

THE CITY OF AGRIGENTO

The form and the space of the city: an interscalar approach

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ABSTRACT

The interscalar approach to the project is a dimension and an operative parameter through which it's possible to know the territory and its relations with urban systems in order to understand its principles, nature, organization and role played in different contexts: however, it's very often understood as a mere technical tool that allows you to show details and relationships between the parties and to identify adequate strategies for action and planning of interventions. The following contribution aims to bring the concept of intercalarity to morphological and typological as well as spatial characters, taking the city of Agrigento as a case study, analyzing it starting from an 'oversized' dimension (the temples) up to infinitely small (the house). An interscalar approach, therefore, intended as a key to understanding all those factors indispensable for understanding the form and space of the «[...] city the most beautiful of the many hotels that are mankind [...]» (Pindar, XII Pitica).

KEYWORDS

Agrigento, form, space, interscalar approach, city

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The ancient city, a city in which the principles that define public spaces and private spaces are very clear and recognizable, is a paradigmatic example of the application of the concept of inter-scale intended not as a mere operational or technical tool but as an element capable of to relate the morphological, typological and spatial characteristics of the city. The same term ‘morphology’, after all, contains in itself a level of description and design at a higher dimensional scale and complexity of relationships than the individual building element and its form as an object (Gregotti, 1985), which instead should be traced back to the term ‘typology’ which indicates the aggregation rules of the building types that preside over the formation of fabrics and parts of the city (Gregotti, 1985). The interscalar approach, therefore, intended as a relevant tool to understand the form of any city – in this case of Agrigento – and its spatiality, if we mean the architectural ‘form’ conceived only as ‘appearance form’ of space [Erscheinungsform des Raumes] (Schröder, 2015a), and if, as Schröder himself points out, the term ‘appearance’ doesn’t mean what veils or hides the reality but what is shown to the eye.

Recalling the recent study conducted by Federica Visconti on the ancient city of Pompei (Visconti, 2017), it intends to analyze the city of Agrigento starting from the infinitely large – the ‘mega’ – which can be identified in the form of the city, then moving on to the insula form, and thus reaching the infinitely small – the ‘dwarf’ – which is recognized in the form of the house. In the specific case of Agrigento, moreover, we find ourselves dealing with an ‘other and superhuman’ dimension, that relating to the Valley of the Temples on which many Doric temples and sanctuaries still lie – some now only in ruins and others instead, such as the Temple of the Concordia, in an excellent state of conservation – necropolis, fortifications and parts of the Hellenistic-Roman quarter: the scale with which we are confronted in this perspective, therefore, can be conceived as a sort of ‘oversize’ for the city of our time, a unique and exceptional dimension.

The study of the form, conducted through the mentioned interscalar approach, is accompanied by some reflections on the concept of space, which cannot be separated from the urban form, as it’s precisely the architectural space that is considered as the structured and essential one of the architecture, through which the architectural form is put back to its service (Schützeichel, 2010). For the study of the architectural and spatial qualities of the city and its places, Uwe Schröder (2015b) has codified a mode of representation, supported by a theory of space and architecture of the city, in which the interscalar component takes on relevant importance: it provides, in fact, a graphic coding that returns different tones of colour by virtue of progressive levels of ‘interior’ or ‘exterior’ of the spaces depending on what is intended to be highlighted, by the relationship of a large scale between cities and territory, between the city and the house up to the relationship ‘an architectural scale’ between the house and the room, between the wall and the opening.

And it’s with these tools, therefore, that we intend to discuss a necessary interscalar approach that allows us to study the relationship between urban morphology

and building typology, in an original and unavoidable relationship of the ancient city of Agrigento with spatiality. This study will be conducted through an analytical methodology, which is based on codified urban analysis tools, such as the *Straßenbau* (the street plan), the *Schwarzplan* (the black plan, therefore the built plan) and the *Rotblauplan* (the red and blue plan), of more recent experimentation and used in its different scales of representation. A methodology, therefore, which uses drawing as ‘specific, critical and unique form of knowledge’ (Ugo, 2008), as a manner of representation and knowledge of the forms and spaces of the city based on an abstraction operation (Moccia, 2016), which allows transferring the elements that make a city knowable, describable and objectivable, particularly interesting in the case of a city rich in history and archaeology as in the case of Agrigento.

The form of the city | The foundation of the ancient city of Akragas dates back to 582 BC when a group of colonists from Gela, originating in the islands of Crete and Rhodes, landed on the southern coast of Sicily, first founding the city of Gela and then, going more and more north-west, the ancient city of Agrigento. The colonists from Gela, however, weren’t the first ‘inhabitants’ of the city. In fact, some archaeological excavations have found traces of ancient villages of huts that suggest that the area had already been inhabited in prehistoric times: the evidence inherent in this era, however, appears somewhat obscure and devoid of relevant supporting documents. Since the Greek origins, the city of Akragas is surrounded by walls that lay on the sharp and cut rock that is partly so by nature, partly has been adapted by the hand of man (De Miro, 2010), whose perimeter – at times still existing – is then strengthened with square towers and equipped with eight accesses to further increase the defence of the city.

