

Advances in Science, Technology & Innovation
IEREK Interdisciplinary Series for Sustainable Development

Tarek Teba · Elisa Pilia ·
Donatella Rita Fiorino *Editors*

The Conservation and Sustainable Development of Architectural and Urban Heritage

Methods, Strategies and Policies

Advances in Science, Technology & Innovation

IEREK Interdisciplinary Series for Sustainable Development

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Tarek Teba · Elisa Pilia · Donatella Rita Fiorino
Editors

The Conservation and Sustainable Development of Architectural and Urban Heritage

Methods, Strategies and Policies

A culmination of selected research papers from the International
Conference on Conservation of Architectural Heritage (CAH) 8th
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Preface

Architectural heritage is more than the preservation of stone, wood, or mortar—it is the safeguarding of memory, identity, and cultural continuity. In an age where rapid urbanisation, climate change, socio-political conflicts, and technological shifts pose unprecedented challenges, the responsibility to protect, adapt, and meaningfully reuse our built heritage is both urgent and multidimensional.

This volume brings together a wide range of contributions originally presented at a conference devoted to the conservation and development of architectural and urban heritage. The book is structured across seven thematic parts, each reflecting a crucial dimension of heritage preservation in the present day.

The opening part attracts the reflection on why our response to heritage conservation matters in a world of shifting values and priorities. Subsequently, contributors examine innovative and place-sensitive approaches to the development of architectural and archaeological heritage—showcasing case studies from Jordan to Italy and beyond.

As climate change, natural disasters, and crises continue to threaten cultural sites, Part Three focuses on climate-responsive strategies and post-crisis planning. These are complemented by analytical frameworks presented in Part Four, which emphasises on the perceptive of historic landscapes, building typologies, and the layers of meaning embedded in urban and rural contexts.

The importance of diagnosis—both as a scientific and interpretative act—is addressed in Part Five, putting emphasis on advanced tools and means for assessing structural integrity and material decay. The following part walks around how heritage supplies local policymaking and sustainable development, calling attention to the interchange between conservation, education, governance, and long-term planning.

Ultimately, the book terminates with forward-looking perspectives on digital integration in heritage conservation. From parametric modelling to laser scanning and community-based digital initiatives, these contributions demonstrate how technology is reshaping our engagement with the past.

These chapters display, altogether, a rich, interdisciplinary dialogue amid researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. They reflect a shared commitment to not only conserve the physical remnants of our built history but to reinterpret, revitalise, and reconnect them with contemporary life. Hopefully, this volume will serve as a resource and inspiration for all those working at the intersection of architecture, heritage, and society.

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Tarek Teba
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Introduction

Why Does Our Response Matter? Architectural and Urban Heritage in Light of Changing Values and Practices

Tarek Teba

Abstract

This introduction reconceptualises architectural and urban heritage conservation as a dynamic, socially embedded, and future-oriented practice that extends beyond the protection of historic fabric. It responds to contemporary challenges, including climate change, rapid urbanisation, social inequity, and digital transformation, and argues for conservation as a participatory process grounded in cultural continuity, sustainability, and community agency. The chapter traces the field's evolution from monument-centred doctrines, such as the Venice Charter, to more inclusive and landscape-based frameworks like UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape Recommendation. It highlights a clear shift towards people-centred, values-led, and interdisciplinary approaches. Conservation is examined as a political and ethical practice shaped by power, identity, and social plurality. Particular attention is given to participatory methods, ethical uses of digital tools, and climate-conscious strategies. Persistent gaps in governance and policy are identified, pointing to the need for more integrated and equitable frameworks. The introduction establishes the foundation of the book by showing that the careful selection of approaches, methods, and tools is essential for achieving resilient, inclusive, and sustainable conservation outcomes worldwide.

1 Reimagining Conservation for a Changing World

Conservation was previously perceived as the practice of safeguarding static monuments against the passage of time;

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however, it has been undergoing a profound transformation during the twenty-first century with increasing calls to address far more than deterioration, decay, or disuse (Carbonara, 2012). Several authors called for conservation to centralise the contemporary social values and challenges and deal with complex challenges such as rapid urbanisation, climate instability, social inequities and contested cultural identities. This has broadened the focus of the conservation process to evolve into an adaptable, ethical and future-facing practice, resulting in changes to conservation methods and strategies, enabling interdisciplinary approaches and solutions.

The historical foundations of architectural and urban conservation were established through international efforts such as the Venice Charter (1964), which foregrounded material authenticity, aesthetic unity and a reverence for original fabric (Hardy, 2008). These principles have influenced global heritage policies and practices for decades. However, this framework has also been criticised for its primary focus on preservation, monumental and material qualities as well as for prioritising expert judgement over local knowledge and static continuity over dynamic change (Jokilehto, 1999; Pendlebury, 2008). Conservation has started to be seen as a socially embedded and value-driven practice, challenging the binary of old versus new. Ashworth et al. (2007) argue that heritage is not discovered but constructed, shaped by political, economic and cultural forces. Rather than freezing architecture in time, conservation becomes a process of negotiation and renewal, balancing inherited significance with contemporary needs and values. At a policy level, the UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (2011) reframes conservation as part of broader urban planning and sustainability efforts (Turner, 2013). The integration of cultural, environmental and economic dimensions facilitates a holistic and interdisciplinary approach, with the use of mixed methods to achieve objectives beyond preservation.

Concurrently, global shifts in technology, governance and climate awareness shape conservation practice and the approaches used to safeguard heritage for future genera-

tions. Digital heritage methods and tools are revolutionising how built heritage is documented, interpreted and engaged with. Climate-responsive strategies highlight the ecological impacts and adaptive potential of historic structures, while community-led methodologies provide space for local voices, strengthening local communities' right to define and steward heritage according to their lived experience (Smith, 2006). Therefore, this introduction provides a context for the book and argues that conservation today must exceed its pre-existing disciplinary borders and embrace a living, pluralistic and climate-conscious ethos. Here, we propose a redefinition of architectural and urban conservation as a participatory process of cultural continuity and how this can define new approaches, methods and tools to achieve holistic conservation objectives. This is an important step to perceiving and using conservation as a process around systems thinking, human values and environmental justice.

Through this introduction, we will investigate how historic principles have shaped current practice, explore the intersections of identity, memory and place, and map emerging approaches that support innovation, resilience and sustainability, emphasising the forward facing nature of the conservation process that is set up to honour the past while nurturing possible futures.

2 From Monumentality to Morphology: Rethinking Authenticity and Scale

For most of the twentieth century, conservation theory and practice focused on monumentality and emphasised the preservation of exceptional buildings and sites for their artistic, historic, or architectural significance. These approaches prioritised material authenticity and aesthetic coherence and often advocated minimal intervention to maintain a site's original character. While instrumental in establishing a professional and ethical code for conservation, these approaches had consequences, such as the marginalisation of vernacular heritage, intangible cultural expressions and dynamic urban processes (Jokilehto, 1999). Moreover, the insistence on authentic fabric discounted intangible dimensions such as oral traditions, rituals and social practices that animate a place (Liang et al., 2023). With this in mind, the last part of twentieth century witnessed key responses to these issues through the Washington Charter (1987) and the UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) Recommendation (2011). The Washington Charter recognised urban historic areas as living environments and advocated the role of conservation to work with urban planning, socio-economic realities and community development. To advance this approach, the UNESCO HUL Recommendation through

