## The Archaeological Sites: from excavation to "open-air" museum Cultural uses, preservation, environments

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## **ABSTRACT**

"History" has allowed that ruins from past epochs characterized the contemporary landscape over the following centuries. But when did they begin setting up an "archaeological site" within this environments?

This contribute provides, through the analysis of some emblematic cases, an historical reading of the main

events that have contributed to the modern concepts of "archaeological park" and "archaeological site", summarized below, and to the difficult relationship among their surroundings. Starting from 1700 the monuments of antiquity became a "material witness" and not only a model of inspiration: this was the end of the practice of re-using ancient architecture as building materials. Meanwhile, scientific archaeological research replaced the clandestine excavations, providing finds to be exhibited in new museums. The exceptional discovery of Herculaneum and Pompeii gave a new role to the architectural remains: they became materials to be restored, preserved and exhibited, also towards a non-specialist audience, in a kind of "open-air" museum with didactic purposes. Since 1800 archaeological excavations were focused on urban areas, at first in sparsely built-up areas, later in central zones. In Rome with this cultural climate, it began to feel the need of designing a route among ruins and, at the same time, reconnecting the "big central archaeological area" with the historical city. However, during the same years, the practice of "isolating monuments" also began, denying the relationship with the surrounding environment. This practice remains in use during the first half of '900: it determined a deep fracture (still unresolved) between the modern town and new and old excavated area. Lately, a new cultural use of the ruins and the protection of them together with their context determined the birth of the legal instrument of the archaeological park, a new concept of protection that allows you to combine all the modern instances of restoration and museology.

**KEYWORDS:** archaeological sites, preservation, environment, museology, restoration

The archaeological sites, characterized by the presence of the material ruins dating back to ancient civilizations, are protected as depositaries of historical, cultural and identity values which are able to instruct the communities.

This didactic role, which is widely recognized today, is a quite recent acquisition and it is the sign of that deep cultural change occurring between a modern "archaeological park" and a picturesque "landscape of ruins", that can be seen, in different forms, in the whole post-classical history.

The formation of "ruins" is tightly connected to a period of cultural break with the civilization that produced such architectural results. In the West, the deep break between the "pagan" and the

"Christian" world created a progressive "ruination" of the "demonized" ancient structures, which became abandoned buildings or places used as quarries or deposit of building materials (Casiello, 2008). The "empire system" collapse caused an extension of this phenomenon that had never occurred before but, actually, it was not conceptually different from other periods of great political and cultural transformations of human history, such as the end of the great pre-Hellenic civilizations or the progressive submission of the Oriental-Greek culture by the Roman army, who left "prostrated and in ruins" the towns that once were considered "boomtowns" (Cic., *Epistulae ad familiares*, 4-5-4 in Manacorda, 2007) and whose "nostalgic" ruins could be seen by the future generations.

Dating back from about the 15th century, after the birth of humanistic culture, such ruinae, considered as a study model for the new architecture, stood out even for their own intrinsic value, as to deserve an admired description in the first guides of the Urbe (Manacorda, 2007; Casiello, 2008) and a public declaration of their aesthetic value in the bull of Pope Pious II "cum almam nostrum urbem", in the same time of the mostly destructive interventions of the ancient monumental traces. In the next two centuries, there were no changes in the attitude towards the architectural buildings, while the appreciation for ancient works of art arose within the growing antiquarian market and the material data of the "Christian past" became testimony and relics of the past.

The change of attitude and the need of scientific methodology, that radically modified the way of living in the "century of the lights", contributed to define an increasingly and conscious separation between present and past. They also encouraged the recognition of the antique monuments as testimony, chronologically definable, and not exclusively as model of inspiration (Panza 1990; Giusberti, 1994).

The ruins became both the direct source for the acquisition of data for the study and evidences which had to be classified; this is the reason why they should be protected. This caused the end of the usual procedure consisting in baring the ancient architectural emergencies for the acquisition of building materials and the beginning of the first great excavations in poorly built areas (Palatine 1729) and extra-urban areas (Villa Adriana 1734).

