



Provincia di Alessandria

DIREZIONE AMBIENTE E PIANIFICAZIONE

SERVIZIO PIANIFICAZIONE TERRITORIALE

E VALORIZZAZIONE DEL PAESAGGIO

“POST STATIONS OF THE LANDSCAPE” TERRITORIAL ENHANCEMENT PROJECT FOR THE AREAS OF EXCELLENCE OF UNESCO CANDIDATURE

PRESENTATION

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1. Reference Scenario

1.1 provincial Instrumentation

In the implementation of legislative measures concerning transfers of authorities and functions, the Province of Alessandria too has, for some time now, explicit attention to exercise political, administrative and institutional prerogatives regarding themes of territorial planning and its government, paying particular attention to the linked features of quality, protection and enhancement of the landscape.

1.2 the proposal to UNESCO candidacy

In the line of this policy of attention to the problems of protection and enhancement of the landscape, there's the firm support and cooperating participation of the Provincia di Alessandria in the candidacy to the UNESCO World Heritage List of the areas of regional hilly system Langhe-Roero, Monferrato called "Piemonte Wine Landscapes: Langhe-Roero and Monferrato", in relation to identified parts of the province landscape.

The choice of submitting to the candidature UNESCO regional territory historically characterized by the presence of vine – with significant and tangible consequences of environmental and economic nature – has in fact established the landscape value and the high perceptual quality , making it particularly worthy of attention in terms of development and active conservation.

In the Provincia di Alessandria were identified, first of all, two areas of excellence (core zones) located respectively in the No. 5 zone (core zone "Moscato") which affected part of the Alto Monferrato Acquese, and in No. 9 zone (core zone "Grignolino") which affected part of the Basso Monferrato Casalese.

After the submitting of the candidacy Dossier in Paris in January 2011 the ICOMOS, UNESCO technical unit expressed its opinion formulating rather incisive requests for deepening leading to change in some areas.

Among these, in our province, the core zone no. 5 "Muscat" was removed, leaving the municipality territories involved, however, in the Buffer Zone and identifying the core zone areas of Basso Monferrato as "Monferrato of Infernot".

On June 22, 2014, during the 38th World Heritage Committee in Doha, Qatar, the project "Piemonte Wine landscapes: Langhe-Roero and Monferrato" has been recognized as a Unesco World Heritage site. This is the 50th Unesco Italian site and first Italian Wine cultural landscape.

1.3 the affected territory: values and problems

The territory affected is, in both cases, characterized by a high perceptual and environmental quality, characterized too by cultural importance factors that can be brought back to specific social and economic conditions that have affected the life of these areas over time.

The fact that the only productive and economic activity in the territory has been for centuries solely agriculture, together with small craft at its service, linked to special geomorphological features of the places, as well as the specific features of soil productivity or to not properly advantageous in terms of economic and productive profit of agricultural soils (1), have physically conditioned the definition of territory and landscape.

In fact in these areas a kind of monoculture agriculture has developed, linked to vine, in its different kind variations in terms of grown varieties, but that carries a series of features linked to settlement, typological and related to building linked to the definition of built landscape.

In the same way the specificity of crop types has made itself a particular and specific "construction" of the same landscape in its own perceptual features, these aspects related to the ways of cultivation of vine (creation of rows, placing of rows in relation to slopes, slope inclining, etc.); as well as the economically poor profit of growing of vine (2) led to the creation of a built landscape in which no particular emergencies have been under the monumental and architectural aspect, but a more widespread network structure of building products with strong and obvious use destination linked to rural life, buildings more characterized by their construction mode such as techniques and materials used rather than their typological features such as the link between full and void volumetric or the size and ways of uniting building cells.

It is worth noting how these features of the territories in object have suffered – and in part right now – a sort of external situation in relation to main historical communication lines, and although they recovered their visibility in terms of recognition of high quality landscape, during the last two decades of the last century, they still remain minor to the important tourist flows that pass along the ways of communication that travel over this part Italian North-West

It is clear that, for both the particular features of the territory and for the weakness of the territorial network itself, these areas would not be able to stand the impact of a significant tourist flow, but also aiming for a kind of niche exploitation, with the aim of "soft" tourism, related to the quality of landscape in its sense of fruition, the new rediscovery of "slowness" of rhythms and times of life, the promotion of wines and typical products.

