of the design called upon to represent the work. If, on the other hand, there are letters, correspondence, calculations, estimates and invoices, the archive almost constructs a hyper-reality parallel to the work. The history of architecture as the history of the construction would still have to wait years to find space and a dignified narrative¹⁰⁵.

Reflection on this possible role of the architectural archive once again started outside Europe: “The nature and value of architectural archives: a Parisian case study: Le Corbusier's archives” was released in New Zealand¹⁰⁶.

The document, unpublished or not, aesthetic or narrative, is not limited to soliciting a philological acrimony almost as if it were a glottologist: it isolates the document from the genesis of the text and, above all, does not investigate the source as social production, opening up a *manière d'écrire* opposed to the novelistic approach that prevailed until the Sixties, but also to the reflections that in 2013 would find their systematisation in François Hartog's *Croire en histoire*¹⁰⁷.

It is indeed essential to follow the writing of texts on Le Corbusier in those years in order to grasp the metamorphosis that writing underwent in the profession of the historian of modern architecture¹⁰⁸. Alongside writing that is now in the genre of memoirs¹⁰⁹ or comparative writings¹¹⁰ – the journal article, where the layout and image-text relationship almost always turn the writing into a commentary – what can now be defined as scientific writing took shape, of which “*Corb as a structural rationalist: the formative influence of engineer Max Du Bois*”¹¹¹ and essays collected in *The Open Hand: Essays on Le Corbusier*¹¹², *Le Corbusier at Work* by Sekler and Curtis¹¹³ constitute, with the English edition and partial revision of Von Moos's *Le Corbusier Elemente eine synthese*¹¹⁴, the most intriguing traces.

By now the drawing and the paper document constituted the bedrock of writing and the traces around which the narrative plot was constructed. How that document can assume different meanings depending on the form of the social production of the source and its role in defining the process that led to the work is of no interest¹¹⁵: the source that cannot be reduced to language is still the constructed work! The Fondation's archive then really did emerge as the new Pandora's box!



Do a change in the procedures for legitimising the profession of historian and a transfer of the object also result in a change to the interpretation of Le Corbusier's work? One event summarised almost all the plots that were being woven together in the second half of the Seventies: the reconstruction in Bologna of the Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau in 1977¹¹⁶. The operation launched by Giuliano and Glauco Gresleri, beyond the also epistemological issue of copying and mimesis, interwove the archive as a workshop of values, drawings as a document, and history as utility, a *retour à l'origine* that was all too didactic, all in an ephemeral architecture that contained many of Le Corbusier's projects and works created before 1925! The paradox of the work and its double to which the reconstruction refers¹¹⁷ was accentuated by the relationship between the container – staged – and the materials on display, between the investigation of the project and drawings that accompanied it. The interweaving represented by the pavilion, even in Paris and even more so in Bologna – between architecture as the mirror of a representation through original contents in the construction-reconstruction of the Pavillon – is a paradox very close to those on which Walter Benjamin constructed his *Doctrine of Similitude* in 1933¹¹⁸. A process that experienced a double mutation: the reconstruction of the pavilion in 1977 and the restoration of the reconstruction forty years later, thereby paradoxically mocking the restoration of the modern, as clearly illustrated on the cover of the collective work *Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau. A 21 Century Show Home*¹¹⁹ which Giuliano Gresleri's irony softly mitigates¹²⁰. The circle of Benjaminian similarity thus seemed to close. But what of the Villa Savoye?

The Villa Savoye floats between short, almost occasional¹²¹ articles and investigations into Le Corbusier's improbable mastery art¹²² in the construction of the Savoye. These two genres that emerged from the writing – popular or scientific – marked a break in the narration of the villa.

The first is a 23-minute film, shot in colour, which Tim Benton produced for the Open University¹²³, the second is an ironic montage¹²⁴. The film is a document that combines footage, texts (taken from *Vers une architecture*) and photographs of the villa under construction and of Madame Savoye who lived there, and the interpretation anticipates the role of an almost sacred path, as von Moos¹²⁵ had written, that the *promenade architecturale* creates as a fundamental device for “knowing how to see” the Savoye. In the conclusions, the film revives and discusses the metaphor of the Palladian villa, of the house designed as a canon of modernity and not as a space to be inhabited, and Benton points out that the state of the villa in that period, devoid of furnishings, made that reading more credible and convincing.

FIG. 16-17
I.Gury, Villa Savoye,
Sketches, end of Seventies.
IFA - Centre d'Archives d'Ar-
chitecture du XXeme siècle,
Paris - Fond Hourlier.



FIG. 18
 Villa Savoye, Polystrat
 sample for insulation
 and waterproofing, 1979.
 IFA - Centre d'Archives
 d'Architecture du XXeme
 siècle, Paris - Fond Hourlier.

To some extent Benton's film turns a critical and theoretical reading of the Savoye, which it had had since 1929, into a reading aimed at a much broader audience: it confirms the shift from a metaphorical hermeneutic – which originated with Le Corbusier, but that would be rewritten by Colin Rowe and James Ackerman up to Von Moos and Jean Louis Cohen – that speaks to a *professionel* audience and conservation justified by the value that the villa assumes as testimony to a modernity that is by no coincidence recognised as a universal heritage, coincidentally speaking the language of popularisation.

In 1980, in the April issue of *L'architettura*, the Villa Savoye – together with the Einstein Tower, the Ronchamp Chapel, the Guggenheim and, less convincingly, the Greater London Council's plan for the Thames – became the object of a unique exercise: a comparison of different semiological approaches to architecture¹²⁶. The uniqueness of the exercise lay in the choice of an almost comic-strip representation, with photos, visual diagrams and late-pop graphics that clearly denounce its Florentine origins. The villa appears in all three readings attempted – the empirical-historical one, the semantic-behavioural one, and the semantic-formalist one¹²⁷, independent from the historical events that accompanied it and from those of its "author".

The readings attempt to break down and reassemble an architecture devoid of history, context and human events – the most evocative image is that of the Villa Savoye gently resting against a globe: an irony already present in Le Corbusier's drawing in *Précisions*¹²⁸ – in which the investigation aims to discover the compositional method, the rules that presided over the conception of an ideal type, in order to refute theory and give weight to the relationship between signs - signifiers. This approach radicalised the perception that there is a time of the work, a time of the author and a time of representation, but also of a critique that would be definitively legitimised when, through a reading of Genette, Bruno Reichlin proposed the Villa Savoye as a text, or rather a model of a possible intertextuality also in architecture¹²⁹.

