

## **Design on Archaeological Sites between Enhancement and Conservation. The Museographic Project of the Acropolis of Mount Filerimos (Rhodes)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The current appearance of the archaeological area of Mount Filerimos, in the island of Rhodes, is the result of design by Rodolfo Petracco, made during the Italian occupation of Dodecanese. The site, formerly the acropolis of the ancient Ialysos, has many stratifications: a pre-hellenic cult is attested since IX cent. B.C., while the remains of architectural structures are dated between the VI cent. B.C. and 1930s, when the re-built church of "Our Lady" was enlarged with the monastery.

Purpose of the project illustrated in this paper is to improve the physical and cultural use of the site and facilitate its conservation, through a more appropriate use of the architectural structures.

The project, based mainly on historical knowledge and on the critical reading of the archaeological site, includes two different forms of museography. An "open-air" museum, designed to ensure accessibility to different categories of users, allows to visit the main archaeological remains with safety for users protecting the structures. The new access walkway to the church replaces the current and precarious path on the east foundation of the late-classic temple of Athena. Part of the design is the lapidarium set up with Early Christian and Byzantine architectural fragments. It is located close to the structures of the multilayered Church, to emphasize the connection between exposure and environmental context. The typological exhibition promotes understanding by the visitor and, at same time, the conservation of the blocks. A "traditional" archaeological museum is set up with the votive offerings to the ancient deity of the acropolis, which are preserved at the moment in the city of Rhodes. The exhibition is located in the monastic structures, strongly degraded after almost a century of abandonment. The new use of the monastery doesn't alter its original image, respects the architectural character of the building and preserves, where is possible, its furnishings.

**KEYWORDS:** archaeological site, Ialysos, museography, "open-air" museum

## 1 INTRODUCTIONS TO THE ENHANCEMENT AND CONSERVATION INTERVENTION

The enhancement of the archaeological heritage requests an incisive approach of the designer because there is the necessity to reconcile the conservative needs with the requirements of exposure and fruition. Consequently, the design issues require the identification of principles, methods and strategies that address the intervention to the preservation of the monuments along time through the adoption of culture tools and technological solutions according to the identity of the place.

In archaeology, the resolution of the priority conservation problems together with issues of stormwater management, lighting, security, fruition and open-air museum should lead the design to a synthesis which is not schematic and repetitive but rather which considers case by case and the relationship with the past. Therefore, it is necessary a prior and in-depth historical-critical analysis of the monuments and their context to facilitate the identification and justification of the design choices and of the purposes according to the features of the site. Time after time we must reflect upon the principles and techniques of preservation and restoration: the technical aspects of the construction, the material composition and the structure of emergencies as well as the themes of technological innovation, energy sustainability and economic feasibility assessment of the intervention.

The design experience, whose aims are the conservation and enhancement of the archaeological area of Mount Fileremo, in the region of Trianda, a few kilometres from the capital Rhodes, requires the resolution of critical issues: physical and cultural accessibility of site and forms of preservation and presentation of the ruins (Demauro T., Gotta F., 2013).

The research and study of the site have been elaborated by Italian School of Archaeology at Athens since 1985, in particular, Antonino Di Vita, director of the school, committed the study of the temple of Athana Polias to the architects G. Rocco and M. Livadiotti (Livadiotti M., Rocco. G. 1996; Livadiotti to be published), the research of the Doric fountain to the architect G. Ortolani and the survey of the votive offerings to M. A. Rizzo, M. Martelli, E. Zervoudakis (Martelli, 1988). This work takes up the research activities of the Italian Archaeology in the early 20th century in the Dodecanese since they were suspended by the Second World War (Gerola G., 1914; Pernier L., 1914a; Pernier L., 1914b; Della Seta A., 1919; Maiuri A., 1915; Maiuri A., 1921a; Maiuri A., 1921b; Maiuri A., 1923; Maiuri A., 1924; Jacopi G., 1927; Maiuri A., 1928; Jacopi G., 1931; Laurenzi L., 1937). This study allows the knowledge of the historical stratifications used as the matrix of the intervention with the morphological and landscape peculiarities of the site.

