

Fabbrica della Conoscenza

XV INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Le Vie dei  
Mercanti

Carmine Gambardella



**WORLD HERITAGE**  
and **DISASTER**

# **WORLD HERITAGE and DISASTER**

Knowledge, Culture and Representation

La scuola di Pitagora editrice

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Collana fondata e diretta da Carmine Gambardella

## **Fabbrica della Conoscenza**

Collana fondata e diretta da Carmine Gambardella

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**WORLD HERITAGE and DISASTER**  
**Knowledge, Culture and Rapresentation**  
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Carmine Gambardella  
WORLD HERITAGE and DEGRADATION  
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**WORLD HERITAGE and DISASTER  
Knowledge, Culture and Representation**

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Scholars has been invited to submit researches on theoretical and methodological aspects related to Smart Design, Planning and Technologies, and show real applications and experiences carried out on this themes.

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## The Resilience of the *Valley of Temples* Among Natural Calamities and Social Disasters

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### Abstract

Preservation of the cultural heritage, intended as common patrimony, is a cultural achievement that in territories like Sicily, which has often suffered the lack of legality, is the result of a difficult process of implementation. Cultural heritage is not ruined exclusively by natural calamities: damages caused by social and cultural disasters may at times be even more devastating.

The archeological park of Agrigento, born in 1947 after a natural disaster (a landslide in 1944), hides a history of a half century of battles between the illegal land use and legislative measures to protect a cultural heritage recognized worldwide (registered in the WHL in 1997).

After fifty years of attacks against the archaeological park, a slow process of collective re-appropriation of the *Valley of Temples* has begun since 2000. A law established by the Sicilian Region has launched this process; this law, unique in its genre, is finally producing long-awaited results.

Herein, we describe battles lost and won, stakeholders took to the field, failure and successes that, during the last decade, have transformed the *Valley of Temples* from a synonym of illegality and unauthorized building into an example of excellent enhancement of the cultural heritage. In 2017, indeed, the archeological park has been awarded the *Italian Award for the Landscape* and then brought up by the Ministry for Cultural and Environmental Heritage as candidate to represent Italy for the *European Council Landscape Award*.

**Keywords:** World Heritage, Archeological Park, Town Planning, Landscape, Agrigento



**Fig. 1:** Agrigento, Valley of Temples. Stenopos from the Agora to the Sacred Way.

## 1. Introduction

The archaeological findings in Agrigento's territory (AG, Sicily, Italy) are the remains of the ancient city of Akragas, founded in the sixth century BC by rhodium-Cretan populations. The Greek city has had a lifetime of almost a millennium and was one of the largest and most sumptuous of Ancient Greece, "the most beautiful city among mortals" [1].

The temples of the city situated along the *Via Sacra* have dominated the landscape seamlessly since the fifth century BC. In 1863 the entire ancient city was detected for the first time by the Technical Office of the king and the archaeological excavations have brought to light, in the course of the twentieth century, many public buildings, monuments and a residential district. However, it is a very small percentage of the original size of the city; the area of the entire ancient city covers 250 hectares. The site therefore has an extraordinary archaeological potential still to be found, as shown by the excavations in the spring of 2016 that seem to be bringing to light the stone-made theater of the city.

After a (troubled) set of constraints affixed to the area, the regional law n. 20 of 2000 established the Archaeological and Landscape Park of the Valley of the Temples. The park covers a total area of 1,400 hectares and was established to protect both the archaeological finds both the landscape heritage and environmental values that characterize the territory [2].

## 2. A fifty years war between preservation of the archaeological heritage and land consumption

In the middle of the last century, for three times Agrigento has been affected by natural disasters (or rather, as described below, by anthropic / natural disaster): the landslide of 1944 which crippled the northern part of the Hill of Girgenti on which the city was concentrated, and that brought down the Bibirria Square; the landslide of 1966 that affected the western end of the hill, collapsing most of the Addolorata and St. Michael neighborhoods; the landslide of 1976 that affected the slopes of the hill of temples, near the temple of Juno Lacinia (this landslide has damaged one of the lintels of the Temple of Concord).

