

SUSTAINABILITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE: AXIOM OR OXYMORON?

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Abstract

Sustainability has become a global priority among the environmental, social and economic challenges facing us urban planners in the coming decades.

The perspective of culture and the cultural heritage's role in triggering sustainable policies is one that, more than any other, requires an informed, integrated and interscalar approach. Yet, we still encounter many difficulties in associating the two terms within effective and lasting policies and strategies. We are still too often associated with a constrained view of cultural heritage that reconciles poorly with sustainability and development.

If, instead, we address the issue of sustainability from the perspective of a complex and conscious process of building a social and cultural identity, then cultural heritage becomes a fundamental component in the definition of valorisation and development strategies that relate heritage itself and communities to the territory and its inevitable physical and functional transformations.

From this viewpoint, sustainability and cultural heritage can represent a deductive and reinforcing axiom of the same principle. Culture is thus asserted as a tool not only for economic development, but above all for promoting dialogue, respect for diversity, social inclusion and consequently cohesion in response to the need to 'strengthen efforts to protect and preserve the world's cultural and natural heritage'.

In urban territories in constant transformation, cultural heritage becomes the element of continuity between the past and the future: it represents continuity to the past, and at the same time, the identity heritage to be passed on to future generations, in a perspective in which transformation becomes continuous evolution.

The contribution intends to explore this theme through the presentation of sustainable and inclusive experiences of regeneration and reuse of cultural heritage in Italy. These include the cases of Rome (Integrated Park of the Aurelian Walls), Bologna (City of Water) and Padua (Park of the Walls).

Key words: *Cultural Sustainability, Cultural Heritage, Urban Regeneration.*

1. Introduction: Sustainability and Cultural Heritage

Sustainability has become a global priority among the environmental, social and economic challenges posed to society and, specifically, to us urban planners, increasingly declined from the perspective of enhancing the cultural heritage and, more generally, the Genius Loci of the territory. Yet, we still encounter many difficulties in associating the two terms within effective and lasting policies and strategies. We are still too often associated with a narrow view of cultural heritage that is ill-suited to sustainability and development.

Too often sustainability and cultural heritage represent an oxymoron. Instead, it is necessary today to approach the issue from the perspective of activating policies and

strategies framed in an overall integrated and interscalar approach. Working on sustainability, according to a broader sense of the term, means moving from traditional models of development to new responsible models, based on “respecting the future” according to an environmental, economic and social dimension.

Sustainability implies “a constant and preferably increasing well-being and the prospect of leaving future generations a quality of life that is not inferior to the present one” toward the construction of a social and cultural identity, starting from the assumption “that there can be no authentic and lasting conservation that does not involve innovative tension, at least in making sense of things again” (Gambino, 2011, p.23).

Our country is now facing crises (energy, climate, health) that have produced negative effects also in the perspective of protection, enhancement and management of cultural heritage and landscape. The aim is to highlight the interdependence and interdisciplinarity between cultural heritage, environment, landscape and technologies for sustainable development, a vision in which culture, its character of memory and permanence, assumes a unifying role that links the past to the present toward a possible future. A vision in which culture, its character of memory and permanence, assumes a unifying role that links the past to the present toward a future.

Addressing the issue of sustainability from the point of view of a complex and conscious process of building a social and cultural identity means assuming cultural heritage as a fundamental component in the definition of strategies of valorization and development that connect heritage itself and communities with the territory and its inevitable physical and functional transformations.

In fact, sustainability is one of the five pillars of the Cultural Heritage Framework for Action, which highlights its potential to strengthen social capital, stimulate economic growth and ensure environmental sustainability. Culture and cultural heritage can contribute to the achievement of inclusive and sustainable development. (EU, 2021). The framework includes three sets of actions to:

- regenerate cities and regions through cultural heritage
- promote the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings
- balance access to cultural heritage with sustainable cultural tourism and natural heritage.

From this perspective, cultural heritage becomes a key component in defining enhancement and development strategies that relate heritage itself and communities to the land and its inevitable physical and functional transformations.

