



National/regional research report

Topic 1: LANDSCAPE

CNR-Ibimet, ITALY

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims of CULT RURAL activities in Italy

The research had a key to the cultural - anthropological and historical, with the aim of documenting the heritage and rural landscape of the Italian Apennine areas, with a view to sustainable rural development and sustainability in the interaction man-territory. The search covered general aspects of the rural landscape, with references to the Italian context and a specific focus on rural areas of mid southern Apennine rural areas. A specific investigation has been conducted to document the rural heritage of rural villages of Samnites, a population that for centuries has occupied a large area mid southern Apennine, on a territory that now affect the current Abruzzi, Molise, Campania and Apulia. The influence of these populations is still strong in determining the culture, landscape, society and beliefs of an important of the rural populations of the Italian territory. San Marco dei Cavoti, in the province of Benevento a village of Samnium area is location of the Italian final exhibition. For this reason, particular attention was paid to rural Samnitic rural heritage of the province of Benevento.

As a starting point has been carried out a search of historical developments in the Italian agricultural system and a study on the different types of rural landscape. So, was followed a path of inquiry in order to describe the different states / levels of interaction man - territory - landscape, starting from the admiration for the mystical elements of the sacred landscape to end with the destruction of the landscape. This route has been divided into several sections, which represent the structure of the final exhibition. The first section covers the topic of "admiration for the sacred landscape", with reference to the primeval stages of the interaction man-territory. In this section attention has been paid the themes of the water and the tree, "sacred" elements of the rural landscape, culture mythology". Water as a source of life, as an essential element of agricultural development as well as the source of beliefs and spirituality. Sacred tree as a source of inspiration, a place of rituals, but also a source of raw material (wood, fruits). This is the case of the WALNUT tree that, especially in the Sannio, has always been tied to belief in witches, but also to an important economic and productive multifunctionality. The second section covers "the environmental friendly use of landscape." This section describes a "sustainable interaction between man and land", quoting as a reference in building a dry stone and ancient routes of transhumance. In this section have been reported examples of rural buildings made of stone, with particular attention to pastoral circular buildings standing along the routes of Apennine transhumance. The third section was devoted to the theme "the conquest of the landscape", in relation to cultivated land, the advent of machinery and agricultural intensification, and the work of man (industries, bridges, roads, dams, works remediation). The fourth section is devoted to the theme "knowing and protecting the landscape", with reference to the definitions of the landscape and the European Landscape Convention. The fifth section is reserved for the theme of "the destruction of the landscape", with examples of defacement, unfairness, disasters (caused by humans), mismanagement, poor planning. This section has been given prominence to the issue of forest arsons. The sixth and last section was dedicated to the theme "landscape art", with references classical art and futuristic.

1.2 Rural Landscapes in Italy

The Italian countryside is the complex result of several millennia of history in which they are layered civilization and cultures. As Piero Bevilacqua says, the complexity of the Italian landscape is due to the "fingerprints" that the many civilization have left in the cities and rural areas. These civilizations have provided, over time, a large contribution of new plants, cultivation techniques, ways to capture and use water, buildings and artefacts. This makes unique the Italian countryside and identifies common elements with the landscapes of many other European countries.

In percentage terms, Italy (2001) has a cultivated area of about 13 million hectares (43.8% of total), distributed to 45% in the mountains, to 23% in the hills and 32% in plain. A surface that is in constant decline since the 1930 had 26 million hectares, almost twice as high. There are no studies on the evolution of the rural landscape to a national scale. We have therefore tried to reconstruct the dynamics through a framework for large scale, supplemented by local surveys can learn some things. As part of international research tends to place it towards the end of the '700 greatest expansion of agricultural areas - minimum grazing and extension of forests, including the effect of demographic expansion and the hunger for land. For Italy, this period is probably slightly ahead, given the demographic trends of the curves, towards the end of the '800, first industrialization of the country. In the late 800's, the picture of the agricultural shows complex characters. The adaptation to different regional conditions and different economic and social structures have, in fact, diversified the country. Environmental factors, cultural systems, culture, types of settlements and "types" of farm buildings, designed unique rural landscapes. The major agricultural systems, such as "Cascina" (farmstead) (Lombardy, Emilia Romagna), and the farm houses of "Mezzadria" (sharecropping) (Marche), "latifondo" (large estate) of cereals in Maremma (Tuscany), the Roman Houses or the "Masserie" (manor farms) of southern Italy, are the most obvious signs of a very complex structure. Similarly, the civilizations of transhumance, which marked the area through the main routes of passage, such as the characteristic Tratturo (an ancient transhumance path), which joined the plains of Apulia to the green pasturelands of Abruzzi, crossing all the mid-southern Apennines. However, within this diverse reality, there are some common traits. First, a significant development of the cultivation of cereals. The "land of bread" was a signal of strong destination for self-consumption of products. Another sign of this trend was the promiscuity of crops. Together with herbaceous crops they joined those trees (vines, olive trees, mulberry trees, fruit trees). Minor the incidence of animal husbandry, particularly going toward the south and the islands, where pasture was most important. The first evidence of evolution is located in Lombardy and Piedmont. Systematical irrigation determined a 'agrarian revolution' that brought together these areas to other European agriculture. Rice, fodder, wheat, maize, cereals brought to higher levels of productivity. The animal found a greater chance of developing into a system of mixed farming, with significant production in the dairy. Wheat and corn prevailed, however, in the dry plains and hills. Hemp and wheat, in Veneto and Emilia Romagna. In the hills above all, and less so in the plains, lands were devoted to mixed plantations: vines supported by walnuts, willows, poplars and mulberries. Albeit with different sizes, the production subsidiary of the central regions (Tuscany, Umbria and Marche) saw the presence of herbaceous and tree crops (vines, olive trees). About olive, it should be noted that although widespread since the Middle Ages, its density reached its current size only in the nineteenth century. In Maremma and in Roman countryside prevailed, however, the extensive use of cereals, partly because many of these areas remained infested by malaria until the early decades of the twentieth century. Similarly, in the South dominated the latifondo (large estate) of cereal and pasture, although

toward the end of XIX century there is a greater crop specialization: mulberries, horticulture, fruit, vines, olive trees.

Starting in the early twentieth century, the percentage of employees in agriculture began to decline slowly. Changes early in this evolution occurred in the industrial North West, where employees in agriculture, between the wars, had already fallen around 35%. In the rest of Italy the reversal between the primary and secondary education took place only after the second world war. It was in 1950 that Italy farming was changing rapidly. The agrarian reform and the dissemination of important innovations determined by scientific and technological progress (Note: the tractor, the landscape and the family) is not won to stem the exodus from the countryside, which led to the abandonment of many cultivated areas, starting from marginal areas. This was also accompanied by a transformation of the structure of corporate farms. In a nutshell, the changes in the last 60 years have seen, as well as a reduction of cultivated area, a more radical change of addresses cultivation of livestock and activities offered.

