

POLITECNICO DI TORINO  
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***Honors theses***

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**From the saltworks to the open air museum: itineraries of development**

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The particular geomorphological and climatic conditions on the West coast of Sicily and the constant work of man resulted in the creation of what is not only one of the most important complexes of sea salt production in the Mediterranean, but also one of the most delicate and fascinating natural environments. A system for nearly three millennia is remembered and implemented and sometimes destroyed by man. The beauty of the salt is an unmistakable element of the coast from Trapani to Marsala with its large windmills, with vast ponds and canals, with large salt mountains covered with terracotta tiles. A landscape that has remained unchanged for centuries and where you can find rare and exemplary plant and animal species, a landscape that may seem monotonous and uniform, but crucial to Trapani, which has its roots in the salt works. Precisely for these reasons the city of Trapani is always ranked as "city of salt".

In the past the salt pans were much more numerous and a large portion of the population was working there Trapani and the nearby port they took advantage, since the export of salt was carried out exclusively with sailing ships and steam, or with the "schifazzi" (typical boats for the transport of salt in Trapani tradition), but in the first and second World War many salt fields have been abandoned and many windmills have disappeared along with the figure of "mulinaro".



### **The relationship between the city and the salt pans of Trapani in the context of the coastal plain**

But the Sicilian coast is not only characterized by the material culture of the salt, in fact it is rooted in different traditions and cultural factors that have contributed to the socio-economic role that the city of Trapani and Marsala played during the past centuries. Let us not forget, just to mention a few, the great art expressed by coral artisans Trapani between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, or the much known Marsala wine. Traditions that originate from ancient times and which were introduced by the peoples who have reigned in these cities already from the Phoenician-Punic period. In this regard play a primary role in archaeological finds and in particular the island of Mozia.



**A path, amongst vineyards, leading from the railway line to the lagoon of Stagnone of Marsala; in the background the island of Mozia**

Just do some research in archives to find drawings of the salt pans of Trapani, this can only mean that for several centuries the landscape Trapani is documented and admired for its aesthetic value, landscape and environmental.

It is indeed a wonderful landscape from different points of view and that each year attracts thousands of visitors. And on this point has focused my project, or for the maintenance of territorial and landscape features which, together with the recovery of architectural artifacts that denote this stretch of coast, aiming for a total valuation of the park system of salt. To do this, I have provided for the recovery of the railway line that would become a kind of "open-air subway" that connecting the two urban centers of Trapani and Marsala and allowing visitors to enjoy a place using a range of services, activities and functions located in mills, in salt homes and coastal towers, as well as in railway stations and motorway.

This would create a veritable museums, high tourism, which encloses all the structures of salt pans, bathtubs and basins including, where identifying a principal place of business, the other would act as satellite facilities specializing in certain topics in-depth exhibition related to the theme of the salt.

In short, the "Salt Park" as eco-museum available to both visitors and people who live there.

In this regard I consider crucial bring the concept expressed by French museologist Hugues De Varine that an eco-museum is *«something that represents what an area is, and what are its inhabitants, from the living culture of the people, by their environment, from what they have inherited from the past, from what they love and who wish to show their guests and transmit to their children»*.



**One of the saltworker structures to be recovered, “Case Calcara” of Nubia**

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