



Investing in your future!

www.italiamalta.eu



PANORAMA Italia | Malta

Operational Programme Italy-Malta 2007-2013



IN THIS FIFTH ISSUE

The July-September-2014 issue of our newsletter opens with **the Lithos project** which concerns the study, restoration, establishment and maintenance of one of the most characteristic and ancient building techniques employed in the Sicilian-Maltese area: *stereotomia*. From this ancient architectural-building technique which involves geometrical knowledge in the drafting and cutting of blocks of stone together with their assembly into complex structures we continue onto **the Archaeotur project** which deals with conservation and promotion of our common cultural heritage by putting some of the cross-border archaeological sites on the map. We are promoting not just the past but also the future with **the Waterfront project** which is involved in re-qualifying urban areas touching the straight of Sicily. This unity of intentions, competencies and resources has been confirmed in **the presentation of the 2014/2020 programming**.

>> THE VALUE OF CULTURE

amidst antique building methods and archaeological sites

the **LITHOS** and **ARCHAEOTUR** projects

>> RE-QUALIFYING HARBOUR AREAS

for a green, fruitful, tourism development of the territories involved

in the **WATERFRONT** project

AND FURTHERMORE...

>> THE ITALIA MALTA CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME 2014-2020

Investing in innovation and research, creating and strengthening enterprises, safeguarding the environment and the efficient use of resources.





The historical architecture of Sicily and Malta has **stereotomia** and similar building techniques in common, as well as the work of architects and masons who spread their knowledge across the Mediterranean. Investigation into this field has rediscovered a tradition stretching back hundreds of years which can be applied to new buildings but also to the recovery, re-qualification and restoration of historical town centres and areas of quality in Sicily and Malta.

And on this premise, the **Lithos** project has created an **International research centre on stereotomia and stonework** which acts as a collector of field, scientific, and popular research work in this area. The centre is housed in Palazzo La Rocca, one of the 18 UNESCO heritage sites within the Ragusa territory, with a complementary unit in Malta.

At present, the Centre has a **Specialised library** with several manuscripts and prints about stereotomia and a **Specialised research laboratory** working on understanding the physical-mechanical properties of stone and in diagnosing the degradation to which it is predisposed. The expertise of the laboratory personnel and the acquired instrumentation has enabled the exchange and transfer of competences with Maltese masons and apprentices

involved in the restoration of one of the façades of the Palace of the Inquisition in Birgu, in which the stereotomia techniques studied within the Lithos project were put into practice.

Furthermore, an area of the centre has been reserved as the **Stereotomia Museum**, the first in Sicily, where drawings, mouldings, models, fragments and iconographic architectural remains exemplifying the use of stone are exhibited.

THE PARTNERS: Provincia Regionale di Ragusa (lead partner); Università degli Studi di Palermo - Dipartimento di Architettura; Regione Siciliana - Centro Regionale per la Progettazione, il Restauro e per le Scienze naturali ed applicate ai Beni Culturali; Heritage Malta.



STEREOTOMIA

Stereotomia is a set of geometrical knowledge and techniques in the drafting and cutting blocks of stone and their assembly into architectural structures (walls, vaults, arches, etc.) alternative to building techniques based on small stone conglomerates and brick.

The word **stereotomia** (from the Greek στερεός "solid, hard" and τομή "cut") was first used in 17th century France, though the stereotomia technique can be traced back a few thousand years before that. In fact, the Egyptians left traces of the building technique in illustrations on papyrus.



LITHOS - Project for setting up an international research and study centre for stereotomy, its restoration and the experimentation of sustainable building solutions



ADMIST HISTORY, TECHNIQUES AND MODELS

THE STEREOTOMIA MUSEUM.

The museum is housed in the splendidly restored Palazzo La Rocca in Ragusa Ibla and exhibits a series of drawings and models of stereotomia work built in south-eastern Sicily and Malta.

Among the models exhibited one can find the cupolaed structures of the cinquecento-chapels of Comiso (St. Francis), Militello (St. Anthony), Modica (St. Mary of Bethlehem), and Scicli (St. Anthony). Further three-dimensional pieces deal with some solutions for helical staircases, such as the open-well staircase of Santa Maria dei Miracoli and the oval one at San Mattia al Noviziato, both in Palermo; the double spiral staircase in the Teatini complex in Siracusa and the oval vis-de-Saint-Gilles staircase at Verdala palace in Malta.

