

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture for Sustainability
Honors theses

**ENHANCEMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF A UNESCO SITE WITH ITS
TERRITORIAL RELATIONS**

**The “Sacri Monti of Piedmont and Lombardy” in reference to the UNESCO Site
of the “Route of Santiago of Compostela”**

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The aim of my thesis is to analyze how the definition of a Management Plan of a UNESCO site can be combined with a vision of local development inspired by a participative approach. The research develops innovative solutions for the management of a Site and actions of enhancement involving the economic actors, which can enhance the potential for local development.

The thesis investigates the case study of the Sacro Monte of Varallo, included in the UNESCO serial sites of the “Sacri Monti of Piedmont and Lombardy”, inscribed in the *World Heritage List* (WHL) in 2003. The choice of this site is based on its features of serialism and complexity resulting from its geographical distribution, split between two different regional authorities and its problematic integration of a set of variables concerning architecture, urban planning, landscape and natural environment.

The analysis takes into account the programming cycles for the use of European Union funds for the periods 2007-2013 and 2014-2020.

The study analyses the case of the World Heritage Site (WHS) of the “Route of Santiago of Compostela” which, despite some differences, presents various analogies with the Sacri Monti, related to the enhancement actions of a serial Site. The feature of serialism of the Sacri Monti entails a high degree of complexity of the institutional context, because of the different levels of government (local, provincial, regional, national) and the different public and private actors involved.

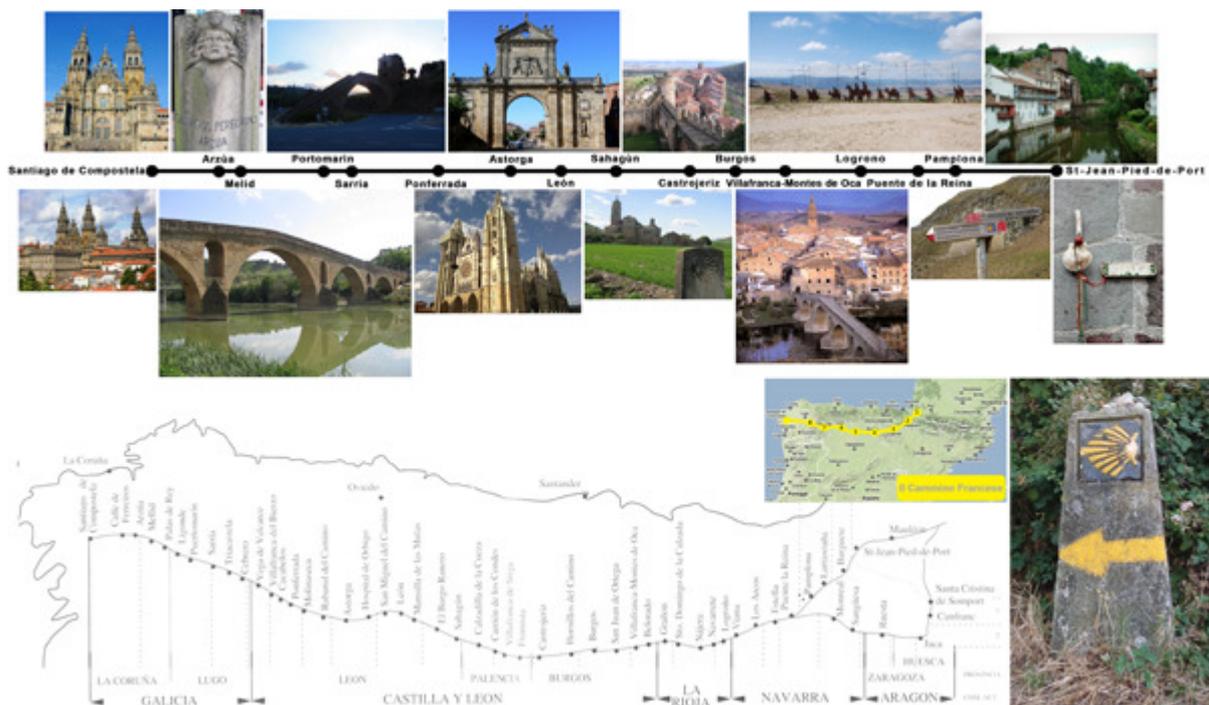


Figure 1 Trail of the Route of Santiago de Compostela (French Route) crossing five different regions (Communidades Autonomas): Aragon, Navarra, Rioja, Castilla y Leon and Galicia. Its complexity follows from its interregional dimension referred to measures and actions of management unity of the Site. According to these reasons a Management Unity Plan above the regional and local legislations is strictly necessary. Furthermore some examples of urban and natural landscape passed by the Route and integrated with it are presented in the figure

