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GASTRONOMY AS A CULTURAL HERITAGE.
VALORISATION OF A *TERROIR*:
L'OGLIASTRA

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Introduction

The organization of a cultural project linked to gastronomy, which concerns a small region, in this case Ogliastra (Sardinia - Italy), can be applied to a wider territory through the promotion and valorization of products for the creation of an economy that respects the environment and local know-how (sustainable development).

Ogliastra has all the characteristics of a region that extending from the sea to the mountain.





Introduction

In fact, two realities of production coexist: the mountainous zone has its economy characterized by the agro-pastoral sector, with a good presence of typical handicrafts and agro-food products (among which some biological productions). The coastal area was rich (after World War II until the 1960s-1970s) with agricultural production (e.i. cereals, vegetables and fruit, tobacco, hemp), and part of these lands was left to tourism development and, part of it, was abandoned. Recently, young farmers have begun to cultivate them and their products are sold through short food chains (direct marketing) to hotels and other types of accommodation, and in a few markets and shops.

There are archaeological sites of great interest that remind us of an ancient agricultural tradition.



Introduction

The most important Sardinian civilization was the nuragic¹ one: numerous funerary objects have been found in caves scattered throughout the region.

But the first human settlements in this area date back to the 3rd millennium BC and are found, in particular, alongside springs and streams.

It should be noted that the economy which characterized and characterizes mainly Sardinia and, in this case, Ogliastra, is the agro-pastoral one and the production is mainly on small-scale.

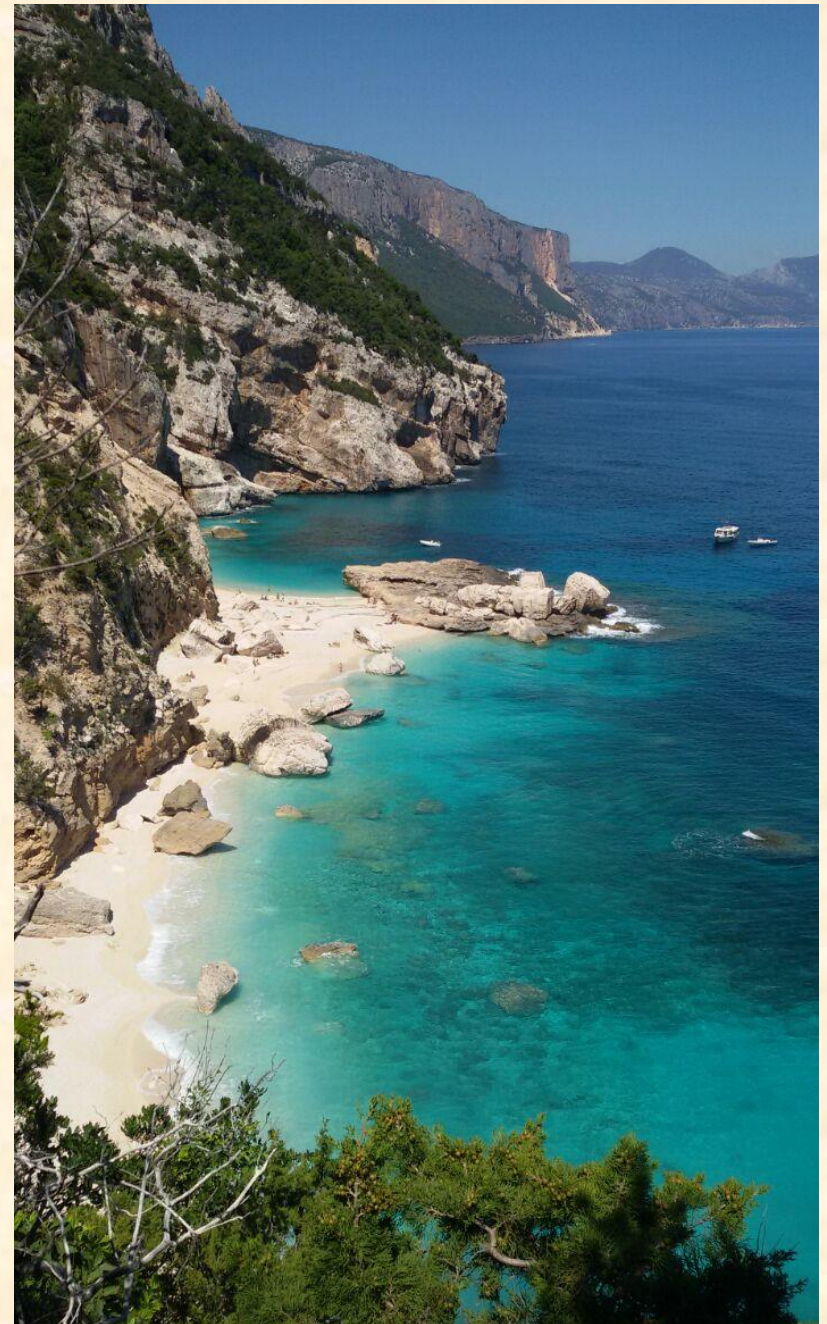
All these local traditions and know-how are based on the development of a continuing education that is genuinely transmitted by families to young people. The transmission of these traditions renders a service to the community.