Rethinking cultural heritage by placing the principle of sustainable development at the center of functions helps to guide choices and take conscious actions from a long-term planning perspective. In urban contexts in constant transformation, cultural heritage becomes the element of continuity between past and future, in a perspective in which transformation becomes continuous evolution. Sustainability and cultural heritage can represent a deductive and reinforcing axiom of the same principle. Culture thus asserts itself as a tool not only for economic development, but above all for promoting dialogue, respect for diversity, social inclusion and thus cohesion, in response to the need to “strengthen efforts to protect and preserve the world's cultural and natural heritage” (UNESCO, 1972).

2. Land care and sustainability of cultural heritage

The pandemic experience of the last few years has amplified the potential effects of the systemic fragilities of our urban realities weighing heavily on cultural heritage management practices and marking an unprecedented setback for the sector related to curation. This resulted in a scenario of uncertainty with respect to the modalities and degree of resumption

of activities that is only recently becoming clearer thanks in part to the numerous emergency measures put in place that have brought the issue of curation to the center of the debate.

Land curation takes the form of a set of practices and policies aimed at preserving and enhancing the natural and cultural resources of a given spatial context, recognizing cultural heritage as a foundational element of territorial identity and a key factor for sustainable development. This approach emphasizes the need for heritage management that goes beyond the mere preservation of individual assets to embrace a broader vision that includes landscape protection, promotion of sustainable practices, responsible resource management, and mitigation of climate change impacts.

The question then arises: in terms of urban planning, how can cultural places, often linked to a conservation rather than a transformative approach, respond to the challenges posed by regeneration and sustainability in the contemporary city?

Sustainability has become a key principle in cultural heritage management, as evidenced by recent studies exploring the interconnections between conservation, economic development and social welfare. A sustainable approach involves protecting heritage for future generations while ensuring that its enhancement contributes to the economic and social development of local communities. With this in mind, it is imperative to think of culture as the fundamental pillar of the entire process of developing a social identity and building knowledge. The concept of cultural sustainability is often associated with social sustainability.

It connects heritage and communities: the degree of development of a given society and the associated quality of life are based on the ability to preserve and repurpose cultural capital, understood as the set of beliefs, values, behaviors and meanings intrinsic to social individuals. This conception places at the center of sustainable development the respect, preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage: culture, therefore, figures as the engine for more authentic and comprehensive development, the tool for smart and inclusive or, better, sustainable growth.

We cannot therefore simply limit ourselves to asset preservation, but must think in terms of inclusion, promotion of cultural diversity, and integration of cultural heritage into social and economic development in an equitable and inclusive manner. A sustainable approach recognizes the interconnectedness of culture, environment and society, aiming for a balance that respects the cultural identity of communities and the planet's resources. This implies the need for participatory cultural policies that actively involve local communities in the definition and implementation of heritage management strategies, conscious of its impact on the social and environmental fabric.

On the other hand, the regeneration of cultural heritage is a complex and multidisciplinary process that, starting from the revitalization and enhancement of existing cultural assets (tangible and intangible) contextualizes them in their territorial, social, economic and environmental context: an investment in the future, capable of generating social, economic and cultural benefits for communities and for generations to come.

3. Cultural heritage and regeneration: good practices to compare

Cultural heritage represents a fundamental element of the identity, rootedness and image of a territory, a valuable asset that plays a particularly important role in the lives of citizens: a tool for the promotion of the territory itself that allows for the activation of paths of knowledge and enhancement and, at the same time, to attract interest, investment and diversify forms of use.

For this to happen, it is necessary to build a network of relationships, both material and immaterial, between subjects of different natures and initiate a shared process between public administration, investors, associations, neighborhood networks, and private operators (Ricci,

2021). Culture constitutes the strategic and structural factor of initiating and managing transformations by “governing” the processes themselves in such a way as to activate flows of knowledge, experience and new relationships. Cultural heritage then assumes the role of invariant: naturalistic and anthropic, landscape and historical documentary permanence, it becomes a structuring and structural feature to configure innovative arrangements and relations between cities and the permanences themselves, in architectural but also social terms, reconfiguring inhomogeneous and fragmented areas to implement a broader regeneration of the urban form (Ricci, 2018).

Permanences, from marginal elements, become transversal threshold places in urban environments where to build policies and transformation projects shared between public and private stakeholders, institutions and citizens and, in particular, play a leading role based on awareness of the collective needs and symbolic value of cultural heritage (INU, 2012).

