



Premio Internazionale Carlo Scarpa per il Giardino

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Taneka Beri, villaggio dell'Atakora, Benin

Taneka Beri, a village of Atakora, Benin

The focus of attention in 2011 for the twenty-second cultural campaign surrounding the International Carlo Scarpa Prize for Gardens is a village in sub-Saharan West Africa: the place, its form and its life, the *Tangba* community that is responsible for it, its heritage of ideas and things, its sense of time and space, its safeguard of memory, its transmission of knowledge, of arts and trades, its stewardship of common property and the care devoted to looking after the home, the concept of nature and the figures embodying the sacred. The village is in north-western Benin, in the Taneka hills, southern offshoots of the Atakora massif, a crucial nexus in the history of the peoples of the region and the watershed between the basins of the Volta, the Niger and the Ouémé, the river that runs from north to south through the country before emptying into the Gulf of Guinea.

It is part of a group of villages whose origins date back to the XVIII century, when they constituted a refuge from slave raiders from the south; its name oscillates between the historical Seseirhà (“superimposed houses”), and the more recent Taneka Beri (“great taneka”). It is divided into four parts called Satyekà, Tyaklerò, Galorhà and Pendolou, each of which comprises many nuclei inhabited by extended families.

An Italian anthropologist, Marco Aime, recently led an experimental incursion of a group of European landscape experts into this *mundus alter* in an attempt to gather evidence and clues to its interpretation. The tools we inevitably and consciously brought to the task were those through which we filter our knowledge and perceptions of our own world but our work is underpinned by a commitment to take full account of the questions that such a distant microcosm continues to pose to our culture and our mentality.

The cultural campaign will receive its public launch in Milan at a press conference to be held on 29th March 2011 and will reach its climax in Treviso on Friday and Saturday, the 13th and 14th May, in a meeting with a delegation from Benin, the publication of a dossier dedicated to the designated place, the opening of an exhibition of documentary materials, a seminar of reflections and the Scarpa Seal award ceremony.

During 2011 the campaign will continue with a series of further knowledge-extending and awareness-raising initiatives, directed also at schools.

[Domenico Luciani, Treviso, 8.III.2011; translation from Italian into English by John Millerchip]