

ABC Department Architecture, Built Environment and Construction Engineering



#### **CHANGES**

**Cultural Heritage Activities: New Goals and benefits for Economy and Society** 

Work Package 2 Conceptualization of previous experiences: the «Distretti Culturali» Project

**Stefano Della Torre** 











# Proud to show an exception: The case of Villa Carlotta, Tremezzo, Como Lake





# Proud to show an exception: The case of Villa Carlotta, Tremezzo, Como

Lake













#### A cultural property does never stand alone

- We recognize significance not (only) because a property is beautiful, but (mainly) because of the realtionships it has with its territorial context
- It's a matter of significance, but it is really meaningful for management issues: the performance of a cultural property shall not be measured just in terms of income or number of visitors, but in terms of empowering the territory: education, cooperation, social inclusion, sustainability of cultural processes...
- Italian public museums cannot be compared with American private institutions...
- Ten years ago Villa Carlotta was getting better and better, but with a lot of problems with the context: no cooperation, no dialogue even on very practical issues...



# To improve its performance Villa Carlotta joined AQST "Magistri Comacini"

#### AQST stands for

# Framework Agreement for Territorial Development

It is a project based on a model of regional endogenous development driven by cultural activities (2001 onwards, still operating)



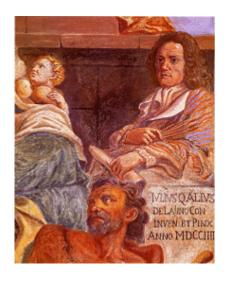






The project aims at integrating existing cultural offer...















... with "newborn" cultural properties, regenerated thanks to AQST grants









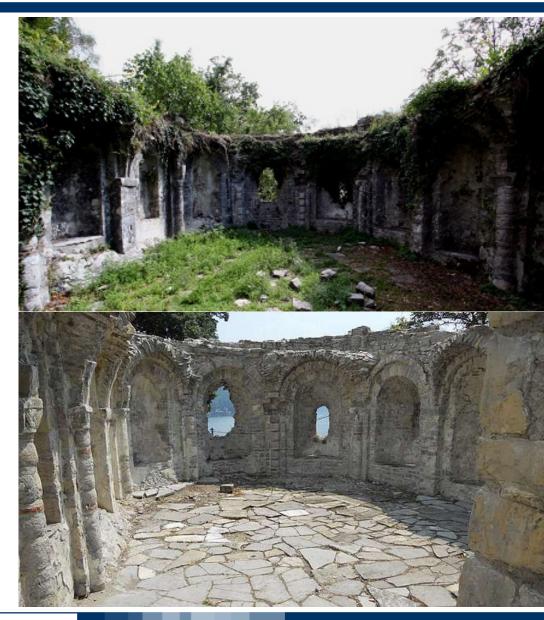


**Prof. Stefano Della Torre** 



The medieval ruins on the Isola Comacina had some problems with vegetation covering and overtaking the romanesque walls, and no regular maintenance system (but sometimes volunteers without any skill)

The AQST project financed conservation works AND a management system entailing ticketing and regular maintenance of ruins as well as of surrounding landscape





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- Now the island is a complete archaeological park, but it has also some more feature.
- E.g. the most appreciated monuments are the modernist houses built to host painters (coming from Belgium, it's a long story going back to WW I)
- In maintaining woods and fields, it is important to respect the delicate equilibrium between ruins, landscapes and trees which may carry a significance of their own







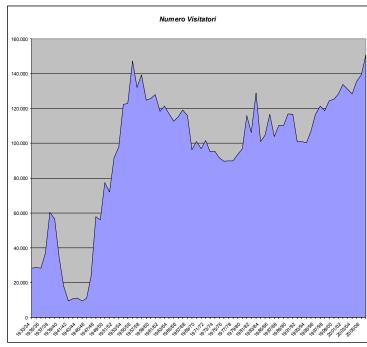
# Villa Carlotta as the driver for the whole network

The driver of the network (Villa Carlotta and its famous gardens) counts more or less 200.000 visitors per year.

