

DANIELA PITTALUGA

FABIO FRATINI

(édité par/by)

**CONSERVATION ET MISE EN VALEUR
DU PATRIMOINE ARCHITECTURAL ET PAYSAGÉ
DES SITES CÔTIERS MÉDITERRANÉENS**

CONSERVATION AND PROMOTION OF ARCHITECTURAL AND
LANDSCAPE HERITAGE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN COASTAL SITES

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Ce livre est un ouvrage collectif, dont les contributions ont été élaborées à partir de la conférence RIPAM 7, organisée à Gênes du 20 au 22 septembre 2017 par le DAD - Département d'architecture et de design (Université de Gênes) en partenariat avec le CNR-ICVBC Institut national de recherche, Institut pour la conservation et la mise en valeur du patrimoine culturel de Florence).

This book is a collective work, with contributions developed starting from RIPAM 7 conference, organized in Genoa, 20 to 22 September 2017 by the DAD - Department of Architecture and Design (University of Genoa) in collaboration with the CNR-ICVBC (National Research Council, Institute for Cultural Heritage Conservation and Valorization, Florence).

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Daniela Pittaluga and Fabio Fratini worked together on the initial texts (including sections “What is RIPAM?” and “RIPAM 7 Conference”, acknowledgements and indexes) and on the descriptions of the themes et subthemes (section A and B and subparties). However, Daniela Pittaluga wrote the parts in French, and Fabio Fratini wrote the parts in English. They are authors of some articles and editors of the remaining part.

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The coast of Altavilla Milicia east of Palermo. History of a forgotten coastal landscape between illegal buildings, architectural-landscape emergencies and the need for protection

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Summary. In Sicily, the coast from Bagheria to Termini Imerese is characterized by the presence of numerous illegal buildings, in many cases located right on the shore in defiance to any urban norm. This invasive phenomenon, partly caused also by urban planning regulations careless of the landscape values strongly present in this area, started in the sixties of the XXth century, with people looking for second homes for seasonal residence, especially the residents of Palermo. Looking around the Gulf of Termini Imerese, which includes the coast mentioned above, it can be observed how, surrounded and suffocated by contemporary buildings, remains of monumental architecture emerge, such as coastal towers, bridges, traps and churches, one of which, in particular, stands on a slight range near the small town of Altavilla Milicia. These are the remains of the Norman church of Santa Maria in Campogrosso, from where an extraordinary panorama that spans the Gulf can be enjoyed, but also the ancient road connections that cross the territory and in part were modeled on the consular roads built in the classical era. The above mentioned landscape is also formed by the cultivation of citrus and evergreen olive trees, that grow on steep artificial terraces built over the centuries by the hard work of man. Unfortunately, all the historical and existing architecture, whether publicly or privately owned, are visibly in a deplorable state of neglect. This condition arises from the lack of knowledge of the cultural values that these architectures instead possess, first of all by the public and private institution and therefore by citizens. From such lack of knowledge follows a negation of value, and hence the increase of the abandonment, transformation and disfigurement, up to the complete destruction of such heritage. This essay aims not only at investigating these architectural remains and their environment, but also to propose a process to update and put it into value, through protection, restoration and fruition. Knowledge is still the key tool for understanding and for the return of the interest on the landscape and the historical architectures contained in it, which nevertheless still manage to touch us¹.

Keywords: Palermo east Coast, Norman architecture, restoration, preservation, fruition.

The Gulf of Termini Imerese: landscape and history

¹ Rosario Scaduto is the author of the paragraph: *The Gulf of Termini Imerese: landscape and history, A sparse territory, Conclusions*. Zaira Barone is the author of the paragraph: *A Norman architecture that deserves to be known and valued, Conclusions*.

In Sicily, the stretch of coastline from Aspra - a seaside hamlet of Bagheria - to Termini Imerese, is characterized by a remarkable landscape (fig.01) and cultural heritage².

