

Archaeological Survey in Agrigento and its Hinterland

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The aim of this paper is to present the methodological approach and results derived by different projects focused on archaeological survey. The first one is an intrasite survey, and it regards the city of ancient Agrigento and its surroundings. The others regard the territory near Agrigento, both in the east, where the University of Palermo has been carrying out the “Cignana project”, and in the west, where the study of ancient landscapes is conducted by a series of M.A. theses; it needs to highlight that all these researches use the same methodological approach.

The Agrigento project is articulated in several phases: first of all the realization of a GIS platform, using the software ArcGIS Desktop (8.3), in which we inserted several layers, particularly the marks detectable by remote sensing. The second step was the fieldwork, carried out in the 2008–2010; the realization of excavations and the study of potteries and other remains from the fieldwork are the later steps. The fieldwork was carried out using intensive and systematic approach, noting density and distribution of archaeological remains (potteries, structures and architectural elements), collecting selected wares, significant from cultural and chronological points of view. These data allowed us to edit thematic maps as “visibility map”, “archaeological map”, and “field density map” (typically referred to density of pottery in a square meter), and finally a “chronological map” that could be a starting point for further research. The preliminary results regard both the urban and the sub-urban areas. The excavation in the urban area of Agrigento close to Poggio Meta/San Marco (NW of the public area of Poggio di S. Nicola) is part of this project; it was integrated with tomography and georadar, and with finalized orthophotos taken by drone. In the area outside the ancient city, the survey documents several kinds of sites, some still unknown, like farms and crafts areas.

The other projects analyze some well-defined contexts, around the Roman villa of Cignana, and in areas close to the Mediterranean coast (particularly between the modern villages of Siculiana and Montallegro). The archaeological data attest that many large sites (farms, villages and maybe any villa) were inhabited in these territories during the late Roman period. These results are strictly connected with the results of excavations in some landing places by the Soprintendenza of Agrigento west of the city, and contribute to highlight the economic interrelations between the ancient city and its surroundings.

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