As a cinematographic subject and the protagonist of late-pop imagery the Villa Savoye, with the change of medium, confirmed its fame and the fact that it now belongs to an almost commonplace utopia, which exercises in style can be built around. After all, the Savoye was intended to be both Palladian and anachronistic, classical and pop!

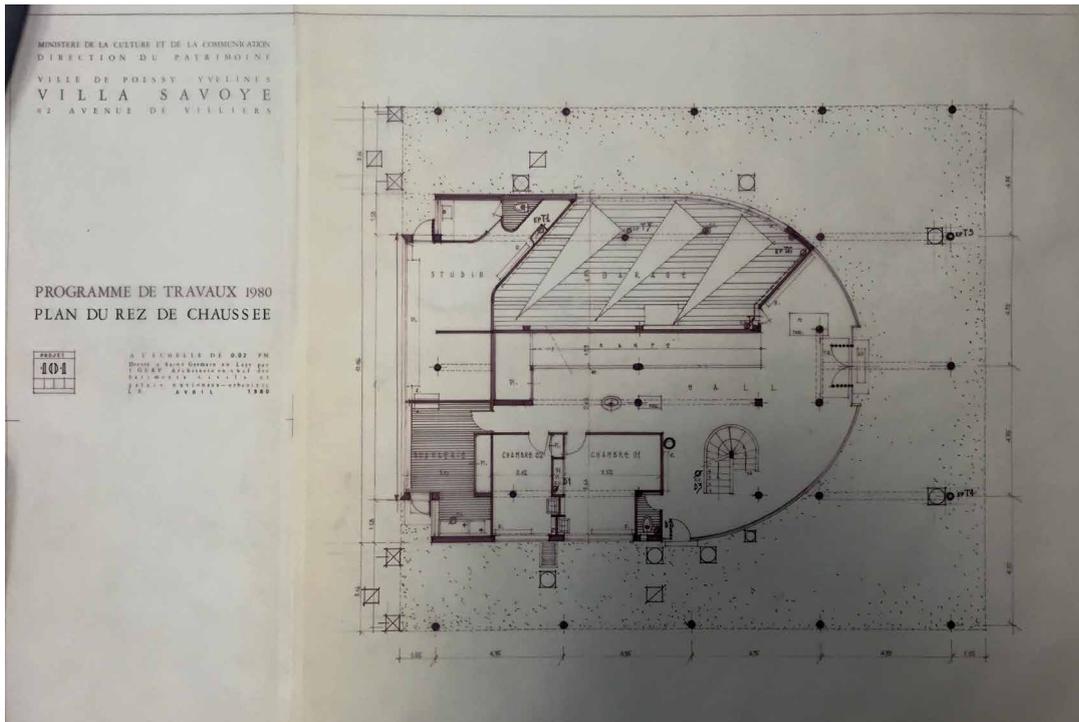
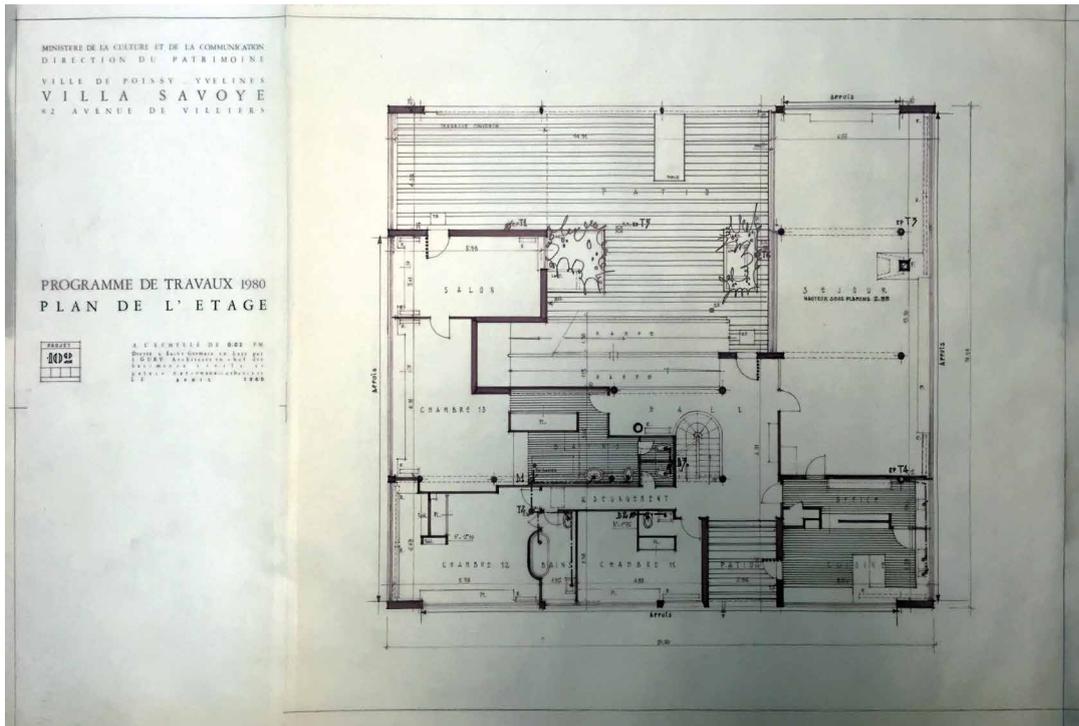


FIG. 19
I. Gury, Villa Savoye,
Programme des Travaux,
Plan de l'étage, avril 1980.
IFA - Centre d'Archives
d'Architecture du XXème
siècle, Paris - Fond Hourlier.

FIG. 20
I. Gury, Villa Savoye,
Programme des Travaux,
Plan du rez de chaussée,
avril 1980.
IFA - Centre d'Archives
d'Architecture du XXème
siècle, Paris - Fond Hourlier.

Chantier : Villa SAVOYE à POISSY

COMPTE RENDU DE LA VISITE
DU 23 DECEMBRE 1980

A la demande de Monsieur GURY, architecte, Monsieur PERRIN, Ingénieur au Service GROS OEUVRE ET CHANTIERS, division Matériaux Bitumineux "Etanchéité-Revêtements Routiers", a examiné l'ensemble des travaux en cours d'exécution, en parallèle à la visite effectuée ce jour, par Monsieur JOBER représentant de la S.M.A.C.