The current perimeter of the archaeological area, located on the acropolis of the Fileremo, is the result of the area arrangement by Rodolfo Petracco for the Italian Government, during the military occupation of Dodecanese. The oldest stratification consists of different phases of the temple, dedicated to Athana Polias and Zeus. A cruciform baptistery, in the Southeast of the temple, with the surviving foundations of the narthex, into the West of the temple, and the ruins of the pavement to the South, are the remains of a Paleochristian three-aisled church (Balducci, 1931; Ferraris di Celle, 1988). This last raises partially on the area of the temple re-using a large number of blocks. In the Eastern side of the temple there is the “Nostra Signora di Tutte le Grazie” church. Its present appearance is the result of the restoration of 1931, which caused the reconstruction of the front and of the belfry and the building of the monastery of the Franciscan order, behind the Church (Martinoli, Perotti, 1999). Nearby the present entrance of the archaeological area there is St George Chostos church (1000-1100 A.D.). The chivalric castle (Gerola, 1914) and the three-aisled apsidal church are on the plateau, while there is a Doric fountain on the slopes. These architectural structures are not included in the enhancement intervention design, focused on area already delimited by the Italian Government.

Nowadays, such architectural heritage, compromised by human activities and natural degradation, characterizes an extended archaeological site with different stratigraphic layers simultaneously visible which require some priority considerations such as guarantee the cultural fruition without compromising the conservation of the archaeological structures. The design intervention starts from a clear and corrected reading of historical layers involving the excavations and the restorations of the last century and the building interpretation of ratio of the ancient organisms. The aim is to redefine a complex historical and

archaeological system characterized by heterogeneous and multi-millennial archaeological structures in a context modified by the Italian intervention in the Thirties. (T.D.)



Figure 1: Mount Fileremo, acropolis of Ialysos: archaeological area

## 2 THE CONTENTS AND PURPOSES OF THE DESIGN

The organicity of the site is achieved through the creation of relationships between the historical pre-existence features and the geo-morphological and landscape characteristics of the site. So it becomes an “open-air” museum and archaeological park. Based on the Italian legislation in force, “*Archaeological Park is a territorial area characterized by archaeological evidences and coexistence of historical, cultural, landscape and environmental values, enhanced under the artt. 6 and 111 of the legislative decree 42/2004, and based on scientific and management project*”. The definition, contained in the “*Linee guida per la costituzione e la valorizzazione dei parchi archeologici*” (“*Guidelines for the constitution and enhancement of the archaeological park*”), adds planning and management references to the contents already expressed in the art. 101 of the Codice dei Beni Culturali e del paesaggio - *legislative decree 42/2004 (Archaeological Park means territorial area characterized by archaeological evidences and coexistence of historical, landscape and environmental values, equipped as “open-air” museum)*. The importance of didactic role of this form of exhibition, implied in the most recent normative and declared at the end of the art. 94 del T.U. d. lgs. 490/1999 (“*equipped as museum so facilitates comprehension by reasonable routes and didactic material*”), entails the necessary conservation of the heritage. The purpose is different from the idea of archaeological garden, elaborated in the 15th and 16th century, where the ruin (true or built) is the element of design as well as the plant and where the scenographic and aesthetic role is preeminent. Accordingly, the design of the conservation and



enhancement of the archaeological area of Mount Fileremo develops the following themes: no insertion of objects unrelated to the surrounding landscape, respect of the image altered by the Italians but yet historicised and re-use aiming at the conservation.



Figure 2: The design of enhancement and conservation of the archaeological area of the acropolis of Ialysos

In this view, the itinerary of the visitors, composed through the identification of the existing route, facilitates the comprehension of the chronological sequence of the architectural structures. The validity of this network is warranted through the elimination of architectural barriers and situations of inadequate safety for the tourists and the identification of an alternative and more accessible route for persons with reduced mobility.

The legibility requirement of the exposure in the site is achieved through didactic panels which become fundamental supports for the communication of the important features of the remains.

