

ENGLISH VERSION

PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY: ITALY AND CROATIA WHEN THE PARKS SPEAK

A twenty-year cultural and political challenge: on the two shores of the Adriatic, the potential of a series of parks has developed within joint projects for a new development model: the emblematic cases of Sepino, Ricina, Omisalj, Kaštela.

EXPERIENCE AND MODEL Thinking of an archaeological park does not necessarily mean envisioning a potential open-air museum, a fenced and waterproof area, from which archaeology excludes any other key of interpretation. As the European Landscape Convention indicates, archaeological areas are portions of territory where traces of the past dialogue with inhabited areas. From this confrontation between parks and communities stems the challenge that for over twenty years - starting from the Marche region's experience of the Management Plan for the Pollentia Urbs Salvia Park - has been taken up by Italian, Albanian, Slovenian, Croatian, and Serbian researchers, coordinated by the University of Macerata. This involved first six parks in the Transfer Project (Urbs Salvia in Italy, Antigonea in Albania, Ptuj in Slovenia, Dodona in Greece, and Omišalj and Šibenik in Croatia) and then, within the new Archaeodigit Project, the parks of Helvia Ricina and Sepino in Italy together with Fulfinum-Mirine and Kaštela in Croatia, which we will discuss below.

TECHNOLOGY AND PARKS Good practices and digital technology. In the four parks of the Archaeodigit Project (Sepino, Ricina, Omisalj, and Kaštela), technology is at the core of the entire chain that goes from research and protection to park management, helping to create relationships among heritage, local communities, and the public, without ad-hoc interventions and spectacularization, but by enhancing the identity of the places. Technology and site specificity. At Fulfinum Mirine, visitors access information through interactive totems, an online exhibition "returns" the artifacts in storage to the site, and a gaming experience engages families. At Kaštela, storytelling is adapted to the "tale of the invisible," that is, the boats still beneath the water's surface, so a 3D print of a Roman wreck activates audio content through touch. At Sepino, the monuments of the Park come to life through 3D scanning and modeling of ten key contexts. Finally, at Helvia Ricina, an artist's installation transforms the entrance halls to the site into a narrative device that introduces the Roman theater. The network is what counts, however, which is why the four parks have also organized the Archaeodigit Platform, a system that feeds the visiting apps and the single website, designed as a hub for local stakeholders.

Sea and land: Fulfinum-Mirine between the empire and late antiquity In Croatia, the site of Fulfinum-Mirine is one of the most important in the northern Adriatic. It is located in the

Sepean bay, two kilometers from Omišalj, on the island of Krk. The area preserves the remains of Flavium Fulfinum, a name that recalls both the pre-Roman community settled here and the Flavian dynasty responsible for the establishment of the municipium in the 1st century AD, where the early Christian complex of Mirine later developed. The settlement grew as an urban center organized around its port. This port, within the north-south routes along the eastern Adriatic coast, played an undoubted role in development. At Flavium Fulfinum, the forum is notably visible, where recent excavations have brought to light the square and the public and residential buildings overlooking it. After the decline of the ancient city, the area acquired a new function in the 5th century AD, when the Mirine complex was built, one of the largest and most significant early Christian churches on the eastern Adriatic coast. The main building, with its spectacular impact, is a large three-aisled basilica associated with several architectural structures and a necropolis. Today, Fulfinum-Mirine is an archaeological area (with a small antiquarium) that combines its precious cultural heritage with the coastal landscape; at the same time, it represents a remarkable source for the study of Roman and late antique urban planning and architecture, as well as a reference point for research on the historical topography of the island of Krk.