The new context of international markets for agricultural products and foodstuffs, and especially the effects of agricultural policies adopted since the Treaty of Rome of 1957, offered further changes.

Since the years of post-war reconstruction, the Italian agriculture and Europe were geared towards achieving increased production in order to compete with international markets. Industrial agriculture has caused significant changes to the centuries-rural landscapes. Even for this size of medium-small family farms, has given way to larger companies.

From the years '70-'80, the changes made to the CAP in order to reduce the surplus, have also led to the spread of non-food such as soybean, rapeseed and sunflowers, which have further encouraged the simplification of the landscape mosaic. Greenhouses, tunnels, shade nets, are now widely used in the fields of floriculture and horticultural products, often in compromising significantly the aesthetic quality of the countryside. The structure of agriculture is now profoundly changed. The changing lifestyles, has caused a new flow back to the countryside as a place of residence, as is the strong point of new tourist routes that combine crops and agricultural production in the context of the property landscape of Italian country. In this case, the signs on the landscape and the rural dwellings are evident.

1.3 Structure of Italian rural landscape according with Landscape Unit (LU) system

To interpret the landscape structure of the Italian territory, we can use the result of work of the Ministry of the Environment. This work has used the database of the *Corine Land Cover Mapping* with scale 1:250.000 (*Barbati et.al. 2004*). The survey classified the Italian territory in 2142 Unit of Landscape (UDP), even if with an approach that aims to highlight the characters or semi-natural landscape. This work has been carried out identifying, within each Landscape Unit, the class that performs the function of landscape matrix, as to say the class significantly more extended and connected to any other class of the mosaic landscape. In this way, depending on the type of landscape matrix, the structure of the landscape mosaic has been classified into four main types: agricultural, forestry, wetlands, urban. According to this approach, there are two main types of configurations that dominate the Italian countryside. The first type is represented by landscapes dominated by an agricultural matrix, equal to about 55% of the country, the second type are the landscape matrix in the woods, 40% of the total area. The agricultural landscape matrix forms a physically continuous stretch, to the scale adopted for the recognition, from the Alpine valleys,

extending across the Po valley, covering the hilly landscapes and the coastal plains of the Peninsula, until arriving in Apulia, Calabria and including Sicily, where this type of landscape is predominant in the hilly areas, lowland and coastal areas. The landscape matrix forests affects the mountainous areas of the Italian peninsula, from the mountainous along the Apennine arc, up to the Sila Mountain (Calabria). In addition to these two types of matrix, there is a landscape composite (3% of total) which is interpreted as a transition between the matrix woodland and agriculture. The landscape is composite in locations (hill or mountains) where morphology or altitudinal limits (eg limit to the mass cultivation of the grape or olive) mean that there is a change in the distribution of land use: the lower hills are covered mainly by the agricultural crop, while the higher bands are predominantly occupied by forest, which has now regained the previous pastures and often also of the terraced slopes planted.

The agricultural landscape matrix are in 50% of cases characterised by a single class of prevailing land use, able to determine their coverage of at least 70%. Among these, the landscape with arable and mixed farming landscapes are those most accidents on the national territory, both in terms of frequency (number of units of the landscape), both in terms of distribution (land area occupied by landscape unit). Tree crops such as olive groves, vineyards, orchards and other permanent crops qualify the agricultural matrix in 16% of cases. The remaining 50% of the agricultural landscape matrix shows, however, greater heterogeneity in their composition it is possible to identify two or more types of land use that characterize the coverage. Structural element of the rural landscape is its structure and infrastructure, the result of the amending of the man who has adapted the land to production needs related to basic needs. This is a continuous process, which follows the economic, social and political changing. A process that gave rise to a variety of landscapes in relation to cultural differences of irrigation and settlements that are defined by adapting the physical characteristics of places (morphology, geology, etc.). All eyes turn to the landscape, it is recognized in the laws and history of the company that have "used", lived and shaped the land. These are the distinctive characteristics, the differences that must be protected to maintain the UE environmental balance and at the same time ensuring the preservation of historic and cultural places.

The catalogue of the Italian agricultural landscapes is therefore very rich, for the multitude of uses and the complexity of interactions that man, society and culture have established with the territory. The problem of degradation of the landscape, which occurs in many campaigns "pressed" by industrialized farming too or "neglected" by abandonment of agriculture, means breaking the delicate ecological balance, but also means the loss of the ancient and complex relationship between man and environment.

1.4 The future for agriculture and rural landscape in Italy

The Italian countryside in the last 150 years has undergone many transformations. After an initial decline, from 1920 to today the extension of forests in Italy has almost doubled at the expense of cultivated areas. The increase of forest occurred mainly in mountain and hill, where there was 68% of cultivated land, and is accompanied by an increase in plant species of the type of forest or semi-natural systems. The phenomenon is linked to socio-economic factors that led to the abandonment of the mountains and countryside and the conquest of pastures and fields by the forest vegetation. Italian forests are now in a moment of maximum expansion compared to the last two centuries and are not in place the processes of deforestation that would significantly affect the national trend. The agricultural areas are in turn affected by evolutionary processes. The first abandonment of

marginal areas, encouraging the phenomenon of spontaneous or artificial forestation and delete the existing traditional landscapes. The second is the expansion of monocultures, achieved by eliminating items considered unnecessary or an obstacle to mechanization (trees, hedges, ditches, small rural buildings). A third phenomenon is the specialization of cultivations: from extensive/promiscuous to mono-cultivation and high density (eg, olive groves, vineyards, orchards), or intensive small-scale (eg, greenhouses, nurseries, industrial ...). In addition, the loss of species (animals and plants) associated with traditional agricultural systems (local species and varieties). These changes have also affected the sustainability of the energy landscape. That sustainability, in fact, in the past was linked to resources and processes of natural and created landscapes that were able, in the case of biotic or non biotic stress, to maintain or recover their functions easily. The sustainability of these systems was further emphasized by international research that have compared the energy efficiency of traditional landscapes with the landscapes of industrial agriculture.

The Italian landscape tends to a progressive homogenization, with the simplification and trivialization of landscape structure and the loss of the "culture" characters that has characterized Italy in the world context. In marginal or abandoned areas, the landscape takes on more "natural" characters due primarily to the forests, while in the intensely cultivated areas, the landscape tends to simplify space, bringing to homogenization and defacement. This is a process that involves not only Italy but many other European countries and North America. This gives the problem an international character.

