



HERITAGE WITHOUT FRONTIERS

**KNOWLEDGE AND PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE ON THE OCCASION OF
THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION AND
THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ERASMUS STUDENT MOBILITY ACTIONS**

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LANDSCAPE AS HERITAGE FOR INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

PAOLA BRANDUINI ⁽¹⁾

I. Landscape as heritage

Landscape is a system of tangible and intangible permanencies, that have been stratified over time, whose different social groups had attributes different values in the different period of time. The landscape is a “system” and not just the sum of its components, tangible and intangible, natural and mineral. The landscape as a system comprehends its social, functional, economic, religious and political organization. It is not possible to explain the landscape system by reading its components separately (Scazzosi, 2018). Therefore, the landscape is a complex stratigraphy based on continuous process of design, construction, sedimentation, transformation.

The visible and sensitive landscape is the outcome of that process of constant interaction between natural and cultural resources: in the landscape, permanencies and innovations stratify, depending on the meaning attributed by the population of a place and at a specific time (art.1 European Landscape Convention, COE 2000). In the agricultural landscape, the reading and the comprehension of an agricultural building is closely linked to the different historical periods of agricultural land uses, that influenced the need for expansion and changes of uses: e.g. shifting from dairy to cereals production, some stables have been converted into deposits of grains and all the windows have been closed; increasing the dimension of tractors, the gates have been enlarged; introducing the dryer for cereals in the hay barn, the heights of

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roofs have been raised up (Branduini, 2005). It is necessary to analyse how these interrelations have been modified over the time and which signs of artefacts, soil uses, agricultural texture, processing techniques, are still present today and still perceivable in the landscape, so as to read identity of places. This is remarked in the definition of “rural landscape as heritage” provided by ICOMOS-IFLA Principles in 2017⁽²⁾.

2. The landscape as a civil education tool

The landscape is also an educational and training tool (Castiglioni, 2022): its both tangible and subjective nature make it a useful instrument of mediation between territorial and social system (Turri, 1998). Teaching the landscape means “to ensure its preservation and its improvement” (ELC, 2000) and at the same time means “raise awareness about the rights and responsibilities of everyone to express their aspirations on the places they live” (Castiglioni, 2022). When its identity is reinforced, the acceptance of another culture can be accepted: the landscape is an intercultural and intergenerational learning tool (De Nardi, 2013).

Therefore, landscape as heritage can be considered also an

(2) “Rural landscape as heritage: refers to the tangible and intangible heritage of rural areas. Rural landscape as heritage encompasses physical attributes – the productive land itself, morphology, water, infrastructure, vegetation, settlements, rural buildings and centres, vernacular architecture, transport, and trade networks, etc. – as well as wider physical, cultural, and environmental linkages and settings. Rural landscape as heritage also includes associated cultural knowledge, traditions, practices, expressions of local human communities’ identity and belonging, and the cultural values and meanings attributed to those landscapes by past and contemporary people and communities. Rural landscapes as heritage encompass technical, scientific, and practical knowledge, related to human-nature relationships. Rural landscapes as heritage are expressions of social structures and functional organizations, realizing, using and transforming them, in the past and in the present. Rural landscape as heritage encompasses cultural, spiritual, and natural attributes that contribute to the continuation of biocultural diversity. All rural areas can be read as heritage, both outstanding and ordinary, traditional and recently transformed by modernization activities: heritage can be present in different types and degrees and related to many historic periods, as a palimpsest” (ICOMOS-IFLA Principles 2017, I. Principles, I.A. Definitions).

intercultural tool. This has been proven by teaching experience.

The observations are the result of the experience gained while teaching landscape as heritage at AUIC School of Polimi; they are based on the student evaluations and the internships reports, based on field activities, such as cleaning and consolidation of hydraulic artifacts. Students come to AUIC school from all over the world (China, India, North Africa, South America, and Eastern Europe) and they have been asked about the educational tools, the knowledge acquired, and the quality of the final work. The teaching tools used to read the current landscape, the past landscape and the landscape desired by local actors are described. Eventually, the practical action to restore complete the educational tools: they are presented according to their opportunity to enhance intercultural dialogue.

