

## THE BENEVENTANO DEL BOSCO PALACE: A SPECIAL HISTORIC HOUSE IN THE ISLAND OF ORTIGIA

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**Abstract:** *The Beneventano Del Bosco Palace: a special historic house in the island of Ortigia.* The aim of this text is to (re) discover south-eastern Sicily through the knowledge of the history of noble families such as Arezzo della Targia, Borgia del Casale, Migliaccio Bonanno and Beneventano del Bosco. They, in turn, lived in one of the most prestigious buildings in the city of Syracuse, now known as Beneventano del Bosco Palace. The monumental baroque palace is located in the historical centre of Ortigia, in the square called Piazza Duomo, opposite the Palace Vermexio<sup>1</sup>. Today it is a popular tourist destination and heritage centre of the Sicilian Region. Before going through the building's history I will explore the monuments, the sites and the urban landscape of Syracuse. The paper looks at the urban structure of Syracuse, which is the result of the great restoration work undertaken after the catastrophic earthquake of 1693. Moreover not only will the links between the Beneventano Palace and the Knights of Malta be examined, but also the role played by the noble families, owners of the house, in reconstructing the urban fabric and their efforts in protecting the palace.

**Rezumat:** *Palatul Beneventano Del Bosco: o clădire istorică deosebită din insula Ortigia.* Scopul lucrării de față este de a (re)descoperi partea de sud-est a Siciliei prin intermediul aspectelor istorice generate de anumite familii de nobili cum sunt Arezzo della Targia, Borgia del Casale, Migliaccio Bonanno and Beneventano del Bosco. Aceste familii nobiliare au trăit în una dintre cele mai reprezentative clădiri ale Siracusei, cunoscută astăzi sub numele de Palatul Beneventano del Bosco.

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<sup>1</sup> Palazzo Vermexio is now the town hall and was named after the architect of Syracuse John Vermexio, who realized it between 1628 and 1632.



Acest palat monumental în stil baroc este situat în centrul istoric al Ortigiei în Piața Duomo. Astăzi este o destinație turistică populară și, în același timp, centrul cultural al Siciliei. Înainte de analiza istorică a clădirii sunt examinate monumentele, siturile și peisajele Siracuzei. Lucrarea este centrată și pe analiza structurii urbane a Siracuzei, aceasta fiind rezultatul acțiunilor de restaurare după cutremurul din 1693. Mai mult decât atât, este examinat și rolul jucat de familiile de nobili, care au fost proprietarii acestei clădiri, în contextul proceselor complexe de reconstrucție dar și eforturile acestora în protejarea acestui monument arhitectonic deosebit.

**Keywords:** Syracuse, Beneventano Palace, Ortigia, Knights of Malta, earthquake.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Siracuză, Palatul Beneventano, Ortigia, cavalerii Maltei, cutremur.

## 1. SYRACUSE: URBAN LANDSCAPE AND TERRITORY

The interest in Beneventano del Bosco Palace (photo 1. figure 1) is part of an intensive project for revitalizing the historical and cultural heritage which has recently involved the historical centre of Syracuse, which is the island of Ortigia. Its name, which was assigned due to its particular morphology, comes from the ancient Greek word *ortux*, "quail", a bird sacred to Athena. On the Ionian Sea, no more than 1 square kilometre in area and rich in rivers it was the first part of the city to be inhabited and the ideal place for different people's settlement: Greeks, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans and Aragons. All Ortigia, in fact, is the legacy of a thousand-year overlap of construction events. It has been object of continuous attention primarily by archaeological research, which has demonstrated an unmistakable dependence of the modern buildings with the Greek installation of archaic age.



