

Fabbrica della Conoscenza

XV INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Le Vie dei  
Mercanti

Carmine Gambardella



**WORLD HERITAGE**  
and **DISASTER**

# **WORLD HERITAGE and DISASTER**

Knowledge, Culture and Representation

La scuola di Pitagora editrice

**Fabbrica della Conoscenza numero 71**  
Collana fondata e diretta da Carmine Gambardella

## **Fabbrica della Conoscenza**

Collana fondata e diretta da Carmine Gambardella

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**WORLD HERITAGE and DISASTER**  
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Le Vie dei Mercanti \_ XV International Forum

Carmine Gambardella  
WORLD HERITAGE and DEGRADATION  
Smart Design, Planning and Technologies  
Le Vie dei Mercanti  
XV Forum Internazionale di Studi

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**WORLD HERITAGE and DISASTER  
Knowledge, Culture and Representation**

**Le Vie dei Mercanti  
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## **Peer review**

Scholars has been invited to submit researches on theoretical and methodological aspects related to Smart Design, Planning and Technologies, and show real applications and experiences carried out on this themes.

Based on blind peer review, abstracts has been accepted, conditionally accepted, or rejected.

Authors of accepted and conditionally accepted papers has been invited to submit full papers. These has been again peer-reviewed and selected for the oral session and publication, or only for the publication in the conference proceedings.

## **Conference report**

300 abstracts and 550 authors from 30 countries: Albania, Australia, Benin, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, California, Chile, China, Cipro, Cuba, Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kosovo, Malta, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey.

200 papers published after double blind review by the International Scientific Committee

## **Preface**

*A theme, that in addition to highlighting the word DISASTER, wants, as in all the editions of the Forum, place the emphasis on the word Culture, the systemic product of knowledge and applications, which has a plastic strength as Nietzsche pointed out, capable of healing broken parts, to recover lost parts, and as such belongs to humanity, the Man Artifex and Faber in its historical self-reproduction.*

*A faith in humanity's ability to achieve ever higher levels of knowledge to offer as patrimonial value, beyond disastrous contingencies, which contains reparative stem cells and also fortifies evolutionary processes involving the Skills and Work of Man, the fate of Landscapes, Territories, Cities, Architecture and Archaeology as Traces of Geography of the past that emerges in the Geography of the Present.*

*For these reasons, in Naples on 15 and Capri, on 16 – 17 June, the 15th "International Forum Le Vie dei Mercanti" will be held. An established event that in three decades has seen the participation of a scientific community from around the world grow, discussing multidisciplinary topics relating to the Landscape, Cultural Heritage, Government of the Territory, Design and Economics.*

*Therefore, I expect, along with the International Scientific Committee, contributions of studies and research relating to theories, concepts, applications, best practices to protect and preserve, in order to not only transmit to future generations the tangible and intangible patrimony of the World Heritage but also to orient the design processes and innovative planning for the modification that derive from the humus of identities and roots of the places, the regenerating sap of the places and of a "new", which, citing Argan, possesses a contemporary of what it does not have the same date.*

*The location is exceptional. Campania, with six sites included in the World Heritage List, two UNESCO Man and Biospheres, two assets on the List of Intangible Heritage, is one of the richest regions in the world for cultural and landscape heritage. It is therefore no coincidence that the Forum will be held in Aversa/Naples and Capri, with visits to the sites and presentations of operational projects by the scientific community of Benecon\*, a University consortium that hosts 250 researchers and distinguished professors of five Italian Universities, UNESCO Chair on Landscape, Cultural Heritage and*

