

Events

Military Landscapes. A Future for Military Heritage

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From the earliest history of mankind, the defence of territories and settlements has always been one of the most widely felt and implemented needs. Even today, the material and immaterial heritage that has come down to us over the ages is a complex and articulated result of theories, treatises, models and systems, themselves varied in time and space, often recognizable and thematically classifiable by means of chronologies and mappings.

Configured, therefore, as cultural heritage characterized by the theme of the defence of the territory, the conference held at La Maddalena in June 2017 was proposed as a critical and intelligent synthesis of the various aspects and the various features with which the related phenomena and processes have developed. The subtitle of the *Military Landscapes* conference well illustrates the content of the initiative: *A future for military heritage, for an international overview event celebrating the 150th anniversary of the decommissioning of Italian fortresses*. Curated by Giovanna Damiani and Donatella Rita Fiorino.

The University of Cagliari (DICAAR) [1], the Polo Museale di Sardegna (MiBACT), the Istituto Italiano dei Castelli (Sardinia Section and National Research Council) and the University of Edinburgh (ESALA) have promoted an international



Fig. 1. Logo of the event.

meeting to share case studies, paths of research and institutional initiatives concerning the knowledge, protection and cultural enhancement of historical military landscapes. In consideration of this heritage, the conference was held in La Maddalena at the Naval Non-commissioned Officers' School. The island, due to its position in the Mediterranean and its historical defence identity, constitutes a particularly significant microcosm, a symbolic place for reflection on principles and guidelines for the protection of international military landscapes. The first objective of the organizers was to initiate an interdisciplinary and inter-institutional dialogue on the issues of protection, reuse and management of mili-

tary assets, in light of the new scenarios of reconversion or dual military and civil use.

With differentiated but integrated approaches, the interaction between military activities and the territory was again proposed, in asking: how can we recognize, interpret and protect this often discomforting memory, that alternates recollections of war, usurpation and violence, with more reassuring messages of security, commemoration, peace and progress?

The prospect of a new wave of decommissioning brings the theme of the reconversion of particularly vulnerable architecture and territories to the forefront. For the future of this heritage, in-

terdisciplinary dialogue becomes essential, in order to share methodologies of analysis of the sites and their contexts, protocols of conservation, surveillance and maintenance, strategies for cultural, economic and social valorization, restoration and conversion projects for civil use (residential, social, cultural, productive, tourist) or military, in the logic of the general rethinking of policies concerning defence and the reduction of public spending.

The initiative had as its primary objective the scientific reflection addressing an architectural and landscape heritage of great importance, not only under the historical-testimonial profile, but also in relation to the important socio-anthropological implications that this heritage underlies.

The redevelopment and re-use of fortresses and military garrisons for the knowledge and enhancement of historical military landscapes were also the theme of the international exhibition (produced by the Polo Museale of Sardinia with the University of Cagliari) that collected the results, through the thematic illustration of the scientific research projects presented. The exhibition –from 21 June to 21 September 2017– was set up on the island of Caprera, inside Forte Arbuticci a complex built at the end of the nineteenth century now the Giuseppe Garibaldi Memorial National Museum.

The exposition of the scientific and multidisciplinary contributions produced has better and more thoroughly, and in a timely and articulated way, illustrated the theme of the Conference, of extreme relevance: that of abandoned military structures, for a new reconversion to military, civil, cultural and tourist use of an important and strategic part of our cultural heritage, in a dimension of great divulgation.

The organizers have also planned the publication of the proceedings, in a 400-page book published by the prestigious Skira publishing house.

In the program, the articulation of the parts and thematic sessions emphasized the complexity and the integration of the methodological approaches.

In the first session A. *History and identity. Knowledge, analysis and representation* and, particularly, in A.1. *Military cartography*, contributions worthy of mention included: *The fortress of Gaeta. A military landscape in graphic representations* by M. Cigola and A. Gallozzi, and *Graphic tools for attack and defence. From terrestrial magnetism to the scientific study of surfaces* by L. Carlevaris. For the session A2. *History, documents, permanences*, see in A2.1. *Pre-19th century defence sites*, see: *Fortifications in the Alessandrino area: a European itinerary in 'time'* by A. Marotta. Another noteworthy contribution was Annalisa Dameri's *Maps for defence. Military engineers' drawings in European archives*.

The history of European cities is strongly conditioned by the construction (and, after centuries, by the demolition) of fortified works. The European military archive, as well as state and municipal archives, are the custodians of the many drawings that testify how cities have been shaped by the demands of war. An important archival heritage that must be known, disseminated and enhanced. The drawings of military engineers, often secreted for years as a strategic material for national security, in the course of centuries, once the urgencies of war had ceased, have been dispersed in various archival repositories. The study of several cities in northern Italy presented the comparison between drawings preserved at ISCAG in Rome, in the state and municipal archives of Piedmont and Lombardy, at the National Library of Florence, at the Biblioteca Nacional de

España in Madrid, at the Archivo General of Simancas, at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris, at the archives of the Service Historique de la Défense in Vincennes, at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, at the Krigsarkivet in Stockholm.

