

**Historical narration in the urban context. Display of an ancient useless bridge an open-air museum in Sicily.**

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Built during the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, at the behest of the Norman king Roger II's grand admiral, George of Antiochia, the so-called Admiral's bridge in Palermo (Sicily) testifies to the considerable professional skills of the Arab and Norman engineers, who could also draw on Byzantine experience in bridge-building. Moreover, Admiral's Bridge is a place of great historic interest because close to it took place an important battle between the men of Giuseppe Garibaldi and the Bourbon soldiers during the Italian Risorgimento war. The former won and succeeded in freeing Sicily and south Italy from Bourbon domain. That crucial moment of the Sicilian and Italian history is remembered by the name of the street where the Admiral's Bridge is, therefore called "Corso dei Mille" (Avenue of the Thousand) to honour Garibaldi's soldiers. In 1931 a frightening flood covered Palermo and river Oreto overflowed its banks, but Admiral's Bridge, almost 1000 years old, resisted without any damage and now-a-day it represents an absolutely unusual structure, of great historic interest and symbol of a lost past. The bridge has still its original appearance but under it there is nothing to be crossed: in the past the reality was different because it two opposite sides of the river Oreto but later, the river of Palermo has changed its course, making the bridge useless. Admiral's bridge is one of the oldest surviving post-Roman era arch bridges in Europe and now it is restored and surrounded by a new park, but also being surrounded by traffic-busy Sicilian roads, cut off from its original purpose, and outside the main tourist area. The Admiral's Bridge deserves more touristic interest as an unusual historical object placed into the urban context as an open-air artefact museum even if it is referred to an ancient and useless bridge.