Regional cultural heritage: new vision for preservation in Sardinia (Italy)

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Abstract

This paper considers the changes made to the new Regional Town Planning in the cultural heritage field. Recent legal measures have required prudent and conscious decision making in the use and transformation of the city and territory. In Sardinia (Italy) the D. Lgs. 42/2004 introduced a regulation into the Regional Town Planning favouring the conservation and development of cultural heritage in the course of urban planning. Consequently, this has started research procedures into the context and the value it is given by the local community. These are aimed at promoting the recognition of its value and ensuring the best conditions of public and private use. Conservation and use of cultural heritage imposes new conditions which open up opportunity and which must be dealt with not only as simple qualitative attributes, but as components for economic development. The cultural matrix of place identity becomes a singular element of sustainable development and supports actions which is compatible with the conservation and development of the places’ cultural resources.

In this sense the concept of cultural heritage value comes from a renewed approach in sustainable development which sees the territory as an expression of the community culture and, at the same time, the expression of cultural diversity. The territory is perceived as the result of layered processes in time and space and as a creative opportunity for new interpretations, compatible interventions and economic value.

Therefore, an initial analysis can be based on recognising the intrinsic values of the asset as “cultural-historic heritage”, to be better used by citizens and to be preserved for the future. Following this, instrumental measurements are used to widen the vision in assessing the capacity to produce economic revenue. In both cases it is necessary to understand the enormous significance of the contextual relations system in which the heritage quality assessment takes into account artistic and social values and recognises the functions and relations consolidated in that specific context.

The case studies illustrate how the construction and sharing of information are used together in order to identify specific assessment criteria, allowing the attribution of values to the local cultural heritage, which in turn guide proposals of modes of use which are coherent with “the vision” of the Regional Town Planning.

Key words: Regional Town Planning; Cultural heritage; genius loci; historic centres

1. Introduction

1.1 Italian heritage legislation

In recent years, Italy has become more aware of the cultural, social and economic importance of Cultural and Environmental heritage and the need to preserve it from deterioration, in order to guarantee its integrity over time and its appropriate development. In addition, from a legal point of view, there have been significant modifications to cultural heritage laws regarding both profiles of conservation and aspects of organisation and running in the management of the cultural heritage sites.

In our country the primordial forms of conservation are represented by D. Lgs. 1089 known as “Bottai law” which regulates the Conservation of historic artistic interest, and D. Lgs. 1497/1939, “conservation of the panoramic
and natural beauty”, which introduces an organic regulation of the conservation of the landscape. These, having an idealistic matrix, introduce for the first time the idea of conservation of the resource, evaluating the monument as cultural heritage, because it is situated in a specific anthropic area, full of meaning, a symbol of identity recognised by the community.

Such legislation undoubtedly established the principal legislative reform in the conservation of artistic patrimony, which at the time was one of the most advanced and today is still strongly rooted in the actions of institutions responsible for conservation.

D. Lgs. 1089/1939 was the only legislative reference, until the enactment of the consolidating D. Lgs. 409/1999, regarding “what is of historic and artistic interest”. The 1939 legislation produced an important cultural renewal because it started to protect various categories of heritage, to which, for the first time, it also assigned a decidedly qualitative value. D. Lgs. 1150/1942, otherwise known as “fundamental town-planning law”, assumed such an important leading role that until recently it was still taken as a starting point for new legislation.

In D. Lgs. 1150/1942, the concept of individual property changed to that of the property’s social function, ensuring in the renewal and expansion of the city, a great respect for its traditions and also for its more historic and important parts.

Recently the European Landscape Convention (adopted in Florence 20 October 2000 and effective from 1 March 2004) ensured the protection, management and transformation of all the natural urban and rural landscapes both degraded and of high quality, offering an important contribution in supporting European cooperation on the question of landscaping. All types of landscape are crucial for the inhabitants’ quality of life and should go beyond the local value attributed to them. The idea of landscape should therefore be an ever present issue which permeates the law at all levels, sector-based, regional, provincial, communal and local. In this way the Convention has proved a fundamental guide in the formation of a common policy at European level, contributing to the creation of a common vision of landscaping in European, national, regional and local policies.

