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## Planning for conservation: accessibility and management of cultural heritage

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# Planning for conservation: accessibility and management of cultural heritage

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**Abstract.** Cultural Heritage must today be the new centers of associated life, emotional spaces in which to feel part of a community that includes everyone. In Italy, the "Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code" defines the valorization of cultural heritage as those actions aimed at facilitating the use, knowledge, and conservation of the heritage. It is about creating a virtuous network of relationships that places cultural heritage at the center of a conservation circuit based on fruition and valorization. We are talking about a conservative model based on increasing visitor flows and not just on protection as an end in itself. The cultural and tourism industries intertwine, developing interactively: the former enhances the creativity of the latter while the latter provides a support platform and a catchment area for the former. The identification of a new user figure who can vary in age, geographical and social origin, cultural background, and physical or mental abilities is fundamental. Today, we can consider assimilating the concept that accessibility constitutes an integral part of the protection project in the broadest sense of "integrated conservation," which adds planning and management tools to conservation. If the decisive step from a legislative point of view was to review the concept of exemption from accessibility requests for historic buildings with the enactment of Law 13 of 1989, another significant watershed is undoubtedly the activation of the National Museum System, which places accessibility as an indispensable objective.

**Keywords:** Accessibility, Cultural Heritage, Conservation.

## 1 From Cultural Heritage to Cultural Tourism

Today, Cultural Heritage must be considered the new centers of associated life, places of collective events, emotional spaces in which one can feel part of a community that includes everyone. The valorization of cultural heritage in the "Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code" (Legislative Decree 42/2004) is guaranteed by indications to encourage use, knowledge, and conservation. These are actions aimed at creating a virtuous network of relationships that places cultural heritage at the center of a conservation circuit based on fruition and appreciation. It is a conservative model based on operations aimed at generating visitor flows and not protection as an end in itself. The monument remains alive as it is part of an emotional flow that affects multiple generations and all social classes. Enjoyment and knowledge are the basis of so-called cultural tourism, based on the desire to shorten the distances between oneself and the cultural heritage of a specific civilization. The term "cultural tourism" has been used since 1995 (Silberberg, 1995). The cultural and tourism industries develop in a mutual and interactive way: the former enhances the creativity of the latter while the latter provides a support platform and a catchment area for the former. The relationship between heritage and territory can generate countless possibilities, a very complex cultural offer system, and an important position for places from a tourist's point of view. This process tends to direct and increase the museum offering, acting as an immaterial multiplier of development (McKercher., 2002). The World Tourism Organization (WTO) states that "cultural tourism represents all movements of people motivated by cultural purposes such as study holidays, participation in live performances, festivals, cultural events, visits to archaeological sites and monuments, pilgrimages. Cultural tourism is also about the pleasure of immersing yourself in the local lifestyle and everything that constitutes its identity and character".

Cultural tourism refers to Cultural Heritage, including both material assets (monuments, churches, museums, castles, historical and archaeological sites, etc.) and intangible ones, in the broadest sense and in accordance with the definition of Intangible Cultural Heritage provided by UNESCO Paris Convention of 2003. The international charters on the rights of the environment and cultural heritage, starting from the declarations of UNESCO in 1972 and the Council of Europe in 1975 up to the latest European

resolutions, define cultural heritage as the wealth of a nation, highlighting the role in the formation of the concept of a nation (Cucco, 2020).

## 2 The new visitor and visitors' journey

The starting point is the identification of a new, more complex figure of the user who can vary in age, geographical and social origin, cultural background, and physical or mental abilities but will have the common denominator of the desire to shorten the distance between oneself and the objects or places of knowledge. New users may be attracted by the usual cultural activities but also by the specificities of a territory, giving life to the so-called experiential tourism, which, as the word itself suggests, puts the visit experience at the center. The new concept of visitors' journey, borrowed from the customer journey (Douglas B. Holt, 1995), places users at the center of the research and makes known the process that determines the behavior of buyers/visitors inside the museum. Experience, integration, and classification are the dimensions of play he added. Knowing the visitors' journey helps the museum institution to understand and analyze the motivations and behaviors of users and to plan the route in order to eliminate any possible physical, social, sensorial, or cultural "obstacle."

