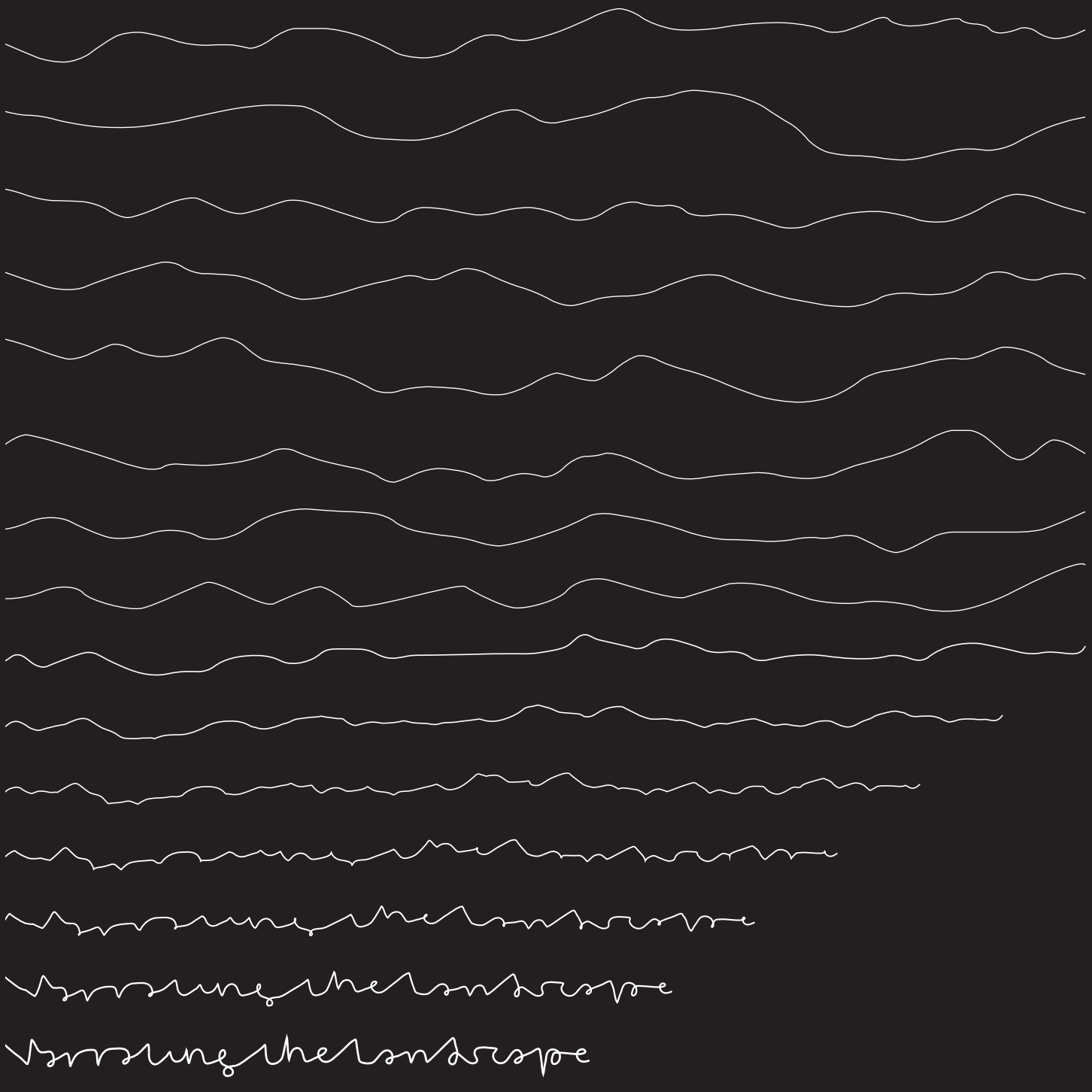

Narrating the Landscape

A disclosure of marginal stories shaping the land and soul of Western Liguria

Lorenzo Novajra

Narrating the Landscape: a disclosure of marginal stories shaping the land and soul of Western Liguria

Master's Thesis P5 Report

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TU Delft Department of Urbanism
BK Bouwkunde

Narrating the Landscape

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Acknowledgments

As I approach the culmination of this journey, signifying a crucial moment in my personal development and growth, I look back on the profound significance of the past year for me. It is my responsibility to take a moment and dedicate at least a page of this work to the people who have stood by my side and supported me.

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With heartfelt gratitude.

Lorenzo

Abstract

This thesis undertakes an extensive examination of the Ligurian and Maritime Alps region, deeply intertwined with its distinctive landscape features and closely tied to its identity. Its objective is to illuminate critical aspects of this territory through meticulous observation. Drawing from a solid theoretical foundation grounded in local literature, the study aims to outline ongoing processes while identifying key territorial characteristics. Advancing from conventional research methods, the thesis incorporates poetry and local literature to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the region.Four primary territorial subjects undergo in-depth investigation: terraced landscapes, river catchments, flora, and horticultural structures. Commencing with an acknowledgment of cultural impoverishment and the corrosion of local identity, the thesis seeks to explore the emerging sense of displacement, tracing its origins and attempting to narrate marginalized stories at risk of being forgotten. Furthermore, by analyzing the current state of the region, the investigation aims to portray the environmental degradation occurring within the examined milieu.

The proposed project builds upon the concept of caring practices, showcasing the diverse array of existing and extinguished caring practices within the region. Drawing from a defined novel methodology, the design encompasses both a tangible and intangible component.
The tangible aspect illustrates how simple, locally sensitive actions can lead to precise interventions in the area, sparking new territorial processes aimed at revitalizing a “way of life” deeply intertwined with the land, environment, and human experience, a way of life currently under threat. The expected interventions lean towards conservative and philological restoration, with the objective of mitigating the ecological drift while concurrently healing the lost identity of the landscape under examination. Conversely, the intangible aspect highlights existing practices of "mattering" and "caring" within the region, offering examples of current good practices and suggesting new ones. Ultimately, this project on matters of care seeks to underscore the need to expand conventional design methods to include the intangible aspect, laying the groundwork for a shared methodology applicable to further development and research.

Table of Contents

Motivation **10**

Introduction **16**
- Prelude: Cultural Unfolding of the Maritime Alpes 18
- Contextual Problematization: Criticalities of the Territory 21
- Methodological Problematization: the Domain of Urban Design 22

Trajectory **24**
- Research Questions 26
- Projections 27

Methodology **28**
- Methodological Framework **30**
- Assessment Framework 32
- Theoretical Framework 33
- Methods of Inquiry 35

Positioning **38**
- Situating Landscape, Place, and Territory in Current Debates 40
- Aprico and Opaco 43
- Global to Local 45
- Humanized Landscape 46
- Shifted Identities 48
- Cultural Landscape 49

Literary Review **52**

Monographies **60**
- Fluvial Catchments 64
- Flora 68
- Terraced Landscape 74
- Horticultural Structures 80
- Territorial Synthesis: Re-Composition 84

Designing for Care **94**
- Critical Positioning 96
- Matters of Care 98
- Assessing Care as Design Action 104

Tangible Design **108**
- Sites Selection and Scales 110
- 01 - Foce del Roia 112
- 02 - Apricale 120
- 03 - Capo Verde 126
- 04 - Vallone del Sasso 134

Intangible Design **142**
Curatorial Statement 146
Literary Findings 148
Personal Archive 152
Caring Atlas 160

Conclusion **168**
Conclusion 170
Reflection 174

Bibliography **182**

9/72 NABAL SECCATA BOCCE

Motivation

The longing to narrate and explore a land to which I am profoundly connected, a terrain that has been an enduring presence in my existence. A place that has molded me into the person I am today. There I reach the summit of my existence, immersing myself in the sublime symbiosis of mental serenity and physical prosperity in a perfect fusion.

I leverage my semi-local actor's knowledge to narrate stories and local realities that are not known.

I employ my passion as a researcher to critically observe the territory and its issues.

I apply my profession as an urban designer to recommend strategies for both preserving and embracing the essence of this landscape.

Introduction

Prelude: Historical and Cultural Unfolding of the Maritime Alpes

The significance of the Mediterranean in the evolution of global civilization remains indisputable. Positioned at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe, the Mediterranean has constantly drawn attention. Within this basin, we frequently encounter similar cultural and historical phenomena that intertwine, contributing to the complexity and richness this area represents globally. Amidst this mega-region with its shared cultural foundation, it is crucial to recognize the micro-histories and territorial diversities it contains. Each region is marked by unique territorial structures and organizations, adding undeniable diversity to their landscapes. In the context of decades-long globalization, from Gibraltar to the Black Sea, characterized by large residential buildings for tourists and significant urbanization and industrialization of the shores, it is essential to consider what remains of local identities and the foundational characteristics of a territory (Petrov, 2013).

In the exploration of the geographical area between France and Italy, conceptualizing it as a border land is essential. This acknowledgment holds significance as it recognizes the region's state of marginality within national and regional identities. Such marginality fosters stronger connections beyond the border, shaping a localized identity influenced more by mutual interactions than external factors. Viewing this territory as a borderland unveils a cyclical pattern of relationships marked by reciprocal influences that consistently lead to parallel evolution processes. Citing Bertone:

> *"The border between Italy and France, at the intersection of land and sea, amidst rugged mountains [...]. At the border between rural life and urban culture (touristic, urbanistic-architectural, and in every sense, of traffic). At the border between ancient, atavistic life and modern cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic currents"** (2006, p. 13).

The historical narrative of this territory reveals its fragility and susceptibility to border alterations, given the absence of a distinct geographical boundary. Since Roman times, Ventimiglia served as a boundary between Narbonensis Gaul and Cisalpine Gaul. In more recent history, the County of Nice was under Savoy rule for five centuries, unified under a region that now is split by the border. The Treaty of Turin in 1860 relocated the border to Ventimiglia when Nice was ceded to French jurisdiction. Additional local alterations occurred until 1947, shaping the present state of the border (Cabona, Mannoni, 1989; Garibaldi, 2015). As of today, within the context of the Schengen Area on Free Circulation, the border is more or less defined and monitored. This has become evident in recent instances such as the migrant crisis and COVID-19 border closures. Despite national disruptions imposed from above, local micro-stories diverge significantly, rooted in pronounced commuting, mutual fraternity, and unwavering relationships.

Due to the pronounced topographical characteristics of the region, perennially contributing to its marginal and rural status, the agricultural vocation has led to a centuries-long process of territorial engineering. This process is characterized by the creation of terraced systems extending from the coast to the mountain peaks, aimed at expanding available agricultural space. This phenomenon reached its highpoint in the 18th century, coinciding with the extensive planting of olive groves, a practice that persists to this day (Quaini, 1972). The entire region is a complex stratification of palimpsests resulting from anthropogenic alterations (Cevasco, 2013; after Corboz, 2001). Examining the case of vegetation, it has been consistently altered by human

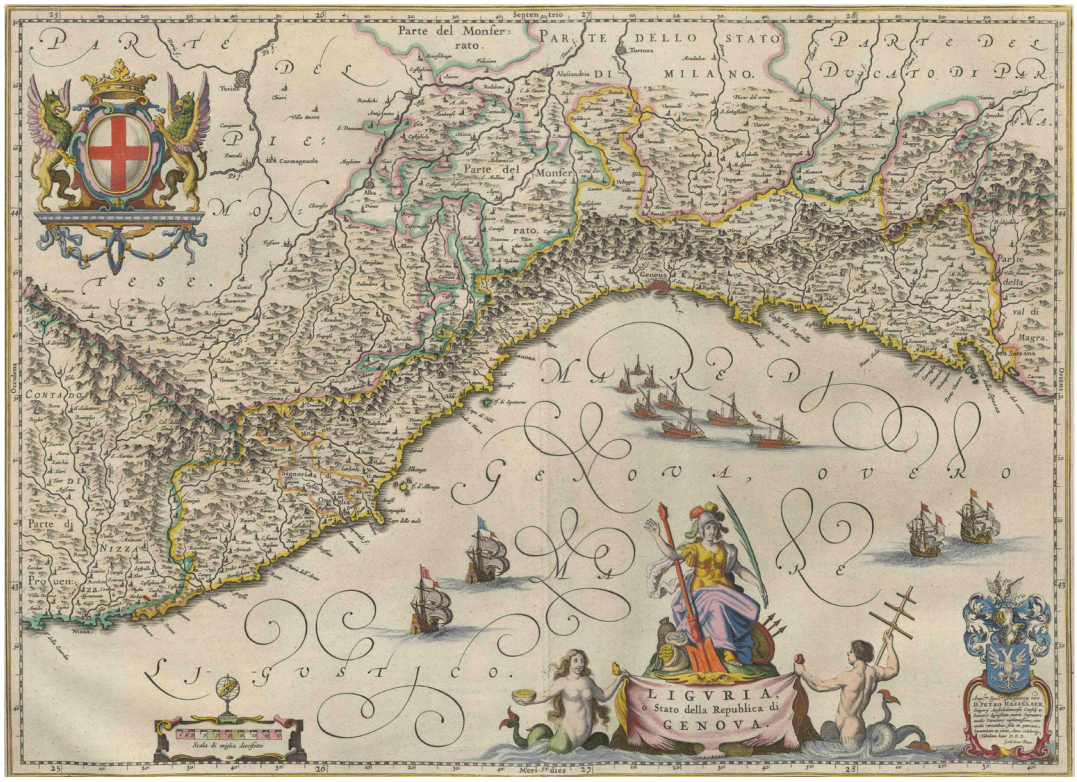
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Fig. 1-2

SAN REMO

intervention, with the introduction of non-native species. Centuries ago, this primarily involved fruit-bearing plants such as olives and citrus; in the last two centuries, more exotic plants from other continents have been introduced (Garnero, 2003).

Over the last century, due to increasingly precarious agricultural prospects and the promise of greater earnings elsewhere, there has been a massive depopulation of the region's inland areas, redirecting the population towards bordering countries or coastal cities. This has resulted in two diametrically opposed phenomena, with the abandonment of mountainous villages and the urbanization of coastal cities. Simultaneously, coastal cities, from Cannes to Alassio, became destinations for elite tourism in the late 19th century and winter retreats for wealthy aristocrats from Northern Europe. This period resonated internationally, acclaimed by tourists for the mild climate and scenic beauty, and increasingly celebrated in European literature (Lupi, 2023). The phenomenon of urbanization intensified in the post-war period, with globalization and economic growth leading to what Calvino termed "A plunge into Real Estate" ["La Speculazione Edilizia"] (1963). The entire Ligurian and French coastlines experienced unprecedented growth, completely erasing the natural profile of the coast. The substantial infrastructural development within the region and the emergence of mass tourism played crucial roles in characterizing the area primarily as a coastal periphery of Turin and Milan, leading to the gradual erosion of its local identitarian dimension.

Fig. 3

Contextual Problematization: Criticalities of the Territory

Confronted with the ongoing processes of anthropogenic transformation and territorial infrastructural development, it is imperative to contemplate the injuries not only to ecological balances but also to the memorial dimensions of the place under examination. Processes initiated in the past century, together with a restrained preservation of the landscape, exposed the area to environmental and cultural risks.

The widespread abandonment of Ligurian inland areas for coastal ones, coupled with the transition from agriculture to the tertiary sector, has rendered the internal area nearly uninhabited. International competitiveness makes exploiting these agricultural areas less advantageous. Thus*, "the high labor density required by this landscape is the reason for its decline"** (Quaini, 1981, p. 78).
The intensive engineering of the territory, with human-dependent terraced landscapes, is now threatened by the lack of "caretakers". It is undergoing a process of de-territorialization, reverting the landscape to a new naturalization, a transformation that, however, comes with inevitable challenges. The lack of maintenance exposes the terraced systems to geo-hydrological risks, including erosion and runoff. The transport of sediments increases the risk of floods. Coastal urbanization, disregarding local practices for profit, erases environmental harmony in favor of new buildings and cementation that disrupt natural cycles. Culverting rivers and alterating riverbeds increases the risk of disasters in case of extreme weather events. Urbanization has generated a total disconnect between the built environment and the surroundings. The original balance, based on local anthropogenic interventions, disintegrates due to shortsighted interventions indicating a growing disconnection from the place. The "*outrage to places*"* (Vallerani, 2021, p. 148) inflicts indelible wounds on the territory, challenging reversibility. The devastation of the lived space is evident. Globalization has accentuated the detachment from the environment, leading to the loss of local identity and sense of belonging. According to Quaini, it is crucial to re-establish a connection with the landscape, recreating a bond through the rediscovery of values and identity associated with it. The loss of local identity and values linked to local micro-stories is evident and must be reversed (Quaini, 2010).

Reflecting on the identity of the place, the value of the lost landscape, and what still persists is essential. Assigning new meaning to the landscape now considered obsolete and neglected is crucial. This emergent value must to be intricately connected with the unfolding narrative of the historical and cultural identity of the place, reversing the current phenomenon of disorientation among the local population concerning the landscape.

> *"To revisit today the theme of the 'lost landscape' means primarily acquiring the ability to give shape and form to something we miss, to something of which we feel the burning absence, constituting the irreplaceable raw material for constructing the scenarios of our future"* * (Quaini, 2010, p. 67)

Methodological Problematization: the Domain of Urban Design

The field of urbanism is conceptualized as a practical research initiative conducted within the framework of application, stemming from the active pursuit of solutions through the integration of design, technology, and science (Gibbons et al., 1994). This pragmatic approach is characterized by its multidisciplinary nature, employing a variety of disciplines to address questions related to urban design. Urbanism, at its core, is an interdisciplinary framework addressing real-world sociocultural, ecological, and technological challenges that impact the urban environment and its green, blue, and grey infrastructures. It combines the disciplines of spatial planning, urban design, and landscape architecture, each with its distinctive theories, methods, and techniques. However, these disciplines share commonalities and act as complementary components. Urbanism employs integrative and design-oriented approaches to tackle environmental and societal concerns (Nijhuis et al., 2016).

Urban planning, having evolved into an exceedingly multidisciplinary discipline, occasionally encounters a slowed validation of scientific findings, as it necessitates approval and confirmation from multiple realms. While this synergy enriches the understanding of urban dynamics, it also demands thoughtful reflection and a prolonged validation process to ensure a comprehensive and accurate analysis of new knowledge in the contemporary urbanist context.
In this crisis in contemporary urban planning and the previously provided definition of the realm of urban design, there emerges an urgency to redefine the urbanism agenda. Notably, there exists a knowledge gap in comprehending how unconventional modes of information can contribute to informing urban design and research. The union of art, science, and technology is envisioned to broaden the horizons of urban design and expand its agenda. Consequently, there is a crucial urgency to integrate art, in all its diverse connotations, as a field capable of informing urbanism, without excluding the validity of earlier theoretical assertions.
This necessitates an integration of subjects more culture-based in the domain of urban design, alongside the well-established evidence-based subjects. Unconventional modes of knowledge, such as artworks and poetry, are considered as valuable tools for informing urban design from different perspectives.

The knowledge employed in this research should not only be data-driven and evidence-based but should also stem from the specific context of the site and the cultural processes that have shaped it. The research must encompass site-specific knowledge and culture, thereby affirming the significance of more local means of knowledge production. In response to the contemporary urban crisis, a new approach to urban development is imperative: one that is more culturally sensitive and care-based. Acknowledging that culture has historically been a driving force of urban development, innovative practices must integrate cultural assets into urban development strategies (Duxbury, N., Hosagrahar, J., & Pascual, J., 2016). Caring as an everyday practice for mattering in the world needs to be the starting point of the design proposition. Therefore, the objective of this study is experimental, stemming from the intention to consider literature and poetics as valuable means of information for understanding the territory in its flow of being. Rather than relying solely on evidence, the research and design inputs will be primarily culturally based, later confirmed by the relevance of scientific data. Practices of care, in different declinations, are also the starting point of a design hypothesis which will be evaluated with the project.

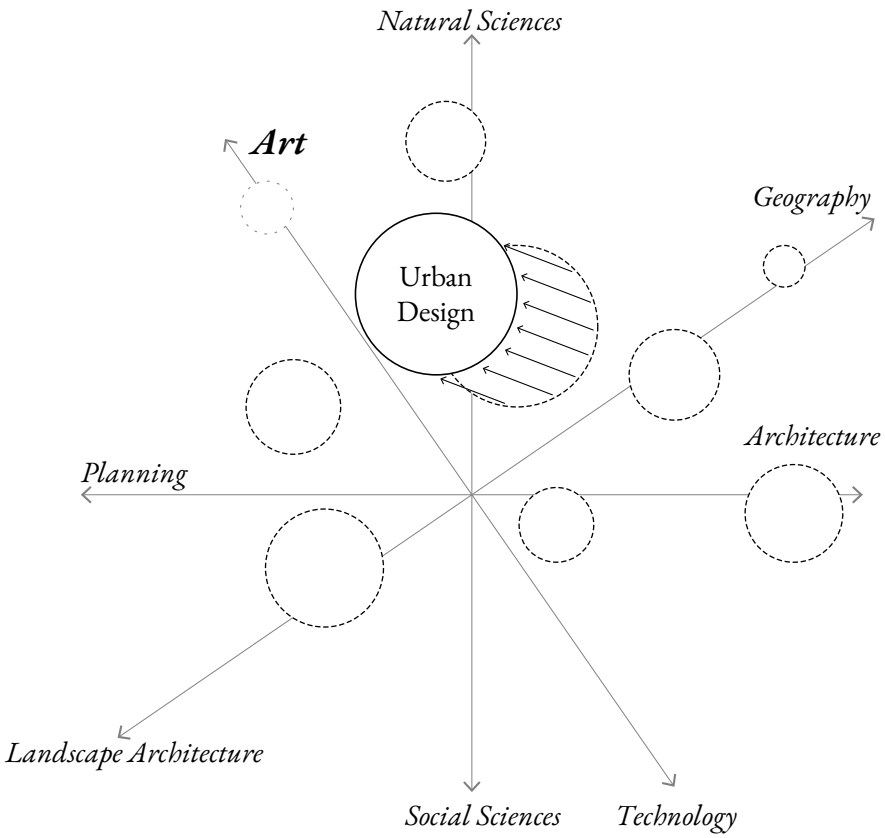

Natural Sciences
Art
Geography
Urban
Design
Architecture
Planning
Landscape Architecture
Social Sciences
Technology

Fig. 4

Trajectory

Research Questions

How can unconventional forms of information such as literature and poetry help inform urban design and research?

How can a culture-based approach help define design interventions integrated with data-driven analysis?

In the context of ecological and cultural fragility of the Maritime Alps,
how can a culture-based approach to urban design, along with a comprehensive understanding of territorial structures, help mitigate environmental risks and restore the identity of the place?

How can care practices, employed as design tools, aid in restoring and redefining a place's identity while emphasizing cultural and site-sensitive approaches?

What are the key environmental and ecological risks prevalent in the territory, and how can these risks be quantified to inform strategic planning?

Projections

Research Goals

The research projection is based on acquiring all the necessary knowledge to justify the design interventions that will be proposed. To achieve this, what is required is a careful and thorough analysis of the present situation in the analyzed territory, looking back into history, and projecting future criticalities. A meticulous and analytical observation of the territory, as highlighted earlier, must be based not only on scientific data or old archival historical research but also by invoking disciplines that may initially seem unrelated to the issue, such as literature, poetry, and art, to reveal how these serve as fundamental sources of information for our research and professional field. This research segment aims to redefine the domain of urban design as it employs unconventional means of knowledge.

This analysis of the territory undertaken through various fields of knowledge should lead to an understanding of the territory from different perspectives. This approach ensures a holistic knowledge of the site and all its characteristics. Within this abundance of acquired knowledge, it is necessary to undergo a process of simplification and rationalization. This phase should lead to the synthesis of the gathered information into macro-territorial problems.
In summary, this crucial first part of the thesis must lead to a comprehensive investigation of the processes within this territory, the ongoing dynamics, and the main actors, encompassing both environmental and historical-cultural aspects, within the context of the current decline.