**Photo 1:** Main balcony: the coat of arms and the plaque commemorating King Ferdinand II of Bourbon's stay at the palace.  
(source: Cotugno, 2011)

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Large parts of Ortigia are still clearly a grid based on major roads intercepted at right angles by narrow streets, where rare archaeological monuments stand. Among them it is worth mentioning the oldest Doric temple of the Greek West, i.e. the temple of Apollo, located at the islet's entry, and the temple of Athena, celebrated by Cicero for the refinement and richness of its decoration, beautifully embedded in the structures of the Cathedral. From the eighth century B.C. until today, the city has been developing on this ancient Greek texture. Later, each era has left episodic or striking testimony in relation to the historical events experienced by the city. The traces of the Christian Era are limited to just very few religious buildings such as the church of St. Peter the Apostle. Very little is known of the urban transformations dating back to the Byzantine Era. After the disastrous conquest



**Figure 1:** Location of the Beneventano Palace in Ortigia.  
(source: personal elaboration of map data 2012 Google)

by the Arabs in 878, the construction recovery of monumental buildings such as the churches of St. Martin and St. Thomas was due to the Normans. Built between 1232 and 1240 due to the imperial will of Frederick II, the superb Maniace Castle has been marking the tip of Ortigia, at the entrance of the Grand Harbour over the centuries. In the fourteenth century some buildings of great families (Chiaromonte, Nava, Mergulese) and Church bear witness to the monumental reconstruction recovery in some parts of the city, but what really marks Ortigia is the Spanish rule. Charles V turned it into a military base, provided with a system of defence that made Ortigia a powerful and imposing fortress for more than three centuries. The community was protected by mighty city walls, towers, ramparts and monumental gates. Great religious buildings of the Counter-Reformation characterized the urban fabric. In the seventeenth century, two great Spanish masters Andrea and John Vermexio enriched the Episcopal Palace, St. Benedict Church, the Palace of the Senate with typical Sicilian Baroque style. After the disastrous earthquake in 1693 the city, which fortunately did not suffer serious damage to the urban fabric, adopted a typically eighteenth-

century form: Luciano Caracciolo and Pompeo Picherale were involved in numerous works of reconstruction and Luciano Ali realized the Benevento del Bosco Palace in Piazza Duomo square, embellished with the extraordinary facade of, perhaps, one of the highest baroque expression in Sicily (photo 2). Since the unity of Italy and the establishment of the provincial capital in 1865 the urban fabric went through a hard time due to the population growth and the need to find space for the new institutions' offices. Consequently, it developed in height, overwhelming the fortifications of the sixteenth century.

These were totally demolished between 1885 and 1893 and the recovered areas were built according to an orthogonal grid which characterized definitively the connection of Ortigia with the opposite western shore. Since then the city opened again to the land and after many centuries it affected the areas of the ancient districts of Akradina, Neapolis, and Tike Epipole, which together with Ortigia formed the Greek pentacles. Then a new period, regarding the complex issues of the modern city development, began and it is not yet completed.. Far from being just layering of history, Syracuse is also the land of universally known myths. They live again in Arethusa's Fountain, where fresh water gushes from a cave a few meters from the sea. Sung by Pindar, Virgil and Milton, it is now enclosed in a basin full of papyrus and fish and recalls the overwhelming passion that bound Alpheus, river Elide, to the nymph Arethusa. This is, with no doubt, another sign of the great bond between this Greek colony and the motherland, further highlighted with the issue of coins, depicting the head of Arethusa. The charming Ortigia belongs to the province of Syracuse, which is located in the southeast corner of Sicily and extends along a limestone plateau that slopes to the north towards the plain of Catania, to the centre towards the Gulf of Noto and to the south towards the southern tip of the island, known as Capo Passero.