The city of Helvia Ricina: archaeology goes on stage A few kilometers from Macerata, near Villa Potenza, the river of the same name flows next to the remains of one of the most significant Roman centers in the Marche region. Founded in a strategic position between the Apennines and the Adriatic, Helvia Ricina was located at the center of an important road junction, between the Salaria Gallica and the Flaminia Proclaquense. The oldest Roman settlement became a municipium after 49 BC following the first regulatory interventions that would be definitively codified with the Lex Iulia Municipalis (promoted by Caesar) under the name of Ricina. We do not know the exact origin of the name Ricina, but when it was elevated to the rank of colony in 205 thanks to Septimius Severus, the emperor, wanting to honor his predecessor Publius Helvius Pertinax, added the appellation of Helvia. The city occupied twenty-two hectares, with a regular grid of streets at right angles starting from the urban stretch of the Flaminia Proclaquense, the main east-west axis, parallel to the river, and partly traced by the modern road layout, on which the main activities were concentrated, portraying a densely built and highly active center. But it is the 1st century AD theater that constitutes the symbolic core of Helvia Ricina, sized, with a diameter of 72 meters and a cavea on two orders of steps, for about two thousand spectators. The monumental scaena, articulated by columns and niches, translated the civic value of the representation into architecture. Archaeological investigations, supplemented by aerial and geophysical surveys, have revealed the layout of the city (still largely to be investigated): the amphitheater, a temple, public buildings, baths, and domus. In 1967, upon the report of the Macerata sculptor Valeriano Trubbiani (1937-2020), inscribed and decorated blocks (today in the small antiquarium-lapidarium) originating from the necropolises were recovered from the bed of the Potenza river, which are fundamental for reconstructing the social and economic profile of the ancient community.

A timeless place: all the charm of Sepino In Molise, the Sepino Park is unique in the Italian

landscape: an unparalleled cultural landscape, in perfect balance between archaeological and environmental values. The art historian Cesare Brandi (1906-1988) captured its essence by defining it as a modest place, where one drinks a sip of antiquity in a silver cup. Indeed, the value of Sepino lies precisely in its simplicity, in being an ancestral place, miraculously unharmed. The feeling is of having frequented it in past lives. Since the Roman age, Sepino has been linked to transhumance, with its enormous importance for the economy of the inland areas of the Adriatic slope. The city, as it appears to us, with its perfectly recognizable ancient fabric, public buildings, and walls preserved for over a kilometer with circular gates and towers, is the result of the urban redevelopment during the Augustan age of a previous Samnite settlement. The excavations of the last century, although partial (we know twenty-five percent of the buried city), allow us to reconstruct a small-sized urban layout, where some monumental public buildings stand out, including the forum and the basilica. As for the theater, it is an architectural jewel of great charm: on the upper part of the cavea in the eighteenth century, rural buildings were constructed that still follow its curve today, exploiting the ancient remains as a foundation. Inside these buildings is hosted the Museum that tells the story of the city and its territory.

Kaštela: Roman evidence of thriving trade Trstenik near Kaštela, not far from Salona (capital of Dalmatia), presents one of the most important Roman testimonies of the Croatian coast, an integral part of the wider area of the ancient port. The site is located along the ancient Salona-Tragurium road (current Trogir) and connects with the Klis pass towards the hinterland, playing an important role in connecting the coast and inland areas since prehistory. It preserves a complex of villae maritimae with significant port infrastructure ; along the road to the nearby hamlet of Castel San Giorgio (municipality of Kaštela) a necropolis extended, as evidenced by the monumental walls that delimited the tombs. Underwater research has identified the remains of a wooden pier from the 1st century AD, which encloses a port of about 2,500 square meters, created partly by sinking three ships filled with stones, which nonetheless document the important economic activities that took place in the area. The first is probably from the 1st century AD: the flat bottom and the structure suggest it was a ship for transporting heavy loads and for maneuvering in the shallow coastal waters of the Bay of Kaštela. Smaller is the second, a horeia, a type of boat for port service, but also usable for fishing. More recently discovered is the third ship, with hull remains extending for a full nine meters. Furthermore, a structure with Hispanic oil amphorae of the Dressel 20 type (1st-2nd century AD) and a large dolium (container for foodstuffs) preserved in the Maritime Museum of Split have been brought to light, while artifacts related to the economic activities that took place in the area are kept in the local Civic Museum.