This analysis, by studying the behavior of a potential visitor, aims to facilitate some basic actions such as:

- identify the museum in the area;
- choose the offer of a specific museum compared to that of other museums or other sporting and/recreational activities;
- plan the visit by identifying the time, physical, economic, and organizational resources.

The "path" of the users is not exclusively the one they have to take inside the museum once they have crossed the physical or virtual threshold. There is a before, a during, and an after. At first, we need to

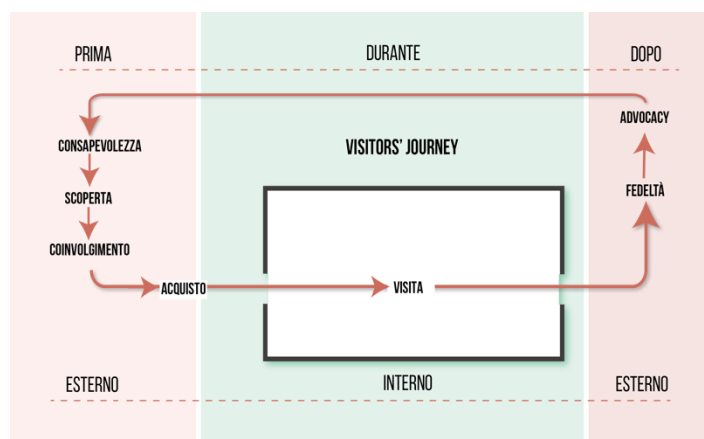


Fig. 1. Classification of the museum visitor path

make the museum and its offerings known, stimulate the desire for knowledge, and facilitate the organization of the visit also for the wider audience mentioned above. Fundamental to the structure is the website, which constitutes the museum's business card and must, therefore, contain all the information necessary to organize the itinerary. To give an example, an autistic person may need to evaluate the level of noise in the rooms, the lighting, or the crowding. A mother with a pram may want to check the presence of steps, the possibility of letting her child play or crawl, or even the possibility of touching the

works, given that children, as well as blind people, love tactile interaction. Everything that the museum declares must actually be present and usable during the visit. Any faults in the systems must be reported.

The Museum acts as a guarantor of its services in terms of directions, accommodation, activities, accessibility, and any type of service indicated. During the visit, it is desirable that the visitor's expectations regarding the visit experience are confirmed – and perhaps exceeded – upon leaving the museum. In the post-visit phase, in fact, each visitor will share what they have experienced and will contribute to activating a virtuous circle, increasing visitor flows and the social effectiveness of the museum itself in the area.

## 3 Accessibility: from obstacle to project quality

The Cultural Heritage Code aims precisely at the concept of visit ability and to facilitate the use of cultural heritage through specific indications for the elimination of all those architectural barriers that prevent visits. The theme of accessibility began to spread only between the end of 1980 and the beginning of 1990, following the approval of law 13/89, which extended the obligation of regulatory adaptation to existing buildings if subjected to restoration works, and through the issuing of provisions implementing

the regulation, Ministerial Decree. n. 236 of 14 June 1989 (Technical requirements necessary to guarantee the accessibility, adaptability, and "visit ability" of private buildings and subsidized and subsidized public residential buildings for the purpose of overcoming and eliminating architectural barriers). Article 3 establishes three levels of quality: accessibility, the possibility of a visit, and adaptability of the visit.

Accessibility is the highest level of quality because it allows everyone to enjoy all spaces open to the public. "Visit ability", on the other hand, corresponds to a level of accessibility limited to a more or less extensive part of the building, to also allow people with motor or sensory difficulties to live a basic visit experience, accessing the social spaces and to the toilets.