Among the many signs still present in our urban contexts, wall fortifications represent, where they still exist, a testimony to the history and urban evolution of a city. They are not simply defensive vestiges, but structures integrated into the contemporary city fabric, sometimes as evocative fragments, other times transformed into scenic routes, offering a privileged glimpse into the past while posing complex challenges of management and preservation in a dynamic urban context (Harvey, 1990).

The relationship between walls and urban contexts is an ongoing dialogue between past and present: if walls shaped past cities, and contemporary cities continue to interact with their vestiges, adapting them, enhancing them or, in some cases, erasing them, in a dynamic process that reflects the evolution of societies and their needs (Holston, 2008) .

In Rome the **Integrated Linear Park of the Walls** represents an interesting case for the possibilities of reconfiguration and refunctionalization that can be created by transforming the walls, still the margins of the historic center, into an onclus of public spaces of hinge and interrelation.

The Aurelian Walls, built in 270-275 A.D. by Emperor Aurelian and raised by Honorius in the early fifth century A.D., constitute the most extensive and best-preserved fortification in the classical world: They stretched for about 19 km around the ancient city (about 13 km remain intact and passable) interrupted by gates flanked by semicircular towers at the consular roads.

Rome's new PRG (approved in 2008) has recognized the Aurelian Walls as one of five strategic planning areas: structuring “signs” (natural or man-made, fully or partially preserved) to which the Plan assigns a strategic role” for the purpose of upgrading the entire urban context.

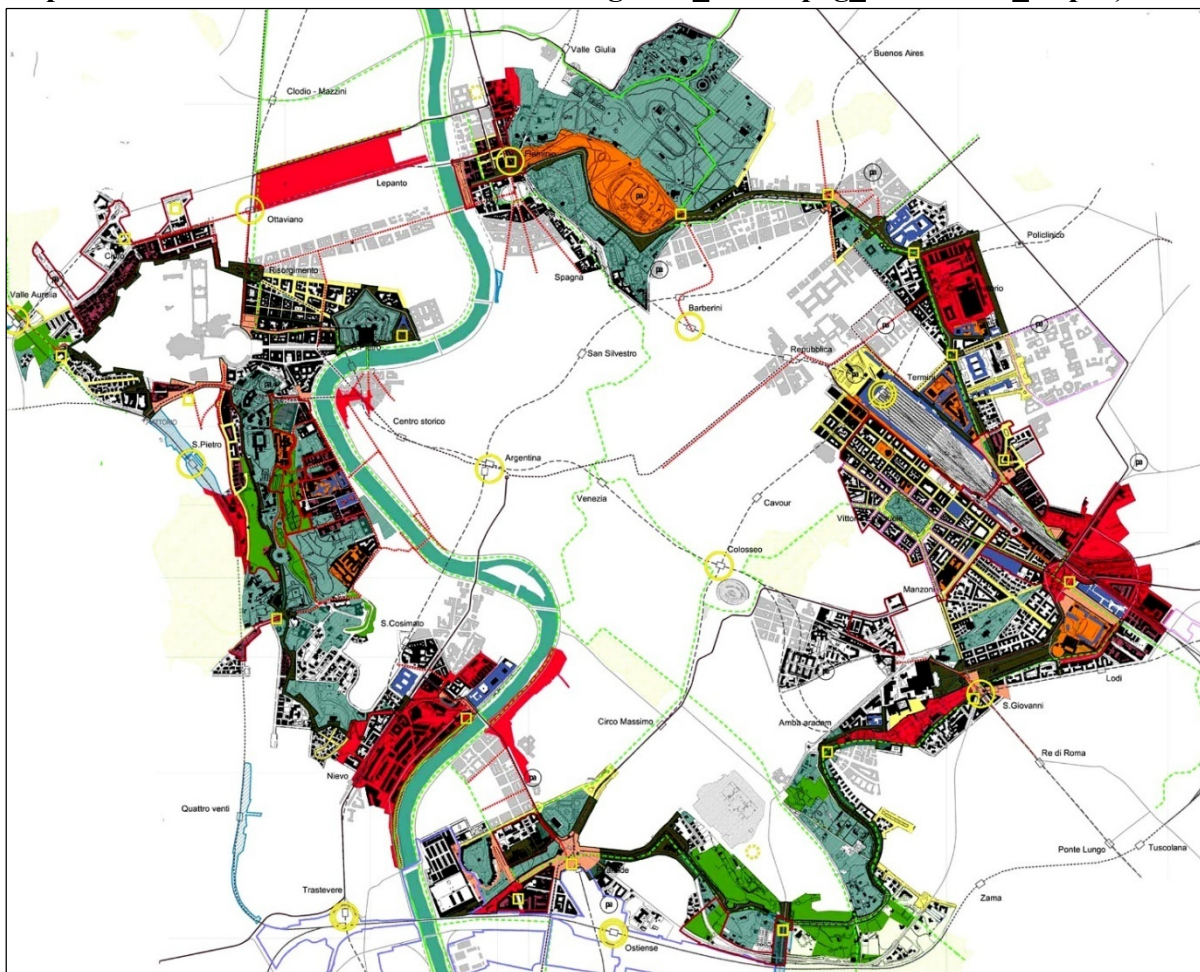
Today, the city walls represent a unique heritage, an identifying sign of the city that, however, apart from a few single episodes, has not found integration with the consolidated urban system and is often not recognized as a resource or added value but as a limit, an often insurmountable obstacle, in the weaving of relations of the contemporary city (Falini, 2009). A “large urban structure, capable of constituting a load-bearing framework capable of reinterpreting the historic city itself in the systems of relations between it and the emerging urban configurations,” (Municipality of Rome, 2003) which requires an overall strategic project of restoration and enhancement, in continuity and coherence with the structuring character attributed to the construction of the overall Historic-Environmental System.