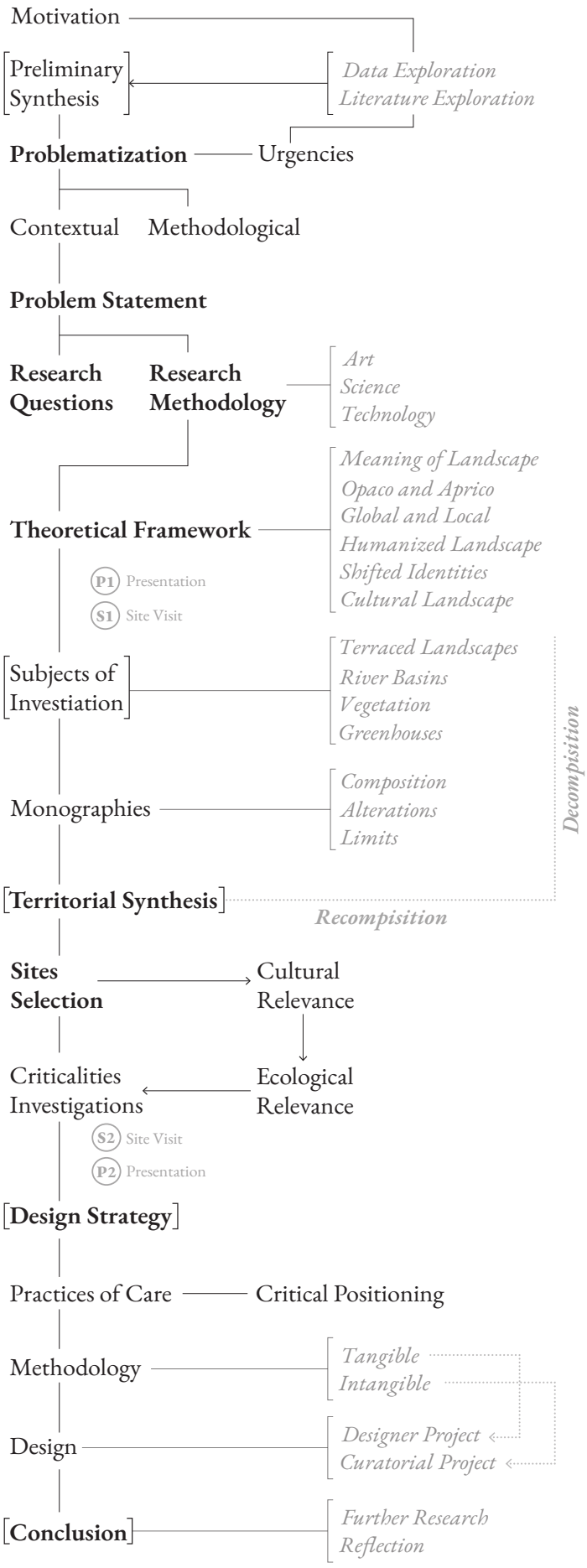
Design Hypothesis

Design interventions can only be conducted when the there is a profound understanding of the territory. The project is deeply rooted in the thematic focus of this academic year, “Altered Nature”, aiming to advance what has been defined as the “Poetics of Change”. With this premise in mind, the project aims to emphasize the categorical need for the maintenance of this landscape and the cultural identity it represents. Furthermore, it advocates for a “Poetics of Cure,” comprehending the value of what remains and striving to act in favor of its preservation.

The design interventions will be strategically located where specific exemplary hotspots have been identified. These locations arise from the literature review and the cultural relevance of the place, later validated by ecological urgency. The interventions will be based on the imperative not only to preserve and safeguard what still exists but also to directly intervene and potentially revert to a previous state of existence, if deemed necessary. Achieving this goal requires a process of clearance, evaluating the current validity of structures in the landscape. This assessment helps discern what needs removal or repurposing and what should be maintained and adapted. The challenge in this design process lies in understanding the importance of designing both the tangible and the intangible matters and in understanding how these two are interconnected.

Methodology

Methodological Framework



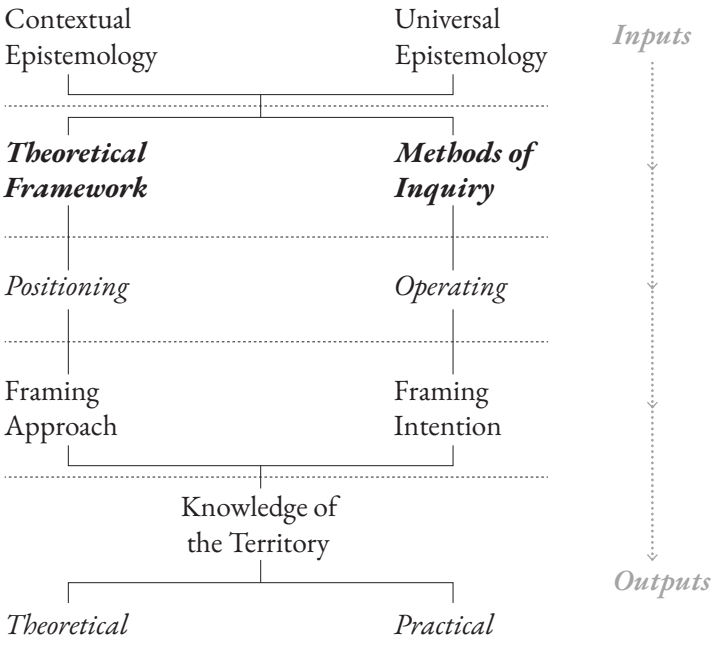
The methodological framework illustrates the accompanying diagram, aiding in comprehending the temporal progression of the project's core elements. A brief examination reveals that this design deviates from the methodology of "Research through Design" (van Dooren, 2014). Instead, it involves an initial phase of pure analysis and investigation, followed by the design proposal and the start of the design process itself. This division is deemed crucial since, as previously emphasized, the design proposal could only start after acquiring a deep understanding of the site.

The genesis of the thesis lies in my personal motivation, initiating from a deliberate choice to begin with a distinct delineation of the geographical location as the foundational element. This approach stands in contrast to preconceiving the research focus, emphasizing the prioritization of the geographical context over predetermined problematization. The problematization unfolds with the assistance of the two intensive courses, "Studio Essentials" and "Geographical Urbanism". These aid in delineating two aspects: site-specific problematization and the knowledge gap within the domain of urban design and research. Once the research questions are articulated, the theoretical framework is structured around three pillars essential for conducting the research: Art (Literature), Science (Data Elaboration), and Technology (Practices). Investigations from these three perspectives illuminate the Actors of the Territory, the primary subjects requiring intervention. Individual monographs at the territorial scale for each subject are conducted to deepen the understanding of the analyzed matter. The Monographies are based on three topics arisen from Studio Essentials and further developed in the weekly deliverables, which facilitate a better comprehension of the investigative subjects.

The design proposition and strategy begin with a strong critical positioning on the current ideological, political, and ecological praxis, as well as the intended spatial outcomes of my design intentions. These intentions are situated within the framework of matters of care, complemented by theoretical insights into heritage futures and the concept of the planetary garden. To develop a design that emphasizes the importance of redefining care as a design tool, a new methodological framework is established to elucidate the ontological and epistemological meaning of it. Consequently, the design is articulated into tangible and intangible aspects, each comprising various sub-interventions (further detailed in the methodology on care). This division leads to two distinct components: the tangible design translates into the designer project, generating direct spatial outcomes, while the intangible design manifests in the curatorial project, staring with a curatorial statement and subsequently delineating various practices of care.

The culmination of this process serves as a crucial moment, affirming the efficacy of the proposed novel methodology. It underscores the importance of unconventional modes of information as research tools and emphasizes the necessity of not only proposing tangible design solutions but also intangible ones within the realm of care. The concluding chapter suggests how the methodology can be further expanded and applied to other design case studies within our field and beyond, before concluding with a reflective moment on the overall outcomes of the thesis.

Assessment Framework



Before delving into the various bodies of literature and methods developed to unfold this thesis, a crucial initial step is to provide a clear and concise synthetic assessment of the literature review. This involves highlighting some core differences in the application of these foundational literatures. To begin, it's crucial to emphasize that the majority of the reviewed bodies of literature are closely tied to the specificity of the site. While these theories and notions may allude to phenomena found in somewhat different forms in a broader context, the emphasis on site-specificity is intentional for greater precision in discourse. In some cases, this literature is supported by more universal epistemologies derived from broader research contexts.

These theoretical concepts play a dual role in the progression of the thesis. On one hand, they serve as theoretical underpinnings, representing site-specific concepts derived from an extensive literature review. On the other hand, the readings are integral to the methods of inquiry. The first aspect is crucial for establishing a personal position within the research trajectory and defining design intentions. This process sheds light on a series of personal statements that will be consistently assumed throughout the evolution of the thesis, constituting the core foundations of the thesis itself. Conversely, the second aspect involves revisiting bodies of literature, contributing to the creation of a vocabulary of operations to be explored and implemented in this context. This forms a system of intentions and actions that will be further developed in the project. In summary, in the first case, this knowledge allows for the acquisition of theoretical insights regarding the analyzed territory, while in the second case, it provides an epistemology with a more practical dimension.

Theoretical Framework

Meaning of the Landscape — Emerson, 1983; Le Gioff, 1982; Ferrando & Mannoni, 1989; Bonesio, 2002; Quaini, 2006; Jakob, 2005; Berque, 1994; Pagano, 2015; Quaini, 2012; Magnaghi, 2021

Opaco and Aprico — Calvino, 1985; Calvino, 1990; Quaini, 2006, 2017; Gastaldi, 2007

From Global to Local — Bonesio, 2007; Quaini, 2016; Magnaghi, 2014; Pagano, 2015

Humanized Landscape — Quaini, 1981; Corboz, 1983; Demos, 2016; Cevasco, 2013

Shifted Identities — Brandi, 1963; Quaini, 1981, 2007, 2010; Berque, 2000; Wagner and Miskell, 1999; Tarpino, 2012; Marson, 2021

P1

Cultural Landscape — Fowler, 1999; Mitchell et al., 2009; Italian Law No. 22 of 2004

Heritage and Restoration — Brandi, 1963; Ferrando e Mannoni, 1989

P2

Territorialism — Tyrwhitt, nd; Viganò, 2008, 2012; Welter, 2014; Cavalieri & Viganò, 2019; Longhin, 2021

Matters of Care — Tronto, 1993; Latour, 1999; De La Bellacasa, 2017

Heritage Futures — Schama, 1995; Hall, 2005; Tronto, 1993; Latour, 1999; De La Bellacasa, 2017; Harrison, 2020; DeSilvey, Bartolini & Lyons, 2020; Lobosco, 2022; Cappeller, 2022; Favaretto, 2022; Diesch, 2022; Zargaran, 2022

Planetary Garden — Clément, 2004, 2015

P3

P4

P5

The literature review conducted for this thesis draws from various sources across different contexts to establish its initial standpoint. It involves analyzing primary sources to illuminate key concepts relevant to the examined territory and general theories. While the thesis is fundamentally grounded in theory, specific moments throughout the process have been dedicated to constructing robust theoretical foundations to address pressing questions at various stages of the project.

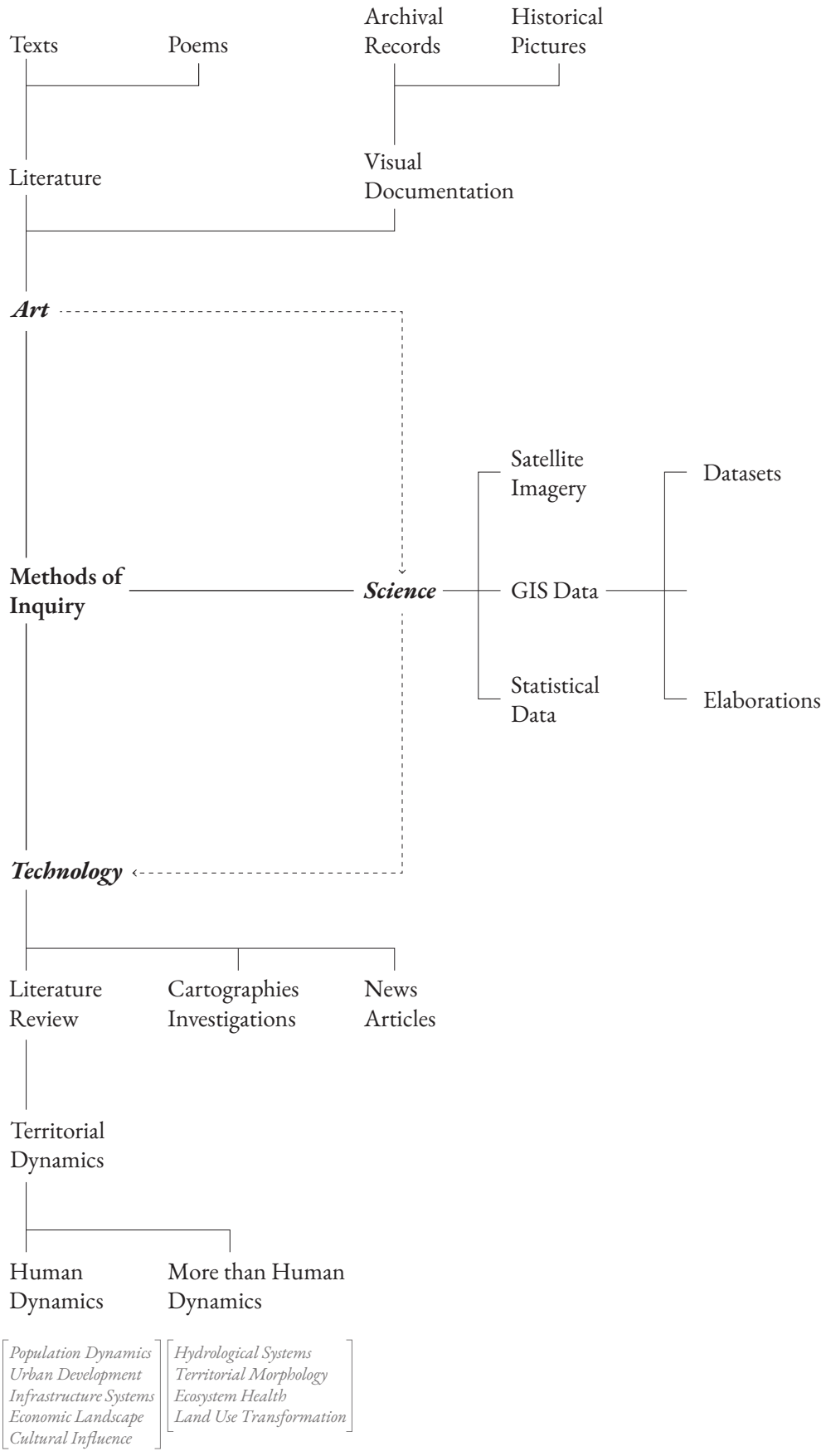
At the beginning, significant emphasis was placed on building a strong territorial lexicon, drawing primarily from site-specific literature to understand global phenomena shaping the territory's dynamics. Notably, Tullio Pagano's recent work on "The Making and Unmaking of the Mediterranean Landscape in Italian Literature" (2015) has been instrumental in grasping the cultural significance of the site depicted in literary works. Similarly, Quaini's writings, examined through various sources, offer valuable geographical and historical insights into the site, shaping reflections on the subject under analysis. Roberta Cevasco's work "Sulla Rugosità del Paesaggio" (2013) has also significantly contributed to the theoretical framework. The theoretical foundations are organized into five key concepts crucial for the thesis's position. The first introduces key definitions and ideas explored throughout the thesis, while the subsequent four delve into site-specific considerations, providing a comprehensive background for the investigative subject.

A second theoretical reflection emerged from my initial design intentions, arising from an understanding of the value of both tangible and intangible heritage. This exploratory phase helped me navigate various existing heritage theories and disciplines, particularly in understanding the concept of heritage and its applicability in the domain of urbanism. This phase specifically focused on the evolution of the concept of heritage through the study of various scholars and the advancement of the concept of cultural landscape through the progression of different treaties and charts.

The third, brief theoretical interlude was based on various texts, primarily derived from the writings of Paola Viganò, and served to deepen the understanding of territorialism and the synthesis and simplification of processes at a complex territorial scale. This research connected territorial analysis with methods of synthesis and representation of information.

The final, significant theoretical segment was instrumental in ultimating my critical design positioning from a political and ethical point of view. Essential to this was the reading of "Matters of Care" (2017) by Maria Puig De la Bellacasa, alongside reflections on the precariousness of heritage futures and horizons within this discipline. Furthermore, personally still within the context of "Matters of Care," Gilles Clement's concept of the "Planetary Garden" (2015) further emphasized the landscape and ecological importance of the proposed design themes.

Methods of Inquiry



The research approach follows the principles of Art, Science, and Technology Studies (ASTS) in collecting information. Current discussions focus extensively on the interdisciplinary nature that emerges when knowledge from different fields is combined. Scientists are exploring how the arts can contribute to creating new knowledge. Engaging in a dialogue across these three areas allows for reflection on their ways of knowing, methods, and the potential outcomes of their research.

Muller et al. (2020) define the intersection of art and science as a diverse field of creative research and production involving collaboration between artists and scientists. Despite the growing interest in establishing a 'third culture' at the junction of art, science, and technology, developing a solid theoretical foundation for such a culture remains challenging. The convergence of these broad disciplines generates work, knowledge, and synergy in areas not clearly defined by either art or science. The collaborative process leading to these unclaimed synergies remains unclear, requiring reinvention with each attempt (Birsel et al., 2023). In the Ligurian context, the incorporation of these methodologies into the investigation holds particular significance, as they offer a unique and invaluable source of knowledge not attainable through alternative means of information. Quaini asserts, "I am convinced that in Liguria, the most perceptive witnesses and observers, especially concerning the wounds and disruptions of the landscape (real estate speculation, mountain depopulation), have been the writers, the poets. I am convinced of the validity of Musil's attribution of a rational and innovative character to the poet's knowledge" (Quaini 2006, p. 10).

Additionally, he emphasizes the importance of literature as a valuable source in understanding the geography and history, especially texts from local and realist writers. He's talking about people who really know and document the area well, as seen in the Ligurian neorealist movement with figures like Calvino, Caproni, Montale, and Biamonti, who can see things from a broader perspective (Quaini 2006, p. 22). According to Quaini, what worried bureaucrats wasn't just the technical view of the territory but also considering the landscape's character. Take a river, for example; it's not just about its capacity but also its cultural and landscape value, holding memories and being a significant point in the mental map of locals. For this reason, in order to conduct a more in-depth investigation of this territory, the tool of "Geocritics" is employed. Bertrand Westphal defines this method as follows:

> *"[T]he geographical space itself will become the focus of attention and the texts [...] will be brought into dialogue with as many other texts as possible that deal with that space. As Westphal puts it, 'The study of the point of view of the author or of a series of authors from the same identitarian space will be left aside in favor of the analysis of a multiplicity of points of view, preferably heterogeneous, which will all converge towards a given site, prime mover of the analysis. This multifocal dynamic will be the indispensable object of this analysis. Without hesitating, we can affirm that that is the defining characteristic of the geocritical approach'"* (Westphal, 2007, p. 199).

Westphal's geocritical study does not center around texts or authors but revolves around geographic sites. With geocriticism, books are analyzed from the viewpoint of the geographical space under scrutiny, juxtaposed with numerous texts dealing with the same site. A stratigraphic reading is preferred, involving texts from different temporal periods and diverse authors. This

approach, Westphal argues, enables the transcendence of the author and the text's subject matter, fostering a holistic and semi-objective perspective of the place. This methodology serves as a tool to reveal and highlight locations with distinct cultural and topological aspects. Alongside this literary investigation (see table at the bottom of the page), the artistic domain is also analyzed through visual documentation, primarily utilizing historical photographs from the 20th century and paintings from the 19th century.

Following this initial phase of literary exploration, there is corroborative input from the other two pillars of science and technology. Scientific inquiry predominantly involves GIS Data. Beyond datasets provided by local, regional, and national services, a comprehensive series of investigations has been conducted using raw data materials, such as Digital Terrain Models (DTMs). This approach has enabled precise, site-specific investigations and the acquisition of scientific data not available elsewhere. Finally, for technology inquiries, the focus has been specifically on investigating practices within the territory. In this context, a literature review on the primary territorial structures and dynamics was conducted.
In conclusion, the intertwining investigations across art, science, and technology have not only revealed a detailed, cross-disciplinary understanding of the territory but also offered diverse perspectives. This holistic approach, encompassing historical, scientific, and artistic dimensions, enriches the exploration and problematization of the landscape.

	Verse	Prose
Giovanni Ruffini	Doctor Antonio (1855)	
Giovanni Boine	La crisi degli ulivi in Liguria (1911)	
Francesco Pastonchi		*Paese Natale (1916)*
Italo Calvino	La Riviera di Ponente (1946) Sentiero dei Nidi di Ragno (Prefaction)(1947) Liguria Magra e Ossuta (1945) Sanremo città dell'oro (1946) Liguria (1946) La strada di San Giovanni (1946) Pranzo con pastore (1946) La Speculazione Edilizia (1947)	
Camillo Sbarbaro		*Scarsa Lingua di terra (1955)*
Eugenio Montale		*Limoni (1971)* *Gloria nel Disteso Mezzogiorno (1971)*
Francesco Biamonti	L'angelo di Avrigue (1983) La Vera Liguria (2000)	

Positioning

Situating Landscape, Place, and Territory in Current Debates

Starting this exploration involves a contemplative examination of our understanding of landscape, place, and territory. Tracing their historical evolution and interplay unveils a dynamic narrative. The notion of landscape shifts from exclusive to inclusive, mirroring societal changes. Delving into identity and territory, the landscape emerges as a symbol rich in historical, cultural, and material significance. This exploration prompts reflection on preserving and transmitting this intricate heritage within the evolving human-biosphere dynamics.

To initiate, a critical reflection on the dual nature of the landscape is imperative, encompassing both subjective and objective dimensions. Michael Jakob, in "Paesaggio e Letteratura" (2005), recognizes that the landscape, while rooted in a specific earthly location, is inevitably shaped and constructed by human subjectivity. Joachim Ritter similarly argues that the landscape achieves its identity when observed freely by the human eye, detached from utilitarian purposes such as cultivated land or forests. What may initially evoke hostility and fear metamorphoses into something magnificent and sublime, embodying the aesthetic landscape (Ritter, 1994, p. 47). The landscape is thus acknowledged as an inherently ambivalent phenomenon, existing within the realm of both subjectivity and objectivity. As articulated by Berque, it is a relational entity deeply engaging our sensibility, underlining that the landscape exists within us, just as we exist within our landscape (Berque, 1994, p. 27).
Crucially, the interpretation of the landscape revolves on the subjectivity of the observer. This implies that humans, in synthesizing and empirically assigning value, centrally contribute to defining a landscape. However, it was believed that not everyone perceived the landscape equally. Only the erudite, poets, and literates possess the capacity to appreciate the beauty of a place, while peasants may lack the knowledge or ability to personally evaluate the ordinary. Only the poet, through their distinctive gaze, can genuinely claim to comprehend the landscape by integrating its diverse components into a cohesive whole. This perspective finds resonance in Ralph Waldo Emerson's 1836 essay "Nature" (Emerson, 1983).

A shift in the definition of the landscape took place in contemporary theory, in which Landscape is no longer considered an exclusive domain to be enjoyed by few individuals endowed with superior aesthetic sensibility, as inherited from the era of Romanticism (Pagano, 2015). One of the greatest contributions to redefining this meaning of the Landscape has been given by Jackson in his study "Discovering the Vernacular Landscape", asserting that the Landscape is what can be comprehended at a glance with our eyes. He proposed the thesis that "*a landscape is not a natural feature of the environment, but a synthetic space, a man-made system of spaces superimposed on the face of the land, functioning and evolving not according to natural laws but to serve a community*"* (Jackson, 1984, p. 9). From this intuition, many studies followed, moving from an elitist definition of the landscape to a more democratic one.
Of great contribution to the redefinition of the concepts of landscape, place, and territory were the studies carried out by the Ligurian geographer Massimo Quaini in the last century (Quaini, 2012; Magnaghi, 2021). His contribution will come back several times throughout this research, as it represented a milestone for the site-specific research that has been carried out.
He defines the identity of the place as inevitably interconnected to the subject, considering the place as an active operator structured by habits, stories, becoming, the basic space of social life, and a condition of human experience (Bonesio, 2012). Starting from this fundamental role of the concept of place, Quaini repositions the terms territory and landscape in their necessary complementarity to designate the territory of territorialists as a common good, distinct from

San-Remo from the East.
Palms.
Bordighera
in San Remo.
San-Remo from the West.
San Remo. From the Mole

Fig. 5

both private and public goods. (Quaini, 2012). In this direction, he focuses on the relationships that characterize the "*territorialist triangle*"* among place, territory, and landscape, specifying the role of historical memory for each term. He particularly highlights the shift of centrality from the concept of place to that of landscape, in which the concept of territory plays a role (Magnaghi, 126). Quaini thus provides a constant contribution to the territorialist definition of terms such as territory, place, milieu, heritage, landscape, and common goods, with a geographical perspective centered on history, fostering dialogue among various disciplines to unify the knowledge of the place.

