



POLITECNICO  
DI TORINO

# Honors thesis

## ARCHITECTURE FOR THE RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

*Abstract*

**Landscape protection and architectural restoration in  
Southeastern Sicily. A migration museum-centre in the old  
lighthouse of Isola delle Correnti**

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July 2016

The territory of Southeastern Sicily has interesting landscape, natural and historical features. Its strategical position related to Mediterranean "theatre" made this land site of cultural and economical exchanges. For this reason the research about the place identity strongly considers the migratory dynamics as constant aspect in the local historical evolution and in our days events.

The research is based on two main themes: one has a cultural and historical contents aims to the comprehension of some local identity values; the other looks for social-environmental themes, to the realization of enhancement project for a part of the same context.

About morphological side, the territory shows a calcareous plateau, (traditional rural landscape) crossed by deep canyons which continue until the sea and the coastline shaped by the sea over time.

The territory presents traditional rural and marine landscape: islets close to the coastline, isthmuses and peninsulas according to the tides, quagmire and freshwater source. The coastline is characterized by a lot of sites which have high naturalistic value: strongholds, ancient industrial buildings for the tunas' production, towers and lighthouses are the characteristic architectures of this particular landscape.

"*Isola delle Correnti*" and its ancient lighthouse, are one of the considerable architectural-landscape examples of this territory and they are the principal theme of the enhancement and restoration project. The island, belong to the territory of Portopalo di Capo Passero, that is situated in the extremity south point of Sicily. The ancient village was historically linked to Pachino, it grows over the ancient "*Promontorium Pachyni*": a modest elevation close to the Ionio sea. The economic and urban development of Portopalo was influenced by invasions and migrations of people around Sicily.

Thanks to its original environmental and naturalistic characteristics, "Isola delle Correnti" was included in the "Rete Natura 2000" system, because its territory is identify like "Site of Community Importance" (SIC) and "Special Protection Area" (ZPS). The governance of this particular territory requires safeguard and protection of its specific Habitat. The human components of the island is represented by the ancient and the new lighthouse: the first, completely abandoned, is composed to a polygonal tower put side by side by two buildings that was the ancient houses of the lighthouse keepers; the second is a metal tower that absolve the function of lighthouse thanks to the light emitted through photovoltaic energy. The ancient building was built from 1861 with the project of "Corpo Reale del Genio Civile"; today we can to appreciate the original wall, despite some volumetric transformations from the end of Twilight War. Finally, the building is declared cultural object in July 2014. The functional vocation research of the building was supporting to SWOT Analysis, it was made considering various part of territory: the need to protect the particular habitat of the site, it was satisfied thanks to the project of fruition and controlled accessibility. Intervention with revertibility principles drove the entire project, that includes two modular and detachable gangway: one of them is floating, to assure the accessibility cross the sea, the other is wooden walkway, to cross the island pathway during the visits. About the lighthouses, we propose a museological project close to habitat reasearch garrison: the main theme is "the human and animal migration". The "Isola delle Correnti" was, in the past like today, a particular location for migration. During spring some bird species migrate from South Africa coasts to this coast to stay and reproduce. Thanks to the abstract concept of migration is possible to juxtapose: birds migration dynamics with the human ones. Although human migration appears different from the animal ones, it has a emergent and constant role in this particular territory.

In accord to the idea that architecture and art have witness and warning values, we propose a competition for artists, to realize a memorial illuminated, to remember the shipwreck or "ghost shipwreck" happened in the Portopalo territory, through the "Canale di Sicilia", in the night between 24 to 25 December 1996.

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