From the geomorphologic point of view, this coastline alternates sandy beaches with rocks full of coves, with natural caves, remains of ancient tuff quarries - biolimestone, and also natural arches such as the Arco Azzurro ("Blue Arch") (fig.02) famous for having been used as the backdrop in the advertisement of a popular brand of chocolates³.

The hinges that make up the Gulf of Termini Imerese are Monte San Calogero to the east and Monte Catalfano to the west, and both keep the precious archaeological evidence of the ancient Himera and Solunto respectively.



Fig. 01 : J.B. De Saint- Non *Voyage pittoresque* 1781-1786, view of the Gulf of Termini Imerese

² This Gulf includes the municipalities of Bagheria, Santa Flavia, Casteldaccia, Altavilla Milicia, San Nicola L'Arena, Trabia and Termini Imerese.

³ Recently recognized as a Geo National site by the Higher Institute for the Protection of Environmental Research.



Fig. 02 : Bagheria, Aspra, the "Blue Arch" seen from the sea, 2017

The Catalfano is a mountain, mostly made of limestone, part of an area subject to landscape constraints⁴, rich in particular species of animals and plants, including some rare orchids. From its peak the nearby Capo Zafferano can be admired, with the remains of an ancient tower on its top and a still working lighthouse on its slopes. Monte San Calogero, a massif made of limestones and dolomites, is a protected natural area, characterized also by the presence of prehistoric remains. The whole landscape described above is also made up of mainly citrus and evergreen olive tree cultivations, which also grow on steep artificial terraces built over the centuries by laborious human hands. The territory has always been inhabited, as evidenced by the VII century B.C. remains of the Punic city of Solunto, which stood on the promontory of St. Christoph, near Santa Flavia, and the town of Solunto built in the IV century B.C. located on the nearby Monte Catalfano.

The Gulf also contains the archaeological remains of ancient Himera, founded in the VII century B.C. and located at the mouth of the river San Leonardo, but also those of the V century B.C. located in the new Termini Imerese. There are some coastal towers, such as the one in Solanto, today inside the homonymous castle/tunny-fishing factory, and Torre Normanna, near San Nicola l'Arena, which can be dated back to the Middle Ages. Other towers, however, listed in the *"Descrizione de las*

⁴ Area subject to constraints according to Law 1497/39 now named Codice dei Beni Culturali e del Paesaggio, Legislative Decree n. 42/2004.

marinas de todo el Reino de Sicilia"⁵ written in 1578 by Tiburzio Spannocchi and now almost completely disappeared, are those of Mongerbino and Capo Zafferano, while others are embedded within the castles of Trabia, San Nicola l'Arena and the already mentioned castle of Solanto (fig.03).



Fig. 03 : T. Spannocchi, *Descriscion de las marinas*, 1578,
The towers of the Gulf of Termini Imerese

Even more numerous is the heritage of the XVth and XVIth century *bagli*, devoted to breeding and cultivation, mainly of vines. Besides the *bagli*, especially in Bagheria, there are also many historic villas, built in this site for its beauty with materials found in the local quarries.

A sparse territory

Despite such cultural, environmental and architectural heritage, the coast of the Gulf of Termini Imerese is characterized by the presence of numerous abusive constructions that, in too many cases, arise even on the boulder in contravention of any conceivable urban norm. This invasive phenomenon, partly caused also by urban planning regulations

⁵ T. SPANNOCCHI (1578), *Descriscion de las marinas de todo el Reino de Sicilia*, ms, National Library of Madrid, in R. TROVATO (1993), *Marine del Regno di Sicilia*, Catania.

that do not take care of the existing environmental values, began in the '60s of the XXth century, with the search for second houses where to spend a vacation. Definitely, the damage caused by the slow natural decay due to the passing of centuries is way inferior to the damage caused by unauthorized building. The "urban havoc", as Salvatore Boscarino calls it⁶, still scars the face of Bagheria and its coastline, including many of the unfinished facades of the houses and reinforced concrete skeletons that deface both the urban and natural landscapes. As far as today's urban centres are concerned, the greatest damages caused by unauthorized building in this area between hills and sea are visible in the destruction of the parks and gardens of the numerous baroque and late baroque villas; as far as the landscape in general, they are instead made visible by a brutal overbuilding.