In addition to the consolidation of the works, further significant interventions for the ancient city are attributed to this period: firstly the development of a dense road network that crosses the *pòlis* from north to south and subsequently a series of works relating to the completion of the hypogea, to the strengthening of the port – which will make Agrigento one of the most important trading centres in the entire Mediterranean – to build the first quarters of houses. Furthermore, belong to this era, the oldest Agrigento necropolis, located near the coast, and the Sanctuary dedicated to Demeter and Persephone, completely excavated within the hill, the only example of religious construction present at that time in Akragas. In the following century, and in particular after the victory over the Carthaginians, the appearance of the city changes significantly: expansion ceases and an intense period of constructive fervour begins, which leads to the construction of eight temples¹, all in style Doric, over about ninety years.

The end of this period of great construction intensity coincides with the decline of the ancient city because of the siege by the Carthaginians; few elements of the walls and, most likely, an altar east of the Temple of Olympian Zeus located in the Valley of

the Temples date back to this period. The resumption of construction activity is recorded after the second Punic war when the city was conquered by the Romans: it's in this period that the city becomes precisely 'Roman', changing not only its name from Akragas to Agrigentum, but also typologies and building techniques, now precisely according to the 'Roman character'. Two monumental tombs (Oratorio di Falaride and Tomone di Terone), numerous houses with atrium and peristyle, painted plaster and mosaics, and the restoration of the Temple of Hercules, the Temple of Era, the Temple of Concordia and the Temple of Aesculapius belong to this period.

The sacking of the city by the Barbarians coincides with the end of the Roman era and marks the beginning of different dominations to which the city is subjected over time: the Byzantine and the Arab ones, a period in which the city took the name of Girgenti. These events and those that followed gave rise to a slow decline of the ancient city, which no longer knew the splendour of the times spent with the Greeks first and then with the Romans. The inhabited centre initially settled in what was once the ancient acropolis² and, afterwards, it was reduced more and more until it corresponded only to the city of Girgenti. It's, therefore, possible to affirm that two different cities existed: the first which corresponds to the ancient Akragas and the second which corresponds to the city consolidated on the Colle di Girgenti, which however doesn't even remotely recall the splendours of the ancient Agrigento: from the plain, it's true, its appearance is picturesque, its houses are elegantly arranged in an amphitheatre on the mountain; but when you enter the sad reality soon it's reveal to your eyes (De Nervo, 1989).

Leaving aside the historical and archaeological events, although relevant to understand respectively the evolution of the city and the ways of life within it, it intends to look at the form of the ancient city, in which, instead of what often happens in the contemporary city, it's possible to deal with the relationship between the different scales of the project, noting how the form of the city influences the form of the block which is its elementary part, the form of the block derives from the form of the house which, in turn, is identifiable in a specific building typology. In substance, it intends to get to know the structure of the city through the study of forms (Rossi, 1975). In an attempt to understand the structure of forms that characterizes the ancient city, it's of fundamental importance to start from a specificity that concerns it, that is the relationship which is established between the forms of architecture and the forms of the substratum orographic (Moccia, 2018) and, therefore, the relationship between forms of construction and the geography of places (Orfeo, 2018), a relationship that in the Mediterranean area always plays a primary role in the construction of architecture.

The Greek historian Polybius (cit. in De Miro, 2010, p. 33), who most likely in the early 2nd century BC he found himself visiting the ancient city of Akragas, describes its topography as follows. The city of Agrigento differs from many other cities in many ways; but still for its fortress and above all for the beauty of its buildings. It's 18 stages from the sea so that no one doesn't benefit from the advantages of it. Its circuit

is equipped excellently and by nature and by art: the walls turn on a high and steep rock, which in part is so by nature, in part it was made such by the hand of man. And it's surrounded by rivers: at noon flows what has the same name as the city, on the west side and south-west wind the one called Hypsas. The upper part of the city overlooks it from the side facing the summer east; limited inside by an inaccessible ravine, from the inside only one road leads you to the residential area. On the top is a sanctuary of Athena and Zeus Atabirio, as it's also in Rhodes. The city is also magnificently adorned with temples and arcades. And although the temple of Olympian Zeus hasn't been completed, by invention and size it's not considered inferior to anyone else in Greece.

More recently, the archaeologist Ernesto De Miro (2010, p. 409) describes the same geographical condition as the place of settlement of the city: Agrigento stands on a plateau consisting of a quay of calcarenite superimposed on Pliocene blue clays,



Fig. 1 | Agrigento: Mountain system (credit: E. Di Chiara, 2019).

with a large north-south slope. The city is delimited to the north by the rocky slopes of the Girgenti Hill and the Rupe Atenea, an acropolis in the Greek period; to the east, from the rocky rib that dominates the course of the Akragas river (today S. Biagio), to the west from the rocky ledge on the Hypsas (today's Drago); to the south by an ancient marine shore (on whose edge is the series of temples), at the foot of which extends a vast alluvial plain of the recent Quaternary up to the mouth of the Akragas river (today's S. Leone), where was the port of the ancient city. Agrigento, therefore, rises in a singular place as it's located on a plateau marked by the presence of two rivers (Akragas that flows to the east and Hypsas to the west) which flow into the sea at the same point, and protected by two morphological conditions steep (the first is the Rupe Atenea and the second the Valley of the Temples) where the level curves thicken almost to describe a protected condition to the rest of the city (Fig. 1).