Les observations suivantes sont notées :

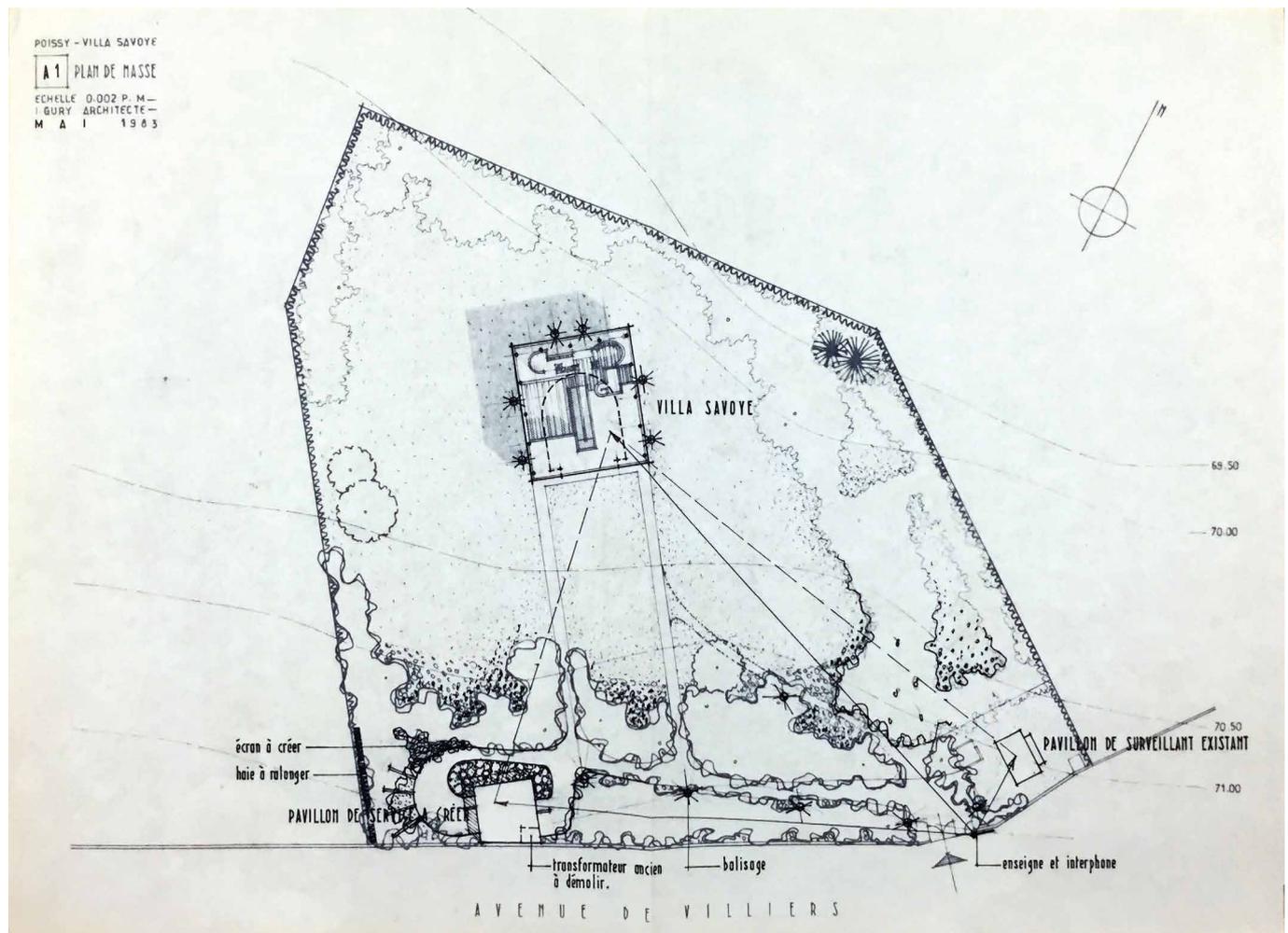
- Une tâche sombre est apparue au plafond sous la terrasse solarium à la verticale de l'accès des rampes intérieures (fuite possible qui demande un examen attentif).
- Les acrotères périphériques de l'immeuble et chéneau sur patio n'ont pas été remplacés et présentent toujours la fissuration généralisée (notre compte rendu du 18 Novembre 1979).

Terrasse Patio

- L'étanchéité des bordures de lanterneaux de la terrasse patio est recouverte par du mortier de ciment.
- Les jardinières sur la terrasse patio sont terminées mais on ne constate pas de joints aux jonctions avec les parois verticales.
- Le béton de la protection lourde est en cours de réalisation, mais l'ouvrage n'est pas terminé et nous constatons que les intempéries ont arraché une partie du béton (porte d'accès et caniveau de protection du chéneau de la grande baie vitrée). Ce béton a été entraîné dans la pluviale et il y aura lieu de vérifier soigneusement les regards et canalisations car la prise est nettement avancée.

.../...

FIG. 21
I. Gury, Villa Savoye,
Compte rendu de la
visite, 23 décembre 1980.
IFA - Centre d'Archives
d'Architecture du XXème
siècle, Paris - Fond Hourlier.



Remaniements et récits: la matière prend position

An archive discovered inside another archive is at least a unique premise¹³⁰. Even more unique is the fact that in an authentic game of Chinese boxes, within that archive there is a complex *remaniement* of the material structure of the villa, the social frameworks of memory and the historical narratives that have just been outlined. And even more so, that those boxes are an exemplary representation of two processes (the cumulative and stratigraphic nature of memory¹³¹ and the representation of the other¹³²) without which the restoration would lose its epistemic foundation.

This *remaniement* is very complex and has several sides. The first is the *remaniement* of the traditions that are being built, situated within the framework of a memory that would ideally be collective, but which sees progressive cracks emerging between the doctrinal traditions of restorers and the historical memory of the contemporaries. Ivan Gury's archive covers around fifteen years in which the words that organise practices follow the doctrine and move away from the historical debate and memory that historians of Le Corbusier and Villa Savoye are canonising, marking a difference between collective memory and specialist memories that still needs to be reflected upon¹³³.

Work programmes that from the outset reiterate the need to "créer la documentation"¹³⁴, almost as if what was done and what was discussed in the Sixties never occurred. The legitimization of practices lies entirely within the relationship between documentation and action. Why? In 1971, the action of the *architect en chef* in charge of the restoration first became an "entretien" and then a

FIG. 22
I. Gury, Villa Savoye,
Plan de masse, mai 1983.
IFA - Centre d'Archives d'Ar-
chitecture du XXème siècle,
Paris - Fond Hourlier.