The unauthorized building that spread along the coast led to the deprivation of the sea, with private use of collective goods, not only in the area 300 m from the shore, but also at 150 m or even on the same shore. The phenomenon of unauthorized building of houses that have direct access to the sea through staircases and escalators that lie directly on the rocks or on the sand is sadly widespread. The few houses built with regular building permits until 1976 coexist with a network of narrow roads that were created by unauthorized parcelling, linking the expanse of unauthorized buildings⁷. The solution to what has just been reported above must be sought in the only possibility that a civil society has, that is law enforcement and therefore the demolition of all unauthorized buildings that could not be granted amnesty, and when this is not done by the owners, the transfer of ownership to the Public Administration. The social use of such buildings acquired in public property must be ruled out. Besides, would a social use, provided by current legislation, of these properties be a minor disadvantage for the landscape? We don't think so! It is necessary instead to demolish what could not and should not have been done on the coast, for our community, and since it is the environmental heritage we are talking about, also for the future generation's sake. Looking at the Gulf of Termini Imerese, it can be observed how the remains of ancient architectures are immersed and stifled by contemporary buildings: villas, towers, bridges, tunny-fishing

⁶ BOSCARINO (1981), *Sicilia Barocca*, Officina Edizioni, Roma, p.206.

⁷ Regional Law n.78/76 has forbidden building in the area within 150,0 m in Sicily, except for areas "A" and "B" pointed out in the PRG. In such area building is instead allowed only to make or facilitate access to the sea.

factories and churches, one of which stands on a slight relief near the town centre of Altavilla Milicia. These are the remains of the Norman church of Santa Maria in Campogrosso (figg. 04, 05), from where you can enjoy an extraordinary panorama that embraces the whole gulf, but also the ancient road links that partly resemble a consular road built in the classical era.



Figg. 04, 05 : Altavilla Milicia, chiesa di Santa Maria in Campogrosso, view of the ruins of the monument and surrounding panorama, 2017

A Norman architecture that deserves to be known and valued

Both unauthorized building and abandonment have caused the almost total decay and disappearance of many monument which could still be studied and restored to ensure their preservation.

On the contrary, as it happened in Sicily in the XIXth century for the most well known monuments of the Norman era, with the awakening of the cult of the so-called "Arab-Norman" architecture⁸, the church of Campogrosso also rose the interest of some scholars, and is counted among the Norman churches in one of the most famous studies of that time⁹.

⁸ On the cult of the "Arab-Norman" architecture, see: F. TOMASELLI (1994), *Il ritorno dei Normanni. Protagonisti ed interpreti del restauro dei monumenti a Palermo nella seconda metà dell'Ottocento*, Officina Edizioni, Roma.

⁹ «La diruta chiesa di san Michele sulla strada da Palermo a Termini si compone di due piani distinti: l'uno sommerso, ne forma la nave somigliante a una intera basilica occidentale; ed a questo più elevato di due gradini, l'altro si congiunge in forma orientale, con avere in centro la cupola poggiante su quattro pilastri e le tre absidi in fondo» («The disrupted church of san Michele on the road going from Palermo to Termini is made of two distinct parts: one upstairs, forms its nave which resembles a whole Western basilica; this part being elevated by two steps, is linked the other part having an Oriental shape, with the dome resting at the center on