The northern part, consisting of fertile volcanic soils, coincides with an area intensively cultivated with citrus fruits, cereals, vegetables and fruit. The internal area is purely mountainous<sup>2</sup> with a dry and harsh scenery full of charm and individuality because of its canyons and its network of stone walls. The region from the Gulf of Noto to the extreme south is continuously heated by the sun, composed of loose or sandy soil and irrigated by a water with the right degree of salinity. These features make the area ideal for agriculture<sup>3</sup>. Instead, the beautiful and extensive coastline, once unpolluted, full of fish and specialized in the so-called "mattanza"<sup>4</sup> with the adjoining conservation and packaging activities of tuna, now is partly disfigured by the petrochemical pole. The industrial triangle of Syracuse, built in the '50s and become the largest in Europe in the '70s, has led part of Sicilian population to rise up in defense of the environment and their health<sup>5</sup>. In the early '80s, as with rigor Carmelo Miduri documented, a season to claim the protection of the region and the quality of life's improvement began. Unfortunately, we are still far from a concrete plan for

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<sup>2</sup> We refer to the Iblei Mountains, characterized by gentle slopes and whose highest peak is Mount Lauro, about 985 metres high.

<sup>3</sup> The economy of the area is characterized by cherry tomatoes, famous throughout world, by wine, fruit and vegetables production, especially vegetables, potatoes, melons, watermelons, citrus and almonds, such as "Pizzuta of Avola" and "Romana of Noto".

<sup>4</sup> The "mattanza" is an ancient ritual of fishing, accompanied by Italian dialect songs and prayers of "tonnaroti" (fishermen) and "Rais" (head of the trap). The climax is reached when the tuna enter the last room of a series (networks) and "muciare" (black boats), approaching each other, enclose them within a quadrilateral to harpoon and lift them slowly.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed and thorough documentation of the late '70s on the serious issue of environment and health caused by irrational development of the industrial area of Syracuse, see Miduri C., *Dal vostro corrispondente pagine di periferia*, pp. 31-55.

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environmental restoration. However, recently Syracuse has come under the spotlight and is returning to its former glory. After decades of neglect the city is attracting and fascinating travellers from all over the world as it used to do.

Life in Ortigia is back and resonates in the streets, in bars, in craft shops, in night clubs, in bathing beaches and in the restoration of historic buildings. A new light shines in the Piazza Duomo square, which is called the living room's baroque and has become the symbol of the architectural renaissance since the devastating earthquake of 1693. This square is unique in the world since Syracuse's Baroque does not follow the universal canons of the XVII century, but it is the result of the mastery of the architects Vermexio, Picherali and Ali and the creativity of many local marble and stone cutters who expressed their skills in the precious facades, in creation of movement, in bevelled corners and bulging balconies .



*Photo 2: Piazza Duomo's square in Ortigia.  
(source: Cotugno, 2011)*

## **2. THE FEATURES OF THE BAROQUE IN SYRACUSE**

The Baroque style, which reached its apogee in Spain in the second half of the seventeenth century, spread almost simultaneously in Sicily. The Sicilian people were already familiar with a style embellished with marble and gilding, due to Byzantine and Arab influences. The importance given to details contributed to the emergence of many artists who were inspired by the exuberance of form and the richness of decorations: the

grates were meticulous the balconies were supported by shelves with various shapes and often derisive grin. The distribution of volumes was studied in depth and the polychrome stone inlays were different and unusual. In the early seventeenth century, the administration of the Spanish viceroys undertook the construction of hundreds of new cities, to meet the needs of a broad territorial program. Most of the architects were trained in Rome and were inspired by the masterpieces of Roman Baroque. Sometimes they surpassed it in an excess of forms, volumes and topics chosen for the carved decoration.

The feeling of life's fragility against nature's forces was expressed through a new approach to art who did not search for beauty. Mockery, excess, death, suffering and even the ugliness (of old age, poverty and physical deformation) are found in the decorative motifs. The twisted forms, suited to architectural structures, proved perfect for the rich coating of facades and interiors. The reconstruction of eastern Sicily that followed the catastrophic event of 1693 emphasized the architectural division between western Sicily and itself. Since then the two different parts of the region developed a different architecture, with an occasional point of contact. An intense cultural exchange spread throughout the island; towns and cities shared the originality of style that characterized the eighteenth century. Endowed with economic power and cultural authority, the monarchy, the church and the nobility headed the urban reconstruction. In particular, the decision-making power of the monarchy came from his role; that of the church was due to the presence within the religious orders of well-known architects; the power of the nobility depended not only on the fact that they owned great dwellings, but also because of travelling abroad their minds were enriched with new ideas for developing the area (M. Giuffrè, 2007).