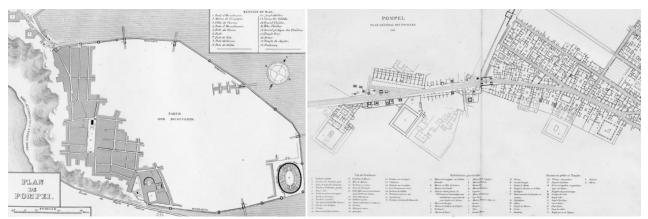
The protection measures of the ancient monumental patrimony, elaborated in such cultural time in the Pontifical State, already contained in an embryonic form and beside the applications for the "maintenance", the bases of the modern concept of "enhancement". In the edict of the cardinal Spinola

(1704) the "antiche memorie" had the role of "promuovere la stima della sua (Roma) magnificenza e splendore presso le nazioni straniere; come pure vaglino mirabilmente a confermare ed illustrare le notizie appartenenti all'Istoria". The "tourist interest", as we would define it nowadays, produced by the archaeological sites was already defined with punctual clarity in the edict of the cardinal Albani (1733): "sommamente importa il conservarsi/le opere/che si rendono più stimabili e rare per la loro antichità, la conservazione delle quali/porge incitamento a' forestieri" (Emiliani, 1978).

In Bourbon milieu, the orders emanated by the prince Corsini (1738-1747) evoked a first form of "archaeological park", with attention to landscape-environmental themes and to the restoration of the monuments, aiming at the maintenance and the study rather than the rarity of the single finding (Boscarino, 1987).

In Campania, the first systematic researches in archaeological field were launched in the extra-urban areas of Herculaneum and Pompeii. These were considered as a "public work" ordered by the sovereign and built using collective human and material resources (D' Ambrosio, 2002). They also replaced the

consolidated procedure of clandestine excavation (LVII pragmatic-1755, "against the excavations and the clandestine exports"). Initially the activities were designed for professionals and they were functional to the data and movable materials of unique quality which should be catalogued and showed in the growing museums. The first archaeological campaign season was led by the colonel Rocco Gioacchino de Alcubierre, and his assistant Karl Weber and then by Francesco La Vega. At the beginning the campaign focused itself around the area of Herculaneum (1738) and later, starting from 1748, in Pompeii area. Indeed, the activities of the campaign supplied the materials for the exhibition launched in the real residence in Portici and directed by Camillo Paderni, opened to the public on request. In this first phase, the excavations were made in areas which were very distant among them while the architectural buildings, when they were not demolished, were often reburied and the wall paintings and the mosaic paintings were removed from their original context. Nevertheless, the findings were never removed from their territorial context or exported, according to the initiative of the king. It arose the awareness about the existing bond among the material ruins and their original context, the focal center of the modern planning in archaeological area (D' Ambrosio, 2002; Manacorda, 2007). The singularity of the case, at the turn of the century, marked meaningfully the conceptual passage from "area of excavation" to "archaeological area": the echo of the discovery of the two urbes attracted both researchers from all around the world and a wide non-specialized public; as a consequence the usability of the places now was necessary. The foundations were laid for a new kind of "open-air" museums whose ruins represented the materials to exhibit and, for this reason, they must be restored and preserved, as for the movable findings (Manacorda, 2007; Dezzi Bardeschi, 2008). As Scipione Maffei already suggested in 1748, ("sgombrando e lasciando tutto a suo luogo la città sarebbe un incomparabile museo" in Vlad Borrelli, 2010), starting from 1780, under the direction of Francesco la Vega, the usage of re-burying ceased and the first operation of restoration and protection of the building began, as well as the first proposals of protection in situ of the wall paintings of the so-called "Surgeon's house". The procedure of the "detachment" was still used in the following century, but primarily with protective function. The excavations were made in topographic compartments (Figures 1-2), dispossessing lands, in order to visit the ancient city as a unit, even if the access was restricted to selected consumers and under royal concession (D'Ambrosio, 2002).