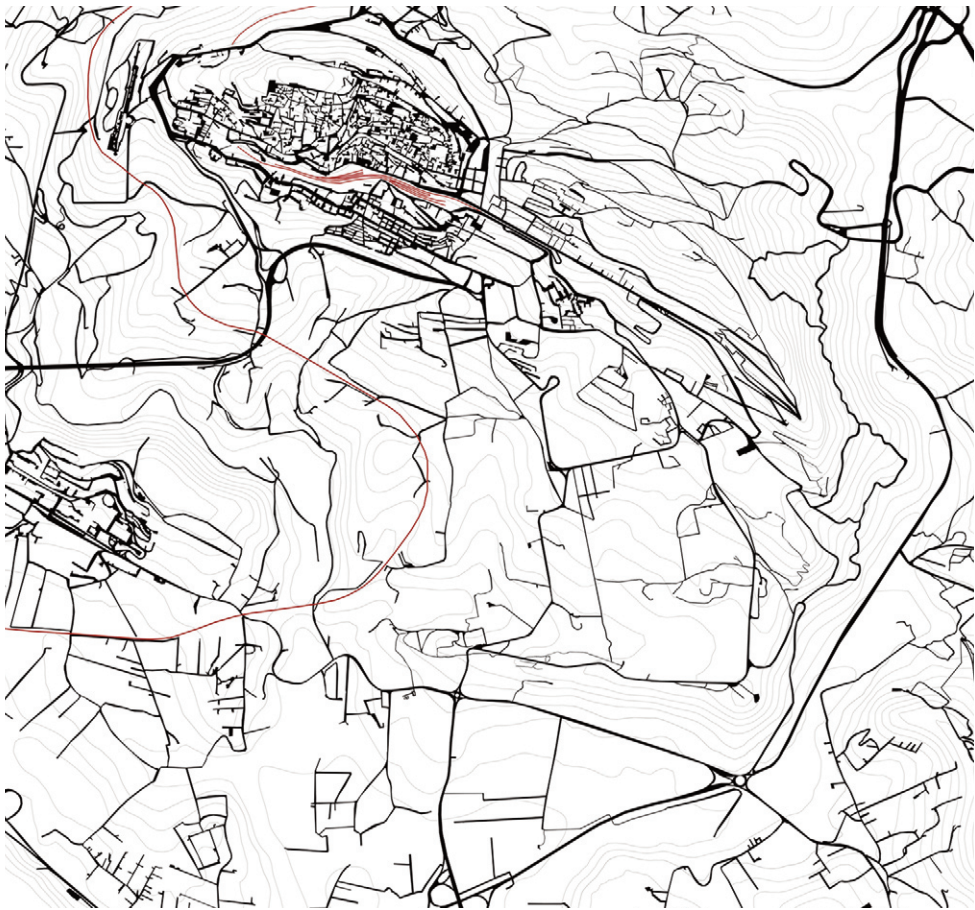


Fig. 2 | Agrigento: Straßenbau and mountain system (credit: E. Di Chiara, 2019).

The drawing of the *Straßenbau* (from the German ‘construction of the roads’) related to the trend of the level curves (Fig. 2) and to the form of the soil on which the city was built allows us to deduce the structure of Agrigento: isolating the *Straßenbau*, that is, the construction of public land, means isolating the constituent elements of the city as architectural facts, it means considering the city above all as a construction, as a stratification and as a composition of formally identified elements (Grassi, 1967). In the city of Agrigento it’s possible to identify three different modes of ‘subdivision of the urban land’ to which, as the drawing of the built space will illustrate, correspond as many different forms of the settlement. At the Girgenti Hill and the Rupe Atenea, the layout, in its apparent irregularity and lack of order, returns the image of a dense and compact city: a city that determines its form starting from the block, in which the drawing of the undeveloped spaces, therefore of the streets, squares and pedestrian