The first landslide would have to alert administrators and citizens of the fragility of the territory on which they have developed their city since the ninth century. Instead, in these years the city of Agrigento is growing exponentially: while in 1944 there were 15,889 rooms and the population had 37,814 inhabitants, the Building Program plans a city of 160,000 inhabitants (Agrigento today has fewer than 60,000 inhabitants) with building ratio index of 14.4 mc / sqm.

### 2.1 The first battle: declaration of significant public interest of the Valley vs the Program of building expansion

Until the postwar period, in Agrigento the building constructions were regulated by the Building Regulations issued in 1870; in the same year, Julius Schubring published archaeological studies that showed



Fig. 2: Agrigento, Valley of Temples. Temple of Concordia. Igor Mitoraj Statue.



clearly the consistency of the entire city of Akragas [3].

Following the landslide in 1944 and the war disasters, the city is included in the lists of damaged centers in 1945. In 1947 the city was included among the settlements to be consolidated by the Government. In the same year, the Superintendent Pietro Griffo begins to constrain the archaeological heritage under the Law 1089/1939. In synergy, since 1948 the Provincial Commission for the protection of the natural beauty starts compiling the list of heritage landscapes under the Law 1497/39.

In 1953 Agrigento is included in the lists of severely damaged cities; a Reconstruction Plan (Del Bufalo, Granone, Biuso) is drawn up in 1954. In the same year, the Provincial Commission for the protection of natural beauty presents the areas that should be subject of constraint. The plan is not approved: it must be changed according to archaeological and landscape restrictions. The constraints are greatly hampered at local level; the Mayor is not favorable to the delimitation of the area of the Valley of the Temples as it would limit the "expansion desire of citizens seeking the sun" [4].

In 1956 Agrigento is included among the municipalities obliged to adopt the General Plan, for the edited of which a national competition is launched. Pending approval of the Plan of Reconstruction and waiting for the General Plan, it is proposed the drafting of a Building Program (the real motivation is the undisguised intention to evade the urban plan as an instrument of control and guarantee of legality). The Building Program is drawn up in suspiciously short times by a commission formed by the leaders of political parties and approved in 1957 by the City Council: the most obvious feature is the excessive size of the population to be settled (160,000 inhabitants) and urban expansion (12,491.425 mc) thanks to the high construction indices. The battle in the construction of the city was punctuated by shots of home-builders; they built more and more tall buildings that have given the epithet of "city of tolli" to Agrigento. Although the archaeological monuments of the valley were protected by the archaeological restrictions, the building threat was likely to affect the landscape. For lack of law, the archaeological restrictions was linked only to the presence of very interesting findings; consequently, the landscape constraint is used to protect the ancient city and its surroundings. The Ministry of Education declared the Valley of the Temples "patrimony of significant public interest"; it submits to landscape protection 824 hectares and binds six lookout views with the D.M. n. 165 of 1957.

The landscape of the Valley is threatened but still not seriously endangered by the pressures of expansion building; since the second half of the 50s, at the national level, the intense bond of the ancient city with its historic landscape is recognized as a priority value; at the local level, however, priorities appear very different.

## **2.2 The second battle: Government interventions vs landscape constraint violations**

In 1958, Julius Schmiedt and Pietro Griffo publish the results of the photo-interpretation of the Valley of the Temples [5]; the studies represent the ancient topography of Akragas with a high degree of approximation. The exceptional extension of the ancient city was well known, but the city of Agrigento continues to grow at an exponential rate, and in a disorderly manner, turning its expansionist aims towards the Valley. The continued violations of the landscape constraint cause the attention of the Ministry of Education which, in 1961, proposed the preparation of the Landscape Plan of the Valley of the Temples.

In 1963 the Superintendent communicates to the mayor to order the suspension of buildings within an area subject to constraint; the illegal spreading to the point that, at the request of the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission, the President of the Sicilian Region requires a special inspection on the building. The Vice-Prefect Di Paola and the sergeant major of Carabinieri Barbagallo quickly put in evidence the many irregularities perpetuated in the municipality of Agrigento.