2. The project idea

2.1 General considerations

According to what has been said, the prearranged project by the Provincia di Alessandria, with the contribution of the Regione Piemonte related to programme agreement, signed in December 2011, aimed at the enhancement of the territory affected by the UNESCO candidacy - it comes as an additional means to promote territory, as well as to propose as a means to support the candidacy itself.

Called "Post Stations of the Landscape", the project takes its inspiration from the post stations already present in Imperial Age "the mansiones and mutationes", put along the road sections that joined the big settlements.

The origin of the word comes from the Latin "mansus", past participle of manere with the meaning of stopping, remain.

NOTE

(1) it is well known that the lands used for the growing of vines are, almost by definition, "poor" lands in terms of use and agricultural profit.

(2) in fact, it is specific feature of agricultural economy in the last thirty years that gave recognizable value to vine growing and wine production with the introduction of the DOC and DOCG and good policies of territorial marketing

The project, interesting both the Core zone of Basso Monferrato and part of the land of the Buffer Zone of Monferrato Acquese, tries to show perceptual powers of the territory affected, exalting the features related to the landscape view and to the deep link with the surrounding wine land context, this one formed by slopes covered with vineyards laid out in rows, farmhouses and isolated secondary farm buildings, little streets furrowing the continuity of hillocks showing themselves almost in an endless series of farmed soils in different colors for different types of crops and farmed varieties, all with scenic background of the crown of the range of the North-Western Alpi defining skyline, this aspect found and particularly attractive during various seasons of the year.

2.2 special considerations

The project develops in the definition of two circular routes – one for territorial scope – with possibility of branching and additions that set up different alternate path offers valid for every kind of request, more or less challenging.

These routes have been identified and structured preferably for a bicycle use for every of users, though usable with other means more or less environmentally sustainable (car, motor-cycle, walking etc.).

Along the path are identified and pointed out places of high view, from which we can enjoy ample great depth visual sceneries and/or important landscape features. Trying to retrieve, enhance and putting in evidence some already existing situations and partly equipped, present in the territory, but, and above all, articulating the two paths through the creation of a series of equipped stopping points, called "Post Stations of the Landscape" which were built with "minimal" evocative handworks and promoters of visual suggestions, under building point of view, joining them with nature elements in order to obtain a good union with the surrounding landscape.

The role and function of "Post Stations of the Landscape" are represented by the ability to enhance views or landscapes sceneries, within a particular value route or of a particular interest describing specific environmental context, and putting them in evidence in order to enhance the enjoyment, creating real "natural paintings".

The definition of post stations of these landscape paths is entrusted to a "totemic" element, with the role of companion along the route, as a sort of Virgil, which represents the original leading thread easily recognizable.

Shaped as a rectangle, made of CORTEN, with a winding cutting that runs in full height and a central panel, the Totem is first of all a recognizable signal and not traditional.

The kind of steel used, during exposure to different atmospheric conditions, covers itself with a uniform and resisting nice brown colour patina, a coherent element with the landscape.

The rectangular shape derives from the need to indicate clearly the place; longitudinal cutting wants to recall the soft, sinuous movement of the hills and the panel serves to evoke the "picture frame" on the landscape.

Each totem is marked with a serial number and with the QR Code for the digital reading of the path.