The aesthetic expression of Sicilian Baroque was not uniform throughout the region, but took on a peculiar and distinctive character depending on the environment it entered into contact with. It is interesting to note that the Baroque in Syracuse has an originality which distinguishes it from other artistic expressions of the same era. First of all, we distinguish two periods: the first one spreads from 1600 to 1693, a date that marked the urban history of the whole Val di Noto, since the earthquake brought death and destruction not only to Syracuse but also to Noto, Avola, Ragusa, Modica, and Catania; the second one spreads from 1693 to the end of the eighteenth century.

The first period was dominated by the reconstruction of religious buildings, while the second period, except for the renovation of the cathedral's façade by Andrea Palma, was characterized by the renovation of secular buildings. The Baroque style focused on the decoration of buildings' façades, enhanced movement and space and gave Ortigia a completely new aspect. Indeed, the medieval urban structure which stood out the buildings' interiors, i.e. the courtyards, was completely upset by the new taste. The core of the renewal became the cathedral square, where in 1618 the archbishop's palace was built, and in 1629 the Senate Palace. The façade of the Norman cathedral, after collapsing in 1693, was renovated according to the rules of the new style. In 1695 the church St Lucia alla Badia was realized and finally in 1775 the renewal of the Cathedral Square was completed with the restoration of Beneventano del Bosco Palace. The most important figures of the architecture in Syracuse and Sicily are three: John Vermexio, author of the Senate Palace, Pompeo Picherali, maker of the cathedral façade, Luciano Ali, planner of the transformation of the former Borgia Palace, today Beneventano del Bosco Palace. We can not avoid mentioning that along with these prestigious names, masters builders and craftsmen worked steadily making the streets of Ortigia unique for their beauty in the world. Here palaces and houses, side by side, express the skill of the architects within the rules, and the free creativity of the

artisans, unique examples of a style that can be found just in Syracuse. Except for Picherali, considered an architect in the modern sense, whose work, characterized by logical rigor, was associated with a style and a school, others, including the Vermexio brothers, belonged to the ranks of craftsmen. The work of artisans, influenced by the environment and by the secular family traditions, was less tied to rules and regulations and was freer and more varied (G. and S. Agnello, 1937). The building renovation, which characterized the Baroque era in the whole Sicily, was not accompanied in Syracuse by a real recovery in civil life and by population expansion. The Baroque's transformation realized first by the church and then, by the great civilian homes, left always the working-class housing on the edge, which later became the example of how the craftsmen translated the Baroque style into vernacular forms. Therefore what is priceless is not an individual building but the whole urban planning, where adapting to the baroque taste the old and the new live in a perfect harmony.

### 3. THE NOBLE FAMILIES OF THE PALACE

According to the well-known Syracusan historian Serafino Privitera, The House of Commendam was originally owned by the family Arezzo and lived in by the royal governors, then passed on to the Boyra or Borgia family, then to the Knights of Malta; finally it was bought by Sirs Beneventano Barons Bosco's (S. Privitera, 1879). The construction of the dwelling was ordered by the powerful Arezzo Targia's family in the fourteenth century and it was made an essential palace for political gatherings. According to some scholars, Arezzo descended from the noble and ancient Roman family "Aretia", while according to others, from an ancient Spanish lineage, native from Arizzi, the castle in Aragon. Split up in various branches in the cities of Messina, Syracuse, Ragusa and Modica, the family Arezzo Targia's was the owner of numerous estates and their corresponding titles. Some members of the illustrious family were prominent in history, arts and law, while others bore major titles such as Prince of the Church, Governor of the State, Senator, Governor of Peace, Knight of Jerusalem. Giuseppe Agnello declares that "the present Beneventano Palace became the Knights of Malta's Commendam in Sicily when in 1641 the noble Pietro Borgia (or Borea), in front of the public notary Jacopo Maso from Syracuse, founded the order of the Knights of Jerusalem's commendam, for 1600 ounces" (G.Agnello, 1937).