Figures 1-2: Topographic Plans of Pompeii in GELL W. SIR, GANDY J. P., 1827

The instances of conservation (Curzi, 2004), promoted from the beginning of the previous century, were actually fulfilled by a new government organization in the service of control and cultural promotion of the historic and artistic heritage (Edict of the Cardinal Doria Pamphili in the chirograph of Pious VII - 1802). The organization allowed also the beginning of a systematic extensive program of excavation in Rome (Jonsonn, 1986).

The digging operations and, consequently, the restoration of the monumental ruins in the town were concentrated in sparsely built-up areas: the zone of the Roman Forum, used for grazing, the Palatine and the location of the vegetable garden of Farnese family. Together with the works, the board of Pious VII had started, and that were stimulated during the years of the French occupation (1809-14), the demand of a new

"arrangement of the area" arose, aiming at both setting the archaeological ruins in an consistent itinerary and, in addition, looking for some kind of relationship with the stratified city (Treccani, 2010).

The solution, in Figure 3, (Jardin du Capitol) that the board of "Restablissement du Forum" proposed, resulting from the landscapist Berthault's planning, defined the perimeter of an archaeological area that, extending from the strata of the Mons Capitolinus up to the Coliseum, included also three triumphal arcs and the ruins of six temples (Insolera, Perego, 1983).

The park was settled in the urban scheme with ample tree-line straights, while the "public walk" complied with the rules of the so-called "mixed borders": geometric routes connected the different monuments, which are set in a scenic position within a mainly naturalistic landscape, rich of trees and "picturesque". The ruins still play the function of "aesthetical enjoyment" and of great emotional impact on the spectator (Matteini, 2009). The architects and restorers Valadier and Camporesi's primitive project instead paid more attention to the documentary value of the monument itself, with small arrangements of the area around the architectural monument, allowing the possibility of further investigations. It is relevant as the knowledges achieved in these same years in restoration field, in Roman environment, still maintain a certain reminiscence of the "romantic" taste of the ruins. An expression of a similar "contemplative" attitude of the ruins is the design of Royal Palace for the Athenian fortress (Simeoforidis,1991), designed by Schinkel (1834). Here the monuments, absorbed in a verdant naturalistic landscape, offered scenic perspectives of "green furniture" to the new monarchic residence. Not so far from these guidelines, it stood the first anastylosis (design of Basiletti and Valentini) with false ruined ornaments of the Capitolium of Brescia (Treccani, 2010).

The punctual intervention, in the greater build-up areas, aimed at "the isolation of the monument", through a series of demolitions, in order to obtain a better view of the monument. This is the case of the projects at the Pantheon, the Coliseum, the Capitol and Trajan's Forum, but also of many post-classical monuments. Such attitude, leading up to an unmotivated alteration of the landscapes involved, will be very common till the cultural acquisition of the concept of "environment" of the monument, of indirect restrictions or of preventive restoration, as Brandi would have said in 1977