The following session A2.2. *Secularization of Church property and military reuse* and A2.3. *Disposals and Demolitions*, included the essay, *San Luca degli Eremitani di Sant'Agostino in Parma: from convent to military structure. Historical analysis and architectural survey for defining transformability* by C. Vernizzi and *The walls of old San Juan during the 19th century* by M. Flores Roman, together with the paper on the *Decline and revival of a military urban landscape: the fortifications of Castelnuovo in Naples between 19th-century decommissioning and contemporary enhancement* by A. Pane and D. Treccozi.

For the session A2.4. *Forts and barracks in the 19th century* and A2.5. *Prisons*, V. Martines analyzed the *History of the Maddalena Navy Military Hospital*, while G.B. Cocco, M. Diaz and C. Giannattasio looked *Beyond the walls of detention. The historical prison system in Sardinia*.

Among the session A3. *War landscapes of the 20th century, in particular, the session A3.1. Pre-19th century defence sites* comprised *De-signs in the landscape and traces in the memory. The modern war sentries of the Mediterranean Sea: an interdisciplinary research between Spain and Sardinia* by A. Martínez Medina and A. Pirinu, while C. Palestini confronted *Representing the fortified landscape: graphic interpretations of the Fortress of Civitella del Tronto*. Also of interest, the paper by P.I. Schneider and C. Röhl, on *The ruin of the F1 missile factory building at Peenemünde and its archaeological intelligence. Methodology and methods*.

In A4. *Typologies and constructive techni-*

ques there was the interesting paper on the *Astura Tower and the defence of the territory: memories and present relevance of a historic landscape* by M. Docci and G. Teodori, in collaboration with the Territorial Technical Office for Land Armaments (UTTAT-Nettuno, Secretariat General of Defence / National Armaments Directorate).

Part B. *Military 'island' networks. Protocols for protection and reconversion policies*, and in particular session B.1. *Tools for Protection, Census and Catalogue* included a fascinating and international reflection on *Medieval fortified cultural landscapes of northwestern and central India* by J. Shikha and KN Prothi; while F. Novelli proposed an analysis, *From the 'Atlante Castellano d'Italia' to the fortified structures in Piedmont: conservation and new use and enhancement processes*.

Session B2. *Design and territory* featured an important work on the *Theory, methodology and feasibility study in the preservation of the Fort of Sant'Alessandro* by F. Bertè, followed by that of A. Rolando and P. Salvadeo, *From landscape 'museification' to 'revitalisation': research, thesis, projects of the Polytechnic of Milan*.

Part C. *Old and new functions. Plans and projects for renewed urban and territorial hubs*, in particular C.1. *Planning and urban design*, saw C. Van Emstede propose *Where preservation and urban planning meet: the reconversion of the shipyard Willemsoord Royal Netherlands Navy Shipyard*, while D. R. Fiorino dealt with *Defensive Stratigraphy. Studies for the preservation of Cagliari's military landscape*, similarly to R. Picone with the *Military Heritage at the San Vincenzo Pier in Naples. From a limit to an opportunity for the contemporary city*. G. Canella, C. Coscia and P. Mellano analyzed *The De Sonnaz Barracks in Turin: from military district to a justice hub for the design of a new urban landscape*. The latter essay established –among other things– the delicate relationship, often to be recognized and resolved, between large and complex abandoned settlements and the landscape and structure of the city.

In session C2. *Social landscapes*, it is important to mention the paper by G. Angelone, K. Russo and G. Krauss, *The protection of Terra di Lavoro's military landscape: the example of San Pietro Infine's park of Historical memory*, while for

session C3. *Experimental design*, the essay by R. Mancini, *Rome seen from its city walls*, was outstanding.

Again in this session, of particular interest –also for the size of the complex concerned– the contribution of M.P. Gatti and G. Russo, of the Department of Civil, Environmental and Mechanical Engineering (DICAM) of the University of Trento. The subject was that of abandoned military structures, particularly Palmanova, with the problems of the physical and economic regeneration of quarters: a theme that was presented with particular criticality for different situations in Italy and in Europe. The typological aspects obviously cannot be separated from the structural and technological aspects, both on the level of knowledge and preliminary investigations, as well as on the level of concrete and operational solutions. If this is an approach valid for any intervention on existing structures, it seems particularly delicate in the case of historic artifacts, especially of considerable size, such as Palmanova. Consistently, one of the questions that this paper posed on a general level was the recognizability of historical-documentary values, of which the extant structure is the bearer, that must be safeguarded, albeit in connection with the strategies of reintegration into a circuit of new economic fruition, also effective on a functional level.