The possibility of visiting must be guaranteed except for some exceptions, expressly indicated in paragraph 3.4 of the decree. Finally, adaptability, i.e., adapting the museum visit to the user's conditions, represents a limiting condition with a reduced level of quality. It's important to underline that the legislative instrument specifies that the visit must be able to take place in conditions of absolute safety and autonomy. All those systems that allow everyone to move freely within the space without having to resort to the help of personnel or being directed along exclusive and segregating routes are therefore hoped for and recommended. In the Official Journal no. 114 of 16 May 2008, the Mibac (Ministry for Cultural and Environmental Heritage, now MiC) publishes the guidelines to allow everyone to access and use places of cultural interest in compliance with the principles of "Universal Design" for new buildings and in terms of breaking down barriers still present in historic architecture. It is not a simple "regulation" but rather a radical change in the concept of cultural heritage management that opens up to the needs of the public. Today, in the light of a fruitful debate, we can consider assimilating the concept that accessibility constitutes an integral part of the protection project in the broadest sense of "integrated conservation," which adds planning and management tools to conservation. These are sustainable development processes in historic areas aimed at ensuring and maximizing the long-term vitality of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The revitalization of this heritage includes multiple aspects, and the accessibility of places is perhaps the most innovative in the new meaning of resource and not a barrier or limit to planning. The adjective integrated, therefore, refers to active conservation, based on knowledge of heritage as a value and on the presence of an increasingly vast and heterogeneous public. Maximizing the use of a cultural asset, such as a museum, means, first of all, making it easy and accessible to everyone, even to those who suffer from a deficit in motor, cognitive, or sensory abilities for temporary or permanent periods. The commitment currently goes further, including the possibility of feeling represented and also included for the people (genderfluid or immigrants, for example) who permanently characterize our society. Cultural barriers are, in fact, also those linked to social representation (Ciaccheri, Fornasari, 2022), highlighted in exhibition choices or communication methods. Today, planning in the management of a cultural asset can no longer ignore social inclusion. New conditions of use are therefore specified: first of all, the democratic friction of the space, i.e., usable by anyone; flexible, adapting to different abilities; simple and intuitive, with an easy-to-understand distribution of functions; perceptible, which transmits and does not hide sensory information (lights, colors, sounds, textures); that minimizes risks or unpleasant or discriminatory actions and involves minimal effort; finally, careful use of measures to make the space accessible to all.

A concept of environmental comfort is therefore emerging that goes beyond the simple elimination of physical obstacles, referring to that feeling of autonomy and safety so desired by people with disabilities, i.e., the possibility of using spaces without limitations or alternative and discriminating routes. The current sensitivity is based on scientific research in recent decades, which has highlighted how making a place more accessible is an advantage from which multiple categories can benefit, and therefore not aimed exclusively at the disabled, understood in the classic sense as a person with a motor system or deficit sensory. A *Universal Design* that aims to create places that are easier to live in in all living conditions. The difficulties, temporary or permanent, can be motor, sensorial and perceptive, intellectual, linked to developmental age, language or chronic pathologies, physical characteristics, or specific dietary regimes. Accessibility goes from being a requirement to becoming an essential quality, which adds rather than removes freedom from the architectural project. For the management of museum assets, this new approach represents a great opportunity for the development of solutions aimed at guaranteeing the desired maximization of usability. The restoration project gives new life to the assets, reinserting them into the contemporary circuit. The intervention, therefore, constitutes the moment of returning the works to public enjoyment, aiming to "save them by allowing them to exist for as long as possible, as aesthetically and historically alive parts of our society" (Carbonara, 1996).

Museum spaces in Italy represent a significant part of the cultural heritage due to their social and educational value and, often located in historic buildings, are among the most complex to adapt in terms of accessibility. Thinking about the new users of the museum, the aforementioned expanded user base constitutes a basic issue for the correct development of a sustainable restoration project that aims to enhance the asset, guaranteeing maximum usability and usefulness.

If the idea of Universal Design spread in America starting in 1985, from a working group at North Carolina State University led by architect Ronald L. Mace, who was forced to move around in a wheelchair due to polio, the expression Inclusive Design was born in Great Britain, precisely by Roger Coleman, professor of the Royal College of Art, who used it for the first time in 1994. It's defined as a general design approach in which it's guaranteed that products and services meet the needs of the widest possible audience, regardless of age or ability. In 2001, the ICF approved a World Health Organization classification for creating quality environments, which provides a scientific basis for understanding the interaction between individual and context and the needs of the wider user. But usability alone is not enough to guarantee autonomy and dignity. The Design for All definition was developed in 2004 by the EIDD (European Institute for Design and Disability) on the occasion of the annual assembly held in Stockholm. It's defined as "design for human diversity, social inclusion, and equality," and its purpose is to facilitate equal opportunities for everyone to participate in every aspect of society. In 2006, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reaffirmed individual autonomy, including the freedom to make one's own choices, non-discrimination, and equal opportunities.