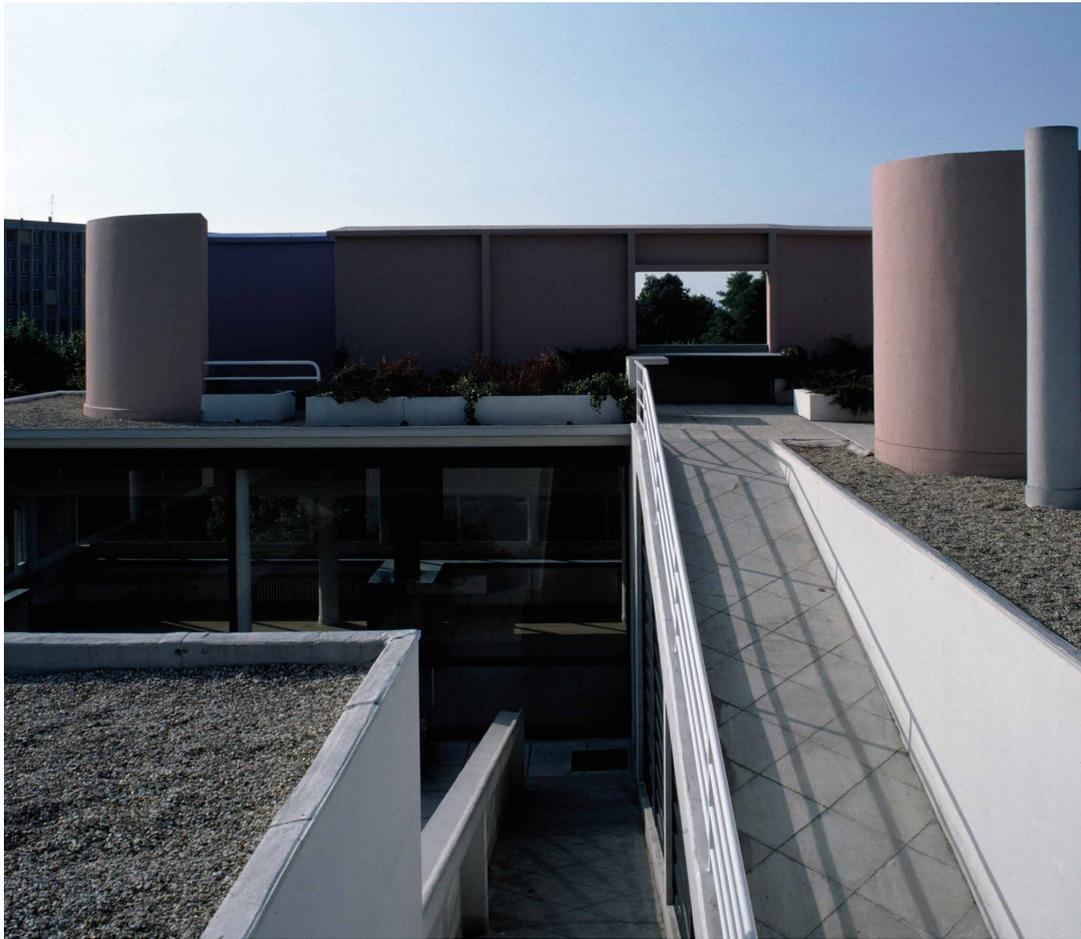
“grosse réparation”¹³⁵, becoming works *d'équipement* in 1972. *Mots et choses* started to find their own lexicon¹³⁶. While this is a “doctrine”, that of the restorers not yet dedicated to the modern, that instead runs through more technical documents such as the annual *Etat Sommaire*¹³⁷. But we need to take a step back, there are other mots et choses in the box.

In the Sixties the Villa Savoye was recognised first as a *batiment civil* and then as a *monument historique*¹³⁸, and the first restoration project led by the architect Jean Dubuisson also inaugurated the eternal alternating of the cycle of restoration and renovation to which the building would be subjected. The period between 1970 and 1986 was time of an extraordinary maintenance work and inspections, proposals and the re-elaboration of images that remained, for the most part, on paper, but it also witnessed the start of a series of restoration works that would be repeated and consolidated over the following three decades¹³⁹. It was also witness to a second circularity between the work, drawings, projects and heritage.

The *remise en état* works directed by Dubuisson between 1966 and 1967¹⁴⁰ did not address the issue of solving the problems that had plagued the villa since the Thirties, and once it had been abandoned by the caretaker it quickly fell into disrepair. After the villa was taken over by two ministries - *Bâtiments Civils and Culture*, another matter not investigated - in December 1967¹⁴¹, and the caretaker's duties had ended in May 1968¹⁴², the façades and interiors once again fell into disrepair, while infiltration from the terrace risked making the villa uninhabitable once more. Then again it was not even supposed to be open to the public!

The idea of opening it to the public and turning it into a museum was abandoned a few weeks before construction was complete¹⁴³. But the controversy over its use predates this, as Le Corbusier himself had worked on its use as a museum mainly

FIG. 23
Villa Savoye, 1984.
FLC – Fondation Le
Corbusier, Paris.



between 1960 and 1963¹⁴⁴. In this period, a reworking of the ground floor plan was produced, as well as a number of sketches for the layout of the lot and the external visitors' route, which Jean Dubuisson had in some way referred to for the design solutions developed in 1965¹⁴⁵. According to these solutions, for example, the space on the ground floor of the villa occupied by the garage was to host temporary exhibitions¹⁴⁶. The 1966 project did not propose a real change of use¹⁴⁷, and although in the 1965 dossier and that of the following year the villa seemed destined for public use, it was rejected when the work was complete. In 1967 it was officially announced that "*la villa Savoye et le pavillon du gardien ne seront pas classés comme établissement recevant du public*"¹⁴⁸.

The works that Dubuisson had come to define, which would give the building – and this must be pointed out – those material "characteristics" against which any future *architect en chef* in charge of restoration would have to measure themselves, were mainly intended to resolve the problems that had arisen since the construction of the villa and were linked to this architecture (the undersized heating system, the infiltrations of the *toit-terrasse*), ransacking during the periods when it passed into oblivion, and the lack of use and maintenance (plasterwork, pictorial films, installed systems).

Interventions that would not however upset the material integrity of the villa. The interior plasterwork was not entirely stripped off and replaced, but where possible it was preserved and supplemented with mortars whose composition, discussed during the progress of the work, was compatible with the existing ones¹⁴⁹. In the end, the restoration gradually became ever more archaeological, with an uncommon attention to material authenticity compared to the traditional approach reserved for modern buildings.

