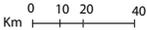
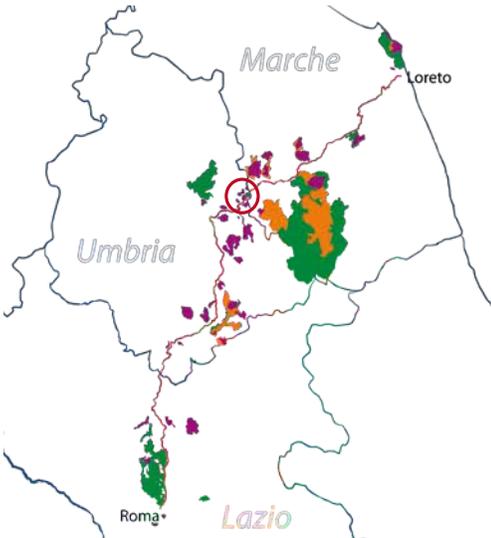


Lauretana Pilgrimage Route in Italy and protected areas along the route

- National and Regional Parks
- Sites of Community Importance (SCI)
- Zone of Special Protection
- XVI cent. Lauretana postal route of the Stato Pontificio
- Plestian Plateaus and Colfiorito Regional Park



Colfiorito Regional Park



The Lauretana Pilgrimage Route and the Colfiorito Regional Park.

Landscape linkages between cultural and spiritual values. The wetland of Colfiorito and the Lauretana pilgrimage route in the Plestian Plateaus.

Chiara Serenelli

This article constitutes part of a research aiming to investigate the utility of historical cultural and spiritual routes in promoting landscape management and conservation at local level. Landscape is the prominent feature of the project. The research takes into consideration the landscapes of Central Italy crossed by the Lauretana pilgrimage route connecting Rome with the Sanctuary of Loreto, in the East Coast of Italy. The pilgrimage creates a network of territorial and local linkages based on traces of ancient roads that can operate as cultural and ecological connections between people and landscape mosaics. While cultural values are rendered by the historical landscapes shaped by the pilgrimage dynamics, ecological ones are also

given by the presence of Natural Protected Areas and Regional or National Parks along the ancient route.

Cultural and spiritual linkages across the Plestian Landscape

Along the Lauretana Pilgrimage Route, ca. 150 km north from Rome, the traveller reaches one of the crucial stages of the *Cammini Lauretani*, the city of Foligno. Embedded in the landscape matrix of the Umbrian Valley, the town had been an important crossing of the Flaminia Roman road. Continuing from Foligno towards Loreto, the Lauretana enters the Menotre Valley and then crosses the mountainous chain of Appennino Umbro-Marchigiano through the Colfiorito mountain pass, beyond

which lies the ample plateau of Colfiorito. It is named Plestian after the ancient settlement of Plestia, and its ecological and cultural values make it one of the most characteristic areas of the pilgrimage.

The Plateau is a system of seven karstic tectonic plains. While once they all were lake basins, they were later drained as outcome of natural mechanisms and human activities. Even today, however, they appear flooded during some periods of the year, depending on seasonal precipitation. The drainage of water is caused only slightly by the network of ditches and canals, while the seasonal variation in water levels is due to a sub-surface capitation system that relies on the presence of *inghiottitoi*, i.e. natural ground pits also used in agriculture.

The Plestian system is one of the most interesting natural areas in the Central Apennines (Orsomando and Catorci, 1997). It contains the line of the Umbria-Marche watershed and is surrounded by mountains overlooking the Mount Sibillini National Park on the eastern side. It includes biotopes that are very important for the conservation of biodiversity in Italy, i.e. the marsh of Colfiorito, legally protected since 1970 (Pedrotti, 1996), internationally recognised as a Ramsar site since 1976 and made a Regional Park in 1995. Around the 355 ha of wetland, located at the centre of the Basin, the landscape opens out from the Colfiorito Plain onto five surrounding plains located at an altitude of 750–800 m above sea level. The only plain

not communicating with the others is located a few kilometres south-west from the marsh and is separated from the rest by a narrow ridge. The whole plateau system is well visible from the top of Mount Trella, overlooking the archaeological site of Plestia, from which the relations between the plains and the layout of the roads that cross them are well discernible.