The relationship established between the Knights of the Holy Order and the City of Syracuse dates back to 1529 when, due to Rhodes occupation by Suleiman, they moved to Sicily and lived in the palace one year before leaving for Malta: "Before moving to Malta the Knights made a stop in Syracuse: here in 1529, the Grand Master Villiers De Isle Adam built an oratory dedicated to our Lady of Mercy, next to St. Sebastian Church, in front of the cathedral"(S.Privitera,1937). It was again due to the Baron Pietro Borgia del Casale that the palace became the seat of the Senate and House of the Queen. The title of Baron del Casale was given to Guglielmo de Boyra on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1403, and his descendants occupied the highest positions in the city of Syracuse, such as Knight of Jerusalem, Captain of Syracuse, Noble Senator, Noble Juror, Captain of Justice. The coat of arms of Borgia family, who probably descended from the same strain of the Duke of Candia and succeeded to the order of Malta in 1584, is a blue field with a golden bull and above the shield a crown. The palace was abandoned because a long fight between the heirs of the Order and the Borgia family broke out in 1660 and lasted more than 70 years.

Only in 1751, when the palace's right to property was granted to the Commendam, the first works started. The ceilings, too old, were rebuilt along with most of the shutters, while the medieval structure of the ground floor and mezzanine did not need any intervention. The Commendam decided to use only a portion of the noble floor while leasing the mezzanine and the shops on the ground floor for 61.15 ounces per year (G.Agnello, 1937). The building administration had several problems, which were recorded in the land registry drafted by the monk Pietro Zappata de Cardenas in 1774. The paper stated that the building, although it was spacious and elegant, was not enough productive. That's why, at Zappata's suggestion, the Duke of Florida Don Vincenzo Migliaccio Bonanno became the owner of the dwelling in September 1774 and the first two years got involved in a comprehensive restoration (G. Pace, 1937). He was the eldest son of Donna Lucia Bonanno Spatafora and Don Ignazio Migliaccio dei Principi di Baucina and Duke of St. Donato. After his mother death in 1750, he was named the eighth Duke of Florida. Due to him the run of the Duchy by the Bonanno family passed on to the Migliaccio family, whose members played leading roles in Syracuse. Like its predecessors, Don Vincenzo was very well liked because he did his utmost for the development and improvement of Florida. He died shortly after the purchase of the building and therefore was not able to begin the restoration work expected.

In 1778 the old house was bought by Baron Guglielmo Benevento Maria del Bosco, who started a long process of reconstruction. It lasted for a decade and changed deeply the appearance of the building, which became the Baroque jewel that we can see today. He was the Baron of the feuds of Monteclimiti, Didini, Casalgerardo, Frescura and Belfronte and he was employed in various capacities, all of which were quite prominent. In 1768-69 he was Royal Depositary, in 1770-71 Senator, in 1781 Justice Captain, in 1785 Superintendent of the Royal Fortresses, in 1794 Royal Commissioner.

The family Beneventano descends from the powerful and aristocratic family Orseola, also called Orsini, who was from the city of Benevento in Italy. Being in conflicts with Pope Bonifacio VIII, it was persecuted and forced to move to different cities across Italy: Venice, Rome, Naples and Lentini in Sicily. In 1298 Matthew Orseolo arrived in Sicily, where he changed his family's name in Benevento, as homage to his hometown, and abandoned his previous coat of arms, depicting a rose in a golden field. Then he married Princess Flaminia Colonna. His descendant was Guglielmo Benventano, who was granted by Queen Elizabeth of Aragon the feud of Ragalna in Lentini. The family Beneventano is ascribed among the noble families of Syracuse, Lentini and Modica. His coat of arms is surmounted by a crown of Baron and consists of a golden background with a red lion and a red bear, facing each other, on three green mountains.

