

Sassi di Matera

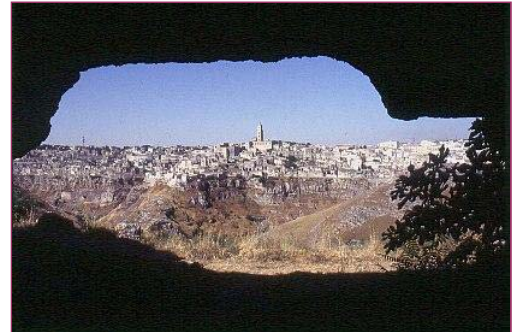
Engineering geological conditions and problems:

The morphology of the area, a rock promontory of calcareous sandstone closed by a deep canyon and bordered by two valley cuts, represented an ideal natural site for prehistoric people settlement (see the orographic map).

The *Sassi di Matera* are a urban complex made up of four districts: “*Sasso Caveoso*” and “*Sasso Barisano*” on the valley bottom and “*Civita*” and “*Duomo*” on the promontory top.

The nature of the calcareous sandstone, very brittle and malleable, allowed to dig several channels and cisterns and to build the houses; but on the other side this kind of rocks is very prone to falls and overturning.

The GNDCI studies report a flood occurred on 24 October, 1928. During the event, caused by a violent rainstorm, waters diverted from their course and flowed in the streets flooding several buildings. Three people died.



The town of Matera (www.sassiweb.it)

Investigations and protection measures already realized:

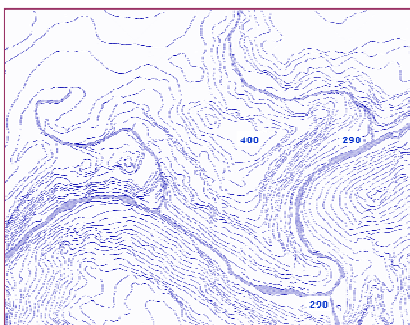
In the sixties, all the old houses were abandoned and so a lot of buildings are ruined.

Now, a restoration plan is trying to bring again the buildings in the original conditions.

The restoration program was established by an Italian architect, Amerigo Restucci. The program provides for a lot of devices in order to preserve the original features of the buildings and of the surrounding area.



The district of Sasso Caveoso
(www.sassiweb.it)



Orographic map of the area (www.sassiweb.it)



The Cathedral of Matera
(www.sassiweb.it)

Supplementary information:

The Committee decided to inscribe the *Sassi di Matera* in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1993. This is the most outstanding, intact example of a troglodyte settlement in the Mediterranean region, perfectly adapted to its terrain and ecosystem. The first inhabited zone dates from the Palaeolithic, while later settlements illustrate a number of significant stages in human history.

References on studies already done:

GNDCI “Progetto AVI – Aree vulnerate italiane - Censimento delle aree italiane storicamente vulnerate da calamità geologiche ed idrauliche” (www.gndci.it)