The road commonly known as *Lauretana*, which is also named *Romana*, can nowadays be identified with the course of the National Road 77 (Val di Chienti Road). It crosses the Plains from the south-western to the north-eastern side, running along the southern side of the marsh of Colfiorito. Pilgrimages toward Loreto began in the fourteenth century, but it was from the sixteenth century that it was possible to use the postal road of *Stato Pontificio*, suitable for carriages. Today Road 77 is a highway, unsuitable for walking. It is possible to recognise, though, other traces of ancient routes, in many cases unpaved country roads crossing the Plains, stretching among hilly pastures broken out by herbaceous crops and woods of Turkey oak. The whole road network connecting the Plateau with its surroundings is of historical and scenic interest. While the network of ancient roads that cross the Plateaus from west to east mainly corresponds to the Lauretana pilgrimage network itself, other important roads cross the Basin lengthwise, whose ancient courses can still be discerned on the Plains' landscape they cross. Still nowadays, this route system allows the ancient settlement of Plestia located into the Plestian

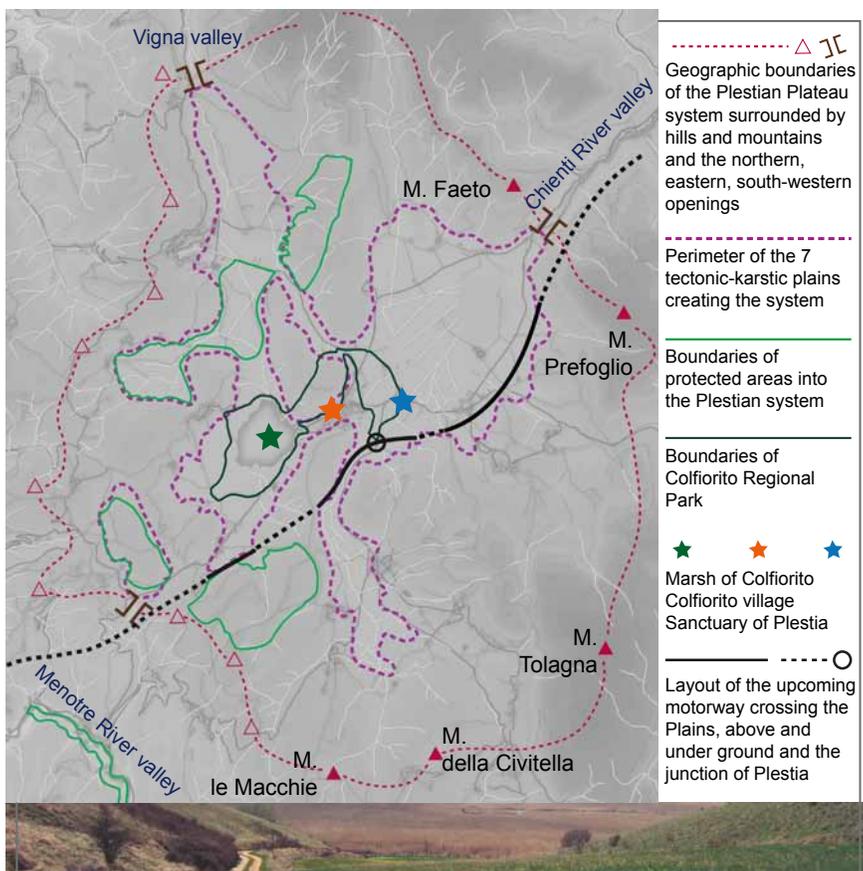
basin to be connected with other numerous landmarks that define the Plesitian landscape's history and keep conveying stories of popular traditions and religious devotion. All along these trails we can reconstruct the route of the ritual processions to the places of worship of the Plains and the near Menotre Valley. Religion has offered the much-needed social cohesion for a population that has always been subjected to consecutive episodes of conquest and change of