its landscape-based lens supported considering heritage as a venue of development (rather than as an obstacle) considering the interaction between historical, environmental and socio-cultural layers. Through this lens, authenticity becomes not a rigid essence but a relational quality that emerges from the interaction between people, place, memory and use. Examples from cities like Luang Prabang, Laos (Leong et al., 2016) and Ballarat, Australia (Fayad & Kendal, 2019), demonstrate the HUL approach in action, where participatory mapping, environmental assessment and heritage-sensitive zoning collaborate to support both conservation and urban resilience. These examples highlight a re-conceptualisation of conservation not as an endpoint, but as a continuous process of urban stewardship, and how the selection of methods and tools is crucial for the success of this process. With the influence of the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994), such participatory approaches and frameworks encourage diverse inclusive definitions of heritage authenticity as related to the communities for whom a heritage place holds meaning. These definitions exceed the scope of fabric and age to include the continuity of cultural practices, spiritual resonance, or adaptive reuse. This allows for change, reinterpretation and even transformation, as long as these are rooted in community agency and cultural logic. Such a change in the conservation focus encourages collaboration between disciplines (conservationists, urban planners, ecologists, sociologists and artists) and invites mixed method approaches that combine tools such as archival research, community consultation and GIS mapping. Therefore, conservation approaches require awareness and careful selections of the methods and tools to enable impactful renovation and conservation proposals; this has been demonstrated through heritage sites retrofitted for contemporary use, such as industrial sites turned into cultural hubs, or religious buildings serving civic functions. Here, conservation becomes a mode of living heritage, that invites practitioners to engage with place as process, and authenticity as a shared, evolving dialogue between people and their built environment. This flexible and inclusive understanding facilitates the groundwork for conservation that is socially responsive, environmentally integrated and politically aware.

3 Conservation as a Social Process: Identity, Power and Plurality

Conservation is often seen as a technical and a political act to resolve decay and celebrate the past with special care. However, conservation is a social and political process and raises questions of whose histories are preserved, whose values are upheld and who gets to decide. As the conservation field is embracing more inclusive and critical approaches, the

need to unpack its underlying power structures becomes not only urgent but fundamental (Harrison, 2012).

One of the key theoretical turns in conservation has been the recognition that heritage is not a fixed or universal fact but rather a constructed narrative, that is selected, interpreted and revitalised through social and cultural processes and dialogues (Ashworth et al., 2007; Harrison, 2012). Ashworth et al. (2007) reinforce this and argue that heritage is “*a product of the present, purposefully created to serve political or cultural needs.*” (Ashworth et al., 2007). This approach challenges the notion of universal value and supports plurality, subjectivity and context, where site-specific social, cultural, environmental and political settings play a crucial role in the adopted conservation approaches and tools. For instance, the conservation of colonial architecture can be both a celebration of national heritage and a painful reminder of oppression, depending on who is asked. The contested preservation of the Rhodes statue at the University of Cape Town or the removal of Confederate monuments in the USA illustrates how heritage can become a battleground for identity, justice and reconciliation and how methods can change accordingly with the architectural, urban, environmental and social settings. Therefore, in the context of urban heritage, conservation should avoid obscuring the significance of everyday spaces and marginalised communities, whose environments are no less rich in memory and meaning. This enacted through challenging the narrow definition of what counts as heritage and advocating for a value-led approach, one that embraces the ordinary and the ephemeral values (Pendlebury, 2008). This is echoed in contemporary community-led movements such as “Right to the City” initiatives that consider informal settlements, post-industrial zones, or migrant neighbourhoods as culturally vital.

As conservation shifts from object to people-centred practice, questions of the role of authority arise: who speaks for heritage, and through which knowledge system? Traditionally rooted in Western-trained experts, the field is increasingly embracing local, indigenous and non-academic perspectives. Participatory tools like cultural mapping and storytelling aim to democratise heritage discourse but must be applied ethically (Duxbury & Redaelli, 2020). The Burra Charter revised (2013) advanced this shift by advocating for community contemporary values in significance assessments. However, structural barriers, such as language, access and political pressures, continue to shape participation. A truly inclusive conservation ethic must address these imbalances by elevating underrepresented voices across leadership, scholarship and stewardship and using methods that facilitate the inclusion of diverse voices in the conservation of architectural and urban heritage.

Thus, framing conservation as a social process reflects a growing recognition of cultural heritage as a human right and emphasises access, participation and community agency. This approach shifts the focus from preservation to empowerment, aligning with UNESCO and the UN Special calls to treat communities not just as stakeholders, but as rights-holders and requiring more inclusive, bottom-up heritage governance and policies.

4 Participatory Paradigms: Towards People-Centred Conservation Practice

As heritage conservation evolves beyond expert-led preservation, participatory approaches have become central to rethinking whose voices shape heritage, how significance is defined and to what purpose. Grounded in equity, empowerment and co-creation, these paradigms challenge static understandings of value and instead view heritage as a living, negotiated process (Aronsson, 2015; Graham & Howard, 2016; Suntutik & Jachna, 2013).

Earlier forms of participation often involved consultation without real collaboration, where communities might be asked for feedback but were rarely included in decision-making. While this marked a step forward from top-down models, it frequently reinforced existing power structures and undervalued local knowledge (Harrison, 2012; Smith, 2006). Contemporary practice increasingly sees participation as essential to successful conservation. International frameworks like the Burra Charter revised (2013) and Faro Convention (2005) highlight that heritage significance emerges through community relationships to place, memory and identity, not solely through material or historical assessments. Authentic participation invites communities into all stages of heritage work, from defining value to planning, governance, maintenance and interpretation (Fairclough et al., 2014; Vícha, 2014).

To support this shift, a diverse toolkit of participatory methods has gained recognition. These include participatory mapping to identify culturally significant spaces, community-led heritage walks and narratives that reclaim local pride, co-design workshops where residents help reimagine heritage spaces, and community-run practices that elevate grassroots knowledge. These methods are most effective when they are iterative, inclusive and responsive to evolving cultural meanings, social values and political, environmental and economic challenges. However, participatory practice is not without its challenges. This includes minimal efforts and superficial or predetermined participation, which significantly affects the final outcomes, and structural power imbalances which

can result in extractive practices, where local knowledge is appropriated without meaningful exchange and reflections. It is important to maintain balance between top-down, authorised and bottom-up, community, discourses, and to address institutional inertia, inflexible legal frameworks and experts' control over heritage discourse which often undermine transformative community engagement (Silva et al., 2021). Ethical participation, therefore, demands reflective thinking among practitioners, capacity building within communities, transparent accountability mechanisms and tangible benefits for participants.

Thus, participatory conservation aligns with broader sustainability and development goals, such as reducing inequality, building resilient cities and advancing cultural rights. When genuinely community-driven approaches are used, they can foster social cohesion, environmental and cultural stewardship and economic empowerment. Initiatives like the Cultural Corridors project in Sub-Saharan Africa exemplifies this synergy, combining youth training, traditional knowledge and sustainable tourism to support both heritage and livelihoods. In this way, participatory heritage becomes not just a method, but a pathway to equitable, place-based development, where the platform and tools make a difference in the outcomes. Therefore, the development of technology and its associated cultural, accessibility and ethics dimensions should be considered when adopting any looking-forward heritage conservation strategies.

5 Digital Disruptions: Innovation, Ethics and Accessibility

The digital revolution is reshaping cultural heritage practice, equipping practitioners with transformative tools that range from 3D scanning and virtual reconstruction to artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted archival analysis and immersive storytelling. These technologies are redefining how architectural and urban heritage is recorded, preserved and experienced. However, alongside these innovations critical ethical concerns arise around power, representation and access, which positions digital conservation not only as a technical process but also as a deeply ethical practice.

Cutting-edge tools like photogrammetry, LiDAR and Heritage Building Information Modelling (HBIM) have enabled detailed documentation of historic structures. Their impact extends from disaster recovery (Li et al., 2023) and structural monitoring (Kong & Hucks, 2023) to public engagement through virtual and augmented reality (King et al., 2016). Iconic examples include the digitally aided reconstructions of Palmyra's Temple of Bel and Notre-Dame

before destruction, where 3D data enabled precise restoration and educational outreach.