1 - The nuragic civilization appeared in Sardinia during the first Bronze Age, towards the eighteenth century BC and this name derives from its most characteristic monument: the *nuraghe*. It is a unique culture in the world. They worked very well metals, especially bronze. There are several objects that have been found in archaeological sites, most of them kept in the museums of Sardinia: the most famous are the small bronzes, which represented different people of the tribes or families. There are plenty of animals or small boats.

Introduction

All these local traditions and know-how are based on the development of a continuing education that is genuinely transmitted by families to young people. The transmission of these traditions renders a service to the community.

Its products give a very simple cooking without sophistication. Its environment is remarkable (great diversity of the landscape, of the flora and the fauna). The *terroir* is still preserved and agriculture allows the conservation of a rich biodiversity constituting a future potential for sustainable development.



Introduction

This region has been recognized globally as one of the five "Blue Zones"².

These areas were identified by the American researcher Dan Buettner of the journal National Geographic, the Belgian demographer Michel Poulain of the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium) and the doctor-nutritionist Gianni Pes of the University of Sassari (Italy).

In this Blue Zone they produce cereals (especially durum wheat), vegetables (artichokes, beans, chickpeas, potatoes ...), fruits (citrus fruits, apples, pears, peaches, almonds, ...), olive oil, wine, cheese (especially sheep and goat's milk) and there is a rich variety of wild herbs (250 of which are edible).

Blue Zone "is a term used to identify a demographic area and / or region of the world where people live longer than the average.

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Culture - terroir

We have to teach people that they have a *terroir* rich in healthy products, simple but tasty cuisine, with important nutritional values that could be valorized and become an asset for local development by giving work to young people.

These cultures belong to the economic and social reality of today's small producers, their survival in an increasingly globalized world, with a place in short chain food productions, as well as local and regional.

We must commit ourselves to their future and their preservation (protection, defense of their culture and their *terroir*) and to pursue their sustainable development taking into consideration the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy.

Gastronomic heritage

In 2014 the European Parliament³ adopted a resolution on the gastronomic heritage which is based on cultural and educational aspects among which it:

- “Points out that education in nutrition and gastronomy, including respect for nature and the environment, should include the participation of families, teachers, the educational community, information channels and all education professionals”;



3 - European Parliament resolution of 12 March 2014 on the European gastronomic heritage: cultural and educational aspects ([2013/2181\(INI\)](#)).