*Carmine Gambardella  
President and Founder of the Forum*



Le Vie dei  
Mercanti

XV FORUM INTERNAZIONALE

# WORLD HERITAGE and DISASTER

Knowledge, Culture and Representation

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## (R)4SMEs

### Resilience essentials for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises SMEs

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#### Abstract

Economic recessions have created challenges for SMEs and contributed to disruptions requiring them to be resilient. The present study started with a mapping of SMEs (in fashion and design sectors) in Tuscany and then extended the research to the national context in order to strengthen the link between industry and academia. Tuscany is a land of excellence, knowledge and ancient craft that are passed on from generation to generation: processing of Casentino wool or Tavarnelle lace...are just some concrete examples of this. Actually there are a lot of products that contributed over the centuries to make Tuscany a symbol of tradition and the, so called, *Made in Italy* has become an intangible but of unquestionable importance value. General aim of this project is to demonstrate that an increasingly strong "net" of skills from different sectors orients innovative design processes even within fashion design and, at the same time, strengthen the local identities and protect cultural diversity, in order to transmit to future generations the tangible and intangible heritage tied to our traditions. The research therefore intends to create contact areas among the traditional knowledge, artisan competence and research activities conducted in universities in order to enhance the tradition of excellence and read them in a contemporary way. Everyone agrees on the point, that globalization cannot be turned back but the "new media of globalization" can be used to preserve our tradition.

**Keywords:** Design; Territorial identity; Local developments; Innovation; Handcraft.

## 1. Context

### 1.1 From *Made in Italy* to *Made in...Tuscany*

The expression *Made in Italy* contains all the Italian manufacturing production made of excellence, know-how and traditions bonded to its territory and worldwide acknowledged. Industrial districts (IDs), a cluster of interconnected companies, mainly SMEs, operating in a small geographical area, are a phenomenon of Italy. Specifically, Italy has found in this organisational model a peculiar trait of its economy and a relevant source of socio-economic development and growth. The industrial districts are characteristic elements of the *Made in Italy* production; they are homogeneous local productive systems characterised by a high concentration of micro/small and medium size companies with a high productive specialisation. This kind of organisation allows to divide the productive cycle into different phases; each phase is entrusted to independent companies which are part of the same geographical and productive net. This allows a high organisational flexibility and, at the same time, economies of scale that can make the finished product highly competitive, even in comparison with the product of bigger companies.

### 1.2 Territorial identity and local products

The definition of "typical product" refers to a plurality of elements that do not only concern the characteristics of the product itself, but also a number of aspects relating to its production and to the territory of origin. A typical product is in fact closely linked to a territory, which should not be

understood only as a physical place, but mostly as a set of conditions that contain numerous tangible and intangible assets, such as history, experiences and processing techniques. The set of these values then represents the identity of the territory, of which these products are manifestation. In Tuscany there are 12 districts identified by the regional decree n. 69/2000. One of the most important districts is Santa Croce sull'Arno situated between the provinces of Pisa and Florence: it can boast companies specialised in the whole leather production chain, from the tanning to the finished product, both in the shoes sector and in the leather industry. Other important districts are: the textile-district in Prato that is one of the biggest Italian industrial site and one of the most important worldwide centers in the field of yarns and woolen fabric. The textile and clothing district in Empoli, the third in Tuscany as for its dimension and the Casentino and Val Tiberina textile and clothing district, situated in the province of Arezzo, which is famous for its Casentino cloth. The goldworking district, based in Arezzo, can boast a production that from the 70s up to now has ranged from modern and old style top jewellery to fine goldworking without stones, up to tableware sets and home decorations. The Capannori paper district, situated between the provinces of Lucca and Pistoia, holds 80% of the paper national production and about 40% of the national corrugated carton production. The Poggibonsi wood and furniture district's strength is the production of kitchens, furniture and accessories and it can boast some successful top design companies. Besides the furniture sector, there are enterprises ranging from caravanning to mechanical, getting to the famous marble mining and working district in Carrara. There are also a number of craft activities such as the processing of straw in Signa (the so called "gold of Signa") that at the end of the twenties inspired the film directed by René Clair: "A straw hat of Florence" or the laces of Tavarnelle that in the period before the second World War, when leather were beginning to be difficult to find, were used by Salvatore Ferragamo to create refined uppers.

