

New scenarios for the Palmaria island (Porto Venere-Ligurian Sea)

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Summary. The Palmaria island in the municipality of Porto Venere between the Gulf of La Spezia and the Cinque Terre (Italy) is a complex and integrated system, consisting of several cultural heritage. The way to arrive at a vision of global landscape, understood as the network connection of all the other elements of great historical value begins in 1939 (law n° 1497) when the site was declared of great public interest and the landscape has been protected as a single asset with a landscape bond. In 1997, after being recognised as a World Heritage Site, the aims of the active management of this area were: public reuse of the historical and cultural buildings, revaluation of the landscape as an integrated system composed by many singular and peculiar elements and promotion of an alternative cultural tourism compatible with the conservation of the landscape. In 2016 the State Property Agency signed a understanding memorandum with the Ministry of Defence, the Navy, the Liguria Region and the Municipality of Porto Venere for the enhancement of more than 100 public property, including buildings and land, present in the Palmaria Island. How will change the landscape of the island after these agreements between public authorities? The intent of this study is to propose guidelines for an integrated and sustainable management of this unique coastal landscape with the aim of promoting cultural tourism without harming the local population. The landscape is understood as 'a sheet without seams' and becomes the connection of the historical, cultural and natural elements of both land and sea. Within this network some pilot projects are proposed, that contribute to the development of a sustainable tourism model, responding to different needs of different social categories that frequent the area. Among the topics studied: the regeneration of the landscape, the revaluation of the history, traditions and cuisine, the recovery of the relationship with the sea as a landscape value, intelligent reuse of public buildings with existing cultural and historic value.

Keywords: coastal landscape, cultural heritage, regeneration, alternative/cultural tourism.

Premise

How can a coastal Mediterranean landscape with important historical-cultural elements, but above all with landscape peculiarities, be modified by contemporary tourism?

In a positive or negative way?

In Italy as opposed to what happened up to the end of the XXth century, where the favourable climate, kilometres of swimming coastline, historical monuments and exceptional landscapes favoured tourism development, today this activity needs promotion interventions, diversification tenders, to a level of adaptation to quality standards, similar to what is happening in developing countries.



Fig. 01 : The Palmaria Island (Merlofotografia.com)

Case study: the Palmaria's Island

The case study is the island of Palmaria, which is located at the eastern end of Liguria. In the past I have deeply studied the landscape of La Spezia, Porto Venere and Palmaria as a doctoral research. The research was focused on sustainable and alternative tourism in a Mediterranean coastal landscape. The interest in this area is generated by its exceptional characters: the Palmaria is spread from the border of the National Park of the Cinque Terre until the Gulf of La Spezia and it is close to the other two islands, the Tino and the Tinetto.

An area with environmental features and landscapes identity particular to its outstanding geomorphological conformations and biological

situations, for the historical cultural and varied signs imprinted on the island from past civilizations. The intent of this study was to propose guidelines for an integrated and sustainable management of this unique coastal landscape with the aim of promoting cultural tourism without harming the local population.

The landscape was understood as “a sheet without seams” (Mc Harg 1969) and the connection of the historical, cultural and natural elements of both land and sea.

Within this network some pilot projects were proposed, that contributed to the development of a sustainable tourism model, responding to different needs of different social categories present on the area.

Among the topics studied: the regeneration of the landscape, the revaluation of the history, traditions and cuisine, the recovery of the relationship with the sea as a landscape value, intelligent reuse of public buildings with existing cultural and historic value.

Today, compared to the beginning of the XXIth century, when I studied the La Spezia landscape, the type of tourism is changing due to the influence of the Cinque Terre.

In addition, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. 15 years after the first celebration of sustainable tourism, the United Nations General Assembly emphasize the need to highlight the importance of this sector for the good of the environment and of the different civilizations and cultures. The gulf of La Spezia is increasingly threatened by random tourism. A new way of traveling and the insufficient number of beds in the Cinque Terre themselves make La Spezia an important point of support.



Fig. 02 : IGM Map- Foglio 95 II SO 1862

NEW TOURISM PERSPECTIVES

It is necessary to plan and program modalities of "durable", flexible, compatible tourism development adaptable to changes in demand as far as possible in relation to aspects not captured by official data and conventional models.