While digital heritage platforms such as Google Arts and Culture and Sketchfab are often celebrated for democratising access, they also reveal challenging digital divides. Communities without the infrastructure or resources remain excluded from contributing or even engaging with digital heritage. Moreover, control of digitisation initiatives by large institutions often raises issues of data accessibility and narrative authorship, particularly for underrepresented groups. Digital heritage tools are not neutral, and their use can be shaped by cultural and political contexts that influence who gets to tell which stories (Cameron & Kenderdine, 2007). One pressing concern is the threat of digital colonialism, where heritage from the Global South is extracted and curated by institutions in the Global North without reciprocal benefits or reflections with local cultures, institutions and protocols. This is particularly sensitive for indigenous or sacred heritage, where custodianship is based on relational and ceremonial values. Successful conservation projects would address these gaps by offering culturally responsive tools that empower communities to manage access, metadata, interpretation and conservation according to their values. Ultimately, equitable and ethical digital conservation must be grounded in co-creation, community consent, cultural sensitivity and long-term sustainability. This includes building accessible infrastructures, sharing authorship and ensuring transparency in data handling and representation. Innovation in the conservation of architectural and urban heritage should be inclusive and guided, not just by technological possibility, but also by respect for cultural integrity and community agency. This includes how such innovations in the conservation practices could contribute to local policies and to addressing wider challenges such as climate change, community resilience and activism.

6 Resilience and Responsibility: Climate-Conscious Conservation

As climate change accelerates, manifesting in rising seas, extreme weather and disrupted ecosystems, architectural and urban heritage conservation must broaden its scope. Beyond physical preservation, it now confronts challenges of climate resilience, resource ethics and environmental responsibility; within this, the historic environment is increasingly seen as vital to both remembering the past and adapting to the future. Cultural heritage, although highly vulnerable, plays a key role in climate response. Venice, for example, faces more frequent "Acqua Alta" events, endangering old and historic infrastructure, while sacred island landscapes in the Pacific are being

lost to rising sea levels and coastal erosion. This is an urgent threat to cultural identity and continuity, pushing conservation from a reactive practice towards a more anticipatory, adaptive planning practice.

Adapting heritage is not just about technical retrofitting. Climate-conscious conservation calls for reinterpreting traditional environments as assets for resilience. This includes reviving passive design features, integrating green and blue infrastructure and using materials that respect original construction methods while improving environmental performance. Cities like Copenhagen and Rotterdam exemplify this approach, blending flood adaptation with ecosystem restoration. Such integrations position conservation as both a steward of memory and a driver of carbon-conscious innovation (Teba et al., 2025). Therefore, conservation should extend the life of buildings, reduce waste and sustain local craftsmanship, aligning its practice more with the principles of the circular economy. In coastal cities like Portsmouth, UK, retrofitting former military and industrial sites instead of demolishing them embodies this “slow urbanism” approach where environmental, economic and heritage values converge. Thus, climate justice is essential to this conservation agenda. Vulnerable, historically marginalised communities often lack the resources to adapt their heritage. Conservation must therefore adopt equitable strategies, including social-risk mapping, inclusive funding and cultural continuity planning. While frameworks like the HUL Recommendation and SDGs offer global guidance, localised and inclusive policymaking is vital to ensure that architectural and urban conservation practices support not just sustainability but justice.

7 Governance, Policy and Institutional Gaps

Despite advancements in conservation theory and technology, governance structures often lag in accommodating emerging values such as inclusivity, adaptability and sustainability. International frameworks such as the UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer progressive visions. However, many national and local systems remain entrenched in rigid preservation paradigms that are not well aligned with contemporary challenges. One of the central obstacles is the fragmentation of institutional responsibilities. Heritage conservation typically resides in isolated ministries, disconnected from sectors such as housing, infrastructure, climate policy, or economic development. This governance model undermines cross-sector coordination, integrated funding streams and policy innovation, which is the reason behind perceiving conservation as a technical rather than a vital component of urban and regional development. Silva et al. (2021) frame this issue through a “sector–factor–vector” lens, arguing that

heritage should function as a cross-cutting path rather than a confined and isolated discipline.

In addition, statutory conservation frameworks often rest on inflexible and expert-led legal models, emphasising architectural control and listing processes. While they are important for protection, these laws can hinder development and adaptive reuse, reduce public engagement and prioritise monumental heritage over contemporary social significance and needs. In the UK, for instance, the distinction between designated and non-designated heritage assets lacks strong pathways for community recognition, exposing local values to economic or political displacement. Moreover, most legal frameworks fail to incorporate climate resilience or emergency planning, leaving heritage sites vulnerable to future risks. Despite these limitations, several international models demonstrate the potential for innovative, integrated policy. Japan’s “Important Cultural Landscapes” system protects landscapes that interweave ecological, agricultural and cultural values. In addition, Ecuador’s Constitution 2008 protects bio-cultural rights and supports Indigenous conservation practices, and Canada’s Historic Places Initiative promotes sustainability and respectful adaptive reuse. These examples illustrate that conservation policy can be dynamic and inclusive, if anchored into local social, cultural and ecological realities.

Looking forward, adaptive and inclusive governance requires reform across multiple fronts. Legal systems must allow for community-led nominations and incorporate social value metrics. Also, heritage governance should be embedded in broader urban, planning and climate agendas. It should be emphasised that participatory planning mandates and equitable funding models can help the development of inclusive decision-making as well as co-creative and sustainable practices. This requires robust monitoring tools that shift from narrow compliance to broader evaluations of equity, impact and innovation; mechanisms such as heritage impact assessments within Environmental Impact Assessments offer a promising route to integrate architectural and urban conservation more cohesively into planning systems and practices.

8 Why Does It Matter? The Importance of Approaches, Methods and Tools in Inclusive Architectural and Urban Conservation

It is recognised now that effective architectural and urban conservation is linked to the deliberate selection of approaches, methods and tools. Each choice shapes the scope, depth and impact of interventions and influences to what extent the conservation efforts succeed. Thoughtful approaches establish guiding principles that align with

broader cultural, social and environmental goals. In addition, robust methods ensure rigorous documentation, diagnosis and analysis, while appropriate tools, that range from traditional techniques to cutting-edge technologies, enable precise, minimally invasive interventions that extend the life of the heritage assets through new uses and communities (Liang et al., 2023).

A values-based approach such as the UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) paradigm reconceptualises heritage sites as living systems embedded within broader urban fabrics, for example, by supporting adaptive reuse over static restoration. HUL-inspired projects in Lyon have revitalised nineteenth-century industrial quarters into mixed-use cultural districts that have catalysed local stewardship and economic renewal. At the methodological level, integrating laser-scanning surveys with stratigraphic material analyses provides high-resolution models while diagnosing decay mechanisms. The integration of diverse approaches, methods and tools in architectural and urban conservation has fundamentally reshaped the discipline and enabled more inclusive and sustainable practices. Theoretical frameworks that range from fabric-based and values-led approaches to process-oriented models offer interpretation structures that facilitate the recognition of intangible and tangible heritage values. This shift from preservation of form to the safeguarding of cultural significance has reframed conservation practice as an evolving dialogue between past, present and future. Methods grounded in archival research, stratigraphic analysis and typological surveys provide empirical foundations for understanding historical layering, material authenticity and site evolution. These methods not only establish baseline conditions but also identify the socio-political narratives embedded within the built environments. Technological tools, such as digital photogrammetry, GIS mapping and building information modelling (BIM) for heritage, have expanded the capacities of conservation professionals to visualise, model and manage heritage assets with greater precision. These tools foster interdisciplinary collaboration by integrating historical, environmental and social datasets and skillsets into comprehensive conservation planning. Participatory tools and community engagement frameworks democratise decision-making processes and ensure that conservation strategies are aligned with local identities and values. The incorporation of climate-responsive design tools and lifecycle analysis has also advanced a new paradigm of resilient conservation, addressing the vulnerabilities of heritage sites to environmental degradation and climate-induced risks. At the urban scale, these interventions intersect with adaptive reuse strategies, landscape ecology and place-making theories, which aligns heritage management with sustainable urban development goals.