### 1.3 The importance of tradition

The concept of *typicality* is strongly associated with that of *tradition*. The tradition, in fact, is the bearer of distinctive characters that show the uniqueness and authenticity of the product. Thus the traditional product takes on a connotation that could be called "mythological", thus allowing the past to merge with the present. Giuseppe Lotti explains "*The territorial dimension has acquired a growing importance especially in the case of contexts that in the collective occupy a significant role. For some production systems, the surplus value that the product must have to be competitive can be guaranteed by membership of the same right to a place*" (Follesa, 2013, p.36). So the memory of a bygone era becomes a fundamental added value in terms of uniqueness and symbolism, since it assumes a symbolic connotation and strongly representative of the place and of that culture. In recent years, these issues have heightened the interest toward the typical products by consumers. In fact it is clear that these products perfectly meet the cultural trends of our time, both in terms of the protection and exploration, or learning practices and ancient knowledge. The contemporary user wants to rich out new experiences and authentic high educational content. Therefore strategies for commercial development of this type of product must, of course, take into account the relationship with artisanal production systems that characterizes them.

The limited production capacity, in a quantitative sense, is not able to fulfill the needs of a global market, but also makes them suitable for meeting the demands of small niche markets, focusing particularly on their needs.

### 1.4 Identity as attractiveness

In an increasingly globalized world, it is evident that the typical characteristics of a territory that represent the uniqueness and the identity can be not only a means of distinction from the masses, but also an important factor of economic growth through the creation of new products.

Italy, more than any other country in the world, is rich in territorial, cultural and productive peculiarities, which together form a huge capital that can reveal crucial for economic development.

All tangible and intangible traits of local culture, due to the identity of the territory and populations that inhabit it, can be marked with the label of "typical" and possess the potential to become an attraction.

The typicality, however, although necessary, is not enough to generate attractiveness: in fact, a resource "typical" to become profitable is to be organized and communicated in such a way as to be attractive. This means you must put in place a process that can make it understandable, visible and easily accessible.

An object, in fact, becomes attraction when it is recognized as such by the users, and the quality that determines the attractiveness goes beyond its "use value."

The objective function of a product loses importance, while it becomes extremely significant to the value which is capable of transmitting. In this way, a product differs from others on the market because of the high load of symbolic values it represents. In the contemporary market the affirmation of a product is thus not only due to its ability to arouse interest, but also and above all, to its symbolic value; therefore the cultural legitimacy is the real key of its success.



**Fig. 1:** Salvatore Ferragamo, 1920s. Upper made in Tavarnelle's lace and in Signa's straw.



**Fig. 2:** Example of research result: application of Tavarnelle's lace inside acetate frames. (Francesca De Nicoli)

### 1.5 Design and territorial identities

In the process of exploitation of local and typical products identity, design, always covers plus a decisive role. In fact, in an increasingly critical economic scenario, where you need to find new tools for communication and enjoyment of the territorial cultural heritage, design is then able to create added value, to make available to users the cultural heritage without distorting or altering the essence and to generate innovative project proposals. In this view, the global economic crisis is a positive factor for the development and the rediscovery of the cultural riches present throughout the Italian territory, providing the opportunity of a radical transformation which could lead to a new equilibrium, causing a major development at both economically and socially. The territorial identity, expressed through culture, the tangible and intangible assets, becomes growth vector through design, which maintains access to knowledge. Design is able to create an innovative and necessary cultural development, without which we would run the risk of dramatically simplifying the content of territorial identity. What is essential, in fact, it is to keep firmly the relationship between project proposals and the complexity of the matter so, the designer's task is to provide a coherent response to the need to tell the identities through the projects.

The culture of the project consistent, aware and responsible is able to make the invisible visible, to bring out perceptions and intangible wealth, creating a connection between the past and future: it is essential to define what is the identity of a place for this to be communicated better, through a careful selection in the survey phase. In-depth knowledge through situated surveys and listening techniques, allows to confront the potential of the area and point out their distinctive features.