The following year, the landscape plan is drawn up (Berardi, Chiurazzi) and covers an area of 1,282 hectares. In 404 hectares it is forbidden to build, in the remaining areas, divided into five zones, the building rights were limited but is still allowed to build housing for 49,271 inhabitants. The plan would have to safeguard the landscape of the archaeological finds, but in fact allowed the building rights around the archaeological area, opening the way to an inevitable urban siege of the ancient city of Akragas and an irreversible impairment of contextual landscape.

Another blow against the archaeological area protection is dealt by the local administration who questions the perimeter of the area to be subjected to constraint: the provincial Commission for the protection of natural beauties, duly amended and supplemented, is forced to review the list of properties to be protecting. In 1965 the constrained area is reduced to 1,207 hectares and are eliminated two of the six points of view concealed by construction of buildings. At the completion of the procedure of the landscape plan, the constrained area resulted resized to 1,202 hectares and the lookout viewpoints are reduced to one. The City Council released in the meantime many building permits with the excuse of not being able to apply a constraint that was not certain.

The contestation of the bond and the continued erosion of its perimeter in favor of the interests of builders, justified by the desire not to exacerbate the housing crisis and unemployment, denounced in the background the serious cultural disconnect between the population and the territory in which it is established; government intervention has been seen as a top-down imposition of a constraint only subtractive

and proved all the more counterproductive; the Superintendent, responsible for constraint management, has proved deaf to the needs of the population, mute in the dialogue for the sharing of values, unable to urge the collective participation in the defense of the most precious values of the area. These were the main causes of bankruptcy protection and its rejection by society.

### **2.3 The third battle: speculation vs environmental fragility**

In the mid-60s, the malleable planning instruments and a waiver system, which did not take long to become a rule, embossed uneven shapes and contradictory directions to urban development of Agrigento: a ring of high density buildings, with well volumes double those already abundant provided by Building Program, now is surrounding the old city, almost completely obscuring the view of the medieval town and imposing itself as a backdrop of the Valley of the Temples; the slopes of the hill, despite their fragility and hydrogeological danger, are invaded by construction along all sides; the south of the valley is now definitively compromised by many construction “in derogation”; dangerous urban fringes protrude further south invading the Valley of the Temples and building episodes flourish even close to the most important archaeological monuments.

The landslide in July 1966, caused by excessive anthropic weight on a geologically fragile land, shakes national public opinion and the city government has put in front his responsibilities; by decree of President of the Republic (issued in 08.06.1966 and converted into the Law no. 794 of 28 September 1966), the Valley of the Temples was declared “archaeological area of national interest” and the constraint protection is extended from the north of the Valley to the waterfront of San Leone. The event exposes a situation of disorder and lawlessness such that the Government urges the Ministry of Public Works to establish an investigative Commission (Martuscelli Commission, to be followed by Grappelli Commission). The implementation decree provided by the Law 794/66, known as Gui-Mancini decree, is issued in May 16, 1968: in the archaeological area is forbidden to build buildings, in the areas around the construction is limited, because it was also necessary to constrain the areas not directly affected by the presence of archaeological monuments. The perimeter is under appeal by the President of the Sicilian Region in July 1968, requesting the annulment for unconstitutionality of Gui-Mancini decree because it invaded the regional jurisdiction. The application is rejected and the area is constrained.

The Gui-Mancini decree, integrated later by Ministerial Decree dated 10/12/1971 (called Misasi-Lauricella), has diligently fulfilled the task of tying a large part of the territory in order to safeguard the environment and landscape values, but it is configured once again as a top-down imposition of a system of prohibitions; restrictions have not been accompanied either by communication and participation measures or by prescriptions aimed at enhancing the regulated area. The constraint is therefore opposed by the local community because it limits the building in the most suitable area for the construction.