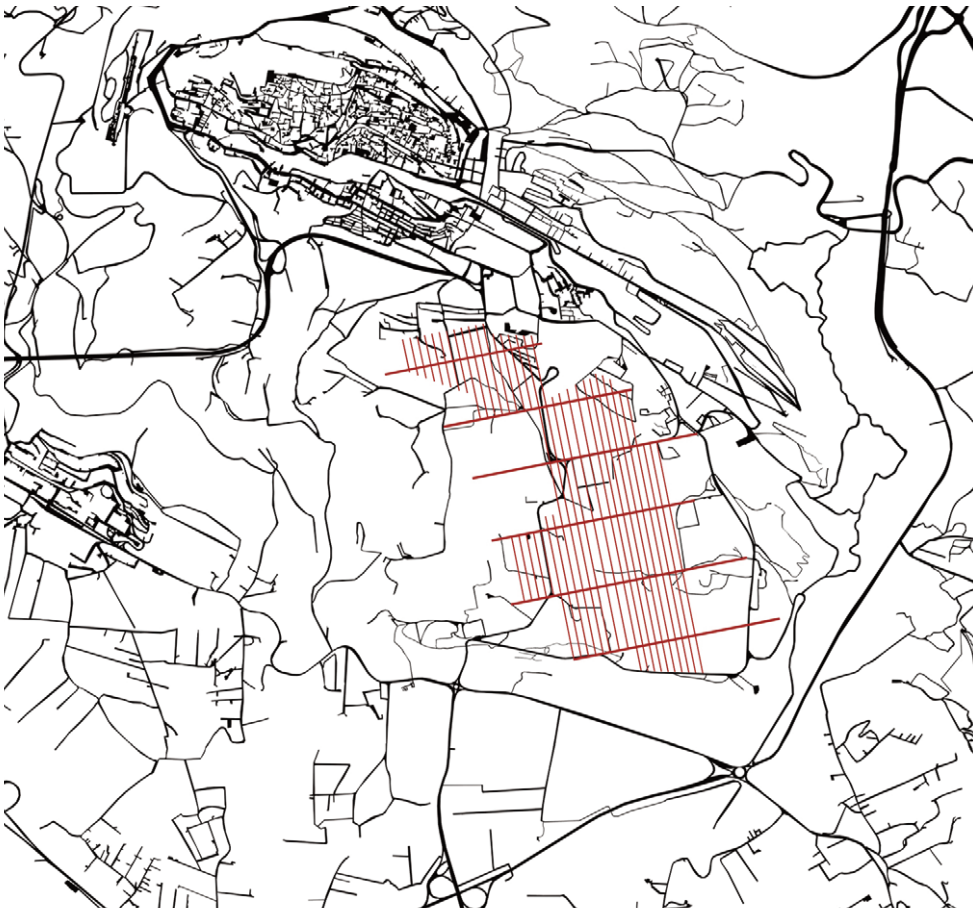


Fig. 3 | Agrigento: *Straßenbau* and layout of the Hellenistic-Roman quarter (credit: E. Di Chiara, 2019).

paths, represents both the negative of the built – which stands out by inversion – and the form of the public space.

The irregular layout of the upper city contrasts with the drawing of the regular layout of the Hellenistic-Roman residential quarter of the ancient city of Agrigento (Fig. 3), little or almost not excavated at all, with a system of *cardi* and *decumani*. This area of the city is organized on a regular level of wide roads *plateiai* crossed by *stenopoi*; arteries of considerable importance are determined, such as the east-west M-N *plateia* that connects the eastern access II with the southern V access, passing through the *agorà* area after marginalizing the sacred hill to the north; and the *stenopos*, corresponding to *cardo* I, as well as that corresponding to *cardo* III of the Quarter, connecting the residential area with the sacred hill (De Miro, 2010). If the irregular layout of the city on the hill and the regular layout of the residential quarter are typical of the

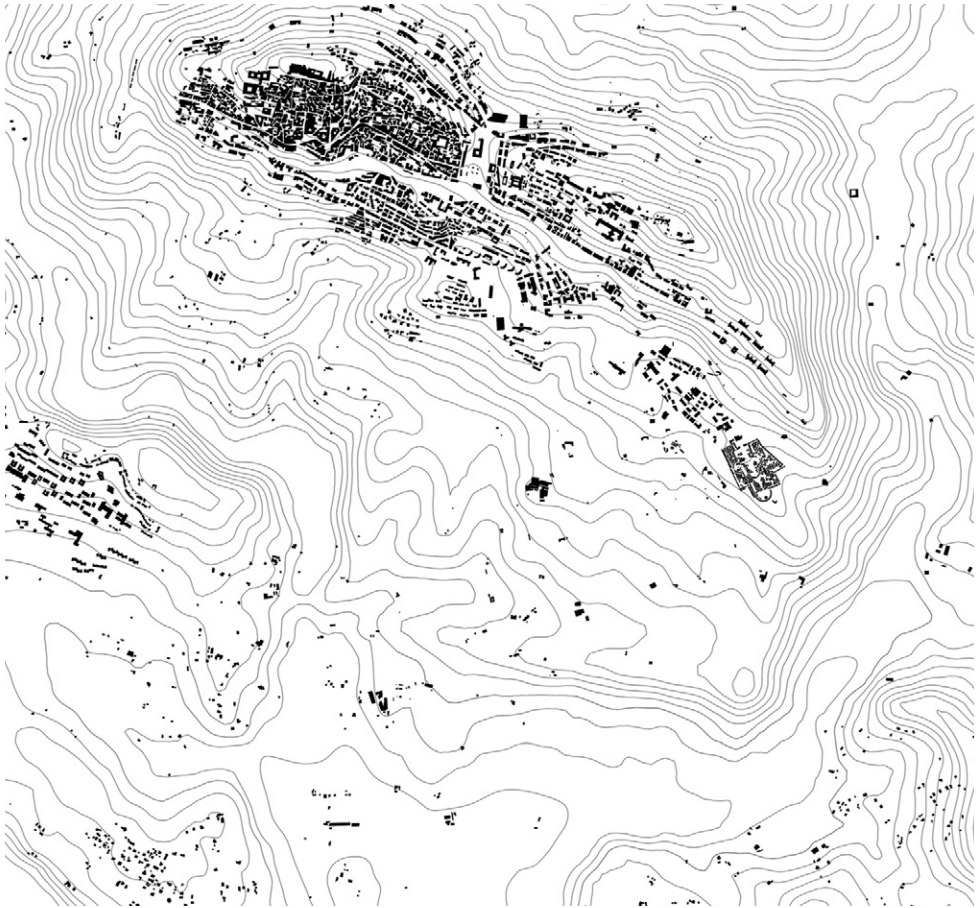


Fig. 4 | Agrigento: Schwarzplan and mountain system (credit: E. Di Chiara, 2019).

ancient city of Akragas, the layout that affects the remaining part of the city, on the other hand, describes a condition typical of the contemporary city: a layout capable to give an order to the forms of the settlement and to constitute a fundamental component of the urban composition is no longer legible.

