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THE «FOSSA DELLA GAROFALA» IN PALERMO: A GEOLOGICAL SITE RICH IN CULTURAL HERITAGE

ABSTRACT: ERCOLI L. & RIZZO G., *The «Fossa della Garofala» in Palermo: a geological site rich in cultural heritage.* (IT ISSN 0391-9838, 2008).

The Fossa della Garofala is a short, narrow valley, enclosed by subvertical banks, which was carved out by the Kemonia creek on the calcarenitic table that makes up the bedrock of the Plain of Palermo. It forms the outermost hem of the Conca d'Oro landscape where, set in an urban area, geological and geomorphological features of value join historical cultural values dating from the Punic period to the XIX century. This combination places the entire area in one of the most significant, albeit little known, pages of history: the history of traditional suburban landscape.

This rare synthesis of natural and man-made landscapes offers the opportunity to create theme itineraries of great cultural and tourist interest, in a city where, like in any densely built-up area, it is almost impossible to decipher the features of the original landscape:

- i) a geological and geomorphological itinerary: from a marine domain to a continental domain;
 - ii) a hydro-geological and hydraulic-technological tour: from groundwater to supply and irrigation;
 - iii) a botanic tour: from pastures and farmed fields to pleasure gardens;
 - iv) a historic-architectonic itinerary: from quarries to artefacts;
 - v) materials and technology science tour for the diagnosis of building materials and their decay.
- For the first time, this work presents both natural and man-made landscapes together, to underline the dangers that threaten our cultural heritage; dangers which are to be referred primarily to stability conditions. It further proposes that the public, from students to the scientific community, is allowed to take part in these itineraries.

KEY WORDS: Hydro-geological environment, Man-made landscape, Cultural heritage, Cultural fruition, Palermo Plain (Italy).

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