Identity is the sum of material and immaterial characteristics that distinguish and make a place distinguishable. For territory, we understand "the constructed landscape"* (Ferrando, Mannoni, 1989, p. 12), namely, "*the expressive territory of identity, whose character derives from the action of natural and human factors and their interrelations*"*, as stated in the "Codice dei beni culturali e del paesaggio" [Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code] (Dlgs. 22 del 2004, Art. 131, Par. I). It has characteristics derived from its history, the craftsmanship of that time and place, and the availability of resources. We modify and build the landscape in various forms and with multiple structures in response to the need to inhabit and live, and each work is an expression of it.
In the "Codice dei beni culturali e del paesaggio", landscape protection is defined as being "*aimed at recognizing, safeguarding, and, where necessary, recovering the cultural values that it expresses*" * (Dlgs. 22 del 2004, Art. 131, Par. IV). In conclusion, the constructed landscape as a 'document' is the result "*of the history, era, society that produced it, but also of subsequent eras during which it continued to live, perhaps forgotten, during which it continued to be manipulated, perhaps by silence*"* (Le Goff, 1982, p. 454). To ensure that this silence does not turn into abandonment and that this cultural heritage continues to exist, transmit, and teach even to future generations, it is necessary to recognize, preserve, and enhance its historical-cultural and material values. These values can be identified through in-depth studies that observe at different scales and with diverse perspectives, including those of professionals with different competencies (Moggia, 2022).

In conclusion

> ***"in the context where dynamics and processes of human/biosphere interactions are redefined, historical/social and historical/environmental bonds are strengthened, social change dynamics are deepened, and place actors are redefined; the landscape returns to the forefront. It is understood as an accumulator of metaphors to comprehend the contradictions and problems of our time, encompassing cultural assets, biodiversity, and local practices and knowledge"*** (Quaini, 2006, p. 12).

Aprico and Opaco

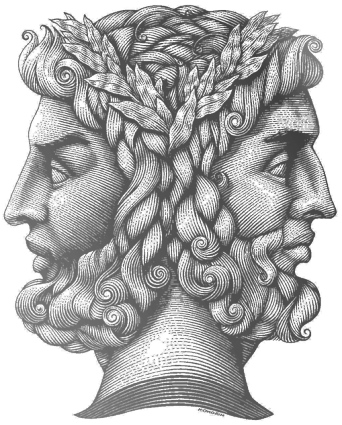


Fig. 6

For a precise understanding of the Ligurian territory and the French Riviera, it is crucial to reflect on the ambivalence inherent in the landscape, especially the historical neglect of inland areas in favor of the coastal ones. The creation of the myth of a region perpetually oriented towards the sea has overshadowed the interior landscape. This thesis challenges the concept of the "Linear City"* proposed by Gastaldi (2007), seeking to underscore the long-overlooked aspects of the inner land in contrast to the predominant coastal focus. Similarly, Calvino critically examines the Ligurian region, challenging the linear representation that has persisted for centuries. He questions whether Ligurian development truly conforms to the coastal road, debating the more intricate history and reality of the region. His viewpoint aligns with the interpretation of the historical structure of the region, marked by isolated coastal cities accessible solely by sea, where vertical relationships flourished, and active inland communities served as vital resource suppliers (Gastaldi, 2007; Calvino, 1985).

The Ligurian region, situated between the Mediterranean Sea and Northern Europe, provides an ideal setting to explore the ambivalence of the Italian landscape. Much like the two-faced god Janus emblematic of Genoa, the region is geographically and culturally divided between its sea-facing openness to commerce and exploration and the mountainous, vernacular interior. This delicate balance shapes the cultural identity of the region (Pagano, 2015).
This introduces the concept of ambivalence in the landscape between "Aprico" and "Opaco." This notion, rooted in local vernacular knowledge, was first extensively utilized in Calvino's theses and later metaphorically adopted by researchers like Quaini. For the poet, "Opaco/ Ubagu" represents the part of the landscape rarely touched by sunlight, the antithesis of the sunny side. On the other hand, "Apico/Abrigu" signifies what directly faces the sun, illuminated by sunlight. Calvino's essay "Liguria Magra e Ossuta" (1985) vividly describes this dichotomy, revealing the Ligurian region beyond the coastal glamour, unraveling the Liguria of peasants (Quaini, 2006). Biamonti defines the "Opaco" zone as the "true Liguria," remaining unchanged for centuries, crystallized, where local identity persists despite significant social dynamics. Globalization and modernization have bypassed this hilly area, prompting a new reflection on the territorial zone, its hidden aspects, ongoing processes, emerging occupations, and potential settlement forms. Understanding the "Opaco," the concealed part of the regional fabric, becomes imperative to comprehend the evolving human-biosphere relationship, strengthen historical-social and historical-environmental bonds between mountain and city, and recognize 'new' local resources and actors contributing creativity and social-cultural innovation to the territory.

The strength of the literary metaphor of "Aprico" and "Opaco" lies in its adaptability to various contexts and meanings. As a holistic metaphor for the territory, it takes on different significances based on the opposing pairs attributed to it. In "L'ombra del Paesaggio" (2006), Quaini distinguishes the "space of fluxes"* from the "space of places"* highlighting the deterritorialized, abstract space and the space of human actions and social cohesion.
In the fifth issue of the journal "Scienze del Territorio" (2017), dedicated to creating a dictionary of key terms for the territory, Quaini reflects on oppositional pairs fundamental for interpreting the area and subsequent critical reflection. These include place/locale, territorialization/deterritorialization, growth/decline, description/representation, global/contextual, nature/ecosystem, man/environment, local history/global history, and settlement/population. This synthesis leads to additional pairs arising from personal reflections based on site awareness, such as autochthonous/exotic, coastal/inland, urban speculation/rural, and global/local.
In conclusion, drawing inspiration from the metaphor of Janus with its dual faces symbolizing opposing aspects, it becomes essential to embrace the dual nature inherent in the geographical region's landscape. Aprico and Opaco, while presenting distinctive interpretations of the Ligurian terrain, essentially embody the same landscape. They are interconnected and share a unified essence. No favoritism or specific intervention preference is warranted, as both facets are integral to the whole. This thesis aims to comprehend and mirror this inherent duality in the territory, shaping subsequent design interventions. These interventions, reflecting the dual nature of the landscape, will offer insights into addressing opposite challenges.

Global to Local

In examining the intricate interplay between global and local dynamics within literary representations of landscapes, Quaini's insightful analysis serves as a gateway to understanding how renowned writers reshape the conventional global-local paradigm.

Quaini, in his discerning use of literary figures as metaphors for landscape representation, illuminates how writers like Giono, Valery, Camus, and Biamonti effectively reverse the global-local relationship. Their focus lies in recognizing and valuing local causes generating universal effects, as opposed to universal causes producing local effects (Quaini, 2016, 58). Concentrating on these poets' reflections, especially in the "gray" areas shaped by perpetual social changes and crystallization, such as the opaque regions of the Maritime Alps, reveals the centrality of their transformations. Writer Magagni, in his contemplation of the "right to the landscape," emphasizes the imperative to advocate for aesthetic elements crucial for reconstructing a sense of wholeness, shielding it from the hegemonic forces of globalization and the erosion of its unique identity.
A paradigm shift is vital, aiming to empower local communities and restore virtuous relationships between cities and their surrounding territories. The process of identity formation connecting an individual or community to a specific place should not be confined to origins. Under the influence of global hegemonic ideologies, narratives may detach from the "genius loci" characterizing a landscape, contributing to its destruction. As Bonesio articulates,

> *"the landscape must be considered as part of a broader reflection on the polarity between global and local"* * (Bonesio, 2007, p. 208).

The global must respect and understand the unique features of local cultures without erasing their differences. Conversely, the local needs a broader perspective, as it may lapse into "abstract localism" without its global counterpart (Bonesio, 2007, p. 208).

Ultimately, as we navigate the rich composition of landscape identity, the cruciality arises to acknowledge the delicate interplay between global and local influences, safeguarding unique local features while fostering a more broad perspective that transcends narrow localism.

Humanized Landscape

A crucial concept in framing this thesis is the notion of the entire analyzed territory as "altered nature," firmly situating the research within the contemporary Anthropocene era. Interpreting André Corboz's initial concept of the "Land as a Palimpsest" (1983) becomes decisive for a nuanced understanding of the examined zone. The landscape emerges as an ongoing anthropic exertion, shaped by processes of exploitation, colonization, and negotiation with nature across centuries, culminating in its present form shaped by human needs and necessities.

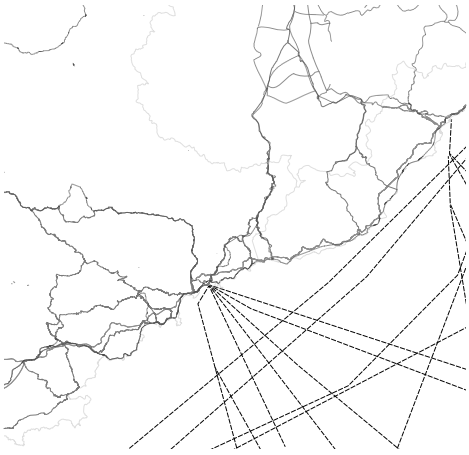
Roberta Cevasco, in her work "Sulla Rugosità del Paesaggio" (2013) delves into the inherited concept of landscape. According to her, recognizing the processual and historical dimension of the territory is fundamental. Seeking the primordial landscape in the Mediterranean context is futile, given the deep anthropic alterations reaching back to the origin of human presence. The specific local landscape becomes a historical source, a palimpsest readable through the stratigraphy of human interventions. Archaeological experience clarifies, in its stratigraphic succession, a multitemporal reality without interruptions or gaps, encompassing not only city stones but also vegetation and soil as artifacts.

Massimo Quaini contributes significantly to the discourse within the Ligurian context by examining the prevalent dichotomy between nature and society. He questions the detrimental implications assigned to nature when exclusively perceived in its pristine and untouched state, juxtaposing this with the ongoing processes of humanization. The humanized landscape, shaped and constructed by human activities, is frequently stigmatized as "altered" with negative connotations compared to an idealized era of primordial forests described as "squalid," "amorphous," and even a "cultural desert." Quaini meticulously analyzes the representation of cultivated fields, roads, and towns, emphasizing their sharp contrast with the dynamic vitality embodied in the "residues" of nature. These residual elements include traces of the so-called "primordial forest" or the "marginal green" found in hedges, groves, and wooded slopes that delineate fields (Quaini, 1981, p. 78).

Thus, when contemplating the extensive anthropization and transformation of the Ligurian landscape, Quaini attributes its current deterioration to inadequate maintenance. According to his perspective, Liguria's identity is not a static, fossilized entity but rather an ongoing project, a collection of endeavors that accumulate significance across time and space. These projects involve the creation of numerous territorial images, actively shaped by the community and susceptible to transformations and potential conflicts. However, it is essential to caution against interpreting this cultural landscape as dematerialized, merely composed of symbolic and perceptual images. Such an interpretation hinders a thorough and realistic understanding of the landscape. Consequently, it is crucial to conceptualize and scrutinize the historical continuum of landscape changes and the processes of territorialization and deterritorialization with a substantial material dimension. This approach necessitates consistently linking the explored historical layers and literature to the tangible reality of the landscape under examination. (Quaini, 1981)

In conclusion, unraveling the intricate layers of the Ligurian landscape demands a deep understanding of its historical stratifications and the ongoing interplay between territorialization and deterritorialization, emphasizing the need to connect the analyses of literature and historical layers to the tangible physical reality of the landscape.

Network system

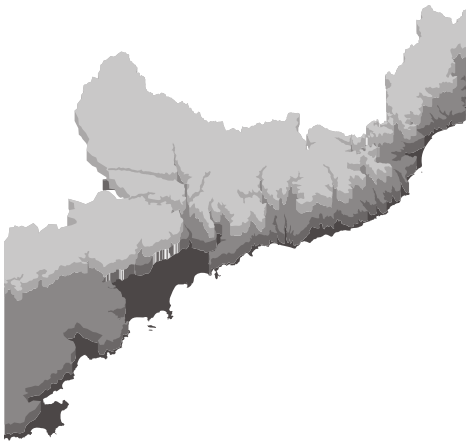


— Highways
— Provincial roads
····· Railways
— Naval routes

Hydrography

River Catchments
— Main rivers

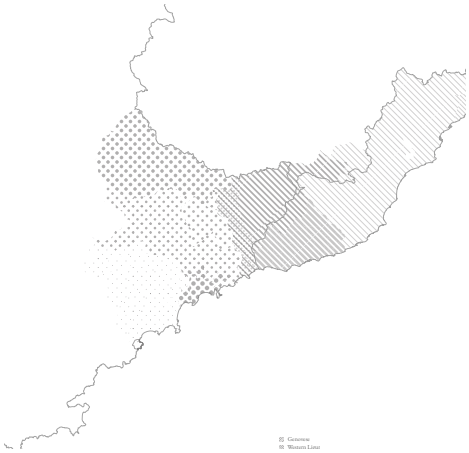
Territorial Division



Urban
Peri-urban
Rural

Climatic Zones

Dialectal Variations



Genovese
Western Ligurian
Roiasco Ligurian
Intemelio Ligurian
Mentonasc Franco- Ligurian
Vivaroaupenc Occitan
Niçois Occitan
Provençal Occitan
National and Regional Border

Geomorphological Units

Limestone fysch ridges
Clastic sediment
Sedimentary
Sandstone
Limestone
Quarzite
Impure Limestone
Andesite
Orthogneiss
Periodite
Schist

Shifted Identities

A crucial aspect for analyzing the theoretical foundation essential to understanding this thesis involves examining the changes in cultural identity within the context of Liguria and the Maritime Alps.
According to Augustin Berque's theory (2000), there has been a reversal of roles, shifting from the environment-landscape process to the landscape-environment. Initially, this involves the discovery and identification process that defines a landscape based on the value of a specific environment. However, Berque contends that a reversal has indeed occurred. The sense of human alienation, a feeling of "non-belonging" and complete disconnection from the surrounding environment, leads to the loss of human identification with the context and a return to the concept of environment. Quaini emphasizes the need to reestablish a connection with the landscape, recreating a bond through the reappropriation of values and identity associated with it. By employing local literature as a research method, he aims to illustrate the representation of this landscape heritage that recent generations no longer recognize or can recreate as part of their imagination, hence reverting to being considered environment once again (Marson, 2021). It is crucial to understand the disorientation that individuals experience in their surrounding environment. Fortunately, the outrage against these places is shareable among individuals with similar perceptions and sensitivities, allowing for the collective civic action of activists responding to the depletion of environmental assets, whether natural or cultural (Vallerani, 2021).

> *"Rediscovering the 'lost landscape' involves shaping something profoundly missed, an irreplaceable source for envisioning our future scenarios"** (Quaini, 2010, p. 67).

It's not nostalgia for a past that can't return but a melancholy for what could have been. Aligned with Quaini's reflections, the landscapes he analyzes bear an archaic Mediterranean essence, reframed in different ways and times, emphasizing the vernacular, local identity, and the rural environmentm, long neglected and still at risk despite several national protection strategies. Building on earlier discussions of global-local dynamics and the discovery of "two Ligurias", the primary importance of restoring this lost landscape connection emerges. Addressing the ongoing loss of cultural identity within the territory and how this process can be reversed is crucial. Preserving inland areas is the initial step toward redefining the existing territorial framework. Beyond Quaini's reflection on preserving ephemeral memories, it is essential to not only identify what is lost but also spatially locate this flow of historical place reminescences. Reflecting on what remains and proposing solutions embedded in local vernacular knowledge and consistent with local imaginaries is crucial to redefine the multifaceted identity that the place has undergone throughout history. It means reflecting territorially on the evolving identity of a place, seeking to reestablish a connection partially abstracted from the place's history and the social and territorial processes underway.

Cultural Landscape

The final aspect to be addressed is the significance of landscape heritage and the identity it embodies. This conceptualization is crucial for reexamining the realm of urban design and guiding subsequent design interventions in the proposal.

The "Handbook for Conservation and Management of the World Heritage Cultural Landscapes", edited by the World Heritage Centre, defines Cultural Landscapes as follows:

> *"Cultural landscapes are those where human interaction with natural systems has, over a long time, formed a distinctive landscape. These interactions arise from, and cause, cultural values to develop"* (Mitchell et al, p. 5).

Although the concept of cultural landscapes dates back to the 19th century, the planning and management of cultural landscapes are relatively recent fields, sparking extensive research and discussion. The global exchange of experiences and the showcase of best practices in managing these landscapes are essential, fostering sustainable innovative solutions (Mitchell et al, p. 6). The concept of landscape is inherently cultural, and while the term "cultural landscapes" may initially seem redundant, it emphasizes human interaction with the environment and the presence of tangible and intangible cultural values. Human geographers define a cultural landscape as

> *"a concrete and characteristic product of the interplay between a given human community, embodying certain cultural preferences and potentials, and a particular set of natural circumstances. It is a heritage of many eras of natural evolution and of many generations of human effort"* (Wagner and Miskell, quoted in Fowler, 1999, p.56).

In 2018, "dry-stone walls" were inscribed on UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage, marking a crucial step in recognizing this landscape as a cultural one. However, this acknowledgment only captures its metaphysical, intangible value, while the landscape remains tangible, alterable, and at risk. Therefore, as a second step, it is our duty to recognize this exceptional landscape as a Cultural Landscape in need of protection and preservation. It is crucial to acknowledge its true value and unequivocally advocate for its safeguarding. Drawing on the previously mentioned text, the Ligurian terraced landscape, with all its diverse facets, clearly falls into the second category of existing cultural landscapes. Termed as an "organically evolved landscape," it has developed its present form in association with and in response to its natural environment, reflecting this evolutionary process in its form and features. Specifically, it is a "relict (or fossil) landscape," where the evolutionary process concluded in the past, but its significant features are still visible in material form (Mitchell et al, p. 20). The first step in this project is, therefore, recognizing this landscape as an identity-driven cultural landscape.

Once the acknowledgment of the landscape as a cultural and identity-driven entity is established, the subsequent imperative is to contemplate the preservation of this identity-centric landscape. In this context, the term "territory" pertains to the 'constructed landscape' (Ferrando, Mannoni 1989, p. 12), described as "t*he expressive territory of identity, whose character derives from the action of natural and human factors and their interrelationships*" *, as articulated in the"Codice bei Beni Culturali e del Paesaggio" (Dlgs. 22 del 2004, Art. 131. Par. I)."

Identifying ① → *Defining* ② → *Transcending* ③ → *Intervening*

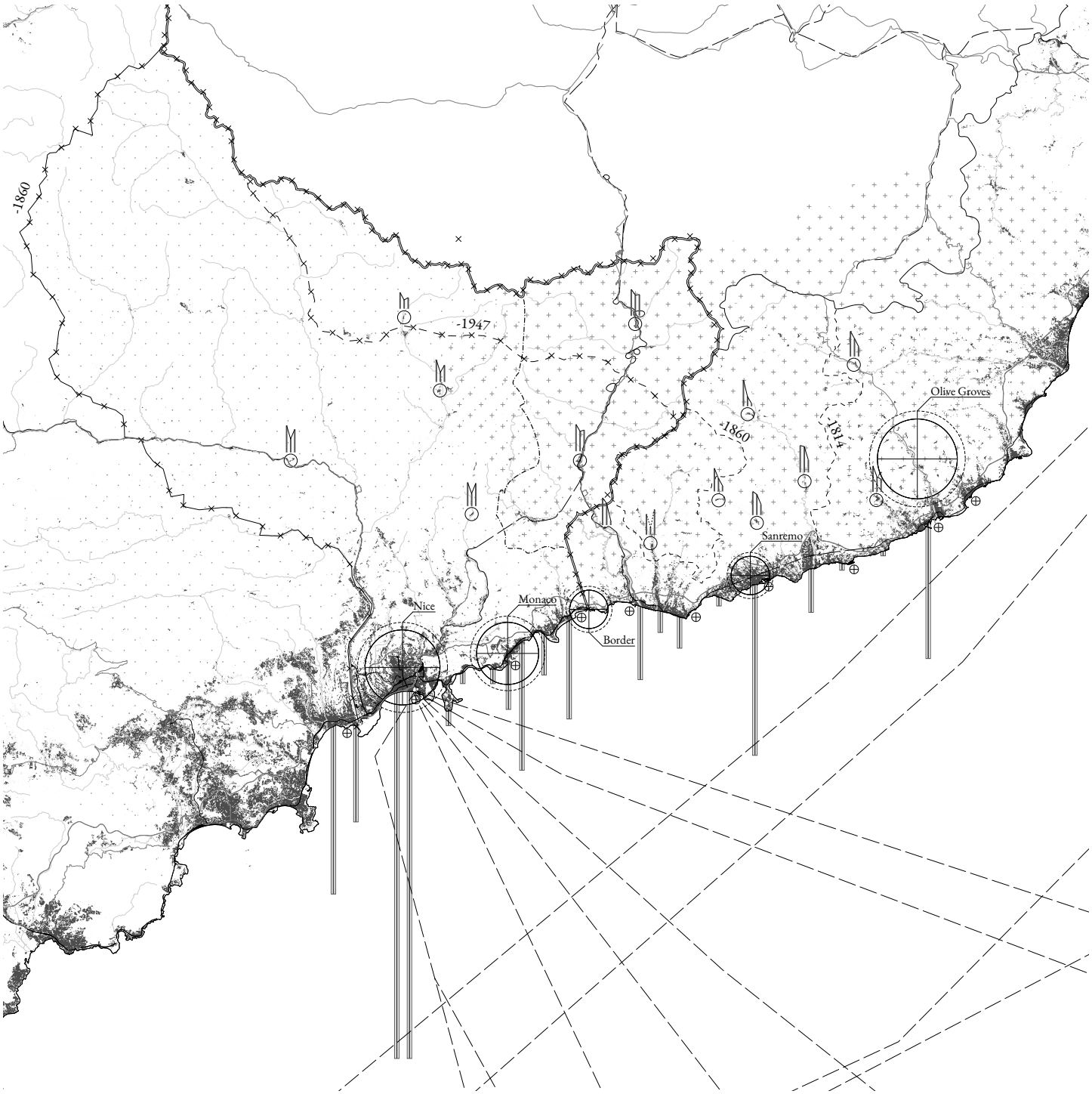
From recognizing the "context" of the rural and built environment as Cultural Heritage (Amsterdam Charter of 1975) to acknowledging, safeguarding, and recovering the cultural values they express (Dlgs. 22 del 2004, Art. 131, par IV), we now face the evident need to directly intervene in this anthropized landscape.

The previous steps have highlighted how the process of recognizing the need to protect landscape features has been well-established to date through numerous charters and codes. However, a clear gap emerges in this research between conservative processes in architecture and those in urban design. In architecture, discourse on the conservation and restoration of the built environment has been ongoing for centuries, with numerous examples of restoration from various periods and styles. In contrast, within the realms of urban design and landscape architecture, notions of landscape conservation and protection are advanced, but direct restoration interventions (whether conservative, scientific, or philological) are much less prevalent and emerge in few global-scale cases. To get to the point, there is a challenge in defining the actual scope of intervention, motivations, and precautions to be taken in the domain of heritage urbanism. In the realm of the Landscape, discussions extensively cover the concepts of conservation and safeguarding, but actual restoration work aimed at reverting landscape features to a previous state is less frequently suggested.