FIG. 24
Villa Savoye, 1984.
Detail.
FLC – Fondation Le
Corbusier, Paris.

Notes

- 1 G. Duby, "Avant-propos", in Id., *Le Dimanche de Bouvines*, Paris 1973, republished 2005, pp. 9-10.
- 2 B. Reichlin, "L'œuvre à l'épreuve de sa restauration", in *Le Corbusier. L'œuvre à l'épreuve de sa restauration*, Paris 2017.
- 3 Nothing will be more divisive than what we must or want to preserve of modern architecture. Because the choice is both ideological, chronological and economic. C. Olmo, "Mémoire et réminiscences dans la restauration de l'œuvre de Le Corbusier ou la nécessité d'un retour à l'antique discussion sur la modernisation de la modernité", in *Le Corbusier. L'œuvre à l'épreuve de sa restauration*, La Villette, Paris 2017.
- 4 One reflection that must be made is what a body of knowledge, a discipline, considers as a source: from the written word up to archaeological finds, from a fork to a hoe, do all human products have the same status as a source?
- 5 The terms are in P. Ricoeur, *Mémoire, histoire, l'Oublie*, Paris 2000, pp. 243 ff.
- 6 L. Kuchenbuch, "Sources ou documents? Contribution à l'histoire d'une évidence méthodologique" in *Hypothèses*, 1/2004. p. 297 ff.
- 7 H. Rousso, "L'histoire du temps présent, vingt ans après", in *La Revue pour l'histoire* du CNRS, 9/2013, pp.121 ff.
- 8 "Patrimoine, histoire et Présentisme, entretien avec François Hartog" in *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, 1/2018, pp. 25-6.
- 9 P.V. Turner, *Catalogue de la bibliothèque de Le Corbusier avant 1930*, La Fondation Le Corbusier, 1930.
- 10 P.V. Turner, "The Beginnings of Le Corbusier Education, 1902-1907", in *Art Bulletin*, 6, 1971, p. 215.
- 11 *Fondation Le Corbusier*, Paris Fondation le Corbusier 1971. The Foundation was opened in autumn 1970, cf. "Inauguration de la Fondation Le Corbusier", in *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, Oct. / Nov. 1970, p. 5.
- 12 L. Hervé, *Le Corbusier artiste et écrivain*, Neuchatel 1970.
- 13 G. Levi, "Les usages de la biographie", in *Annales*, 44-6/1989, pp. 1325-1336.
- 14 As pointed out at the time by M. de Certeau, *L'écriture de l'histoire*, Paris 1975, pp.75-76.
- 15 S. von Moos, *Le Corbusier Elemente einer synthese*, 1968 was not only translated many times but it was also re-edited by von Moos himself for MIT Press in 2009, which made the updating of the text the trace of a history of the historiography on Le Corbusier in 2009. A history of the historiography, starting with each chapter of the text. After Besset, this was the second attempt to construct a narrative outside of the current historiographic rules.
- 16 J. Petit, *Le Corbusier Lui-même*, Genève 1970. Jean Petit was another of the actors-authors of Villa Savoye.
- 17 Y. Futugawa, *Le Corbusier*, preface by Marin Pawley, London 1970.
- 18 V. F. Pardo, *Le Corbusier*, Firenze 1966, tr. into French by Flammarion in 1968 and English by Grosset & Dunlap, New York in 1971.
- 19 C. Cresti, *Le Corbusier*, Firenze 1968 by Sasea in 1969, tr. into German in 1969 with the subtitle *Le Corbusier. Der Architekt und Städtebauer, der Form und Geist unserer Zeit geprägt hat.*, by Luzern-Freudenstadt-Wien, Kunstkreis.
- 20 S. von Moos, *Le Corbusier: L'architecte et son mythe*, Paris, 1970.
- 21 J.F. Jordan, *Le Corbusier*, London 1972.
- 22 C. Jencks, *Le Corbusier and the tragic view of architecture*, London, 1973.
- 23 S. Gardiner, *Le Corbusier*, Fontana/Collins 1974.
- 24 P. Serenyi, *Le Corbusier in Perspective*, Englewood Prentice Hall 1975, M. Pawley, *Le Corbusier*, Simon&Schuster 1970.
- 25 Y. Futugawa, text by A. Isozaki, *Couvent Sainte Marie de la Tourette, France 1957-1960*, Tokyo 1971.
- 26 Y. Futugawa, text by T. Yoshizaka, *Chapelle Notre Dame du Haut Ronchamp, France 1950-1954*, Tokyo 1971.
- 27 B. Brace Taylor, *Le Corbusier at Pessac: The Search for Systems and Standards in the Design of a Low Cost Housing*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1972.
- 28 Y. Futugawa, T. Yoshizaka, *L'Unité d'habitation, Marseille, France 1947-1952*, Tokyo 1972.
- 29 The primary sources are the Avery library, the R.I.B.A Library, and the TGB in Paris. In general they are short or very short articles on the most varied topics: cries of alarm ("SOS: le sort de l'immeuble Clarté de Le Corbusier et Pierre Jeanneret", in *Werk* 5, 1969, pp. 293-5, project fragments ("Avant-projet d'extension des maisons Jaoul de Le Corbusier", in *Technique et architecture*, 4, 1970, pp. 72-3; works not yet published, Ruben O. Pesci, "Un'opera inedita di Le Corbusier in Argentina", in *Architettura, cronache e storia*, 5, 1970, pp. 32-38; theoretical issues, P. Serenyi, "Classicism and anti-classicism in Le Corbusier", in *Journal of American Society of Architectural Historians*, 3, 1970, pp. 273-4; unpublished by Le Corbusier, L. Glaser, LC, "*La Casa Stein: i disegni inediti di Le Corbusier per la casa Stein di Garches*," exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, in *Domus* 4, 1971, pp. 3-9.; moments of Le Corbusier's education (P. Turner, "*The Beginnings of Le Corbusier Education*", in *Art Bulletin*, 2, 1 pp. 214-224 and P. Serenyi, "Le Corbusier: The formative years, 1887-1917", in *Journal of American Society of Architectural Historians*, 3, 1972, pp. 222; "Ronchamp: le Corbusier beabsichtige Provokation", in *Bauwelt*, 4, 1974, pp. 512-13; "Église Saint-Pierre de Firminy", in *Architecture Française*, 4, 1975, pp. 64-65.
- 30 C. Ginzburg, *Rapporti di forza: storia, retorica, prova*, Milano 2006.
- 31 P. V. Turner, "Beginnings of architectural education", 1902-07, cit.
- 32 A. Corboz, "Encore Pessac", in *Archithese* 1,1972, pp. 27-36.
- 33 B. Brace Taylor, *Le Corbusier at Pessac: The Search for Systems and Standards in the Design of a Low Cost Housing*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1972.

