



**Politecnico
di Torino**

Honors Thesis

Master's degree Science in Sustainable Architecture

Abstract

The hypogeum and the house. Project for a student house in Agrigento, Sicily

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December 2021

In order to evaluate any stance on reality, even before its internal coherence, it is necessary to establish the positioning of its gaze. In this introductory chapter we will deal with the conditions that have allowed the "symbolic game", the "pretending of" of the literary text that is supposed to represent something else, of the territory or of the city in their physical materiality. And it is really only this narrative thinking, this thinking about the thought, that allows us to understand and construct the *fable* of this study, to use causal, temporal and spatial connections. In other words, thinking about what is thought will become the narration of the narrative because only this is able to unite and give a sense of continuity to what has been broken.

The present study is to be understood as part of the research directed by Carlo Ravagnati as part of the national coordination of first-year architectural design laboratories, called "*Incipit Lab. Geographies of teaching*", under the coordination of the University of Palermo. Agrigento is the common object of study and design.

The thesis attempts to fill a gap in knowledge about the city of Agrigento. In fact, there is a lack of urban analysis studies in the existing literature that give a broad and complex look at the *situation* of the city. Up to now, sectoral studies have given priority to only one aspect, or rather to the exclusion of everything that is not precisely relevant to one's specialisation. This has produced a fragmentation of theoretical, rather than alternative, objects, detached from each other. It should be noted, however, that the most substantial narratives about the city of Agrigento, those concerning its archaeological aspects, already sketch a city built *in parts*.

The general problem faced is the possibility of tracing in urban history the constant reasons that have determined its construction. In the moment of analysis, the problem arises of recognizing things – recognizing them through the definition of images. Conditions for the construction of these images are the possibility of sorting analogies between things and events and establishing similarities, the need to detect recurrences, to isolate them and to construct metaphors.

Among the assumptions there is also the continuity in the logic of construction of the city from the Greek period to the present day. If the architecture reveals what is already *in embryo* and gives a name to forms that are *already* contained in the shape of the earth's crust, and the various settlements that have succeeded one another over time insist on the same area, then it is possible to find in the architectural forms of the city of no matter what period a logical continuity. The working hypothesis is therefore the ability of the map and the architectural project to speak and explain the city and its form, each becoming a legend of the other in a sort of intertextual game. And so the aim of this thesis becomes the representation of the architecture of the city of Agrigento.

On the one hand, this study will be qualitative, and on the other, it will have no historical or historicist pretensions, especially since the intellectual tools used are quite different. In fact, the historical thresholds of the treated objects are not considered, but only their ability to produce figures. Among the spatial limitations, on the other hand, the surroundings of the city between the San Biagio and Drago rivers were taken into consideration.

An initial critical review of the existing literature will make it possible to trace the dominant motifs. This part will take the form of a long introduction. This will be followed by an analytical part, where these reasons will be taken up and clarified, identifying their contribution to the construction of the city. Finally, these motifs will become the founding features of the project of a student house and a legend of the shape of the city.