3. Teaching and learning tools

3.1. Observation

Feedback from students has highlighted the usefulness of some tools. The visit, based on a sequence of planned activities and integrated with other disciplines, is the first step to start the confrontation among cultures. It allows the reading and interpretation of the landscape elements and the understanding of the functional relationships that exist today.

It promotes dialogue comparing with one's own experience ("there is or there is not in my country") by recognizing similarities or differences of natural conditions, applied techniques and applied solutions to mitigate similar natural problems. For instance a comparison frequently raises about the water collection and the storage in drought countries compared to the abundance of the Po plain water: albeit opposite climatic conditions often leads to complex irrigation systems that skillfully exploit the slopes and the different soils (such as Persian Qanat).

The survey and the sketches, though not accurate, are imperative to learn how to recognize the materiality of the elements and their essential metric relations.

The identification of sensory perceptions (visual, auditory and

olfactory) allows to impress the memory and to compare the new landscapes with those already visited or lived in the past or in other places.



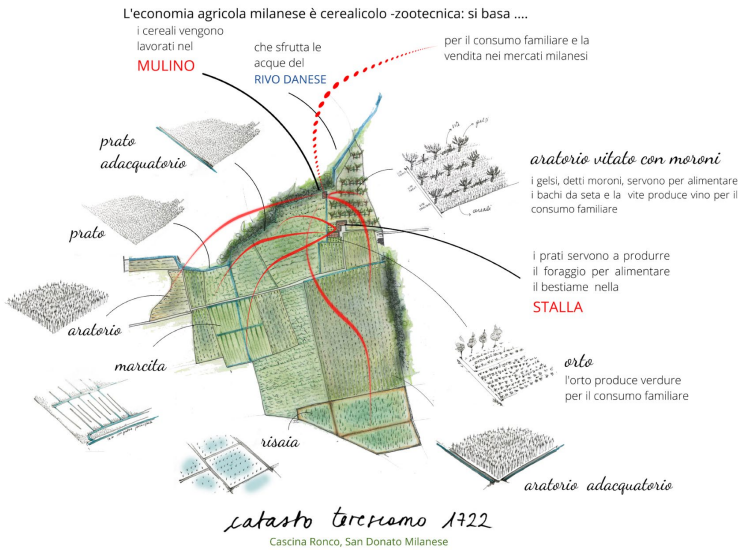
Figure 1. *Sopralluogo* (Picture by P. Branduini)



Figure 1. (following of the previous page) *Sopralluogo* (Picture by P. Branduini)

3.2. *Historical analysis*

The methodology to read landscape as a systems of tangible and intangible heritage is based on the historical analysis and is composed by two stages: firstly, a diachronic analysis is done with the aim to read the transformations at the different historical thresholds, secondly a synchronic analysis is prepared in order to understand the tangible and intangible permanencies (of elements and relationships) still present today. This last interpretation responds to the need to understand only material and meaning pieces of evidence, avoiding the possibility of reconstructing elements that have no material permanence, in compliance with the principles of conservation.



All'intensificarsi della produzione foraggera (evoluzione dai prati adacquatori in prati a marcita) corrisponde la nuova costruzione di fabbricati agricoli secondo una gerarchica organizzazione aziendale

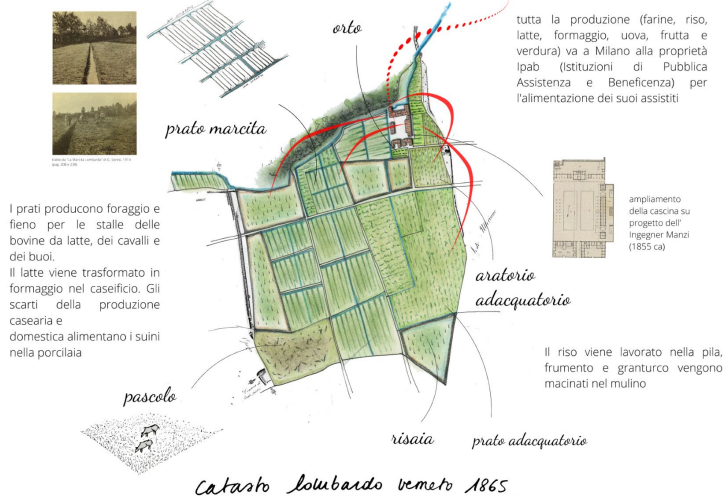


Figure 2. Elaboration of three diachronic and one synchronic map (Map by P. Branduini)

La produzione zootecnica si è contratta a seguito dell'incendio della stalla, i prati a marcita ospitano le colture cerealicole, i prati adacquatori accolgono le colture orticole ...