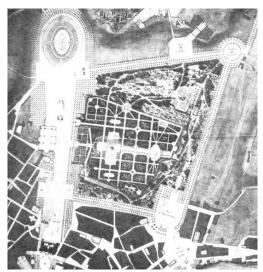


Figure 3: *Jardin du Capitole*, in INSOLERA I. - PEREGO F., 1983

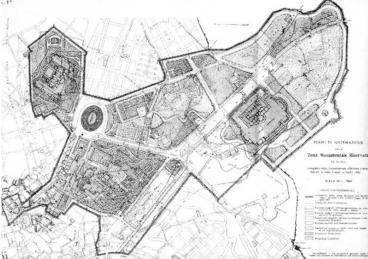


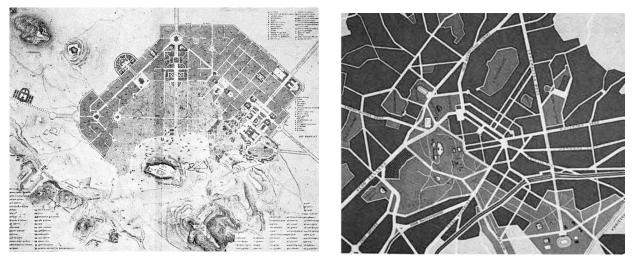
Figure 4: The Urban Plan for Rome of 1887, in BENEVOLO, L. 1985

The increasing role of a government control in the field of excavations and restorations (Emiliani, 1978), the improvement of a suburban control system of such activities (Edict of the cardinal Pacca - 1820; Law 2359/1865 about the expropriations; institution of the Superintendence for the excavations of antique in Rome and in the Roman Provinces -1870), the strong urban transformations over the town in the postunitary period and the resulting polemics, created the proper conditions for the enlargement of the areas designed for the archaeological studies, which had been already pointed out in the first decades of the century (involving the areas of the Thermal baths of Caracalla and the Ancient Appia in addition to the Roman Forum and the Palatine), and to the definition, for these, of new proposals of layout. The board charged of drawing up the new Town Plan, in 1871, promoted the creation of a wide unitary archaeological area (involving the Roman Forum, the Palatine, the Celio, the Aventine Hill and part of the Esquiline Hill) without the "modern constructions" and designed for "public gardens" that would have been used to surround the ruins and to create some buffer area constituting the area of the investigations yet to come (Benevolo, 1985). In 1887, on the initiative of the Minister for Public Education Mr. Baccelli, a special board was founded (Figure 4). The board was charged of the design and protection of the area, approved as a variation to the 1883 project. The new perimeter of the urban park, according to the design of the second halves the 19th century, and to the Sanjust project of 1909, gave to the valley of the Colosseum a significant intersection role. In the Jardin du Capitol (Figure 3) it was designated to be the backdrop for the excavations in the Forum. The amphitheater was connected, through green elements, to the Circus Maximus, which had not been dug yet, and the adjacent Thermal baths zone on one side, and, on the other side, to Venice Square, representing the scenery of huge transformations and the center of the modern city (Treccani, 2010). The investigations in the area of the Roman Forum started from 1899 and were directed by Giacomo Boni. The methodological echo of the job he carried out attracted the attention on some urgent problems of "preservation" of the archaeological buildings, whose reflections remain still valid (Boni, 1913).

The cultural state, that produced remarkable results in the archaeological research within the city of Rome, had a strong echo in other Italian towns. The need of defining a national identity, that Boito (1880) felt very strongly, and the incapability of translating it in a worthy architectural language aimed at matching the needs the "modern" city, affected the increasing interest for the "history of the places". The difficult dialogue between the "historical city" and the "modern city", underlined by the growing of urbanism as discipline, was also complicated by the appeals of preservation and "setting" of the ancient ruins. The increased interest for the monument led to the bending of the surrounding landscape, at the expenses of the post-classical stratifications which were sacrificed through the common isolation procedure, both for healthiness and urban scenography reasons. If in the capital the strong restrictions resulting from the ownership of the places restrained this kind of operations, in other centers the desire to resurface the ancient beauty of the classical monuments, from an unhealthy city, involved the loss of a wide part of the historic town, as it happened in Verona (Treccani, 2010).

In Pompeii the definition of the archaeological area as an "open-air museum", became a real matter in the decades between the two centuries, when people should have a ticket to enter the archaeological area, whose access was allowed until that moment only to a very limited public and only after the regal concession (Manacorda, 2007).

Even in Greece, the foundation of the neo-Hellenic state determined a renewed interest for the ancient monuments, which were the tangible testimony of the glory of the past. Similarly, in Italy, the numbers of excavation, promoted by Von Klenze, lead to the isolation of the monuments at the expenses of all the post-classical stratifications, removing a significant part of the history of the place (Filetici et al.,1991).



