

UNESCO World Heritage Centre

Rural Vernacular Heritage Research: Report 1

Campania Felix (Italy), Cultural Landscape and Governance of Rural environments

Alessandro De Masi, University of Naples Federico II (Italy)
Department Urban Planning and Town planning, Faculty of Architecture
Via Monteoliveto 3, 80134 Naples, Italy
alessandro.demasi@unina.it - architetti.demasi@libero.it

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The programmatic lines of the REPORT 1 “*Campania Felix (Italy), Cultural Landscape and rural environments governance*” of the international research “Rural Vernacular Heritage” reflect the multi-functional role played by the agricultural activity in terms of richness and diversity of landscapes, cultural and natural heritage.

From the methodological point of view, the research was articulated according to:

- **Human semiology, natural and absolute views of the territory** to identify new forms of visibility and accessibility of the sites;
- “**Characterizing aggregation systems**” of the territory (urban, naturalistic, rural-manufacturing, rural-cultural and landscape-environmental-cultural) **and their exchanges with nature and the anthropic reality**;
- **Definition of territorial macro-areas and micro-areas district having a landscape value** (Rural and Urban) **resulting from territorial dynamics**, to establish a cultural and managerial presence interfacing with technical Institutions, cultural Institutions, Universities.

The study environment being taken into account, developed on an area joining, 10 Municipalities of the High area of Caserta, the slopes of the mountains: Massico, Santa Croce, Maggiore, Tifatini (beyond Volturno River) with the hill of San Sivestro in line with the Park, the Royal Palace and the city of Caserta. The territory is crossed, in the South, by the consular roads *Appia* (ancient Roman route passing through Mondragone and direct to Capua) and *Domitiana* along the coast and, in the North, by the Spanish road Real Cammino, today *Appia* no.7.

The rivers and the physiography of the plain and hilly territories, along with the historical infrastructure, the Great Farms (built on the *Pagus and/or Vici*) and the Farmhouses (hamlets composed of ten living units) gave rise to local ecosystems called since antiquity *ager Falernus*, *ager Calenus*, *ager Campanus* e *ager Statanus*. The territory is still centuriated and organized in harmony with the system of inland waters.

The attracting elements (economical-social) are present on the meeting nodes between cardines and decumans of the territorial grids of urban planning roman (*pagus, vici, terma and villae rusticae*) and favour the cultural, productive and infrastructural exchange between environment and society of individuals. The attractors, when present, characterize a territorial environment and, according their importance, confer a *district* dimension of the same environment.

The need to promote the creation of *districts* represents also an effective reply to the progressive impoverishment of the biodiversity and, consequently to the landscape degradation, strengthening the biopermeability of the interested areas (connectivity and porosity) and the functions of ecological connection among mainly rural areas. On the other hand, the *districts*, while connecting the local diversities, as well as their specific competences, propose assemblies of different and significant historical cultures for the process of political and economic development.

Therefore, the study aims at starting the requalification process of the anthropic environment by analysing the problems arising from the strategic vision of the tourist and cultural *Trans-European Corridor 1* (Berlin – Palermo) and of *Corridor 8* (along the Volturno river) and *Ionic Corridor* directed toward the Mediterranean Sea.

The strict relationships among biodiversity, landscape diversity and previous historical and cultural events testify that the landscape is likely to change over time.