Together with some particularly interesting and positive aspects rediscovered and included in the new unitary territorial development program (in collaboration with the State Property Office), the paper did not neglect critical aspects, such as excessive bureaucratization, which has in fact blocked any specific proposal or initiative. As the article concluded, new regeneration strategies are needed to avoid damaging the abandoned military sites even further. Strategies based on

Fig. 2. Arbuticci Fort, Caprera, La Maddalena (Sassari).



the knowledge of their architectural and technological characteristics, and on the knowledge of local policies; but what is needed, above all, are real, contextualized, economically sustainable projects. For what regards the special session S1. *Redevelopment, functional adaptation and management methodologies for civil and military dual use*, of particular interest were the paper by TK Kirova, *Good practices and models of intervention and management of military assets in use and HBIM for the conservation, reuse and management of military heritage. The case study of the Cascino Barracks in Cagliari* by D.R. Fiorino, S.M. Grillo, E. Pilia and E. Quaquero.

Session S2. *Military heritage for the arts and museums* treated *Fenestrelle: a fortress in Piedmont and its second life* by L. Accurti (MIBACT, Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the City of Turin, Italy). Also known as the “Great Wall of Piedmont,” the fortified complex of Fenestrelle is a symbol of the province of Turin. The author traced the process of restoration and refunctionalization of part of the buildings of Fort San Carlo (that is, the lower part) including the visitor paths through the entire complex that has been returned to use and visitation with the educational and cultural function of a museum. In this project, particular importance was given to the restoration of the Royal Gateway, which made it possible to recover and enhance the main entrance to the Fort for conferences. Consistent with the vi-

sion of more contemporary conservation, a fundamental part was reserved to the phase of analysis and critical knowledge, while it was considered important to correlate the material interventions with those of a dynamic nature in the physical experience of the places. This interactivity was also interpreted in a virtual and digital sense. Finally, the notable dimension that was illustrated regarding the minimalist level of the interventions, implemented both in terms of non-invasiveness (in all senses) and in economic terms.

At the end of this brief excursus, intended as a concise summary of a broad, complete and irreproachable scientific initiative, we would like to mention what Sergio Polano wrote in his initial *lectio*, *Dazzle Painting*: «the first great futurist exhibition! The art of visual confusion in maritime military landscapes.» If Thomas Alva Edison had failed with his solutions for *camouflage* involving a large use of tarpaulins, the new technique (already adopted during the First World War) based on dyes and paints directly applied to the ship hulls enjoyed great success in Europe and beyond. The first campaign of unlimited submarine warfare was begun in February 1915 by the German *U-boat*, in open violation of the international conventions of the Laws of Warfare. The visual masking project was programmatically based on a precise application of *Gestalt* concepts and rules, with close connections with Vorticist movements. The critical selection

of colors and their evaluation parameters was fundamental, first of all the tones and the *nuances*, managed and applied (for example in England) by 11 volunteer assistants trained in various art schools for painting with *gouache*, according to typologies and with colors numerically coded according to a standard color chart. «Those who were not fortunate enough to see the docks at one of our great ports during the war –wrote Hugh Hurst, in 1919 in *Dazzle Painting in War-Time*– may imagine the arrival of a convoy [...] of these painted ships, and the many miles of docks crowded with vessels of all sorts. [...] Each resplendent in a variety of bright-hued patterns, up-to-date designs of stripes in black and white or pale blue and deep ultramarine, and earlier designs of curves, patches, and semicircles. Take all these, huddle them together in what appears to be hopeless confusion, but which in reality is perfect order; bow and stern pointing in all directions, mix a little sunshine, add the varied and sparkling reflections, stir the hotchpotch up with smoke, life, and incessant movement, and it can safely be said that the word ‘dazzle’ is not far from the mark.» This methodological approach, therefore, can also be considered among the “forms of defence.” The interesting and fascinating graphic and photographic documents accompanying the essay confirmed the valid, relevant and effective role of Visual Culture in the art of war, in the military theater.

Notes

[1] The persons involved and their roles are as follows: Scientific Direction: Donatella Rita Fiorino, University of Cagliari – DICAAR; Institutional Refe-

rence: Polo Museale of Sardinia: Giovanna Damiani, Director; University of Cagliari: Donatella Rita Fiorino; University of Edinburgh: Miles Glendinning,

Director of the Scottish Centre for Conservation Studies; Istituto Italiano dei Castelli: Michele Pintus, National vice-president

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