**Fig. 3:** Agrigento, Valley of Temples. Olympieion Ruins. In background, the city of Agrigento.

## 2.4 The fourth battle: the inscription into the UNESCO WHL vs the heavy artillery of the illegal building amnesty

Despite the impressive special regulatory deck set by the Government for the protection of the Valley of Temples and its context, the illegal building phenomena continue to affect also the restricted areas. Following the dramatic 'solution' to the problem of unauthorized building, introduced by the laws on amnesty land-use violations, in Sicily it is approved the Regional Law 37/85.

The law introduces, Article no. 25, a special clause to the Archaeological Park of Agrigento suspending requests for amnesty, for the buildings constructed within the restricted areas, until the enactment of a decree by the President of the Region.

The decree (called Nicolosi) was issued in June 13, 1991; on the thrust of the numerous requests for amnesty, the President of the Region reduces the park only to the area A (archaeological area) and defines the remaining areas such as completion and compared areas. The exclusion of these areas from the perimeter of the park, in fact, has allowed the rectification of numerous construction abuse [6]. In 1997 the Agrigento archaeological site is inscribed on the World Heritage List of UNESCO for the wide range of temples present, which makes up one of the most significant collections of art and monuments of Greek culture, considered among the most extraordinary Doric architecture from around the world; Akragas was one of the greatest cities of the ancient world, with its exceptional state of preservation, that testifies the Greek influence in the Mediterranean world and the interchange of human values.

Not even the lights of the UNESCO limelight, however, manage to win the local sloth and Archaeological Park continues its existence on the margins of the socio-economic dynamics. Although the park continues to attract an increasing flow of tourists, it remains marginalized from the life of the local population and fails to trigger development processes due to lack of infrastructure and tourist services.

## 3. The paradigm shift: social reconquering of cultural heritage

A few years from Nicolosi Decree, which seemed to have sealed the victory of the illegal building against the safeguarding of cultural heritage, the Sicilian Regional Assembly establishing a "regional system of archaeological parks" aimed at the full development of the archaeological heritage of Sicily (R. L. 25 / 93, art. 107). The article will be transformed into the more comprehensive Regional Law 20/2000. It is an innovative law, the only one in Italy destined for archaeological parks, which opens the way towards a paradigm shift towards alliance between archaeological heritage and territorial development.

The law introduces the institute of Archaeological Park as entity with "scientific, search, organizational, administrative and financial autonomy"; the Director of the Park coordinates the activities of protection, scientific research and enhancement; the Council of the park, which advises the Director, provides the scientific advice and representation of the local community; the Park of the Plan is established for the management of archaeological sites and landscape; enhancement of the archaeological heritage is implemented as a regional system.

### 3.1 The Park's resilience: Kolymbetra garden flourishes again

The administrative awakening is accompanied by a socio-cultural revival: on the initiative of the University of Palermo (Department of Arboreal Cultivation), in 1999 the FAI (Italian Environment Fund) and the Regional Department of Cultural Heritage conclude a Convention for the recovery and the enhancement of a small as a significant fragment of the alley of the Temples, the garden of Kolymbetra.

The artificial reservoir of Kolymbetra was an ingenious hydraulic work carried out by Theron in the V sec. B.C.; Diodoro Siculo describes it as "a large tank (...) the perimeter of the seven stages (...) deep twenty yards (...) where the Aqueducts Feaci flowed, a nursery of sophisticated flora and abundant wildlife" [7]. Finished the function of water reservoir, the site has been used for agriculture and has been cultivated until the 80s of the last century. Subsequently abandoned by farmers, both for aging of manpower and failure of generational replacement, both for the expropriation of archaeological areas that has severed the sense of belonging, it was transformed into a heap of brambles and was improperly used as landfill



Fig. 4: Phaeacians Aqueducts and Kolymbetra Garden.

The FAI receives the grant without charge of Kolymbetra for a period of 25 years for the realization of a project for the restoration, maintenance, promotion and tourist use. The landscape was reconstructed thanks to the



collaboration between the teams of the FAI and the Superintendency of Agrigento and old farmers and local laborers, custodians of the ancient and traditional cultivation techniques and water regimentation; it has been returned to the public in 2001, equipped with new paths of fruition, guided tours, dining area (Fig. 4) [8]. This is the first of rebirth sprout, blossomed thanks to the collaboration between public and private after half a century of hostility. It is the witness of the need to change from a constraint and repressive model imposed from above to a collaborative model and proposal to grant also opportunities for private initiatives.