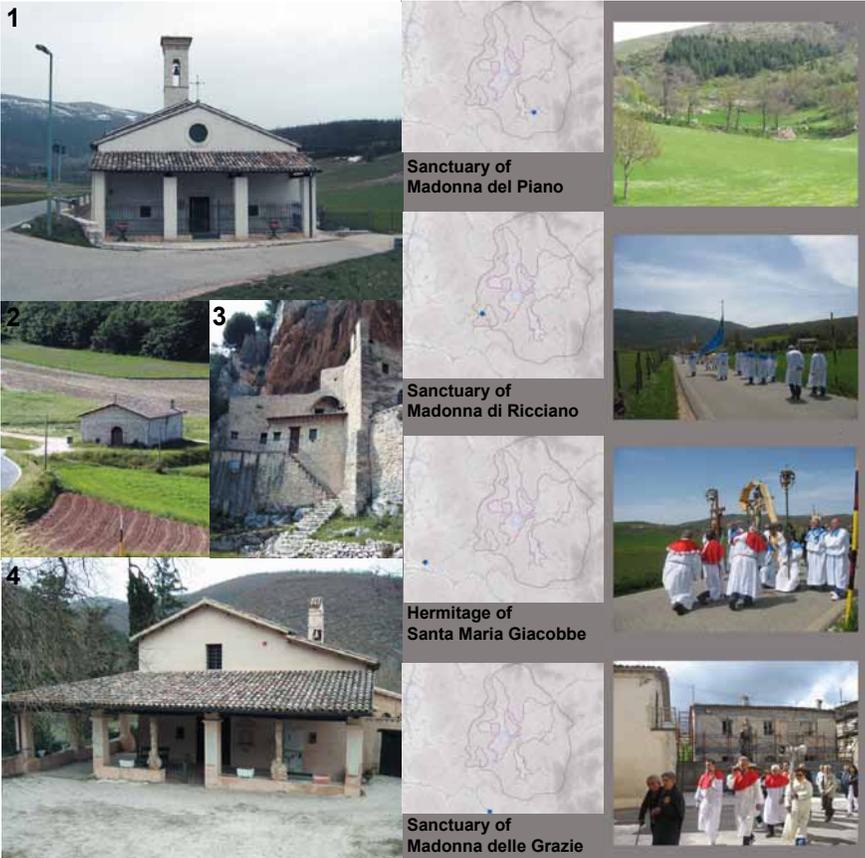
administrative organisation. The trails, therefore, have always been of great importance for the locals (Sensi, 1984).

Signs of historical evolution and spiritual values of the landscape

The diachronic evolution of the land and its settlements, together with an investigation of its religious traditions, can surely contribute to the under-

A scheme of the Plesitian Plateau System.





Left: The main sacred sites in and next to the basin forming the system of 'Therapeutic sanctuaries' Right: Present-day rituals and processions of local people and religious confraternities.

standing of the current structure and layers of the landscape.

Traces of pre-Roman settlements characterise the area surrounding Mount Orve. In Roman times, however, the most important centre certainly became Plestia, built on the bank of the Plestian Lake, which was drained to obtain agricultural lands (Sensi, 1984). The main public spaces were once situated around the lake. A historical sign of the

latest republican Roman Age can still be found in the remains of a *domus*, in the archaeological site of the Casone Plain.

Following the barbaric invasions of the High Middle Ages and the destruction of Plestia, the population moved to the surrounding hills and started the construction of castles in defence of the main roads. This fostered the particular hillock settlement system that still characterises the area.

The only remnant of the ancient Plestia is the sanctuary of Saint Mary an early Christian basilica which became cathedral in the eleventh century. In effect, because of its location at an important crossroads, the sanctuary came to represent a prominent centre for religious participation and the spreading of Christianity. In the Middle Ages, the area where the Basilica was located became a junction where the rivalries for the setting of boundaries among the townships of Camerino (Marche), Foligno and Spoleto (Umbria) developed. The townships were all striving for the control of the Plateaus, and thus causing their administrative, civil and religious fragmentation. Therefore, whereas once all pivoted around Plestia, by the twelfth century the Basin was divided along the two main defence lines – Camerino on the one hand, Foligno on the other. Both display traces of fortifications, as the ruins on the top of some hills still reveal.

Nowadays, the regional boundary between Marche and Umbria runs all along the buffer zone which lies between these two ancient frontier lines. Nonetheless, a strong factor of social cohesion can be found in the cultural identity of the local population, their sense of places' historic depth and in a solid religious component that stayed unscathed through all the administrative divisions, in spite of the reiterated frictions concerning the management of the local resources (Sensi, 1984; Sensi, 1998).

During the sixteenth century, an important element of social cohesion stemmed from the *frontier therapeutic*

sanctuaries (Sensi, 1984: 207-231), that is, places of worship generally of very old origins, whose denomination derives from their religious and spiritual function and their position. They are in fact told to have apothropaic powers (therapeutic sanctuaries) and they are located at the confluence of lands belonging to different administrators (sanctuaries of frontiers). Even today, their presence and role is acknowledged as they helped people conserve a certain degree of religious freedom and a distinct cultural identity. The majority of these sanctuaries are dedicated to the Virgin Mary and are located along the Menotre Valley and the Plestian Highlands. Their presence has facilitated the establishment of a network of small pilgrimages from the surrounding villages, often along the ancient routes connecting the settlements.