Tool selection further promotes impact: the development of web-based GIS platforms in Quito's historic centre empowered community members to map intangible heritage assets

(festivals, oral histories, vernacular trades), feeding them directly into municipal planning processes and ensuring that conservation priorities reflect lived cultural practices rather than top-down designations. However, technical approaches without a participatory framework risk the success of the conservation strategy to address social dimensions properly. At Venice's Mestre station retrofit, advanced moisture sensors effectively stabilised humidity, but the absence of any stakeholder engagement resulted in failure to address the displaced informal vendors, which eroded local trust in heritage authorities. These examples underscore that no single tool or method suffices in isolation; instead, conservation success emerges when (1) philosophical approaches set inclusive objectives, (2) rigorous methods supply evidence-based diagnoses and (3) adaptive reuse tools translate insights into interventions that honour both material authenticity and community agency. By calibrating each layer (approach, method, tool) to site-specific values, risk profiles and stakeholders' aspirations, conservation practice can achieve resilient and equitable outcomes and empower cities and communities to steward and develop their heritage.

Therefore, this book presents a comprehensive and interdisciplinary exploration of contemporary approaches and methods to preserve architectural and urban heritage in the face of environmental, social and technological challenges. The book is structured into six thematic sections that bring together a wide diversity of case studies, methodologies and policy analyses from across the globe, which offer rich insights into sustainable heritage conservation.

Section 1 explores the development of architectural and archaeological heritage and emphasises the cultural and social dimensions of conservation. Through case studies from Jordan, Italy, and the Mediterranean, the section highlights the importance of community engagement, educational innovation and place-based strategies in revitalising historical landscapes. Projects such as the reuse of Roman amphitheatres and the ESG-driven restoration of Sicilian villas illustrate how heritage can be reimagined for the contemporary society while respecting historical integrity.

Section 2 addresses heritage under pressure, focusing on climate-responsive conservation and post-crisis planning. Contributions examine the integration of resilience into conservation practices, particularly in the wake of climate change and natural disasters. Methodologies such as multi-objective optimisation for water heritage and adaptive reuse of historic schools in İzmir demonstrate how heritage can serve as a foundation for sustainable urban resilience.

Section 3 discovers frameworks for analysing and understanding urban and architectural legacies and offers analytical tools to decode complex historical environments. From typological studies of Mediterranean crypts to the geometric precision of the Giza pyramids, this section underscores the value of deep historical and spatial analysis in informing conserva-

tion strategies. It also considers the role of disused buildings in urban regeneration and the reconciliation of conflict through heritage.

Section 4 focuses on diagnostic methods and strategies and showcases advanced techniques for assessing the condition and materiality of heritage structures. Non-invasive diagnostics, moisture monitoring and decay pattern analysis are presented as essential tools for informed restoration. Case studies from Italy, Latvia and beyond illustrate how scientific rigour enhances the longevity and authenticity of conservation efforts.

Section 5 examines the contribution of heritage to local policies and sustainable development and advocates the intersection of cultural conservation and socio-economic planning. Topics include traditional housing models, policy-practice gaps in urban conservation and the role of government and NGOs in heritage management, advocating for evidence-based and inclusive policies that recognise heritage as a driver of long-term sustainability.

The last section highlights the transformative role of integrated digital methods and strategies in heritage conservation. From laser scanning and parametric modelling to Heritage-BIM and digital fabrication, this section illustrates how technology enhances documentation, analysis and community engagement. Digital tools are shown to bridge the gap between the past and the future, enabling more precise, participatory and sustainable conservation practices.

Overall, this book offers a forward-looking vision for heritage conservation, which is rooted in interdisciplinary collaboration, technological innovation and a deep respect for cultural identity. It makes the point for scholars, practitioners and policymakers that interdisciplinary approaches are inevitable to effectively use resources and experiences that safeguard architectural and urban heritage for future generations. Through varied contributions, we can recognise that a careful selection of approaches, methods and tools is essential for achieving successful and inclusive architectural and urban conservation. Philosophical frameworks guide ethical decision-making, rigorous methods ensure evidence-based interventions, and adaptable tools support accurate, sustainable practices. Integrating community participation and biodiversity-inclusive design further enriches conservation outcomes and aligns heritage preservation with social equity and community resilience. As cities evolve under climate pressures and demographic shifts, adaptive and interdisciplinary conservation strategies will remain critical in safeguarding cultural heritage for future generations. A sustained commitment to innovation, collaboration and inclusivity will define the future of this field.

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The Place-Based Approach for the Enhancement of Cultural Heritage: The Case Study of Madonie Inner Area

Zaira Barone, Annalisa Giampino, and Filippo Schilleci

Abstract

Citizen participation, in the active management and enhancement of cultural heritage, has shown in recent decades that cultural heritage is a dynamic generator of the development of good management policies for abandoned or depopulating territories. An interdisciplinary contribution is proposed, between urban planning and architectural restoration, which aims to investigate the critical issues highlighted by the traditional approach to “inland areas,” as defined by the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI). The case study of the “Inner Areas of the Madonie in Sicily,” can represent an excellent place of investigation in which to understand what are the possible interweavings between different disciplinary approaches and understanding of the potential of the new dynamics of collective participation of local communities in planning policies and conservation of tangible and intangible values. We ask ourselves two questions: what is the qualitative and perceptual dimension of the “inner areas” of the Madonie Mountains, with respect to the heritage that still describes their cultural landscapes? Is there an awareness of this cultural heritage that can become a quality criterion for the development of a design and enhancement of the cultural landscapes of the Madonie? An overview will be made of local development strategies, not codified in official policies, which are a driver of development that is still not integrated into the design and possible financing for land management. The framework of active policies in the Madonie territorial sphere that are based on the enhancement of

cultural heritage will also be explored, analyzing their strengths and criticalities. Particular attention will be paid to the potential cultural itineraries not yet codified, which intercept the system of values recognized in the widespread heritages that connect the landscapes and histories of the territory. The great potential of monumental cultural itineraries, such as those of the legacy of the Norman building tradition, still very present in this territory, has been partially perceived by communities and partially used as a development factor. Only some parts of these territories have put in place today enhancement policies that focus on cultural heritage systems spread throughout the territory, capable of narrating a landscape that has been transformed over the centuries, but in which elements such as generative road axes, perspective connections and architectural structures characterized by recognizable building elements as the legacy of a common culture are still strongly present and recognizable. Starting with restoration projects in which collective enjoyment and openness to new policies of sustainable tourism have become new avenues of growth and awareness, new systems of reading these existing heritages and possible strategies of valorization and management that go beyond the local scale will be proposed.