The task of this research, therefore, is to demonstrate what the methodology and techniques could be to extend the realm of restoration not only to the built environment but also to landscape cultural assets. This implies not just recognizing the value of the surrounding environment and the landscape asset as something to protect and safeguard but actually perceiving it as a subject still evolving. Consequently, it can be modified and altered to improve its conservation status or return it to a historical state.

To ensure reader clarity, it is crucial to revisit Cesare Brandi's definition of conservative restoration (1963). For him, philological restoration emphasizes the meticulous study and respect for the history of an artwork or artifact. This method seeks to preserve the authenticity of the work, respecting its historical evolution, original technique, and any signs of aging. The goal is to maintain the work's identity intact and allow its historical and artistic characteristics to emerge clearly.

In conclusion, to advocate for the preservation of the identity of the territory in the Maritime Alps under analysis, it is imperative to perceive it as a cultural landscape with a distinctive identity. Consequently, promoting new interventions involves not only safeguarding but also restoring. By extending the principles of philological restoration into the domain of urban design, there arises the potential to reconstruct robust identity-driven landscapes in the Ligurian context, thereby countering the longstanding loss of values in this environment.



Historical-Cultural Map

0 10 20 km

- Urbanised areas
- Ligurian speaking
- Provencal speaking
- Coastal demography
- Denographic trends inner land
- Border before 1860
- Border 1860-1947
- Today's Border
- Natural Border
- Ports
- Areas of interest

Literary Review

Literary Review

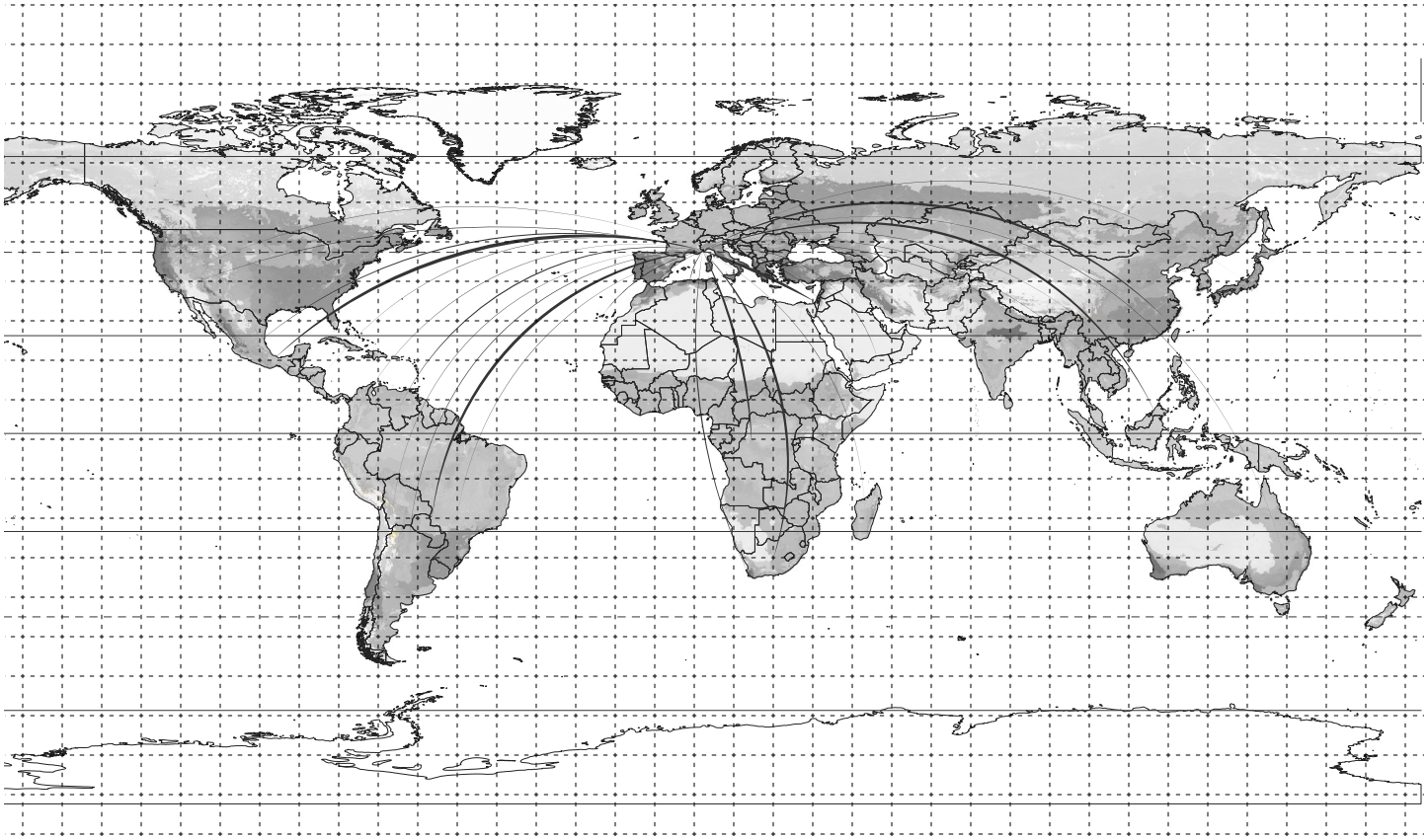
In the examination of interdisciplinary collaboration within urban design, this thesis attempts to illustrate the effective assimilation of unconventional sources, notably poetry and literature, into the methodological framework. Quaini's perspective emphasizes the perceptive role of writers and poets in capturing the essence of landscape, demonstrating the cultural significance of places, and advocating for a comprehensive perspective that transcends technical considerations. As previously indicated, the implementation of the Geocriticism approach (Westphal, 2007) has been integral to this study. This methodology centers on the analysis of landscape descriptions found in literary texts situated within the specified geographical era. By transcending the subjectivity of the author, it facilitates a comprehensive and objective understanding of the area of interest, considering diverse perspectives. The investigation that unfolds here spans from erudite literary figures who narrated the exceptional and idyllic aspects of the Ligurian landscape. It then transitions through the avant-gardes of the twentieth century, which favored narrations of everyday life, rural existence, and the industriousness of the people. Subsequently, it analyses narratives detailing the profound social and environmental changes that impacted the region, aligning with the broader context of Italy during this period, and the irreversibility of these actions remains evident today. The analyzed theses begin with Ruffini's 1855 British novel, marking the onset of the era of elite Riviera tourism and intellectual interest in the region. The inquiry concludes with a profound exploration of the extensive narratives that Italo Calvino dedicated to his homeland. The examined texts encompass a range of genres, including poetry, prose extracts and essays.

"Doctor Antonio" was written by Giovanni Ruffini in English in 1855 in Great Britain. The narrative unfolds as Lucy, daughter of Sir John Davenne, forms an unspoken connection with the Sicilian political refugee Dr. Antonio, who aids her during an accident near Bordighera. The book starts with a description of the Ligurian landscape from the coach on which Lucy was travelling:

> *"Numerous towns and villages, some gracefully seated on the shore, bathing their feet in the silvery waves, some stretching up the mountain sides like a flock of sheep, or thrown picturesquely aside a lofty bridge, with here and there a solitary sanctuary perched high on a sea-washed cliff, or half lost in a forest of verdure at the head of some glen; marble palaces and painted villas emerging from sunny vineyards, gaily flowering gardens, or groves of orange and lemon trees; myriads of white casini with green jalousies, scattered all over hills, once sterile, but now their scanty soil propped up by the terrace shelving above terrace, clothed to the top with olive-trees,—all and everything, in short, of man's handiwork, betokens the activity and ingenuity of a tasteful and richly-endowed race."* (Ruffini, 1855, pp. 1-2)

The diligent labor of the local population is evident from the start, showcasing how the current landscape is solely attributable to their efforts. Despite the deceptive garden-like appearance, the soil is described as "scanty" and requires support from numerous terraces that were once considered barren. The text repeatedly emphasizes the opulence and exoticism of this landscape:

> *"The observant walker can spot palms of all types, from African to Californian. Yuccas, euphorbias, and cacti—some now bearing red flowers—along with the palisanders displaying dense and brilliant blooms in this season, exhibit vast crowns of blue*



Non-autoctonous Plants Origin

> *shading into violet. The araucarias resemble phantom vessels, standing tall and neatly parallel. Eucalyptus trees defy the sky with their mass. Just a meter of soil allows poppies, acanthus, and agapanthus to emerge. While roses and wisteria have faded, entire walls are adorned with bougainvilleas and campanulas"* (Ruffini, 1855, p. 142).

Similar to Ruffini's narrative, Raffaele Andreoli, in his book "Storia di San Remo" (1878) describes the opulence and uniqueness of this stretch of coast.

> *"In one of the most picturesque bays of the Ligurian Riviera di Ponente, between Cape Verde and Cape Pino, sits the city of Sanremo. Nestled against a graceful semicircle of hills that surround it from all sides, except the south where the sea bathes it, it receives the enviable gift of eternal spring. [...] [B]ut all around the old refuges, as well as the new splendors, delightful gardens flourish, dominated by magnificent villas. Here, all the refinements of European art accompany the luxurious beauty of nature from Asia and Africa. Among olive trees and cedars, pomegranates, and oranges, palm trees are abundant" **(p. 7-8).

With Sbarbaro, we witness for the first time an exploration of the distinction between the territory of noblemen and the inland regions. He is the first to vividly portray the vernacular nature of the territory and the enduring efforts of cultivators over centuries to adapt and maintain the land. He depicts the land as sterile, lacking in actual resources, making every action an immense effort and prompting the question of whether it is truly worth it. The desolation of the land does not signify poverty but rather emphasizes how the inhabitants appreciate and value the gifts of this land. In one of his greatest masterpieces, "Scarsa Lingua di terra" (1955), Sbarbaro fully captures this ambivalence between tradition and modernity:

"Meager strip of land that borders the sea,
enclosing the arid backs of the mountains;
carved by sudden rivers, bitten
by salt like an anchor ring;
struck by the wild, battled
by the winds bringing from the open
seas the algae and petrels
- you are a plowed stone, between sky and sea
raised, where the scorching heat burns
aromas of wild herbs.[...]
Your gentle slopes, touched by shadows
from the pale olive grove, blessings
upon this harsh land:
- harsh or gentle, ephemeral or eternal,
you are, land, and your sea, the only faces
*that peer into my deserted heart."** (Sbarbero, 1955)

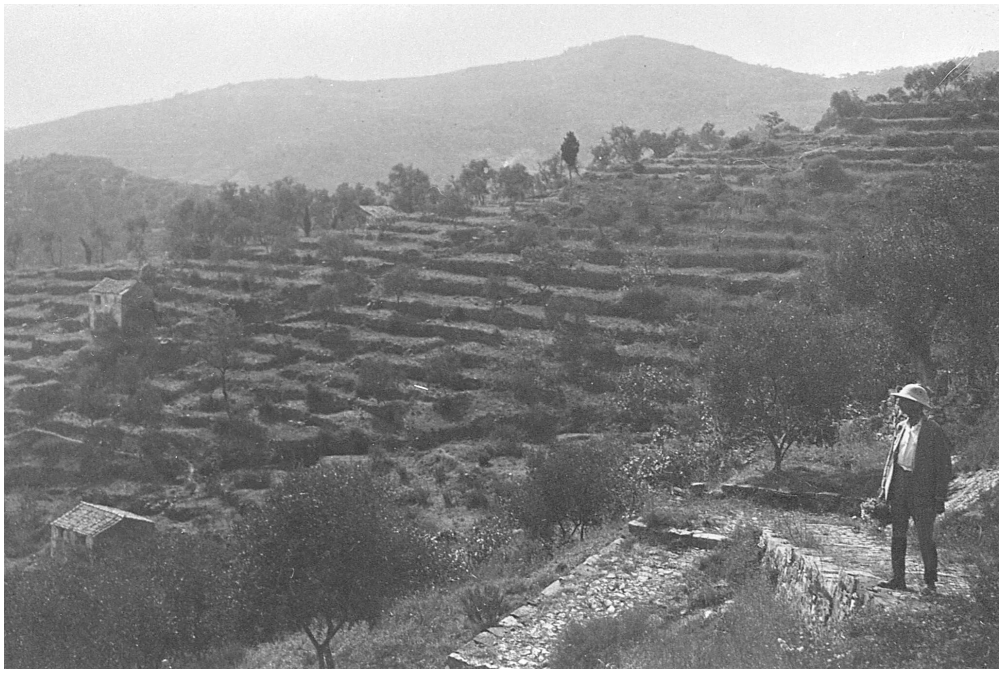


Fig. 7

Montale, in comparison to other poets, descends to a detailed examination of individual elements. He analyzes lemons, vegetation, the orchard, and the beauty of these small green patches that endure in contrast to the external world undergoing alteration. This is significant because it effectively expresses the gap between one type of land and another. Addressing a deep understanding of the anthropized landscape in the Ligurian context, Montale writes:

> *"Never was the Ligurian Riviera an 'Alcyonian' haven, nor 'panic' in the torrential sense of the word. Instead, in its natural forms, it was anthropomorphic and exquisitely human, albeit on a small scale."* * (Montale, 1971, p. 1459)

This same landscape celebrated by Giovanni Boine in his renowned essay "La crisi degli ulivi", published in 1911 in "La voce":

> *"Our fathers did not leave us palaces, they did not think about churches, they did not leave us the glory of composed architectures. Tenaciously, laboriously, religiously, they built walls, dry stone walls like Cyclopean temples, iron walls by the thousands, from the sea up to the mountain! Walls and terraces, and on the terraces, twisted olive trees bear witness that they lived, that they wanted, that they were opulent in will and strength"* * (p. 604).

With Calvino, we reach the culmination of these landscape descriptions, also thanks to his familiar background. As will be further discussed later, he elaborated greatly the essence of distinction between "Aprico" and "Opaco", between the coast and everything that lies behind it. The landscape descriptions in his literature are sharp and detailed. For Calvino, the focus is not solely on protagonists but primarily on the direct portrayal of the landscape. It encompasses both the extraordinary and the mundane.

> *"Behind the Liguria depicted in tourist billboards, beyond the Riviera adorned with grand hotels, casinos, and international tourism, lies the forgotten and unknown Liguria of the peasants. Distinct from all plain and hillside countryside, the Ligurian countryside appears more like a staircase than a traditional landscape. A staircase of stone walls ('maisgei') and narrow cultivated terraces ('fasce'), ascending from the sea up to the barren heights and reaching the Piedmontese mountains: it bears witness to centuries of struggle between a stingy nature and a people as industrious and tenacious as they are abandoned and exploited. [...] This made it possible - even in past centuries - for the laborer and tenant to emancipate the land from the possession of the rich and the clergy through their own work. They stood alone in the battle against drought that devastated crops, against landslides that ruined walls, against the harsh and unforgiving land, fragmented into tiny 'fasce,' unsuitable for plowing but only suitable for the toil of human arms armed with the traditional hoe with two or three prongs: the 'magaiu.'"* * (Calvino, 1985, pp. 2362-2363).

A keen observer and precursor of the profound changes affecting his homeland, Calvino also narrates the proliferation of greenhouses, the creation of the "Collina di Cristallo" (Pepino, 2023), which deeply alters the appearance of the coastal territory from Albenga to Ventimiglia.

> *"Lower down from the olive groves begins the area of flowers. Sterile and gray 'fasce,' with geometric plantations of carnations, adorned with sticks and threads to keep them upright, with water pipes, interspersed with large cylindrical concrete tanks, glass showcases, and mats. Flowers are the only cultivation that normally rewards the immense efforts required. [...] Above the serene world of tennis courts, halls adorned with palm trees, in the descending 'fasce,' the peasant continues a futile, solitary struggle with a pitchfork."* * (Calvino, 1985, pp. 2369-70).

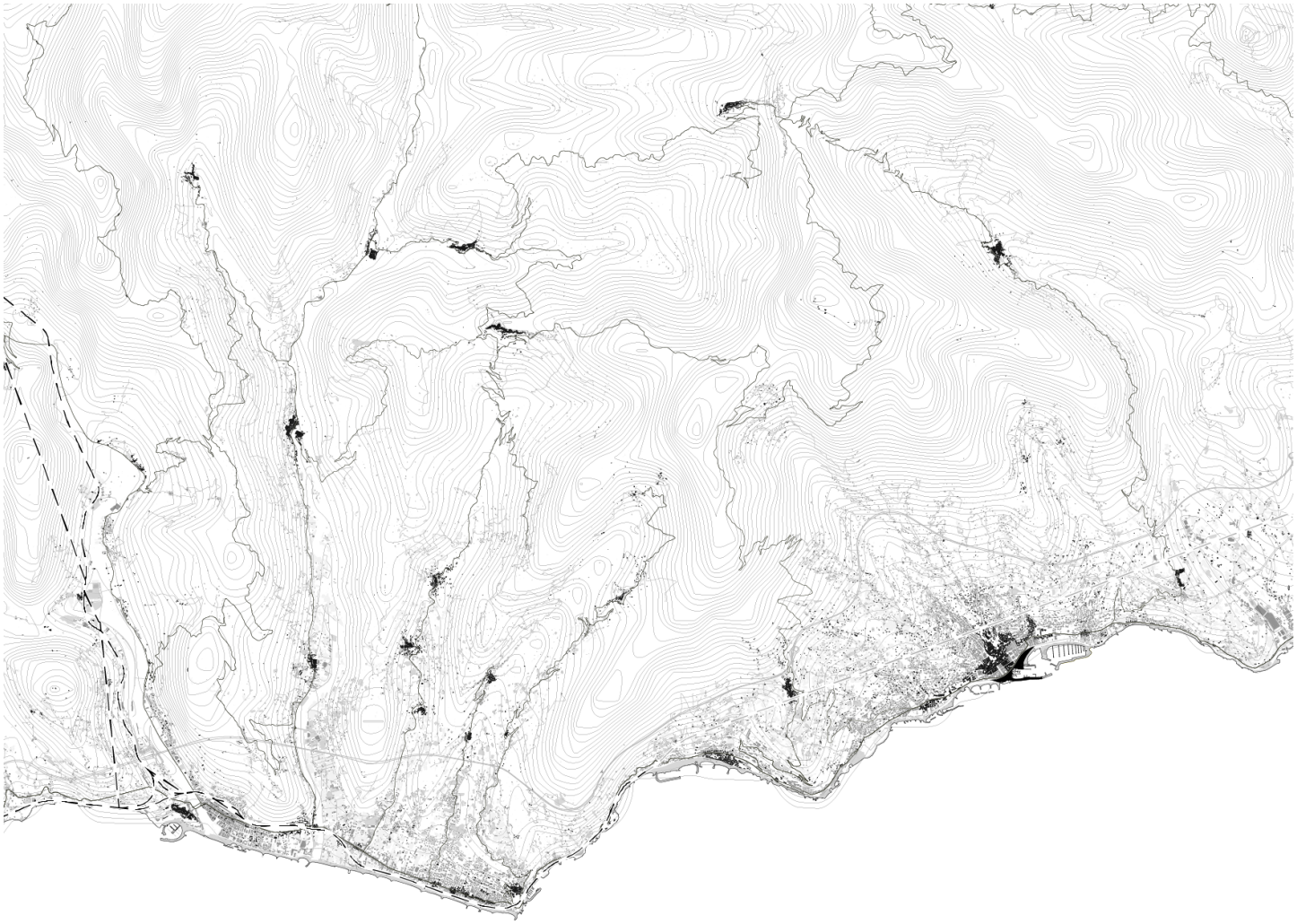
Similarly, he narrates the decline in population in the inland regions moving towards the coast. The villages and towns situated inland experienced a gradual depopulation, leading to the abandonment of the land. Consequently, the residents migrated towards the coastal areas. The terraced landscapes, some reaching considerable elevations, were left deserted and deteriorating, now overgrown by natural vegetation (Pagano, 2015).

> *"A downhill history. In the end, life is almost only on the coast. Only older people remained in the mountain villages. In certain places, it seems that there are only stones. Stones in the shale of the mule tracks, stone-faced houses without plaster, dry stone walls in the terraces, the field soil full of stones. Even the elderly, who remained in the villages, seem to be made of stone. Perhaps that's why they stayed."* * (Calvino 1946)

In addition to the phenomenon of depopulation in the inland, another aspect he tackled is the strong urbanization along the coast after the two world wars, accompanied by the rise of mass tourism. In this regard, Calvino dedicates an entire book, "La Speculazione Edilizia" [A Plunge into Real Estate] (1957), and one can easily recognize the context of Sanremo in the descriptions, left implicit by the author:

> *"The fever of concrete had taken hold of the Riviera. [...] The new buildings tried to outdo each other, rising one on top of the other, and in between, the owners of the old houses stretched their necks in the expansions."* * (p. 163).

Biamonti's literary focus centers on resilient peasants in the Ligurian inland, preserving traditional roots among the gradual dissolution of culture. Over centuries, persistent labor transformed an inhospitable landscape into a distinctive human-crafted mosaic composed with terraced olive groves. Labeled a "writer of the border," Biamonti transcends the Italo-French border, capturing the contrast between tourist-damaged coastal Liguria and a more pristine hinterland. Ruins symbolize protagonists navigating abandoned landscapes, reflecting a dedicated interest in the constructed scenery and generations' patient labor. This insight amplifies the enduring legacy of hard work and patience in Biamonti's narrative.



Palimpsest Map

0 2,5 5 km

Longue Durée

Addiction

> ***"Much patience was required, patience beneath the cerulean sky, to raise these walls."*** * (Biamonti, 1991, p. 27).

Ultimately, concluding this literary inquiry requires a reflection on the enduring tensions within this territory, examining both extinguished and ongoing phenomena. Citing Calvino one last time and echoing Pagano's final insights (2015), reflecting on the temporalities that characterize a landscape, shaping and forging it, involves contemplating the precarious balance between *"the forces that hold it together as well as those that tend to dissolve it."** (Calvino, 1985, p. 2390).

Monographies

Monographies

Borrowing the terminology commonly used in literature - a monograph, often signifying a specialized written work or exhibition centered around a singular subject - this term has been employed in the context of this master's thesis. The objective is to emphasize the necessity of thoroughly analyzing the intricate nature of the examined territorial structures and their interconnected dynamics. In adherence to the Lines of Inquiry outlined by the Transitional Territories Studio, a comprehensive investigation has been carried out on both the territorial structures and the involved stakeholders in this domain. This exploration aims to grasp the groundwork upon which subsequent design interventions are to be suggested. The trajectory of inquiry transcends conventional methodologies and concepts. These investigations also incorporate considerations of spatial morphology, landform, and the reconfiguration of relationships between environmental and human dynamics. Following a comprehensive inquiry, based on the investigative methods mentioned before, four subjects of inquiry pertaining to natural elements and constructed landscapes have been identified: fluvial catchments, flora, terraced landscapes, horticultural structures. For each of these subjects, various representation exercises have been undertaken. Three distinct investigation moments have emerged, namely "Composition", "Alteration", and "Limits".

"Composition" includes the spatial assemblage of diverse elements and their composition (homogeneous, fragmented, heterogeneous).
"Alteration" involves the sectional evolution and how processes have unfolded, illustrating the structured composition through cross-sections and showcasing the limits of action or agency that the subject or element is currently or potentially reaching.
"Limits" represents an exploration of the boundaries already attained and those yet to be reached. This phase reveals the extent of action or agency that the subject or element is currently achieving or may achieve in the future.

Following these phases of inquiry, a phase of re-composition is essential for comprehending the dynamics and fluxes within the territory and understanding how these subjects are interconnected. This enables the development of a more coherent, holistic understanding of the territory, facilitating the progression of design intentions.