The attention for this monument took shape in 1895 when the Regional Office for the Conservation of Monuments in Sicily investigated and restored the remains of the church. The interventions were directed by Arch. Achille Patricolo¹⁰, son of the more famous restorer Giuseppe Patricolo¹¹. The surveys carried out on this occasion, in particular those of the plan of the church with a single nave with three-apse Latin cross and some other architectural details, gave back elements today missing or unreadable, such as the profile of the moulding of the entrance door, strongly stumped, a decorative frame, sometimes with lateral barrels and six buttresses along the outer walls of the nave (fig.06). In the report on the works, however, there are no references to the ruins of the cenoby placed beside the church, of which there are still traces, and which, on the date Patricolo intervened, should still have been visible. Patricolo's intervention consisted in cleaning the area and consolidating with dry masonries in the church. Interesting information about what was found and about the works carried out can be drawn from the archive documents. There are also some signs of lapicides, some letter or sign of recognition that are depicted in quite a few carved ashlars, both inside and outside the church; some murals were also made, in particular at the north, where there was a tumbled door with the surrounding masonry that was likely to collapse. In the early XXth century the church continued to enjoy some notoriety, in fact it appeared among the monuments representative of the so-called "Arab-Norman" architecture in some studies such as those by Arata (1914), which contains a plant later questioned by Guiotto (1956), and those by Bottari (1948)¹².

four pillars and the three apses at the bottom») in D. LO FASO PIETRASANTA (1838), *Del duomo di Monreale e di altre chiese siculo-normanne*, Tip. Roberti, Palermo.

¹⁰ Born in Palermo (1867-1941), son of 'arch. Giuseppe Patricolo. His interests span from design to restoration, together with an intense cultural activity. While in Milan, he was one of L. Beltrami's students and collaborator of G. Moretti. He was a scholar and an essayist, and worked both in Italy and Egypt where he designed the archaeological museum of Cairo.

¹¹ G. Patricolo (1834-1905), one of the protagonists in the season of restoration of the Norman architectures, in 1891 became Director of the Regional Office for the Conservation of Monuments in Sicily. On G. Patricolo see: F. TOMASELLI, *Il ritorno dei Normanni. Protagonisti ed interpreti del restauro dei monumenti a Palermo nella seconda metà dell'Ottocento*, Roma 1994.

¹² See: G.U. ARATA (1914), *L'architettura arabo normanna e il Rinascimento in Sicilia*, Milano; M. GUIOTTO (1956), *La chiesa di San Michele in territorio di Altavilla Milicia*, in *Atti del VII Congresso Nazionale di Storia dell'Architettura*, Palermo 1950



Fig. 06 : Santa Maria in Campogrosso, detail of the plaster in the inner part of the masonry of the central apse

Another significant contribution to the study of the ruins was given in the mid XXth century by the Superintendent of Palermo Mario Guiotto¹³, who in the light of his observations also delivered a graphic reconstruction of the church (fig.07).

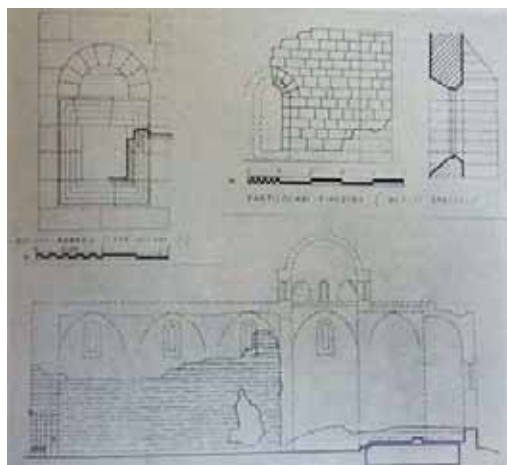


Fig. 07 : M. Guiotto, relief designs and Church reconstruction hypotheses, 1950

and S. BOTTARI (1948), *L'architettura della Contea. Studi sulla prima architettura normanna nell'Italia meridionale e in Sicilia*, Catania.

¹³ M. Guiotto (1903-1999) was the main actor behind the preservation and restoration of the monuments in Palermo, after World War II.