Keywords

Heritage regeneration · Local development programs · Place-based approach · Local community · Madonie

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1 The Inner Peripheries: From Problem to Resource Areas of the European System

In recent years, the topic of the development of Inner Peripheries has become relevant in the scientific debate (Carrosio, 2016; De Toni et al., 2021; Servillo et al., 2016), in European Cohesion Policies and in the national political agendas of the

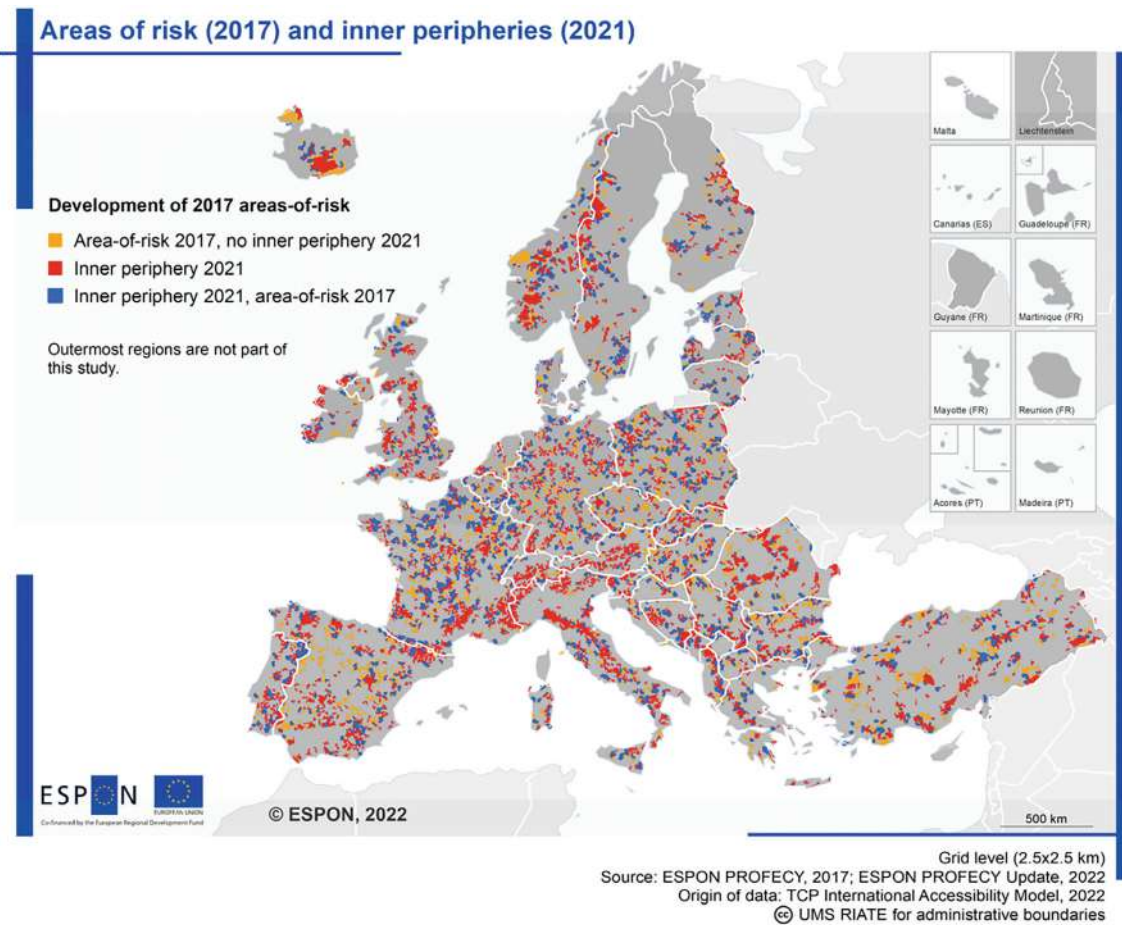


Fig. 1 Inner peripheries present in the EU (by Annalisa Giampino)

Member States. This is one of the most complex challenges tested in European application experiments: the construction of place-based development policies in marginal areas. Going beyond a purely competitive positioning perspective, cohesion policies have returned to question the specificities of places, the differences in local contexts, the non-neutrality of the territory in the belief that the knowledge that supports innovation (as well as development), as argued by Carrosio et al., (2022, p. 3), resides in places, it is dispersed among the people who live there.

These marginal areas are subject to demographic and economic contraction, distant not only geographically from the economic dynamics and agglomeration forces of metropolitan systems, (Carrosio, 2016; De Toni et al., 2021; Servillo et al., 2016). This is that mosaic of medium and small-sized urban centers on which the European urban system is structured, and which today represent the so-called Inner Peripheries (Peréz Soba et al., 2014) (Fig. 1), areas that suffer from the conditions of peripherality and marginality in a multidimensional perspective that covers the spatial, political, economic, and last but not least social spheres (Peréz Soba et al., 2013; Noguera et al., 2017).

From this point of view, these centers are complex and extremely fragile areas of intervention that, although economically disadvantaged, still appear as micro-deposits of natural and naturalistic resources, cultural values, historical-architectural heritage, contextual knowledge where long-term cooperative and community forms of heritage management clash with the absence of services, demographic and productive rarefaction that hinders their valorization.

In this process of redefining the boundaries of local development actions, smaller municipalities have been called upon to become protagonists of innovative forms of valorization of their heritage by implementing a cultural and administrative operation to remove areas of extraordinary beauty from the risks of degradation and abandonment and to offer them an endogenous possibility of redemption, that is, based on the recovery of their own identity and the valorization of their own resources.

In this framework of European action, marginal areas are called to take action to enhance, also in a touristic key, their material and immaterial cultural heritage. Local development actions have been matched by a huge public investment to

improve the services and infrastructures connecting these territories.

This is an ongoing phase of experimentation of new policies which, however, raises some problematic issues on which scientific research is called to question itself in a trans-disciplinary dimension. If place-based approaches will be the prevailing action strategy in the coming years, it is necessary to understand the contribution of the bottom-up approach to the reduction of intra- and inter-regional disparities (Weck et al., 2021) beyond models that commodify heritage and lead to the overtourism and touristification of places.

Following this line of reasoning, the article offers a critical reflection on one of the most advanced place-based policies currently being tested in the European context—the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI). It highlights the strategy's limitations while proposing a new interpretative framework that emphasizes the ongoing practices initiated by local communities (specifically in the Madonie Inner Area), which are capable of generating sustainable local development rooted in the deep co-implication between places, tangible and intangible heritage, and inhabitants (§2). This interpretative approach brings together diverse perspectives, scales, and disciplinary traditions in order to explore the potential for renewing local development policies grounded in a broad and rich conception of cultural heritage and its community-led valorization (§3), as illustrated by the presented case study (§4) (A.G.)

2 The Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas: Critical Issues and Possible New Development Perspectives

In this framework of themes and issues, one of the most interesting place-based development policies in marginal areas tested in Europe is represented by the Italian experience of the Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI). This is an example of an innovative policy aimed at countering socio-economic inequalities between urban (and/or central) areas and rural and peripheral areas, which suffer from depopulation, poor accessibility to essential services and limited economic opportunities. In Italy, the Inner Peripheries have been defined as Inner Areas and cover a total of 60% of the national territory in which approximately 22% of the Italian population lives.

The Inner Areas have been identified through statistical parameters and include the most peripheral Italian municipalities with respect to the main centers of supply of essential services (education, health and mobility).

The National Strategy for Internal Areas (SNAI), since its inception in 2014, was launched in a climate of great enthusiasm that corresponded to an intense public and scientific debate both from a perspective that we could define

as “internal” of those who participated in the construction and implementation of the Strategy (Cersosimo & Donzelli, 2020; De Rossi, 2018; Lucatelli et al., 2022); and from an “external” perspective of those who—in various capacities and from different disciplinary perspectives—evaluated its methods, effects and results (Dell’Agnese & Delatin Rodrigues, 2023; Gabellini, 2020; Moscarelli & Fera, 2024). In these 10 years, the cumulative process of knowledge and experience produced has highlighted the limits and prospects of a Strategy that must, however, be recognized for having brought back to political attention a forgotten Italy, consigned to institutional oblivion and kept alive by “resilient communities” that—sometimes together with organizations of various kinds (associations, informal groups of citizens, representatives of the private social sector, etc.)—have initiated processes and actions of active citizenship for the care and survival of territories distant, not only geographically, from the opportunities of urban agglomerations. Considering the evidence mentioned above, despite the confirmation of SNAI in the current 2021–2027 programming cycle which marks its transition from an experimental dimension to a structural dimension of national policy, no process of hoarding of this analytical capital—with the consequent revision of the strategy—seems to have been activated. On the other hand, some regressions emerge.