Fig. 8

Altered Nature

Monographies

Composition / Alteration / Limits

De-composition & Re-Composition

Staging

Scarcity as a Project

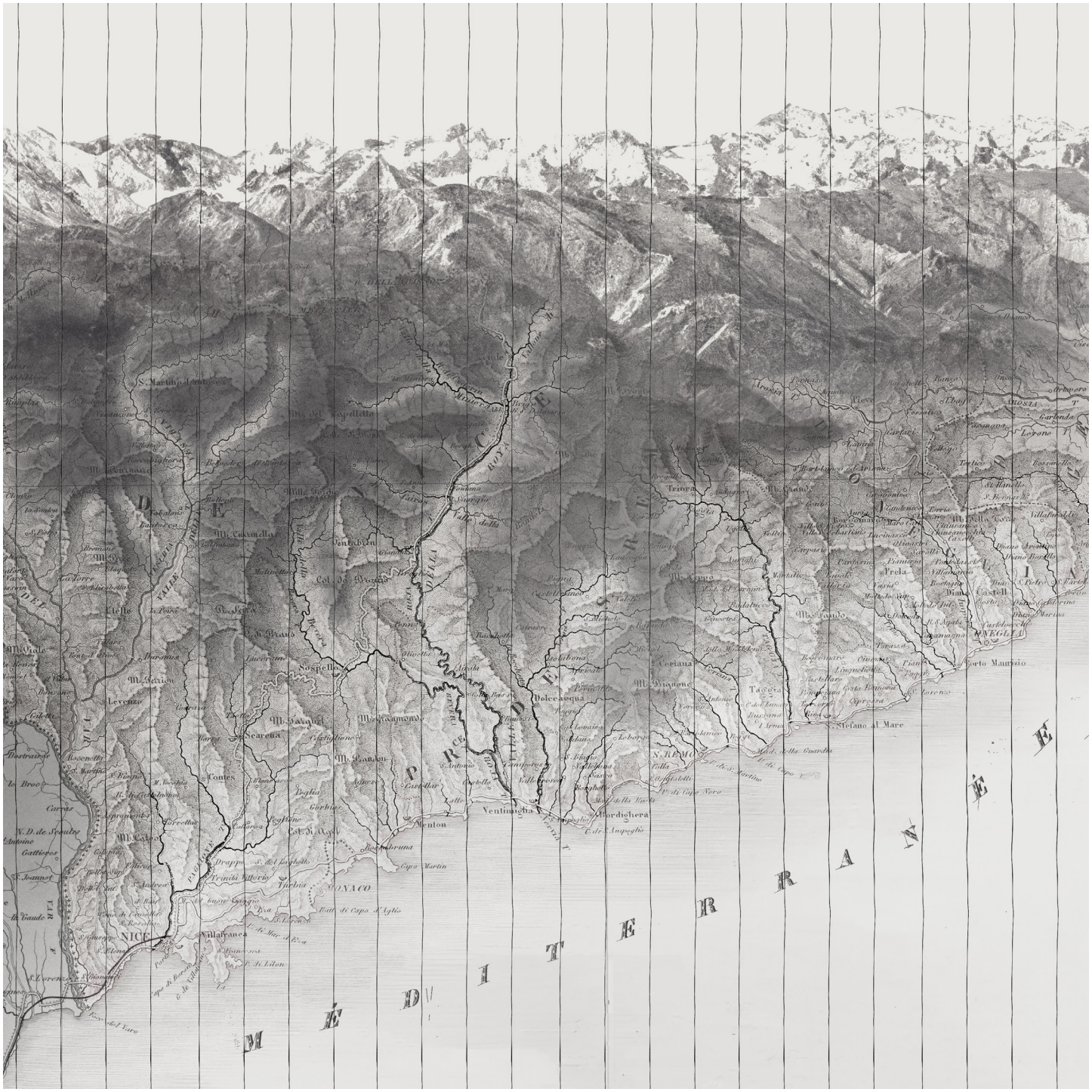
Fig. 9

Fluvial Catchments

The primary focus of the examined monograph revolves around river basins, delineating their drainage areas and the inherent challenges they pose. Liguria has rivers of moderate to short length, a characteristic attributed to the proximity of the Alpine watershed to the coastal region. This geographical arrangement results in the unique topographical feature of notably high mountains with steep slopes. The landscape unfolds as a series of mountainous slopes with a pronounced gradient that extends directly into the sea. These slopes have been molded by numerous small riverbeds, giving rise to a continuous sequence of parallel valleys (Garibaldi, 2014). The mountains sustain a considerable flow, consistently fed by the melting snow from high peaks. Although the valleys are typically narrow, the river mouths are characterized by the presence of small alluvial plains.

Anthropogenic alterations in these fluvial catchments have evolved over time. The region transitioned from a history marked by a dense population gathered in small villages in the inland, to a significant migration and settlement along the coasts in the twentieth century. Narrow alluvial plains became focal points for new settlements, driven by a unstoppable necessity of more space. Houses were constructed in the immediate hinterland, along river channels, obstructing natural water drainage and often covering riverbeds with reinforced concrete ceilings. These practices, influenced by a lack of scientific awareness and an exaggerated ecological approach, led to the alteration of the hydrographic balance. Two primary anthropogenic actions have contributed to this alteration. Firstly, the culverting of secondary rivers near urban centers, redirecting and placing them underground. Secondly, larger rivers experienced a reduction in their natural riverbeds and flow, especially near the river mouths. These alterations often involve a significant anthropogenic engineering component that has infrastructuralized all riverbeds.

The limits of this system have become evident through periodic environmental disasters in the region. Notable examples include the disasters in the Cinque Terre in 2011, Genoa in 2014, and Roja Valley in 2020. Floods and landslides dominate, marking a prolonged sequence of calamitous events. A fair evaluation considers the natural conditions triggering these events: exclusively mountainous terrain, steep slopes, transverse river catchments flowing directly into the sea, high rainfall, and a Mediterranean precipitation regime with increasingly intense extreme events over the years. Restoration efforts following these disasters reveal the changed landscape, marked by landslides triggered by flooding. Predisposing factors include steep slope inclination, differential erosion of geological formations, fragmentation with complex fracture systems, and the presence of formations prone to lubrication during rainfall. While unregulated construction is cited as a cause of damages, the negative role of constructing structures in inappropriate locations, influenced by misguided urban planning choices, has played a significant part. Instances of abuse exist, emphasizing the importance of informed decision-making to address hydrogeological instability (Garibaldi, 2014).


Ventimiglia
Menton
NICE
Villafranca
MONACO
Sospello
Triora
Ceriana
Taggia
Stefano al Mare
Porto Maurizio
S. REMO
Bordighera
Col di Tenda
Col di Braus
Col de Turini
Col di Nava
Col di Oggia
Col de Brouis
Col de Castillon
Col de Villefranche
Col de Vence
Col de Cabre
Col de Crocette
Col de Bleine
Col de Fenestre
Col de Raus
Col de Salèse
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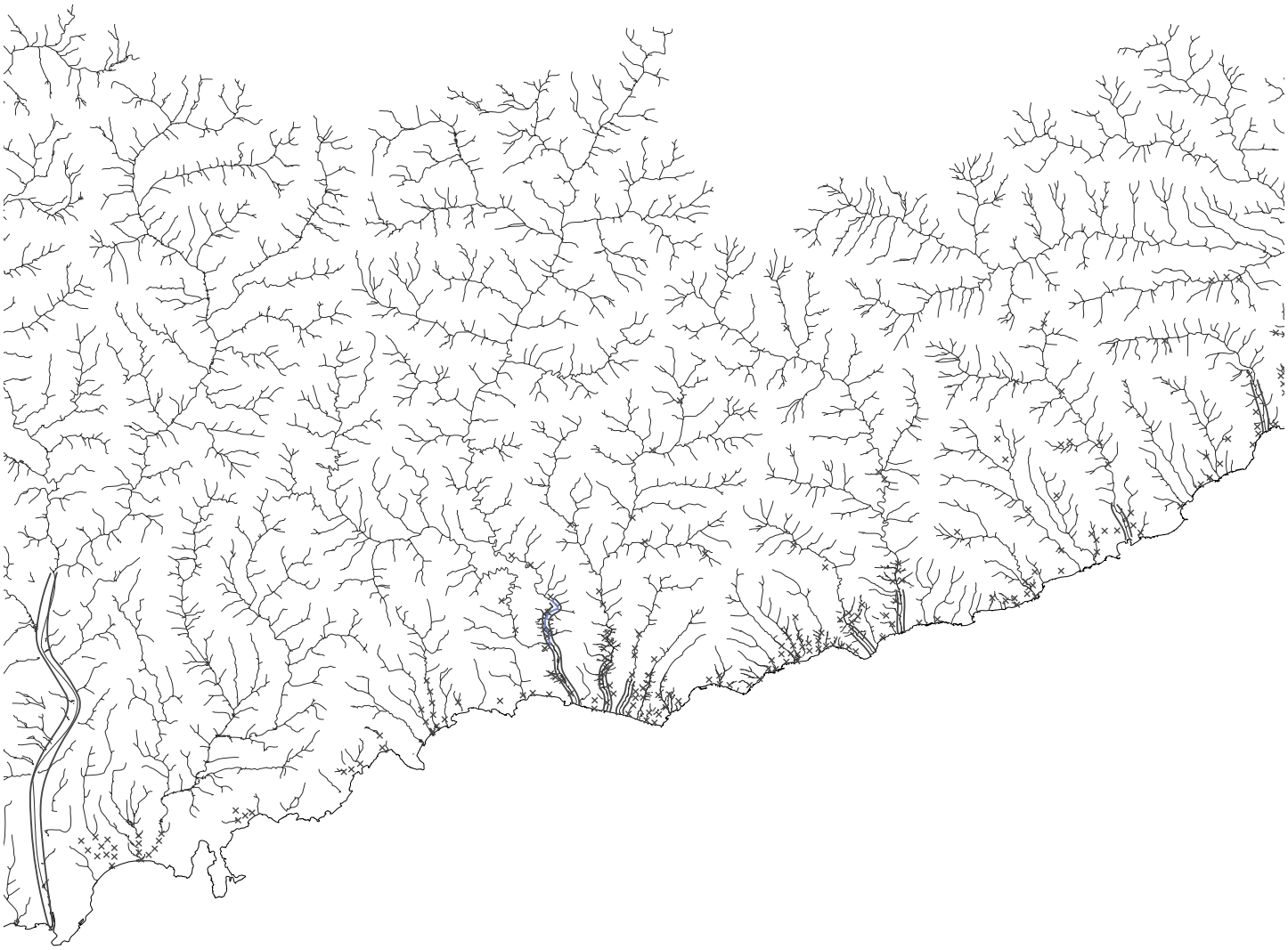
Col de Vars
Col de Restefond
Col de la Bonette
Col de Cayolle
Col de Valberg

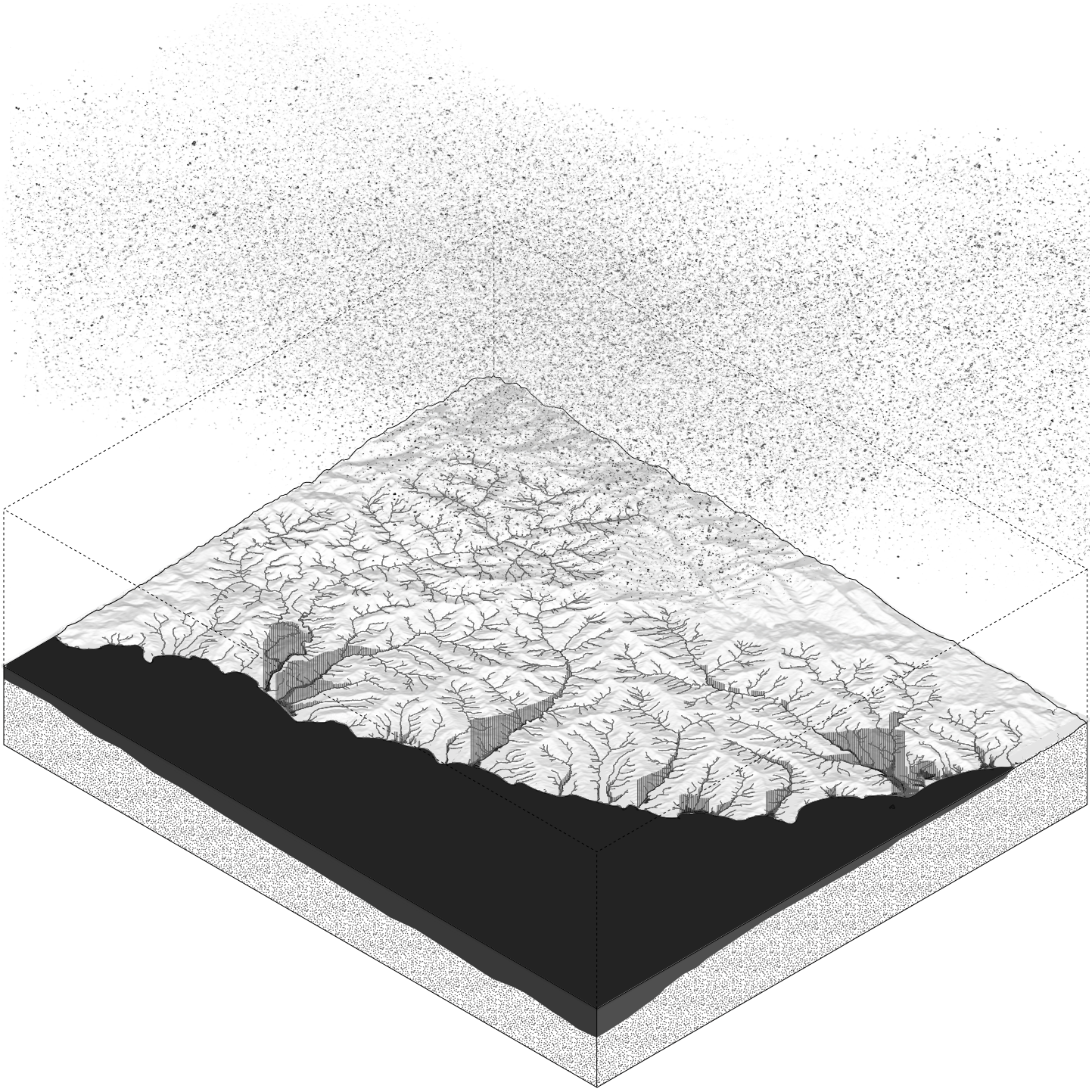


Alteration

0 7,5 15 km

× Culverted rivers

— Basin alterations



Limits

Flora

In the Mediterranean, Liguria serves as a prime example of a landscape undergoing significant changes throughout the centuries. Continuous interactions with neighboring countries have led to a notable transformation of vegetation, marked by the introduction of plants from diverse origins. Here, the objective is not to excessively contemplate the losses experienced or to draw clear distinctions between the historical arcadian landscape and the contemporary milieu. Rather, the primary focus resides in a reflection on the evolutionary trajectory of this vegetative landscape, perceived as a cultural manifestation intricately connected to the people who inhabit this territory and their necessities. Plants that were once considered exotic can now become integral components of a historical or cultural environment. The sole distinction in this regard lies between agrarian landscapes and those designed for purely recreational and experimental purposes. Not only do these distinctions delineate two different categories of landscapes, but they also emerged in markedly different historical epochs. Consequently, this discussion is partitioned into these two temporal periods.

The autochthonous woodlands of Liguria are predominantly characterized, particularly in proximity to the sea, by the prevalence of Aleppo and Maritime pines. At higher elevations, beech, chestnut, and holm oak species predominate. However, the historical landscape of this region has been subject to persistent anthropogenic interventions, leading to the alteration of vegetative typologies for human utility. Following the conquest of the shores and the narrow plains and valleys, humans initiated to interfere with the natural vegetation on the mountain slopes. This began during the medieval era, giving rise to the characteristic terraced landscapes. Horticultural activities emerged in areas proximate to the sea and human settlements, while olive groves and vineyards were established further inland (Fera, 1955).
The olive tree stands out as a key vegetative species that has significantly influenced the agricultural landscape of Liguria. This influence is particularly evident in the modern hinterland of Imperia, where intensive monocultures have emerged, not without associated challenges. The introduction of the olive tree to Liguria remains a subject of scholarly discourse, its origins traced by some to returning Crusaders from Palestine, disseminating in the 12th century, while others suggest its presence since the late Roman era (Quaini, 1972). It can be asserted, however, that the olive cultivation specialization in the Ponente region and the broader impact of the olive tree on the entire hilly landscape of maritime Liguria are phenomena of a later period, specifically the 18th century. From this epoch onward, olive monoculture encountered several issues, encompassing fluctuating olive prices, general economic unviability, and the chronic abandonment of these lands in favor of richer regions.

Historically, citrus cultivation along the Ligurian coast has diminished compared to enduring olive groves and vineyards, now limited to a sparse collection of ornamental wild plants. Reconstruction of this aspect of Ligurian agricultural landscapes relies heavily on historical documentation. Studies by historical geographers like Gallesio and underscore that citrus production in Liguria surpassed that of Southern Italy in the past. Gallesio's crucial 1811 observation remains,

> *"Sicily and the Kingdom of Naples are purported to have potentially engaged in the cultivation of lemon and orange trees, possibly predating the Ligurians. Despite the favorable climate, this cultivation, for a considerable period, remained a matter of curiosity confined to select delightful locations in these regions"** (Gallesio, 1811, p. 270).

Composition

0 7,5 15 km

Agricultural areas
Deciduous forest
Chestnut grove
Coniferous forest
Olives grove

Fig. 10

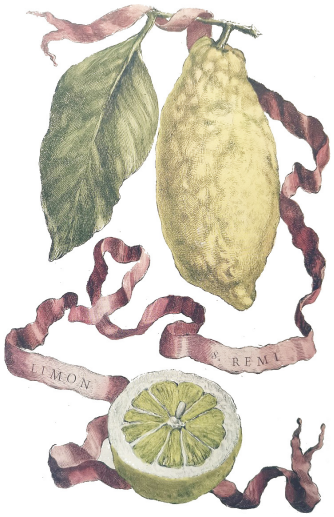


Fig. 11

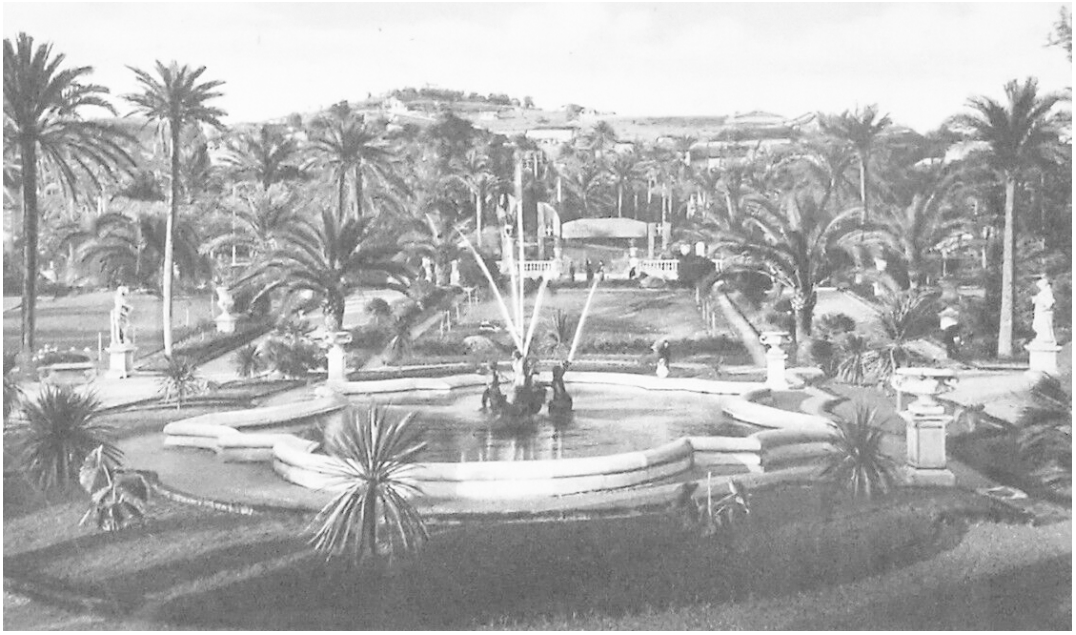


Fig. 12

Alteration

L = long durée, A = alteration, S = subtraction

By the 16th century, citrus cultivation had emerged in the coastal region near populated areas, notably in the gardens of villas and surrounding urban green spaces. This cultivation, alongside other wood-bearing crops like olive trees, almond trees, fig trees, and grapevines, profoundly altered the landscape. Along the Riviera, resembling the broader Mediterranean basin, the terrain is characterized by terraced hills supported by dry-stone walls, adorned with olive trees and vineyards. This historical transformation, initiated in the 16th century, significantly shaped the unique agricultural landscape of the region, reflecting broader trends in Mediterranean farming practices (Quaini, 1972).

The historical cultivation of exotic plants, driven by both commercial and ornamental motivations, remains deeply ingrained in Ligurian landscapes. Citrus cultivation, serving as a historical paradigm, shares prominence with the cultivation of palms in Bordighera and Sanremo, notably featured in Judeo-Christian religious celebrations. This era, characterized by the peak of bourgeois influence and colonial expansion, intensified the appeal of exoticism. This botanical trend permeated society, transforming industrial bourgeoisie and aristocratic families into enthusiastic collectors of exotic flora. Along the Riviera, enthusiastic tourists, residing in villas for a substantial part of the year, embraced contemporary trends, fashioning gardens adorned with collections of exotic plants (Morena, 2003).
The acclimatization of exotic plants developed almost simultaneously with the emergence of a prestigious agricultural activity, Floriculture. During the 19th and 20th centuries, as coastal urbanization intensified along the Ligurian and French Riviera, the hills gradually transformed, adorned with greenhouses and large cylindrical concrete tanks that resembled modern watchtowers. In this period, olive groves were replaced by floriculture greenhouses, especially noticeable between Imperia and Ventimiglia. The resulting landscape bears a lunar resemblance, featuring stone walls and tanks, forming a starkly geometric composition entirely void of natural vegetation (Fera, 1955).

In the present day, due to environmental imbalances, neglect of land maintenance, and changing climate patterns, the entire floral system in the region is at risk. The majority of inland forests face the risk of geo-hydrological instability due to insufficient land maintenance. Areas that were once high-altitude pastures are now experiencing reforestation. The same wooded regions, exacerbated by severe drought, are increasingly prone to intense summer wildfires. Despite a noteworthy revival of the olive industry in the Imperia district over the past 50 years, the abandonment of olive groves remains common in certain inland areas, where production struggles to cover costs or where modern cultivation techniques prove challenging. Globalization has notably increased the importation of plant varieties, particularly horticultural ones, from around the world, often at the expense of plant biodiversity in favor of more profitable species. Even with the use of chemical pesticides, instances persist where indigenous plants face mortality due to the arrival of insects from other regions. Examples were the African ant or, more recently, the red palm weevil, causing the death of tens of thousands of palms in the region (Carassale, 2014).

Limits

0 7,5 15 km

Wildfires
Forests in Evolution
Bioloss
Abandoned Land
Abandoned Olive Groves

Terraced Landscape

Terraced agriculture in the Maritime Alps predominantly revolves around olive cultivation. The historical progression underscores the vital role of terracing in settlement and farming, dating back to the Bronze Age, expanding through the High Middle Ages, and peaking in the 17th-18th centuries. This era witnessed terracing's extension to less favorable slopes, causing deforestation and the formation of olive forests. In the 19th century, agriculture saw the establishment of terraced strips along riverbanks. Demographic shifts towards valleys led to the abandonment of these strips. Terracing remains crucial in hillside agriculture, sustaining a deep rural tradition challenged by recent socio-economic changes. For Ligurian farmers, terracing is essential to prevent ecological disturbances, as attempting to clear a slope without terracing renders it vulnerable to rapid erosion, and potential landslides pose threats to inhabited areas (Pappalardo, 2002).