2.3 aims of the project

The to which the project aims are the following:

- to explicit, with the material actions of construction of "Post Stations of the Landscape" rather than circuit and routes with landscape high perceptiveness enhancement, the quality elements of territory which make the identity of the territory itself under social, environmental and historical-cultural aspect;
- to insert correctly in the landscape context single interventions, exalting the distinguishing features, enhancing the nature elements of places, paying great attention to the link between built elements and not, to the use of materials, the proper use of colours;
- to hasten and strengthen sensitization and social life in single smaller towns object of the interventions, actions which can be coordinated with other initiatives of population active participation, aimed at social accompanying and at collective awareness of being part of a "special" territory, so as to be the subject of a candidacy to join the list of sites setting up "world heritage";
- to look for through the project of the framing of the landscape, the creation of new "landscapes letting local populations recover values and identities made commonplace by everyday life and custom. For the user and the "foreign" user, conversely, stimulating the visual perception of the "quality" landscape often distracted by a not critical and detached approach;
- to characterize the "added value" constituent elements project, with real attention to the themes of
- environmental sustainability of the project, to the use of elements of vegetation and composition of handmade , with use of materials and building techniques both traditional and innovative respecting site's recognized shared values;
- the research of exemplary feature and of repeating of the actions and experiences in other parts of the territory marked by the same characters; for this point, it is to confirm how the project is applied only to the territories concerned in Provincia di Alessandria, while the same core zones and buffer zones, also extend on the land of the provinces of Asti and Cuneo; It is evident that this experience can be surely exportable with the same prerogatives and the same identical characteristics to other portions of the territory, while maintaining its uniqueness and homogeneity of the sign.

The project, so, represents a kind of pilot project of experimenting the use of landscape that according to its reproducibility and easy environmental integration-can be extended beyond the Unesco core zones and buffer zones, also to other areas of the province worth be enhanced.

3. General view of interventions

The project in question has identified, as it has already been pointed out, two scenic routes that wind within the excellence area "Monferrato of Infernot" and the buffer zone of Alto Monferrato and affects, respectively, the territory of nine Municipalities in Basso Monferrato Casalese (Vignale Monferrato, Camagna, Frassinello M.to, Rosignano M.to, Ozzano M.to, Cella Monte, Sala M.to, Ottiglio, and Olivola) and the territory of four municipalities of Alto Monferrato Acquese (Cassine, Ricaldone, Strevi and Alice Bel Colle).

The routes, we can travel over by various means(on foot, by bicycle, by motorcycle and by car) according to available time, have been planned and designed granting a privilege to bicycle.

Once reached the destination by car it will be possible to find convenient and available parking, and by your own property bicycle, go along the various paths or by other means, to get benefit from a landscape of unique beauty.

Along the paths that wind on ridge roads, generally quiet and not crowded, themselves very suggestive, a series of points with particular landscape view called the "Post Stations of the Landscape" were created, that connected by loop paths, we can travel over, as it has already been pointed out, by car or, best, by bicycle, points out the uniqueness of the landscape.

Inside the routes, the role and the function of the Post Stations of the Landscape are represented by ability to enhance views or landscapes parts of particular value "framing them" in order to enhance fruition, creating a real "natural paintings".

"Post Stations of the Landscape" are made – according to the kind and landscape context with "minimal" handmade, sometimes paired with vegetal elements in order to obtain the best union with the landscape around. The identification of Post Stations has been designed taking into particular consideration two different aims:

1. the enhancement of places with particular landscape value within a high quality landscape route;
2. the identification of the sites within the cities and towns where it is possible to stop and to relax after the "fatigue" of the path in order to appreciate its historical-artistic value and wine-and-food features.

The routes start and finish with the Post Stations of the Landscape located respectively in Cassine for the area of Alto Monferrato, and in Vignale Monferrato for the core zone "Monferrato of Infernot", where it will be possible to park the cars and with a bicycle walk along paths to enjoy them fully or continue with other means of transport toward other stations which identify already existing view sites and others in project.

The described routes have a length ring approximately 33.6 km for the buffer zone of the Moscato (Alto Monferrato Acquese) and approximately 51.4 km for the area of excellence of Grignolino (Basso Monferrato Casalese) and can be shortly summarized in the tables you find in the specific descriptions of the routes.

It should be noted that for the route in the area of Casalese excellence, some shorter rings were identified, (with total length of approx. 25 km), paths that can be done even by less trained users or by who, due to problems of time, hasn't a whole day.