The strategic planning scope of the PRG (Falini,Terranova,2001), prefigure the construction of an integrated Linear Park consisting of the “artifact” of the walls and the spaces of its encroachment (open spaces, green areas, services, etc.) that articles the walkability of the entire city wall and the re-functionalization of the walls and related volume for cultural and service activities. A true public works project according to a flexible perimeter but characterized by identity and continuity and a udea of overall unity.

The Park Project has been carried out in phases from the perspective of “planning by doing” (Morassut, Ricci, 2018), understood as an approach characterized by experimentation and processuality, aimed at bringing extraordinary procedures back into the Plan's contexts of reference: parts already defined are the Gardens along Via Carlo Felice, and the area between Porta Metronia and Porta Latina (inaugurated in 2009), Porta San Paolo - Via Giotto - Via Guerrieri (2013). Areas still to be redeveloped, however, are those at Via delle Fornaci, Porta San Paolo and Porta Maggiore - San Lorenzo (Terranova, 2001). The realizations, of the single parts of the Park have highlighted its enormous potential in terms of preservation of historical manufacts, environmental regeneration and revitalization of urban contexts.

The Walls become the backbone of an urban and metropolitan level redevelopment project “capable of reinterpreting the historic city itself in the systems of relationships between it and the emerging configurations” (Falini, Terranova 2001, 114). A multifunctional linear urban park is being configured that integrates pedestrian and bicycle routes in a unique context witnessing and active memory of the city's history. At the same time, the continuation of the Project opens up significant scenarios for the accomplishment of an ecological ring road corridor according to an idea of a “*planning conscious of the history of the places and attentive to the values of the contexts*” (Municipality of Rome, 2003).

Map 1. Strategic Planning Walls Ambit, (Elaboration I6.2 Objectives, scale1:10,000, http://www.urbanistica.comune.roma.it/images/uo_urban/prg_adottato/i6_02.pdf)



The case of the **Walls a and Water Park of Padua**, proposes a different approach to the Project that sees in a shared and participatory path the way toward the construction of a new

arrangement of places focused on public space and the promotion of innovative uses compatible with the historical-cultural value of the permanences .

The city walls of Padua represent an important testimony of military engineering of the 16th century, the first one built to defend a large plain city: a complex system composed of the perimeter wall (11 kilometers in extent, nineteen bastions and six surviving gates of the original eight), historic canals roads and military areas inside and outside the walls for a total of about 1,100,000 sq. m. 500,000 sq. M (Municipality of Padova, 2006).