Figures 5-6: Urban Plans of Athens by Von Klenze (1834) and by Biris (1945), in SIMEOFORIDIS Y., 1991

The urban plan for Athens dating 1834 is also to ascribe to Mr. Von Klenze, shown in Figure 5. The plan represents a proposal standing between the conservative proposal of Kleanthis and Shaubert and the well-known transformation designed by Schinkel. It is interesting to note how the areas constituting the object of contemporary archaeological researches are "excluded" from the urban project. However, only a buffer area is set for these areas with different size in the three projects, from the maximum to the zero value, in order to underline the alienation of the places with respect to the contemporary town and, above all, to the future towns. In 1906, the beginning of "Beautification plan of the area surrounding the acropolis" represented an exceptional case involving the creation of an arterial road connecting the acropolis and the Theseion. Even the following plans designed by the urban planners Hoffman (1910) and Mawson (1918) had not a solution to the problem of the archaeological areas. In Athens, only through the excavation in the zone of the agora and through the 1945 town plan, drew up by Biris (Figure 6), the first well-framed proposal of a "Park of the ancient Athens" was achieved. The archaeological "garden" involved numerous sites dispersed all around the urban center (Simeoforidis, 1991).

During the first decades of last century, the strong interest of the Regime in the monuments of the ancient empire for propaganda purposes and the presence of a particularly active and dynamic intellectual elite, led in very few time to the definition of some behavioral and normative policy whose application guided the choices of the design of most part of the century, excepted for small variations.

The regulation, in the archaeological field, in the Charter of Athens (1931), shared by the international scientific community (which was indignant by the heavy interventions of Evans in Crete), and adopted, in the same year, by the Italian Charter, were often implemented in many interventions. On the other hand, the consistent action on the material ruins of the monument, defined in the five categories of Giovannoni (Giovannoni, 1946), didn't lead to a greater care for the surrounding environment. The demands of the traffic flows of the modern city affected the arrangements of the archaeological area and involved buffer areas smaller than the zones designed in 19th century. Often, there was no link between these areas and the city (Treccani, 2010) where they constituted an "empty" space located at a lower altitude (the socalled "pool effect"). In fact, the Carter still focused on the scenographic component of the architectural structures (Charter of Athens - VII. "La Conferenza raccomanda di rispettare, nelle costruzioni degli edifici, il carattere e la fisionomia della città, specialmente in prossimità dei monumenti antichi, per i quali l'ambiente deve essere oggetto di cure particolari. Uguale rispetto deve aversi per talune prospettive particolarmente pittoresche. Oggetto di studio possono anche essere le piantagioni e le ornamentazioni vegetali adatte a certi monumenti per conservare l'antico carattere"; Carta del Restauro Italiana- 6. "che insieme col rispetto pel monumento e per le sue varie fasi proceda quello delle sue condizioni ambientali, le quali non debbono essere alterate da inopportuni isolamenti da costruzioni di nuove fabbriche prossime invadenti per massa, per colore, per stile").

The town plan of Rome, drawn-up in the 1931(Commission of Governor Boncopagni Ludovisi), put an end of that idea about a great unique "archaeological urban park" (Treccani, 2010) which was the constant element of all the solutions proposed in the previous century. The need to convey the increasing traffic in the old town led to the definitive caesura between the central archaeological area of Roman Forum/Palatine and the area of Circus Maximus/ Caracalla Baths, where a great part of the green areas connecting the above-mentioned monuments, as indicated in the 19th century "archaeological walk", were sacrificed. Similarly, the archaeological area of the Imperial Fora, resulting from imposing demolitions instead of excavation (Leone, 2008), appeared fragmented by the necessity of a new scenographich straight between the Colosseum and Venice Square, suggested by the Regime propaganda required for it. (Insolera, Perego, 1983; Panella, 1989).