PERMANENZE TANGIBILI

PERMANENZE INTANGIBILI

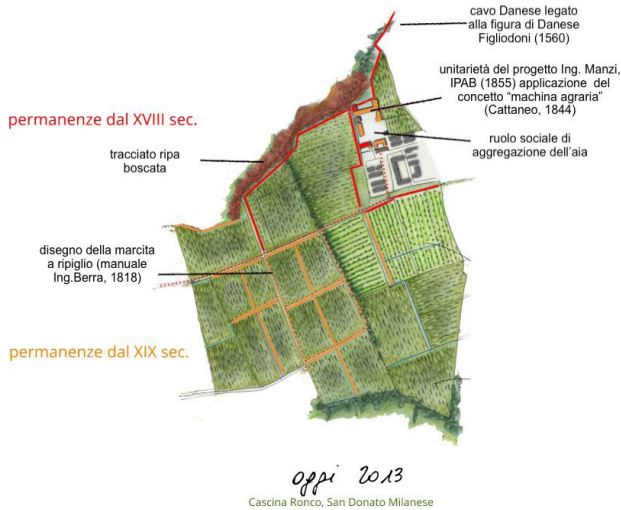


Figure 2. (following of the previous page) Elaboration of three diachronic and one synchronic map (Map by P. Branduini)

3.3. *Debate and gaming*

The discussion structured in thematic groups enables the confrontation among the different view points and the different cultures. The exchange can be encouraged and vivify through ludic games.

The “territory game” is a teaching tool to elaborate the present diagnosis of a territory and his future scenario through text and graphical representations, scheduled by alternate sessions of common work in groups and open sharing (Lardon, 2013).

The role-playing game is useful to collect, synthesize and discuss stakeholders’ opinion by the means of a teacher performance simulating a real council. This tool helps the students to take into account all the different stakeholders’ point of views in the design as well as clarify the opinions of the students themselves (De Nardi, 2013; Davodeau, Toublanc, 2019).

Indeed, at each step of the design formulation, the discussion within the groups and with the teacher is essential to manage the different sensitivity between the Italian and the foreigners about the building and landscape preservation : selective conservation of Italian, reuse of all the artifacts in South America, demolition and reconstruction in Eastern Europe and China, abandon in the Middle East (Cody et Fong, 2007).



Figure 3. Role play with some students (Picture by P. Branduini)

3.4. *Manual work on field*

Practical activities immerse students in the action reality: they make them part of a common action to preserve a common heritage.

After the understanding of the landscape, the acknowledgement of his historical and social values, students can start acting in favor of his preservation and enhancement, with physical activities.

The manual skill allows to learn with the mind and with the body; the action and the gestures are fixed in the memory more easily and in a more stable way and allow to acquire local competences. The students are involved in simple activities around small artifacts to limit dangers, e.g. small ditches and canals: they can learn gestures seen but never practiced, like remove leaves, dig until revealing the bottom of the canal made of bricks or stone, brush the artifacts, open and close small wooden gates, regulate the waters like the campari (the watermen).

They can disconnect their minds from studying, carrying out manual activities and experienced the studying in a different, but certainly pleasant way. Any experience “out of the school”, also with the teachers, reinforce interpersonal exchange and fortify the sense of belonging to a group (Branduini, 2022).

Their action is a tangible step for transmitting heritage to the future generation. The common work enhance the sense of belonging to a community that recognize the same landscape as an heritage, an heritage community according to the meaning of Faro convention (2005): it's a community formed by people from many different countries and cultures, gathered to work together and restore an artifact.