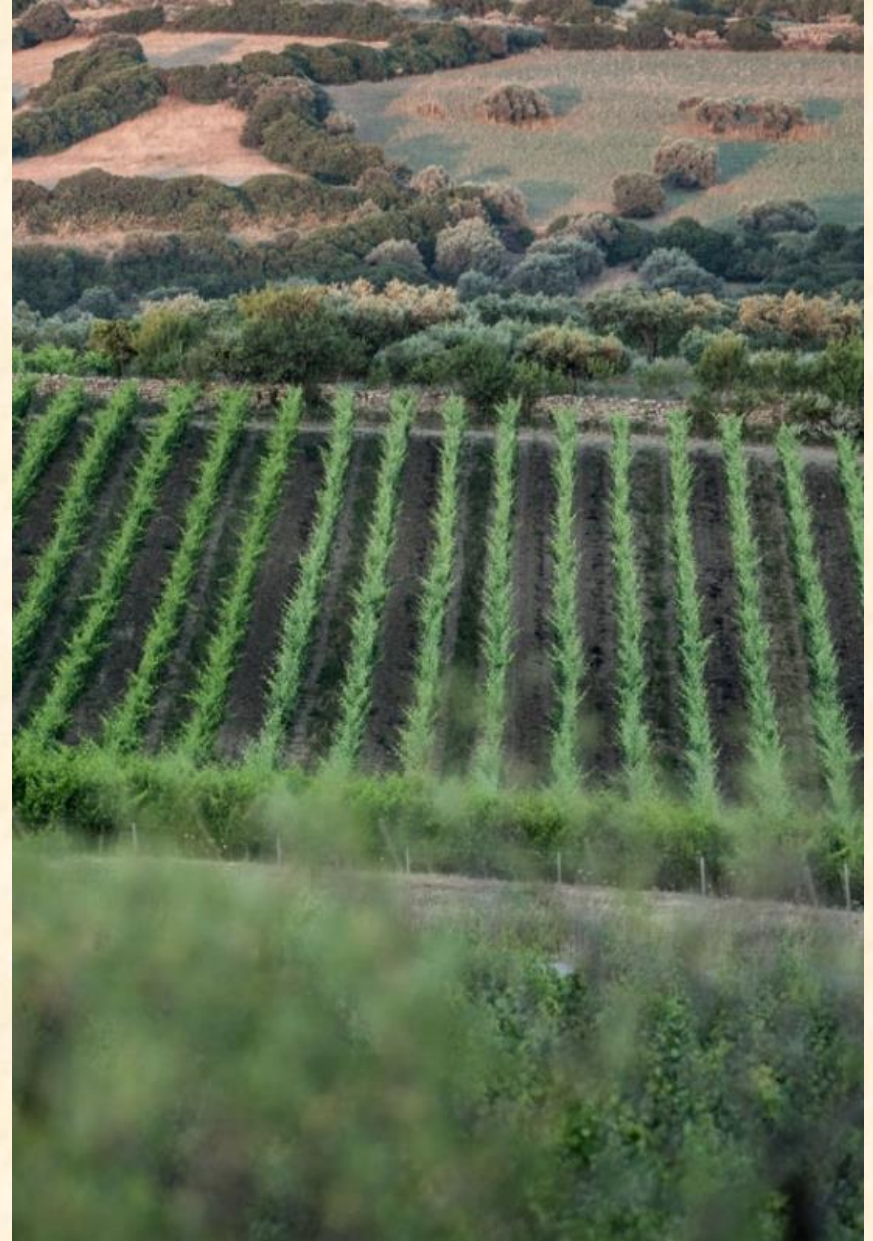
Gastronomic heritage

- “Calls on the Member States to exchange knowledge and best practices concerning gastronomy-related activities in education and to promote gastronomic awareness in the various regions; calls also for an exchange of best practices or for thought to be given to shortening the food chain by focusing on local seasonal produce”;



Gastronomy

- “Points out that gastronomy is an instrument which can be used to develop growth and jobs in a wide range of economic sectors, such as the restaurant, tourism, agri-food and research industries; notes that gastronomy can also develop a keen sense for the protection of nature and the environment, which ensures that food has a more authentic taste and is less processed with additives or preservatives”.



Terroir – small farmers

Small farmers, with their know-how and knowledge of the *terroir*, can contribute to improving the agricultural productions, the flavors, the culture and the spirit of the place, the respect and the defense of the environment. They contribute to the development of gastronomy and the pleasures of the "*science de la gueule*"⁴ (Michel DE MONTAIGNE, 1588).



4 - Translation "Science of the mouth".

Michel Eyquem de Montaigne – *Essais*, Didot, Paris, 1838.

Agri-food sector



The agri-food sector, in recent years, is at the center of the interest of the development of certain regions, and I will start from the cultural heritage of Ogliastra to enhance this *terroir*. To realize this project it is necessary to identify and manage its actors, its potential protagonists.

Indeed, the connection between this sector and the cultural and environmental resources and that of tourism through the development of strategic policies that start from a synergy between the typical activities of the place, could give this *terroir* a good possibility of development.