A new way to experience the city of La Spezia is connected to this fact: in addition to the Cinque Terre, tourists staying in the Gulf are attracted by the magnificent landscapes of Lerici, Porto Venere and the islands.

In this light, attention should be paid to how Palmaria will be used.

Active conservation and enhancement of the particular landscapes that characterize the island should consider the following aspects:

- natural landscape with particular endemism;
- agricultural landscape, in the past, the source of the island's livelihood;
- military landscape with many structures that have preserved the island since the colonization of mass tourism in the 1960s.

PORTO VENERE: THE WAY UP TO A SMART CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Today the landscape of Porto Venere with the islands is a complex and integrated system, consisting of several cultural heritage.

The way to arrive at a vision of global landscape, understood as the network connection of all the other elements of great historical value begins in 1939 (law n°1497) when the site was declared of great public interest and the landscape has been protected as a single asset with a landscape bond.

There are the church of St. Pietro, the castle and the medieval village of Porto Venere, the military buildings of the 1800s on Palmaria, on Tino and in Le Grazie, the remains of the Roman villa in Varignano, the marble quarries of Portoro, etc...

In 2001, after being recognised as a World Heritage Site and the institution of the Regional Natural Park of Porto Venere, the aims of the active management of this area were: public reuse of the historical and cultural buildings, revaluation of the landscape as an integrated system composed by many singular and peculiar elements and promotion of an alternative cultural tourism compatible with the conservation of the landscape.



Fig. 03 : Porto Venere from the Palmaria Island

NEW SCENARIOS FOR PALMARIA ISLAND

In 2008, as the first public act for enhancing the island, the Liguria Region promotes a landscape-environmental redevelopment project.

A public walk from Terrizzo to Porto Venere channel is made with the demolition of Scheletrone, structure of an illegal building built in the '60s.



Fig. 04 : The "Scheletrone"

In 2016 the State Property Agency signed a understanding memorandum with the Ministry of Defense, the Navy, the Liguria Region and the Municipality of Porto Venere for the enhancement of more than 100 public property, including buildings and land, present in the Palmaria Island.

How will change the landscape of the island after these agreements between public authorities?



Fig. 05 : The public path from the Terrizzo to the Piazza Lineare Palmaria

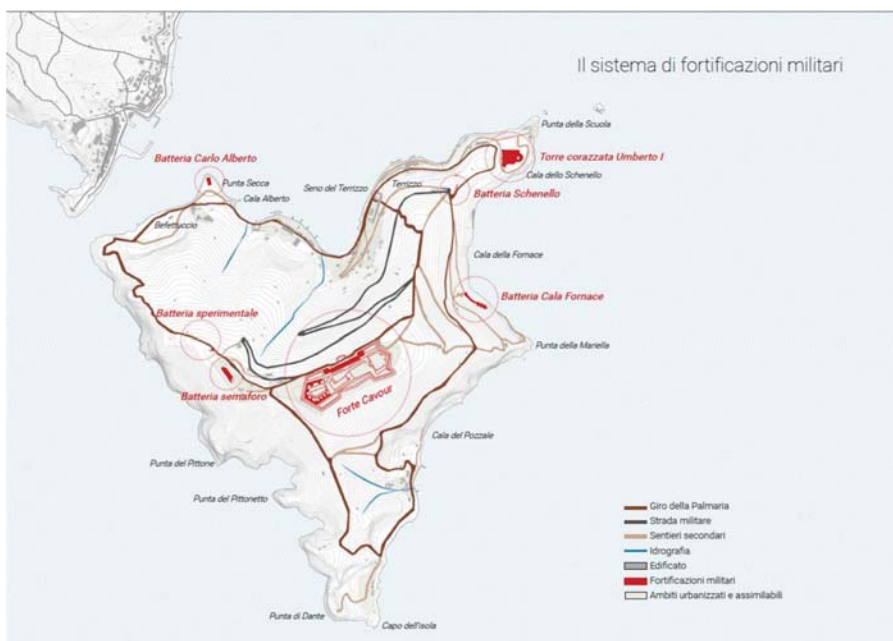


Fig. 06 : The Regional Natural Park of Porto Venere - identification of existing military fortifications on the Palmaria Island

At the beginning of 2017, the Liguria Region (IRE), following an invitations procedure, assigns to LAND the task of Technical Advisor "for drafting intervention scenarios and masterplan under the Palmaria island enhancement program".