Due to migration from inland areas to the coast and the growth of tourism, economically marginal and less accessible lands are frequently deserted, resulting in the abandonment of over 50% of terraced agricultural surfaces. The vast majority of inland villages have experienced devastating depopulation in recent years, leading to the loss of agricultural labor and the abandonment of the land (see Alteration map). New spontaneous vegetation is emerging on these abandoned terraces, contributing to the degradation of slope structures. The rocky nature of a slope unequivocally influences its evolution. The Ligurian region is characterised by a strong presence of terracing at its extremities, particularly in the province of Imperia, known as the Flysch zone. The Flysch, composed of clay and limestone, fosters fertility, while its varied structural characteristics facilitate fissility, providing material for construction, drainage, and terrace filling. Terracing is most prevalent between 50 and 500 meters, peaking around 300 meters. The distribution of terracing varies, occupying scattered portions of slopes, forming diverse surfaces in terms of shapes and sizes. Terracing offers morphological benefits, preventing soil erosion, maintaining soil moisture and water balance, limiting gravitational phenomena, stabilizing terrain, and mitigating landslides. The different dimensions of these terraces, typically ranging from one to three meters, are correlated with slope steepness. Two main types of materials are employed: earth embankments relying on vegetation for containment, predominant in the eastern area, and dry stone walls, more massive and adaptable based on their purpose. It is crucial to note that local stone materials are consistently utilized, regardless of geotechnical characteristics (Pappalardo, 2002; Salesse, 2000).

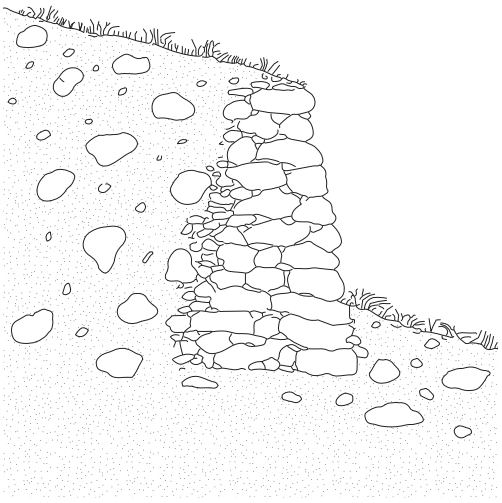


Fig. 13

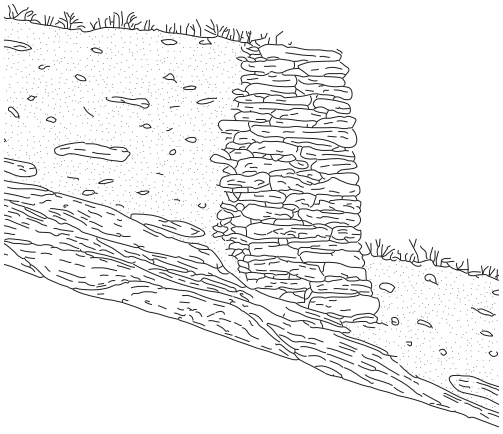
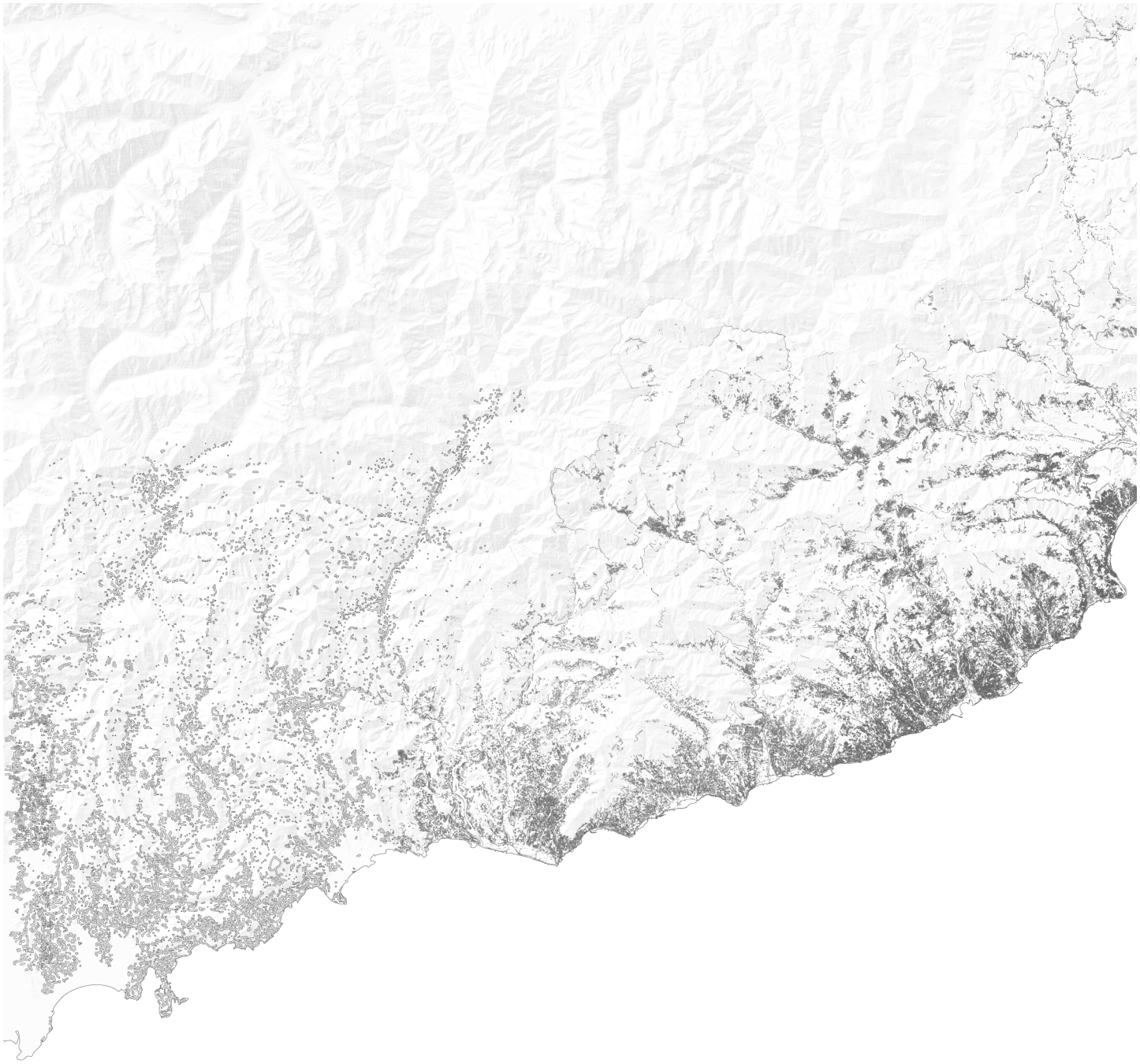


Fig. 14



Composition

0 7,5 15 km

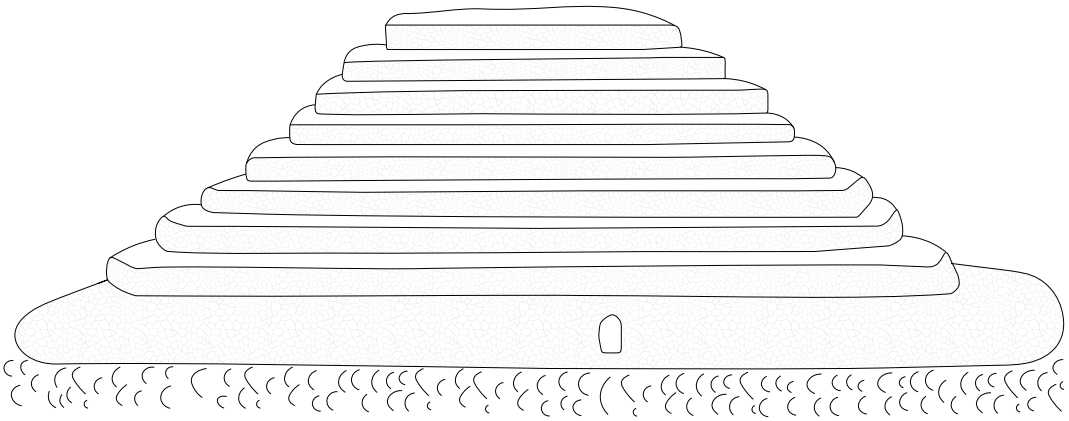
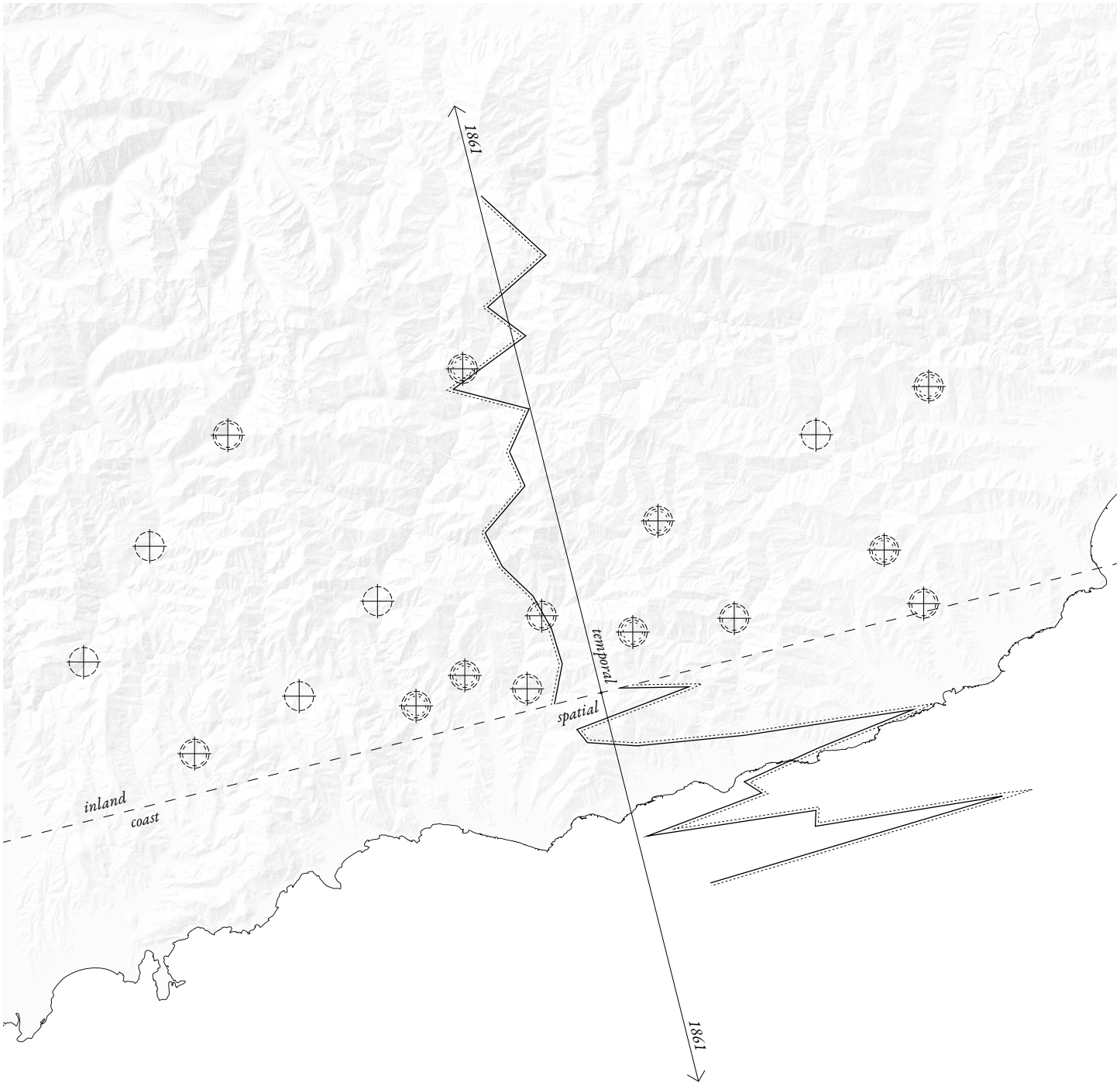


Fig. 15

Terrace exploitation involves the presence of a debris layer forming the terrace base. If insufficient, additional material is obtained from alluvial valley bottoms using large wicker baskets. The terrace is divided into two parts: an upper section more exposed to degradation and a lower part composed of material washed down. Precipitation is partly absorbed by the soil, with the remainder flowing downhill, causing increasingly pronounced runoff. In terraces, water carries debris, accumulating against barriers. Observing abandoned terraces reveals how unchecked erosion, due to lack of human maintenance, gradually leads to complete soil removal, exposing bare rock. The wall deforms until it collapses, and the accumulated material behind it is carried downstream by rainwater, often flooding the hydrographic network. This, for instance, reduces bridge clearances. Notably, the abandonment of terraces effectively becomes a component of hydrogeological instability (Brancucci & Ghiglione, 2020). Pappalardo builds upon Sestini's concept that elements of the anthropic landscape, like natural forms, endure as an "anthropogeographic landscape as a form of equilibrium"* (1947). This underscores the evolution of a territory's human landscape through ascending, equilibrium, and declining phases as long as the active agent persists. The reappropriation by natural agents undergoes regressive stages, wherein anthropic, possibly indirect, intervention can prove crucial (Pappalardo, 2002, p. 301). In this region area, the maintenance of terraced structures has declined since the post-war period, except in specific areas where unconventional methods and materials were applied for restoration. Along the coastal region, old dry-stone walls have been replaced by cost-effective, sturdy, and easily maintained cement structures. Despite the advantages, using cement on terraces raises concerns about aesthetics. Issues arise when



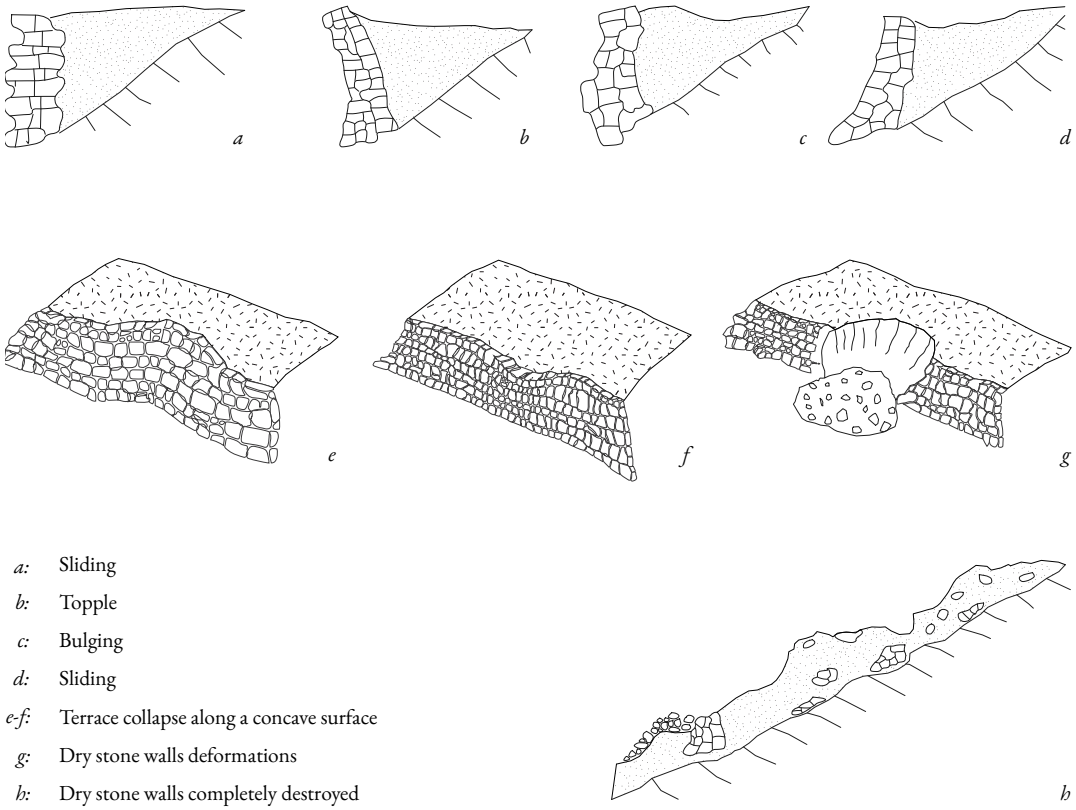
Alterations

0 7,5 15 km

- Slightly Depopulated
- Moderately Depopulated
- Heavily Depopulated

cementing the terrace base coincides with enclosing the riser in greenhouse glass, significantly reducing water drainage and altering ground temperature, reducing its natural functions to merely a “container” for plant roots.

After being acknowledged by UNESCO, terraced landscapes undergo a significant reassessment, recognizing their deep cultural and agricultural significance. Now seen as cultivated areas conducive to secure living and work, this shift in perspective moves away from narratives of instability. Instead, it embraces restoration efforts, the establishment of natural ecosystems, and the rediscovery of native plant varieties. The revival of once-abandoned villages, led by Ligurian mountain region associations, signals a promising direction toward lively coastal centers.
At this crucial point, there is a heightened emphasis on the renewed commitment to terrace preservation, fostering scholarly discussions on sustainable cohabitation within this unique landscape (Brancucci and Ghiglione, 2020).



a: Sliding
b: Topple
c: Bulging
d: Sliding
e-f: Terrace collapse along a concave surface
g: Dry stone walls deformations
h: Dry stone walls completely destroyed

Fig. 16

Limits

0 7,5 15 km

Moderate erosion risk

High erosion risk

Very high erosion risk

Horticultural Structures

The introduction of greenhouse cultivation stands out as a significant alteration to the Ligurian agricultural landscape starting from the end of the nineteenth century. Recent decades witnessed shifts in cultivation practices, exemplified by the replacement of traditional olive cultivation with profitable greenhouse horticulture, primarily along the exposed coastal terrain. This phenomenon, almost unique in Italy, impacted the westernmost Ligurian region, particularly the coastal area between Albenga and Ventimiglia, with focal points in Albenga and Sanremo, the latter renowned as the "City of Flowers". The district is divided in two clusters, the Albenga region, with its emphasis on potted plant production, and the Sanremo region, specializing in flowers, green fronds, and nurseries, playing a crucial role in the floricultural sector on the national scale (Quaini, 1972). Italy ranks second in European flower and ornamental plant production after the Netherlands, with Liguria contributing extensively. The Riviera di Ponente, specifically between Albenga and Sanremo, hosts approximately 95% of the region's floriculture enterprises (ISTAT, 2010).

Greenhouses take on various forms, ranging from simple shading structures to glass-covered facilities designed for crops needing warth year-round. These structures have diverse interactions with the landscape, potentially causing environmental impacts. Specifically, when situated on terraced terrain, greenhouses can induce soil impermeability, disrupting hydrogeological equilibrium and slope stability. The water that is not absorbed by the soil is directed through gutter systems, augmenting its erosive capacity. This heightened erosive potential often leads to the collapse of terrace retaining walls in a later stage, necessitating replacements with modern cement structures in numerous cases. Additionally, greenhouses influence the microclimate and water balance, impeding natural water infiltration, restricting soil aeration, and increasing surface temperatures year-round (Gaggero & Ghersi, 2002; Pappalardo, 2002).

These issues are aggravated by the widespread abandonment of greenhouses in the territory, particularly those dedicated to floriculture, notably in the Sanremo area. This phenomenon results from a significant decline in demand over the past fifty years and intense international competition, particularly from the Netherlands. The Ligurian sector has struggled to keep pace with innovation and market demands, making the facilities obsolete. In some cases, these greenhouses have transitioned to cultivating shrubs or fruit trees, resulting in their covers being left unused or unnecessary. In other cases, particularly in family-run businesses, widespread abandonment occurs without greenhouse dismantling due to high costs, further aggravating environmental risks.

Composition

0 2,5 5 km

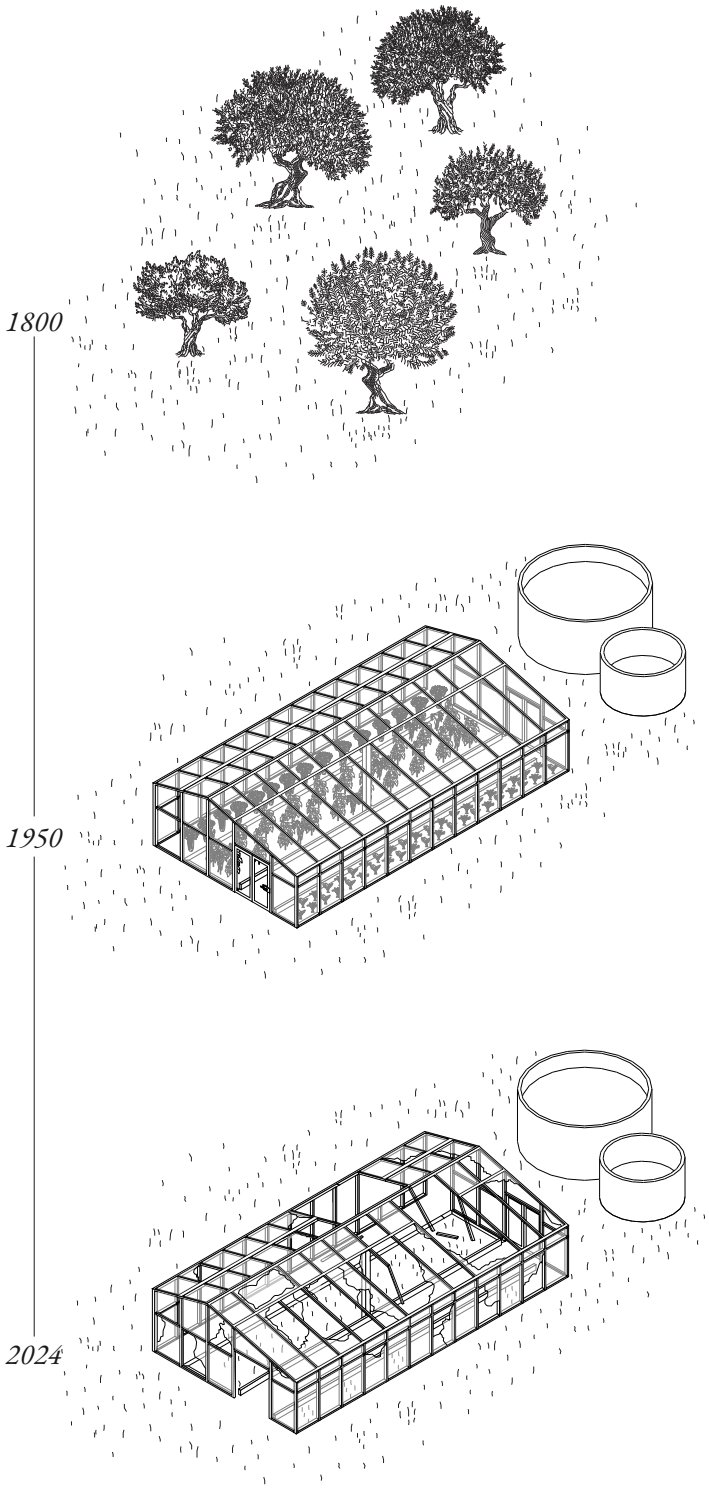
Greenhouses

Greenhouses/open air horticulture

Nurseries

Riviera dei fiori
ITALIA
Carnations
Tris
Daisies
Chrysanthemums
Anemones
Brooms
Roses
1982
1990
1997
2010
2020

Alteration



Limits

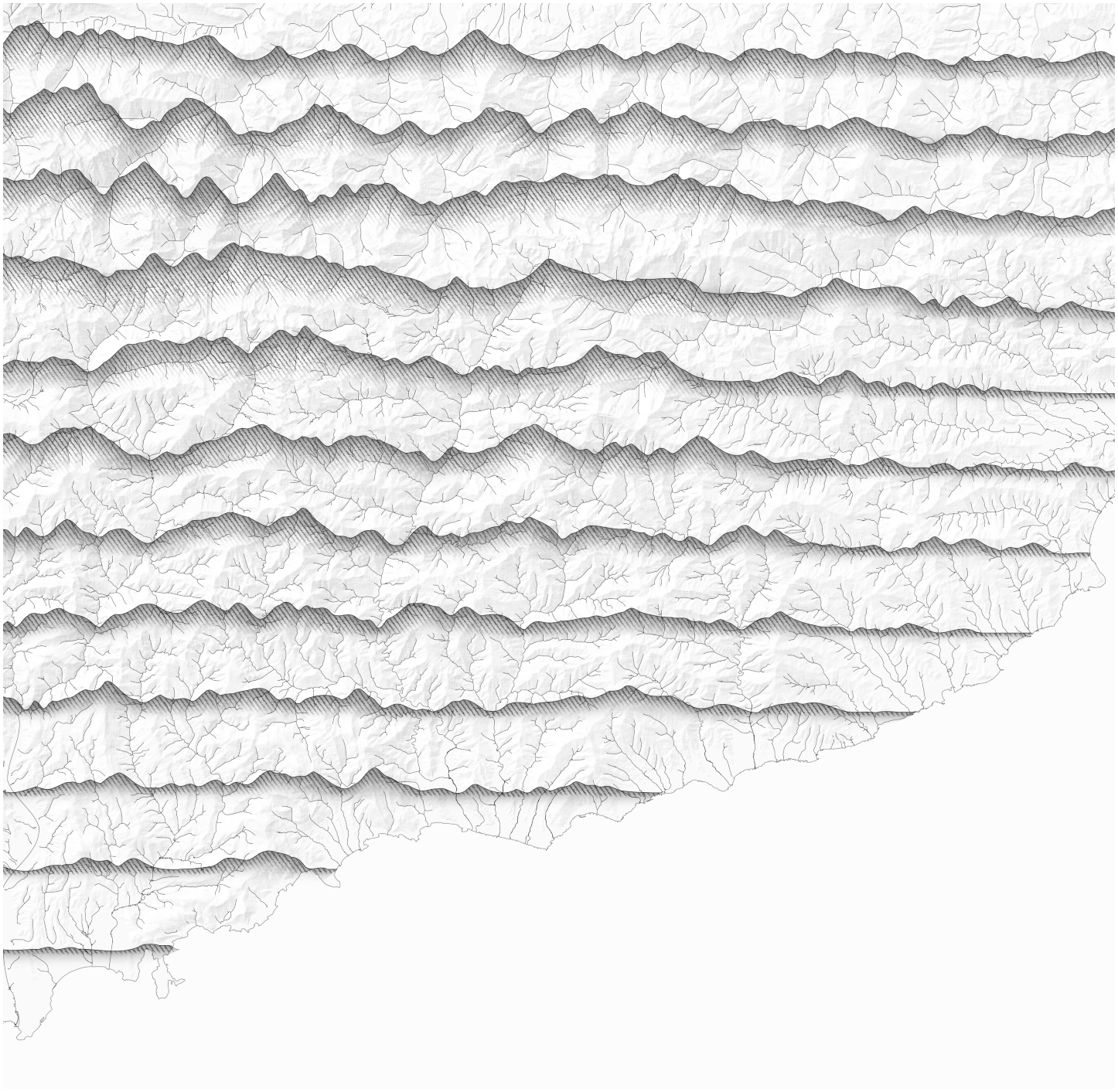
Territorial Synthesis: Re-Composition

Concluding this comprehensive monographic examination of the territorial structures that predominantly characterize the region of the Maritime Alps and their current state of turbulence, it is crucial to now reflect on how these elements are inherently interconnected within the territorial dynamics and environmental and anthropic processes that define this area.

