

Plant landscape of the archaeological site of Selinunte and its restoration: tribute to scholars and professionals who worked on it

F. M. RAIMONDO, G. CASTIGLIA, S. CICCARELLO, F. SCAFIDI, C. SALMERI

Dept. STEBICEF / Section Botany and Plant Ecology, University of Palermo, Via Archirafi 38, 90123, Palermo, Italy. E-mail: francesco.raimondo@unipa.it

Plant cover of the Selinunte archaeological site has been receiving special attention by various landscape ecologists, mainly with regard to its restoration. Since the Eighties, the then Superintendent to the western Sicily Monuments, professor **Vincenzo Tusa**, was concerned with the landscape restoration of Selinunte area, and the stabilization of the nearby mobile dunes potentially affecting the ruins excavation in this site, which would rapidly become the widest archaeological park of Magna Graecia thanks to its 270 hectares. Tusa began his work by involving one of the most renowned landscape architects at that time, professor **Pietro Porcinai**, Florentine by birth and leader of a School that left substantial cultural heritage and expertise in Italy. He appreciated multidisciplinary and collaborative approaches, including different specializations such as botany. The then director of the Botanical Garden of Palermo, professor **Andrea Di Martino**, also known for his studies on the flora and vegetation of some circum-Sicilian islands (Pantelleria and Egadi), was requested to cooperate to the project plan, which also involved the first author of this contribution. The vegetation of the area was analyzed and fisionomically typified. Main directives were provided to reconstitute the Mediterranean shrubland, partly covering the ruins, in the degraded or bare areas next to the accesses and the Acropolis. A list of appropriate native plants useful for the intervention was also provided. The results of these plantings, carried out under the direction of the knight **Ettore Paternò del Toscano**, who was an open-minded agronomist and expert of Sicilian gardens, are still visible in the Park to the unaware visitors and to those people, specialists included, who approach them. Hence, this represents a valid example of multidisciplinary methodology for reconstituting and rearranging the natural landscape features in a sensitive area; a good model to be repeated in other archaeological sites, as well as in the remaining degraded areas of the Selinunte archaeological Park.