If the undeveloped spaces are represented by the street level, the built space is returned by a further codified urban analysis tool, that is to say the Schwarzplan (Fig. 4) which represents all the elements of the building in black and it eliminates any other information immediately allowing a first reading of the 'figure' of the city against its background (Visconti, 2017). The three different ways of 'subdivision of urban land' observed in Straßenbau correspond to as many forms of the settlement. The historic city of Agrigento, in correspondence of the Girgenti Hill and the Rupe Atenea, is dense and compact thus highlighting a close relationship between building typology and urban morphology for which the Straßenbau and the Schwarzplan constitute the one the negative of the other; and even if the inadequate archaeological documentation doesn't provide sufficient documentation regarding the Hellenistic-Roman quarter, it could be said with certainty that this same condition also occurs in the ancient residential quarter, even if in completely different forms.

The city on the hill appears characterized by the tortuous forms that often characterize the settlements in the upland of medieval origin while the Hellenistic-Roman quarter has a geometric drawing based on a narrow and extended rectangular insula. This image of a dense and compact city is then contrasted by that of a more recent expansion, in which it begins to take hold a drawing of the city apparently based on principles such as the negation of the street as a place of view of the house, the overcoming of the block as an elementary part of the city, the assumption of nature as a place of habitation and the natural landscape as a place of its view (Monestiroli, 2002), but which almost seems to flow in a sort of uncontrolled dispersion. In fact, the recent expansions based on large blocks inside which residential buildings are arranged appear like subdivisions aimed at realizing the maximum possibilities of use of the building land, unable to define an urban drawing, while, in even more peripheral areas, the forms of the settlement are those characteristics of urban sprawl.

As Aldo Rossi states, the city is made up of dwelling areas, located in Agrigento both at the Girgenti Hill and the Rupe Atenea and at the Hellenistic-Roman quarter, but it is also made up of monuments, and that is persistent urban facts, whose persistence or permanence is a result of its capacity to constitute the city, its history and art, its being and memory (Rossi, 1982): the temples (Fig. 5), in their being 'physical signs of the past' but also 'persistence', are monuments and, as such, are a part of the city that cannot be suppressed because they constitute it (Rossi, 1982). These large artefacts are mainly arranged in the area at the foot of the Acropolis, now called the Valley of the Temples, closed to the south by the low ridge and parallel to the sea (De Miro, 2010), and organized as an extensive sacred area divided into several sanctuaries, of which the temples are the monumental expression.³

The monuments of a city are, however, also those places representative of the values of a community; the Agorà and the Acropolis as regards the Greek city and the Forum as regards the Roman city are two different but completely comparable representations to which correspond as many different and complementary urban paradigms: opposing isolated objects and open to the landscape or spaces defined and delimited as exceptions within the fabric (Capozzi, 2017). These places in the ancient city of Agrigento have left a faint trace identifiable in the flat area east of the Temple of Olympian Zeus for the agorà, near the Temple of Hercules for the Forum and on the Rupe Atenea for the Acropolis. This representation of the city of Agrigento intends to analyze, and therefore, re-describe in order to understand the urban form and think possibly of its possible transformation (Martí Arís, 2007), and it's for this reason that cannot be separated from analysis also of the spatiality of the places of the city.

The space of the city | Next to the description of the city analyzed taking into consideration its 'formal image', it, therefore, seems appropriate to also consider the spatial aspect of architecture, as it's believed not only that the form and space are two inseparable concepts, but that it's precisely the space to generate the form that defines it (Schröder, 2015a). For this reason, it was intended to address the study of 'urban facts' through a spatial interpretation of the city using the Rotblauplan tool, codified by Uwe Schröder. This approach allows you to understand the spaces of architecture by distinguishing them into 'warm' spaces, defined as interior spaces, and 'cold' spaces, exterior space. But to understand when space can be defined as an interior or an exterior, it's essential to refer to two concepts: the concept of limit and that of relationship. Ungers believes that when man consciously detaches from the infinitely large and boundless space of nature an isolated piece and clear boundaries and in some way delimits this piece – albeit only with a gesture – he's already creating architecture, even if in its broader sense (Ungers, 1982).