### 1.6 The aim of the research

This research aimed to create new opportunities for economic development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs): it intended to preserve traditional craft production methods that represent a huge cultural wealth and they are an integral part of territorial identity.

The research was aimed to employ conventional typical processes of different territories to create exclusive and high-end products. In this way, it was possible to fully understand the importance of territorial identity as a development vector and its decisive role in terms of differentiation also according to the meaning of luxury today.

Practically, the purpose of this work is to propose a referring methodological system to valorize and reactivate traditional products or production of specific territory. The proposed system allows to maintain the value and the know-how of a territory and at the same time reinterpreting tradition by actualizing through the new technological innovations.



Fig. 3: Casentino cloth with the characteristic curls in the classical orange colours.



## 2. Methods

A qualitative multiple case studies analysis of Tuscany products was carried out.

The case study on which the research has developed is the Casentino's cloth. The aim of this project is a study of feasibility that allows to start up the experimentation and the consequent introduction of some innovative methodologies in the managing of a Tuscany typicality.

In particular, the present study is aimed to present the results of a research for the valorisation, accreditation and innovation of Casentino's cloth. Furthermore the results can be theorized as guidelines to be used for other case study and districts.

### 2.1 Research phases

In order to reach the above mentioned objectives, our research has been divided into the following phases:

Phase 1: selection of a typical Tuscan product on which to start a process of research and experimentation

Actions

A1.1-map of the Tuscan industrial districts and of SMEs in order to locate a case study on which to focus research.

A1.2-bibliographical survey of primary and secondary sources (catalogs, web-site, ...) in order to identify the typical products of Tuscany

A1.3-selection of those products that need a valorisation process

Results

We decided to identify a study case as representative product of Tuscany: the cloth of Casentino.

Phase 2: the study case

The first activity of this phase of the research consists in researching the characteristics of the Casentino cloth, its evolution from the past until now and its peculiar manufacturing processes.

Actions

A2.1- attentive study of the physical and social characteristics of Casentino.

A2.2- bibliographical survey of primary and secondary sources (catalogs, web-site) on Casentino's wool and its manufacturing process.

A2.3- detailed study of each processing phase.

A2.4- interviews have been carried out with the sector operators in order to know better the problems connected with the Casentino's wool production

A2.5- workshops and local tours to a sample of selected small/medium Casentino companies have been organised. In this occasions some experts have explained their production processes

Results

The data have been used to prepare a synthesis document which constituted the reference grid containing the informations to start the project phase. This method of reading values, related to traditions, to local habits and to typical ways of life created the conditions for an "integral" evaluation of territory and its peculiarities.

Phase 3: design interventions to valorisation, accreditation and innovation of Casentino's wool.

The third phase consisted in activities aimed to study the different types of Casentino cloth in order to enhance its use. The results identified new areas of application, proposing and designing innovative products.

Actions

A3.1- study of current manufacturing processes to catalog the different types of cloth.

A3.2- study of the performance characteristics of the cloth and their improving through the special and experimental treatments (in collaboration with NTT-Next Technology Tenotessile, Prato)

A3.3-identification of new areas of application

Results

Decisive to this process was the stimulus and support offered by local associations and companies (Lanificio di Soci, Casentino Lane, Tessilnova, Premiata tessitura T.A.C.S. e Casentino Textile).

The main results of this phase are:

- coding of three different types of cloth: Historic-Classic-Evolved and design of related the symbols
- defining of process guidelines to encode the instructions of technical and performance characteristic able to reaffirm and update its identity.
- development of products for fashion system design
- development of products for interior design

#### Phase 4: dissemination of results

##### Actions

A4.1-relationship with newspapers and magazines (also specialized) for the dissemination of the developed actions;

A4.2-organization of events designed to raise awareness of the potential of the cloth and the new fields of application

A4.3-publication of a book

##### Results

The results of the research has been widely disseminated through traditional communication channels (press, television) but also through the network

### **3. Result of the research and conclusion**

The Italian product is very rich in intangible values and cultural meanings that have their roots in their own territory, in the social context and in the strengthened techniques. It stands out of the international landscape thanks to the quality of its forms, its care of details, but also the shapes and materials taken from its territory. The Italian product, characterised by a product-territory symbiosis, expresses its own human, social and historical values through a blend of intellectual and tangible knowing that eventually becomes know-how.