Experience

In April 2012 I organized a conference entitled "La bellezza del nostro territorio e la qualità dei suoi prodotti: a benessere da condividere"⁵; Before this event I set up a meeting in Lanusei⁶ where a family and other people prepared traditional local dishes. Many of them did not realize the importance of their know-how and culture in preparing food.



5 - Translation: The beauty of our *terroir* and the quality of its products: a well-being to be shared.

6 - Small historical town (municipality) in province of Nuoro of approximately 5,500 inhabitants. It was several times the chief town of Ogliastra.

Experience

They did not know that gastronomy has a close connection with the *terroir* and the knowledge shared and transmitted from generation to generation. In addition they were surprised by the economic potential that such knowledge could give their city.

Reinforcing the feeling of belonging to their land could push their will to become good promoters of their region.

Pani carasau



Methodology

The project will take place in several phases. To start the project we need to know:

- - Local actors (producers, processors, shopkeepers guest rooms and bed & breakfasts, agro tourism, hotels and distributors of products);
- - Economic subsistence, local products (olive oil, almonds, wine, durum wheat, vegetables, potatoes, peaches, apples, pears, ...); And their layout to make improvements.

For the success of this project, it is important to create synergies among the interested people of the region and to act in concert to establish a complete chain from the seeds, passing for the transformation (when required), until marketing.

Methodology

After several visits, I noticed that either in the guest rooms, in the bed & breakfasts and in the hotel structures, or in the commercial structures, there are products that do not belong to the tradition of Ogliastra, but come directly from other regions of Italy and from abroad. Moreover we find processed products that are a mixture of different ingredients, but their recipes do not match the local culture. So people who do not know the local products and if do not find them on their table do not eat them. As a result, local producers are not encouraged to continue their work.



Methodology

I am already in contact with local producers who mainly practice organic farming. I am going to set up a working group with the actors of this *terroir* who are more involved in the agri-food sector (production, processing, sales). In my forthcoming visits, I will organize workshops (with this group of local stakeholders and with the help of public institutions). I also will plan an event involving families who know local gastronomy and have the know-how to prepare traditional dishes with the purpose of showing and giving them to the inhabitants and tourists to taste and eat them. All this to make known especially to local people their gastronomy which is their cultural heritage that they will lose if they do not take it into consideration and do not seek to preserve it from industrial production⁷.

7 - The 80% of the food products that are served on the tables in Sardinia is imported from Italy or from abroad. And this happens also in Ogliastra even if there are still family productions that cover a part of the revenues.

Cultural enhancement

(A. CAPATTI and M. MONTANARI, 2002):

The characteristics of a product come first and foremost from its connection to the *terroir* of origin because it benefits from the "knowledge" consolidated for years, as well as the "know-how" of production techniques, historical and cultural traditions: this product is unique! Perhaps a work of art.

For example, in Ogliastra it is still the families that are the repositories of the food traditions and their identity and culture.



Cultural enhancement

Smaller agricultural structures, which cannot compete with each other, have to rely on the quality of their products with local characteristics (techniques of product placement and techniques of production used), traditional and cultural factors as a point of differentiation and position within the niches of market which reward their typicality and originality (VIIIth Report Nomisma, 2002)⁸.

Typical products are a broad and complex category that have elements of differentiation: the raw material supply basin, the know-how processing, the climate that favors drying and conservation conditions.

These specificities must be perceived by the consumer as an added value.

8 - Nomisma is an independent company that conducts research and economic advice for companies, associations and governments at national and international level. Its headquarters are in Bologna (Italy).

The methodology that I will follow:

- A. Certify the origin of these products, especially when exported. After an analysis, in order to identify which products better represent the *terroir*, we (I and the working group) have to work on a local quality brand. Then on a global one and see the possibility of giving the European label of origin (PDO, PGI - Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012)⁹ to a product;



9 - Regulation (EU) No. 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21.11.2012 on quality systems for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

The methodology that I will follow:

- B.** Labeling of food products. The labels must clearly have the name of the operators, so that, the origin and quality can be guaranteed even to tourists and visitors to the region (Regulation (EU) 1169/2011)¹⁰;
- C.** Making quality controls;
- D.** Product valuation and marketing.