In the first place, therefore, the concept of limit that defines a space and establishes a demarcation between internal and external space represents a basic notion to debate the architecture of spaces. Next to the concept of limit, then there is that of 'relationship': space is defined as an interior or an exterior based on the section relationship that is established between the height of the buildings and the space between the buildings. A space-delimited by architectural constructions but uncovered (squares, streets, widenings, courtyards) is to be understood as an interior space when certain relationships occur between the undeveloped and the constructed space. When, however, these relationships fail, space is no longer to be understood as an interior but as an exterior. In the specific case of the city of Agrigento, there are interior spaces, but above all exterior spaces (Fig. 6). The spaces of the interior mainly concern the buildings, but also the urban exteriors present in the dense and compact city in which the sectional relationship between the height of the buildings and the size of the street gives them an internal condition. The exterior spaces, on the other hand, mainly concern the large part of the

territory surrounding the city of Agrigento in the current condition, also because of a substantial part of the Hellenistic-Roman quarter has not been brought to light.

As already anticipated, the analysis of urban spatiality through Rotblauplan moves between the different scales, offering, for each of them, the possibility of adding further levels of knowledge. In particular, in considering the scale that highlights a portion of the city, two different shades are used: dark red and light red, dark blue and light blue. The first coding (dark red / light red) concerns the interior spaces and, therefore, those spaces that indicate 'closure' but are covered (in the case of dark red) or uncovered (in the case of light red). The second coding (dark blue / light blue), on the other hand, concerns the exterior spaces and, therefore, those spaces that indicate 'a rural link or landscape' (in the case of dark blue) or 'an urban link' (in the case of blue clear). Not only the shades but also the graphic signs take on a fundamental

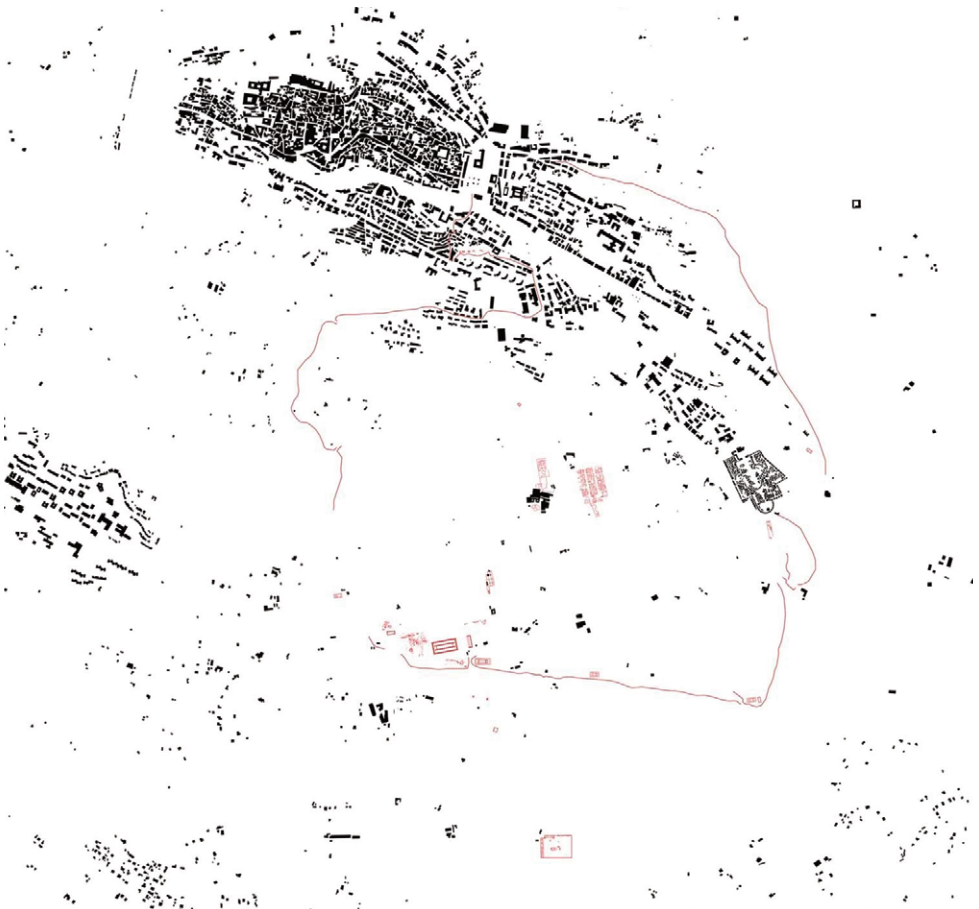


Fig. 5 | Agrigento: Schwarzplan and archaeological evidence (credit: E. Di Chiara, 2019).

meaning: while the white lines (the walls) represent the ‘active boundary’ in the formation of space, the black lines (the borders) symbolize the ‘passive boundary’. The city of Agrigento certainly takes on an interior character in correspondence with the Girgenti Hill, while the remaining part of the city – both the expanding one and the one occupied by archaeological findings – is, today, an exterior space.