#### **4. DESCRIPTION OF THE BENEVENTANO PALACE**

The elegant Beneventano del Bosco Palace, surrounded by Baroque churches and palaces, is located in Ortigia in the spectacular Piazza Duomo square. It is considered the masterpiece of Luciano Ali, star of the long restoration process from 1779 to 1788. In 1789 it played host to Horatio Nelson when he stopped to restock before the Battle of the Nile and in 1806 it was chosen to held social events in honour of King Ferdinand, during the second stay of the Bourbons in Sicily.



The façade, divided into three horizontal orders which are bordered on either side by pillars and steps, is a valuable example of late baroque style. It is the result of several modifications made to the medieval prospectus such as, for instance, the addition of balconies and the consequent lifting of the attic and placement of the great convex portal. The entrance, standing out at the centre of the ground floor, is adorned on both sides with double Corinthian columns. On either side of it there are six small wooden portonidi (three per side) and on each of them, at first floor level, are placed rounded balconies enclosed by marvellous wrought iron gates. The central balcony, at the second floor, located above the large portal, is surmounted by a broken pediment with frieze similar to those on the six side openings, which are also enclosed by elegant railings, but larger in size, and laying in the middle the coat of arms and the plaque commemorating King Ferdinand II of Bourbon's stay at the palace<sup>6</sup>.

The upper part of the prospectus consists of a battlemented entablature ornate at the centre with an elegant triangular pediment and on each side of it (three per side) there are six hexagonal panels, embellished with floral carvings. Finally, the attic is crowned with a central pediment flanked by two spherical pinnacles, which are repeated, one on each side, at both ends of the façade. The main entrance opens into a small lobby, which has a barrel vault decorated by stucco bas-relief representing the blind beggar Belisario<sup>7</sup>. From here, through two side doors, you can enter the building, and through the iron railings you have access to the courtyard, covered with cobblestones, which creates a play of black and white stylish curvilinear shapes. The courtyard overlooks the median body prospect of the palace, decorated with twisted pairs of Corinthian columns and enriched by a portico with three arches. The central arch leads, through the monumental staircase designed by Ali and produced by Ferlito, the marble maker from Catania, to the apartments on the upper floors. The side arches lead to a second courtyard where it is accommodated a wall fountain. The rich and adorned Baroque architecture that characterizes the exterior of the building enhances even the rooms on the upper floors. These are furnished with antique furniture and boast high ceilings plastered by Gregorio Lombardo from Palermo, paintings by Ermenegildo Martorana, crystals and Murano glass chandeliers commissioned provider Maltese Gaetano Cecuti. The side arches put into a second courtyard that features a wall fountain. The rich and adorned Baroque architecture that characterizes the exterior of the building enhances even the rooms on the upper floors (photo 3).

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<sup>6</sup> Inscription on the plaque: "Ferdinando II utriusque Siciliae regi clementissimo qui syracusarum portua et moenia illustrando hanc aedem adivit honestavit beavit Franciscus Beneventano in grati animi pignus et accepti honoris memoriam posuit Die XXVII Aprilis MDCCCVI". Translation: "To the gracious Ferdinand II, King of the Two Sicilies, who while made the ports and the walls of Syracuse shine, visited, honoured and beatified this house, the grateful Francesco Beneventano in memory placed the plaque on 27 April 1806.

<sup>7</sup> According to a medieval legend, the brave Byzantine general Flavius Belisarius, was blinded on the orders of Justinian and forced to beg at the Princiara door by the Aurelian Walls in Rome. It is a recurring subject in painters' works in the eighteenth century, since the blind beggar Belisarius became the symbol of the whole injustices committed by the rulers of the time.