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2. APENNINE MOUNTAIN ARC, THE ANCIENT CIVILIZATION OF SAMNITES AND THE SAMNIUM REGION: A FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH

2.1 The Apennine chain: a cradle for Italian rural culture

The Apennine mountains are the longest mountain arc in Italy and one of the major European mountain systems, the fifth in order of area, with an extension of more than 9 million hectares, equivalent to 31.2% of Italian territory. Stretches over 1500 km, from the Alps to Sicily. Inside the Apennine arc, the wide range of physical, geo-morphological and climatic conditions have fostered during the centuries the birth and development of diversity of landscapes, cultures and regional and local identities. At the same time these mountains are known for an extraordinary richness of organic livestock and vegetable but, more importantly, the Apennines is the great bridge that connects the Mediterranean with Europe, a large green road that connects and maintains a historical, cultural and natural absolute value internationally. In comparison with the other Italian mountain arc (the Alps), the Apennines has a different geology and a lower average height. The natural landscape, the diversity of rocks and the climate, it is very different to the Alps. The peaks appear rounded with a slow slope of the two sides towards the Tyrrhenian Sea (west) and Adriatic (east). The valleys are often inaccessible, because many areas are subject to landslides and mudslides. The numerous and easy passes that allow you to move across the two seas sides, to heights almost always below the 1,000 m, are listed in local jargon, according to the characteristics of their forms, with the names in hand, mouth, gallows, door and throat. The first major change in the Apennines there were in Roman times with the spread of stock, the depletion of forests, the drainage of the valleys and the construction of a road network. In the Middle Ages Apennine becomes location for trades and exchanges, civil settlements (the typical Medieval Italian village, perched on the Apennine mountains to defend themselves from enemy attack) and linked to the religious history of monasticism. For almost a thousand years, the Apennine is one of the core for economy and Italian history, thanks to the development of agriculture, industry and transhumant pastoralism. At the end of the industrial era, the economic crisis begins in all the mountainous areas, with depopulation and the gradual weakening of the company and the local landscape. The profound changes that affect the Apennines in the decades after World War II further exacerbate this process. Bankruptcy is a development project designed to conform the Apennines to the dynamics and needs of the economically strongest areas of the country. From the 80s of last century, is growing the idea that the future of the Apennine mountain arc is in the conservation and enhancement of its extraordinary heritage of history, nature and culture.

2.2 Sannio and Samnites: origins of the rural civilization of central Italy



The Sannio (Samnium in Latin) was a historical and geographical region of mid-southern Italy, "governed" by the civilization of the Samnites in the VII-VI century b.C. and I-II century a.C. The vast territory of the Samnites was mostly concentrated in the central area of Italy, an area which today coincides with the most internal regions of Abruzzi, Molise, Campania, Basilicata and Puglia. According to an ancient tradition, this ancient civilization occupied those lands before inhabited by the Opic-Osci population from which they would gradually assimilated the customs and language. It is believed that these people were coming in from the lands bordering Sannio (Sabini) (today Lazio), to whom, according to Strabo "... have perhaps added

Hellenic lineage populations from Megale Hellas". Samnites were made up of at least four tribes, allocated in different areas and mainly linked by language and religion: the Pentri, which occupied an area corresponding to the Molise. This was the heart of the Sannio, the city-capital Bovianum (today Bojano) (Bovianum derives from the Latin bos bovis, the bull, the ver sacrum, god adored by the Samnitis people); the Carrucini, which occupied the north-eastern part of Sannio; the Caudini, which occupied the south-west of Sannio, capital Caudium (near today's Montesarchio in the Province of Benevento); the Irpini, who occupied the south area of Sannio. In the north-west of their territory stood Maleventum, Latin name derived from OSCO (the language Sannita) "Maloenton", today the city of Benevento. The Romans called it Malventum (evil wind) for the many war defeats suffered by the Samnites and, as a result of the war against Pyrrhus and a memorable victory, renamed Beneventum (good wind). Subsequently, these groups joined the Frentani, who occupied the area of the Adriatic coast (today Molise), with capital Larinum (modern Larino in the province of Campobasso).

The various tribes of Sannio formed a league, with capital Bovianum, that face (losing) the advance of the Roman empire. After the fall of the Roman Empire the Sannio, after conquests by the Byzantines and the Goths, was conquered in 570 a.D by Longobards that created the dukedom of Benevento. The dukedom proved politically very stable, so that it remained independent even after the seizure of the Longobard Kingdom of Northern Italy by Charlemagne in 774. Around the tenth century, the territory of Sannio was absorbed by the Kingdom of the Normans. In 1077, following agreements between Pope Leo IX and the Emperor Henry III, Benevento and environs passed to the Papal States. The papal Sannio remained, except for short interruptions, until 1860, when, as a result of Garibaldian conquests, became part of the Kingdom of Italy.

The name Sannio is today used (even if not officially) to define the inner mid-southern region of Italy. It is a mountainous region with strong characters of marginality. Yet, in certain periods of history, the Sannio and its people certainly have not been in a condition of marginality, but an autonomous role of leadership. The studies of recent decades are returning to the Samnites a new light, making them re-emerge out of the great Roman empire. Among "the gray limestone mountains," writes Edward Togo Salmon, author of the first monograph on their behalf, the Samnites developed a culture of absolute importance. Today we know much of the civilization of the Samnites, starting from the forms of settlement in the territory: the prevailing model of pagus, that is characterized by an agricultural land belonging to a community of people who lived in a dense network of small farms and villages (vici). Numerous fortifications stood in the most mountainous areas, with defence and control functions, great shrines, like Pietrabbondante village

(over 1000 m altitude), a sanctuary performing functions of worship, market, meeting political and cultural exchange. That of the Samnites was not a nation of small farmers free. It was a society divided into classes by 'relations of socio-economic dependence and subordination'. They were certainly dedicated to agriculture and pastoralism, but also to the robberies: among the Romans it became the proverbial *nefarium latrocinium Samnitium*. In short, they were inhabitants of the mountains, strong and brutal, as shown by the etymology of the names of the tribes: Carrucini can be compared with the Celtic * Carrega, "rock", while the name of the tribe of Pentri, which constituted "the backbone of Samnite league, contains the same root of the Celtic *pen-, "the top". The name of the Irpini tribe come from the ancient Osc language (*h*)irpus, "wolf", they were then "man-wolf", people of the mountains and forests.

The history of the Samnites, after more than two thousand years, continues to fascinate anyone trying to enter those events that, around the last centuries before the coming of Christ, have influenced the growth of most of the Italic populations. The history of the Samnites overlaps with that of other peoples, like the Etruscans, the Greeks, the Celts and the Romans. Were the most stubborn people and the most resolute temperament among all peoples of the Italian peninsula. The Samnites did not leave, or at least we have received no documents or codes, or simple scripts that can help us now describe the structure of their social, political and economic. Only the classical sources, allows us, together with archaeological activities, to reconstruct broad outlines for what could be the life of this ancient people. The Sannio, like other regions, had a development process rather slow until the period of the wars against Rome. Contact with the Romans, or rather the clash with the Romans, developed and strengthened their very conception of state policy and, consequently, there was a sudden revival of their social organization, such as contact with the Etruscans in Campania improved business and cultural development, and the Greek civilization influenced the religious convictions.