### 3.2 A new planning tool: the Plan of the Archaeological Park

The Regional Law 20/2000 introduces a new active protection model for cultural heritage. It integrates the protection of the archaeological heritage by protecting the landscape, defining the enhancement as a key component to a policy of cultural heritage, promotes the participation of local communities and partnerships with private entities.

The Law also addresses the issue of management, relevant question for archaeological parks in Sicily, extend over large areas. The reference entity for the management is no longer an administrative office (the Superintendent) but the Director of the Park which are delivered wide margins of autonomy, and the instrument for land management is the Plan of the Park.

The plan is a tool comprehensive, multi-level, adaptable: it is therefore able to manage the resources and the dynamics of an area, to combine the conservative aims with processes of social, cultural, environmental and economic development.

The plan operates on a vast territory that includes: the archaeological areas, the environmental and landscape areas, the equipped areas. For each area are provided rules for safeguarding and enhancement, aiming for a productive use of the territories compatible with their vocations: the protection of cultural heritage prevails in the archaeological areas; land use compatible with the maintenance or recovery of the landscape is regulated in environmental and landscape areas; the use or the implementation of the services necessary for the enjoyment of the park is provided in the equipped areas.

In the specific case of the park of the Valley of the Temples, its archaeological and landscape nature raises the question of the need to prepare an adequate instrument for the protection and enhancement of a cultural complex, in which coexist archaeological sites of exceptional importance with farmland, residential, commercial, cultural and productive activities [9].

Because the site is inscribed on the World Heritage List, the Management Plan was drawn up in 2005, based on the analysis of the Plan of the Archaeological Park and the Guide-lines of the Landscape Plan of Sicily Region (2000).

The Management Plan manages the protection of the archaeological heritage and the local context; it aims to identify strategies to reconcile the requirements of the protection of archaeological heritage with the development and promotion actions. The general aims of the Management Plan are included in those of the Plan of Archaeological Park, as provided by the Law 20/2000; the latter is a more complex



Fig. 5: Pedestrian walkway provided by Pilot Project no. 1.

and comprehensive tool and, once approved, will replace the Management Plan. So it will be possible to ensure a more praying management of the Valley with a specific, implementation, management, promotion and systemic instrument, connected with the regional archaeological heritage of Sicily.

#### 4. Projects for the Valley of the Temples

The Regional Law 20/2000 created the conditions (organizational and financial autonomy) so that the park could take concrete actions to value and promote the archaeological and landscape heritage, involving public and private entities. The new targets are: to overcome the impasse in the bond intended as misappropriation of resources to the economic and cultural development; become a launching pad for qualitative growth for the region and the settled community.

##### 4.1 Pilot Projects

The plan for the Landscape and Archaeological Park of the Valley of the Temples is currently under investigation. The Plan contains seven Pilot Projects: the projects are tools of urban, environmental and landscape planning for the solution of urgent problems. The interventions involve the arrangement of roads, internal mobility of the Park and accessibility from the outside; the management of forests, olive groves and almond orchards; the recovery of rivers and waterfront; the establishment of an Eco-Museum of the Valley of the Temples.

Waiting for the Plan, some projects are in progress or have been made, in order to overcome the current difficulties. Among the projects, it was built pedestrian walkway overpass the highway that passes through the park, in the midst of the Temple of Hercules and the Temple of Jupiter (Fig. 5). It is a temporary work, which must be maintained until the completion of the project for the internal mobility of the Park [10].

##### 4.2 Patrimoine et Créativité Project

In 1991 the University of Palermo has established a decentralized university center in Agrigento; at the beginning was opened the “School for Technical-Scientific Operators in Heritage and Culture - Archaeological Field”. Subsequently, new degree programs were opened, including degree programs in Architecture, Archeology and Cultural Heritage (for operational reasons, these courses were closed in 2016). In twenty-five years, the University of Palermo has developed numerous studies on the knowledge of the cultural heritage of Agrigento and drafted many enhancement projects.