The research methodology includes an investigation of the primary and secondary sources of data, the collection and organization of data on tourism statistics, a stakeholder analysis based on interviews of the main actors and a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) of the proposals identified. The crucial issues of the management of Sacro Monte of Varallo, can be grouped in six clusters:

- Economic recession, particularly regarding the tourism sector;
- Site management models that are not sufficiently focused on territorial integration;
- Poor promotion and “branding” of the site;
- Inadequate “targeting” of specific tourism markets in the area;
- Over complex territorial and urban planning tools, scattered over too many institutional levels;
- Difficulties of integration between different centers of local development.

The proposals identified can be summed up in three main areas of interest:

- Reorganization of the legislative sources and of the fragmented normative framework. The existing norms created passive (conservation) constraints which are sufficient to guarantee the preservation and protection of the Site. However, active (enhancing) constraints have not yet been implemented through the Management Plan. This includes:
 - a) A coordinated legislative situation and planning instruments between different Regions;
 - b) the ongoing rearrangement of the provincial administration;
 - c) the creation of a unified database which should act as a single instrument for speedier consultation and easy updating;
 - d) the sponsoring and promotion of projects aimed at enhancing the serial features of the Site.

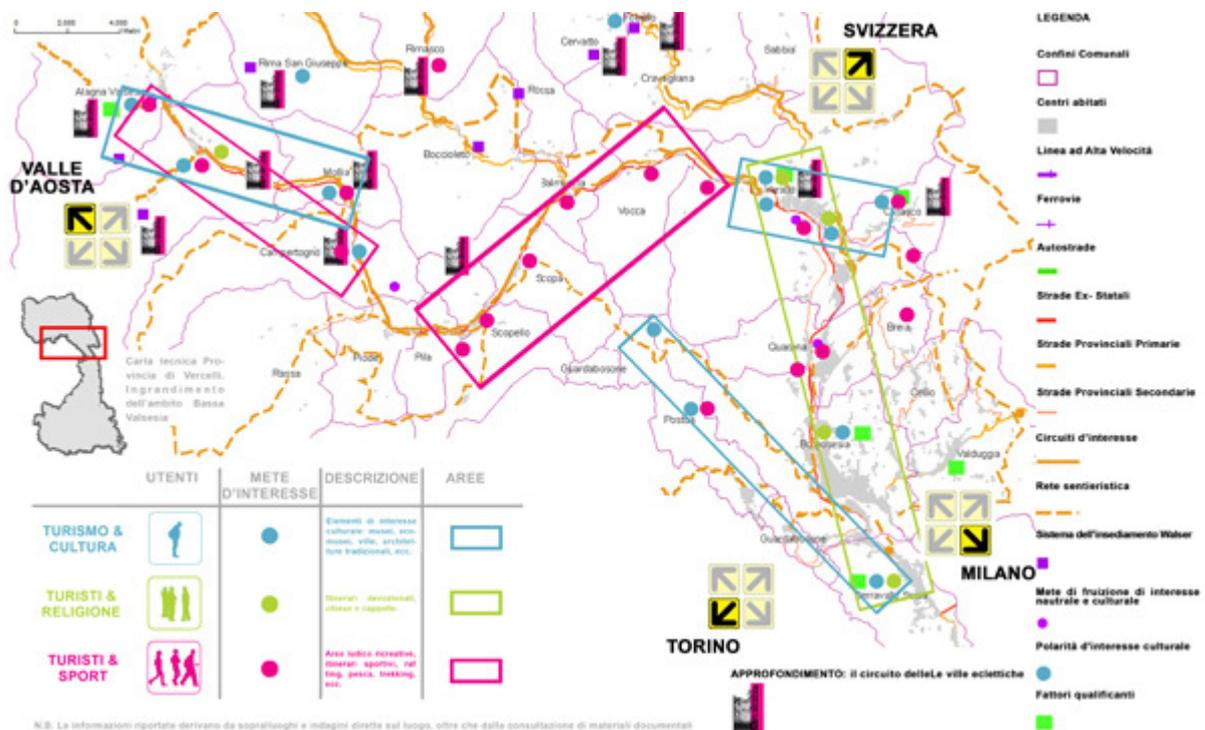


Figure 2 Territorial Analysis of the area of the Sacro Monte of Varallo. The figure underlines the qualifying and typifying characters/elements, the polarities and the different areas of interest, identified accordingly to three typologies of tourism: cultural, religious, and sportive. Furthermore it is possible to appreciate the recovery of the ancient road system and of the rediscovery of the historical trails to reach the different points of interest