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3. FEAR AND ADMIRATION FOR SACRED LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS: THE TREE AND THE WATER

3.1 Sacred tree and beliefs: the Walnut tree

3.1.1 *Benevento witches between history and legend*

As a point of fact, some magic superstitions still survive in Samnium countryside, and among them, the legend of witches plays a relevant role. The most common hypothesis, is that witches may be “daughters” of ancient goddesses-mothers of nature, worshipped until the introduction of Christianity. Other elements contributed to the construction of the legend and of the system of popular beliefs. Samnites, the ancient population living in the area, had a view of the world as occupied by gods, whose favour was needed. The fear of contaminating elements or actions was very common and purification ceremonies were very frequent. To avoid the bad influxes talismans were used, together with recitation of magic formulas and offers to the gods. The main holy place in Samnium was the Ansanto valley, where the main temple of *Mefite* was. Since Samnitic times, in Benevento cults of female goddesses flourished, first *Mefite*, then *Diana/Ecate*, then *Iside*. *Ecate*, in particular, ancient Greek goddess, was believed to be followed by an infernal procession. These cults involved dances around a holy tree, that in Benevento was a walnut tree, symbol of abundance. Similar rituals can be found in Carias (now in Turkey), the village of walnuts, where girls were dancing in honour of *Artemide*, greek name for Diana. And in many parts of Europe dances and jumps are methods of homeopathic to foster crop production, and the same aim could be attributed to the dance around the walnut. The belief in witches and in the horse rides of women with *Ecate* (that is the first nucleus from which the believe of meetings of witches with the devil will develop) appears in imperial times, fostered by the works of poets such as Lucano, Petronio, Ovidio and Apuleio. At the end of the VI century, the area is occupied by a Germanic population, the Longobards, that introduced new myths, that, together with the diffusion of Christianity, will build a culture made of remnants of Paganism, Christian values and Germanic institutions. The *Life of Barbato Bishop of Benevento*, a treaty of the IX century, tells us about a Longobard cult not only to the image of viper (animal often referred to Iside) but to a tree, holy to their god Wothan (Odino). Accordin to some authors, Longobards were used to hang *coria* (skin of sheep and other animals) to a giant walnut tree and were riding on their horses toward the tree, trying to spear a piece of skin, to gain the favour of gods. During Benevento siege by the Bizantine emperor Costante II in 663, Barbato promised Duke Romuald to gain him the help of the Holy virgin, to win the Bizantines, if he was renouncing to this pagan ritual. The Longobard victory was followed by the felling of the tree, by Barbato himself. **The Longobard ritual is part of beliefs according to which things hanging on a tree are offers to the spirit of the place or to a god, becoming amulets.** The legends related to witches, although sharing with the Longobard ritual the presence of a walnut tree, is clearly distinct, involving a relationship between the devil and the witches. And, likely, the witches walnut has been associated to the Longobard ritual, as in the treaty by Pietro Piperno “*Della superstiziosa noce di Benevento*” (about the superstition of walnut tree of Benevento), published in 1635. On the other hand, the belief in witches did growth through the Middle ages, allowing the Church to condemn the surviving pagan cults. The first written witness about the Benevento walnut as a place for witches to meet with the devil, can be dated back to 1273, and a major role in elaborating the physiognomy of witches was played by S. Bernardino from Siena, that mentioned Benevento as a place for witches' meetings in a sermon he gave in Siena in 1427. The legend built by S. Bernardino and then by Piperno rooted thanks to the works of many authors, and was absorbed at popular level. In the past, the belief in the existence of witches allowed the farmers to give an explanation to negative events, and to prevent them with rituals, as well as to kill

the persons that was supposed to be responsible. We can consider the many European traditions about witches as survival of pre-Christian religions; in the case of Benevento, the image of the city was built through historical and cultural events that attributed it the role of witches city.

3.1.2 Witches legend: a system of beliefs

The roots of witches legends can be found in the cults of goddesses such as *Ecate* (subsequently identified with *Diana* and *Isis*), *Empusa*, *Lamia*; these three goddesses had a link with magic and with mysterious female rituals. *Ecate*, goddess of night and queen of hell, was worshipped where three roads cross (“trivia”), and in black magic rituals, and her image is still supposed to survive in the legend of the *Zucculara* (namely “the woman who wears and makes noises with clogs”), mysterious female figure appearing at night in lonely roads.

So, various elements could have contributed to build the witches legend, including:

- Classic culture, with the cult of *Ecate/Diana/Isis*;
- Popular culture: the presence of witches can be found in any agro-pastoral culture, and appears as the survival of a prehistoric female religion, termed by Margaret Murray as “cult of witches”;
- Christian tradition: all the cults that cannot be referred to Christianity involve the presence of Devil, to which women can sell their soul to get power.

The term “janara”, indicating witches in the local dialects, has been referred as originating from *Janua*, in latin “door” (as a ghost that tries to enter the world of family and home); according to other authors, it may originate from *dianaria*, follower of *Diana*, goddess linked to the moon, to night rituals, to which a temple was erected in Benevento. When moon appeared, *Diana* was present, and plants and animals were dancing. “*Gioco di Diana*” (Diana ritual) is not by chance named the procession of witches and wizards and hell ghosts. And the cult of *Diana*, identified with the Egyptian goddess *Isis*, continued through the IV Century a.C., stressing its character of secret cult, that asked for an initiation of the followers; a major role, in the ritual, was played by water. Rituals in honour of *Isis* were forbidden in 395 a.C., but when the Longobards occupied Benevento, in 571-576, although the population was still Christianized, *Isis's* feast, as a propitiation of the new year, was still celebrated, while the cult of the Holy Virgin of Graces, introduced by the Byzantine Empire, had replaced the old goddess.