Some of the information he had found can no longer be traced due to the degradation of stone materials and collapses, and therefore his contribution is still very important today. Inside the crypt, Guiotto himself found a cruise liner key decorated with a carved rosette and a piece of shaped bow ring¹⁴. In 1979 Vladimir Zoric, having studied and catalogued several types of lapicides found in the cathedral of Cefalù, compared them with similar signs in other architectures of the Norman period such as the castle of Maredolce in Palermo and, precisely, the church of Santa Maria of Campogrosso¹⁵. From a conservative point of view, after the surveys carried out by Guiotto the church remained in a state of neglect; in the context of a progressive decay.

In 1989 Zoric recorded a further collapse of the north wall, in correspondence with the insertion of the transept. Only between 2015 and 2016, the remains (fig. 08) were investigated by a group of Polish archaeologists from the *Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Science*, in collaboration with the Superintendence of the BB.CC.AA. of Palermo and with the Municipality of Altavilla Milicia. Stratigraphic sculptures were performed outside the church that allowed to collect data on the time the church was built and also led to the discovery of some graves¹⁶.

Future surveys could be the basis for the necessary restoration work and to ensure a gradual process aimed at restoration, full exploitation and fruition of the site.

¹⁴ M. GUIOTTO (1956), quoted, pp.268-269.

¹⁵ V. ZORIC (1989), *Alcuni risultati di una ricerca nella Sicilia Normanna. I marchi dei lapicidi quale mezzo per la datazione dei monumenti e la ricostruzione dei loro cantieri*, in *Actes du VI Colloque International de Recherches Glyptographie de Samoëns*, Editions de la Taille d'Aulme, Brainele Château.

¹⁶ «The geophysical surveys (georadar and electric resistivity) carried out in the surrounding subsoil have highlighted the presence of structures relevant to the monastic complex attached to the church» in S. MOZDZIOCH, T. BARANOWSKI, B. STANISLAWSKI (2017), *Rapporto preliminare della I campagna di scavi archeologici condotti nel sito della chiesa di Santa Maria di Campogrosso (San Michele del Golfo), Altavilla Milicia*, in "Notiziario Archeologico della Soprintendenza di Palermo", n. 19.



Fig. 08 : Santa Maria in Campogrosso, seen from above during the recent archaeological excavations of 2017

Conclusions

Unfortunately, as in the case study mentioned above, many of the pre-existing historical and architectural remains present in the Gulf of Termini Imerese, of both public and private property, still are in a serious state of abandonment. Such condition arises from the lack of knowledge of the cultural values these architectures possess, first of all by the institutions and consequently by the citizens. The lack of knowledge of the heritage is associated with the denial of value and consequently the increase of abandonment, transformation and deterioration, until complete destruction. Therefore, it is imperative for every local community to develop a path for the systematic knowledge, with interdisciplinary contributions, of its architectural and environmental heritage. We also refer to the fundamental role the School has today in the formation of citizens who are aware of the importance of monumental and landscaping heritage. Not to mention the role the School has in relation to the permanent formation of the parents, who through their children can participate in initiatives aimed at the knowledge and understanding of that same heritage. In general, the thread represented by a common cultural history binds the urban centres that look to the Gulf of Termini Imerese. There is also a need to add a network system designed to link

the different urban and territorial realities to the only goal of cultural, social and economic growth. For example, in the context of a seasonally adjusted tourist offer, the enjoyment of monumental and landscaped sites (fig. 09) could also be guaranteed by means of sea routes with the use of local sailing boats. The experience of the sea and the coast, enhanced with the opportunity to visit the hinterland, is an added value in understanding a territory. All this must be accompanied by the supply of a parallel path of knowledge of food-producing culture, which translates into the spread of typical products of the countryside and of the local fisheries, still very practised today. Every community should help the birth of the need for knowing, identifying, protecting and spread the material consistency of its heritage, which is an inseparable part of the collective heritage of the Gulf of Termini Imerese¹⁷. We are confident that an appropriate research and census of the architectural testimonies, of their context and of the landscaping heritage goes through the proposal of a path of renewal and value, through the protection, restoration, fruition and exploitation. Knowledge remains the fundamental tool for understanding and addressing the right conservation interventions aimed at the responsible fruition of the landscape and of the historical architectures contained therein.



