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## THE MUSEALISATION OF THE SHIP OF MARAUSA IN MARSALA'S BAGLIO ANSELMI MUSEUM

The wreck of the Ship of Marausa was identified in 1999 by two underwater fishers. Among the posidonia, a few meters underwater, they noticed some wooden parts which had prompted them to inform Sebastiano Tusa, Director of the Archaeological Department of the Superintendence of Trapani of that time. After some doubts, scuba diving in Marausa's water - a few kilometres from Trapani - confirmed the hypothesis: an ancient wooden ship had remained under sand and posidonia for who knows how long. Only further underwater investigations would have clarified the doubts.

After a few years, thanks to one of Tusa's many intuitions, the governmental funds obtained by the proceeds from the lottery supported the first campaigns of investigations and underwater excavations. The newborn Superintendence of the Sea, created and directed by Tusa for fifteen years, began to investigate the precious wreck starting from the first findings: amphorae, containers, oil lamps, portions of wood. Subsequent systematic excavations brought to light the hull of a Roman merchant ship of the III-IV century AD, coming from North Africa. Getting stranded in the shallows or hitting a reef, it sunk together with its load, which was destined for a rural Roman villa located near the mouth of the Birgi river.

A complex operation lasting few weeks made it possible to recover, disassembling it piece by piece, a boat of considerable size: about eighteen meters long and six meters wide. A painstaking work of excavation, survey, and disassembly, like a reverse puzzle, engaged the divers in an unprecedented undertaking.

More than seven hundred wooden parts, including the keel of the ship - a single piece more than ten meters long - were recovered together with dozens of finds, coins, oil lamps, metal nails, amphorae, olive stones, pine nuts, hazelnuts, almonds, walnuts, peaches, pinecones, dried figs, and various dried fruit. A mixed load that also had amphorae for the transport of wine, oil and garum, a fish sauce extremely popular in Roman times.

Once the long and meticulous recovery work was over, the restoration process of the woods began. Sent to Salerno to a specialized laboratory, the complex process of desalination, drying and consolidation was undertaken to lead to its following assembly. In 2016, the ship was returned to Sicily ready to be offered

to the public, and the Baglio Anselmi Museum in Marsala seemed the ideal venue for its exhibition.

Today, finally, the rebuilt ship, displayed in a museum with educational and multimedia supports, completes its long journey. It saw the commitment, sacrifice and dedication of many experts and the intuition, perseverance and tenacity of a scholar who unfortunately did not see his work fully realized. A twist of fate did not allow him to present to the world a substantial part of his moral, human, and scientific legacy.

The ship is currently exhibited in a dedicated room at the Baglio Anselmi Museum in Marsala (TP) and is presented with a museum approach aimed at the general public, always keeping in mind the necessary scientific rigour for operations of such a broad cultural scale. For one half, the hull was reassembled using a steel structure that reconstructs the exact curvature of the recovered wood and therefore offering the public a view of the boat as it appeared before its sinking. The other half of the ship has been reconstructed as it was found underwater on a horizontal flat surface, to give the visitor a view of the wreck as archaeologists discovered it before the excavations. The two parts are divided by a raised steel and wooden walkway to allow visitors to make a short journey inside the boat. On the side walls of the large hall, three display cases contain the finds recovered during the excavation and then restored: amphorae, containers, plates, on-board equipment, hooks, oil lamps, glasses. Large panels on the walls illustrate the various phases of the discovery, excavation, restoration and history of the boat and its sinking. Another panel, placed in front of the ship, illustrates the 3D relief created during the excavation of the wreck.

For the recovery and museum display of the wreck, a documentary was made tracing all phases from the identification of the ship to its exhibition. The documentary, in DVD format, was distributed to the public, libraries and schools. Thanks to a large screen installed in the exhibition hall, it is repeatedly projected. Two interactive touch screens are installed near the wreck. The first one illustrates the excavations, surveys, recovery, and study of the boat and of its routes with 3D models and computer graphics reconstructions specially created by a specialized company according to the Superintendence of the Sea indications. The second one is an interactive multimedia game allowing young visitors to play by interacting with touch screens and answering the questions

raised during the game. Starting from the simplest answers and moving animated pieces, it gets to more structured questions on construction and ancient navigation techniques.

The augmented reality representation system has a great scenic impact and can be used through two latest generation viewers: two “VR oculus” that allow you to live an immersive experience with sounds and 3D images specially created for the exhibition. The story of the ship's navigation route and the reconstruction of its cargo and crew, the sinking, the discovery, the underwater excavation, and the museum display are narrated through storytelling with a strong emotional impact. From the initial observation of the exhibited wreck to a progressive superimposition of augmented reality images guiding the visitor inside the boat. It is therefore an example of mixed musealisation, where the traditional static display of the reconstructed wreck coexists with new multimedia methods, representing an added value for a complete visit.

For the reconstruction of the wreck, the exhibition is by a team of the Superintendence of the Sea directed by Sebastiano Tusa and is designed by Stefano Zangara in cooperation with Alessandro Urbano and Enrico Lercara. The reconstruction was conducted by the “Legni e Segni” laboratory of Salerno. “La nave di Marausa” documentary is made by Riccardo Cingillo with the scientific supervision of Sebastiano Tusa and the executive production of Salvo Emma of the Superintendence of the Sea. The multimedia display is designed by Salvo Emma with the scientific supervision of Sebastiano Tusa and the technical realization of ETT SpA of Genoa.



The musealisation of the Ship of Marausa in Marsala's Baglio Anselmi Museum, thanks to Superintendence of the Sea – Sicily Region.