By the end of the 19th century, having now lost all military function, the walls, ceded by the state property to the Municipality of Padua, began to become an obstacle to urban growth and circulation, and the first of about fifteen breaches began to open, sections of the walls were razed to make avenues (along the Piovego towards the Portello, in Via S. Pius X), other sections of walls and bastions accommodate public gardens (Savonarola, Arena and Codalunga bastions, with large sections of walls adjacent to them, as well as next to the S. Croce bastion).

Luigi Piccinato in the PRG of 1954 had grasped the importance of the walls and the river-canal system linked to them as an exceptional resource (Franzin, 2004), and had hypothesized the design a green ring along the esplanade that surrounded the Centro Storico, which, however, was never realized due to strong settlement pressures. It was not until the mid-1980s that the idea arose that the 16th-century walls constituted an enormous resource to be enhanced.

In the long path to the establishment of the Park of Walls and Waters, the Comitato Mura played a fundamental role an association founded in 1977 on the initiative of a group of scholars, preservation bodies and simple enthusiasts, with the aim of studying, spreading knowledge, safeguarding and enhancing the city walls of Padua. The Walls Park project, has been carried on since 1986 by the Walls Committee through a project path shared with associations, IUAV and with the support of the Region, Province and Municipality.

The basic idea starts from considering the rampart belt as a unique system, overcoming the logic of restoration for the purposes of pure conservation. The Project defines a complex system of interrelation between the different values inherent in the nature of the park itself (historical-cultural, architectural, landscape, naturalistic, artistic) by articulating differentiated levels of offerings (public spaces, functions, etc.)

In 2016, again on the initiative of the Walls Committee within the framework of the Culturalmente Call for Proposals, the experimentation of a non-museum museum of the walls, consisting of Narrative Environmental Installations, and educational stations, was carried out, providing diversified and interactive modes of enjoyment (Fadini, 2016). From the reinforcement of this first project, in 2021, the MURAVIVE initiative, a multimedia narrative museum in permanent form, was born. MURAVIVE is both a multimedia museum that places the musas themselves at the center of the narrative through different modalities and technologies, and a diffuse museum, articulated in several "stations" - seven once the project is completed - housed in gates and bastions, distributed along the entire bastion walls.

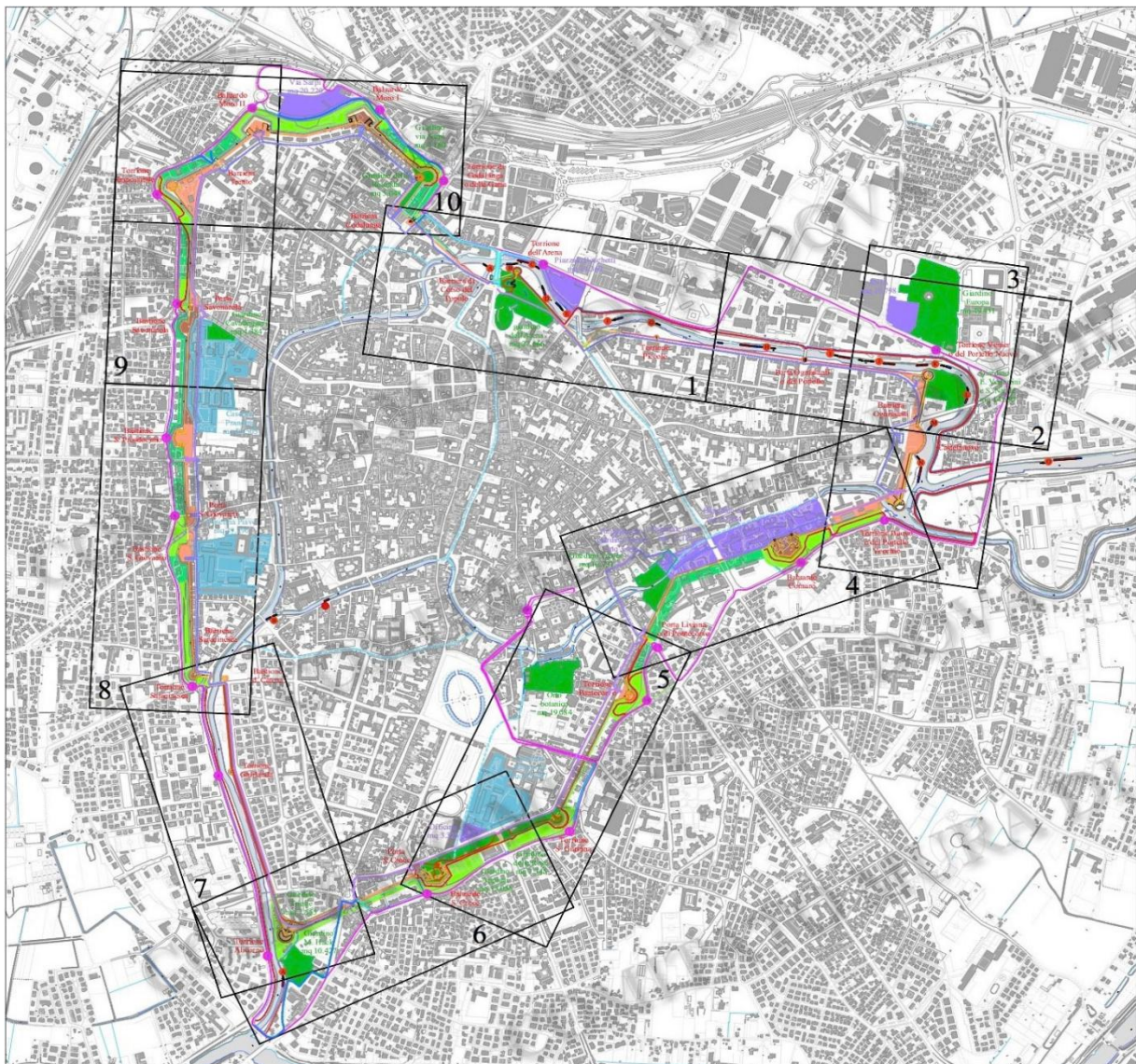
In parallel, thanks to the interest aroused by MURAVIVE, a group of professors from the IUAV University of Venice and the ICEA and DEI departments of the University of Padua promoted and implemented a project financed with ESF European funds, called PAMU - Multimedia Park of the Walls of Padua, a dedicated website for a virtual tour of the Walls complex.

