

## **Pollenzo between the Langhe and the Roero**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The object of this thesis is a proposal for the creation in Pollenzo (a small town in the Tanaro valley) of an important physical and informational connecting link between Langhe and Roero. In fact, they are the two best-known and most popular tourist areas in Piedmont thanks to their historical-cultural and environmental value, as well as to the quality of their wine and cuisine.

The paper examines the following main topics:

- changes in the territory;
- [the new expansion](#);
- [reclamation and restoration of the historical center](#).

### **CHANGES IN THE TERRITORY**

Pollenzo has been a crossroads of very important routes ever since Roman times. Its location, right in the middle of the valley, and its closeness to two waterways such as the Tanaro and the Stura di Demonte, put the town in a crucial position as a trading center and an obligatory thoroughfare for those passing through the region. This is the area where the road joining Turin to the sea, via Bra, intersects the one that runs through a long valley from Asti to France, via Alba and Cuneo.



A multitude of mementos testify to the special role played by this town throughout history.

The landscape still bears traces of the Roman system of land division and the later reorganization into lots, occurred in modern times; of the infrastructures built by the King Carlo Alberto and the recent trend toward more specialized agricultural productions. Due to its closeness to the Bridge on the Tanaro River and to the Alba-Bra route, Pollenzo is now in danger of losing its livability and quiet-farming-town look.

The heavy traffic invading its outskirts every day at high speed contrasts with its slow-paced country life. Two very different settling patterns are simultaneously affecting the region: on the one hand, rural houses scattered throughout the network of country roadways; on the other, urban-type clustered buildings along main routes, with huge volumes able to house manufacturing and commercial activities.



The soon-to-be-built Asti-Cuneo motorway is expected to ensure easy access to this important tourist region, and therefore to expand its catchment area. Our proposal aims to identify suitable itineraries for tourists to discover local realities and intends to enable such knowledge through alternative routes, away from the traffic and any other kind of perceptive filter. This thick network of diverse pathways (vehicle tracks, hiking, biking and horse riding trails) will represent a connection and integration, through the planned new foot and bicycle pathway by the old neo-Moorish bridge, between two existing tourist itineraries, in the Barolo and the Roero regions. New routes will lead from Pollenzo to different directions; to the south, through the new pathway, visitors will reach the "Rocca del Campione" (Champion's Rock) on the

Tanaro River, the "Cascine della Bassa Langa", the "Morra", Verduno, Roddi and the Barolo vineyards; eastwards they will find the Turrilio, the Cinzano riding school, S. Vittoria and Monticello; to the north Pocapaglia, its "Rocche" (fortresses) and the Roero vineyards; to the west the "Tenuta Reale" (Royal Estate), the "Cascine Albertine", the river, Cherasco's golf course and historical center; in the direction of Bra, the hothouses, the Zizzola and the town center.



The region exhibits some principles of land organization which have often been useful to the project in re-defining different functional spheres. Our territorial project includes a vast area which involves and redesigns a strip of the Tanaro valley, from the woods of S. Vittoria, Pocapaglia and Bra in the Roero region, to the foot of the Bassa Langa hills, encompassing the entire Pollenzo Royal Estate and the town itself, as well as the Verduno, La Morra and Cherasco areas.

The project is also defined by two clearly identifiable constraints near the Alba-Bra route: on one side the industrial and commercial area of near-by townships, and on the other the Bra hothouse area. We envisage a strip of farming land to stop the overwhelming expansion of industrial settlements towards the country around the "Cascine Albertine", not yet affected by construction speculation. The strip of land will be bordered by two "biological corridors" including a path and a canal or artificial lake running along it as far as the river and, ideally, joining the existing ones in the Bassa Langa. These green aisles will create a screen against indiscriminate construction of settlements along the route.

The new roadway network and land design will restore organizational principles conceived centuries ago, when there was a main central road with secondary paths

converging towards it transversally and other paths running parallel to it. This layout also allows the recovery of the remains of a wall encircling the Roman town and the major routes connecting it with the surrounding area.

Along the "vallum", the aqueduct and the roads to Alba and Turin a bike trail, lined with Italian poplars, will run slightly higher than the country plane. The existing lots will be consolidated in large portions of territory, marked by hedges made of various local and non-local tree and bush species. The project also intends to restore the Estate's 19<sup>th</sup>-century Park, which – considering the importance of its flora and wildlife – will hopefully soon become a regional park open to visitors.

Some of the tables are published in: DE ROSSI A., DURBIANO G., GOVERNA F., REINERIO L., ROBIGLIO M. (edited by), 1999, *Linee nel paesaggio*, UTET, Torino.

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