In January 2004 D. Lgs. 42 was passed creating the Code of Cultural Heritage and the Environment, in which the content of urban planning at a national level was redefined, setting specific environmental quality objectives for each territory according to recognised value levels. Within this, regional planning instruments are provided to implement coordinated direct action of cultural heritage protection and development, and indirectly to safeguard, plan, manage and deepen the knowledge of the territory. In particular, with article 135 dedicated to landscape planning, the area is thought of as an instrument by which it is possible to recognise aspects, particular characteristics and landscape characteristics of the territory, dictating rules and expectations aimed at the:

- Conservation and restoration of the morphology, architectonic and technical elements;
- Redevelopment of degraded areas;
- Safeguarding of environmental characteristics;
- Identification of development paths compatible with recognised and protected values

Therefore, the field of landscaping is an instrument, a device which on the one hand reads and interprets the issue and analysis breakdown needed to manage the information on the territory. On the other, it responds with a common vision of landscaping. In addition, the Code assigns the job of passing from an evaluative phase of identified landscapes to a phase which defines the planning objectives in order to obtain the future urban quality. Regional Town Planning (RTP) has been a “town planning revolution” for the Sardinian region.

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\[\text{\textsuperscript{2}}\] The Sardinian Regional Town Plan (RTP), whose procedures and objectives were passed under the “Save the coast law” (Regional law n. 8 of 25 November 2004) which introduced safeguarding measures banned any modification within two km of the sea, is one of the most interesting experiences of planning in Italy for its “pioneering” character, and is in fact the first landscape plan approved according to the legislation of the cultural and landscape heritage Code (DLgs n. 42 of 22 January 2004).

The Regional Town Planning, even though it falls back on the council planning instrument, determines a great change in direction for territorial policy and represents an enormous cultural and ethical challenge aimed at recognising and protecting landscape and cultural-historic heritage meant as resources in sustainable local development.

1.2 The state of the art: Sardinia’s Regional Town Plan

If the landscape is a “producer of identity”, in Sardinia such character is particularly evident. From this perspective, landscape planning, together with territorial and sustainable development policies, reflect an idea that identity should be preserved, enriched and constantly revised.

With this in mind, the Regional Town Plan (RTP) was created in 2004 in Sardinia to protect the environment and the territory. This represents a modern legislative framework which guides and coordinates planning and sustainable development of the island starting with the coasts.

It is the first landscape plan in Italy to conform to the “Town planning National law”, which aims to improve the quality of life for citizens and promote forms of sustainable development.

The RTP represents an innovation in its operative approach to building and urban transformations in Sardinia, and precedes and coordinates the town planning procedure very differently to that applied until now which was based mainly on the zoning of the territory.

The territorial policy is equipped with an instrument which protects the environment and which researches the urban quality and compatibility of the transformations.

The RTP aims to preserve, protect, evaluate and hand down to future generations the environmental, historic and cultural identity of the Sardinian territory; protect the cultural and natural landscape and the relative biodiversity; ensure the safeguarding of the territory and promote forms of sustainable development in order to conserve and improve its quality.

It proposes to protect the landscape with the aim of conserving the historic and characteristic elements, highlighting their value and promoting improvements through restoration, reconstruction, reorganisation and restructuring even where the landscape is degraded or jeopardised.

With the effective RTP, in adapting the Municipal Master Plan (MMP), councils have had the chance to enrich and integrate all the environmental, landscape and cultural-historic values, on the basis of territorial knowledge and through territorial evaluation strategies.

In the RTP the cultural-historic profile of Sardinia was reconstructed from an accurate appraisal of the heritage of the island’s historic resources, which concentrated above all on the historic coastal regions. In particular, an original analysis of sources was conducted, based essentially on cognitive and informative heritage from provincial urban planning, public offices and state archives, as well as on historic cartography and on archived resources relative to historic iconography.

In this way a first mapping was reconstructed of the qualitative consistence and the spatial dislocation of the cultural-historic resources. With the aim of promoting the identification and formation of systems of articulation and fruition of the cultural-historic resources, the RTP identifies cultural-historic systems within the Sardinian territory which represent the relations subsisting between settlements and historic, archaeological and architectural paths and other landscape components with high unitary value and important environmental and cultural connections.

The RTP is based on the identification of the “landscapes”. These make up the reference spatial figure of the landscape environment, articulated in the natural, cultural-historic and settlement components.