The countries that have adopted the Convention are committed to achieving accessibility by promoting research and development of universally designed goods, services, and equipment. Accessibility is understood as a principle (art.3 and art.9) and universal design as a general obligation (art. 2 and art.4). This is now recognized as an essential point for a correct multi-demand approach to planning in general and conservation in particular, which must be "inclusive." The transition from the medical (health) model to the social (human rights) model is fundamental, which leads to considering the person, with or without disabilities, a subject of law. Placing accessibility at the basis of planning for the conservation and enhancement of museums, therefore, means starting from the identification of the needs and difficulties of the wider user base.

#### **4 The creation of the National Museum System**

After much debate in Italy, the time had come to move from theoretical scientific research to the practical application of consolidated learning, not being able to entrust the functional adaptation of the structures open to the public to the individual sensitivity of the individual managers and specifically in this discussion, of the museums. If the decisive step from a legislative point of view was to review the concept of derogation from accessibility requests for historic buildings, with the enactment of L.13/89, another significant watershed is undoubtedly the activation of the National Museum System, which places accessibility as an indispensable requirement.

The transformation of state museums began with the Franceschini reform of 2014 (DPCM 171/2014, Ministerial Decree of 23 December 2014), which identified four functional areas, placing emphasis on relations with the public and management marketing. The museum stops being a self-referential place and opens up to the outside. We must wait until 2018 to begin the establishment of the National Museum System, indicated by the acronym SMN and regulated by Ministerial Decree No. 113. The operational document defines the uniform levels of valorization quality (LUQV) for museums and places of culture to which the art refers. 114 of the Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code. This can be considered the first act to transmit the minimum operating and organizational requirements that accredited museums must possess, previously different from region to region.

Article no. 2 specifies, among the objectives of the National Museum System, the strengthening of the use of cultural heritage through economies of scale aimed at «guaranteeing quality access for users and improving the protection of cultural heritage, through the definition of a homogeneous level of use of cultural institutions and places, of uniform and verifiable methods for the conservation and enhancement of buildings." The legislation specifies that museums that have already been recognized by a regional accreditation system based on quality levels comparable to national ones can be automatically included in the national system. The procedure also involves regions with special statutes and private museums through the sending of a voluntary request for evaluation. It should be noted that inclusion in the national museum system gives museums an edge, favoring requests for funding for modernization projects and, more generally, the economic management of the structures. The request is voluntary and is based on a self-assessment questionnaire where it's the museum requesting accreditation that has to demonstrate and highlight the degree of achievement of the minimum standards required.

The establishment of the National Museum System, therefore, aims to overcome the traditional management separation between the State, Regions, and local authorities in a unitary perspective, which also involves private bodies, and aims to achieve a unique quality standard throughout the national territory. All museums accredited to the National Museum System, regardless of their public or private nature, therefore share a unitary framework of reference inspired by the ICOM Code of Ethics. It is a

professional self-regulation tool, translated into 38 languages and adopted since 1986, which sets minimum standards of professional conduct and performance for Museums and their staff. ICOM Italia has, in fact, actively collaborated in the definition of the National Museum System in the Study Commission (established with Ministerial Decree 1 June 2015) and in the various operational teams, working alongside ministerial managers and officials, sector experts, and representatives of the Regions.

## **5 Sicily and the case study of the “Antonio Salinas” Regional Archaeological Museum**

Sicily has decided to join the national museum system (O.A. 35/GAB of 05.18.2021) and, pursuant to art. 5 of the Ministerial Decree. n. 113 of 21 February 2018, establishes the regional accreditation body, which is responsible for investigating the requests (D.D. 385, 16-02-2022) and whose results should be transmitted to the General Directorate of Museums of the Ministry of Culture for verification and validation by the relevant Commission.

However, the work of this commission has never started to date, and no museum in Sicily is included in the list of museums accredited to the SMN (Decree no. 604 of 17/06/2021). The standards identified in the "Pilot Project for the Accreditation and Monitoring of Quality Levels and Standards of Regional Cultural Places" establish measurable and unambiguously definable quality levels. The objective of Sicilian museums from now on is not only to obtain accreditation and enter the national circuit but rather to aim for the general improvement of performance. In the self-assessment questionnaire, museums must examine eight areas: legal structure, financial structure, structures, security, personnel, management and care of collections, relations with the public, and relations with the territory. As regards accessibility, data relating to accessibility (relations with the public) were investigated, from the retrieval of information on the web to the actual carrying out of the visit.