Among the most recent, is the project DO.RE.MI.HE. which ended in 2016 (scientific directors Maurizio Carta, Abdelhamid Fenina). The project was funded by the European Commission under ENPI CBC Program Italy-Tunisia. The project partners are: University Center of Agrigento (Italy), University of Tunis (Tunisia), UNESCO Chair for Cultural Heritage of University of Evora (Portugal); collaborators: University of Foggia (Italy), Institute of Historical Research of University of Gerone (Spain), School of Architecture of Barcelona *La Sala* (Spain) [11].

The project addressed the issues of preservation and enhancement of the archaeological heritage in a cross-border vision and in an innovative approach. The project is based on creativity: it is a complement to the conservation of cultural heritage and to the sustainable development, in search of still viable places but underutilized, cultural identities disconnected from the dynamics of development, fragile places but global renown .

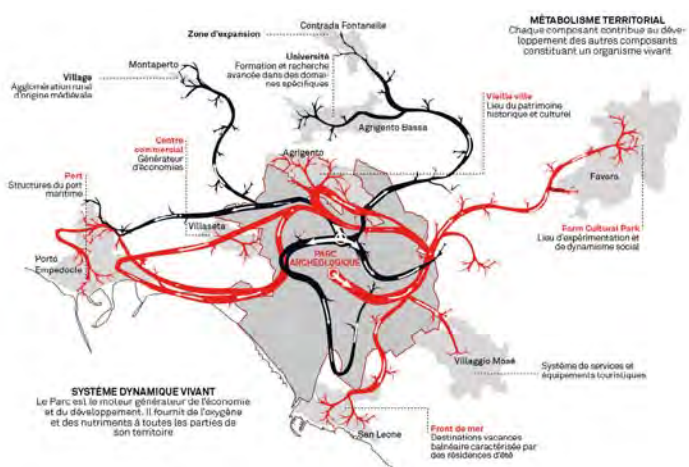
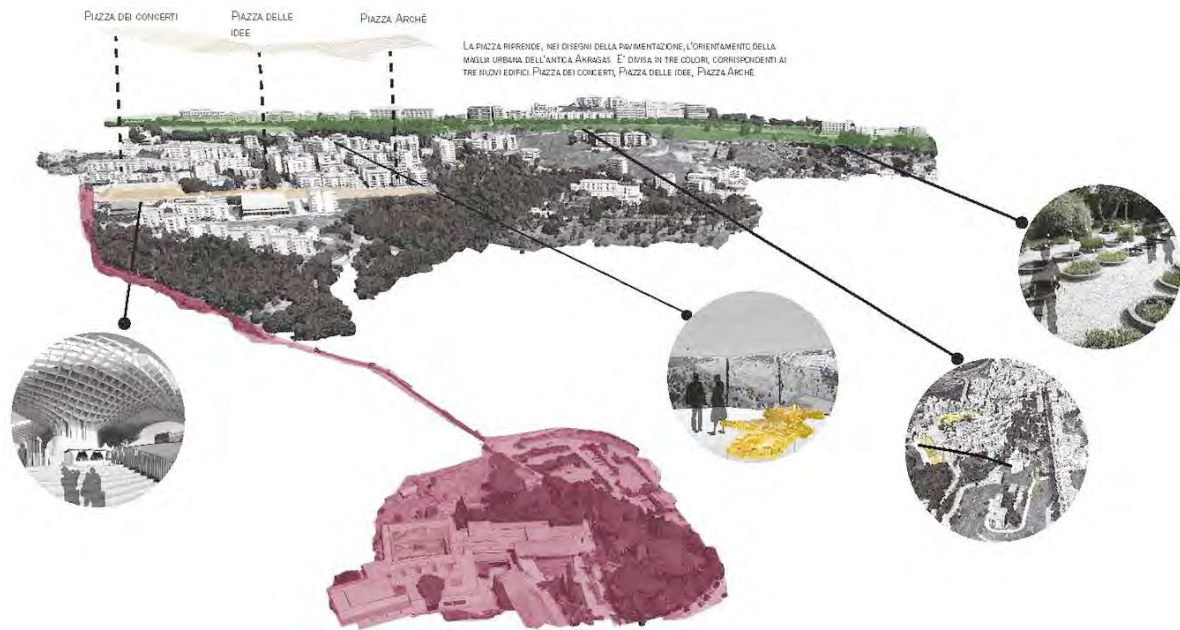


Fig. 6-7: Alternative mobility in the park. *Patrimoine et Créativité* Project, 2016.