The form and the space of insulae and domus | If the form and space of the infinitely large are clearly legible by means of the analytical tools that have been debated to now, the possibility of formal and spatial reading of the infinitely small, that is of the insulae and, even more, of the domus, appears more complex, as at present the archaeological knowledge is not, for this purpose, still sufficient. In particular, as it stands, the excavations have revealed only three insulae, not even in their entirety, of the Hel-

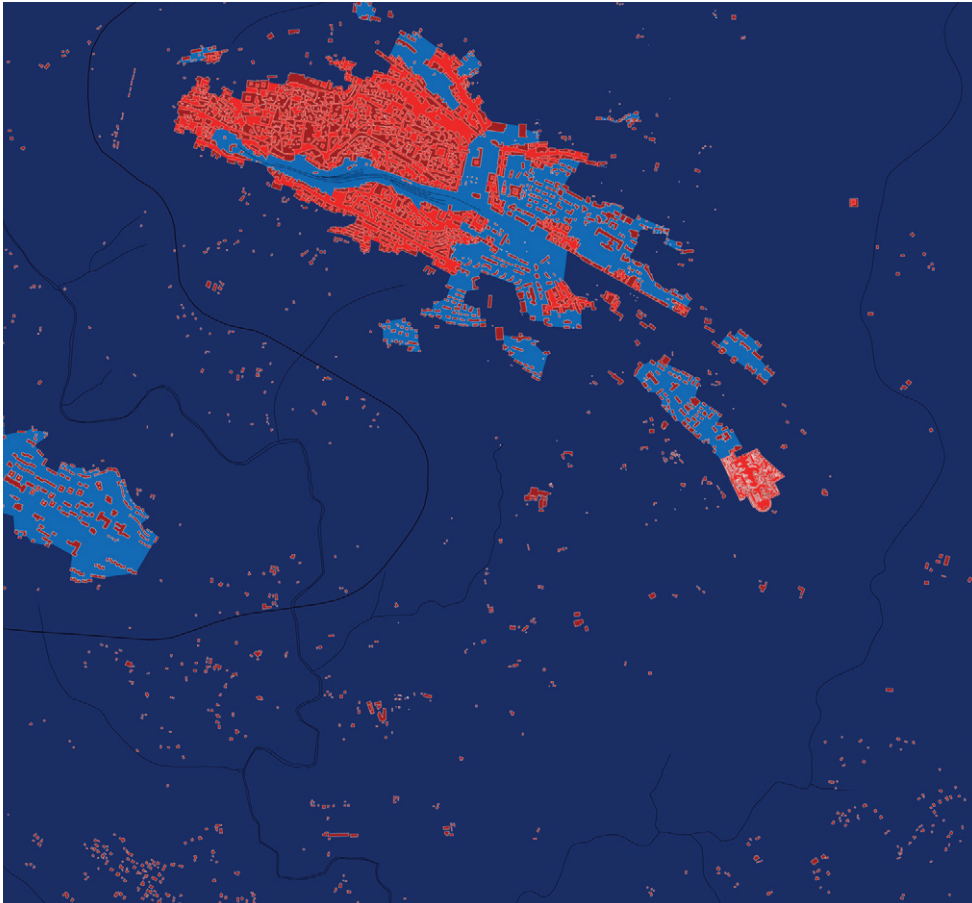


Fig. 6 | Agrigento: Red-blue plan, plan segment ‘city’ (credit: E. Di Chiara, 2019).

lenistic-Roman residential quarter, included between the complex of public buildings to the west and the housing quarter closest to the slopes of the Rupe Atenea. Looking at the city of Agrigento and, more precisely its residential part (Fig. 7) – the Hellenistic-Roman quarter – it's noted that this is inserted in an 'urban mesh' marked by main east-west streets (plateiai-decumani) and from north-south secondary streets (stenopoi-cardines), whose regularity contrasts with the layout of the city on the high ground. The axes define rectangular, very narrow and extended insulae, whose size is equal to 295 x 35 metre with a ratio of about 1:8.50 between the width and the length, whose north-south orientation presents a divergence of 10° west.

The three insulae highlighted by the archaeological excavations are delimited to the north by the decumanus maximus and to the south by the terracings that reach the foot of the Valley of the Temples, except for insula III, which has a somewhat uncer-



Fig. 7 | Agrigento: Reconstruction of the Hellenistic-Roman quarter (credit: E. Di Chiara, 2019).

tain southern limit, due to the suspension of the excavation, where a consistent landslide has left few monumental traces, while to the east and west they are delimited by the cardini thus assuming as width the distance between them (equal to about 35 m). The three insulae, instead, are different respect to the number of houses: the insula I comprises seven houses, among which, due to its size and its monumentality, emerges the House of the Peristilio which, although in its current incompleteness, occupies an area of 1,084 sqm; insula II, instead, includes ten houses while insula III comprises nine houses and four shops located near the decumanus maximus.

The Hellenistic-Roman quarter, thus outlined although in its condition doesn't integrate, therefore, would take on a different spatiality (Fig. 8): no longer an exterior space, but an interior space. From this perspective, the Rotblauplan tool, considered in its multiscalarity, no longer analyzes a portion of the city but the relationship between



Fig. 8 | Agrigento: Red-blue plan, plan segment 'city and house' (credit: E. Di Chiara, 2019).

‘the city and the house’, in whose coding, next to the different colour tones that represent progressive levels of interior and of the exterior, further ‘graphic symbols’ appear: the black hatching, representing an inclusive ‘dedication’⁴, and the white hatching, which instead indicates an exclusive ‘dedication’. This drawing is enriched with further meanings when there is a change of scale and, therefore, when the relationship between ‘the house and the room’ is highlighted, as in the case hypothesized here of the House of the Cryptoporticus⁵ (Fig. 9), located in Insula II, where even the inclusive ‘dedications’ are identified within the house itself.