The present study (whose main objective has been to support the small-medium companies in their search for new synergies with universities to develop innovative products as symbols of a cultural identity) has enabled to pilot projects that will test the feasibility of this organisational model and the possibility of using it also in other contexts.

These projects have given birth to co-branding partnerships and to partnerships between big well structured companies and small-medium companies. The ethicality of this project is based on the realisation of products with a high added value, given by their uniqueness and by all those intangible aspects that connect it with a territory and its unique traditions.

The final goal of the research is the competitive growth of a renowned traditional Tuscan product. Casentino was the selected territorial model with the precise aim of serving as a guide, as a tool for orienting the formulation of strategies of action that may influence the quality of the territory.

In fact, the project was developed with the ultimate goal of adding further value to the renowned and traditional "Casentino cloth", and to give renewed impetus to the companies that produce it: therefore it was necessary to be active on the factors that could contribute to strengthening their competitiveness and innovation on a globalised market by offering complex formal, technological and typological performance. The project aimed to give new contents and new perspectives to the Casentino cloth by defining a specification that encodes the instructions of technical and performance character able to reaffirm and update its identity.

The work was so focused on two different points of the research: defining the technical performance parameters of the cloth and definition of possible application scenarios of it in sectors with high added value and different from textiles.

In particular, the research might be pointed out that the study of various types of cloth (moreover all necessarily equipped with the famous, unmistakable curl casentino) in production today or further producible, led the companies in the industry to establish three types of cloth susceptible to boast with the name of "casentino" cloth and that all companies were able to produce and market:

*-Historical;*

*-Classic;*

*-Evolved.*

The Historical Casentino is evidently the philological version of the traditional one; the Classic one admits the technological and aesthetic devices that have been recently introduced to the workings of the fabric; the Evolved is a cloth that substantially preserves the appearance and origin but also admits sophisticated treatments to get new opportunities.

Obviously, the specification of which is said contextualizes and resets parameters to which the consortium producers will adhere to ensure the final consumer on product requirements.

Thereafter, in order to verify the possibility of combining flame retardant properties and stain-resistant, they have been defined innovative finishing products to be implemented in the textile industry in relation to the substrate employed in the textile furnishings industry.

Also within the project, particular emphasis was also looking for new markets in not traditional fields; for instance, it seemed significant the furniture area.

#### **3.1 New synergies**

In Tuscany, more than in the rest of Italy, the textile sector and the clothing sector are considered "excellences". Tuscany is a region characterised by some of the general Italian economy factors and

also by other factors that on their regional territory become more important; it is a region aimed to the international trade, thanks to the fashion sector.

Thanks to this manufacturing base and these territorial characteristic, Tuscany is ideal for creating synergies able to rework the traditional know-how to new developments and applications made possible through the creation of more and stronger contacts with academic research community. The research by promoting the creation of an industrial/academic network has contributed to realizing a play of strategic development able to give value to the Tuscan product.

Today, more than it used to be in the past, it is important to have a wider view of the added value, given by the productions that involve different entrepreneurs in the same territory; an effective network that is able to grant a systematic, multi-dimensional and multidisciplinary innovation, as it creates synergies between different realities (industrial-craftmanship, innovation-tradition, etc.).

We can assume that the small/medium companies need to comply with the market deep change: that is to stand out of the crowd and become an excellence, defend the quality of their own products by using technologies and being innovative, but mainly including in their business relations similar or complementary companies and create with them business networks or partnerships.

Finally the research results are able to promote the formulation of guidelines tailored to the different regional experiences.

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