Fig. 8: Scheme of “Territorial Metabolism” of the Valley of the Temples. *Patrimoine et Créativité* Project, 2016.





**Fig. 9:** Project of new functions and interconnection between the urban center and the park of the Valley of Temples. *Patrimoine et Créativité* Project, 2016.

With creativity, cultural heritage is reinstated within the region through new technologies and innovative solutions; all actions are sustainable and reversible, and link to the full involvement of local people to produce qualified cultural offer and to attract sustainable tourism.

The project developed a participatory dimension with the *Forums*: local political representatives, provincial and regional administrations, educational institutions, representatives of the category, professionals, Club Service operating in the territory and citizens were invited to participate in the work. Thematic tables were formed where were discussed the emerging themes of the Park and proposed initiatives from all subjects.

The project has also developed a project dimension with the *Campus*; the theoretical principles and proposals that emerged from the Forums were applied to two major case studies: the Valley of the Temples in Agrigento (Italy) and the Temple of the waters in Zaghouan (Tunisia).

The projects prepared for Agrigento addressed the following topics: traffic and sustainable mobility inside the park; thematic itineraries for the use of the various components of the park; facilities and equipment for cultural tourism; reconnection between the historic center, the contemporary city and the park; utilization and management of internal agricultural areas in the park; introduction of new functions compatible with the park; increased use of the archaeological heritage; system enhancement to the outside area of the park (Fig. 6-11).

### 4.3 Landscape Regeneration Project

The Archaeological Park has developed the Landscape Regeneration project with the cooperation of public and private partners: the University of Palermo (Department of Agriculture and Forestry, scientific manager Giuseppe Barbera), organic olive oil Company Ltd. Val Paradiso, the Garden Kolymbetra managed by the FAI, the Association of culture and activity station Kaos Railways and the winery Company Canicatti CVA. The project, divided into different initiatives, is based on the principles of sustainability and reproducibility: it is based on the recognition and promotion of the local multi-functionality of traditional agricultural landscapes, including in it not only the fundamental productive functions, but also the environmental, social, ethical and aesthetic functions.

Starting from the landscape as an element of creative inspiration, the project aims to recover the historical memory of ancient farming practices, to propose and develop them inside the archaeological park. In collaboration with leading companies in the food industry, the traditional high-quality products have been recreated through the use of agronomic practices of the ancient Sicilian tradition.

The added value of the project is to put together different initiatives, some already underway, which contribute together to the active protection, quality production and tourist use of the park. In particular, the initiatives supporting the following four axes:

#### 1. Exploitation of the environment:

- educational exhibition of the six hectares of the *Kolymbetra* garden-orchard, biodiversity depositary with old varieties of citrus, ancient knowledge, production, environmental and cultural values and material culture in the process of disappearing;

- educational exhibition *Goethe's Orto*, with the description of crops and agronomic techniques of end 700, as described by Goethe in his travel in Italy;
- construction of environmental route, along nearly 4 km from the Temple of Vulcan to the Temple of Demeter, which adds a thematic itinerary to the archaeological itineraries, now often limited to the Hill of the Temples;
- educational exhibition "The vegetable Patriarchs" between the monumental specimens of olive trees, carob trees and myrtles.