These are the first conclusions of Kipar (LAND-Landscape, Architecture, Nature, Development) on a landscaping-cultural and socio-economic analysis of the island of Palmaria.

The enhancement project of Palmaria is a gamble, with many military areas to be converted and ex quarries of the Portoro marble to be landscaped.

Emphasize the peculiarities of an 'intact' landscape, to be valued or pointing to mass tourism, which, if not well regulated, is often destructive?

The territorial and programmatic framing together with the factual situation of the places allow to highlight the many peculiarities of the island.

Today the island is set up as a real natural jewel whose framework is represented by a network of paths and existing trails, passable on foot starting from the coast inland.

The trail network offers an opportunity to those who choose to take one of the walking paths, whether they experienced hikers, tourists, travellers, residents, to explore the landscape of the island, away from crowded Cinque Terre.

Along the way you come across a nearly uncontaminated landscape, stopping in one of the many belvedere to admire the surrounding landscape and discover the remains of the military fortifications scattered on the island. Despite its strong potential in historical, cultural, landscape and environmental terms, the island does not enjoy continuous and constant connections throughout the seasons of the year.

The existing infrastructure gap means that there are not many generous tourists flows throughout the year.

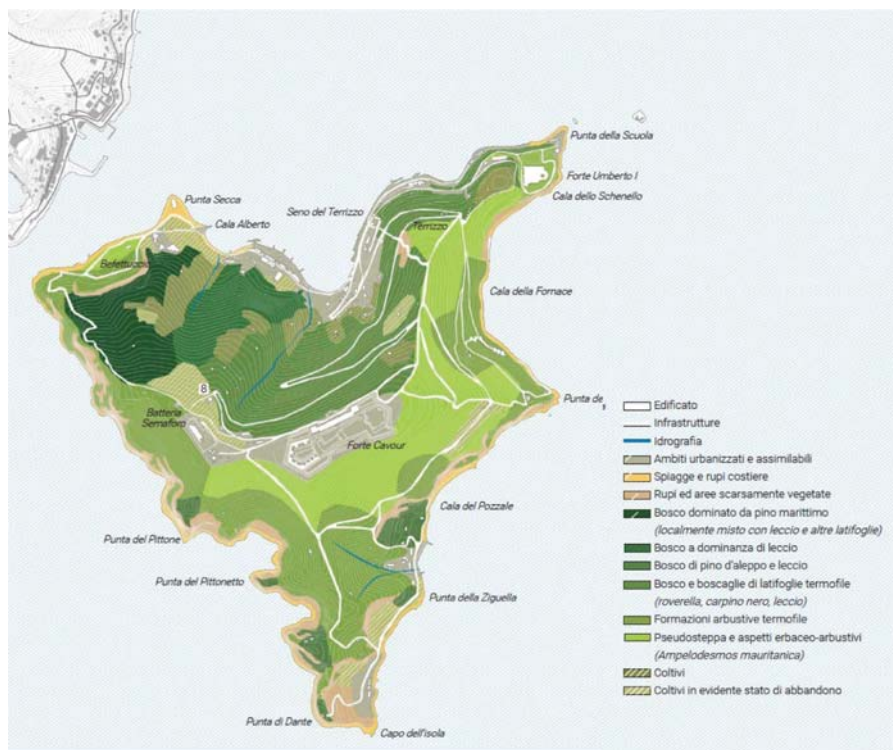


Fig. 07 : The Regional Natural Park of Porto Venere: the Palmaria Island land use

On the one hand, the increase in services and infrastructures for the promotion of sustainable tourism is necessary in order to enhance the landscape excellence and historical emergencies of Palmaria. On the other hand the difficult accessibility of the island and the fact that so long has been a military garrison guaranteed the preservation of its inestimable cultural and landscaping heritage.

LANDSCAPE PROJECTS FOR AN ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PALMARIA ISLAND

Orientations for the Sustainable Development of the Palmaria Island:

1. managing access and promote sustainable mobility;
2. welcoming visitors;

3. valorising the site as a whole, also in relation to the mainland;
4. restoring and enhancing the cultural heritage;
5. conserving the landscape and protecting nature and biodiversity;
6. managing, deploying actions 1-5 and monitoring outcomes.



Fig. 08 : Principal orientations

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