Even today, on the occasion of local festivities people from the different villages of the Plains find religious references in many of these sanctuaries, which continue to be destinations of local pilgrimages and processions (Sensi, personal communication, 2010). Santa Maria of Plestia has become again a multifunctional centre of religious, economic and social events, as it hosts an annual exhibition of traditional dairy products. Many sanctuaries continue also to be the focus of local religious festivities involving people of every age. Over time, certain sanctuaries have been abandoned and decayed, such as the sanctuary of Madonna di Ricciano (in the Ricciano Plain, one of the seven karst plains).

The spatial distribution of the sanctuaries largely derives from the pre-existence of older religious architectures, such as tabernacles, hermitages, monasteries, etc., related to miraculous events or the religious history of a local community. It thus seems possible to think of those as 'places of memory' that enable communities to remember their past and cultural values, in spite of the physical transformations of the land (Sensi, personal communication, 2010). Sometimes such places of worship are located at the top of a *castelliere*, i.e. a pre-historic type of settlement fortified by an embankment – which remains recognisable still today - abandoned in Roman times and sometime restored and re-used in the Middle Ages (Sensi, 1984: 3-27; Sensi, 1998: 6-8).

The proto-historical system of *castellieri* surrounding the Plains represents another defining element of the Ples-tian landscape, a clear sign of a long history of human habitation and their role in the transformation of the natural ecosystems. The therapeutic sanctuaries, which are mainly located in the valleys and plains, the hillside villages and the castles erected on the very top of the hills, all comprise components of the local history. Together they define a specific cultural and land-use system, a sign of human presence in these lands and a landscape organisation typical of the Basin, characterising its cultural diversity, charged with profound spiritual values and enriched with natural resources.

In such a structure, the main connection, at the cultural, religious and func-

tional level, is given by the web of roads and pathways, defining also the flows of pilgrims directed to the Sanctuary of Loreto. If the linear network of human connection between historical and cultural elements of the Ples-tian landscape can be found in these local roads, a deeper structure subtending also the latter ones can be identified in the agricultural landscape, which has shaped the land patterns of the area according to the human needs.

Biodiversity in the rural landscape

The lands of the Plains are mainly used as croplands. The cultivation of legumes and potatoes is predominant, and along with grain and forage they form the basis of the local agricultural production. In the valleys, although drainage and reclamation works have turned most of the ground into cultivated lands since the Roman Age, wet meadows, marsh and lake formations still are a very important natural resource. The hills surrounding the plains, again, are characterised by the presence of copses, the Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris* L.), the Hop hornbeam (*Ostrya carpinifolia* Scop.), as well as the Downy oak (*Quercus pubescens* Willd.) being the dominant species in the sunnier areas, and the beech (*Fagus sylvatica* L.) on the higher relieves. The arboreal vegetation of the hills alternates with the herbaceous vegetation types of the hill and mountain pastures, which define the landscape mosaic shaped by another important local human activity: farming,

The Quadrilatero Project, threats

..... Historic roads of possible pedestrian connection - - - Future road with risk of traffic increasing



Real risks of landscape fragmentation

Entrance of the tunnel near Mount Trella
march, 2010



Works on the buffer zone of Selva di Cupigliolo
march, 2009



Some effects of motorway construction in the Plestian Basin.

and stock-breeding, though nowadays traditional grazing is decreasing. On some hills conifer reforestations made in the Sixties can also be recognised (Orsomando and Sensi, 2002).

The 'landscape units' defining the Plestian landscape create a variegated system of resources that the local communities have used over time, often associating them with social participation events, such as exhibitions, festivals and religious festivities, their

timing marking important moments of the agricultural cycle. This has turned the local landscape into a primary element of cultural and spiritual, as well as ecological, importance defining together with the network of sanctuaries and pilgrimage routes, the 'landscapes of the sacred' (Tosco, 2009: 166).

Additionally, the rural matrix also hosts natural areas of international significance, owing to the presence of rare and endangered habitats or species.

These constitute the nodes of the Natura2000 European Ecological Network. Moreover, sometimes shrines and religious buildings are associated with the presence of protected areas. The link between protected areas and therapeutic sanctuaries is probably coincidental. No historical references connect their location to particular natural elements (Sensi, personal communication, 2010), although sometimes they are related to the cult of spring water (Sensi, 1984) and they are actually built along watercourses or in particularly scenic natural settings. And it is also argued (Antinori, 2009) that some Christian sacred places traces out older pagan temples and sacred sites, often connected to the natural characters of landscape (presence of spring water and mountains). What remains certain is that the shrines and religious buildings are often associated with 'outstanding landscapes'. Anyway the spontaneous manifestations of the devotion of locals and their familiarity with the place make these outstanding landscapes part of their everyday life.