3.1.3 The walnut tree: beliefs, uses and functions in rural areas and Samnium

Many trees are linked to rituals and religious traditions. Woods were considered as house for a god, and trees were planted near temples, while dead were buried near evergreen trees. *Janare* (the witches), after greasing their body with magic oil, were gathering in the nights of Tuesday and Friday, while on Saturday their *sabba* (the orgiastic ritual) was taking place under a tree, the famous Benevento walnut, in a place known as *Ripa delle Janare* (in local dialect “river bank of the witches”), near the Sabato river. The unknown author of the *Adventus Sancti Nycolaj in Beneventum*, written in 1090, describes the place as close to the *Torre Pagana* (pagan Tower) where “...*aquarum abundantia sit*” and “*arborum amenitas*” (there is abundance of water and pleasantness of trees” (today the river is still named *Sabato* (Saturday), referring to the *sabba* rituals. But, why to chose a walnut for hight *sabbas*? The fame of this species is ambivalent. According to popular belief, sleeping under a walnut can cause headache; if its roots penetrate in

a stable, they can cause health problems to the animals. Its fruit's structure can resemble a brain, symbolising psychic alteration. *Juglandina*, a substance contained in fruits, roots and leaves, can be toxic for the surrounding plants. On the other hand, walnut is used in popular medicine for fighting several diseases, although the same preparation, done in the wrong way, can be noxious instead than useful.

In many parts of Italy traditions about witches refer to their trips, flying on brooms or on monsters, to the Benevento walnut.

The scientific name of common walnut is *Juglans regia*, since in the antiquity its fruits were dedicated to Jupiter. Its name, in fact, derives from “*Jovis*” (Jupiter) and “*glans*” (acorn). The walnut is vigorous tree, characterized by a solid trunk and sturdy roots. It can catch up the 30 meters of height. Estimated for its fruits, leaves and buds (with which oils and curative substances can be obtained), the walnut is appreciated also for wood (used in the fabrication of valuable furniture) and for food preparation. Its wood has the characteristic of being resistant but at the same time of easy workable. The harvest of the fruits happens in the september and October, exactly during the passage of shepherds during the sheep transhumance.

The Greek name of the walnut is *Karion* and seems that in the pre-Greek age this tree had been consecrated to the goddess of death called *Kar*, after identified by Greeks as *Kore*. *Kore* is the child kidnapped from *Ade* and become then goddess of the hell with the name of *Persefone*, (*Proserpine* for Romans), daughter of the goddess *Demeter* (*Cerere* for Romans), goddess of the harvests. Thus the *Caria* area in *Asia Minor*, is the earth of the kernels and of the walnuts and *Carias*, in *Arcadia*, is the village of the walnuts where some girls used to a dance in honour of *Artemis*, Greek name of *Diana*, there called *Caryatid*. Greek mythology narrates the history of *Caria*, daughter of *Dione*, king of the *Laconia*, that was transformed in a walnut tree. During one of its travels, the God *Apollo* was received with the greatest cares from *Anfitea*, wife of *Dione* and, in order recompense her for the hospitality, he gave to her daughters *Orfe*, *Lico* and *Caria*, some prophetic gifts agreeing they would never interfere with Gods and their hearth affairs. Some time after, *Dionysus*, God of wine (the Roman God *Bacchus*) was hosted by king *Dione* and fell in love with *Caria*. In spite of the warnings of *Dionysus*, *Orfe* and *Lico* began to spy the sister and the God, smashing the agreement they made with *Apollo*. So *Dionysus* was obliged to punish *Orfe* and *Lico* transforming them into rocks. From the pain, *Caria* died and *Dionysus*, that was still in love, transformed her in walnut tree with fecund fruits. *Artemis*, sister of *Apollo*, told this history to the *Lacons* that successively, calling her *Artemis Caryatid*, erected in her honour a temple with walnut wood columns modelled on feminine shapes, called from that moment *Caryatides*.

The link of the walnut with the feminine divinity continues in the Middle Ages, an example si the legend of Benevento witches. For this mythology and legends, the walnut tree is traditionally linked with witchcrafts and black magic. The shape walnut fruits remind the structure of a skull, with an hard external box (the wood shell) and an inner brain-shaped fruit. Also for this reason walnut has been always used for “sympathetic magic”, the black magic that uses objects similar to those on which the “witch” force is wanted to be exercised. As a matter of fact, according to *Pietro Piperno*, the walnut fruits produced by the witches walnut were sold like amulets and were used in order to fight children nightmares and epileptic crises. It was believed that the seeds, if inserted in the cavity uterine, made to conceive male sons. The same *Piperno* writes “*Nux, ut arbor et bonis et malis proprietatibus fuit a natura dotata*” (Walnut, the tree that nature provided with good and evil characteristics), giving to the walnut the rule to contain in itself, at the same time, good and the evil power. The wrong manipulation of walnut, in fact, can transform injurious substance that in origin are able to make to recover. So, even if the walnut is for excellence linked to the evil, the witches,

to the devil, the tree has also positive symbolic meanings, in catholic religion too. Saint Augustine identified walnut fruit Christ, comparing the green cover to the meat of Jesus (tried by the passion), the wood shell to the cross and the real fruit to the inner divinity that supplies nutrition. In the same way, Piero della Francesca, in century in his XIII century portrait “the Baptism of Christ” represents to the right of Jesus a walnut tree referring to the Christian symbolism for which the external cover represents the human nature, the inner seed the divine and wood shell the wood of the cross. During its stay in Verona, Sant'Antonio from Padova was withdrawn to pray and to rest himself on the lower branches of a walnut, on a platform that his friend, the Count of Tiso, built for him it.

3.2 Water: symbolism and myths in Sannitic rural culture

Three main symbolic meanings can be attributed to water:

- a) When it displays as a layer, it represents and reflects the primeval waters that originated the Universe, according to myths and religions of different times and areas. In this context the distinction between Upper Waters, corresponding to sovra-formal potentialities, and Lower Waters, giving form to living beings, can be distinguished. This distinction between upper waters, related to light and life, and lower waters, related to death and darkness, can be found in the symbolisms of many religions.
- b) Water is the main purification mean in religious and magic rituals, both as ablution and aspersion.
- c) A third aspect characterizes water as a source of spiritual regeneration, as in physical world there are therapeutic waters for the body. In Christian religion, is a *fons vivus*, a spring of living water, giving knowledge and love, and in liturgy water is associated to birth and rebirth.

Obviously, the aspects of water so far considered can acquire a negative meaning, symbolised by images such as the sea storm, or river floods.

The cult of Mephitis. A female water goddess is always found in archaic societies, as a survival of prehistoric matriarchal culture. In the Samnitic pantheon, this goddess, named *Mephitis* (“the one that is in the middle”, between sky, earth and lower world), had a paramount importance, having attributes connected to fertility and reproduction. In a place named *Mefite*, near Rocca S.Felice (in samnium area) characterized by H₂S, CO₂ and CH₄ emissions, mud lakes and water springs, a temple to the goddess was built by the *Irpini* tribe; in it *Mephitis* was worshipped for her therapeutic properties (in consequence of the disinfecting properties of S, up to now used to sanitize herds), that were nevertheless connected with the killing power of CO₂. Similar phenomenon, also associated to the cult of *Mephitis*, is found in Bolle della Malvizza (Malvizza Bubbles), near Montecalvo Irpino (not far from Benevento). Place names such as *Mefite*, *mefitico*, *Malvizza* indicate areas in which geological phenomena to be connected to *Mephitis* can be found, and the same root can be found in *Malventum* (the ancient name of Benevento). The cult of *Mephitis* was very strong in Samnium, associated not only to sulphur emissions, but more in general to presence of water. *Mefite* was the female principle linked to the world of underground waters, opposed to the male principle (“Jovis”) linked to rain water.

