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European and Global Perspectives on Sacred Landscape

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Introduction

Sacred Landscape is one of the research topics of the Scientific Committee of the European Association of the Vie Francigene (EAVF). The Committee was set up at the International Conference "Comuni in cammino - Jubileum 2016" held in Monteriggioni (Siena) on 29 January 2016, precisely in Abbadia Isola where Sigerico was used to take a break during his pilgrimage to Rome.

In Monteriggioni the members of the EAVF Scientific Committee discussed future goals and underlined the importance of cultural routes and pilgrimage as material and immaterial heritage, sharing experience between scientific researchers and territorial planners.

One of the goals of the Committee is to research on pilgrimage routes and sacred landscapes, in order to support the European Landscape Convention (ELC) of the Council of Europe and other global initiatives of UNESCO and ICOMOS. A Round Table has been organised to implement the first, and discussion has started to implement the latter.

1. EAVF Committee

The EAVF Scientific Committee is currently composed by 11 European Institutions. It has been promoted by the EAVF, as a result of the European Project PER VIAM -

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Pilgrims' Routes in Action, and it has been supported by the European Universities Network of Knowledge (EUNeK) and the Centre for Advanced Studies in Tourism (CAST) of the University of Bologna (UNIBO). During the first workshop, the members met local stakeholders, in particular Massimo Tedeschi, EAVF President, and Raffaella Senesi, Mayor of Monteriggioni, with the aim to work together on the topics discussed. The Scientific Committee has already started to develop a research on the cultural and social heritage of pilgrimages and cultural routes, in agreement with international cultural organisation, trekkers associations and local communities, to support a wider and permanent social participation.

The Committee aims also to develop projects meant to promote cultural tourism and new communication practices, according to current studies on the sustainable territorial development of the rural areas involved in the pilgrimage routes.

Some topics to be developed have already emerged, among which is the European interregional system that involve the buffer zones alongside the routes, starting from Via Francigena. Other topics to consider are the hospitality of young tourists (especially children and their parents) performed on disabled accessibility, and projects promoting the mobility with Trenitalia, the Italian Train Company, with the Europe-scaled Interrail Francigena, i.e. the "Welcome Pilgrim!". This can happen not only with the involvement of local companies, from handicraft to hospitality, from food to beverage, from services to entertainment, offered for example by farms, restaurants and hostels, but also with the requalification and the integration of abandoned train stations and road inspector's houses - which are State properties - as well as with the huge heritage of sacred buildings in state of abandon or decline. Other activities outlined are the scientific contribution in local, national and international publications, as well as on reputed reviews and special (Almatourism) and professional (Tour Operators) issues. Finally, quali-quantitative analysis about pilgrims and trekkers alongside the Via Francigena is needed, with data to be collected and elaborated by a Geo-Statistic Observatory Lab, supported by CAST. The purpose is to create an interregional European system devoted to processes for the social and cultural inclusion, involving cities and urban areas, starting with those alongside the Via Francigena, then moving to other cultural and pilgrimage routes.

2. The Round Table on Sacred Landscape: a European perspective

The Round Table "Sacred Landscape: From Concepts to European Perspectives" was held in Palazzo Farnese, Piacenza, on 29 April 2016, during the international conference "Via Francigena, Via Di Pace", in the XV Anniversary of the EAVF.

The goal of the Round Table was to discuss on sacred landscape from different European perspectives, clarifying key issues and raising awareness on the cultural and spiritual values of European pilgrimages. Public bodies such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the European Institute of Cultural Routes, shared experiences with scientists from EAVF Scientific Committee and other institutions. The Round Table was coordinated by Gloria Pungetti of the Universities of Sassari (Italy) and Cambridge (UK),

who is an expert of the EAVF Scientific Committee and founder of the Cambridge Centre for Landscape and People (CCLP) at the University of Cambridge, and was chaired by Fiorella Dallari of the University of Bologna, who is coordinator of the EAVF Scientific Committee and founder of CAST. The outcomes are valuable not only for the Council of Europe ELC, but also for the UNESCO Initiative on Heritage of Religious Interest.

