



**Urbanistica n. 138**

January-April 2009

Distribution by [www.planum.net](http://www.planum.net)

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## A heritage to defend and exploit

*Roberto Gambino*

The double image of Vesuvius symbolizes the paradox of the Neapolitan area: a place of 'outstanding universal values' (well represented by the Vesuvian 'monument' and by the World heritage sites Unesco) and at the same time of extreme social, urban and environmental ravage, risks and threats for hundred of thousands people. In this context, the only route seems to be the revaluation of the heritage, placing environmental requalification and landscape enhancement at the center of every territorial development. It implies a very hard 'civil project' in a context marked by the violence of social degradation, the roughness of the conflicts and the crisis of the institutional networks. The continuing aggravation of the 'environmental question', in fact, jointly highlights:

- the unceasing scaling-up of many environmental problems, such as those linked to global change, increasingly difficult to regulate at the local level;
- the increasing interference of environmental problems with economic and social ones, such as those related to poverty, insecurity, access to the primary resources, information and culture.

In light of these processes, the environmental and landscape question reflects the reaction to the increasing unsustainability of current models of development and the search for new relationships between man and the land. At the center of the new prospects is the European landscape convention (2000), which proposes some important innovations: the broader significance attributed to the landscape as a vital component of people's surroundings and a

foundation of their identity, and the enlargement of the scope of protection to the whole territory, including the ordinary and degraded landscapes. Even if only partially transposed in laws, policies and practices a new paradigm is taking shape for public intervention in heritage. It shifts attention from the 'islands of excellence' to the widespread landscape heritage, as a part of the 'territorial capital'. It requires more awareness about places, values, processes, interests and subjects. Of course, more knowledge can make use of the enormous developments in information technology. But there is a dual need: to respond to the increasing complexity of the landscape and environmental problem with the diversification of specialized scientific contributions; to produce holistic and integrated visions and interpretations, able to guide intervention strategies and public regulation.

More scientific attention is due to spaces and resources that are often underestimated, like natural and rural spaces. Given the gravity of deterioration and the impending threats, the Plan cannot avoid seeking to 'salvage the salvageable': to put impassable limits on the dispersion of settlements and infrastructure in rural space, consumption of agricultural soils, attack on the coastal strip and so on. But the plan cannot complete its missions in the protection of the individual resources, because the target is not them but the territory, where conflicts, sufferings and local expectations and designs take place.

That is the task of the 'structural provisions' of the Plan. They are based on holistic interpretations and interdisciplinary acknowledgments, to highlight the key factors of the territorial structuring processes, the long-lasting

elements and relations that can be considered as 'invariants' for any transformation process. It implies a critical interpretation, a 'new idea' of the Neapolitan territory, based on nature and history and, at the same time, opening new visions on the future.

So, the structural interpretation is well distinct from the strategic guidelines, with which the plan addresses a vast audience of the parties and stakeholders involved in the transformation processes, inviting them to share ideas and proposals for plans of action, goals and motivations for interinstitutional cooperative planning and participatory processes.

Conservative requests and innovative visions can be better compared in each of the landscape areas, or 'landscape units', identified on the basis of historical and natural characters, determining the 'landscape quality goals' to be achieved in each of them.

Recognition of local diversity may not be separated from a consideration of their connections, for at least two reasons: the fact that urbanization and generally the enlargement of the 'urban footprint' have resulted in a devastating process of ecological and landscape fragmentation; and the fact that the reorganization of the metropolitan structure depends on the possibility of repairing the network of mobility, transport and functional interaction. In this perspective, the ecological network takes on much more complex functions than those strictly biological: it tries to answer the demand for landscape enjoyment, aesthetic quality, recreation and cultural enrichment. In this sense, the ecological network fits with the dense interweaving of historical, archaeological and cultural routes and

relations that have shaped the Neapolitan territory over the centuries. The strategies of the plan pursue the achievement of a real 'environmental infrastructure', designed to ensure conditions of development, environmentally and culturally sustainable, for the whole territory.