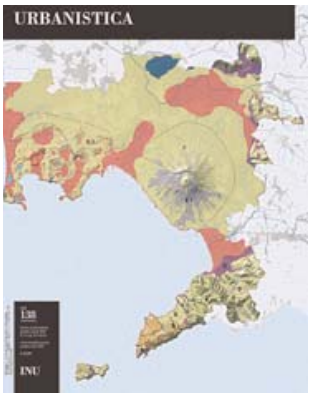

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Methodological proposals for the management and promotion of Piedmont landscapes

Attilia Peano,
Claudia Cassatella

The inter-university department of territorial studies (Polytechnic and University of Turin), with the contribution of the Crt foundation and the collaboration of Piedmont regional council, has produced an *Atlas for the management and promotion of Piedmont landscapes*, coordinated with and complementary to the *Atlas of historical landscapes in Piedmont* produced by the Casa città department at the Turin Polytechnic. Together, they represent an 'atlas of change' under-lining the historical processes, repositories of the past, current dynamics, critical points of transformation and change scenarios linked to planning and innovation.
The purpose of the two sister atlases is to achieve methodological and technological innovation regarding the way in which the landscape is read and interpreted, in the light of the recent indications of the European landscape convention and the *Italian code of cultural heritage and landscape*.
The Atlas has been designed as a kind of portal, which organises varied, fluid content in order to provide an instrument for orientation that can be updated on an ongoing basis. It is divided into two main parts:
- part I, "The Region" (Piedmont); this section describes the geographical landscape, the history of the region, the content of sectorial studies on land and landscape planning, and the places and issues relating to the landscape of Piedmont which form part of the collective imagination.
- part II, "Characteristic landscape areas"; this divides the region according to the most significant landscape areas which are then described in detail.
Each environment is illustrated in two ways. The first is a collection of different representations: maps, photographs, pictures and images familiar to the general public (very famous landscapes, etc.). The second consists of the interpretative frameworks produced by the experts: these include environmental, socio-economic and scenic contexts, and the history of population development in the region. An illustrated document then provides a brief evaluation, which adopts the interpretative categories used in landscape policies: type of landscape, significance, values (relating to geomorphology, natural history, population development, geomorphological, naturalistic, agricultural and scenic issues), status, dynamics and pressures, and critical areas. A section, detailing the current dynamics and changes envisaged by plans and projects, enables a comparison of future scenarios.
The networked structure and inclusion of hypertext enables a great deal of content to be stored, and browsed according to need.
The idea behind the Atlas is that it will encourage public decision-making with regard to the landscape, as it allows links and comparisons between interpretations and proposals from various sources. Unlike other landscape atlases, it is not a planning instrument (it does not include rules and is not institutional), but it is an instrument for the planning process. The knowledge is geared towards action, while leaving the decision-making process open.
In order to do this, the information must be comprehensible to various groups of people, and the public point of view must also be considered. The research group carried out several tests in order to understand how the social perception of the landscape can be analysed, and be taken into account for policymaking purposes.
The proposed aim of the landscape atlas is not to provide a univocal description of the landscape, but to compare the many images of the "interested parties and population concerned". It takes into account the social perception of a landscape, as required by the European convention, and can be a useful tool in planning processes, by clarifying the viewpoints and values at stake, separating the information-gathering and evaluation stages of the decision-making process.