Starting from these premises, the Universities of Cagliari, Palermo, and Molise are carrying out a PRIN program (Research Projects of National Relevant Interest—REPLACE. REframing PLace-based Approach through the Cultural Ecosystem Services of inner areas, 2023/2025), that aims to critically analyze the challenges identified by the conventional framework of the Internal Peripheries, as outlined in the National Strategy for Internal Areas (SNAI). The objective is to explore the revitalization of Inner Areas by examining the interconnectedness between communities and territory and analyze methodologies that local policies and planning initiatives can employ to incorporate the qualitative and perceptual dimensions of “living in Inner Areas” into their developmental strategies.

The project aims to strengthen the role of local communities in building “place knowledge” and territorial and human capital through the innovative lens of Cultural Ecosystem Services (CES), studying them as a factor of the quality of life of inhabitants and as a key factor for local development from “inside.” We consider the CES in the definition suggested by Fish et al. (2016: 4), as the contributions ecosystems make to human well-being in terms of the identities they help frame, the experiences they help enable and the capabilities they help equip. As non-material benefits that people obtain from ecosystems, CES can help in understanding how

place influences opportunity, in terms of growth as well as individual life chances. “Place knowledge,” together with the recognition and enhancement of informal and grassroots practices and experiences that are developed in the territories, offer elements to enrich and integrate the planning processes, according to a logic of institutional learning and working on new models of cooperation, shared local knowledge with the goal to bridge the research-policy-practice gap.

The research findings endeavor to fill a lacuna in comprehending the extent to which policies and planning incorporate the qualitative and perceptual facets associated with “living in the Inner Areas.”

According with the territorialist approach, which has practiced in territorial plans and projects a dense and deep knowledge of the identity and morpho typological peculiarities of the place, constitutive of a heritage interpretation and representation, the framework of knowledge, in its complexity and multidisciplinary expansion, has become essential to define the genetic and transformation rules of the territory and for the activation of integrated socio-economic models on a territorial basis, through participatory tools aimed at the self-government of the heritage commons (Magnaghi in Marson, eds., 2019).

Through a mixed-methods approach, whose aim is to give value to the interdisciplinary nature of territorial sciences, the research enhances our understanding of the intricate and diverse interactions between local communities and their surroundings. It plays a crucial role in reshaping the discourse by offering valuable data to assess challenging scenarios. Furthermore, it proposes a reflection about designing a range of tools and strategies to unlock the territorial potential.

In the framework of the capability approach of Nussbaum (2011) and guided by a bioregionalist vision, the focus of University of Palermo Unit Research is on the Madonie Inner Area with the aim to enhance a capability building mechanism by interpersonal relationships that will become an instrument for individuals to invest in building personal capabilities, producing results in the direction of the growth of communities.

The Madonie Inner Area and its Strategy which, from various points of view, is considered by the same promoters of the SNAI a success story for the results achieved so far (Barca & Zabatinò, 2017). The Madonie Area was identified as a prototype area during the 2014–2020 programming cycle with the aggregation of 21 municipalities and a total population of 60,393 inhabitants. The perimeter was the result of the overlapping of the SNAI classification with the perimeters of the instruments of the past programming seasons. In fact, it is an area with a high capacity to attract resources in a time frame that unfolds from 1997 (with the Territorial Pact of the Madonie) to today (with the SNAI) without,

however, these having returned lasting wealth and capacity for autonomous development to the local communities. In the new 2021–2027 programming cycle, the Madonie Inner Area was not only confirmed but also granted a further expansion to 26 municipalities with a population of 73,927 inhabitants (Fig. 2). The territory involved is far from homogeneous both in its geo-morphological, landscape, and historical-cultural aspects (Fig. 3) and in its socio-economic profile.

In the following paragraphs, some preliminary investigations carried out on the case study of the “Inner Areas of the Madonie in Sicily” will be presented. An investigation that puts into tension the place-based approach from an interdisciplinary perspective (urban and landscape design and architectural restoration) to understand the potential of the new dynamics of collective participation of local communities in the policies of planning and conservation of material and immaterial values that are a connecting element between the architectural scale and the landscape scale and an operational foundation for valorization policies based on knowledge of place. We, therefore, focused on an exploratory single-case study of a virtuous municipality, which enabled us to describe and interpret the complex causal relationships among various factors of change and development. In fact, the case of Castelbuono highlights, on the one hand, how local communities reactivate abandoned public spaces and places, fostering new economies based on the valorization of heritage at different scales; on the other hand, the synergies established with public institutions outline novel forms of public–private collaboration that could contribute to the definition of new development policies. (A.G.)

3 Cultural Heritage and “Inner Areas”: An Introduction

The growing attention to cultural heritage as a factor of sustainable development and social cohesion can be recognized in various guidelines, policies and strategies that recognize it as a community interest. We are now aware that if landscape and urban contexts and if monumental architectural heritages degrade to the point of dissolving, centuries-old cultures are lost, that “material culture” (Iscum, 2021) that produced those housing systems that still preserve collective memory, the only true potential for evolution, including economic, for the future. The need therefore emerges to understand how the development of a territory is capable of reading cultural heritage as a system of relationships between “artifact” and its habitat.

With the widening of the object of protection, an aesthetic dimension is added to the geographical dimension saturated with historical and environmental elements, and the exis-

