

RE-USE RAGUSA

territori in evoluzione



Sustainable strategies to revive the city center

International Workshop
in Architectural
and Urban Design

Ragusa September, 16th-28th 2014



Promoters :

- COMUNE DI RAGUSA Assessorato ai Centri storici e all' Urbanistica
- POLITECNICO DI MILANO DASTU - Dipartimento di Architettura e Studi urbani

University:

- Università degli Studi di Catania
- Politecnico Tadeusz Kościuszko di Cracovia
- Universität Potsdam
- Anhalt University, Dessau
- Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, Lisbona

Scientific supervisor:

- Gianni Scudo, DASTU, Politecnico di Milano

Headmasters:

- Ado Franchini, Politecnico di Milano
- Carlo Alberto Maggiore, Politecnico di Milano

Coordinator:

- Elisa Gulino



POLITECNICO DI MILANO



DIPARTIMENTO DI
ARCHITETTURA E
STUDI URBANI



Comune di Ragusa



Ragusa Superiore



Ragusa Ibla

PROGRAM

The Workshop will mainly take place in the prestigious location of [Palazzo Garofalo](#), close to the cathedral of S. John the Baptist. The programme includes:

- Design sessions

The sessions will be conducted in small workgroups guided by skilled tutors and professors. After a guided survey of the city centre and a preliminary briefing, each group will be asked to select a specific reference area and fix method and scales of intervention.

The work sessions will be open to the public in order to stimulate discussions, not only among the groups themselves, but also interacting with local people.

- Thematic lectures

Thematic lectures, conferences and round tables held by architects and scholars internationally renowned, will contribute to enrich the Workshop by showing planning and design experiences on current architectural and urban regeneration issues. These public meetings, scheduled by topics, will provide participants an opportunity to discuss with the speakers on the matters of the Workshop.

- Public meetings

Public meetings will be organized to achieve contributions by inhabitants in order to find ideas from the social, economical and cultural representatives. Within [Re-use Ragusa](#) website, links to the main social networks can be found, in order to extend the Workshop to anyone.

- Guides tours and trips

Guided tours to the city of Ragusa and to the surrounding cities will be organized.

- Exhibition and publication

Workshop results will be shown in a public exhibition where local administrators, professors and experts will be invited. Final designs, lectures and papers will be collected in a specific publication.



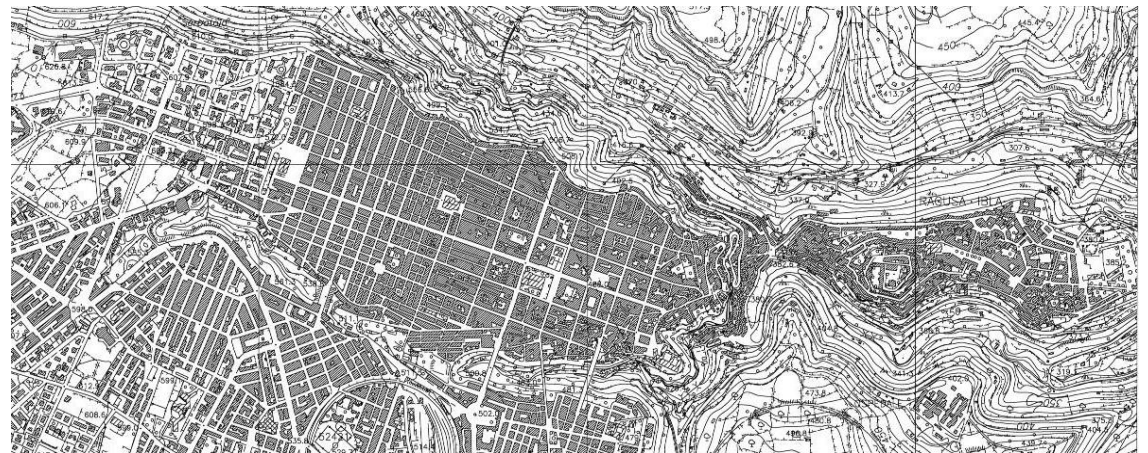
SUBJECT

In September 2014, the city of Ragusa will host a 12 days International Workshop on Urban and Architectural Design, addressed to students and postgraduates from Italian and foreign Schools of Architecture and Engineering .