The objective of the ongoing research is, in fact, to highlight the potential and shortcomings of Sicilian museums in relation to national standards and, more generally, in the light of Universal design for all. It is not simply a question of adapting places to allow access by disabled visitors, but of moving towards a general system of demolition of all those structural, cognitive, and sensorial-perceptive barriers whose scope falls, in different times and ways, on the entire museum users.

It should be specified that some requirements (for example, the structural conditions of the premises, some plant situations, etc.) do not fall within the scope of the direct responsibilities of the individual museum but refer to the owners of the premises, such as the Municipality, the Province, the Superintendency, the Diocese, and so on. However, accreditation allows relations between the owner bodies to be speeded up, withstanding requests, provided that the availability of the museum headquarters and collections is guaranteed for a period of at least 10 years to justify the costs of adaptation.

Many interventions necessary to achieve minimum quality levels are QZB or "almost zero budget," i.e., they do not require the outlay of money for the purchase of material goods but can be achieved through the reorganization of protocols and procedures.

The self-assessment questionnaire analyzes the structure in relation to the public, the collections on display, and the museum staff. In relation to the relationship with the public, the minimum standard requires, first of all, the free movement of physically disabled people. The museum must pay attention to the signs for approaching and entering the museum, the clarity of the orientation systems, the absence of architectural barriers, and the provision of toilets for the disabled. It must evaluate the actual usability conditions of the routes and verify the possibility of enjoying a good view of the collections even from a sitting position. By architectural barrier, we also mean a single step, a difference in height, or a gap that is too narrow, which may represent an insurmountable obstacle and be an impediment for wheelchair circulation, but also for an elderly person with a cane or families with a stroller. The accreditation procedure does not stop at the achievement of the minimum standard but provides margins for improvement (divided into two priority levels), which would guarantee the structure of the Quality Marks. Specific areas of improvement are represented by the provision of tactile information devices or those expressly dedicated to particular user groups, such as visit aids (audio guides, augmented reality, or multimedia supports) and educational and didactic devices (differentiated activities for different user targets, technological supports). The quality mark is also achieved with the presence in the structure of a director, a curator, and a security manager, and with the use of specialized reception staff capable of expressing themselves in multiple languages and in sign language, as well as of specific figures such as cultural mediators, responsible for communication and teaching, capable of significantly improving the museum's offering in terms of accessibility and use of the places.

In terms of safety, in addition to all legal obligations, specific training of staff to deal with emergency and disaster cases is desired at a higher level, even in the presence of disabilities. An illuminating example

is the ineffectiveness of sound and flashing indicators for deaf-blind users, while a raised emergency route can more effectively guarantee reaching the exits.



**Fig. 2.** Large metopes of Selinunte, Salinas Museum, Palermo

that can provide well in advance all the necessary information, also in other languages, including specifications for any disabilities. The museum's margin for improvement includes detailed analyses of the public in terms of customer satisfaction and, more generally, constant attention to detecting inclinations, preferences, and critical issues useful for planning activities and exhibition methods, according to the visitors' journey model already mentioned. When reaching the minimum standards is not possible, the individual structures can enter into a network and integrated offer system. This allows small museums to overcome the limits regarding particularly critical areas, such as logistical and management difficulties, maintenance and safety procedures, optimizing the supply of specialized personnel (such as a curator or an accessibility manager), and opening hours. Even if belonging to a network does not constitute an exception to compliance with the laws that apply to the individual museum. The establishment of the territorial network also allows for easier access to development policy consultation tables, adopting supply coordination strategies, and responding more efficiently to the cultural needs of the community. Particularly interesting is the possibility of creating hybrid networks that involve not only museums or cultural heritage but also tourist and economic operators, creating complex supply chains.

The research verified the standards of Sicilian museums, with the help of a check list in line with the SMN and with the Guidelines for overcoming architectural barriers in places of cultural interest (Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities with Ministerial Decree 28 March 2008). First of all, the four degrees of accessibility were examined: physical, perceptual, communication and experience.

**I** - The first degree examined physical accessibility and, in this case, the possibility for everyone to use the spaces in an equal, inclusive, and non-discriminating way. When conditions did not guarantee full autonomy of the visit, full accessibility was replaced by the concept of visitability of the property, with alternative solutions especially in archaeological areas.