Other models in the museum rooms point to complex solutions for arches to be found in villa Nicolaci and the town hall in Noto.

Through the analysis of such works, both in Sicily and Malta, the workmanship and particularly advanced technical ability in dressing the stone, its sheer cleverness become clear.

Hence, this exposition allows the public at large to sense the quality and characteristics of Sicilian and Maltese historical buildings — such as the hemispherical, stone, cupolas or the spiral staircases — this helps us understand the differences and the geometrical variety of the past which is essential to keep the memory alive and is the basis to remould a modern, sustainable building experimentation.



Web site:

www.progetto-lithos.eu

Lead partner: Susanna Salerno
Provincia Regionale di Ragusa
info@progetto-lithos.eu

Stereotomia: a shared technical-cultural tradition to preserve and maintain together.



PROMOTING AND CONSERVING CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE through the development of relatively “minor” archaeological sites, in regard to the great cultural attractions to be found in Sicily and Malta.

The **ARCHAEOTUR** project has guaranteed better management, development, and tourism promotion of the archaeological sites in the Iblei area and Malta which were also subject to protection and conservation within the project. Thanks to these actions it has

been possible to turn these sites into potential cultural tourist attractions for these two areas thus generating the opportunity of socio-economic development in terms of numbers of visitors and in lengthening the holiday season, apart from rediscovering the roots of a common cultural identity.

The **ARCHAEOTUR** sites were regenerated and improvements made for access, such as repairing paths and dry-stone walls, the building of wooden walkways and fencing and the setting up of a visitor welcome centre with the virtual reconstruction of the archaeological surroundings.

The usability of the regenerated sites has enabled the planning and realization of common — thematically distinct — heritage trails containing maps and trail types at the Ragusa, Santa Croce Camerina, Rabat and Mosta sites.

The partnership has placed a great deal of attention on the fruition of the heritage trails by children and the diversely able person creating learner friendly educational programmes through ICT and multimedia supports.

THE SITES INVOLVED: Catacombs, hypogea (underground chambers) and burial places of Late Antiquity at Ta’ Bistra (Mosta); St. Augustines (Rabat); Cava Celone, Trabacche, Cisternazzi and Donnafugata (Ragusa); Mezzagnone, Pirrera and Mirio (Santa Croce Camerina).

THE PARTNERS: Mosta Local Council (lead partner); Heritage Malta; Malta Tourism Authority; Rabat Local Council; Comune di Ragusa; Soprintendenza ai Beni Culturali di Ragusa; Comune di Santa Croce Camerina; GiriTravel s.r.l.



ARCHAEOTUR IN NUMBERS

9 archaeological sites regenerated with improved access

4 heritage trails

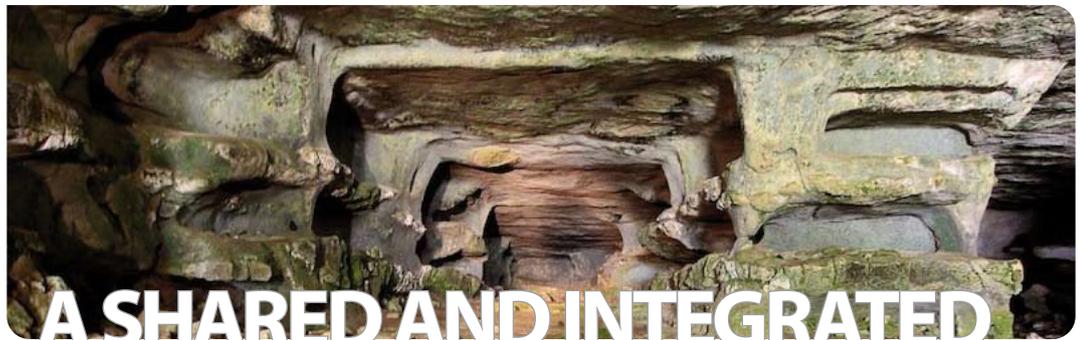
2 ICT kiosks

25 information boards and tourism sign posts

1 3D video showing a virtual reconstruction of the archaeological surroundings



ARCHAEOTUR - Integrated management and promotion of archaeological sites in Ragusa and Malta



A SHARED AND INTEGRATED TOURISM CIRCUIT.

Web site:

www.archaeotur.eu

Lead partner: George Cassar
Mosta Local Council
george.cassar@um.edu.mt

Regenerating and promoting nine archaeological sites in Sicily and Malta to spur on cultural tourism.