Threats for the conservation of landscape connections and visions for future management

Despite the presence of a significant number of protected areas, nonetheless, the Plestian landscape remains open to threats and transformations. The complexity of the relationships between the different parts of the region, whether they are of natural or cultural/spiritual relevance adds to the prob-

lem. The mere presence of protected areas does not always guarantee a sustainable integrated management of the entire landscape, nor does it halt the loss of biodiversity. Sometime functional choices imposed on by the national government, responding to the current economic global system's needs, actually represent threats for biodiversity conservation, despite the protection of specific sites.

A first threat to the conservation of local ecosystems comes from methodologies of management that are only apparently coherent with the aims of biodiversity conservation, but actually far from a holistic, integrated and systemic vision that takes into account delicate ecological balances and dynamics (Pedrotti, 1996) together with their relations with human activities. This is especially true as regards the marsh, where part of the wetland was drained between 1963-1992, because of the agricultural reconversion, the extraction of peat, and interventions aimed at the naturalistic and touristic 'revitalisation' of the protected area, such as the closure of the main *inghiottitoio* (see above) to stabilise the water level (Pedrotti, 1996; Pedrotti personal communication, 2010). The second threat comes from modern agricultural and zoo-technical practices, e.g. the increasing use of fertilisers, the reduction of linear elements of ecological connectivity, such as hedges and rows of trees, in addition to the spread of urbanised areas at the valley bottoms.

Also for these reasons, the protected areas of the Plains do not yet represent

an ensemble, as they lack connectivity and the management practices inside the protected areas often clash with unsustainable practices outside these areas.

Moreover, the administrative division of the Plestian territory risks dividing a unified landscape with divergent management choices. The Plestian Basin is still shared by three Municipalities, two Districts and two Regions, using the same tools for land planning, but have sometimes different priorities, especially as the regional trends are adapted to the local levels.

The Umbria Region employs two main instruments of planning and governance: Territorial Urban Plan (*Piano Urbanistico Territoriale*)¹ and Regional Landscape Planning (*Piano Paesaggistico Regionale*)²: both strongly oriented to the conservation of landscapes and particular natural values. The former recognises the Plestian Plateaus as a high-interest area for its particular and rare flora; the latter underlines the importance of the Plestian system as a pivotal component of the regional identity, where natural, historical and symbolic elements interact to define a manifold landscape, which has also an economic and social value. Also the Marche Region with the Regional Landscape Planning (*Piano Paesaggistico Regionale*)³ grounds

the importance of the Plestian landscape on its cultural values and typical agricultural productions, linked to the local manifestations of faith and spirituality.

Recognition of the high landscape value, in definitive, is shared by both Regions, and today is even stronger thanks to the Regional Ecological Network project⁴, which aims to become a set of inspiring principles for regional and local programming and planning (Sargolini, 2006).

In particular, the role of the Plestian Plateaus can be seen as strategy for the national ecological connectivity, representing a possible junction in the greater mountainous system of Central Apennine, the north-south axis structuring the ecological continuity at a national level between Lazio-Abruzzo's and Toscana-Emilia Romagna's areas (Romano, 2010) forming a part of the *Appennino Parco d'Europa* project. Furthermore, the Plestian Basin can also be seen as an area of transversal connection with both cultural and ecological values, strengthening again, at the ecological level, its ancient role as a road-link between the Tirrenic and Adriatic coasts. But do such guidelines really become operative planning and management actions?

Translating recommendations into actions at the local level is not always simple, and the Plestian landscape is

1 Regional Act no. 27, 24 March 2000

2 Regional Act no. 13, 24 March 2009

3 Regional Decree no. 197, 3 November 1989 and updating according to the National Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape (Legislative Decree no. 42/2004)

4 Rete Ecologica Regionale Umbra, Regional Act 13/2009 and REM, Rete Ecologica Marche, project from competition, Legislative Decree 163/2006, art. 108

often subjected to threats of ecological landscape fragmentation that also influence the application of the Ecological Network project. The loss of connectivity was influenced by various local parameters; on top of them one can add the decreasing of the social cohesion caused by weak financial cooperation strategies and possibly by the erosion of the religious imprint; additionally, the fragmentation might be caused by planning choices at the national level, and especially those linked to the development of infrastructures.