A water ghost: Manalonga (“the long hand”). The well is a way between the upper world, the world of alive humans, and the lower world, the world on dead. Water is the vital sap of earth, seen as an organism, rich of energy. In this perspective, the digging of a well is a violence to the Earth, that uncover underground beings, normally secluded to human view, a thread that overcomes human

limitations, strictly connected to the arrogance sin that Greek tragedies appeal as *Hybris*. Looking in a well allows to see what should not be seen, allows the communication with lower world, where tenebrous beings live. It may happen to be caught by the *long hand* of a being, named Manalonga, that will take down any observer. The belief in such a creature is common to many cultures, and in Samnium has peculiar characteristics and different names in each village. I.e. *L'acqua del Pozzillo* (the water of the little well). In Baselice, a village not far from Benevento, a still surviving legend attributes magic properties to the *Pozzillo water*, linking to the town any person that drunk it.

Moon, Dance, Fairs, Witches. In Samnium, the link with the world of nature, and its prescientific interpretations, is still alive. It is important to stress how oral traditions still preserve their vitality in Samnium's everyday life, as being rooted in the unconscious substrate and in the archetypical culture of a whole people. In this sense, the traditional legends about witches rooted in the far cultural past have a relevant role. The number of legends, displaying different details in different areas, is high. Many of these legends enclose a lunar symbolism, clearly readable in the alternance that reflect the moon cycle. In this perspective, a relevant role is played by dance and rhythm, referring to the moon "dance" in the sky along weekdays, and to its relationship with fertility. Fairs and witches are "daughters" of ancient nature goddesses worshipped until the establishment of Christianity, and sometimes beyond it.

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4. EXPLOITATION OF NATURE WITH RESPECT

4.1 Sheep transhumance and ancient paths: the “TRATTURO”, a human sign on the territory

The transhumance sheep farming is the base of a type of landscape and life style that can be found in all the Mediterranean Countries. In Italy, the transhumance has left ancient traces in the culture, the economy and the territory of many regions, from the Alps to the Sicily and Sardinia, passing through the area of the Apennine, where it has found its greater expression. Similarities can be found still today in Portugal, Spain, Greece, France, Romania and Bulgaria, also for effect of the dissemination of sheep transhumance farming operated by Romans, civilization that considered the breeding of the sheep extremely profitable (in Latin “pecus” = sheep; “pecunia” = money). The sheep transhumance has ancient origins. It seems sure that the first European hunters used to follow the animals during their usual migrations in a sort of hunting-transhumance already thousands of years ago. The sheep farming, meant like breeding of the animal-sheeps, appears in Close East during Neolithic (9000 years ago) and begins to penetrate in Europe (from east to the west) approximately 6000 years ago. According to some authors, the transhumance of the flocks begins in that period, with the arrival of the sheep breeding in Europe, for the need to move the sheep, in the course of the year, to look for better climates and pastures and for the necessity to follow the normal migratory paths of the animals to hunt. This would be testified from the presence of megalith handicraft in correspondence of transhumance paths. This, at the beginning, happened in a spontaneous way, presumably along the migratory directions. With passing of the centuries, that “natural” ways became more and more practiced, till to become real and very identified paths. These paths are already mentioned in the ancient literature and in some inscriptions of the bronze and iron age. With Samnites (VIII-III century b.C.), the transhumance assumes a role of primary importance. The Samnites, in fact, based great part of their own life on the sheep breeding, and this further strengthened the system of transhumance paths. This system constituted, therefore, the basic structure Samnitic society, a base for their commercial and cultural exchanges and also a “reserve” for the feeding sheeps. All this induced the Sanniti to allocate along the transumanza ways, building pastoral fortifications, villages, sanctuaries and buildings that still today characterizes the landscape of the mid-southern Appennine territory. The roman empire, after to have defeated the Sanniti, understood the importance of the transhumance paths and of the sheep breeding. It is with the Romans that the term “TRATTURO” appears for the first time today (this word is today used in order to indicate the main ways of transhumance). Tratturo, in fact, derives from the Latin “tractoria”, a term used in order to indicate the right to use, also from the shepherds, the public ways of transumanza. Romans considered the sheep breeding a profitable economic activity, so that they emanated a series of laws with the purpose of disciplining to the use of the Tratturi and the breeding of the sheeps. The control of the tratturi, moreover, was particularly important for Roman conquest strategy. For this reason, in the Italian Appennine, the roman ways finished with coinciding in wide measure with the transhumance paths. This gave ulterior impulse to the birth of inhabited centres and of buildings along the route of the tratturi. The fall of Rome meant also the fall of the transhumance in mid-southern Appennine and the tratturi progressively were abandoned. During early middle-age, the defensive poverty and necessities made to rise along tratturi rural centers. In this phase, an important contribution to the rural reorganization of the territories of the transhumance was before given by the Benedictines monks and then by Normanns (XII century). Alfonso of Aragon, Spanish and king of Naples, definitively reorganized the net of tratturi (the XV-XVI century), instituting a system of customs and carrying to the maximum splendor the transhumance (in this period esteem that journeyed on the tratturi of the

Appennino up to 5 million sheep per year). Alfonso of Aragon put rules for the tratturi, delimiting them with milestones and drystone walls, and assigning the management to the landowners of the crossed territories. In the XVII century, with the increase of the population, the arrival of the French and the beginning of the industrial era, the civilization of the transhumance endured a new and definitive decline to the detriment of agriculture finalized to the wheat production and cereals. Today, the tratturi assume a new and strong meaning, for their cultural roots, the links with the territory and the landscape and for the new opportunities of development, especially tourism, offered to the rural territories. The transhumance needed a route net able to satisfy the needs in mobility, pauses and feeding of sheep and shepherds. The entire system was articulated in main ways, the tratturi, and in the secondary ways (tratturelli and branches) with function of connection between tratturi and tratturi and inhabited centers. The tratturi, in the period of maximum splendor, were 111,60 meters wide and till 224 km long, for a total of more than 1300 km all over the mid-southern Appennine. For this the tratturi are considered real green freeways, equipped with areas for rest realized in proximity of sources of water or rivers, close to which economic activities and exchange were located and where, in the course of the time, often rural villages and centers have grown. Taverns and stazzi (pastoral buildings with fencing for pause of the sheep) were also part of the system of the tratturo. Transhumance was accompanied by ceremonies and offers to Gods, linked to agropastoral world, to fertility and to waters. In honour of a god named Lupercus, protector of animals from wolves, *Lupercalia* were celebrated. Among other important gods, we can mention Apollo protector of shepherd communities, and, as god of sun, responsible for crop productivity, and Hercules, protector of water springs, that so important were for the animals. While, for defence, Italic populations were building *oppida*, giant fortresses that could house men and herds for long periods, yet we must underline that wars were stopped during transhumance.

