In recent years there are increasingly attention and demand for rural landscapes. In 2012 the Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies established a tool which aims to recognize and preserve the heritage in Italian landscapes: the National Register of Historical Rural Landscapes. The Register aims to collect Italian historical rural landscapes as models opposed to industrialized and homologated landscapes, accepting spontaneous candidacies also from local actors and authorities, thus representing a good tool for preservation of history and heritage in rural landscapes, in a sustainable and participative way.

One of the most well-preserved centuriated landscapes is the Roman centuriation between the Provinces of Padua and Venice (Italy). Despite its undoubtedly historical value, it today represents a very compromised landscape, disfigured by urban and industrial sprawl and by a general state of carelessness and disaffection, both by policy-makers and citizens. For this reason it risks to be omitted from the Register for a double reason: firstly, a lack of attention and, secondly, a potential exclusion due to the criteria adopted, based on 'significance', 'integrity' and 'vulnerability'.

This paper starts from this framework for reasoning over the value of history in all rural landscapes, also in the degraded ones. The intention is to propose a double value of history in cultural landscapes: a ‘documental’ value and a ‘multifunctional’ one. Considering the Paduan centuriation, we intend to reflect over the documental value of history, testified by the well-preserved orthogonal grids, but also the multifunctional value of other elements (canals, riparian hedges etc.) which also characterize the centuriated landscape, but which are rapidly disappearing. These elements could connect past and present in terms of conservation of biodiversity, aesthetics, possibilities for leisure and rural tourism, identification, sense of place and more, towards a historical landscape of more sustainable value than the present one.

Keywords: Paduan Centuriation, Historical Rural Landscapes

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