

*Caminante, son tus huellas
el camino, y nada más;
caminante, no hay camino:
se hace camino al andar.
Al andar se hace camino,
y al volver la vista atrás
se ve la senda que nunca
se ha de volver a pisar.
Caminante, no hay camino,
sino estelas en la mar.
(Antonio Machado)*

*Walker, are your footprints
the road, and nothing else;
walker, there is no path:
the path is made by walking.
When walking, the path is made,
and looking back
you see the path that never
must be stepped on again.
Walker, there is no path,
but wakes in the sea.*

(Antonio Machado)

BACKGROUND

The *CAMMINANDO INSIEME* group was born from one of the first workshops of the project “CAMBIO VITA!”, promoted by LABORATORIO DI ECOLOGIA SOCIALE of ACAT Bassa Val di Cecina in collaboration with many local associations, Municipal Administrations and the Health Society, starting from 2011 and currently suspended due to Covid-19.

The project wants to improve the awareness of people about some lifestyle’s risks and to provide some tools to build a more sustainable society through shared paths.

Our 30-year experience with *Club Alcologici Territoriali* (now called *Club di Ecologia Sociale*) of Bassa Val di Cecina, is important for the whole community, not only for alcohol-related problems, but for any kind of unhealthy habits, often promoted by the social culture, and causing sufferings to the people and the planet.

We all share the same sufferings, and it doesn’t matter if some people are considered healthy or not, good or wrong.

We all live a life of risks, and for someone those risks could turn into problems.

Facing our limits and frailties, we can find ways to make better choices for our well-being and also make it possible to get out of already problematic situations, using as resources the same relationships networks that, perhaps, have contributed to get us in trouble.

We will also find out that the choices that are good for our well-being are also good for the well-being of the planet and vice versa.

First of all and foremost, people have to be able to discover that these choices can be easy and pleasant (and not a penance!) so that people (especially when they have not yet developed significant problems) may decide to adopt behavior capable of producing well-being.

For this project, which has continuously evolved by building on experience gained by exchanges and collaborations with all partners and participants citizens all over the years, it provides every year a theme nights cycle, followed by a series of workshops, in such as share simple strategies to change their lifestyles in the various scopes that everyone can recognize as the most significant for himself and for the loved ones.

The workshops include supply, use of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs, gambling, physical inactivity, difficulty in interpersonal communication and in gender relations.

From the laboratory dedicated to overcoming the habit of inactivity and to rediscover the well-being related to the moving and the outdoor life, were born the first group walks; over the years the group tends to grow and to establish bonds of friendship and sharing that go far beyond the weekly Saturday morning meeting.

The enthusiasm of the participants took me to write a description of some of the paths trodden over the years in Bassa Val di Cecina, commitment to which I have so far tried to escape ...But then, who knows? Maybe this booklet will be something that remains in the memory of all of us and, above all, something that will invite others to walk...with us!

WARNINGS FOR WALKERS

Before proceeding to the description of the paths I have to say that I have encountered some difficulty in giving precise indications, which can be summarized in two aspects.

The first one concerns the names of farms and localities.

The succession of generations, often with the resulting fragmentation of ownership, has made it necessary to rename them in order to distinguish the different appliances.

The frequent changes of ownership due to buying and selling have meant that any new owner named to his liking what he had bought (now *Villa Jessica* sounds better than *Podere Antonio*).

In this way, the old names are being lost and, quite often, the same locals can no longer recall the ancient names, which usually contained a meaning and a story.

In addition to the problem of orientation between places that have lost or are losing their original name, in all this there is probably another loss: the memory of their roots.

Another difficulty, even more serious from a practical point of view for those who have to orient themselves, is constituted by the continuous interruption of the paths due to the closure of private properties.

In fact, if once the roads passed by the yard of the farms to allow hospitality to the travelers, trade, communication passages and everything was a vital necessity for those who resided for anyone who moved, now one stranger who passes in front of the door is only seen as a dangerous threat.

So gates, fences and, therefore, interrupted steps are the norm.

This means that if you decide to put yourself on the road by following this guide, not everything could be just as I am describing.

Finally, remember that some routes are through the best areas to hunt, so it is not advisable to venture there during the openings provided by the hunting calendar (available on the website of the *Regione Toscana*).

There is still something I would like to say and that is not really a warning ... We know that walking is good for our mental and physical health, but it is also something more.

Points through which wind through the routes described are physical places of great variety and beauty: beauty that becomes magic when we discover the first blooms of violets, anemones and crocuses, or the warm colors of autumn, or the frost that covers the triune shrubs and even when, suddenly, there comes out in front of a deer or a wild boar, or on the path we see the traces of a wolf; Sometimes however there is wide in front of the sea, the islands of *Arcipelago Toscano* and, on cold winter days, the snowy peak of *Corsica* or the white of the *Alpi Apuane* and *Appennino*.

But all of this and more means that we are also in spiritual places, where finally we lost humans can find a connection to the web of life.

Walking makes this process easy and immediate.

At this mainly serves our path (to us that we have the great privilege of being able to walk) because walking can be accessed very simply a form of knowledge which I define *pedestrian knowledge*, to distinguish it from academic or technology and that, Unlike other forms of knowledge, it involves us completely, totally through our being and becoming a part of us, as we are part of it.

GLOSSARY

Affaccio: a panorama that opens up to the sight and beyond.

Occhiali: a path that examples a pair of glasses.

Padella: a path that has a ring part (the circumference of the pan) and a straight part that (the handle).

Pelaga: idiom for a circular artificial lake.

Tufo: a volcanic rock which is often confused with *Calcrenite Sabbiosa*, a sedimentary rock made of sand and fossils.