During this international event, religious and lay experts covered different European perspectives on sacred landscape, as requested by ELC. It has been focused on how to develop cultural and spiritual awareness about the European pilgrims' routes - and not only. The concept of sacred landscape, that must be analysed in its peculiarities, has been suggested at the event by institutions like UNESCO and the Council of Europe. Opinion leaders in these fields were present: Maguelonne Dejeant-Pons (ELC Executive Secretary, Council of Europe, France), Christopher Young (Cultural Heritage Specialist and General Rapporteur of UNESCO WHC Expert Meeting, UK), Enrico Buergi (Council of Europe Conference on ELC, Switzerland); William Pettit (Canterbury Cathedral, UK), Nicolino Manca (delegate of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, Italy), Adele Cesi (Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Tourism, Italy), Gloria Pungetti (Universities of Sassari and Cambridge, Italy & UK); Eva Konkony-Gyuro (West Hungary University, Hungary) and Fiorella Dallari (University of Bologna, Italy). All contributed to the definition of "sacred landscape", shared a basic framework on meanings and values of sacred landscape in Europe, and backed European and global policies tackling the matter.

The members of the Round Table drew up a framework shared by the basic theoretical point of view in order to support the UNESCO policies on the theme, especially the Initiative on Heritage of Religious Interest. The same applied considering landscapes, sites and roads that can be defined sacred in order to support the Council of Europe with both the European Institute of Cultural Routes, and the European Landscape Convention.

Since 2003, religious heritage and sacred sites have received special attention by ICCROM (2003), ICOMOS (2005; 2011) and MAB's UNESCO (2012) as well as by scientific literature linked to a complete and valuable world heritage with inclusive common values (Pungetti et al 2012, Verschuuren et al 2010). In the last few years, the issue of an integrated strategy has emerged with reference to cultural heritage, proposing guidance for the management of sites of religious interest with the involvement of civil and religious authorities at every level. After a wide debate on the basis of long personal experience, the members of the Round Table shared this as a feasible way to overcome the dichotomy between tangible and intangible values in the context of sustainable development.

3. ICOMOS and UNESCO: a global perspective

The term "Religious property", as used in the ICOMOS study *Filling the Gaps - an Action Plan for the Future*, defines "any form of property with religious or spiritual

associations: churches, monasteries, shrines, sanctuaries, mosques, synagogues, temples, sacred landscapes, sacred groves, and other landscape features" (Jokilehto, 2005). The term "Sacred sites" embraces areas of "special spiritual significance" to people and communities, with the term "Sacred natural sites" corresponding to areas of land or water having special spiritual significance (IUCN/UNESCO, 2008).

At the end of 2010 the UNESCO Initiative on Heritage and Properties of Religious Interest (PRI) was launched, and recognition was given to sacred landscapes across the globe. According to WHC (UNESCO PRI-SM, 2010), religious heritage differs from other forms of heritage and, in particular, religious areas are the oldest protected places of the planet, and "have a vital importance for safeguarding cultural and biological diversity for present and future generations", the better geographical elements of sustainability. Among the UNESCO 16 categories of properties of religious interest (PRI), five groups are deemed as requiring a sustainable management: archaeological sites, urban properties, landscapes (both natural and cultural), monuments, routes (cultural itineraries, pilgrimage routes, cultural itineraries. religious structures).

In the UNESCO data base, PRI represent the widest category across Europe, with 54% of all properties (n. 453) considered to have religious/sacred/spiritual values, and 65% of properties reported as a factor affecting religious value. In SE and Mediterranean Europe 110 (65%) out 172 properties are considered to have religious/sacred/spiritual values, 122 reported as a factor affecting religious value, and 47% of properties without religious/sacred/spiritual values reporting as a factor affecting this value. Approximately 20% of the properties inscribed in the World Heritage List have some sort of religious or spiritual connection and constitute the largest single category on the List. Considering the significance of this heritage, supposedly the oldest and in large part still "alive", during the above mentioned Round Table it was recognised the evidence of a high degree of potential sustainable value compared to other type of heritage.

Conclusion

Key concepts emerged in the Round Table on Sacred Landscape: social participation, intercultural exchange of know-how, local shared memory and internationally shared heritage, sacred gaze and social awareness all around Europe. In addition, territorial sustainability was underlined, considering the roads of the pilgrims representing a strategic phenomenon in future ecological and social changes. All these concepts should be taken into considerations for future implementation of the ELC by the Council of Europe.

Moreover, due to the importance of cultural and spiritual heritage in Europe and globally, an increased awareness and wider involvement of religious communities will be crucial in the implementation of the UNESCO Initiative on Heritage and Properties of Religious Interest (PRI) by WHC. The development of methods for the identification of PRI, and the need for management guidelines, should be set among the main future achievements in the subject.

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