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The Baraccola commercial backbone

Paolo Pasquini

The urban development of Ancona is analyzed through the relation between its seafaring vocation, expressed by the Astengo Plan of 1963 which follows a coastal development pattern, occupying the areas around the Port yet leaving it without any growth possibility, and the southward development Plan, of 1973, which among other things foresaw an 'inland port', linked by road and rail to the Port of Ancona.

In the '60s, to obtain new port areas they foresaw and carried out the filling-in of sea areas through the ZIPA public consortium, but then for management purposes the areas were sold off for activities other than those of the port, thereby losing the possibility of developing the land spaces for the Port of Ancona.

In the '70s and '80s the foreseen 'inland port' located at Baraccola was inserted in a public initiative Productive Settlements Plan, of about 200 hectares, which foresaw also areas for public and private offices, for wholesale trading, for industrial and handicraft activities, and for road transport. A plan that overturned the preceding choices, shifting housing and productive development towards the hinterland, but without forgetting the needs of one of the engines of the city, the Port, proposing a real decentralized Logistics Platform of approximately 40 hectares, almost in competition with the Jesi Interport then being built. But the lack of demand of port operators and regional policy choices stopped any progress from being made, and indeed the hypothetical competition with the Interport of Jesi put an end to the inland port project. The productive aims were carried out: the handicraft

and industrial sites and the wholesale commercial centre; but very soon the pressure to carry out above all commercial structures or to transform into commercial activities certain areas intended for other uses became very strong. A good part of the built-up strip along the S.S.16 as far as Camerano and Osimo, intended for productive areas, has been converted into retail commercial structures, in this way taking on the role of a continuous 'commercial backbone', located away from the urban fabric, but well provided with car parks and large expo spaces.

The implementation procedure of the industrial area of Baraccola, in spite of public planning backed by ten years' experience, in actual fact ended up copying the 'spontaneous' transformations, giving rise to a city area having the same critical elements and limited sustainability (with congestion, pollution, soil consumption, energy consumption, etc.), as well as losing another opportunity (after ZIPA) to give prospects to port activity.

By now we can only envisage a 'second life', decided by further planned transformations in a broader context, able to act on the entire 'commercial backbone', grafting innovative requirements onto it, from the advanced tertiary sector to industrial management quarters and to logistics.