ARCHAEOTUR has defined an **Integrated Tourism Circuit** that goes through the communes of Ragusa and Santa Croce Camerina in Sicily and those of Rabat and Mosta in Malta so as to promote the so-called “minor” archaeological sites — that have already been subject to regeneration and user accessibility — falling within the Ragusa provincial district and the Maltese state. Areas that share a common cultural heritage made up of churches, hypogea and catacombs from Late Antiquity and Early Middle-Ages (circa III-XI c.).

The importance and wealth of this heritage has led to its definition as an **eco-museum** that is, the spatial impact of a given historical community that proposes as “museum artefacts” not only objects relating to daily life but also the landscape, archi-

ecture, know how, and the oral testimony of traditions. So as to offer combined, optimised tourism services — planned in such a way as to respond to the diverse requirements — a fundamental role was played by tour operators and organizers, from meeting planners to professional congress organizers (that is, local tourism intermediaries) whose activities are closely tied to complementary hospitality services such as restaurants, shopping, and tour guides.

The **Integrated Tourism Circuit** is the positive result of having engaged (through the partnership) the cross-border territories in all economic, social, and cultural aspects of the project which, through the development of a shared cultural heritage, which stimulated and sustained the tourist flows in the areas involved.



THE DISSEMINATION OF GOOD PRACTICES and the harmonization of territorial planning techniques of the common coastlines, based on the exchange of cross-border experiences between Malta and Sicily.



THE WATERFRONTS

The WATERFRONT project has favoured the integration between Sicily's western coast and Malta to develop, through sustainable means, the cross-border resources of the area from a cultural, economic, and social point of view. The exchange of experience and dissemination of good practices among the administrations involved has led to the harmonization of territorial planning techniques favouring the evaluation at a national, regional, and local level and thus strengthening the implementation of environmental policy and programmes of risk prevention. The evaluation and re-interpretation of the risks and opportunities offered by the dynamics of the transformation of the coastal areas under survey was the starting point of the project which considered the waterfront a valid driving force for the sustainable development and innovation of territorial systems.

The **waterfronts** are strips of urban land in direct contact with a body of water, or closely connected to it, such as towns on the sea or a lake or crossed by a river. Areas for which the water represents a resource to be exploited also from a green viewpoint.

The **Waterfront project** aims, therefore, at the re-qualification of these areas and specifically those in the province of Trapani and Palermo and that in La Valletta. A re-qualification that starts with an evaluation of the risks and the potential for transformation of the cities and relative territories and

by an analysis of the transformations in act. The partnership — the regional provinces of Trapani (lead partner) and Palermo, Palermo Town Council, the University of Palermo and the University of Malta — has thus been able to define an **atlas of prospective and contrasting scenarios** to harmonise territorial planning techniques and for the ecological, productive and integrated tourism development of the areas involved.

Web site:

www.waterfrontproject.eu

Lead partner: Deborah Aureli
Provincia Regionale di Trapani
daureli@provincia.trapani.it



WATERFRONT - Water And Territorial PoliciEs for IntegRation of multisectoRial DevelOpmeNT

2014/2020 PROGRAMMING



Commission by the Sicilian Region – Planning Department (Managing Authority).

The programme is based on three priority axes:

- 1) research, technological development, and innovation** that foster the specialization in some technologically advanced sectors such as electronics, electro mechanics, micro and nano systems, the biotechnologies and applied research into human health;
- 2) cross-border competition** to enhance the creation and strengthening of

businesses working in environmental protection, marine and land security, cultural heritage, and the quality of life and health of its citizens;

3) environmental protection and efficient use of resources that contribute to the protection and safeguard of marine and terrestrial biodiversity within the territories of the two islands and promote actions to mitigate the effects of climate change and to face scenarios of natural and man made risks to the area, placing particular attention to those coming from the sea.

FOCUS Since July 2012, a work group made up of the Managing Authority, the Funds and Programmes Division, the Ministry for Economic Development and the Joint Technical Secretariat has worked on the Cooperation Programme. The group has discussed and shared the principal themes for future cooperation between Sicily and Malta and has involved in the various public consultation processes both generic partners (public/private actors and citizens generally) and qualified partners (competent authorities and actors in programming operations). This combined and multilevel approach has assured the final draft of the programme that can be seen at www.italiamalta.eu

