

GLOSSARY OF LANDSCAPE TERMINOLOGY

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Introduction

*Geschützt werden kann nur das,
dessen Entstehung man kennt*
– Küster, 1995 –

With the drastic transformation and disappearance of traditional rural landscapes in Europe (MEEUS et al. 1990, ZIMMERMANN, 2006), one of the cultural aspects of these landscapes at risk of disappearance, or at least of oblivion, is their terminology. This is particularly true of local and dialectical terminology, which is most vulnerable to oblivion as both traditional farming and rural populations and their dialects decline or disappear; as much of this terminology has never been recorded in academic and other publications, there is thus an urgent need to record vernacular terminology through oral history before folk memories fade. With the decline, or perhaps recent neglect, of historical landscape studies, there is also a need to assemble in one multi-lingual glossary that part of the landscape terminology that has appeared in the literature, so as to facilitate communication and easy cross-reference at the many fora, conferences, and working sessions involved with landscape conservation today, especially under the aegis of the European Landscape Convention. The following is a part of a large glossary, this particular section is only listing terms related to the endangered agricultural landscape type “Coltura Promiscua” and offered as an example of the form that such a multi-lingual glossary might take, in the hope that it might stimulate improvements or counter-proposals. The terminology catalogued in this draft is arranged by major regional landscape types of Europe; it is possible that future versions of a glossary may find it more convenient to group terminology according to functions, such as irrigation, drainage, configuration of fields, land tenure etc., with sub-divisions arranged by language. Terms are identified as “vernacular” or as predominantly “academic” in usage; it is clear that some of the latter originated as the former. The immediate (i.e., not necessarily the original) sources of the terms listed are included wherever possible. Some overlap between regional landscape types seems inevitable.

The following list is an example for the variety of glossaries that have to be done in order to save the knowledge on existing, vanishing, endangered agricultural landscape types. In order to open the debate on it and to encourage people to do the same: to do research, to collect terms and descriptions in order to get a sound basis on agricultural landscapes - especially of regional types.

**Coltura promiscua and Alberata padana
(Italian mixed cropping and Po Valley tree-planted openfield)**

Note: these two major Italian regional landscapes have essentially disappeared in the last 60 years; only relics of them are visible today. They were among the traditional European landscapes with the richest historical, literary, artistic and other cultural associations; a record of the vernacular, especially dialectical, terminology of these two landscape types should be compiled as a matter of priority before folk memories are lost.

- Abbragliare (I) (Vern.) to plant trees and grapevines in arable land already marked by drainage ditches and cart trails; in other words, to turn Po Valley reclaimed land into an Alberata (FINOTTO, 2007).
- Altenu (I) (Vern.) Piedmontese term (first cited in 13th century) to designate a local form of Coltura promiscua with vines tutored by live trees and mixed with cultivated crops; Gricia was an alternative with grapes growing on dead tutors (FINOTTO, 2007).
- Arbustum gallicum (Latin) The term used by the Romans (and by some of the recent landscape literature; cf. SERENI, 1961) to denote the practice of using live trees to tutor grapevines; attributed by the Romans to the Gauls, but may be of older, Etruscan origin. Grapevines growing on live trees, especially field maples, were one of the hallmarks of both the Coltura promiscua and the Alberata padana.
- (A) Cavalcapoggio (I) (Acad.) any type of cultivation or lay-out of crop patterns that straddle both sides of a hill (SERENI, 1961); a Poggio is Tuscan for hill (Collina in standard Italian).
- Cavalletti (I) (Vern./Acad.) the 4-m wide strips that separated, east and west, the crop fields of the Alberata padana; they supported the rows of trees (Filari) that tutored the typical, festooned grapevines of this landscape (RINALDI, 1995).
- Cavedagne (I) (Vern.) passages or paths 3-4 m wide that separated, north and south, the typical north-south orientated, crowned crop fields of many parts of the Alberata padana; also known as Carraie (“cart tracks”) or Cappezzagne (RINALDI, 1995).
- Ciglione(i) (I) (Vern./Acad.) hillside terrace built of dug and banked earth; typical of the Coltura promiscua in the sandy-clayey Pliocene hills of Tuscany (SERENI, 1961; STOPANI, 1989).
- Colmata di monte (I) (Vern./Acad.) the practice of reducing the relief of hilly terrain and expanding level land by inducing erosion and sedimentation in the Coltura promiscua region of Tuscany (SERENI, 1961).