Villa Carlotta has been chosen as "the driver" of the local network because it attracts so many tourists (part of them willing to visit other sites) but also as a centre of best practices, where young professionals can have training.

When Villa Carlotta hosted an exhibition on the restoration of modernist Houses for Artists, visitors increased by 10% on the same period of previous year (22,000 people visited Villa Carlotta during the exhibition period)







# **Network management**

Ticketing (Card)
Promotion
Bookshops
Planned Conservation
(prevention, regular
maintenance...)
Coordinated Programming

Overtaking localism!

Valorisation of externalities (capacity building, scale economies, people involvement...)















- We realized soon that in spite of the subscribed documents, to keep actors committed was a hard task, and the follow up of the iniviatives required an improvement of human capital and relational capital
- A weakness of AQST project was the lack of investments in education, training and soft skills
- The outcome we nevertheless got, that is some more skilled local professionals, is just an externality produced by the care we put in enhancing the quality of the works (but nobody was aware that capacity building should be one of the main targets)



#### "Distretti culturali" Project

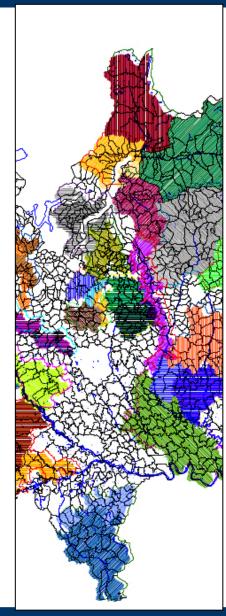
We had a relevant second opportunity expanding the model of "comprehensive wide area projects" with the project "**Distretti culturali**" granted and supported by Cariplo Foundation.

These project gave both grants and rules.

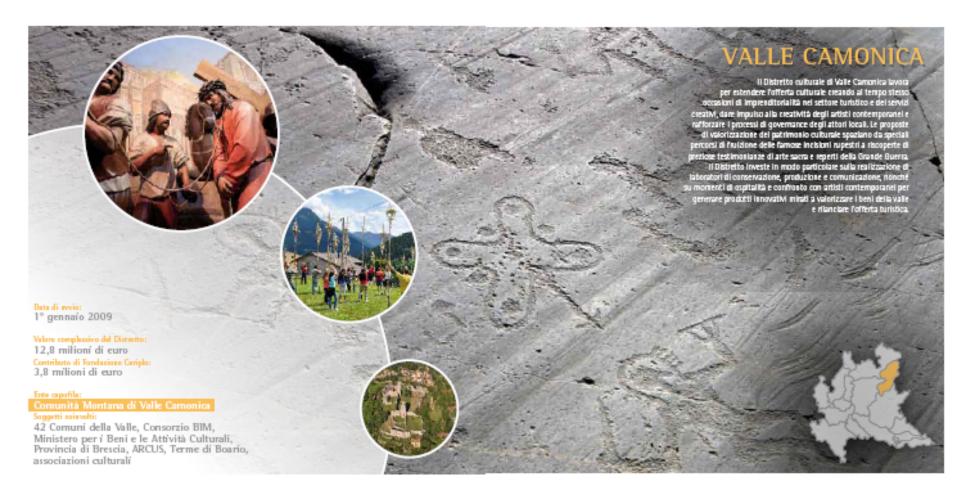
So restorations (what people want) had to be carefully planned taking into account quality, planned conservation after works, management system, exploitation of networking as a tool to enhance relational and human capital (giving sustainability to the investments).

More than 60,000,000 Euros have been invested in the six financed projects (selected out of 37 proposals).

The selection underscores the diversity of the region, thus making the test even more interesting.