The insertion of modular gangways for the passage from the oriental foundations of the temple to the “Nostra Signora di Tutte le Grazie” church, represents a formal solution of protection of the underlying late classic and paleo-Christian ruins. The supporting structure is out of the perimeter of area of the temple to avoid potential damages while the transparency of the glass allows the observation of the rests.

The re-use of the ex Franciscan monastery as *antiquarium* and the exposure of *lapidarium* along the terraced walls of the Italian intervention embody an ideal continuity with the vocation of the site and the presentation of the archaeological datum becomes an opportunity for the preservation of the remains.

The exhibition of *antiquarium*, based on a museological project, involves the finds of votive stipe, founded during the excavations of the temple dedicated to Athana and moved to the archaeological

museum of Rhodes. The enhancement of the architectural structures provides for appropriate use through the application of a minimalist language in conformity with the characteristics of the building and the real demands of use of the spaces. The compositive idea calls for the iteration, in the two perpendicular wings of the convent, of exhibition showcases arranged according to the rhythm and the geometry of the wall sections that defined the cells of the monks. The exposed objects are situated inside the corten steel showcases whose cavities are drawn according to dimensions of each find. This aims to preserve and exalt, at the same time, the historical and architectural values of the monastic complex and recontextualize the finds. The arrangement of votive offerings is studied according to the chronological criterion which can facilitate the visitor's experience, in terms of emotion and didactic aims, within a critical or interpretative approach. The large back-lit posters, with images and texts, placed along the outer walls, represent a knowledge opportunity, through the graphic communication. The intervention involves all structures of the monastic complex, monks' cells become deposits and laboratories where the access is allowed only to the researchers and not to the visitors. With the respect to the past, the design proceeds for additions rather than subtractions, in fact a new lift has been placed near the convent structures in order to reach the terraces, a privileged view point and pleasant place for rest and refreshment. The sequence and dimension of the prior's room and the refectory are appropriate for their function as reception area (dining room, bookshop, information point and toilets). This area is a focal point of the itinerary that continues, towards the South-Western loggia, with the exhibitions of chivalric stone fragments. This choice of re-use appears fundamental to ensure the conservation of architectural heritage to the future generation. With the same purpose, the original furnishings are preserved.

In continuity with the organicity of the intervention, the exposure in situ of *lapidarium* collects

Paleochristian and Byzantine architectural fragments issued from the Marian Sanctuary determining visual and spatial experience. The Italian fortification wall is the background of the architectural blocks whose exhibition illustrates the sequence of the architectural order. So the visitor can watch closely the blocks and can easily understand through the illustrating didactic panels. Some architectural fragments are placed on the corten steel base, others are anchored to the wall with telescopic anchors in order to ensure the integrity of the architectural remains. (F.G.)

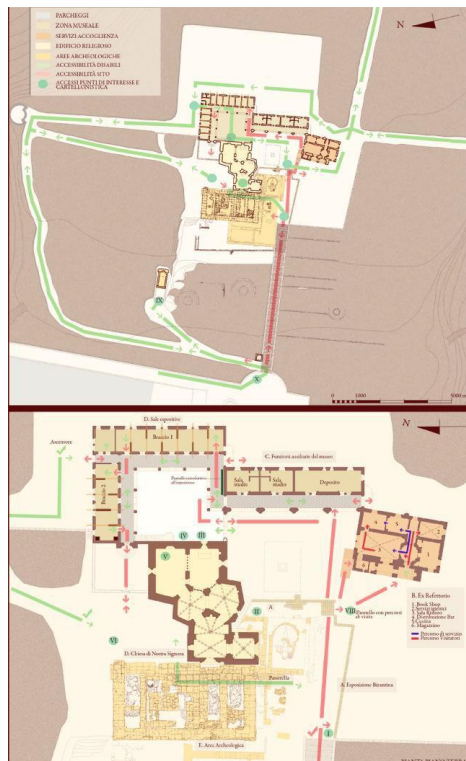


Figure 3: Museum itinerary



Figure 4: Itinerary and accessibility





Figure 5: Antiquarium



Figure 6: Lapidarium

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