The aspect that characterizes the walls of Padua, and therefore also the redevelopment plan, is that of being composed of the juxtaposition of many elements, of which each represents a case in itself but, at the same time part of an organic whole: historically, but also in the perspective of regeneration and enhancement. The walls represent the backbone of a linear park, the generating line of urban public space, gradually triggering the recovery of

areas and containers that are degraded but of high historical and urban value and the structuring of new safe bicycle and pedestrian routes for residents and new routes for tourists to visit the city.

The case of Padua allows a reflection on the experiences of “regeneration from below” and on the objective difficulty of initiating effective policies for the regeneration of the historical and cultural heritage: if the contemporary city is a complex of articulated, discontinuous and specialized situations (Poli, 2020), historical infrastructures can play an important role in the construction of planning and paths of social innovation and integrated and shared management, leading to a gradual process of re-appropriation and re-signification of these urban spaces, allow to reconfigure social fabric and symbolic values of the territory (Cellamare, 2019).

Map 2. Overview plan of the park of the Walls a and Waters of Padua. Source: <https://www.muravivepadova.it/mura/lemura.html>



4. Two example urban projects: The gardens of Via Carlo Felice in Rome and the Wall Park of San Benedetto in Padua.

The new garden on Via Carlo Felice constitutes one of the realized sections of the Linear Integrated Park of the Walls in Rome, with a total area of 2.7 ha close to the walls in the inner part between Piazza San Giovanni and Piazza Santa Croce in Gerusalemme.

The area, the final part of the Celian crest, was already described at the end of the 1500s as a small valley whose filling in began with Sixtus V, during the construction of the road between Santa Maria Maggiore and Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, and was completed in 1774 with Benedict XIV to create the tree-lined avenue, connecting the square in front of Santa Croce and the square of San Giovanni. It is exactly the relationship between the different elevations, (of the walls, the gardens, the street) that is the informing motif of the project to restore and create the new park.

The Project is part of the larger program of redevelopment of the Esquiline neighborhood, a strategic place of coexistence between different cultures, which is going through a moment of profound transformation of the social and economic fabric of the city. Funding for the work totaled 5 billion liras, partly from the Esquilino neighborhood redevelopment program.

The overall objectives of the project involved the restoration and enhancement of the Walls and the creation of a pedestrian path and equipped green spaces.