- 34 R. Gabetti and C. Olmo, *Le Corbusier e l'Esprit Nouveau*, Torino 1975.
- 35 Y. Futugawa, text by R. Meier, *La Villa Savoye, Poissy, France 1929-31*, Tokyo 1972.
- 36 W. Curtis *Le Corbusier: The Evolution of his Architectural Language and its Crystallization in the Villa Savoye*, Milton Keynes Open University 1975.
- 37 T. Benton, *Villa Savoye, Preliminary Drawings*, Milton Keynes Open University 1977. One year earlier in 1976 a short article on the Savoye was published, edited by two Japanese architects, Yuzuzu Tominaga and Shigetake Nagao, in *SD* (2, 1976, pp. 74-78).
- 38 T. Benton, "The Villa Savoye and the Architect's Practice", in Garland *Le Corbusier*, vol. VII.
- 39 T. Benton, *Les villas de Le Corbusier et Pierre Jeanneret: 1920-1930*, Sers Pais 1984.
- 40 J.L.Cohen, "Manière de penser Ronchamp oggi", in *Domus* 951, 2011.
- 41 T. Benton, "Insights into the daily life of Le Corbusier: The agendas in the Fondation Le Corbusier", in *Les Cahiers de la recherche architecturale, urbaine et paysagère*, 2020. Also in *LC. Revue de recherches sur Le Corbusier*, 2020, pp. 9-22.
- 42 P. Ricoeur, "L'écriture de l'histoire et la représentation du passé" in *Annales*, 4, 2000, pp.731-747.
- 43 F. Hartog, *Partir pour la Grèce*, Paris 2016, pp. 45-46.
- 44 R. Della Rocca, *La traduzione alla prova necessaria del nome*, Firenze 2019. On this point see, S. Caccia, C. Olmo, "La trascrizione, la narrazione e Pollicino", in *La villa Savoye*, cit, p.5.
- 45 D. Pauly, *Catalogue raisonné des dessins. Tome 1(1902-1916)*, Brussels 2020.
- 46 R. Barthès, *The Death of the author*, cit. and M. Foucault, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?" in 3, 63^e année du *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie*. (see following note).
- 47 M. Foucault, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?", in 3, 1969 année du *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie*, referenced in M. Foucault ("Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?", 1969), in the anthology by A. Brunn (*L'Auteur*, GF-Corpus, 2001, texte VI, p. 76-82). This anthology brings together many of the most interesting theses on authorship.
- 48 S. Giedion, the one photographed by Zervos first and then by Giedion, and published in Siegfried Giedion, "Le Corbusier et l'architecture contemporaine", *CA* n° 4, 1930, p. 204. Cf. also Léa Baudat, "L'architecture, l'image et le mot. Le Corbusier dans *Cahiers d'Art* (1926-1933)", in *Les Cahiers de l'École du Louvre*, 2, 2013 en ligne.
- 49 The definition is by P. Saddy (*Plan séquence sur la villa Savoye*, 25/09 1984) and it is linked to the nature of the work, "Les épaisseurs et sections minimales voulus par le Corbusier comme l'image de la technique moderne exigent un entretien vigilante", Cf. C. Olmo and S. Caccia, *La villa Savoye*, cit., p.170 ff.
- 50 P. Saddy, *ibid*
- 51 Keith Loftin III, "The Loss of History and the Rediscovery of Origins" in *JAE*, 3, 1980, pp. 14-18. Loftin makes explicit reference (p.18) to T. S. Kuhn and to *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*.
- 52 Le Corbusier, *Précisions sur l'état présent de l'architecture moderne*, Paris 1930.
- 53 P. Hadot, "Epistrophè et metanoia dans l'histoire de la philosophie." *Proceedings of the XIth International Congress of Philosophy*. Vol. 12. 1953.
- 54 Gaston Bachelard offered the most convincing interpretative key of this triple function. Cf.: Gaston Bachelard, *Études*, 1970 edited by Georges Canguilhem.
- 55 J.L. Cohen, "Exhibitionist Revisionism: Exposing Architectural History", in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 3, 1999, pp. 323-325.
- 56 On the twofold nature of the architecture document, C. Olmo and S. Caccia Gherardini, "Le Corbusier e il fantasma patrimoniale. Firminy Vert: tra messa in scena dell'origine e il restauro del non finito" in *Quaderni Storici*, 150, 2015, pp. 711.
- 57 Foucault, cit, pp. 803-804.
- 58 Caccia - Olmo, cit., first photographic insert, lettre de Le Corbusier a Mme Savoye, 31 October 1937
- 59 S. Caccia, "La remise en état come gioco di ruoli", in Olmo, Caccia, cit. p. 85 ff.
- 60 M. Eliade, *Il mito dell'eterno ritorno. Archetipi e ripetizioni* (1949), Torino 2018. The risk in much of the literature on Le Corbusier is precisely what Robert Ellwood reported in 1999, R. Ellwood, *The Politics of Myth: A Study of C. G. Jung, Mircea Eliade, and Joseph Campbell*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1999, pp. 11-119.
- 61 Cf. R. Johnson "What is cultural studies anyway?" In *Social text*, 16,198, pp. 38-80.
- 62 This reflection was taken up again in 1960 by Cesare Brandi (*Segno e immagine*, now reprinted by *Aesthetica*, edited by L. Russo and P. D'Angelo) with Suassurian reflections, which would be analysed in-depth a few years later by Emile Benveniste, Roland Barthes and Cesare Segre.
- 63 G. Apollinaire, *Les Peintres Cubistes. Méditations Esthétiques*, Paris 1913, p.27: "L'art d'aujourd'hui revêt ses créations d'une apparence grandiose, monumentale, qui dépasse à cet égard tout ce qui avait été conçu par les de notre âge. Ardent à la recherche de la beauté, il est noble, énergique"
- 64 Jeffrey Andrew Barash, "The Place of Remembrance, reflections on Paul Ricoeur's Theory on Collective Memory" in. B. Treanor and H.I Venema (ed.) *A Passion for the Possible* p. 147.
- 65 S. Giedion, *Space Time and Architecture*, Boston 1944.
- 66 After the all too well-known essay by J-M. Pérouse de Monclos, *La Monographie d'architecture, Documents et Méthodes* n. 10, Paris 2001, it was Franz Graf who gave new meaning to this literary genre in architecture. Cf. F. Graf, *Histoire matérielle du bâti et projet de Sauvegarde*, Presses

Polytechniques et Universitaires Romandes 2014.