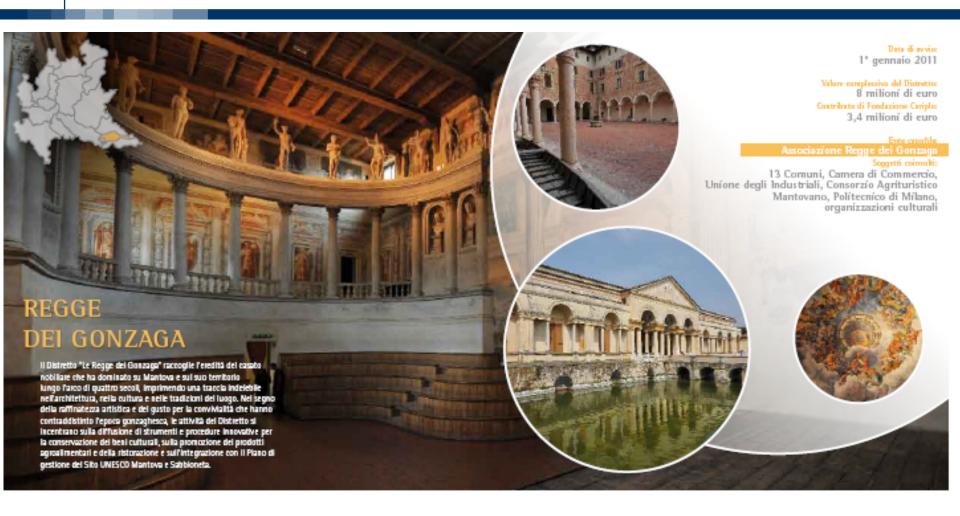
















The Mantua Project provide grants for a set of interventions decided not through a dialogue but by a top-down process.

The projects identifies a triple helix strategy, investing on university campus as a factor to enhance the cooperation between the administrative system and the productive chains.

In this strategy, Heritage from Gonzaga dynasty plays as a brand but also as an opportunity through tourism industry. Gonzaga buildings in Mantua and Sabbioneta have just been inscribed in Unesco WHL.

The project finances the establishment of a research center on Preventive and Planned Conservation in the Mantua Pole of Politecnico di Milano









Valtellina Project finances the inspections of dozens of monuments restored some years ago without any idea of subsequent use and maintenance





Monza and Brianza project finances the establishment of an Office for the Preventive and Planned Conservation of public and private properties including historic gardens

## A turnover

**\** 

"Distretti Culturali" is a project which makes a lot of people work.

Most of them are enhancing their skills.

The challenge for everybody is to improve skills but also to change mind about the link Economy-Culture.

We are going beyond the vision that the problem is just to collect money to pay conservation costs, and that Heritage makes money directly (hard to endorse).

We try to learn lessons about the way Heritage sector can empower Regional Economy



Distretti culturali: dalla teoria alla pratica





# Historic Preservation as an infrastructure for development

Historic preservation can be seen as an infrastructure for social and economic development according to the models of Knowledge Economy

The evolution of the relationship between culture and economy

| Economic enhancement of culture  | Cultural enhancement of economy   |
|--|---|
| <ul> <li>Culture as an asset</li> <li>Culture as a factor of production</li> <li>Focus on artistic, cultural and environmental heritage</li> <li>Rise of cultural industries</li> <li>Rise of cities of art and culture</li> <li>Rise of cultural cluster and district</li> <li>Focus on local economic development</li> </ul> | <ul> <li>Culture as capacity</li> <li>Culture as sources of innovation</li> <li>Focus on human capital, creative class and ICT</li> <li>Rise of creative industries</li> <li>Rise of creative cities</li> <li>Rise of creative cluster (milieu)</li> <li>Focus on innovation process</li> </ul> |

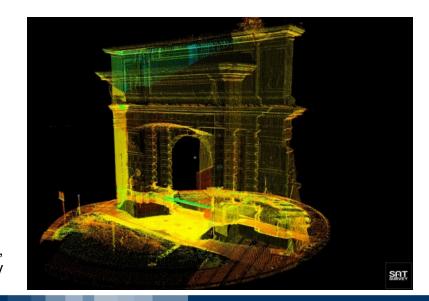
Source: Lazzeretti, Capone, Cinti 2010: *Technological innovation in creative clusters. The case of laser in conservation of artworks in Florence*, IERMB Working Paper in Economics, n°10.02, April 2010

### A turnover

We are exploring the thesis that Heritage preservation **activities**, provided they are carried on aiming at opening minds, can empower the Economy of a region.