The problem of road barriers, already existent in the Plesstian region (Romano, 2010), is increasing with the upcoming project of a four-lane motorway connecting Foligno and the Adriatic coast that is going to cross the Plesstian Plateaus from its south-western to its north-eastern side (called the Quadrilatero Project).

While it is planned not to be constructed in the proximity of the wetland so as not to compromise the ecosystem directly, it is nonetheless likely that it will constitute, even during the construction phase, a concrete threat to the unity of the entire system at both the ecological and cultural levels, risking also the loss of historical connections between parts of the Plesstian landscape.

To add insult to injury, the decision to construct a road junction in the area of Plesstia, near the archaeological site and the sanctuary, could also initiate urbanisation processes for the broader area. The dangers of such a prospect might be even more evident, if one

takes into account the fact that the dispersion of urban settlements is one of the major causes of fragmentation and loss of connectivity (Romano, 2010).

It may be argued that the Quadrilatero Project could be an opportunity for the inhabitants of the region, as it will improve the communication with more developed areas, favour tourism and decrease traffic within the villages. A more likely outcome, however, will be an increase of high-speed traffic, pollution and soil consumption in these fragile areas, once characterised by a slow velocity road network in balance with the features of the landscape. In order to be sustainable, the development of these lands should be founded on very different bases.

The Lauretana pilgrimage route restoration project can have a favourable outcome, if its natural and cultural resources are integrated in a sustainable management plan. The improvement of 'slow' travel infrastructures and the creation of naturalistic and historical-cultural routes, embracing the whole Plesstian region and pivoting around the therapeutic sanctuaries network, can be the key concepts, upon which the ecological connectivity and the creation of a system of protected areas around the Regional Park can be rescheduled.

In fact, by integrating the idea of recovering the historical road network into a greater plan at the landscape scale, including both conservation and development, one could guarantee a truly multifunctional delivery of services, ranging from the restoration and con-

ervation of the wetland ecosystem as a 'all-encompassing reserve' (Pedrotti, 1996), to the optimisation of the local economic resources, whether they are agricultural, tourist or educational.

This can be feasible only by promoting an idea of a Natural Park far from the patterns of command-and-control as typical of the Italian conservation tradition, already proposed and refused by local populations. A new model is needed, related to the 'new paradigms' developed by recent Italian research conducted by Valerio Giacomini (Giacomini and Romano, 1982) to Roberto Gambino (Gambino, 2010). It proposes a vision that makes local communities and their environmental culture the fulcrum around which projects can be built, and systemic and reticular logics the guiding principles for their implementation. In order to satisfy the need to conserve and manage the linkages between natural and human systems with important historical connections, a new model of a Park has to operate at different and integrated levels of landscape protection. It is, of course, a vision that involves more complex procedures, but it is in the acceptance of complexity that the new vision of reality must be founded upon (Morin, 1993).

The possibility to recover/salvage the relationship between humans and nature underlies also in the IUCN initiative for including Protected Landscapes into the categories of biodiversity conservation. That can be an important example and reference for the Plestian landscape itself.

A possible model of an 'Interregional Park' was drafted as part of a master thesis on 'Lauretana Route as European Cultural Route'. It indicated that the area of Plestia that includes the archaeological park and sanctuary, could be the centre from which the 'cultural system' of the Plateaus can cast its light on the rest of the land, since it is the historical meeting point of the roads that enter the Basin from its natural entryways, which could thus become the 'gates' of the Park.

The Lauretana Route, as the 'backbone' of a low speed travel through the area, could become the main axis of distribution of local products and cultural and traditional knowledge, also through the ancient *hospitalia* located along the way. In fact, today the little parking bays along Road 77 are used by local producers to sell renowned local products, such as the red potato of Colfiorito. In this case, the completion of the motorway project could paradoxically contribute to the redefinition of the existing main road as a slow velocity road network. But evidently, it needs a critical revision of each of the project's stages.

In the Plains, which are characterised by important biodiversity values, all activities will have to be compatible with the conservation of the wet meadow vegetation and the marsh ecosystem. In general, all of the agricultural practices will have to conserve at least small elements of ecological connectivity, threatened by mechanised agriculture.

The natural entryways of the Park will

ensure communication with neighbouring protected areas, thus enforcing ecological connectivity against the effect of the current ecological barriers – mostly, the main roads crossing the Apennine landscape.