**II** - The second degree considered sensorial-perceptive accessibility, i.e., that set of measures aimed at not creating discomfort. Think, for example, of the texture of a floor, the gratings, or the noise level of the rooms, which can cause disorientation in visually impaired or autistic people.

**III** - The third degree analyzed the communication of the museums, from the clarity of the website to the aids useful for planning the visit independently. In particular, access and quality to information, if this were available in a clear and reliable way, and if it allowed a self-assessment of one's visit possibilities.

**IV** - At the fourth level, wayfinding was evaluated (Vescovo, 2022), i.e., the possibility of enjoying the experience. The possibility for all museum users to simplify orientation, understand, and better enjoy the visit in an autonomous, fulfilling, and satisfying way was analysed. Just think of the captions of an exhibition, the brochures, the signs, the icons and the pictograms.

The research work then merged into a case study, the "Antonio Salinas" Regional Archaeological Museum in Palermo. Following the model of the SMN questionnaire, we begin with the analysis of the legal status and structure. The Museum can count on the availability of the headquarters and collections

As regards the collections, the minimum requirement provides for the coherence of the new acquisitions with the museum's mission, which is becoming increasingly inclusive and varied. In order to obtain "quality marks," it must be able to represent ethnic, gender, and social minorities. The museum can no longer ignore or underestimate its educational function and expertise towards its territory, positioning itself as an attractive pole. The accreditation highlights the need to rethink reception, both to achieve the minimum standard, guaranteeing 24 hours a week, and in the improvement phase, equipping the museum with a computerized ticket office and a booking service

for the minimum required period of 10 years. It is named after the Palermo archaeologist and numismatist Antonino Salinas, who directed it from 1873 until 1914. The House of the Fathers of the Congregation of San Filippo Neri, home to the museum since 1866, underwent a final restoration and modernization of the exhibitions from 2009 to 2018. On this occasion, the exhibition space called Agorà was created in the third courtyard of the convent, and on the ground floor, a reception point and cafeteria with a wi-fi area. It houses one of the largest archaeological collections in Italy, ranging from prehistory to the Middle Ages. The collections and the mission of the institution are consistent with each other.

The management is regional, through the Regional Department of Cultural Heritage and Sicilian Identity, but it was a national museum until 1977 and since 1987 detached from the Superintendency.



**Fig. 3.** Fountain with triton, outdoor spaces of the Salinas Museum, Palermo

Since 2016 it has been part of the "Palermo regional hub for parks and archaeological museums with Salinas Museum," pursuant to the Prime Ministerial Decree. 29 August 2014, n. 171. It is equipped with signs for the approach and proximity of the entrance, although the number of signs could be increased and improved in terms of completeness and clarity. The structure is divided into three floors above ground. The exhibition, open to the public, is distributed on the ground floor and a part of the first floor where temporary exhibitions are set up. The Museum has a total of 49 exhibition rooms and two outdoor cloisters. There is no reserved parking. Physical accessibility to visitors with specific needs is guaranteed by lifts

and stair lifts. On the ground floor, the museum claims 80% of spaces can be used directly but with the aid of stairlifts and/or dedicated staff and 100% accessibility to external spaces and services. A necessary intervention to increase the quality of services would be the creation of an entrance that can be used independently via an external ramp. The Museum is equipped with toilets suitable for all types of visitors. On the ground floor, there is an introduction and orientation space, but there is no staff capable of speaking three languages or sign language. The dining room staff also has the same deficit. Information devices for orientation, such as maps and signs, are there but not suitable for all visitors and not in Braille. The free printed information material is lacking and should be revised. The management and dining room staff section, in relation to accessibility, presents shortcomings with regards to those figures who can improve the offer and increase the degree of satisfaction of the individual experience, such as adequately qualified and formally identified curators capable of guaranteeing the mission of the museum and allow all categories of visitors to be adequately represented (presence of immigrants, socio-economic hardship, gender fluid), staff able to speak sign language and other languages besides Italian, responsible for the communication and teaching.