Conclusions | The study of the city of Agrigento, conducted through an interscalar approach in reference to the morphological, typological and spatial characters, allows us to know the form and the space of the city under investigation. The form certainly



Fig. 9 | Agrigento: Red-blue plan, plan segment ‘house and room’ (credit: E. Di Chiara, 2019).

suggests an undeniable value in the relationship of the Agrigento city with the morphology of the soil but also in relation to the different historical moments that the city has lived from its origins until today: it's precisely for this peculiarity that Agrigento could be read as a 'cities by parts', which express ideas of different cities but which are simultaneously represented by the 'formal image' of the city.

Next to the form, the interscalar analysis conducted on the characteristics of the urban spaces of the city of Agrigento assumes a role of fundamental importance, in particular, if this is attributed to the Hellenistic-Roman quarter which, even if the scarce archaeological documentation to supporting, allows us to understand the interior character that characterizes the form of the domus, in some cases built around the spaces of the atrium and peristyle, empty spaces chosen to represent the place of being (Moccia, 2017). Agrigento is also certainly a 'city by layers', yet to be discovered but certainly full of forms and, therefore, of spaces, a condition to be studied from that point of view that Aldo Rossi suggested to us when he said that, although there are different ways of looking at the city, it emerges as autonomous only when we take it as a fundamental given, as a construction and as architecture (Rossi, 1982).

Finally, the study of the form and urban spaces of the city of Agrigento provides a broader reflection related to the city project of our contemporary era. As the drawing of the Straßenbau and the drawing of the Schwarzplan have highlighted, in the city of Agrigento it's possible to identify three different 'ways of dividing the urban soil' to which correspond to the same different 'city ideas'. The historic city, located mainly at the Girgenti Hill, in its dense and compact appearance, certainly manifests a happy condition because the relationship that is established between the urban space and the built space is clear, but at the same time it deprives itself of that void system and that natural condition that has always represented an 'archetypal' of living. In the 'modern' city, instead, that system of relations between the building typology and the urban morphology typical of the historical city is lacking, generating an amorphous condition that turns into the impossibility of defining a clear urban design.

And finally, the archaeological city, corresponding to the ancient Hellenistic-Roman quarter, which, in its system of relations between public spaces and private spaces, between spaces open to nature and spaces of architectural construction, between the 'void' and the 'full' represents a great lesson from which to glean for the contemporary city. Looking at the forms of the past and, in this specific case, at the forms of the ancient city of Agrigento, it can, therefore, move away from the idea that the city of the 'modern' has become 'hopeless' (Ungers, 1997) and aspire to the model of the city proposed by Uwe Schröder (2015b) in Pardié: a city as a 'montage' of parts, a 'collage' made from the clippings of the cities of Parma and Saint-Dié by Le Corbusier, in which open spaces can be introduced into consolidated contexts and contemporary forms can take on a defined urban design. This is the greatest lesson we learn from the application of the interscalar approach to the ancient city of Agrigento: to study its characters and its form to make it a matter of design for the city of our time.

Notes

1) The temples built in this period are the Temple of Heracles, built-in 510 BC, considered the most archaic in the Valley of the Temples; the Temple of Demeter, built on the slopes of the Rupe Atenea in 480-460 BC; the Temple of Athena, the Temple of Era Lacinia, the Temple of Concordia, the Temple of Vulcano, the Temple of the Dioscuri and the Temple of Aesculapius. Many of these temples appear today in a state of ruin or few columns remain, except for the Temple of Concordia which appears in an exceptional state of conservation thanks to its transformation into a Christian church, which took place in the 6th century AD.

2) As Superintendent Ernesto De Miro reports in the Historical-Archaeological Report on the city of Agrigento on the occasion of the discussion on the local strategic plan, one of the oldest topographical problems of the archaeological literature of Agrigento is that relating to the location of the acropolis, for the which the Girgenti Hill and that of the Rupe Atenea were proposed from time to time. In particular, starting from three ancient references – Polybius (2nd century BC), Diodorus (1st century BC), Polyenus (2nd century AD) – and from more recent studies it seems it can be concluded that the position of the acropolis of the Greek city, with the Sanctuary of Zeus Atabirio and Athena, it's located on the current Rupe Atenea (De Miro, 2003).

3) The Doric sanctuaries and temples found in the Valley of the Temples are: the Temple of Juno, at the eastern extremity; the Temple of Concordia; the Temple of Heracles near access IV; the terrace of the Sanctuary of Chthonic Deities, the Temple of Vulcano, at the western extremity.

4) 'Dedication' would seem to be the best translation of the German term 'widmung'.

5) The House of the Cryptoporticus, whose dimensions are 38.60 x 18.00 metre, has a structure dating back to the 2nd century BC, even if the last changes are recorded in the last decades of the first century BC. The access, located on the west cardo, consists of a vestibule that leads into the portico of a central transverse peristyle with five columns on the long sides and three columns on the smaller sides. The rooms of the domus are arranged around the peristyle and, specifically, on the west, north and east sides the main ones.

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