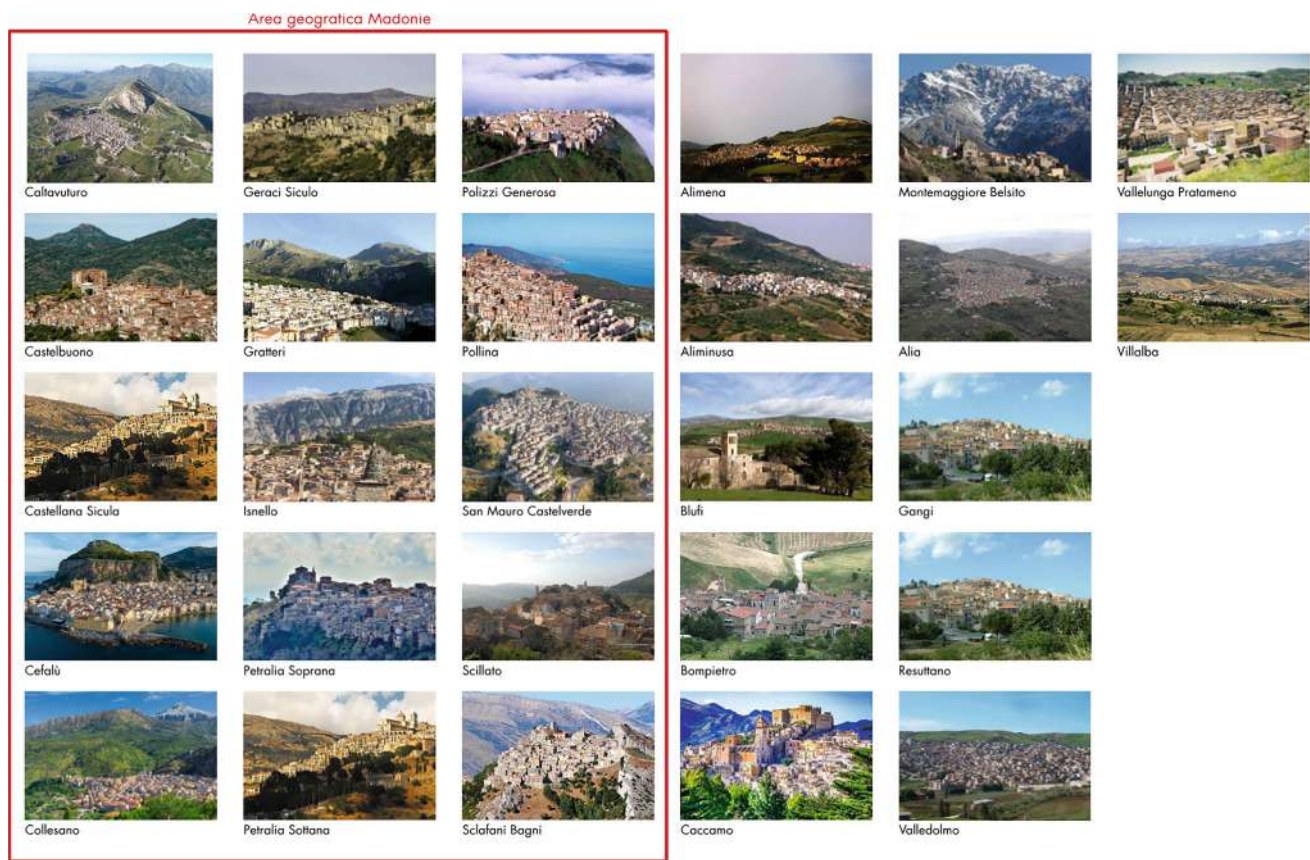


Fig. 2 Municipalities of Madonie inner area (by Annalisa Giampino)

tence of a “right to beauty” is discussed, which is characterized by its universality and its claim to become a tool for pursuing collective well-being, improving the quality of life for all also through adaptation to changes in the social context (Cabiddu, 2021). For decades we have been witnessing changes in perspective embedded in a debate that has defined a new glossary, dominated by concepts such as heritage, roots, identity, community. These terms have been given a new value in relation to the transformations taking place in places of life, at different scales and with respect to contemporary realities (including the virtual one). What is the identity of a community? There is a deep link between collective stratified memory and architectural and landscape heritage. Analyzing the system of relations of the products of the ‘material culture’ that has characterized the territory over the centuries also means understanding the value of the specificities of the cultural heritage, at different scales. It means, therefore, to understand the relationships between architecture and context, in a new transversal vision of monument, no longer reserved only for what is unequivocally monumental, but also for structures, architectures, interwoven value

systems, which are the identity mark of cultural territories (Devoti & Naretto, 2017).

With the Franceschini Commission in 1964, a new concept of cultural heritage linked to the idea of collective heritage was glimpsed; in 2000, with the “European Landscape Convention,” “Landscape” was defined as “a certain part of the territory, as perceived by populations, whose character derives from the action of natural and/or human factors and their inter-relationships.” A definition that created a common basis for comparison between disciplines, which prepared the “Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society” (Faro Convention 2005). A convention that introduced for the first time the concept of “heritage communities,” defining them as “a group of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage, and who wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit them to future generations (Art. 2).” The convention thus represents a “cultural revolution” (Baratti, 2020), because it broadens the meaning of the term “heritage,” shifting the focus from “good” to “citizens’ right to cultural participation” and also emphasizing the role of cultural heritage in human development (Crobe & Schilleci, 2024). There is growing evidence of

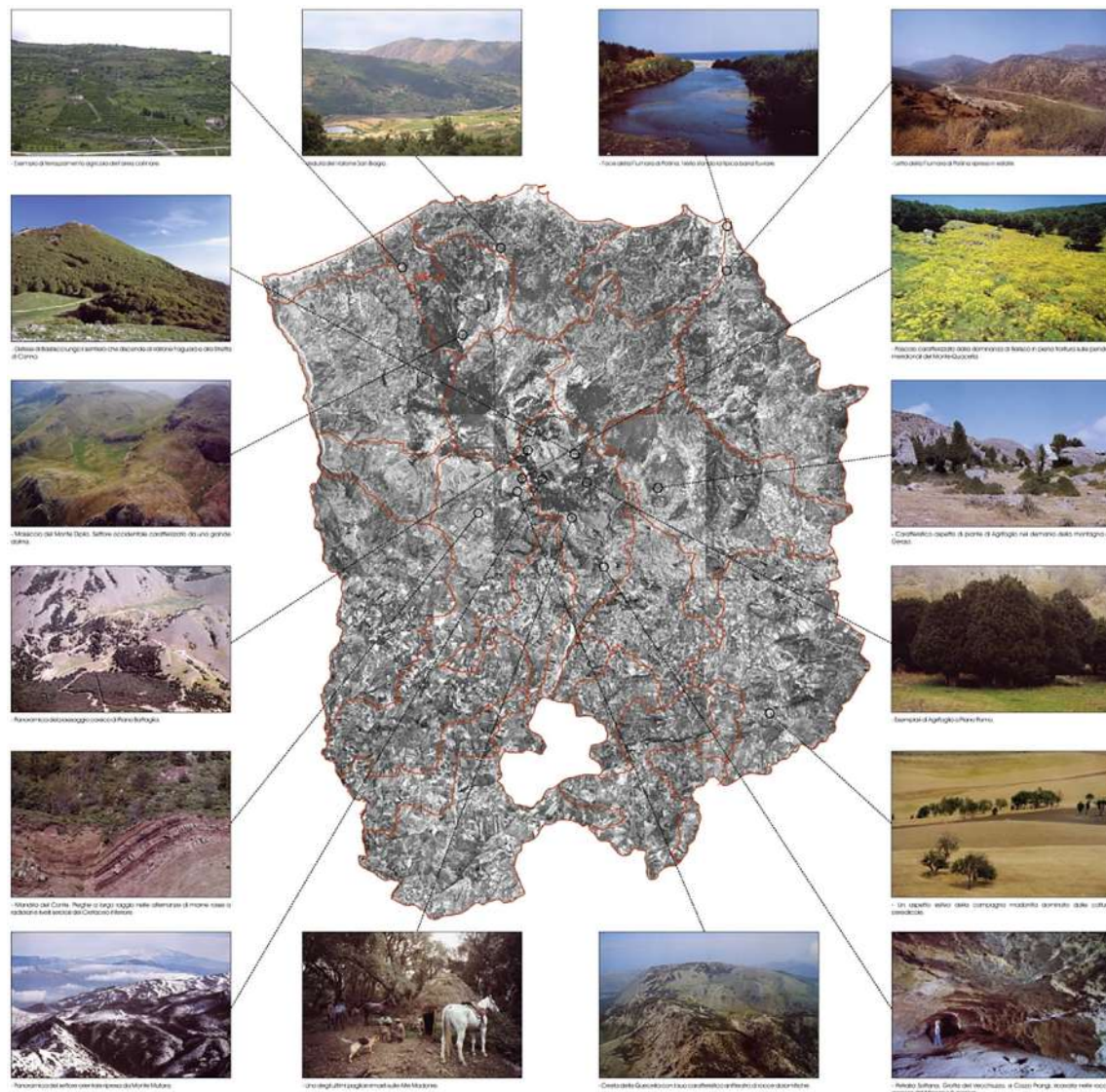


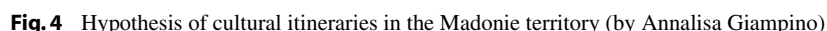
Fig. 3 Territorial heritage of the Madonie (by Annalisa Giampino)

the principle of interdependence, the strong relationship that links the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage to the natural and territorial context. The protection of the landscape and the same care for the individual monumental or historical-artistic asset are not detachable from the environment in which they are embedded (Crosetti, 2001). If, therefore, cultural heritage is the sign of memories engraved in the landscape, it holds the key to a rediscovery of meanings on which to hinge the dynamics of transformation and cultural and economic development. In both policies and practices, in fact, we are gradually witnessing, if not a paradigm shift, at least a deeper analysis that goes beyond the economic dimension of cultural heritage and considers the social dimension and cultural participation as systems for building connections between people and places, contributing to the discovery, rediscovery and production of a “consciousness of place”

(Becattini, 2016; Magnaghi, 2010) in which heritage, in its multiple and sometimes contradictory meanings, contributes to shaping identities and narratives, past values and elements of local history and culture.