This is the first initiative of **Re-use Ragusa**, an extensive program of study and design experience on the city and its environment that the Municipality of Ragusa is developing together with the Polytechnic of Milan, in view of its general urban plan revision.

Ragusa, the capital of Sicilian Baroque, is a perfect location to host a “laboratory of ideas” focused on architectural, urban and environmental issues, for the consistency of its architectural and monumental heritage, but also for the complexity of its urban structure which requires nowadays an extensive regeneration process.

The selected theme for this first edition concerns the regeneration of the historic center of Ragusa Superiore, the "new town" built on a higher plateau after the earthquake which destroyed the old city in 1693. The historic center, shaped with a compact gridiron plan, embeds several late-baroque palaces for which was declared an UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2002.





The denser part of this fabric, made of an extensive grid of small blocks, each composed by tiny lots, has gradually proved inadequate to accommodate the new housing needs, forcing residents to look elsewhere for more suitable conditions. The strict regulation imposed on the whole historic center has strongly contributed to freeze this condition, by preventing the necessary renewal process. The consequence has been a gradual depopulation of the old town that led to a large urban and social decay.

Using a multidisciplinary approach, the Workshop aims to test “on-site” strategies for urban renewal that could suggest integrated solutions, to these several issues: preservation of architectural and urban character of the site, building and public space renovation, upgrading to current housing and circulation needs, creation of safety areas for both seismic and hydrogeological risks.

After a preliminary guided analysis of the urban context the participants will carry out design experiments at different scales on sample areas inside the urban frame or along its borders built along the edges of the plateau. The specific methods of intervention will be discussed within the working groups, each followed by a tutor, and will be increased within scheduled seminars, conferences and panel discussions.



Ragusa historical map_1837

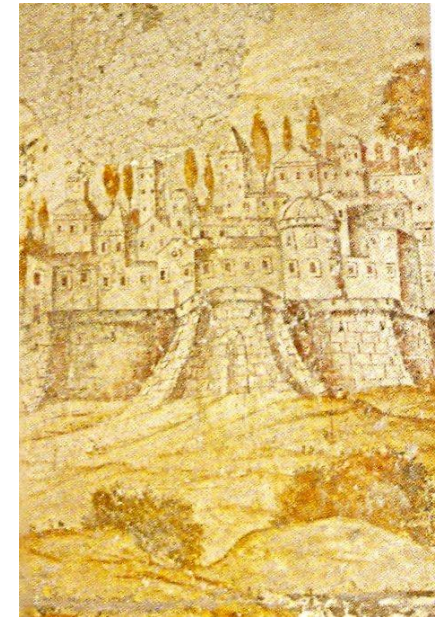


CONTEXT

Ragusa is the chief town of the southernmost province of Italy and one of the eight towns in south-eastern Sicily that in 2002 have been included in UNESCO World Heritage List for the innovation of their urban plans and the architectural values of their late Baroque monuments.

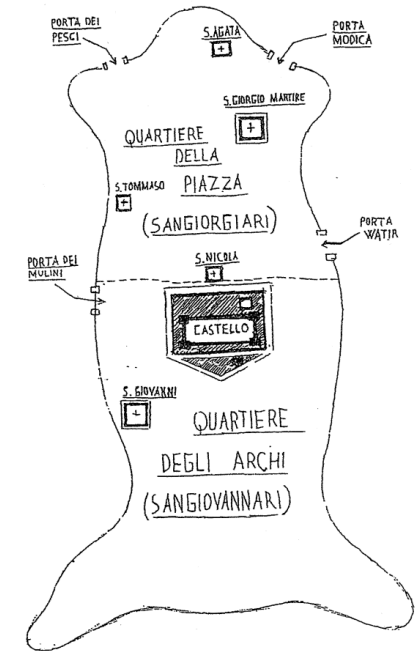
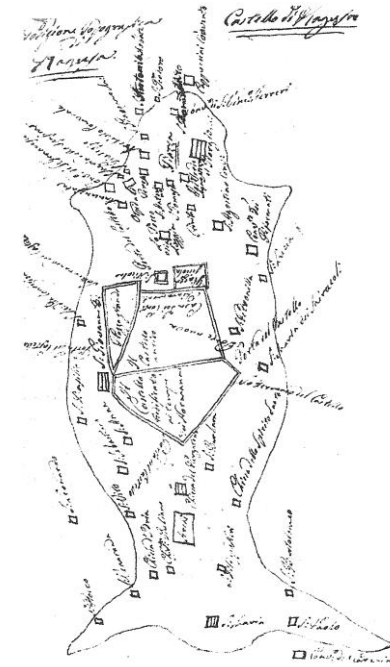