- Doppio spiovente (I) (Acad.) used to describe rectangular crowned fields of the Alberata padana that were sloped (and thus drained) not only towards their long sides but also towards their (usually east-west orientated) short sides (RINALDI, 1995); literally “two-sided drainage”.
- Filare (i) (I) (Vern./Acad.) row of trees, in the Alberata padana particularly of field maples, elms and other species used to tutor vines or produce fodder, poles, etc., and of mulberries planted in connection with the silk industry; sometimes km long.
- Gabba(e) (I) (Vern.) pollarded trees in traditional Alberata padana, sources of fodder, firewood, poles, willow twigs for vine tying and other products needed by peasant farming (FINOTTO, 2007).
- (A) Girapoggio (I) (Acad.) any cultivation or crop pattern that “surrounds” the hill, i.e. follows the contours (SERENI, 1961).
- Gradone(i) (I) (Vern./Acad.) terrace with dry-stone retaining walls, typical of the Coltura promiscua in the sandstone-limestone hills of Tuscany (SERENI, 1961; STOPANI, 1989); also known as Scalone
- Larga (I) (Vern.) vast expanse of fields, recently reclaimed, not yet planted to trees, marked by a wide-mesh drainage system, and not (yet) subdivided into estates (Poderi) in the Alberata padana of the Emilia; known as Bassa in the Ferrara area; precursors of modern industrial farming (SERENI, 1961)
- Loppo (i) (I) (Vern.) the field maple (*Acer campestre*) in Tuscan dialect; an important tree species in the Coltura promiscua as it provided support for grapevines and as it supplied supplemental fodder (without encroaching on cash cropping) to the typical sharecropper (see Podere system) (SERENI, 1961; STOPANI, 1989).
- Lunetta (I) (Vern.) crescent-shaped terrace, designed to retain and accumulate soil and moisture for one or more olive trees; the term Lunette is used in English for similar structure used in soil and water conservation, especially in arid-zone forestry and range management
- Maruga (I) (Vern.) recent (19th century?) dialect name for the black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), a species much appreciated by traditional peasantry for its rapid production of firewood and for its flowers (honey production) (RINALDI, 1995). This North American species was widely introduced to Europe during the main era of railway construction in order to consolidate rail embankments.

- Opo (opi) (I) (Vern.) the field maple (*Acer campestre*) in the dialect of the Emilia region (also Lombardy and elsewhere?); an important fodder and vine-tutoring species in traditional agriculture; the equivalent of the Tuscan Loppo (RINALDI, 1995); standard Italian for this species is *acero campestre*.
- (A) Pigola (I) (Vern./Acad.) Denotes fields with irregular shapes and acute angles (wedge-like), instead of property lines following straight lines and meeting at right angles; usually the result of individualistic initiatives and the lack of an overall cadastral or land-use plan (SERENI, 1961).
- Podere (I) (Vern./Acad.) Rural estate usually owned by urban absentee landlords, and farmed by sharecroppers in the traditional *Coltura promiscua*; the system persisted from the Middle Ages to the 1960s.
- Porca(che) (I) (Vern.) crowned field, usually flanked by drainage ditches in the Alberata padana; also known as Pracione, Presone, Prace, Prese, Quaderno, Vaneggia, etc., depending on the region (SERENI, 1961)
- (A) Prode (I) (Vern.) Rows of trees planted only along either side of a drainage ditch (STOPANI, 1989).
- (A) Rittochino (I) (Vern./Acad.) any cultivation or crop pattern straight up and down (perpendicular to) the main slope of a hill (SERENI, 1961); the opposite of contour ploughing and sowing.
- Rora, Ruer (I) (Vern.) the English or pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*; *Q. pedunculata*) in various Po Valley dialects; an important firewood and utility wood species in traditional agriculture; standard Italian for this oak is *farnia*.
- Scoline (I) (Vern.) the drainage ditches that flanked both the crop fields and the Cavalletti (RINALDI, 1995), as much of the Alberata padana occurred on reclaimed alluvial plain; in particularly clayey soils, each Cavalletto was flanked on either side by a Scolina, on better-drained soils only was side had such a drainage ditch (the latter called A rivale arrangement).
- Striscione(i) (I) (Vern./Acad.) The strips of land between rows of olive trees and/or grapevines, formerly devoted to annual crops, notably winter wheat, in *Coltura promiscua*; usually about 5 m wide
- Tirella(e) (I) (Vern.) grapevine festooned from live tree to live tree in traditional Alberata padana (FINOTTO, 2007).

- Vite(i) loppata(e) (I) (Vern./Acad.) Grapevine tutored by field maple; it allowed the sharecropper to produce some fodder for his few animals without encroaching on the three traditional crops of the *Coltura promiscua*, wine, wheat and olives (STOPANI, 1989).
- Zanella(e) di piede (I) (Vern.) the drainage ditch running along the bottom of a dry-stone retaining wall of terraced *Coltura promiscua* (CASELLI, 1998).

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