67 P. Ricoeur, "La prova documentaria", in *La Mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, Ed. du Seuil 2000, tr. it. Cortina Milano 2004, p. 276-8. An intense reflection on evidence was also resumed in the historical field in that same period, cf. Carlo Ginzburg, *Rapporti di forza. Storia, retorica prova*, Milano 2000.

68 T. Benton, *Le Corbusier Secret Photographer*, Lars Muller 2013, p.156-7.

69 B. Colomina, "Le Corbusier and Photography", in *Assemblage*, 4, 1987, pp. 6-23.

70 B. Mazza, *Le Corbusier e la fotografia. La verità bianca*, Firenze 2002.

71 Exhibition curated by Tim Benton, Jean-Christophe Blaser, Véronique Boone, Arthur Rüegg, Catherine de Smet and Klaus Spechtenhauser.

72 Fernando Zaparrain Hernandez, Jorge Ramos Jular, Pablo Lamazares Blanco, "La promenade fotográfica de la villa Savoye. Le Corbusier y la imagen como expresión de la forma", *RITA*, 10, 2018, pp. 104-113).

73 P. Deamer, "The Legacy of the Whites", *Perspecta*, January 2001, p. 95.

74 Cf. "Dimenticare per ricordare" in Caccia Olmo, cit. p.25

75 Ibid.

76 Studies by Artur Graf, Bruno Reichlin, Caroline Maniaque, Susanna Caccia Gherardini and Roberta Grignolo have provided a new key to interpreting the relationship between matter and design.

77 L.W. Speck, "Mainstream is almost All Wrong", in *JAE*, 1, 1980, p. 20.

78 This is explained better than any hermeneutics by Le Corbusier's wish to see reality not as the work and its surveys, but as a selection of drawings from the four designs.

79 Carlo Olmo and Susanna Caccia Gherardini, *Metamorfosi americane: Destruction by Neglect. La Villa savoye tra mito e patrimonio*, Quodlibet 2016.

80 This letter is well documented in the work of J. Quetglas on the villa, included in *Les Heures claires. Proyecto y arquitectura en La Villa Savoie de Le Corbusier e Pierre Jeanneret*, Ediciones Asimétricas, 2019, ed or. Saint Cugat del Vallès Barcelona, Associació d'idees, 2009.

81 It is not only the history of architecture that suffers from essentially being a "single archive" story. Cf. C. Ginzburg, *Il filo e le tracce*, Milano 2006, pp. 15-6.

82 On the intertextual reading that Bruno Reichlin would then bring, as a historian and architect, to its highest level, B. Reichlin, "Introduzione" to *Dalla "soluzione elegante" all'"edificio aperto". Scritti attorno ad alcune opere di Le Corbusier*, Mendrisio 2013, pp. 23-25.

83 The reflection on the monograph of the work would be at risk of recreating an autonomous Crocian aesthetic of the work if it were not integrated with the assumption of the work as a canvas whose translation into actions, decisions and choices can

be understood as an authentic *mise en intrigue*, cf. P.Ricoeur, *L'histoire, la Mémoire et l'Oubli*, cit., pp. 243 ff.

84 The other possible route is the one taken by many texts by Carlo Ginzburg, in primis *Rapporti di potere*, cit.

85 David Leclerc, "Albert Frey: entretien et realisation", in *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, 2, 1992, pp.130-142.

86 It was above all Mariastella Casciato who worked on Pierre Jeanneret, while there is still no systematic study of Weissman.

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88 Michel Levine, "The Transformation of Villa Savoye into the National Library: Le Corbusier's influence on two generations of Architects in Israel", in *Journal of Jewish Art*, 3-4, 1977, pp.103-121.

89 Up to arriving at the almost parody made of it by A. Vidler, "Diagrams of Diagrams: Architectural Abstractions and Modern Representation", in *Representations*, 72, 2000, pp. 1-20.

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92 E.H. Gombrich, *Norms and Form. The Stylistic Categories of Art History and their Origins in the Renaissance Ideals*, Phaidon 1971 (the essay was written in 1966), pp. 81-83.

93 J. Ackerman, "The Villa as Paradigm", in *Perspecta*, 22, 1986, pp.10-31.

94 J. Ackerman, cit., p. 14.

95 J. Ackerman, cit., p. 21.

96 J. Ackerman, cit., p. 26.

97 J. Ackerman, cit., p.31. This topic is best represented by Jeffrey Hildner, "Remembering The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa", in *Journal of Architectural Education*, 3, 1999, pp. 143-162 and above all Daniel Sherer, "Le Corbusier's Discovery of Palladio in 1922 and the Modernist Transformation of the Classical Code", in *Perspecta*, 35, 2004, pp.20-39.

98 Issue 15/16 of Winter Spring 1979.

99 A. Camus, *Alger Républicain*, 20 October 1938.

100 Thomas Da Costa Kaufmann, "Periodization and its Discontents", in *Journal of Art Historiography*, 2, 2010 (originally French 2008), pp.1-6.

101 Cf. *Projets d'architecture de Le Corbusier, document réalisé par la Fondation Le Corbusier*, Paris Fondation Le Corbusier 1977 and Mary Patricia May Sekler, *The Early Drawings of Charles- Edouard Jeanneret (Le Corbusier) 1902-1908*, New York 1977.

