

SUBTITLES

Vania Cauzillo >> Welcome to the O'City podcast, a project financed by the European Community, which promotes, through the Orange Economy, the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of 13 European cities in order to develop the identity, pride and social wellbeing of citizens.

Here in Italy, today we are talking about Matera, a city known throughout the world for its cultural heritage, thanks also to UNESCO, which in 1993 recognised the Sassi and the park of the rock churches as a world heritage site.

A city also known thanks to the many films shot in the unique setting that the city offers, a white postcard made of roofs and caves. But today we will tell you about Matera with many guests in another light, or better in another colour, green. Not many people know, in fact, that Matera is the greenest city in Italy, according to a study carried out by the local government study centre. In other words, it has the largest surface area per capita.

In addition, many citizens take care of urban green areas, and today we will listen to the testimonies of the protagonists of this process of enhancing the green and naturalistic heritage of Matera. Let's start with a short jump into the past with Mimì Coviello, an architect who, thanks to her PhD project, has mapped the green areas of the city. Mimì, can you tell us something about the historical relationship between the people of Matera and nature and about your Agri Natural project?

Mimì Coviello >> My PhD research on urban agriculture and the city was definitely an input for the urban regeneration project that is AgriNetural, which wanted to put together, the idea of disused private public spaces and environmental degradation, together with the need for sociality, food production, content and open source systems. In short, a lot of stuff. The Agri Netural project was born in 2012 and the aim was to create a collaborative platform that would map unused areas in the city of Matera and make them available to citizens and the community, thus providing tools to rethink space, experience space differently and generate other communities.

Vania Cauzillo >> Mimì, how did the citizenship welcome this initiative?

Mimì Coviello >> It is clear that there is a sea between what is said and what is done, which is perhaps the sea of scepticism. I believe that this scepticism really has ancestral roots, and that it will take time before the sense of the common good of the community is not the same as it was 50 years ago when sharing was synonymous with poverty and destitution. The new generations are enthusiastic and see an asset in this common good, the older generations are certainly struggling more, but despite the difficulties I trust in time.

Vania Cauzillo >> thank you Mimì. Fortunately, young enthusiasts like you live and work in Matera, but also like Michele Mangione, who not only studies urban regeneration at the Department of European and Mediterranean Cultures of the University of Basilicata, but also applies it on a daily basis. Michele would you like to tell us how?

Michele Mingione >> I am Michele Mingione, I study at UNIBAS in Matera and I am graduating in PAO, landscape environment and urban green. My professional profile is somewhere between a landscape architect and an agronomist. Studying in Matera has given me the opportunity, through various projects, to experiment and put theory into practice. My mission? To make the most neglected places in the city breathe by giving them a green footprint so that the citizenship becomes aware of the importance of nature and ecology. I then imagine various educational, artistic and sporting activities within these spaces. One of the projects I am particularly keen on is the one we are carrying out with the association NOI ORTADINI, with which we are creating a food forest in the Rione Sera Venerdì in the city of Matera.

Vania Cauzillo >> putting ideas and theory into practice immediately, a perfect approach to experimenting and trying things out, thanks to Michele. Regarding the Noi Ortadini project, however, I am curious to know the precise meaning of the word ortadino, as well as the objectives of your association. Let's ask Andrea Grieco, the president, directly.

Andrea Grieco >> I am Andrea, a vegetable farmer, half citizen and half ortolan, because our mission is to make the citizens of Matera a little more Ortolani, and therefore make everyone a little more aware of the production cycle of the food we eat every day. We are regenerating an area in the Serra Venerdì neighbourhood, one of the first neighbourhoods to be inhabited following the displacement of the sassi, through urban farming practices. We also want to offer a service of environmental education workshops for young and old, and host various events in our space, such as site-specific theatrical performances, i.e. performances conceived and inserted in our precise location, as we think we enjoy a beautiful space. As Vania also said, we have a panorama from which we can enjoy the view of the San Giuliano dam, for example, and also part of the Pollino National Park. So we invite everyone to join us in the garden and we hope to see you soon. Thank you Vania I give you the floor again.

Vania Cauzillo >> A wonderful experience! We are sure that listeners are also looking forward to a theatrical performance in the vegetable garden.

The San Giuliano lake mentioned by Andrea is located about 14 km from Matera in a peri-urban area where, in addition to horticulture, there are also those who practice reforestation in the villages immediately outside the urban centre, such as Borgo Picciano. Here there is the Roccia Viva association, which has been carrying out the reforestation, education and Perm culture project for years on the land of the organic and educational farm "La Fiorita" and elsewhere. Let's listen to Piero, the founder of the association

Piero Franco >> Hi everyone, I'm Piero, the president of Roccia Viva, made up of a group of volunteers who have been working in the area for three years on all the methods and practices of permaculture, that is, to ensure that humanity can have a permanent future on our sustainable planet, and we have worked so far by organising courses, We have worked so far, organising courses ranging from bio-construction to how to create a vegetable garden, how to have a compound worm, how to build a raw earth oven, but above all with reforestation, that is, the regeneration of eroded and sterile soils starting from plants that are endemic to our territory, and it is an incredible work that has involved the local community. We look forward to seeing you on social networks and on our website. Thank you!

Vania Cauzillo >> Well, thank you very much Piero! Remaining outside the urban boundary of Matera, we invited the hiking guide Mimmo Giovinazzo in art, Tree philosophy who will make us travel with the mind telling us all that the landscapes of the Murgia and Gravina have to offer and what we can do to preserve them.

Mimma Giovinazzo >> You cannot understand the history nor therefore the present of the city of Matera if you don't look at it from the Murgia plateau, which is not only that portion of territory that you can see looking out from the stones, the so-called Belvedere. Instead, we are talking about an area of about 8000 hectares, an archaeological and historical park, a special protection area and a site of community interest for the presence of a very rich plant and animal biodiversity and a kaleidoscope of landscapes that can really surprise the visitor. As an environmental excursion guide, I invite you to stay for several days, allowing yourself to explore this area in all its nuances and, above all, in a slow way. This is because it is a place made up of delicate balances that must be approached with a certain respect, but also and above all because this is the only way to truly appreciate a place that can be both very stimulating and equally peaceful if you walk at the right pace.

Vania Cauzillo >> thank you Mimma, I would say that you have rounded off our journey through green Matera on a high note. We hope that this podcast will inspire you to visit this beautiful city from another perspective by discovering the cultural but also the natural heritage. We look forward to seeing you in O'City Matera.

See you soon!