Figure 4. Field activity with students (Picture by P. Branduini)

4. The acquisition of a new sensitivity

Students, seldom used to work on built heritage, are trained to a sensitivity to the heritage. They learn the ability to “re-use a built ensemble without tearing it down” (claims of some Iranian students, Chinese and Egyptian), to “read and interact with the environment” and not to consider the landscape as a “blank sheet”, to “deal with agriculture” (and not only in architecture!), “so to apply it in their origin country” (Egyptian students and Iranians), to know how to “deal with a fragile place (a place with a history) that needs patience and commitment” (Indian and Mexican students).

4.1 Respect for the matter and the people

These words reveal a new respect in front of the tangible heritage, which is the first step towards the preservation and enhancement of the heritage. It is a life attitude, before becoming an approach to the landscape.

It is a pause in thinking before acting, a suspension of the assessment, before leaving any mark on the matter, before partly erasing it or keeping it alive and delivering it to posterity. It is a concept not always easy for young people who do not yet perceive the desire to pass on to their children the legacy of their parents and grandparents, wishful to change the world rather than to retain as it is.

4.2 Unique but fragile

The acquisition of awareness of the fragility and delicacy of each place makes it valuable and unique: the awareness of its exceptionality, its characteristics and therefore much of its identity does not come from the sensitivity of the individual, but from group work and by continuous comparison of approaches and cultures.

In the mutual exchange, the Italians have learned to defend the values of their heritage and the Foreigners to reform their approach and transfer their knowledge to their country. “It is when the public space is perceived as heritage that everything is played to engage a concrete mobilization in relation to the emotional roots of which [the public

space] is potentially the object “(Partoune, 2012). So, to understand the uniqueness of a culture, a confrontation with the other culture is necessary.

4.3 *Integrating old and new and cultures*

Looking at the solutions proposed by the students in the design phase, innovative solutions try to communicate with the heritage (Scazzosi et Branduini, 2014). The design seeks compliance with the form, the organization of the interior and exterior spaces of the rural courtyards and grasp the intimacy suggested by some buildings. They propose functions ranging from agricultural production and transport logistics improvement, to the transmission of knowledge and agricultural techniques, to the improvement of usability of recreational places. They also try to detail scale to minimize the alteration, to insert new elements distinguishing shapes and materials, responding to the principle of recognition of the addition (Bellini et Torsello, 2005).

Sometimes the solutions achieve the preservation of all the matter, sometimes suggest the replacements, sometimes propose new construction: generally all the proposed actions denote an effort to focus on heritage and they demonstrate a satisfaction in taking care before founding an economical solution, as evidenced by Cassia in the survey on Italian farms (Cassia et al, 2015). Within the groups, students try to achieve a balance between the tendency to Italian preservation and Foreigner innovation: the comparison, the dialogue, the common reflection, the expression of diversity of approach, are more useful than the finding of an appropriate solution. This is the direction to achieve a “common intelligence of the territory”, as defined by Partoune, “a way of living a territory that is specifically linked to the fact of feeling-thinking-acting-talking in groups, where local members have capabilities that no actor could conquest alone” (Partoune, 2012)

5. Conclusion

The “landscape as heritage” teaching leads to considerations that go beyond the assessment of the quality of students work. It leads to reflect on the role of the landscape in a multicultural society. Through the landscape education, the teacher plays the role of intercultural and intergenerational mediator and allows approaching students, citizens and professionals to the culture of heritage preservation.

To have a dynamic vision of the future, in a long term vision of change with emphasis on pre-existing structures, a suitable educational work is desirable. It should be encouraged through school and/or civic engagement; it should experience the processes of values construction through the debate, and specific methods to achieve them; it should integrate the work on emotions and sensitivity; it should develop collective skills such as ability to communicate, collaborate, negotiate a project and lead people to collective action. Since the teaching of the landscape as a result of the people culture is a lesson for life, educate to the landscape means educating to the collective values of mutual respect. Within the comparison of the different approaches at the landscape and the different interpretation of the landscape as a result of the culture of an area, it is possible to achieve mutual benefit between diverse cultures.

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