- 102 G. Gresleri, *80 Disegni di Le Corbusier*, Bologna Ente Fiere 1977; A. Izzo and C. Gubitosi, *Le Corbusier: disegni, disegni, drawings*, Roma 1988.
- 103 "Three unpublished letters by Le Corbusier", in *Cahiers de la recherche architecturale*, 12, 1978, pp. 36-38.
- 104 Publication preceded by two texts essential for understanding what was happening in architectural journalism: M. Besset and A. Wogensky, *Le Corbusier-Carnets*, Milano 1981-2 (first notebook of a long series), and *Selected Drawings*, edited by Michel Graves, Rizzoli New York 1981, an almost paradigmatic approach of publishing unpublished drawings by architects whose professional career was about to take off.
- 105 A. Picon, *Architectes et Ingénieurs au Siècle des Lumières*, Parenthèses, Paris, 1988 and V. Nègre (Ed.), *L'art du chantier: Construire et démolir du XVIè au XXIè siècle*, Snoeck 2018.
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- 107 F. Hartog, *Croire en histoire*, Paris 2013.
- 108 C. Segre, *Ritorno alla critica*, Torino 2001.
- 109 A. Roth, *Zwei Wohnhauser von Le Corbusier*, Stuttgart 1977.
- 110 C. Luigi Anzivino, E. Godoli, *Il Concorso per il palazzo delle Nazioni Unite di Ginevra e il caso Le Corbusier*, Calenzano 1979.
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- 112 Russell Walden (edited by), *The Open Hand: Essays on Le Corbusier*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1977.
- 113 Edouard F. Sekler and William Curtis, *Le Corbusier at Work*, Harvard 1978.
- 114 S. von Moos, *Le Corbusier, Elements of a Synthesis*, Cambridge 1978.
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- 125 S. Von Moos, cit.
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- 127 The sources from Bruno Zevi, Robert Morris, G.K. Koenig are stated in the bibliography.
- 128 W.F. Facilla, cit., and Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, fifth lesson cit.
- 129 B. Reichlin, cit., p. 21.
- 130 Ivan Gury's archive on the Villa Savoye is contained within the Houllier archive, his father-in-law's agency.
- 131 S. Servoise, "La fabrique de l'archive. Nathalie Piégay-Gros, Le Futur antérieur de l'archive (2012)", in *Écrire l'histoire. Histoire, Littérature, Esthétique*, 13-14, 2014, pp. 182-185.
- 132 F. Hartog, *Le miroir d'Hérodote. Essai sur la Représentation de l'autre*, 1980.
- 133 The term is obviously taken from Maurice Halbwachs who spoke of the memory of musicians or surveyors, M. Halbwachs, "Mémoire collective et mémoire historique", in *La Mémoire collective* (ed. cited 1997), p. 92 ff.
- 134 From 25 June 1970 IFA, Fonds Hourlier, 4035.
- 135 *Programme de Travaux 1971*, 27 September 1971, IFA Fonds Hourlier 4035. Also in this document Gury defines "imperatives", the grosse réparations to be made.
- 136 Programme de travaux à réaliser en 1972, IFA Fonds Hourlier 4035.
- 137 Etat sommaire, Villa Savoye 1973, IFA Fonds Hourlier 4035.
- 138 On 8 January 1965 the *Commission supérieur des Monuments historiques* endorsed the dossier, but only the *lettre du charge de mission pour la creation artistique* dated 26 November 1965 led to the villa's recognition and its *classement* with *l'Arrêté du ministre d'état des Affaires Culturelles/Direction de L'architecture* on 16 December 1965. FLC, H1 (12) 453. On the broad debate in France in those years and the matters linked to the Commission established in 1963 to draw up the first list of modern "monuments" to be protected, see "Tra accademia invisibile e neo positivismo incipiente: la villa tra lista e inventari", in S. Caccia Gherardini, C. Olmo, *Le Corbusier e l'Accademia invisibile della modernità. La Villa Savoye. Icona, rovina, restauro (1948-1968)*, Roma 2016, pp. 204-208.
- 139 On the recurrences of the interventions, the items in the specifications, the estimates and the site reports preserved in the archives of the FLC and in the IFA Funds can be compared. In particular FLC U1 (15)112, 113, 114, 118, 119, 120, as well

as the estimates U1(15) 132, 137, 158, 166, 182; IFA, Fondo J. Dubuisson; Fondo I. Gury; Fondo J.-L. Vêret.

140 On the figure of Jean Dubuisson, cf. E. Guillem, *Jean Dubuisson. Un architecte majeur de la reconstruction de l'après-guerre*, Paris 2014.

141 On 5 December 1967, a few weeks after closure of the construction site, "le ministère de la Culture devient propriétaire de la Villa Savoye. Il en confie la gestion à la Délégation aux arts plastiques qui l'ouvre au public". An indication given by Pierre Saddy in that brief chronicle of the first restoration campaigns, preserved in the archives of the Parisian Foundation. A brief but nonetheless tendentious reconstruction of the facts. One of the few to tell the truth, according to which Saddy himself was among those in charge of the construction of the dossier for the restoration of the villa between 1963 and 1964, which would later be finalised with the Agence Dubuisson "sous le contrôle de Le Corbusier". FLC, Pierre Saddy, Appunto manoscritto sui restauri della villa, 1968.

142 FLC, *Dossier Confidentielle*, 6 May 1968.

143 On the restoration directed by Dubuisson, see in particular "Il cantiere del restauro e la prima ricezione della villa", in S. Caccia Gherardini, C. Olmo, *Le Corbusier e l'Accademia invisibile della modernità...*, cit., pp. 129-208.

144 See in particular the notes of that year, FLC, H1(12) 408-409, H1(12) 415, H1(12) 46 and notebooks L46, P59, P61, P62, R64, R65, R66, R67 3 70 published in *Le Corbusier Sketchbooks*, IV, 1957-1964, Boston 1982.

145 FLC19530 and 19533; U1(15)107-109.

146 And it did. We need only recall the exhibition of 1987 curated by Jean Louis Vêret on the occasion of the centenary year. On the exhibition events, cf. IFA, Fondo J.-L. Vêret, Boite «*Villa Savoye*».

147 The problem of the use of the villa would persist throughout Gury's assignment, and he would always complain about the non "une utilisation des locaux". Gury a Vêret's letter dated 11 June 1986, Fonds Hourlier, Boite 4227, IFA, Paris.

148 "*Monsieur Dufour Gaz de France revenant sur accord verbal donné il y a 3 mois et concernant les dispositions techniques à réaliser en chaufferie demande maintenant en se référant aux normes des Etablissements recevant du public quel es chauffe-eaux mis en place avec son accord dans la chaufferie soient déplacés dans un autre local. Nous mettrons en rapport avec la Conservation de Versailles pour préciser que la Villa Savoye n'est pas à assimiler à ce genre de construction, en conséquence les dispositions réalisées ne seront pas modifiées*". IFA, Fondo J. Dubuisson, 224, boîte 245, *Compte Rendu*, 15 February 1967.

149 See in particular the reports of the meetings from as early as May 1966, IFA, Fondo J. Dubuisson, 224, boîte 245-247.

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