

Presentation

What initially could have been a simple opportunity to bring together the top of Mediterranean botany in a symbolic site, rich in history and memories, like that of Selinunte, turned out to be a good opportunity to present and discuss not only systematic and biogeographical topics but also themes closely related to the nature and landscape of archaeological areas. This topic, in general, is often undervalued and mostly neglected because mainly the historic and archaeological aspects are discussed in these places, as if the context was secondary, while it is not only essential but, most of the time, it was the origin of the choice of the place where founding a city, a colony. Reconsidering the approach to the study of an archaeological site, mostly in a place as Selinunte, one of the greatest ancient cities and, in spite of its peculiar ruins, today among the sites that, better than others, save this close connection between nature and artifice, must be the beginning of a new trip towards Knowledge, aiming at all the elements that well characterize this place. I think that this one can be the opportunity for a new reading of the context and of the wonderful relicts of the primordial landscape which still survive and which are waiting to be revealed yet, hoping in a new impulse for this kind of study. Therefore an important occasion also for the Park that in two days of intense scientific work has been able to record a qualified presence of scholars of different nationalities. The botany declined according to the problems suggested by the hosting context was therefore a useful occasion for guests and for the host location.

Combining culture, nature, art and science together is not an everyday thing. Trying to do it in a historical context like the one offered by the archaeological site of Selinunte has been a unique occasion of its kind.

As director of the regional archeological Park, I am grateful to OPTIMA to have chosen to organize a special and focused scientific meeting in Selinunte, Sicily. The Symposium, which was convinced of its support, was also an unrepeatable opportunity to show and discuss the problems of landscape recovery in the Park area; at the same time a propitious circumstance to present to the scientific community the results of the studies started on its botanical heritage conducted in collaboration with botanists of the University of Palermo; qualified moment of results verification of the interventions of recovery and redevelopment of the host landscape site - carried out since 1975 - following an approach then recommended to the Superintendent former, professor Vincenzo Tusa, from the botanists Di Martino and Raimondo. I am particularly grateful to him to have continued to direct and advise on the path to follow both to extend the landscape redevelopment project to the entire archaeological area, and also for giving us greater awareness of the floristic and veg-

estational heritage present within it. Our friend Franco Maria Raimondo deserves further thanks for the qualified opportunities and for the scientific support given to this Direction when it was necessary to solve the problems, even in a legal way, of an inappropriate use of the territory of the Park not always dictated by legitimacy and not always endorsed by past administration actions based on impartiality and transparency.

It is my duty here to thank all those present at the Symposium, some of whom have seats far from our Island, and all the institutions and those who have made it possible to host the participated scientific meeting in the ancient city of Selinunte and, today, to publish and disseminate the relevant scientific contributions. Among these, I thank in particular the Regional Administration of Cultural Heritage and Sicilian Identity for having granted the necessary resources. Finally, let me give a grateful thought to our Councilor, Professor Sebastiano Tusa, for his willingness and for the attention he has always given to Selinunte and for having kindly – as he always uses - conveyed the greetings of the entire Regional Government at the Symposium.

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