## 2. Agricultural Production:

- concession to private management of some of the agricultural soils of the park for the production of olive oil and wine of high quality, sold under the brand *Diodoros* which is part of the park's marketing. The initiative has been the appreciation and the emotional involvement of the local population for the rediscovery of traditional and local production methods; for private partners, the project was an opportunity for investment and economic development by creating jobs and generating a new economy;
- *Agri Gentium* project that has granted more than 152 hectares of the park agricultural land used for three types of partners to pursue different goals: social gardens; agriculture for the rehabilitation and reintegration of disadvantaged people; productive agriculture with high-quality products with *Diodoros* brand.

## 3. Environmental Education:

- construction of the *Germplasm Laboratory* for the characterization and conservation of almond, olive and pistachio germplasm;
- realization of the *Almond Living Museum*, a field-collectio that contains about 300 traditional variety of ancient culture of the almond tree and displays the traditional cultivation techniques;
- environmental education program *Oliver: from olive to oil*, involving schoolchildren; children are involved directly in the production process, from picking olives in the field to grinding in the mill

## 4. Recovery and enhancement of landscape:

- *Thousand Almond* project that allowed to be planted in the valley a thousand almond seedlings in order to contribute to the recovery of almond trees damaged;
- alternatively mobility with the recovery of the railway track, dating back to 1874, which crosses the park.

The *Landscape Regeneration* project won *Italian Award for the Landscape* in March 2017 and then brought up by the Ministry for Cultural and Environmental Heritage as candidate to represent Italy for the *European Council Landscape Award*.

The project has been awarded for being able to: maintain a harmonious interaction between nature and culture through the protection of the landscape, ensuring the traditional land use, preserving the artifacts and social and cultural expressions; support the lifestyle and economic activities in harmony with nature and with the culture of the communities concerned; maintain the diversity of landscape and habitat, conserving biodiversity; avoid inappropriate use of the soil; create opportunities for the public with recreational and tourist activities; create economic opportunities with the local agricultural products and tourist services.

## Conclusions: the battle must continue

The Agrigento archaeological park has lived, in his first fifty years, in a war fought between two opposing requirements: on the one hand, the need to protect the archaeological heritage of the ancient city; on the other hand, the economic and construction needs of the contemporary city.

The two requirements does not consist in a common policy for two reasons: on one side, the constraints on the archaeological heritage and landscape were imposed from above (from central government) without the participation of local government (which has opposed the bond continuously); the protection proved to be poorly effective and not suitable for the cultural enhancement and the socio-economic develop-



Fig. 10-11: Organic farming in the park. *Patrimoine et Créativité* Project, 2016.

ment. On the other, the interests of the local population have focused mainly on building construction. Moreover, urban expansion was not properly guided by appropriate urban planning, many buildings were built in derogation of the urban forecasts and many other illegal buildings were also built in the Valley. The main resource of the area is the archaeological park, but it was in fact ignored and insulted until the end of the twentieth century due to legal deficiency, entrepreneurial inability and cultural disinterest. This has caused huge disasters to the territory and cultural heritage: the contemporary city is chaotic and dysfunctional; the archaeological park remained marginalized from the socio-economic development processes. The case demonstrates that the damage caused to the cultural heritage by the social and cultural disasters can be, at times, more damaging than natural calamities.

The Regional Law 20/2000 has produced a paradigm shift in cultural policy. By assigning administrative and financial autonomy to the archaeological park, it inaugurated a new management model for cultural heritage. The aim is no longer exclusively the protection, but it is associated with the enhancement; private actors interact with the public authorities to promote activities and produce economies; the local population is involved in cultural heritage reconquest processes.

The resilience of the Valley of the Temples, whose beauty is as undeniable as imperishable over the centuries, has been able to re-emerge after half a century of adverse battles; it is flourishing thanks to a new collective appreciation of its historical, cultural and identity values. As in the pseudo-memories of Emperor Hadrian, "construire, c'est collaborer avec la Terre" [12]: the success of a policy is measured by his ability to recognize the values expressed by the territory, to exploit the full potential, to reinserting the cultural heritage in the circuits of contemporary life [13], to reduce the degradation and the risk factors and, above all, to activate the collective participation of administrators, citizens, researchers, experts, technicians and entrepreneurs to share development decisions and their implementation.

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