Fig. 09 : Golfo di Termini Imerese, proposed for the use of the sea of monumental and landscaped sites,, by A. Aiello, *Il faro di Capo Zafferano tra conservazione e valorizzazione*, tesi di laurea, relatore R. Prescia, R. Scaduto, a.a. 2015-16, Dipartimento di Architettura, Università degli Studi di Palermo

¹⁷ The interdisciplinary methodological approach suggested, for example, during the conference *La Baia di Napoli. Strategie integrate per la conservazione e la fruizione del paesaggio culturale*, Napoli 2016, whose proceedings are being published, is worthy of interest.

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Les RIPAM (Rencontres Internationales du Patrimoine Architectural Méditerranéen) sont à la fois des rencontres et un réseau de personnes et d'institutions qui travaillent pour la connaissance et à la conservation du patrimoine architectural et urbain méditerranéen: Meknès (Maroc) en 2005, Marrakech (Maroc) en 2007, Lisbonne (Portugal) en 2009, M'sila (Algérie) en 2012, Marseille (France) en 2013, Monastir (Tunisie) en 2015. La septième conférence RIPAM «Conservation et valorisation du patrimoine architectural et paysagé des sites côtiers méditerranéens / Conservation and promotion of architectural and landscape heritage of the Mediterranean coastal sites» a été organisée à Gênes le 20-22 septembre 2017 par le DAD (Département d'Architecture et Design, Université de Gênes) et le CNR-ICVBC (Institut de Conservation et de mise en valeur du Patrimoine Culturel du Conseil National des Recherches de Florence, maintenant CNR-Institut des Sciences du Patrimoine Culturel).

Ce livre contient les travaux de recherche menés depuis Ripam7 sur la conservation et la mise en valeur du patrimoine architectural et paysager des sites côtiers de la Méditerranée. Il part ensuite de la définition du paysage côtier et des transformations que le paysage lui-même a souffert au fil du temps, dans la région méditerranéenne pour arriver ensuite aux spécificités du patrimoine architectural de ces mêmes régions. Différentes théories et approches méthodologiques sont comparées. La deuxième partie de l'ouvrage décrit les stratégies de conservation et de valorisation et présente des interventions dans différentes parties des côtes méditerranéennes (des côtes italiennes aux côtes françaises et portugaises, puis aux côtes marocaines, tunisiennes, algériennes, israéliennes, turques, grecques et syriennes).

The RIPAM (French acronym for International Meetings on Mediterranean Architectural Heritage) are both meetings and a network of people and institutions working to the knowledge and the conservation of the architectural and urban Mediterranean heritage: Meknes (Morocco) in 2005, Marrakech (Morocco) in 2007, Lisbon (Portugal) in 2009, M'sila (Algeria) in 2012, Marseille (France) in 2013, Monastir (Tunisia) in 2015. The seventh RIPAM conference "Conservation and enhancement of the architectural and landscaped heritage of coastal sites Mediterranean / Conservation and Promotion of Architectural and Landscape Heritage of the Mediterranean coastal sites" was organized in Genoa, 20-22 September 2017, by the DAD (Department of Architecture and Design, University of Genoa) and the CNR-ICVBC (Institute of Conservation and Promotion of Cultural Heritage of the National Research Council of Florence) now CNR-ISPC (Institute of Heritage Sciences).

This book contains the research work done since Ripam7 on the conservation and promotion of the architectural and landscape heritage of Mediterranean coastal sites. It starts with the definition of coastal landscape and the transformations that the landscape itself has undergone, over time, in the Mediterranean area. Then it addresses the specificities of the architectural heritage of these same areas. Different theories and methodological approaches are compared. In the second part of the book, conservation and promotion strategies are described with interventions carried out in different parts of the Mediterranean coasts (from the Italian coasts to the French and Portuguese coasts and then to the Moroccan, Tunisian, Algerian, Israeli, Turkish and Greek coasts till the Syrian territory).