The proposed structure readdresses the history of the place through the garden design, which is developed as a "promenade" along which various types of spaces are articulated, on different levels and longitudinal paths, belvedere points and fountains; the perspectives open toward the walls and toward the areas in front of the basilicas of St. John and St. Cross in Jerusalem.

The central path along the street is bordered by a double row of holm oaks and a row of plane trees. The innermost part next to the walls is connected by several flights of steps interspersed with water features.

Map. 3 Overall plan of the Garden project and view of the lowered part abutting the Aurelian Wall. Source: <https://paesaggiorigenerazioneperiferie.it/carlo-felice/>



In 2021, the Municipality of Padua acquired the former Prandina Barracks from the State Property Office, an asset listed as being of cultural interest by the Superintendence. The area of the former Prandina Barracks, close to the 16th-century walls and the city center, was once occupied by the women's monastery of San Benedetto. Monastery which, in 1810, by Napoleonic decree came under the control of the State Military and became an artillery barracks. The barracks, which remained operational until the late 1980s, includes multiple properties of special historical, artistic and cultural interest.

For the redevelopment of the area, thanks to the close collaboration between the Municipality, Superintendence and the Ministry, a master plan has been drawn up for 2024 that also defines the new name once the redevelopment is completed: St. Benedict's Walls Park. Leading the Project team will be Ferrara-based studio Qb Atelier srl of architects Filippo Govoni and Federico Orsini, called upon to design the new park together with a group of 10 other firms and professionals, each specializing in specific aspects of the design.

The plan calls for redevelopment, with the creation of an “inclusive green infrastructure” to enhance the historic center and the Renaissance walls of Padua. The intervention, in general, involves the liberation of the complex from all the overlaps that have occurred over time, so

as to return a vast green area to the city and the redevelopment and enhancement of the rampart system and the former monastery. It is planned to create a large park, which inside includes the listed buildings of the former barracks, the Cavalleggeri Park and the area in front of Porta Savonarola. Over 67 thousand square meters of greenery, recovery of three buildings under Superintendence protection, a square for Corso Milano.

Map. 4 Masterplan of the St. Benedict's Wall Park.

Source: <https://www.comune.padova.it/sites/default/files/images/01%20Prandina.png>,
<https://www.cafetv24.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Parco-01.jpg>



Special attention is paid to the reorganization of traffic routes. It is planned to eliminate the current route of Via Orsini that does not coincide with the original route of the road of the walls, unloading the road system from the crossing traffic and enhancing the route of the “Road of the Walls of San Prosdocimo” with a tree-lined bicycle and pedestrian path.

5. An inconclusive final consideration: toward new forms of sustainable governance of culture

On the occasion of the year the European Year of Cultural Heritage, proclaimed by the European Union in 2018, EU Decision 2017/864 strongly reaffirmed that heritage in Europe was undervalued with respect to its potential as a tool/tool for value creation, skills, employment and quality of life because it lacked sustainable governance. By sustainable governance, the Commission meant “*participatory, multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance and enhanced cross-sectoral cooperation*” (EU 2018).

It reinterprets an externally relevant approach that wants to promote cultural diversity and a sense of belonging by overcoming the habit of thinking of Heritage as an artifact decontextualized from its territory and its management a matter of protection rather than design.

In fact, it is now clear that there is a need to think of cultural heritage in terms of integrated regeneration, restoring its territorial dimension and breaking down many of the walls that have arisen between the different disciplines that contribute to defining the arrangements (first and foremost urban planning but also sociology, economics, etc.).

In this approach must be integrated a push for innovation that is translated into actions aimed at renewing planning, equipping itself with updated strategic planning tools, seeking new forms of confrontation with local communities, pursuing greater integration with other

disciplinary sectors, including addressing issues of sustainability, reconverting its services, producing and offering new content. A drive that in recent years has resulted in an integrated approach to the regeneration project, characterized by multiple aspects.

A first aspect concerns the definition of a territorialization dimension of cultural heritage, that is, a dynamic process through which heritage elements, both tangible and intangible, are anchored to specific territorial and social contexts (Turri, 1998 and Dematteis, 2000). This process cannot stop at the mere spatial location of assets, but implies a profound interaction between heritage, the physical space in which it is embedded and the community that inhabits it, attributing meanings, values and collective identity to it. Territorialization transforms heritage into a local identity and development resource, influencing social practices, representations of place, and cultural and tourism enhancement strategies (Harvey, 1996). Through territorialization, heritage becomes an integral part of the cultural landscape, helping to define its uniqueness and attractiveness.