“Landscape” means an area which is represented by historic cartography, in which “structural, natural and anthropic factors, functional structures and ways of use, forms and actions, symbolic assets and values and spatial and

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3 Sardinia did not have any appropriate legal measures to protect and safeguard the territory, above all for the coastal areas, after the 1993 town planning legislation was annulled. The 14 Territorial Town plans (TTP) were adopted in 1993 to protect the Sardinian coasts and various areas in the centre of Sardinia. 7 were annulled in 1998, accused by the Environmental Association of lacking in protection, with an appeal to the president of the Republic advised by the State Council, and 6 were annulled from October 2003.

4 Guidelines RTP
Figure 1. The procedure of constructing the landscape.

Figure 2. The method used in the RTP.
imaginary collective configurations converge relating to each other and in an homogenous way.\textsuperscript{5} The RTP, in its first homogenous extract, regulated 27 coastal areas, rigorously determined through analysis and the superimposition of both scientific and territorial knowledge outlining the coastal landscape and linking it to the internal landscapes with a unique point of view on the conservation of the region’s landscape. The landscapes are identified both as places where resources of environmental, natural, cultural-historic and settlement heritage interact, and as places for territorial projects aimed at the conservation of heritage. They were catalogued into areas of landscaping, jeopardised or degraded. Following this, the experiment was extended to a further 51 landscapes.

The procedure of constructing the landscape starts from the knowledge acquired from single, cultural-historic, settlement and environmental assets taking part in the RTP. The area represents the reference unit in which choices, planning hypotheses and objectives converge aiming to reach a higher level of quality. Each zone is different in its geology, settlements and tourist centres. Each territorial area was analysed and studied in depth in order to be able to dictate regulations and advise on how to operate at a town planning level. In this way, precise quality objectives were assigned to each part of the territory and regulations attributed to maintain the principal characteristics for urban and building development, but also for recovery and redevelopment.

From a real point of view, the elements which make up the Sardinian territory today can be summarised as follows:

a) the city.
b) the countryside.
c) areas of tourist development.

The main direction of the planning is towards the conservation and development of the entire coastal heritage which is still intact from a transformation point of view. The urban redevelopment should be implemented respecting all the constraints and values identified in the studies of cultural-historic, environmental and settlement structures. For this purpose the RTP, in implementing state orders, identifies various categories of area and structural asset which are submitted to protection, conservation, development and recovery regulation.

The categories can be grouped into two types:
- landscape heritage
- Identifiable assets.

In the study of cultural-historic structures, “landscape heritage” is represented by the areas characterised by buildings of specific cultural-historic interest and by the areas characterised by historic settlements.

Since the cultural-historic structure of Sardinia should be considered crucial towards its landscaping frameworks, it was considered necessary to look to a further note of “asset”, this time defined “identifiable” with reference to the capacity of certain buildings and historical contexts to become indelible memories of regional identity. These “identifiable assets”, that is “the category of building, area and/or immaterial value which gives a sense of belonging To the local community and specifically to the Sardinian culture” are defined in the following categories:

- prehistoric to contemporary historic-artistic elements, including religious, political or military iconic or non iconic representations;
- industrial archaeology and mining areas;
- architecture and historic productive areas;
- specialist architecture and civil history.
- Historical infrastructural networks.
- Weaving and handiworks from cultural-historic food farming country.
- Areas of productive settlements of cultural-historic interest.

The identifiable assets must have historic, archaeological, technological, geographic and economic value. To be historic, the identifiable asset must make us think of the past in its place and time, without ever reducing it to the present; it must be identifiable, therefore highlight one fact among others and underline its meaning, importance and singularity; finally it must be

\textsuperscript{5} General report RTP.
CULTURAL-HISTORIC ASSET
Retracing the perimeter of the ancient and first formed centres (historical centres)

In the case in which the perimeter is smaller than that traced by the Regional Town Planning, councils should provide accurate iconographic documentation which shows recent transformations carried out on single buildings.


Figure 3. The method used in the RTP.

A regulation should be drawn up defining colours and building types in the areas near the historic centre.


Figure 4. The method used in the RTP.
selective, or from the variety of possible relations, must choose what is important or fundamental.

To be archaeological it must, through surveys, supply stratigraphic information, the history of events and cultural attributions. To be technological on the other hand, on the basis of stratigraphic information, processes of formation and transformation of the subject through analysis, measurements and comparisons of the material found must emerge.