We have to choose a system that must be harmonious and sustainable, respecting the environment, the local rhythms and the know-how of people.

Regulation (EU) n. 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25.10.2011 on the provision of information to consumers on foodstuffs. It introduces obligations such as the nutrition declaration. It applies to all professionals in the food sector and to all foodstuffs.

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The methodology that I will follow:

There is the need to label products locally. For visitors, it will be the opportunity to know more about the *terroir*, its history and its culture. We can even try to valorize and protect certain products by proposing them as "sentinels" of the international association Slow Food¹¹.

To achieve this goal I will also organize workshops and / or conferences.

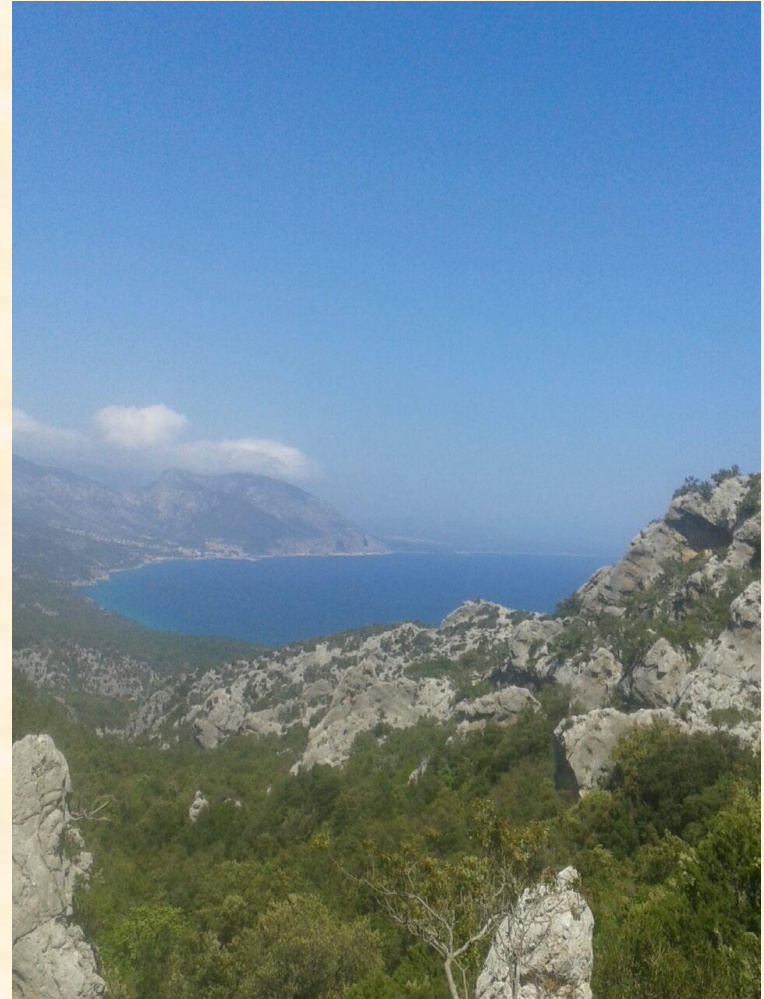


11 - Slow Food is an international organization founded in 1989 to counteract the phenomenon of fast food in response to the disappearance of local food traditions (various websites including www.slowfood.com).

The methodology that I will follow:

In recent years, the small-scale agricultural producers have been able - for example, even though European legislation - to diversify their incomes by highlighting the quality of their food production, the quality of the environment and the quality of life.

Local products have opened up a real potential for development for their *terroir* and they have found confirmation through the link between gastronomy and tourism. Indeed, gastronomy is one of the reasons that pushes people to travel.



The methodology that I will follow:

Typical products, especially local ones, as well as other cultural elements (monuments, art exhibitions, etc.) solicit curiosity and attention and they constitute an important call to visit a country.

A new figure of traveler is emerging: a person who is ready to make trips in rather difficult places to find a good table.

In this way, he expresses his interest not only for the food products in question, but also for their production context, landscape, natural environment, history, culture and traditions.

Through gastronomy we discover places where, in the past, nobody would have gone because they were devoid of famous attractions.



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Bruxelles, July 28th 2017