Beside the above-mentioned reasons, the abandon of the project of creating a unique great archaeological area inside the city should have been also left also because of the incapability in proposing a satisfying project. In Athens the first urban plans avoided the problem of the archaeological area leading to the fragmentation of the area, that cannot be restored after the modern enlargement of the town. In fact, it should be noted that despite of the ideological-theoretical claim for a "great archaeological park" in the two capitals, no project have been proposed in this perspective. The Italian law defines the "park" system as a natural landscape that is, as a consequence, an extra-urban landscape. Maybe Pompeii is the only Italian case of archaeological "park" within the town, but it should be noted as the modern city developed around the archaeological area in a different way from the multi-stratified Rome. Even in Kos, where the desire of founding an "archaeological city" was ratified in 1934, by the preventive plan of Petracco, the randomness of the digging trenches for prior investigation, caused that the more representative public buildings of the Hellenistic city, as the Western Gymnasium and the Agora, turned out to be disconnected within the urban fabric (Livadiotti, Rocco, 1996). Therefore it would be suitable, as regards the urban cases, and as Simeoforidis (1991) had already suggested, thinking to a "conceptual unit" among the areas, to a network or a system of sites, rather than to an utopian united archaeological area.

The separation between theory and practice was also felt in the years immediately before the world conflict. Excavation and restoration campaigns took place with the Augustan bi-millennial (1937-38) in the whole territory managed by the Governorship. The numbers of projects of anastylosis (Muñoz,1933) had scenographic purposes rather than conservative and didactic ones.

In the city of Rome, the most part of these restorations did not produced an appropriate reflection on the design of the area surrounding the ruins. Until today, some of these themes have not been faced in decisive way, (Ray et. al., 1989). An example is the archaeological area (the dynamic Muñoz had excavated) of Largo Argentina in Figure 7, whose depth is completely cut off from the context, or Largo Augusto Imperatore, where the design of Morpurgo is relatively complicated from the building of the new museum of the Ara Pacis and object of a recent design contest.

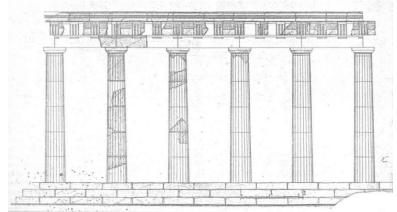


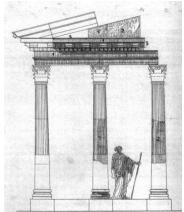
Figure 7: The Area of Largo Argentina in Rome, in Muñoz A., 1933

The partial reconstructions and locations in the buildings, in Campania and in Siceliotes territory, but also in the area of the Dodecanese are very huge (Livadiotti, Rocco, 1996).

In Kos, the arrangement of the extra-urban sanctuary of Asclepius led to its partial reconstruction. This reconstruction (arch. Paolini) involved both the terrace structures and the single emergencies, particularly the so-called "Roman temple" (De Mattia, 2012) in Figure 9. Similar interventions occurred also for the structures of the Odeon, Nymphaeum-Latrine and of the so-called "Roman House" in order to "cover" ruins of the mosaics and wall decorations. Small interventions of anastylosis involved a many monuments in the districts of "Porta Nuova" and "Città Murata".

In Rhodes the excavation of the scenographic terraced acropolises of St. Stefano, Lindos and Kamiros (Figure 8) was associated with the restoration activities integrating the architectural orders and the reconstructive restoration of the show buildings, as for the town of Rhodes (Laurenzi and arch. Paolini). As for the arrangement of Ialysos acropolis, the impossibility to carry out a similar anastylosis on the Late Classic structures, seems to be comparable in the reconstruction, following a chivalrous style, to the church of "Our Lady of all Graces" and in the construction of the attached Monastery (architect Petracco). The reconstruction of the fountain along the Southern slopes couldn't have the same effect of an emergency situated in the highest part of the plain.





