THE NATURAL DISASTERS AND THE URBAN ASSET MODIFICATIONS: THE MELITO IRPINO CASE HISTORY

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INTRODUCTION

The history of Melito Irpino, a small village in southern Italy is particular, though not unique in its genre. The development of its urban assets was, in fact, strongly affected by natural disasters such as hydrogeological and seismic events, which determined its transfer to another location.

SEISMIC EFFECTS

From the seismic point of view, Melito Irpino is included in the first category of the new seismic classifications of the Campania Region. The most devastating earthquake that damaged Melito date back to December 1465, which hit central and southern Italy and 5th June, 1688 which had the Saintes on episcopal area, both with In = 32 MCS and M0 = 7 [1465] to 33 MCS, M0 = 7.5, 1688 to 32 MCS, M0 = 7.5

During the research on the urban centre, it was involved in two other seismic events that caused serious damage to the village in 1938 with an intensity VIII and in 1962 with I = 16 MCM and VIII 8.7 Intensity. On August 24, 1942, a violent earthquake of Mw = 4.1 struck the Campi, in the border between the Dunai and Irpinia region, with epicentral intensity of IX MCM. The most affected villages were Adrano Irpino, Casalgrone, Melito Irpino, Montespertoli Irpino, in the province of Avellino. Giuseppe Bagli Schiavone, Molinari, Roman S. Giorgio La Medira, in the province of Benevento. The event was characterized by some prominent shocks that induced people to stay out of their homes, effectively reducing the number of deaths recorded. After more than half a century and considering the effects of two important earthquakes in 1963 and 1969, Melito now features a rebuilt 2 km far from the original historical centre.

HYDROELOGICAL EFFECTS

Due to its landscape and flooding it has been included since the beginning of the twentieth century among the unstable zones to be consolidated. The landslides were caused by peculiar geological characteristics of which the subsidence essentially originates from different consistent dynamic elements.

The earthquake of 21, August 1962 was fatal for the village of Melito. In December of the same year it was left with 7132 inhabitants of 51 houses, most of which were unstable, 390 were to be demolished, 30 unoccupied and 220 were still uninhabitable yet repairable.

From a geological point of view the situation worsened even more dramatically when the whole valley area stretching from the old Ulita river bridge and the historical center of Melito, was affected by a series of large slope instability such as rock falls, complex rotational slip, its cause complicating an extremely compromised situation. This was sufficient to encourage the transfer of the entire village to another location.

CONCLUSIONS

The knowledge of the territory should be not only the base of the urban, social and economic development of any town, but it should be considered also the necessary systemic approach in order to minimize the so-called "natural disasters", and the risks related to them. The transformation of the physical and urban environment due to floods, debris landslides, hydrogeological instability phenomena, as well as to violent earthquakes, cause often irreversible upheaval, or sometimes also resolution, if the regulations were fully respected and applied to protection of the community.

The iconographic collection presented in this work is a contribution to the knowledge of the territory of Melito Irpino (Irpinia, Southern Italy), which due to its adverse geographical structural and urban conditions, have determined the worst variation of its urban conditions. This could be a contribution and a tool for the local community that still want to recognize itself deep in its history and in its origins.

"This beautiful country is reunited deep in your heart even if you do not see it, but I feel it!" These words by Niccolò Di Pietro, a neogristian Melito citizen who lives as a guardian of a rich photographic and cinematographic heritage, synthesis in an exemplary way the feeling of regret and longing that unites the older generations who live today in the old village, and more lives in the new village.

Moreover, all measures of reconstruction have limits, positive and negative aspects. The modern urban asset seems to be far away from the original rural connection, which is a love for the identity of the village. The aim of this work is to pay attention to the reconstruction of other villages affected by similar natural disasters. How and when this should be done is a delicate and complex process of reconstruction, which should consider the rural cultural and economic aspects. Last but not least, the ethical intervention of technicians in the decision to relocate a village must be very important.