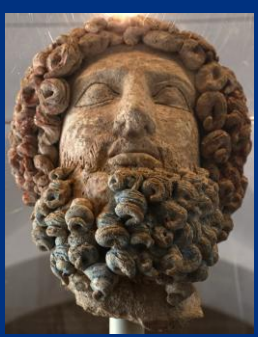
Serena Raffiotta

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY FROM AIDONE, CENTRAL SICILY

Does an archaeological discovery have the power to change the approach of a community to cultural heritage?
Yes, for sure.
The singular case of the community of Aidone, a small town in central Sicily, in the province of Enna, is very emblematic. The discovery in 1955 of Morgantina, a huge archaeological site in the countryside of the town, brought to life not only monumental ruins of a flourishing ancient Greek city, today a popular touristic destination in Sicily, but also the roots and the identity of this small community, showing in a very impressive way how their ancestors lived 2400 years ago. Buildings, objects, activities of the past emerged from the earth, telling of a mysterious world.
But in the past decades, ancient artifacts were seen by the locals as precious objects to sell, thus producing looting as a consequence.













Furthermore, something happened very recently to change the point of view of this community about antiquities.
After more than 20 years of investigations, proving the presence of looted antiquities from Morgantina in museum collections abroad (the Goddess, the Silver Treasure, the Achrolitic statues and Hades head), and a recent process of restitutions from American museums of unique masterpieces, today the highlights of the Aidone museum collection, the community changed its perspective, starting to work for safeguarding and promoting its past.
Nowadays Morgantina is roots and identity, not a place where to make easy money, selling looted antiquities. This very significant process involves youth and adults through many local associations (Archeoclub and Ecomuseo I semi di Demetra), proud to work together with local institutions for the care of their past: this is a Heritage Community!

S. RAFFIOTTA, *"Nella terra scavata dai tombaroli". Il fenomeno degli scavi clandestini a Morgantina tra furti e distruzioni, restituzioni e costruzione di una comunità di eredità*, in G. CALCANI (a cura di), *Quaderni del Master TPC - Esperti nelle attività di valutazione e di tutela del patrimonio culturale e Strumenti scientifici di supporto alla conoscenza e alla tutela del patrimonio culturale*, Atti del ciclo di studi A.A. 2019-2020/2020-2021, Collana Quaderni del Master, 11, Roma 2024, pp. 163-174.