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LANDSCAPES OF THE CAPITALISTIC FARMING SYSTEM



New Mill of Settimo (Turin): Headquarters of the Freidano Ecomuseum

Freidano Ecomuseum is named after the ancient watercourse that gave the impulse and the power to the first industrial activities in **the area between the cities of Turin and Chivasso along the left bank of the Po river.**

The project of the Ecomuseum is a project of environmental and cultural requalification created in 1985 by the City of Settimo Torinese (and established by the Piedmont Region in 1999) and has its starting point in the industrial complex on the **Mulino Nuovo** (New Mill). After being renovated for public use between 1996 and 2002, the Ecomuseum is the location of the **Ethnographic Museum** dedicated to the ancient professions of the area, the **Energy Park** with interactive hydraulic installations and the sightseeing centre of the **Park of the Po River and the Hills of Turin.**

In this fine location the Ecomuseum develops research projects on the landscape and the industrial heritage, workshops and events for students and families, tour activities for the local community and for an ample public of Piedmont.

The New Mill is the starting point of a lot of thematic itineraries which bring to almost sixty different places of the city and which include the surrounding landscape and the architectural and industrial heritage from the XIX century.

The valley between Turin and Chivasso is densely populated and closely connected with the Po river and the hills of Turin: this is the environmental frame which surrounds Freidano Ecomuseum; a territory rich of wonderfully particular landscapes worth visiting. Among these there are the many canals, which, in the Middle Ages accompanied and characterised the urbanisation and proto-industrialization of the territory. **Rio Frediano** runs through these lands and the water was used in past centuries for the development of many activities of production, such as traditional watermills, industrial watermills, manual laundries, factories and button factories. The importance of which today is made even clearer in a guided itinerary of the museum. Some sites, like the already mentioned Mulino Nuovo and Mulino Re di Brandizzo, are of outstanding size and quality. They are also part of the project **Paesaggi del capitalismo agrario** (*Landscapes of agricultural capitalism*).

Ecomuseum Frediano has been developing this research for many years with the intention of moving beyond Settimo and its territory. The project illustrates the combination of the natural characteristics of the territory and the infrastructural and technological intervention (mills, railways, works of water engineering, etc.), which, starting in the Renaissance, contributed to create the modern area between Turin, Settimo Torinese, Chivasso, Vercelli e Casale Monferrato along the river Po.

Starting with the analysis of some of the main industrial mills in Piedmont, the work of the ecomuseum mainly concentrates on the theme of **Mulini e riserie del capitalismo agrario** (*Mills and rice factories of the agriculture capitalism*). This materialised thanks to a **travelling exhibition and some online local guided itineraries in partnership with different cultural realities and ecomuseums.** The objective is the in-depth analysis of the complex work first started by Camillo Benso Count of Cavour and his staff, who, in 1850 allowed a modernisation of the local economies, shaping the landscape and industrialising the territory. The project was not only oriented to modernise the machineries, whose standards applied to the European models, but to invest in infrastructures (railways first), in order to help the territory to develop according to an economic- productive system.

The mill of the capitalistic farming system and object of our study, is the symbol of the passage from water power to heat energy and, subsequently to electricity. A prototype of these mills is Mulino della Barca of Rivoli (Turin), followed by Mulino Nuovo of Settimo (Turin), Mulino del Mussotto di Alba (Cuneo) and Mulino Re di Brandizzo (Turin).



Mulino Re - Brandizzo (Turin)



Lucedio Abbey (Vercelli - Piedmont)

Photographs of Vito Antonio Lupo



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