Figures 8-9: Paolini's project of anastylosis in *Kamiros* (Great Stoà) and *Kos* ("Roman Temple") in LIVADIOTTI M., ROCCO G., 1996

The war events showed the theoretical and practical limits of the "scientific restoration", sanctioned in archaeological field by the rapid deterioration of the interventions made UP of reinforced concrete that instead seemed to have totally solved the problem of the additions.

In the mid-century, in Athens, the planning of the archaeological area by Pikionis involved only the landscape, shown in Figure 11. There wasn't a direct intervention on the monuments on which started to be visible the damages of the previous few decades restoration made by Mr. Balanos, but it was preferred to work only on the context (Filetici et al., 2003).



Figure 10: Griswold's project for the Agorà of Athens, in www.Agathe.gr



Figure 11: Project for the Acropolis of Athens by Pikionis, in SIMEOFORIDIS Y., 1991

In the period from 1953-1956, a strongly and contradictory planning also defined the order of the other great archaeological area of the city of Athens: the Agorà. At the same time of the "arrangement of the area" by the landscape architect Griswold (Figure 10), the reconstruction/museographical project of the Stoà of Attalos the II, in contrast with the conception of "open-air museum" of the site, was carried out. In this regard, the architect Kostantinidis strongly claimed against the construction of a museum since he wished the construction of a "protective roof" for the findings (Simeoforidis, 1991).

The 1964 Venice Charter became the manifesto of the demand of new guidelines to the restoration as discipline (Carbonara, 1997). The document established the use of materials which were durable and compatible with the structures (art. 10). In addition, it also provided a very useful starting point for the modern definition of archaeological area/park such as: the search of an "equilibrium" with "the surrounding environment"(art.13); the didactic purpose in implementing the activities "that could facilitate the understanding of the restored monument without any distortion of its meanings" and "a prior" condemnation of "any reconstruction", reaffirming that the integrations, in case of anastylosis, had to be minimal (art.15), as indicated in the 1931 charter.

Conscious of the values of the cultural goods, new demands for protection were growing in that period. In the years of a great increase of "tourism of mass" and of the sites "use" (Melotti, 2008), the need for protection arose. In particular, precautionary measures concerned the admission of the visitors and also the concept of protection in a wide sense and not only as direct intervention on the monument.

The main purpose of Minissi's project about the Archaeological Park of Selinunte was to "isolate" the ancient architectural structures in an ample space destined to green area deleting the driveways and to protect them from the strong building speculations of the 70s of last century. The creation of one natural "barrier", that enveloping the perimeter of the area cut it off from the surrounding environment, would allow visitors to immerse themselves into a "walk" between the archaeological ruins and the different refined trees (Ranellucci, 1996; Dezzi Bardeschi 2008).

The assumptions that "everything is landscape", achieved during the International Conference on Landscape held in Florence in 2000, synthesizes the gradual awareness learned in the second half of 20th century concerning the landscape and environment protection and the importance of place identity.

The Archaeological and Landscape Park of the Valle dei Templi, founded as autonomous corporate body in 2000, perfectly embodies the most recent leanings in protection and "appreciation" themes: the monuments and the excavation, integrated in their environmental context, are showed to the visitor according to a real scientific project which let the visitor understand easily the data of matters. In addition to the didactic and conservative purposes there are contemporary functions and equipments, that both offer an incentive to the tourist and allow a sustainable economic management of the site. In fact, Agrigento represents the reference model of the recent guidelines for the creation of an archaeological park.

The definition of an area within a "park" perimeter makes easier the protection activities concerning everything the area contains, allowing a logical and general "interpretation of the places" (Pierdominici, Tiballi, 1986). Actually, it's the most coherent expression of the modern concept of archaeological area. Nevertheless, the concept of "enhancement" is always and rapidly changing together with the life of the archaeological monuments. The role of "ruins", from their formation to their inclusion in the "parks", has incessantly changed and it will certainly keep on changing.

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