In a unitary but not homogeneous structure, elements of the historical memory will create an expanding cultural system, its spiritual components discernible in the cluster of therapeutic sanctuaries, further consolidated by the presence of the Park. The natural and spiritual components will be visibly linked together in the Lauretana Pilgrimage Route network.

It is precisely this strong interrelation between the natural and cultural-spiritual elements of the Ples-tian landscape that will guide the planner to develop models of landscape management, which take into account the importance of local communities and let them become the focus of conservation and development projects, by promoting the preservation of spiritual traditions and strengthening the local ecological and landscape culture.

A recent Degree thesis has suggested how an Ecomuseum can be used as a cultural model to be taken into account

for the local development of projects, a tool of both knowledge-analysis and land use planning, where the community becomes the real subject of the local actions and its cultural heritage the main object of local development (De Varine, 2005).

Of course, different instruments, such as the Regional Park, the Ecomuseum, and the Protected Landscape can be used together in an integrated manner, provided that the local community becomes the first referent of the project and dynamic conservation its first objective.

Moreover, in order to connect the Ples-tian landscape unit with landscapes belonging to the regions of Marche and Umbria, one has to consider, whether the Cultural Route⁵ can be used as another tool of the valorisation of the natural and cultural resources, not bound within the specific context but guaranteeing interrelationships at a larger territorial scale. Therefore, the Cultural Route becomes a territorial system connecting its local nodes (the Parks, Ecomuseums and Protected Areas) along the thematic and geographic 'conductor' of the Marian pilgrimage route towards Loreto.

5 According to the definition given by both the Council of Europe in the Resolution CM/Res(2010)53 and the International Scientific Committee of Cultural Routes of ICOMOS/CIIIC with the 2008 Charter of Cultural Routes.

The wetland. Steps of protection.

1969 Date of first requirement of conservation of the wetland of Colfiorito by prof. F. Pedrotti (University of Camerino). He proposed a Managed Nature Reserve (*Riserva Naturale Guidata*)

1971 The area is indicated as Fauna Oasis (*Oasi faunistica*)

1976 The wetland is included in the Ramsar list that gives it the international acknowledgement as Natural Protected Area

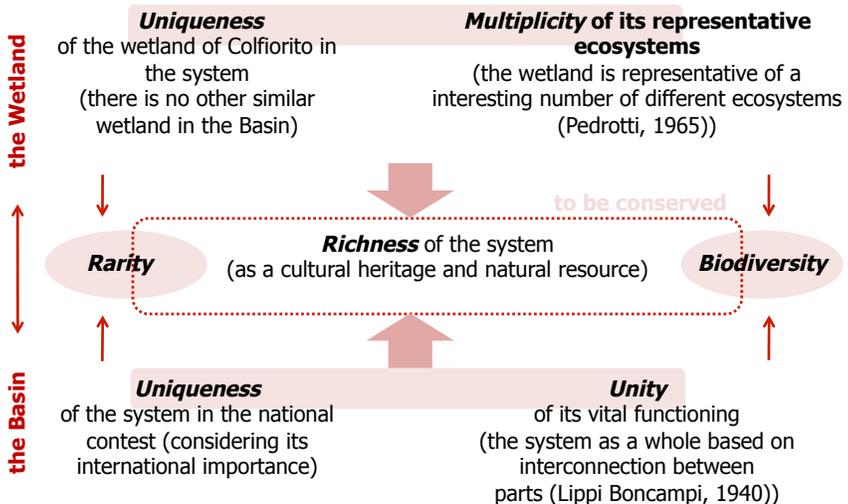
1983 The wetland is included among the Areas of particular naturalistic interest (*Area di particolare interesse naturalistico-ambientale*) by Umbria Region, with L.R. n. 52, after indication of great public interest (*notevole interesse pubblico*) by E. Orsomando and F Pedrotti in 1980/81

1995 Date of birth of the Regional Park of Colfiorito (*Parco Regionale di Colfiorito*) with L.R. n. 9

1994-97 With Bioitaly Project the wetland is recognised as ASP (Area of Special Protection, Directive 79/409/EEC) and SCI (Site of Community Importance, Directive 92/43/EEC)

Present days The Plestian system is considered as an area of public interest (*Area di notevole interesse pubblico*) according to the Italian Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape (*Codice dei Beni Culturali e del Paesaggio*, D. lg 42/2004).

The Landscape. Meanings and importance.



References

Antinori, A. (2009), *I sentieri del silenzio. Guida agli eremi rupestri ed alle abbazie dell'Appennino umbro-marchigiano* [*Pathways of silence. A guide to hermitages and abbeys of the Apennine Mountains in Umbria-Marche*], Folignano, Ascoli Piceno: Società Editrice Ricerche.