The geographical concept means to have the capacity to relate the transformations undertaken to human activity and the physical environment and to study the relation between the subjective and objective components of a specific territory. Finally, economic because it must highlight the overall flow of services, costs and socio-economic benefits which the development brings and which requires a rational conservation policy.

To sum up, the planning makes a great effort to identify and recognise “identifiable material” of Sardinia. The local bodies will carry out most of the detail recognition in the town planning adjustment phase, adding further assets, correcting localising or identifying imprecision, clarifying the confines of the areas in question and the “contexts” of the cultural-historic heritage.

2. Material and Methods

2.1 The adaptation of the MMP to the RTP: various examples applied to different case studies

The adaptation of the MMP to the RTP is the most significant point in the process of cooperative planning that the RTP proposes to carry out. The technical regulations for implementation (TRI) (art. 107) provides for the Councils to adapt the MMP to the RTP within a year of being approved. The adaptation involves the adoption of descriptive, prescriptive and propositional content relative to the environmental, cultural-historic and settlement structures and what is indicated in the technical form created for each landscape.

2.1.1 The analysis of ancient and first formed centres (historical centres)

The RTP recognises the ancient and first formed centres (historical centres) for the Sardinian councils, identifying perimeters existing on historic cartography on a scale of 1: 25,000 e 1: 50,000.

In the adaptation phase, the councils, collaborating with the Sardinian Planning Office (SPO), checked this perimeter on a scale no less than 1: 2000, on historic cartography and surveys directly carried out on the historic centre. The method used in the RTP taken from an analysis carried out by the collaboration of the council and the regional planning office to analyse the ancient and first formed centres (historical centres) is shown in Figs. 2, 3 and 4.

2.1.2 Methodology

Urban agglomerations are considered to be ancient and first formed centres (historical centres) when they conserve signs of remote formation and the original housing, economic, social, political and cultural functions in the territorial organisation, urban system or buildings. In the RTP draft, such centres have been defined approximately, on the basis of historical IGM maps from 1890.

Since these technical maps are on a scale of 1:25,000, it is possible to find errors in the perimeters due to the difference in the scale of the maps.

Therefore the councils need to clarify more precisely the parameters of the ancient and first formed centres (historical centres), dividing the area in question into sub-areas in the adaptation phase from MMP to RTP. In this way it is possible to arrive at preliminary conclusions.

2.1.3 Documentation to attach to the analysis of the ancient and first formed centres (historical centres)

The analyses for the study of ancient and first formed centres (historical centres) contained in the MMP, as prescribed by art. 52 of the RTP are:

a) historic framework of the territory: functions and roles in the established infrastructures and networks;

b) fortified systems and possible parameter marking of the urban structure;

d) genesis of historic structure with the identification of the urban axes and poles over time;
Figure 5. Illustration of the methodology (par. 2.1.2).

Figure 6. Illustration of the methodology (par. 2.1.2).
Figure 7. Illustration of the methodology (par. 2.1.2).

Figure 8. Illustration of the methodology (par. 2.1.2).
d) building structure and type which characterise construction;
e) presence of complexes and smaller constructions with emergent and monumental character;
f) presence of historical green areas, parks gardens and villas, roads and squares (public and private);
g) character, meaning, representation and usability of the urban public space over time;
h) the state of conservation of historic-architectonic and archaeological heritage; critical situations in progress, emerging problems of recovery and reuse (damage from natural causes, anthropic, instrumentation, improper town-planning, inadequate projects etc.).

Historical buildings and boundaries, relevant open spaces, and collective spaces (green, roads and squares) will have to be identified.

These analyses guide the interventions. The objects of redevelopment are not only historic-traditional structures but also boundaries and original relations with relevant open spaces, to be considered and safeguarded in their integrity, as well as the context of collective spaces such as green areas, roads and squares.

As mentioned above, the parts of historical settlements which have been altered and are no longer recognisable should be marked in order to be able to start measures to guarantee the development of modified structures through the
redevelopment of architecture and open spaces and the proposition of traditional chromatic aspects (certified with iconographic analysis, historic photos and/or multimedia) and with a number of established regulations in favour of conservation of the surviving identifiable elements. In particular, for recently replaced buildings, there should be town planning and building renovation interventions available which are coherent with the pre-existing buildings.