The Samnium was crossed by the *Regio Tratturo* Pescasseroli-Candela, that from Passo di Serra Vescigli, crossing Morgia delle Fate south of San Giorgio la Molara, and passing close the towns of Reino, Circello, and Santa Croce del Sannio, entered in Molise north of Sassanoro. Along this way, the ancient *taverne* where shepherds stopped to rest and to sell their products are still visible. In general, *masseria di pecore* ("sheep farm") was indicating a breeding farm, with thousands of animals, up to 10-15 thousands; *masseria di campo* ("field farm") was on the contrary meaning a farm devoted to agriculture, in which breeding had a minor role. Among the shepherds, a regular hierarchy existed, from the *massaro di pecore* at the top place, to the *capo-buttero*, the *butteri*, the *mandriani*, the *butteracchi*, the *pastoricchi*, the *guaglioni*; other figures were the *caciere* or *casaro*, preparing cheese, and the *carosatore*, that shear the animals. *Coratino* was the term indicating the cheese merchant. The *massaro* was the chief shepherd, responsible towards the owner of the animals ("*locato*"). In summer, when the animals were on the mountains he lived in the *locato's*, home, acting as a sort of rural butler, moving often to the mountain to control the work of shepherds, directed then by the *capo-buttero*, man of wide experience in animal breeding ("*arte di mazza*"), usually able in knowing medicinal plants, responsible for food distribution and for cheese maintenance. Among shepherds, it was not uncommon to find able guitar ("*colascione*") players, singers (knowing long parts of classic poems, or the Divina Commedia), wood carvers. The *butteri* were looking after horses and donkeys, and more generally after transports, during transhumance. In summer they did not live on the mountains with the herds, but worked for the *locato* in the town. Herds were divided in *morre* each *morra* including animals in number from 200 to about 370, looked after by 3-5 *mandriani* under the responsibility of a *capo-morra*. at the last places in the hierarchy, the *butteracchi* (help for the *butteri*, usually not married), the *pastoricchi* (help for the *mandriani*), the *guaglioni* (doing the most humble works).

In some times, the *tratturi* became a good place for robberies, and in consequence of that, transhumance started to loose its intensity.

4.2 Transhumance architecture

The development of buildings and the distribution of rural centers in the southern Appennine, have been conditioned by geography, climate, materials findables in situ and by the function that the manufactured had to carry out in the within of the transumante civilization. The construction activity, in fact, has been conditioned by techniques and forms of the culture of the transumanza and this have favorite, locally, the appearance of special creative abilities. In the nomadic culture, the place is the indispensable element for the orientation. The same has happened for the culture of the transhumance, that maintains some aspects of the nomadism, in which the natural elements, the rural churches, the bridges... has represented elements for the orientation and the location of the positions. The nomadic character of the life of the shepherds has produced a bound building activity connected to the "temporary" nature of the structures, since the system was centralized on the movement and the transhumance. The rise towards north and the way back towards south, in fact, happened with a calm rhythm, with stages of two three days in the fixed places of pauses, in proximity of water springs and shelters. The use of the stone becomes predominant in the architecture of the transhumance, not only for technical and economic reasons. For the shepherds, in fact, to live means to identify with the surrounding environment. The shepherds use, as annexed rooms, temporary building installations but also shelters with mixed functions, to extended the exploitation of the summery pastures. The more recurrent structures along the *tratturi* are the *taverne*, but also the rural churches, able to offer spiritual comfort and shelter. The constructions directly tied to the transhumance have, instead, the function of rest and pause for shepherds and sheeps. The *stazzo* is a sort of sheep cote, generally of drystone walls, that has the function of shelter, guard, milking and cheese production. In the cases in which the *stazzo* has also additional functions, to the fencing joins other constructions, like huts and fencings for the dogs. Along the *tratturi*, during the centuries, other kind of buildings have joined as rural houses, the *masserie*, and the taverns. The rural houses can be isolated or re-united in little groups. They are realized in stone and, usually, on a slope. The kitchen is usually near the stable. Sometimes the house has two floors, with an attic used like warehouse. The *masserie*, instead, groups a complex of buildings with various functions. Often the *masserie* are the result of the stratification of various generations and families that have lived there. The tavern is the more characteristic element of the *tratturo*. They are usulally situated in proximity of rivers or water springs and have also the function of orientation for the shepherds. The tavern carries out complex functions, beyond the simple rest for the travellers and the shepherds, because it is also used for exchanges and trades.

4.3 Drystone buildings

Terraced fields, drystone walls and the huts in stone that characterize the architecture of the transhumance, are the evident sign the long work made by the ancient populations. This patient work has been mainly dictated from the necessity to clear fields and pastures. Drystone walls, therefore, were erected to enclose the small properties embezzled to the mountain, in order to repair from wind the cultivations, to realize terraces, to group the sheeps, to construct shelters to spend the nights in the periods of rest. From invading presence, with the time, the stone became the best ally of the shepherd-peasant in order to rend lands more fertile than mountain. In order to feed the populations of mountain, in fact, with the time the small fields were no more enough, so it

was necessary to create new workable land and richer zones for pasture. With the centuries, stone after stone, thus have been erected walls, fencings and huts, beginning with rudimentali “heaps” of stones to end, after centuries of improvement, with complex and articulated buildings. All it came realized with stone. Also the water sources, important points of the communication ways, came enclosed in a stone coffer with “religious” cure. With passing of the centuries, with the improvement of the techniques, but also with differences tied to the use purposes, the huts have assumed various forms and complexities. According to some authors, in fact, various tipologies can be distinguished, even if all are connected to a primary form with a circular base. Primitive they have a form to “beehive”, with walls undistinguishable from roof, often tied to a stronger nomadism. More evolved, instead, are the huts with cylinder-conical structure, that represent an important point of the process of evolution of the transhumance architecture. The walls are very clearly separated from the roof and have a height - man (that increases the habitability). The door is very evident. The hut in drystone is a building tipology diffused all over Europe. The area of the Mediterranean is sure mainly interested by drystone buildings, but in general they are diffused where the stones are abundant and easy to be found. The tipologies present all over Europe are very numerous, and similar huts are found where they have the purpose to carry out similar functions. Circular drystone huts are foundable in several Italian regions, in Ireland, in Swiss, in Greece, in France, in Istria and several Mediterranean islands.