Carefully considering the repercussions of abandoning terraced landscapes and assessing the impact of slope cementation or impermeabilization through greenhouse coverage is crucial for strategic planning. It is necessary to assess the environmental instability cost associated with terrace abandonment and transformation. In the studied region, human-made slope management notably reduced the erosion rate. However, the abandonment of these terraces has resulted in a substantial escalation of this rate, leading to a significant increase in the solid sediments transport in streams (Pappalardo, 2002). Extensive research highlights the negative effects of leaving agricultural lands uncultivated, especially in abandoned areas. These lands, which predominantly experience failure induced by rainfall, become more susceptible to landslides when terraces are abandoned, particularly those with poor vegetation cover. Scientific evidence supports the idea that abandoned slopes regain stability through natural vegetation recolonization. In particular, the time frame between terrace abandonment and the establishment of dense vegetation is identified as the most hazardous, with recently abandoned terraces, lacking wood-bearing crops, undergoing more intense landslide processes (Pepe et al., 2019).

In the lower to middle stretches of watercourses, substantial concrete embankments have been erected along the banks to protect structures such as buildings, roads, and industrial facilities situated on the valley floors. As a result, the water, loaded with sediment and deprived of the ability to expend its energy through erosive processes, reaches the alluvial plains. Particularly during extreme meteorological events, it disperses its solid load violently, causing floods and calamities. However, the solid load often proves inadequate to significantly contribute to coastal replenishment. Conversely, along the slopes, the absence of water regulation leads to substantial landslides, posing threats to residences or transportation routes. Addressing these landslides necessitates the utilization of communal resources (Pappalardo, 2002).
The adjustments made to the riverbed includes stream channelization, constriction of discharge sections, and the installation of culverts, rendering the discharge sections inadequate even for floods with a return period of 20 years. Changes in land use, extensive urbanization of the valley floor, and alterations to the riverbed amplify ground effects and vulnerability (Faccini et al., 2016). Anthropogenic alterations, both direct (urbanization, river channelization, etc.) and indirect (rural abandonment, secondary woodland), likely stand as the principal catalysts behind the recent increase in flood hazard (Piana et al., 2019).

A systemic framework is needed to further asses there interdepended characteristics of the territory and to conclude this synthesis part. One method to achieve this is through the analysis of landscape sections or transects spanning the entirety of the territory, ranging from elevated mountainous regions to the coastline. The transect highlights the necessity of developing a design strategy grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the diverse characteristics found throughout the territory, along with the distinct water, environmental, and developmental challenges each area presents (Viganò, 2012; Cavalieri & Viganò 2019; Longhin, 2021). Specifically, it showcases how these elements intersect and mutually influence one another,



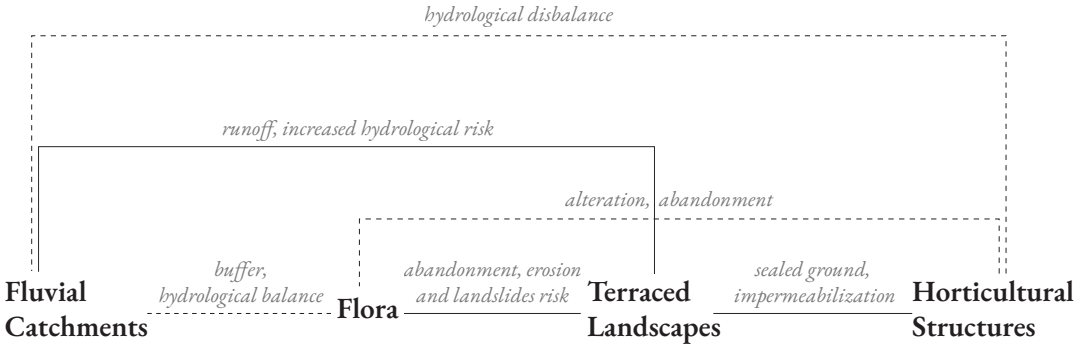
Topographical Sections

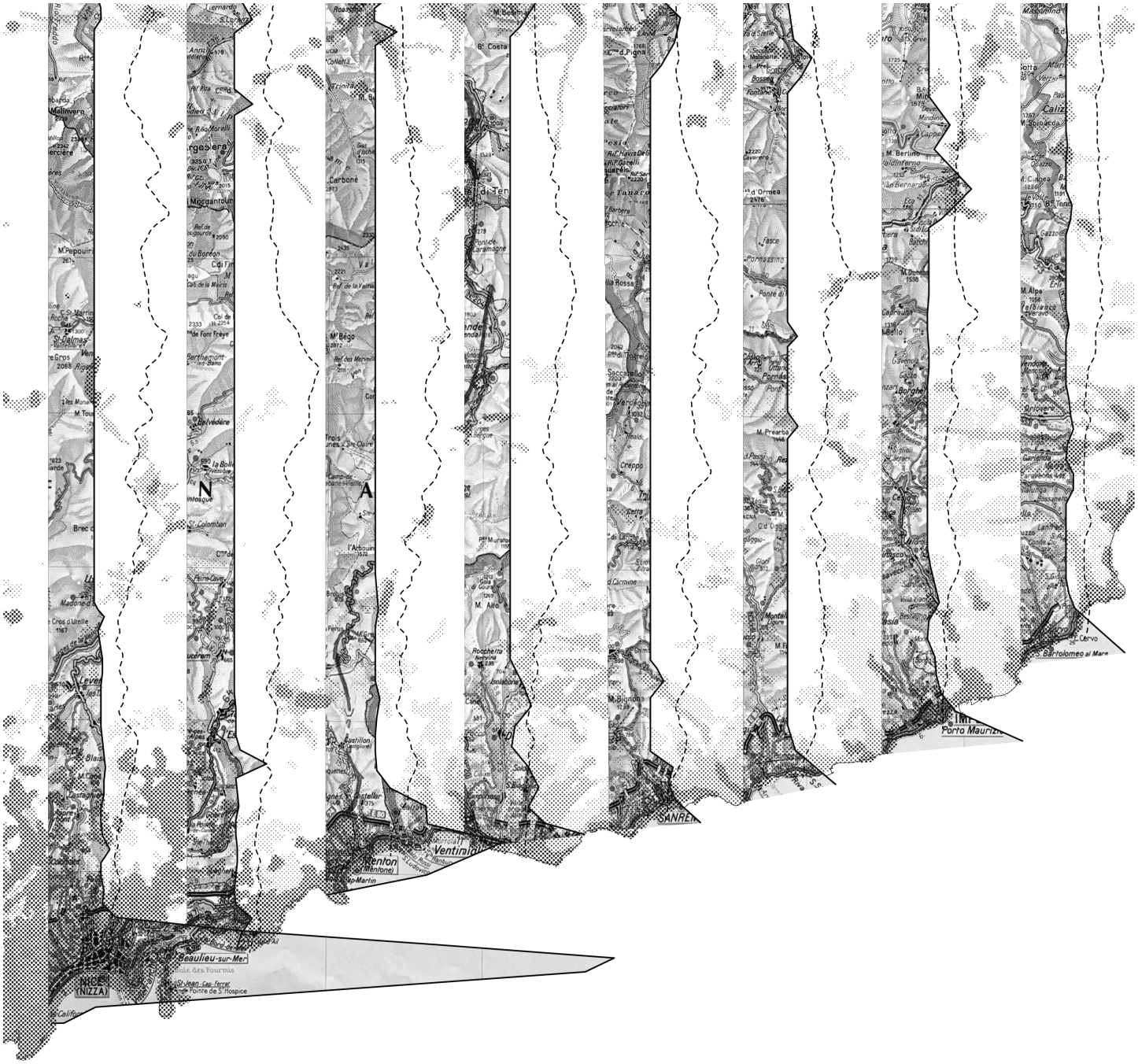
0 7,5 15 km

giving rise to various contextual scenarios contingent upon the specificity of individual sites. Understanding the system in its entirety requires considering what occurs further up in the mountains. Therefore, reaching the coast reveals how the system of valleys and mountains directly influences and is influenced by the activities occurring above, forming an interconnected system.

For the analysis of this intermediate scale, it remains relevant to mention Geddes' "Valley Section" concept (1925). In his reflection, Geddes divides the territory into zones based on distinct features, leading to a division of labor across geographical areas (Tyrwhitt, nd). Although Geddes' theory is considered outdated today due to ecological determinism and the need for multiple stratifications, examining the Ligurian landscape through diverse strata rising from the coast to the mountain tops reveals fascinating insights. The coast represents the most urbanized area, with civilization reaching its peak evolution. Moving inland, agricultural land and vegetable gardens develop on floodplains or hills above cities. Olive groves, create very distinct cuts on mountainsides, while semi-natural chestnut forests or deciduous tree groves occupy higher elevations. Lastly, pasture lands can be found on mountain tops.

Understanding the peculiarities and significance of dissecting the territory using multiple sections, two intermediate scales have been explored. The first scale involves analyzing the landscape features that shape the region. By dividing the territory into horizontal sections, we can comprehend the entire mountain range, ascending to its highest points on the map, progressing towards the watershed, and gently descending towards the coast, resulting in parallel valleys. This approach aids in understanding the roughness of the entire region, which has influenced its distinctive socio-territorial characteristics previously mentioned. A second interpretation of the landscape can be approached from a cultural perspective. In this regard, tracing vertical demographic sections allows us to grasp the significant lack of inland inhabitation. The correlation between population density and topography becomes evident on this map. Moreover, the dotted layers demonstrate how anthropization and human impact on the environment diminish as one moves inland. Furthermore, this analysis can be expanded by examining even closer sections within the valleys, revealing a clear division of the landscape for various purposes. This closer examination highlights distinct and recurring patterns within the territory.

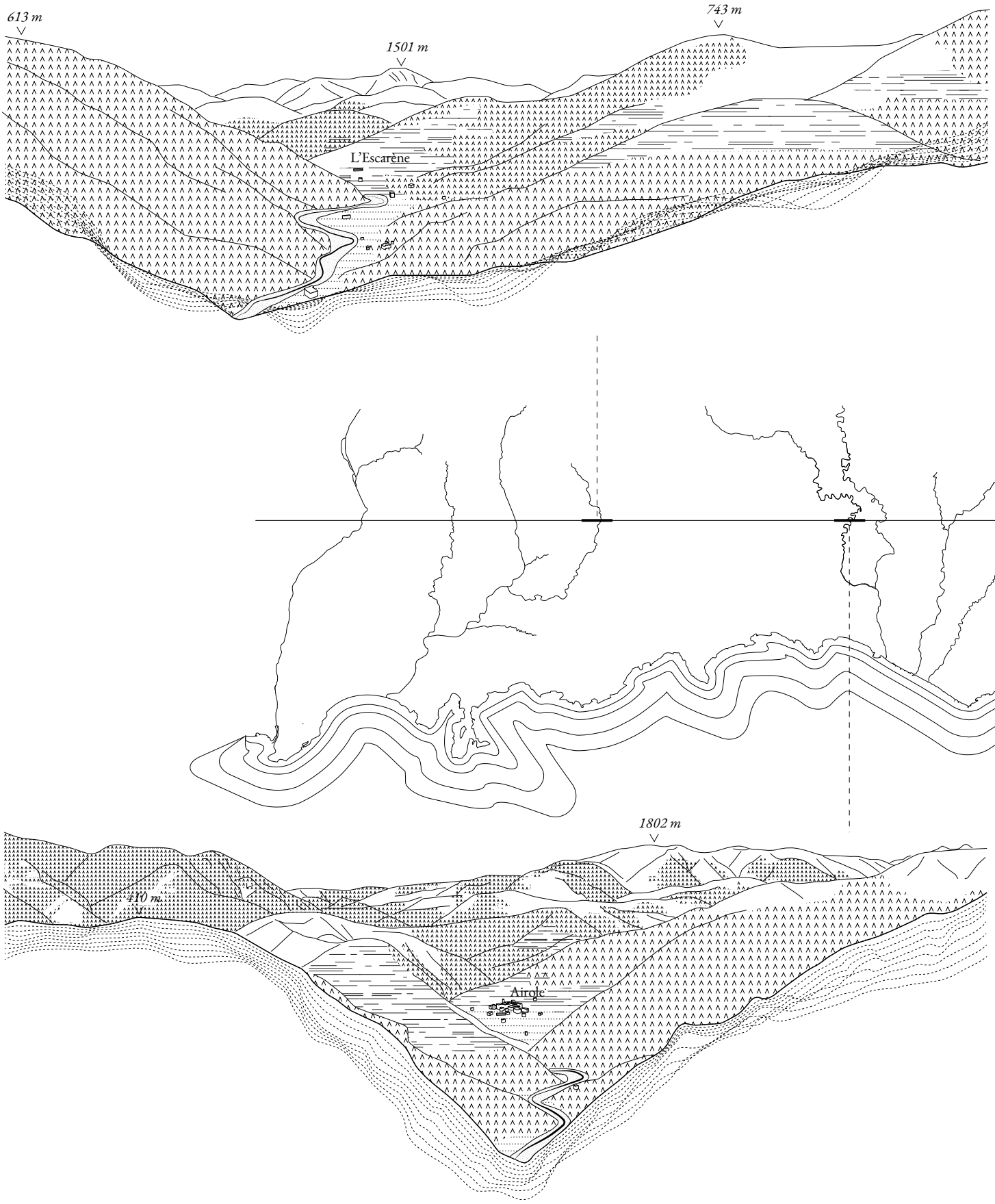


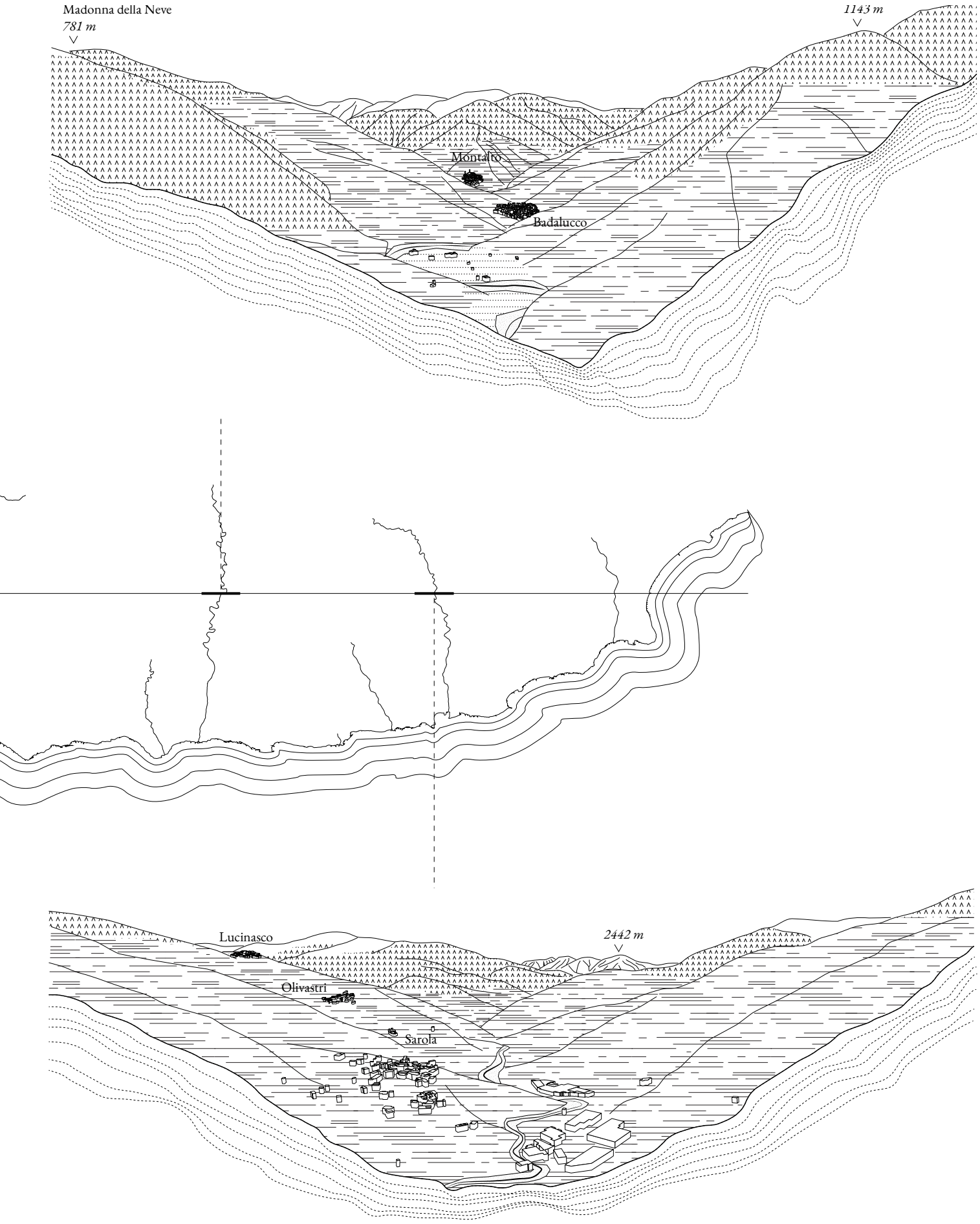


Demographical Sections

0 7,5 15 km

- Very high anthropization
- High anthropization
- Low anthropization
- Demographic sections
- Topographic sections


613 m
1501 m
743 m
L'Escarène
1802 m
410 m
Airole
Forests
Agriculture land
Olive groves o terraces


Madonna della Neve
781 m
1143 m
Montalto
Badalucco
Lucinasco
2442 m
Olivastri
Sarola

On Flora

On Terraced Landscapes

On Horticultural Structures

Designing for Care

Critical Positioning

Having understood the environmental structures of the territory and their complexities, it is essential to place the project within the current ideological, political, and ecological context. Design choices must carry a significance that transcends the mere purpose of the project itself. This thesis takes a clear political stance, criticizing the total disregard for the environmental drift caused by the global population and the complete lack of political vision regarding environmental issues. Recognizing the detrimental impact of capitalism on natural resources and its concentration of power, underscores the urgent need for a paradigm shift[16] to reassess the prevailing status quo (Longhin, 2021). Despite widespread awareness of the unsustainable nature of market-driven lifestyles, there is a notable absence of political will to instigate change, as highlighted by Gilles Clément's characterization of the "human project" as an attempt to selft-destruction, "to die buried beneath its own riches" (Clément, 2015, p.111). While the political question regarding environmental concerns remains unresolved and still, public interest for the alarming mass extinction appears to be minimal. Today, there is a heightened awareness of the environmental damage caused by human actions. The question arises: how can this damage be remedied? An alternative approach is needed to develop or renew practises that meet human needs without harming the environment.

> *"Is it possible to take without impoverishing, to consume without degrading, to produce without exhausting, to live without destroying?"* (Clément, 2015, p. 36).

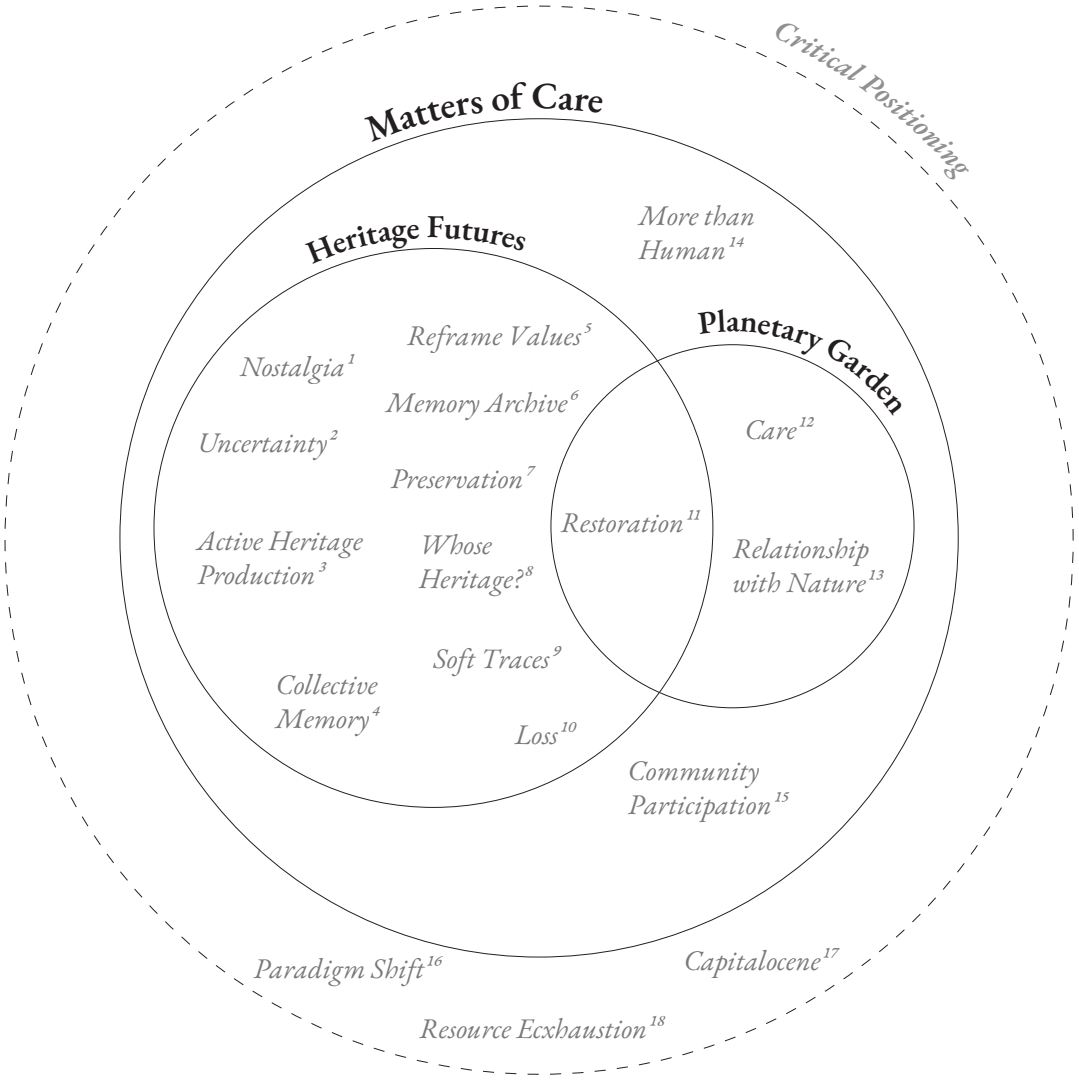
> *"What worlds are being maintained and at the expense of which others?"* (De la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 44).