Enhancement and promotion of tourism. The study fosters an integration of the different interests and opportunities of the natural and cultural heritage of the territory, with initiatives addressed at the promotion of cultural, religious and sport tourism. A more efficient use of *Information and Communication Technologies* (ICT's) is proposed, through investment in web applications addressed to potential markets - particularly young people and foreign tourists.

proposte di promozione

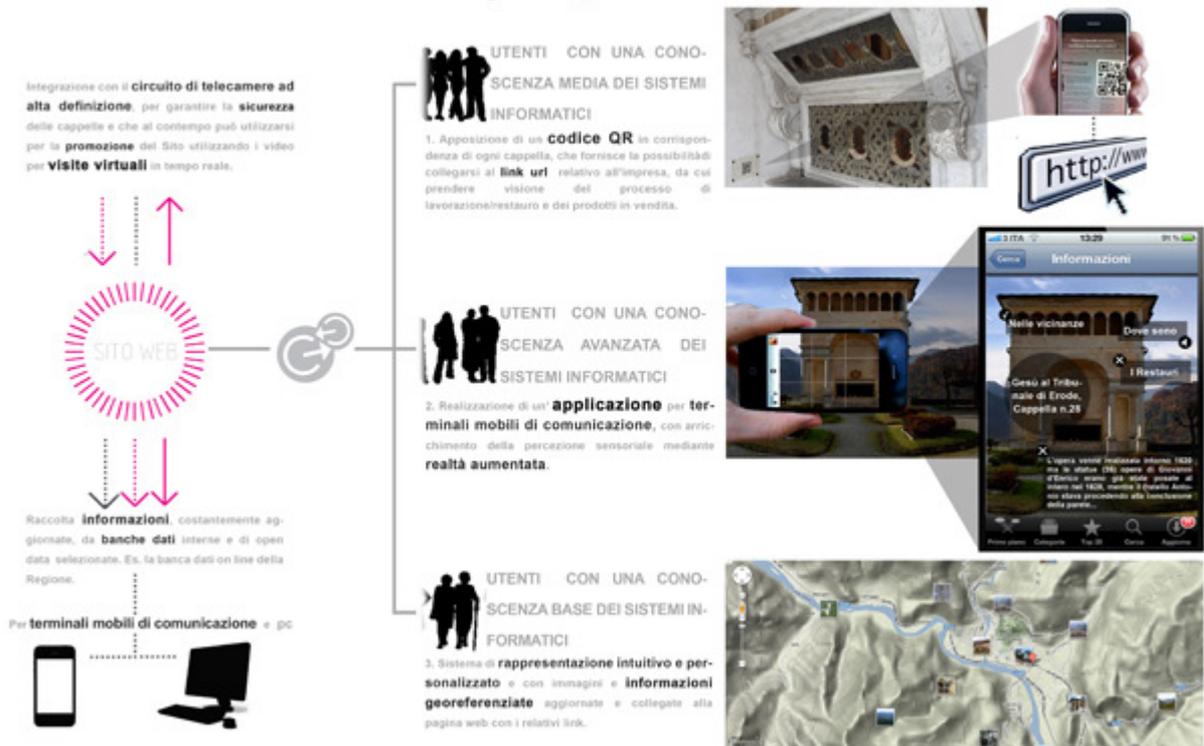


Figure 3 Examples of promotion through the Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the joined promotion of the UNESCO Site and its territory, encouraging the exploration and the visit of the places on a captivating and personalized way through the new technologies

- Improvement of the Site management. The study seeks the involvement and training of selected subjects who could promote preservation, protection, maintenance and development through forms of public-private partnerships and conventions with universities as well as private institutions.

Furthermore, the management of the UNESCO sites has to take account of the budget/cost contraction that strongly affected the cultural sector, so as to develop synergies able to cope with a context of decreasing economic resources, where the development of the best strategies for the economic, cultural and social development of the involved territories is necessary to improve and ensure their competitiveness. Finally the research aims at the development of a management model, within the management plan, able to build and create capacities and resources for the Site's development, by means of *capacity building* initiatives, that is the development on the ground, through adequate information/training processes of human resources, able to preserve the recognized universal values and a sustainable development of the territory.

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