A second aspect, closely related to the first, concerns inclusion and, in general, the predisposition, in Cultural Heritage operations, to invest in social relations by achieving a sense of belonging, collective responsibility and identity. In this sense, knowing how to network is essential for all economic actors, and more so for cultural and creative ones, which are rich in initiatives but often 'poor' in financial resources. The relationships that are created-through the exchange of ideas and knowledge-provide added value and produce mutual benefits among the actors involved: in fact, the goal is to share resources, values and experiences in order to repropose them in a virtuous circle that will be self-sustaining.

Cultural and creative entities, by placing the issue of social sustainability at the center of their strategic actions, are inclined to create and consolidate collaborations and alliances on various levels (micro, meso, mega): with organizations operating within the same supply chain; with other economic actors to activate multi-sectoral synergies; with public bodies to guide policy choices. Therefore, it becomes essential to involve multiple organizations and entities of the Third Sector that, sharing the mission and goals of Agenda 2030, are directed toward sustainable development, generated by culture and aimed at future generations, which therefore act for the protection and valorization

Accessibility and enjoyment of cultural heritage are not only fundamental cultural rights, but also powerful tools for promoting social cohesion, reducing inequality, and fostering a sense of belonging. Projects and policies that aim to make cultural heritage accessible to different segments of the population, overcoming economic, physical, cognitive and cultural barriers, contribute significantly to building more inclusive and democratic societies. The valorization of the diverse cultural expressions present in an area, including the heritages of minorities and marginalized communities (Young, 1990), not only enriches the overall cultural landscape but also provides opportunities for recognition, intercultural dialogue and plural identity building, which are essential for effective social inclusion.

The relationship between cultural heritage and social inclusion is an increasingly central issue in contemporary debate, as highlighted by recent studies that emphasize the role of heritage in building more equitable and cohesive societies. Access to and participation in cultural heritage are recognized not only as cultural rights, but also as fundamental tools for promoting the inclusion of marginalized social groups and fostering intercultural dialogue: the enhancement of social heritage, which is intangible in nature and often linked to the practices and traditions of specific communities, can strengthen the sense of belonging and identity of minority groups, contributing to their social inclusion (Smith, Akagawa, 2009).

Similarly, the importance of a critical approach to the concept of heritage, taking into account the different perspectives and narratives present in a society, is highlighted in order to avoid forms of exclusion and marginalization (Harrison, 2013). In addition, heritage management policies must be informed by principles of social justice and active community

participation (Waterton, Watson, 2015) to ensure that the benefits of heritage are equitably distributed and that all citizens can feel part of their cultural heritage.

A final aspect concerns the broadening of the concept of territory itself: It is no longer a simple geographic delimitation, but a complex social and cultural space, shaped by the interactions between communities and their environment, which takes on, also through the use of information and communication technologies, an expanded strategic dimension: from real space to digital, innovative and creative space in which cultural heritage can be represented, interpreted and enjoyed. Both of these spaces can assume a fundamental role in the enhancement and enjoyment of cultural heritage, and their interaction can create new opportunities for social inclusion. For example, digital technologies can make cultural heritage accessible to people who cannot physically travel to the places where it is located, or they can foster the active participation of communities in the creation and sharing of digital content related to their heritage. However, it is important to be aware of the risks of exclusion that can result from the digitization of cultural heritage, and to adopt strategies to ensure that all citizens can access and benefit from these new opportunities.

Cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, is an integral part of this extended territory, helping to define its identity, memory and sense of belonging: different narratives and perspectives coexist within a territory, often reflecting dynamics of power and inequality. Therefore, inclusive management of cultural heritage requires an approach that acknowledges the complexity and layering of the territory, promoting the active participation of all the communities that inhabit it.

In a very concise summary, the relationship between culture and city development is an interconnected and central issue in urban regeneration strategies. While culture defines the identity of a city and its community, its social and economic dimension is an essential element in activating resilient and sustainable urban development and regeneration processes.

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