De Varine, H. (2005), *Les racines du futur: Le patrimoine au service du développement local*, it. ed. (2005), *Le radici del futuro: il patrimonio culturale al servizio dello sviluppo locale* it. trans. by Daniele Jalla, Bologna: Clueb.

Gambino, R. (2010), Parchi e paesaggi d'Europa. Un programma di ricerca territoriale [Parks and landscapes of Europe. A regional research programme], in *Rivista. Ricerche per la progettazione del paesaggio*, 14/2010, luglio/dicembre, anno 8, numero monografico, in <http://www.unifi.it/ri-vista/14ri/14r.html>

Giacomini, V. and Romani, V. (1982), *Uomini e Parchi* [*Man and Parks*], Milano: Franco Angeli.

Morin, E. (1990), *Introduction à la pensée complexe*, it. ed. (1993), *Introduzione al pensiero complesso. Gli strumenti per affrontare la sfida della complessità*, it. trans. by Monica Corbani, Milano: Sperling & Kupfer.

Orsomando, E., and Catorci, A. (1997), Fisiografia [Physiography], in *Gli Altipiani di Colfiorito. Appennino Umbro-marchigiano. Storia e ambiente* [*The Colfiorito Plateaus. The Apennine Range in Umbria-Marche. History and environment*], ed. E. Orsomando, Comunità Montana del Monte Subasio, Ente Parco Regionale di Colfiorito, pp. 13-15.

Orsomando, E. and Sensi, M. (eds.) (2002), *Studi sull'ambiente naturale degli Altipiani di Colfiorito* [*Studies on the natural environment of the Colfiorito Plateaus*], Colfiorito, Foligno: Quaderni della 'Sagra della patata rossa', with a map of vegetation.

Pedrotti, F. (1996), Gestione su base scientifica dei sistemi ecologici per la loro conservazione e recupero [Science-based management of ecological systems for their conservation and recovery], in *Società Italiana di Ecologia*, 17: 549-554, Ecologia. Atti del VII Congresso Nazionale della Società Italiana di Ecologia. Napoli, 11-14 Settembre, 1996.

Romano, B. (2010), Le interferenze insediative [Human settlements' intrusions], in AA.VV. *RERU. Rete Ecologica Regionale dell'Umbria. Proposte per la costruzione di una rete ecologica regionale* [*RERU. Ecological Network of Umbria Region. Proposals for the planning of a regional ecological network*], Città di Castello: Petrucci Editore.

Sargolini, M. et al. (2006), *Reti Ecologiche e Siti Natura 2000. Il caso studio delle Marche [Ecological Networks and Natura2000 sites. Case study in Marche]*, Roma: Ed. Kappa.

Sensi, M. (1984), *Vita di piet  e vita civile di un altopiano tra Umbria e Marche (secc. XV-XVI) [Religious and civil life of the High Lands between Marche and Umbria Regions (fifteenth to sixteenth centuries)]*, Storia e Letteratura, Raccolta di studi e testi: Roma.

Sensi, M. (ed.) (1998), *Plestia si racconta. Dalla 'fiera' alla 'sagra della patata rossa' [Tales from Plestia. From the 'fair to the 'festival of the red potato']*, Colfiorito, Foligno: Quaderni della 'Sagra della patata rossa'.

Tosco, C. (2009), *Il paesaggio storico. Le fonti e i metodi di ricerca tra medioevo ed et  moderna [Historic landscape. References and methods of research between the Middle and Modern Ages]*, Bari: Laterza.

Other references used for producing maps:

Lippi Boncampi, C. (1939), Il Bacino carsico di Colfiorito [The karst Basin of Colfiorito], in Orsomando, E., Sensi, M. (2002), op. cit., pp. 160-164

Lippi Boncampi, C. (1940), Osservazioni morfologiche sul Bacino di Colfiorito e presupposti idrogeologici della sua bonifica [Observations on the morphology of the Colfiorito Basin and the hydro geological conditions for its drainage], in Orsomando, E., Sensi, M. (2002), op. cit., pp. 61-87.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Prof. Enrico Falqui, Prof. Gabriele Paolinelli, Prof. Franco Pedrotti, and Father Mario Sensi as well as Fabrizio Frascaroli, Damiano Galeotti, Silvia Minichino, Federica and Dante Santoni from Colfiorito, and Ms Milena from Rasiglia.