The quality of the publications is commensurate with the reputation of the institution, and the dissemination of the results obtained from the research conducted could be improved. As regards relations with the public, the museum is open to the public for 49 hours per week, reaching and well exceeding the minimum requirement of 24 hours per week, including Saturdays and Sundays. An entrance ticket is issued, even if it is free, and entries are registered. The external tactile information panel with the full name of the Museum, opening hours, and access conditions is missing. The structure provides essential information for the recognition of works and finds and for understanding the collections, and it is possible to arrange special itineraries for school groups upon reservation. The Salinas Museum preserves documents, researches, exhibits, and communicates its cultural heritage. Over time, it has carried out various valorization activities such as exhibitions, conferences, conventions, extraordinary openings, training courses and internships, guided tours, workshops, and publications, stimulating the active participation of citizens and guaranteeing effective experiences of knowledge and public enjoyment. It promotes and carries out scientific research also in collaboration with Italian and international universities and institutions.

It's lacking in the section of the questionnaire regarding information material on the printed and digital collections, activities, and audio-visual aids for disabled people. With a number of annual visitors equal

to approximately 64,000 units and 79,000 works inventoried, the institution could adapt the level of knowledge of its public and enhance the quantity of training offered and the provision of services, such as a children's area and activities for the disabled motor, sensorial or psychic. As regards communication on the web, the Salinas Museum has a website and is present on the main social networks; part of the communication and management of the ticket office, bookshop, and cafeteria are managed by the cooperative company COOPCULTURE. The website is being rebuilt; the information section is currently lacking, and the service map is accessible on the site but is not easily identifiable. The declared visit time is approximately two hours but it is not possible to plan the visit independently, especially if in a condition of even temporary motor or sensory deficit, due to the lack of a specific page and maps and graphic routes. From the analysis conducted, it can be seen that, with regard to accessibility, many of the actions necessary to facilitate the accreditation of the Salinas Museum to the National Museum System are at no cost and require the review and optimization of personnel and protocols. Some structural interventions would allow a significant strengthening of the structure's catchment area and the possibility for everyone to benefit from a very important social and territorial aggregation center.

## 6 Conclusions

The "right to accessibility" today has become an increasingly pressing right and duty on everyone's part. In fact, every city or town should equip itself with plans for the elimination of architectural barriers



Fig. 4. Agora Hall, Salinas Museum, Palermo

(P.E.B.A. introduced by Art. 32 of Law 41/86). It is no coincidence that any program or financing by the European Community must necessarily take into consideration two fundamental aspects: environmental sustainability and the prerequisites for achieving equal opportunities. The ultimate goal is to break down all the barriers but also all those clichés about accessibility. Too often, the topic is evaded by hiding in the shadow of the rules. We need to change the paradigm, moving from respecting regulations to questioning whether a space can truly be used autonomously and safely by people with different disabilities and specific needs. Enhancing a building by making it accessible is no longer expensive, nor does it lead to aesthetically ugly results; it is rather a design challenge and a social responsibility. Technical difficulties only denote a lack of knowledge of the topic. Today, more than ever, the architect must reject segregating solutions and promote integrated visions. This is not only possible but desirable as an added value capable of bringing new flows of visitors and promoting the economic sustainability of cultural heritage.

Accessibility is a process that allows

everyone to interact with cultural heritage through new multi-sensory modalities, promoting inclusive museums in which there are no special needs but only positive experiences for all visitors. The research highlighted good practices and underlined the introduction of a holistic approach to the challenge of making museums more accessible. For example, it is no longer acceptable to have museums for the blind and museums for "normal" people. The tactile experience can be useful to everyone and create new ways of relating to the work. Many European projects have developed from this inclusive perspective. Significant is the "Come-In Cooperare for open access to museums towards broader inclusion," which, in the wake of the slogan "nothing about us, without us", involves the museums of Italy, Austria, Croatia, Slovenia, Germany, and Poland. The structures involved collaborated with disability associations,

academics, training institutions, and policymakers to define transnational standards aimed at improving the accessibility of museums. With a view to an approach that places the visitor at the center of the investigation, qualifying him as an active subject of change, a satisfaction questionnaire was developed so that users could express their opinions on the pilot museums.

The "Come-In" symbol was created with the aim of spreading the concept of accessibility as an added value throughout the world and guaranteeing the quality of the experience in certified museums. What matters is the transferability of research efforts beyond the specific field to the international level to achieve the desired universal level of inclusive planning for all.

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