Further to recovery, the MMP must set out forms of reuse of the asset which are compatible with its intrinsic constitution and do not destroy its cultural identity. Where possible, residential services should be maintained or restored, as well as the activities which are needed for the historic centre’s economic and social vitality, such as commercial and handicraft businesses and family services, public practices, offices and private studios, the associated health, social and religious structures with respect to the conservation of the local community’s identity. There are incentives for research, cultural activity and tourism, quality handicrafts and services which favour the sustainable reuse of historic centres, including the reuse of building heritage under new hospitality business policies.

Following the demolition of structures, opportunities to maintain the newly acquired space must be carefully evaluated in the public’s interest. In the case of reconstruction (for public work), the approval of the building planning must favour public tenders. Consequently, the MMP must have an analysis of the areas which are currently free following the demolition of buildings. Interventions which change the character of the road network or buildings or even isolated secondary buildings which are historically and culturally important are not allowed.

In this way, environmental and urban landscape redevelopment is preferred with the elimination of the superfluous and recovery and redevelopment of public spaces. Thanks to strategies which identify superfluous, measures to redevelop historic structures can be set out using restoration interventions which substitute the incongruous and incompatible parts, in the search for the original historic centres.

3. Conclusion

The transformations which have taken place over the last fifty years in the regional territory have not been accompanied by an equal capacity to foresee the irreversible effects and the changes to the environment and the landscape. Economic growth without overall planning and protection has caused a reduction in the effective working of ecosystems and a weakening in the quality and quantity of environmental resources.

As a result, the Regional Town Planning was created with the intention of trying to reverse the tendency, to stop irreversible transformations and start positive processes applying regulations in order to reconstruct the Sardinian landscape and obtain a better territorial balance.

The new phase of regional landscape planning was started as a result of an emergency, without doubt connected to the crisis in planning then in effect, but above all to the greater crisis in the relationship between the community and the Sardinian territory. All this has put more sensitive regional heritage at risk, firstly the coasts and even more has blocked the possibility of seeing an innovative “development model” founded on a new agreement between community and environment, in progress. It is exactly this that the new Regional Town Planning is putting at stake: Sardinia’s landscape as regional identity.

Therefore the fundamental objective of the planning is to put the landscape forward as reference for a new idea of Sardinia, founded on the territory’s identity.

In coherence with this objective, the RTP was formulated on the basis of two essential elements. On the one hand, to identify the great invariants of the regional landscape, places of natural and historic identity, the values that cannot be renounced or negotiated on which to found the territorial quality project of Sardinia, building a common consensus on the need to safeguard. On the other hand, reconstruct and reclaim the places with large and small transformations in progress and recover the places which are degraded due to abandonment or overuse, with a project for the new local landscape “regulations”, in coherence with the European Landscape convention.
In this paper the RTP has been described with the intention of explaining how, with such an instrument the Sardinian Region wanted to preserve the territory’s landscape heritage. Although dealing with a pioneering instrument, because it was the first plan adopted in Italy following the principles of the national decree “Town planning code”, it fell down in the drafting phase due to the lack of collaboration between the region and the councils. This caused a significant delay in the MMP’s adaptation phase, because of the lack of a transparent and structured process which should have represented the necessary and essential conditions to have a qualitatively valid result in defining future planning and in managing processes of redevelopment and landscape protection.

However, a greater participation by the local community would have allowed the process to take into consideration the knowledge of various subjects directly influenced by the decisions being made, and so transforming the constructive discussion between the different parties concerned into a winning card.

In the first part of the paper a panoramic vision of the planning structure was presented, highlighting the criteria put into action in the field of the protection of landscape and Sardinian culture heritage. Subsequently the procedural phases of MMP adaptation were illustrated with various examples. Such a process happened in different phases which go from a first analysis of the places with analyses of the cartography and archived historic material, through a study of different sources and material relative to the council, to a successive systematic collection of knowledge which has made up the basis for the adaptation of plans and for the definition of processes of territorial use and transformation.

It appears clear that, in order to put forward credible recovery and protection proposals for landscape heritage, it was necessary to have a complex and shared landscape project. The problem of environmental planning is without doubt a problem which needs further in depth examination, but which finds its best conceptual application in the landscape approach.

References
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