This is what we read in some bottom-up management practices located in so-called fragile areas (Oteri, 2019; Oteri & Scamardi, 2020). In the “contemporary” management of the cultural heritage, offered by these experiences, a possible way of action can be found, capable of outlining a method of reading and interpreting local instances, capable of understanding the importance of the processes of valorization of the cultural heritage, generating identity processes to support the conservation of material and immaterial values, for the future of these places (Fig. 4).

In order to try to analyze the interrelationships between cultural heritage and territorial government, we asked



In this perspective, even contexts perceived as fragile, undergoing depopulation or abandonment can find a perspective in the renewed relationship between heritage, with its still recognizable material and immaterial values, the multiplicity of meanings expressed by the landscape and the territory. Recalling the words of C. S. Bertuglia, “there are no territories without hope, however compromised, but there are territories without a project” (Bertuglia, 2003). What kind of project today do the good practices found in the Madonie express? We are still in a critical condition, of slow development, but pointing toward quality projects that always start from a bottom-up participation. Projects that, to be defined as “quality,” attempt to be the expression of that “consciousness of place” capable of expressing the profound soul, the multiple



Fig. 5 Gratteri, medieval abbey of San Giorgio. A long campaign of restoration, has generated much attention to the monument, and today trekking routes are organized that have the abbey as their final destination (by Zaira Barone)

identities of the territory. It is important to recognize a direction taken, albeit in a piecemeal manner, of expression of a way of development involving the cultural heritage. And it is important that in the long term these dynamics of community and administrative involvement can: “reflect on the relationships between space, time, and society and make it possible to highlight that, for the protection of abandoned assets, intervention strategies cannot be limited to mere material and functional action. Co-evolution requires a holistic view and an integrated approach that takes into account the interconnections between cultural heritage, natural environment, social and economic context. It means considering cultural heritage not only as an object to be preserved, but as a dynamic actor that can contribute to change and sustainable development” (Della Torre & Russo, 2023). (ZB)

4 Cultural Heritage and “Inner Areas”: A Case Study of Castelbuono

For about twenty years, the municipality of Castelbuono, classified as a municipality of the Madonie in the “Inner Areas” category according to the SNAI definition, can be consid-

ered a good reference practice for the entire Madonie context. Political management and the dynamics of collective participation triggered by local history and traditions, as well as a deep knowledge of the territory, allow us to understand the development of a municipality that has suffered much less from depopulation. The good practices to which we refer have developed from the recognition of cultural heritage values, questioned through a new interpretation, capable of “inspiring a more comprehensive vision of the pre-existences and suggesting intervention criteria marked by a coherent, compatible and integrated design to the context, through different tools. Castelbuono has had the ability to relate with the Union of Municipalities of the Madonie, the Madonie Park Authority and the Madonie Ecomuseum, realities that, in the difficulty of constant collaboration, are elements in defense of a systemic planning to refer to in order to focus on the valorization of heritage with re-significant actions that relate heritage at different scales.

The rediscovery of the rural values of this territory, strongly linked to the history of the Madonie Park, has in recent years enabled the activation of an innovative productive economy based essentially on food products and has its strong point in the link between the city and the centuries-old agricultural



Fig. 6 Castebuono, Ventimiglia castle square. Festivals organized by the “Glen Gould” cultural association use the town’s monumental heritage as the scene of musical events (by Glen Gould association)

history of this landscape. Some of these productive realities, such as confectionery production that is exported throughout the world, for example, have utilized the production of manna from ash, one of the oldest crops and products in the Mediterranean, the production of which has shaped the Madonie landscape. The new entrepreneurs, who have thus invested in the rural production tradition, have brought out an innovative production strongly anchored to the historical roots of the territory and have also been able to reinvest this success in forms of patronage for the restoration of the artistic heritage of the historic city center, creating a real process of cultural heritage awareness in the place where they live and produce. The patronage of local entrepreneurs has seen, for example, the restoration of the fresco of the Assumption of the Virgin on the façade of the Matrice Vecchia, which among the religious monuments is the one that most represents the city.

Castelbuono is one of the twelve municipalities of the Madonie Park Authority, an authority that works in the direction of a systemic vision of recognizable values at different scales and on which to plan. In this direction of action, we must mention the Minà Palumbo Museum, in the former convent of San Francesco, restored thanks to public funds and creating a

network of Sicilian nature museums. A museum that recounts what the Madonie Park is today, starting from the tradition of the 19th-century culture of the Sicilian naturalists who studied and described it. Minà Palumbo was a pioneer in recounting the naturalistic and also archaeological heritage of this territory. A museum that is also the fruit of a collaboration with the University of Palermo, in particular with the Palermo Department of Architecture, for the reinterpretation in a contemporary key of the value of the famous scholar’s documents, in order to understand both historical documentation as a heritage to be preserved and documentation as a heritage to be communicated, useful for the identity process of the rebirth of this territory. Another interesting ten-year experience is that of the Glen Gould association, which has been able to trace a method in the process of valorisation, production and care of the territory and its cultural heritage. It is a reality born in Castelbuono in 1997 that organizes Ypsigrock, a summer music festival that has become an annual international reference point for all rock music enthusiasts (Fig. 6). The aim of the association, which for years has been able to work with a musical proposal of the highest quality, moving away from the cliché image of the stuffed town in the small mountain village and toward that of a place capable of interpreting the

present, and to support its festivals by interweaving cultural projects and territorial valorization of cultural heritage. The association's work therefore belies the rhetoric of the "crib town," a vision that must be overcome if we really want to proceed with the conservation of existing values in a perspective of future development. This leads to the definition of multi-level governance models that promote a local welfare oriented toward cohesion and social consolidation. (ZB).

5 Conclusions

The risk that always exists is to transform these practices of managing and communicating this transforming identity process as an exclusively tourist development attractor. Understanding the values of the stratified historical context, should be constant practices in the project for the historic city and indicate new normative perspectives, planning strategies at different scales and among different competencies. Investment in restoration projects, capable of preserving the heritage, but also of introducing it into the process of producing new development economies and introducing it into a reading of the system that identifies the stratified context at different scales, is the only real revitalization policy possible. To do this requires a connection between competencies, focusing on the design of new economies that can propose themselves from the historical and productive roots of the territory, activating processes of development of that collective memory that connects itineraries of cultural heritage by linking the architectural scale to that of the landscape. Analyzing the context of the Madonie allows us to demonstrate that there is a bottom-up approach that recognizes new networks of meanings and that, when it encounters political openness, can develop and function as good practice as well. What indications do these buove practices give us that, slowly, are charting a new future for the Madonie? They are evidence: of a new awareness of the material and immaterial values of the cultural heritage; of restoration projects capable of preserving the recognized values, from the architectural to the landscape scale, making them usable for the community; of the connection between different competencies, focusing on the enhancement of the cultural heritage, the design of new development economies, agricultural development, communication of collective memory and connection with the cultural tourism itineraries of metropolitan cities. Concluding and quoting Clifford Geertz in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Geertz, 1973): "...man is an animal entangled in the networks of meaning that he himself has woven, I believe that culture consists of these networks and that therefore their analysis is not primarily an experimental science in search of laws but an interpretive science in search of meaning..." (F.S.).

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