4.4 Vernacular architecture and rural landscape. A perspective for sustainable development

All across Europe, the rural environment is treasured for its beautiful diversity. Indeed, the rural world as a whole is a priceless part of our heritage, and the unique vernacular architecture of a region reflects and supports that region’s own identity. Beyond its aesthetic value, it provides a unique and irreplaceable record of certain aspects of intangible heritage: local responses to the conditions of everyday life, such as techniques and skills, and ways of organising social life. In spite of its immense worth, rural vernacular heritage is threatened on several fronts. Worldwide economic, cultural and architectural homogenisation of the agricultural sector is in large measure responsible for developments in the rural habitat. Rather than repair buildings or remain faithful to local tradition when building new ones, it is often more practical in the short-term to opt for modern, featureless buildings. Rural depopulation, itself in part a result of the homogenising industrialisation of agriculture, may leave buildings disused and perhaps abandoned to people who do not see or care about their inherent value. Linked to both of these causes is perhaps the greatest threat: society’s general under-valuing of this form of heritage. It has long been the “poor relation” of the heritage sector, perhaps overlooked in favour of more splendid monuments or areas of outstanding beauty. For their part, local communities, while appreciative of their built heritage, may not recognise its full value because to them it is so familiar. For this, is important to appreciate and protect the value of all types of landscape. Indeed, the rural habitat is not a museum-piece. It is not fixed or static, a curiosity to be wrapped in cotton wool. In order to preserve this heritage, it must be fully integrated into the modern life of the community in such a way as to retain local practices and ways of life. Redundant buildings can be readapted and re-used, in particular to exploit the economic potential which can be derived from rural tourism.

Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni

Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe

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4.5 The vernacular rural heritage: from the past to the future

Rural heritage includes architectural and landscape features. These include dwellings and production units, like stables, piggeries, silos, barns, which have been shaped and developed over time until mechanisation, brought about by industrial development, altered the relationship between people and their land irreversibly and made the need for labour less necessary. Traditionally, rural settlements represent the best synthesis of people's ability to modify the environment to their own advantage with the least impact; the farming structure provides the elements that characterise the landscape. The way buildings are shaped depends on: the limits imposed by local resources; the productivity of the farm and the buildings related to the crop system. The lay-out depends on environmental and social factors, including safety. Recurring materials, shapes and volumes, always connected to local conditions, define specific architectural types that become representative of the various places. As for the climate, the structure is arranged so as to make the most of local environmental conditions, eg. south facing walls are characterised by wide façades and arcades, while north facing ones are thicker. In many cases, farm buildings were built more than 1,000 years ago, restored and adapted over the centuries, according to the changing demands of farming practices. This constitutes an anomaly when compared with other utility buildings whose life span coincides with the practice that has generated them. The international community has started taking an interest in rural heritage because of its state of decay. The reasons are economic and social as well as cultural. The production system, once based on complex crop rotation, is today based on monoculture which leaves fields uncovered for more than seven months. By opting for monoculture or a simplified two-year rotation, cow sheds and barns have become useless and have made old farm buildings and dwellings of no use at all. In Italy, there are more than 5.5 million rural buildings and 1.5 million have been totally abandoned.

While in the past, the use of materials and labour was strictly local and bound to tradition, nowadays, the use of new technologies and building techniques has introduced elements and styles that are totally foreign to the local environment. The new imposes itself on the old and on the surrounding landscape and, while ignoring any reference to typologies, layout, building techniques, it has a strong visual impact on the landscape. As a consequence the scenario becomes monotonous and huge pre-cast storage buildings stand out against historical farmsteads in ruin. New buildings are the result of international border-free architecture, introduced by industrialisation, which tends to ignore any local value. The traditional rural building, is the cause and the effect of a certain landscape. Farming and natural landscape are not to be confused: the one is the result of people's work and the result of agricultural policies. In order to cut down on production costs, fields are re-shaped drastically with consequent dramatic changes to the landscape that becomes more and more simplified. Meadows and marshy meadows are eliminated and the increase in the number of fields has made it necessary to carry out huge soil movement. Hedges and planting rows have been destroyed and traditional rural buildings are what is left of this impoverished landscape. Recovery therefore concerns not only buildings but also countryside elements and links up with the idea of sustainable and compatible agriculture, which is clearly against the current trends, based on diseconomies.

Rural heritage means buildings and landscape together, and its safeguard implies careful attention being paid to the changes needed to enhance the local character. This demands a common approach by farmers, policy makers etc. that is difficult to realise. As long as the traditional rural building keeps its territorial identity, it belongs to the cultural heritage that is worthy of safeguard. Obviously, the reconstruction of a historical scenario, incompatible with modern production, is out of the question, because the rich variety of this traditional landscape, safeguarded in the past by

the farmer's constant care, would demand such commitment and a lifestyle which is incompatible with current social trends. Recovery and re-use of old buildings for modern use require careful evaluation of: a) the real re-use potential of the structures within the new production context. The solutions put forward need to be the result of careful examination of the farm organisation, of the produce and of its destiny; b) the management of properties, which would ensure acceptable maintenance standards after the recovery. Upkeep. How to preserve vernacular architecture? It is therefore necessary to: i) carry out a detailed analysis of the state of rural buildings within the same area, so as to make it possible to devise coherent restoration guidelines; ii) discover the criteria that led to the choice of these sites where the buildings were constructed; iii) list the existing buildings from a historical point of view, so as to define what impact can be admitted in case of restoration; iv) devise restoration methodologies taking into account local customs and usages, so as to promote the ownership and the proper restoration of the building; v) provide guidelines to reduce to a minimum the impact of supply systems on traditional buildings; vi) decide what the necessary interventions are in order to enhance the value of the landscape and upgrade it; vii) set up, for each geographical area, an inventory of the necessary and available traditional building materials and explain how to use them; viii) promote training courses for workers and make them more aware of the issue; ix) make workers and public opinion aware of the wealth and peculiarity of this heritage and of its importance in the definition of our cultural identity; x) introduce the notion of recovery of traditional rural buildings, and the micro landscape, into the syllabus of undergraduates and upper secondary education students.

Undoubtedly, rural buildings are a direct testimony of human activity in a certain place and, if they are left to decay, part of our past will be lost forever. That is to say that the landscape, the environment, the land and the people are part of one and the same unit and that this heritage should be preserved not only as a memory of the past but also as a resource for future development. The problem of the decay of the rural heritage is common to all countries as is the evolution and the specialisation of agricultural production. The problem becomes more severe where land is not profitable enough. It is therefore necessary to answer this question: is the issue of recovery simply a matter of the recovery of volumes or is it also linked to agricultural practices that provide the building with a context (and the landscape)?

Franco Sangiorgi

Professor at the Institute of Agrarian Engineering, Milan- Italy