XVIII century plan of Ragusa district



Ragusa Ibla in medieval times

The city's origins are related to the different civilizations that have crossed Sicily over the centuries: Phoenicians, Sicilians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, Spanish. Until the end of the seventeenth century the settlement was mainly concentrated on the eastern hill of Ibla, surrounded by single farms ("massarie") and fields fenced with traditional stone walls. But the current urban structure and even the origins of its architectural image are connected to the reconstruction process started after the earthquake that in 1693 destroyed all the major towns in South-Eastern Sicily.



Ragusa Ibla_Forma piscis

The quarrels for supremacy between the families belonging to the two antagonistic parishes of St. George and St. John, as well as the social conflicts existing between the feudal aristocracy and the new agricultural middle class, led the city to be rebuilt split in two parts. The nobles chose to rebuild their new city on the ruins of the old one, gradually raising on the medieval urban plan new Baroque architectures forming the peculiar architectural unity of Ragusa Ibla, which culminates in the new church of St. George. The emerging agricultural middle class ("massari") chose instead to urbanize the "Patro" plateau, the highest hill west of Ibla, where they started to build a second independent core. The "new town" was planned according to an orthogonal grid. The "Mother Church", dedicated to St. John the Baptist, was erected just in the centre

The building process of Ragusa Superiore proceeded from east to west through two and a half centuries. The fabric is made by two different parts with different types of blocks and buildings: the eastern sector is arranged according to an approximately 90x90 mt square grid; in its central area (among Via Roma, Via San Vito, Corso Italia and Via Vittorio Veneto) are inserted remarkable baroque palaces and monuments.



Ragusa historical map_1874

Westward the grid is fragmented and subdued to a more intensive construction: small blocks are parceled into many lots, sometimes smaller than 20 square mt on which more recent and ordinary buildings are standing.

The dual slope of the ground, from west to east and from north to south, warps the final shape of the urban grid. On the borders of the plateau the fabric suddenly stops along the curved edges overlooking the two valleys that surround the hill: the deep San Leonardo valley to the north and Santa Domenica valley to the south. This one separates the historic center of Ragusa Superiore from its further extension southward, towards the railway station, whose development was increased after the construction of the Capuchins bridge at the end of the nineteenth century.



The undeniable lack of facilities, squares and public gardens within the city centre is the result of a gradual process of extensive densification and saturation. Two interesting masterplans tried to introduce inside the isomorphic scheme of the grid hierarchies and public spaces allocated in the different districts, but they have been ignored.

PIANO REGOLATORE E D'AMPLIAMENTO DELLA CITTÀ DI RAGUSA

Scala nel rapporto di 1/5000



Migliorisi city plan_1878



The first is the city plan drawn up by G. Migliorisi and approved in 1880, which provided for an adaptation of the grid to the needs of vehicular traffic, by widening some streets and integrating new facilities (market, theater) as well as squares (Casino and Serra neighborhoods) and public gardens (Borgo Cappuccini).

The second is the project drawn up by F. La Grassa and awarded at the competition for the new city plan in 1928. Here the “thinning” and street widening operations planned for the city centre were integrated within a general development of a new scale street network, supporting the natural extension of the city southward and westward.