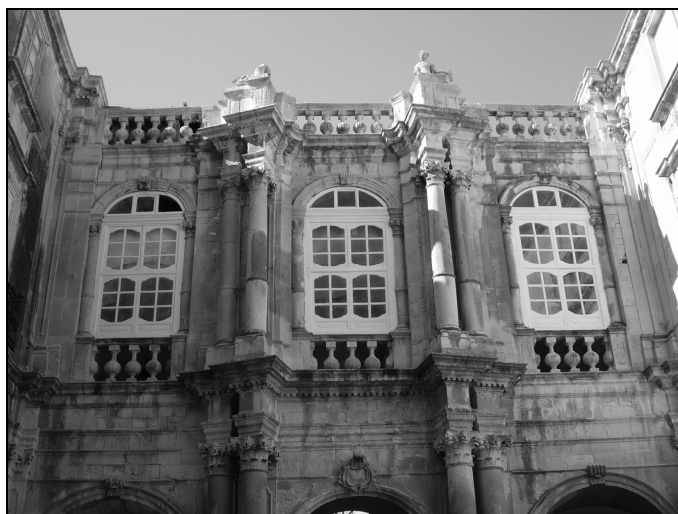
***Photo 3: The main facade of the palace***  
(source: Cotugno, 2011)

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*Photo 4: Internal facade of the Palace  
(source: Cotugno, 2011)*

## **6. THE ROLE OF THE BENEVENTANO PALACE IN THE CURRENT SOCIETY**

Today the building is inhabited by Pietro Beneventano Baron of Monteclimiti that, as traditionally his family members did, occupies several positions of considerable importance in the territory. He is the Delegate to Malta Grand Priory of the south-eastern Sicily, Censor and Counsellor of the Bank of Italy, the first elected President and Founder of Rotari Club in Ortigia. As a worthy heir of Guglielmo Beneventano, who started in the middle of 1700 the production of the well-known Moscato di Siracusa, carries on enthusiastically to work on the Sicilian wine. Due to him the vineyards and the cellar were renovated, the wine growing was expanded, expert consultants increased the wine quality. On the ground floor in the wine cellars are stored Moscato di Siracusa Doc, Chardonnay IGT Sicilia, Nero d'Avola Sicilia Doc. Preoccupied with protecting our heritage and as Head of the FAI delegation to Syracuse, Pietro Beneventano is also involved in organizing activities of historical and artistic interest. Therefore, the palace and especially the great hall, displaying the ancient splendour of the eighteenth century, become the ideal forum to regularly host conferences, meetings, seminars and exhibitions with the participation of leading experts in the world of culture and art.

The lucky ones to cross the threshold of the palace can admire, over the rest, the precious collection of Pietro Beneventano, dedicated to the representation of Syracuse. The eighty images, dating from the sixteenth to the late eighteenth century, can be classified into three types: the legendary Syracuse, the picturesque Syracuse depicted by the Grand Tour travellers, the real Syracuse planned by engineers and hydrographers. The description of the

mythical city, of ancient origin, is uncertain and badly defined, while the representation made by the travellers aiming at providing information, although depending on the artist's point of view, is more objective and scientific. Finally the real Syracuse, due to the fact it was an important Spanish stronghold in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is depicted by drawings of fortifications, harbours and city maps (Dufour, 1995).

By a careful observation of the maps, drawings, engravings and prints, mostly gathered from books or atlases, you can see the different faces of Syracuse, one of the largest cities in the ancient world. By looking at the most recurrent objects displayed in the works of art, such as the Greek Theatre, the Latomie, the Athenaion, the Fountain of Arethusa, the Tomb of Archimedes, you can retrace the historians and artists' path between 1500 and 1800. By analyzing the various representations and taking care to distinguish what is the result of the imagination and what is not, you can even see the changes in places, monuments and natural features that have occurred throughout history.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Syracuse is located in an area defined as the ideal settlement from ancient times to the present due to small peninsular formations (Augusta, Thapsos, Ortigia), large areas of ports, fascinating shaped fjord incisions, landing places and long beaches. Aware of its potentialities, this city has recently invested a lot in its priceless heritage of history and culture. as The Beneventano Palace represents a high resource at tourist level since it is by far one of the most prestigious dwelling in Ortigia.

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