In other words, Heritage may create the "learning environment" where innovation and creativity can be developed.

The turnover from an economic empowerment of Culture to a cultural empowerment of Economy does not downgrade Cultural Heritage, it's just an evolution in understanding the role



Laser scanner survey of Porta Romana, Milan, by SAT Survey

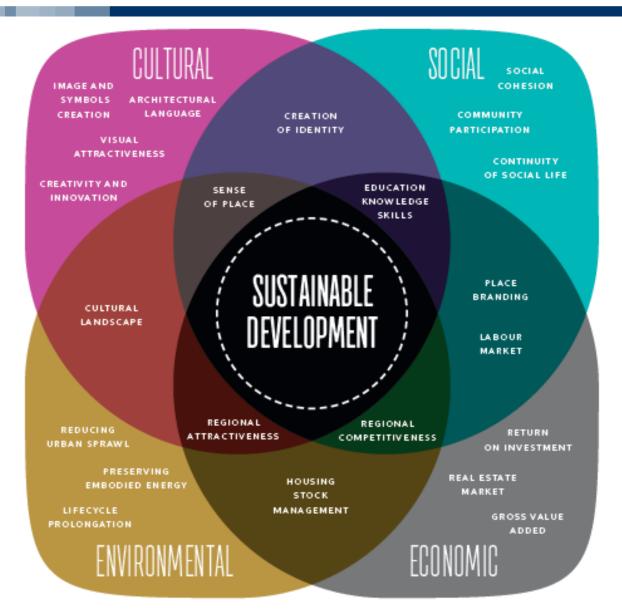


# Value produced by Conservation activities

- Heritage values are produced both because heritage buildings are used and visited, and because the activities related to their conservation produce externalities which can be organized and turned into new value
- This value is related to the models of Knowledge Economy and Creativity, as it concerns professional skills (human capital, intellectual capital) and relational attitudes (social capital)
- These values are assets for a local system, therefore this value is of the utmost importance and should be targeted by policies, as it is a precodnition for making a local development model sustainable



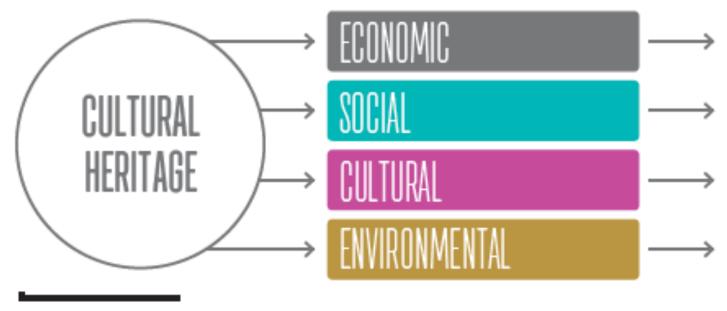
# Research «Cultural Heritage counts for Europe»



Heritage Counts for Europe Report



### The traditional argument



6 FIGURE 4.2. "DOWNSTREAM" PERSPECTIVE ON CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT SOURCE: OWN.



### A new model proposed

http://www.encatc.org/culturalheritagecountsforeurope/outcomes/



S FIGURE 4.3. "UPSTREAM" PERSPECTIVE ON CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT

SOURCE: OWN.



#### Managing significance

Understanding significance in the frame of cultural relativism is powerful in driving preservation out of old schemes, putting it in the forefront of activities which work for change (and against Climate Change!).

It may sound paradoxically, but people in conservation know very well how much of **openness** and **creativity** is required to solve technical problems.

Continuous investigation entails methodical doubting about presentation of sites; in other words it requires, as a necessary consequence, a rich production of new studies targeting different groups of people, thus creating social inclusion through Heritage.