La Grassa city plan_1930

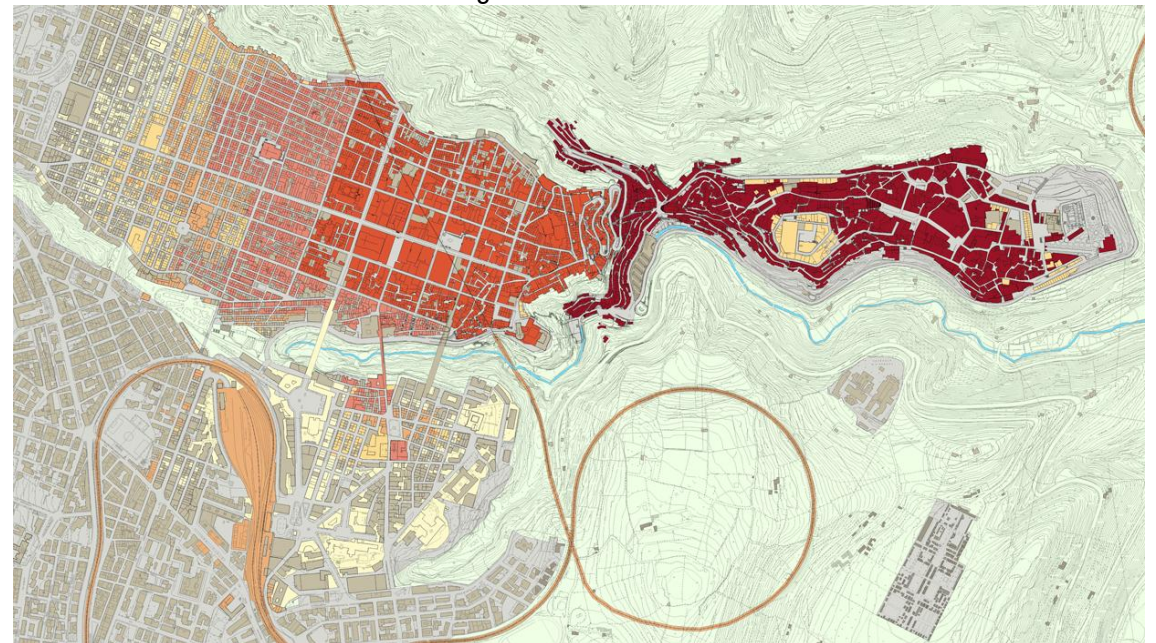


In the Thirties, after the opening of the new bridge over Santa Domenica valley on the axis of Via Roma and the following implementation of a new square surrounded by public buildings (Piazza Libertà), the southern district of the “New Ragusa” has been equipped with a new core located just midway between the historic centre and the railway station. The new square was designed by the rationalist architect Ernesto B. La Padula, well known as the designer of the Palace of Italian Civilization in Rome EUR district.

After the Second World War the historic centre of Ragusa Superiore went through a gradual saturation while on the borders of the valley massive public and private buildings have been built (as the seats of the Province and the Civil Engineering). In 1960 it was built the third bridge as an extension of San Vito Street.

The city plan approved in 1974 left the old town of Ragusa Superiore out from the restricted category of “historic centre”, so that several buildings have been torn down to house very impacting multi-storey buildings, such as the INA insurance palace in front of St. John’s Cathedral, the Bank of Sicily, the new Courthouse.

Since that moment a gradual depopulation of the old town led to a large decay of houses and commercial activities that were forming the socio-economic fabric of the centre.





Symmetrically an extensive building activity has been quickly developed westward, giving rise to new housing districts with several apartment buildings and detached houses. Furthermore on the coast a lot of summer houses started to be built in “satellite” and seasonal town of the Marina di Ragusa thus leading to a new doubling of the city: Ragusa is currently the Italian city with the highest per capita real estate surface.

The more recent Masterplan of the City Centre, which was enacted to overcome the deregulation of the previous years, introduced nevertheless rigid constraints that inhibit the regeneration process wished by the citizens.

If today Ragusa Ibla regained vitality as a tourist and night life entertainment destination, Ragusa Superiore needs the launch of a new and extensive regeneration process that requires the set up of complex planning strategies and strong economic subsidies .



Vallata S. Domenica



Cattedrale S. Giovanni

CREDITS

Students participating with success to Re-use Ragusa workshop activities will receive an official participation certificate and a 4CFU/ECTS certificate (valid only for students from the 'Architettura e Società' School, students from other Schools have to verify conditions at their own School). The final projects and papers may be freely used by the participants for Thesis at their universities.

REGISTRATION

The Workshop will take place from 17th to September 28th, 2014.

The workshop attendance is open to 40 participants.

The admission is addressed to undergraduates, postgraduates from Italian and Foreign Architecture and Engineer Schools. English knowledge is required.

Within June 30th 2014, pre-registration form has to be filled uploading curriculum vitae (max 1,5 MB). If the number of students will be over 40, there will be a selection based on the curricula.

The selected candidates will be sent an invitation letter showing detailed instructions about how to complete their enrollment with the payment of the expected fee (€ 300.00). The fee includes half board and organization costs over the period of the workshop.

Contacts:

Elisa Gulino
tel +39 3312612940
info@reuseragusa.eu

www.reuseragusa.eu