> *"How can one live with care in more than human worlds?"* (De la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 4).

The following chapter seeks to address these and other questions. Drawing on contemporary philosophies and concepts from various backgrounds, all of which question current praxis, the need to move beyond this era of Capitalocene[1], and the awareness of ecological drift and impending mass extinction. The primary design approach is founded on the concept of "Matters of Care", (2017) as articulated by De la Bellacasa, and contextualizing care within urbanism. This framework advocates for understanding care as a transformative and inherently political act that shapes our interactions with both human and non-human entities. Additional reflection is being put in translating this theory in actual design actions, alongside two complementary concepts directly associated with care, further exploring this theory in the context of thesis. The first concept, Heritage Futures, draws from texts such as "Heritage Futures: Comparative Approaches to Natural and Cultural Heritage Practices" (2020) edited by R. Harrison et al. and "The Matter of Future Heritage" (2022) edited by G. Corda et al., which examine the future of heritage and conservation practices amidst uncertainty, highlighting conservation as an act of caring and exploring how heritage can evolve in future contexts.

Gilles Clément's "The Planetary Garden" (2015) advocates for humanity's responsibility to care for the entire planet by extending the metaphor of the garden globally. This perspective imposes a specific political duty on individuals and recognizes the collective responsibility for the global impacts of our actions.

Building on the theoretical basis, the final segment of this chapter aims to delineate a novel methodology employed for a structured investigation into existing care practices within the territory, with a focus on enhancing and translating them into design actions. Beginning with a redefinition of the ontology of care and diverging from conventional design practices, this methodology clarifies how the ontology of caring translates into an epistemology of design possibilities, including both tangible and intangible aspects. Additionally, the methods of inquiry employed to disclose these care practices and the tangible and intangible outcomes of this project are clearly presented.



Matters of Care

The concept of Care, as articulated by Joan Tronto and Bernice Fischer, encompasses "everything we do to maintain, sustain, and repair our world for optimal living conditions, including our bodies, selves, and environment" (De La Bellacasa, 2017; Tronto 1993, p. 103). Building upon Bruno Latour's notion of 'Matters of concern,' (Latour, 1999), which highlights the socio-political and ethical dimensions of knowledge production, Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, in her book "Matters of Care" (2017) expands on these concepts. She argues that caring involves aesthetic, ethical, and affective considerations often overlooked in traditional scientific approaches. She asserts that:

> *"Caring [...] goes beyond a moral disposition or wishful thinking to transform how we experience and perceive the things we study. Here care stands for necessary yet mostly dismissed labors of everyday maintenance of life, an ethico-political commitment to neglected things, and the affective remaking of relationships with our objects. All these dimensions of caring can integrate the everyday doings of knowledge"*
> (De La Bellacasa, p. 67)

Understanding caring as a form of action is crucial. It's not just a moral inclination but a vital practice, sustaining life and demanding our daily attention. Engaging in everyday acts of maintenance underscores our responsibility towards the ongoing development of things. However, considering the diverse dimensions of care prompts a crucial question: how do our selective caring processes shape different potential realities? By acknowledging matters of concern, we gain insight into the importance of actively practicing care to cultivate awareness of our priorities and their impact on the world (De La Bellacasa, 2017).

Projecting de la Bellacasa's theory in the dimension of our discipline, helps us understand how this 'logic of care' can be reflected in everyday practices. Scholars have explored the concept within cultural and natural heritage management, emphasizing how various preservation practices for both tangible and intangible assets can promote sensitivity to future challenges, including risks and potential losses (Harrison, 2020). Examples of this reflection include practical actions aimed at repurposing built heritage to meet the needs of contemporary society, as well as attempts to perpetually commemorate and preserve what has been lost, the memories and history of the past. An illustration of this is seen in memory archive projects, which document places and memories from the recent past to prevent their complete oblivion.

Finally, to make the necessity of care more tangible, it is essential to revive direct participation in decision-making processes regarding our futures. This entails fostering a sense of community belonging and adopting a community-centered approach to reclaim direct management of heritage. In today's context, innovative social engagement strategies are imperative to reinterpret and re-engage communities in heritage conservation initiatives. They must understand that they have ownership of this heritage and can tangibly benefit from it, just as they have in the past, provided they undertake the necessary tasks to preserve it (Zargaran, 2022).

The concept of care is crucial to the intentions of this thesis. It is essential to recognize the current situation, as extensively articulated in various chapters, marked by a neglect of community, cultural memory, and vernacular practices. Society's detachment from its context, viewing its surroundings merely as an "environment" rather than a place, has led to historical mechanisms of indifference and degradation Conceiving this project primarily as a matter of care underscores the need to reestablish the lost connection between humans and nature. It aims to recreate a sense of community belonging to the surrounding environment and to identify the added values within. Motivating the population to preserve and care for their heritage and landscapes is crucial for future generations. Understanding how the population can benefit from both intangible and tangible values demonstrates how resources can be utilized in various ways to create new future scenarios. Simultaneously, embedded in the context of cultural landscapes, it means reflecting on how future scenarios can also consider more-than-human worlds while maintaining the importance of heritage and landscape restoration.

These caring exercises focus on preserving the memory of the place and directly maintaining existing elements or recreating lost ones if necessary. They involve promoting initiatives and workshops for the local population to repurpose existing resources and envision new scenarios for cultural landscapes. At the same time, caring also means carrying out exercises of clearance and mattering of what is there, understanding what is worth preserving and what no longer holds value within the landscape. Caring means envisioning new scarios for this landscapes and beign directly involved in their becoming in the future. Simultaneously, efforts to preserve the memory of the place and the community are crucial, accomplished through initiatives like "memory archives" and "living archives" created by both formal and informal associations within the community. These archives serve to document how the land and society have evolved, moving beyond mere nostalgia. This personal and collective excercise ensures the continuity of cultural heritage for future generations.

Caring for Heritage Futures

The emergence of Heritage Urbanism theories is a recent development, reflecting the recognition of the need to preserve and extend conservation principles beyond architectural artifacts to encompass landscapes and cultural landscapes. Understanding heritage as a socially embedded, future-oriented process that shapes new practices and environments is a crucial concept (DeSilvey, Bartolini, & Lyons, 2020). Scholars explore both the future of heritage as a means of preserving memory and the subjective nature of conservation influenced by societal values. This leads to questions regarding whose heritage will be preserved and how we can transition towards a future that maximizes the significance of what we already have. Moreover, in the context of ongoing instability and anticipated changes in our environemnts and lifestyles, there's a need to reframe[5] the meaning of heritage. This concept inherently embodies uncertainty[2], as heritage resources uncertain futures and current intervention frameworks may be inadequate for the challenges we face.

In this contemporary landscape, heritage values are subject to constant evolution, influenced by social, cultural, and economic factors. Notably, efforts to quantify the economic worth of heritage, especially built heritage, have advanced significantly, highlighting its economic, embodied, and intrinsic values as crucial assets for economic development (Zargaran, 2022). However, debates persist around the attempt to monetize nature and culture's values (Harrison, 2020). Heritage professionals caution against solely evaluating these resources monetarily, fearing it may lead to their commodification and subsequent loss of intrinsic value and potential for reinterpretation. To mitigate this risk, a multifaceted approach is recommended, integrating various conservation strategies to convey the diversity of heritage values for future generations. Effective heritage management requires comprehensive analysis and transparent assessment of these values (Zargaran, 2022).

The potential future of heritage raises questions about the diverse ontologies of heritage, encompassing various world-making and future-assembling capacities of different heritage practices. Rodney Harrison emphasizes that decisions regarding "decision to build 'around', 'within', 'above' or 'below' is also a decision to build 'with' something" (Zargaran, 2022, p.38) inherently involve building with them, leading to a plethora of interpretations and future possibilities. The creation of future scenarios depends on today's decisions, yet this process can also induce a sense of paralysis, as decisions may prove incorrect in hindsight (Zargaran, 2022). In light of these complexities, contemporary reflections on future installations and heritage conservation prioritize strategies such as conservative restoration, light interventions, and ephemeral temporary interventions. Instead of permanent installations that risk becoming outdated or inadequate, maintenance systems and furniture could be designed to be discreet, transformable, or even disposable (Clément, 2015). Gilles Clément advocates for the incorporation of 'soft traces[9]" (Clément, 2015, p. 120) that can harmonize nature with anthropogenic structures, opposing the permanence of hard, irremovable objects. Moreover, given the plurality of possible futures, interventions should stem directly from the issues, acknowldging the understanding of processes necessary to counteract them.

In a world marked by profound shifts, where planetary processes and resources undergo constant alteration and depletion, our global reality is defined. Within this dynamic milieu, discussions surrounding heritage urbanism inevitably take on a forward-looking stance, yet remain intertwined with the unpredictable and precarious nature of future trajectories. The conventional ideals of conservation and perpetuation are increasingly viewed as unsustainable against the backdrop of inevitable partial loss and continual questioning of their inherent values and validity. Themes embedded within this discourse gravitate around the notion of uncertainty, acknowledging heritage's intrinsic connection to shaping uncertain futures. This awareness could foster cultural resilience. In light of the prevailing instability, a fresh outlook on heritage is warranted, one that accommodates loss[11], alternative forms of knowledge, and the inherent uncertainty of future trajectories, thus informing decisions on the preservation and transmission of heritage assets over time (Lobosco, 2022). Acknowledging the inevitability of change or loss in heritage raises profound ethical and political dilemmas. Questions arise regarding whose narratives are preserved and celebrated, and who holds the authority to determine what is lost and what is preserved[8] (Harrison et al., 2020).

Concluding our exploration of contemporary heritage studies, it's crucial to examine the evolving values and adaptive reuse of both tangible and intangible spaces. Lefebvre's conception of space as a reflection of its practices and uses highlights its perpetual transformation by built and social elements. Through its history, previous uses, material alterations, and the accumulated patina, a space conveys the essence of its past inhabitation, fostering a sense of attachment among individuals. (Cappeller, 2022; Lefebvre, 1974). Through changes in space usage and their resonance in collective memory[2], we observe how spaces acquire new meanings beyond mere nostalgia[1]. This necessitates considering not only a site's historical significance but also its present-day interactions and relevance. Lowenthal emphasizes the need for active heritage production[3] that extends beyond mere preservation[7], underscoring the importance

of *"transmitting a legacy which must be refurbished and given new resonance while in our care"* (Cappeller, 2022; Lowenthal, 2009). As Simon Schama suggests, this process involves reinterpreting existing resources and understanding their potential for future generations (Hall, 2005; Schama, 1995). By starting with stratified artifacts and grasping the passage of time in space, we open avenues for new interpretations and transformative possibilities. This metamorphosis occurs across various layers and components, focusing on morphologies and forms shaped by collective construction and social norms. These choices reflect the present context and its potential for the future (Cavalieri & Viganò, 2019).

In conclusion, heritage emerges in this project as a potent tool for reconnecting people with their sense of place and repurposing existing resources instead of depleting them further. Reconnecting individuals with their roots is expected to encourage a renewed sense of responsibility towards the landscape and their surroundings. Understanding the value of the context, both in terms of built elements and intangible cultural values, should foster a desire within the population to preserve this local vernacular knowledge and progress towards creating maintenance projects for these cultural landscapes. A heritage and conservation project, as elaborated earlier, should begin by employing existing elements within the context, whether they are existing terraces, old architectural structures, ancient pathways, or abandoned greenhouses, and conceive how these can be reintegrated for the benefit of the community. This effort should transcend mere nostalgia and instead focus on actively reintegrating these elements into the daily lives of the population. This awareness can inspire virtuous interventions that bridge the gap between past, present, and future, offering a compelling reason to care for both their heritage and the environment.

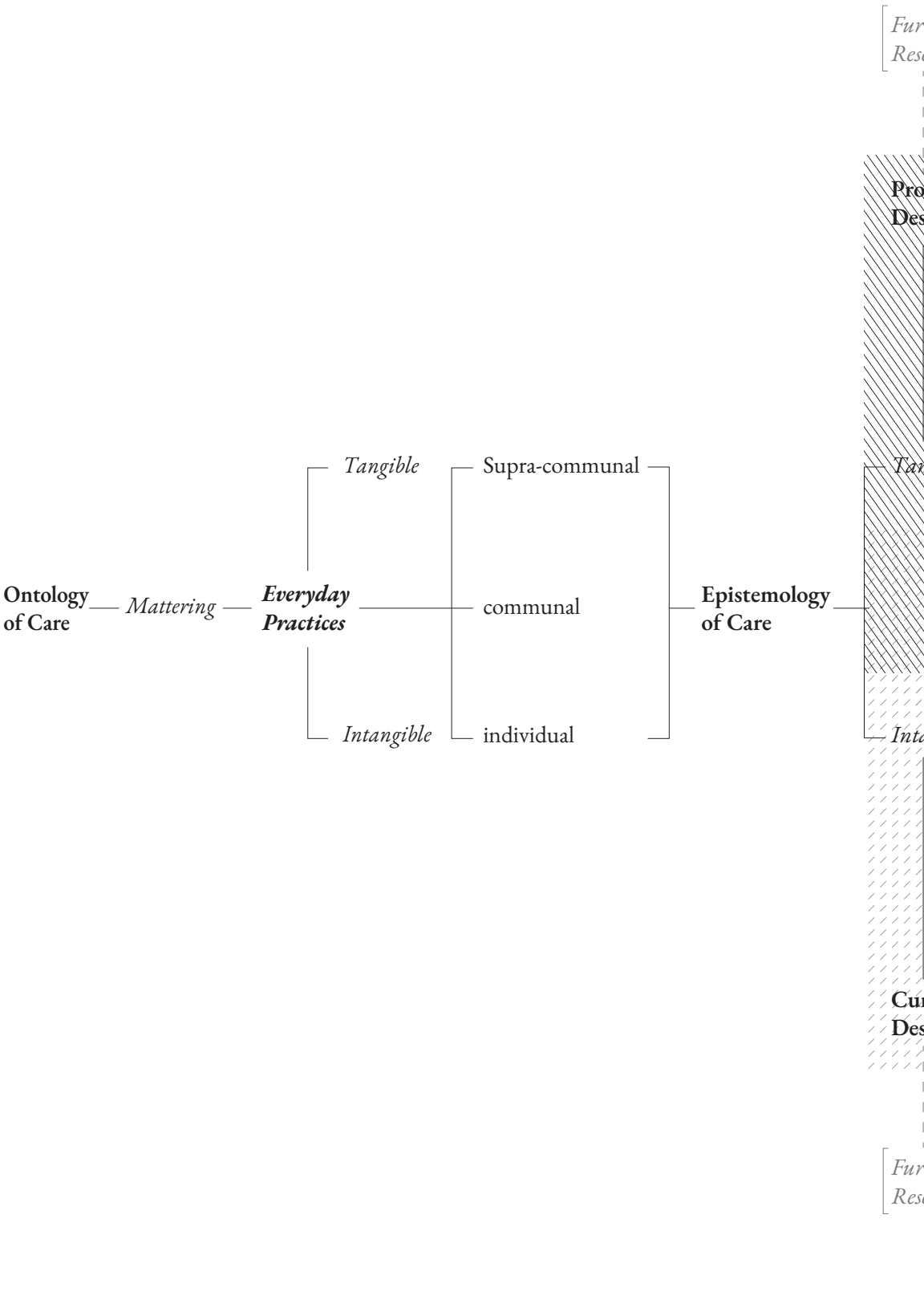
The Planetary Garden

The concept of the "Planetary Garden", as investigated by Gilles Clément (2015) directly relates to the previously discussed notion of care. Clement extends the traditional notion of a garden as an enclosure to encompass the entire biosphere, metaphorically making the entire planet our garden. Like any garden, the planetary garden requires our care and stewardship. This idea resonates with Puig de la Bellacasa's concept of collective responsibility, highlighting how our actions locally have global repercussions. As Gilles Tiberghien notes in the foreword of the book, each individual, through their daily activities and worldview, becomes a "planetary gardener", tasked with protecting the living organisms of which we are guardians. This responsibility demands a heightened state of awareness, not only of the interactions between living beings but also of their cultural systems. This new sense of duty brings forth numerous ethical considerations. It necessitates a complete shift in mentality and approach to our connection with the world. Clément ponders whether it's feasible to acquire, consume, produce, and live without negative consequences such as impoverishment, degradation, exhaustion, and destruction (p. 36). He argues that adopting the act of gardening as a form of caring for our surroundings and the planet can help address these questions and emphasize the need to cease exploitation without allowing for regeneration.

Humans have long engaged in the deliberate cultivation of plants and animals, accelerating their intermingling, and modifying their genetic makeup to enhance resilience and adaptability to harsh environmental conditions. In essence, they engage in gardening. The current state of our planet is shaped by these processes of endemism, intermingling, and assemblage. However, the ultimate profile of our landscape will be based on humanity's relationship with nature, the role they assume within it, it will inevitably depend on gardening. Interestingly, Marcus Hall, in "Earth Repair" (2005) draws parallels between landscape restoration and gardening, despite some differences in interpretation. Restorationists working to reintroduce natural conditions may be likened to wildland gardeners. While gardening and restoration share similarities, their core principles diverge: restoration focuses on biocentric thinking, while gardening leans towards anthropogenic perspectives. Therefore, gardening emerges as a crucial concept in the realm of restoration. When viewed broadly, "gardening" encompasses various methods by which humans enhance the natural world to serve their own purposes.

In conclusion, it is crucial to ponder Gilles Clement's question: "who are these planetary gardeners?" While traditionally, gardeners are perceived as influential figures such as politicians or individuals advocating for the planetary garden concept, I personally believe that gardeners also include those who engage in acts of care, regardless of their nature. They are individuals who defy the norms of our anthropocentric capitalist society, challenging the status quo and striving for paradigm shifts through unconventional actions. Clement asserts that while a planetary garden exists as a principle, there is no such thing as the planetary gardener. *"The planetary garden is a principle, its gardener the whole of humanity"* (p. 145). We serve as stewards of our world's garden, where each individual action plays a significant role in driving progress toward positive transformation. Let our voices be heard, echoing the call for change.

Reviewing what has been assimilated in this chapter, the concept of the planetary garden, connected to the preceding ideas of matters of care and heritage futures, stands as a foundational pillar of the proposed design solutions. This entails conceiving of humans as stewards of this garden, responsible for its maintenance and care. This aligns directly with the concept of care and the need for humans to renew their interest in sustaining this project. However, it also allows for the freedom for individuals to shape and experiment with existing elements. This translates into practical consequences such as landscape maintenance, species preservation, and the introduction of new plantations, whether native or not. It also includes the renaturalization of highly infrastructuralized landscapes and the repurposing of underutilized structures. Conceptually, it underscores the human responsibility to directly engage with and propose new strategies of growth or de-growth for a sustainable future.


Ontology of Care
Mattering
Everyday Practices
Tangible
Intangible
Supra-communal
communal
individual
Epistemology of Care

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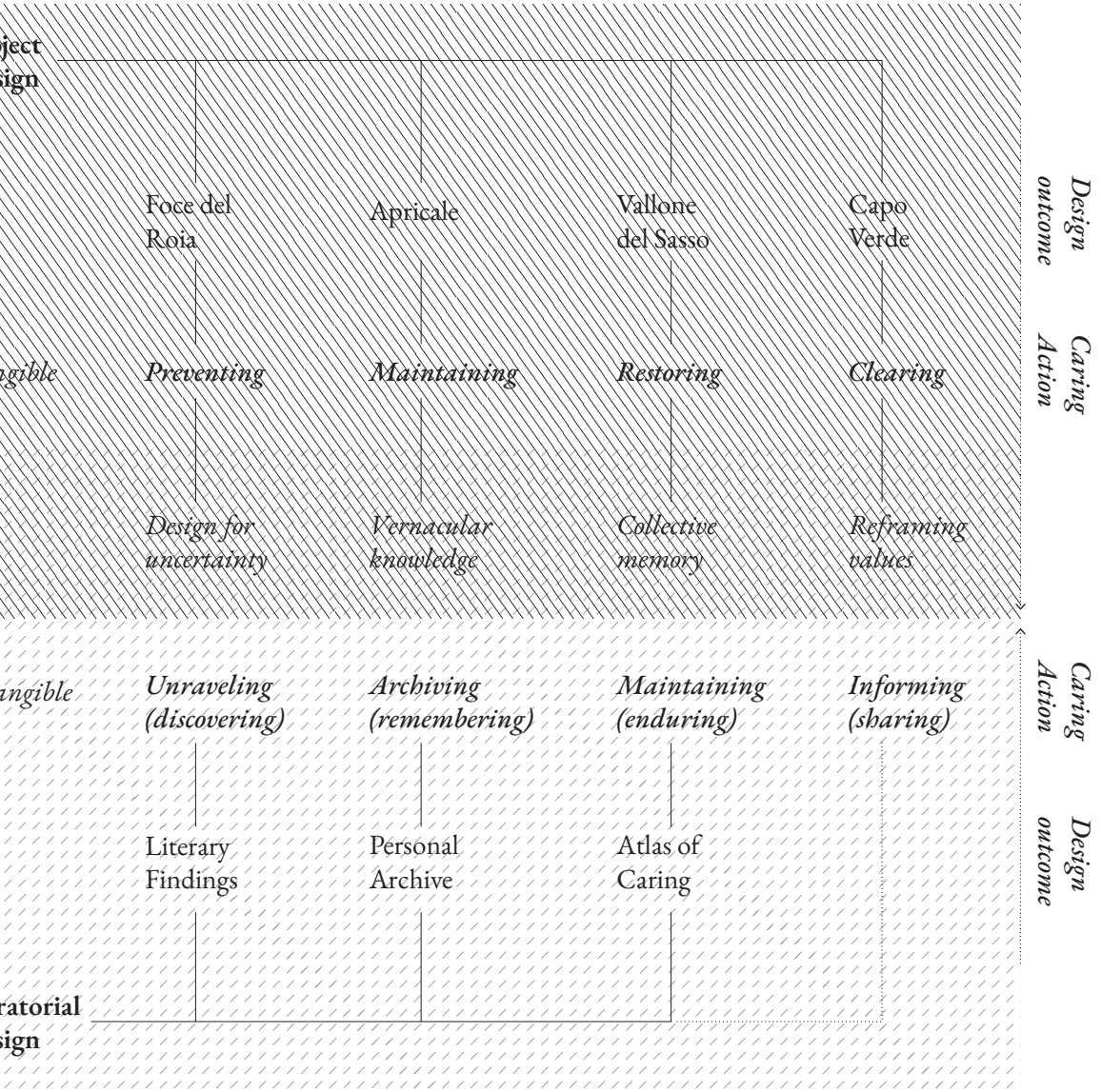


ther
earch

The initial phase involved contextualizing this theory within our discipline and comprehending how these practices of care manifest within our specific context. To achieve this, it is relevant to provide a concise overview of my somewhat subjective interpretation of these practices of care and the primary methods employed in this study. In addition to the literature review mentioned earlier, practices of care were extensively explored through archives, encompassing personal and public records, both formal and informal. This approach enabled the exploration of notable instances of transmitting vernacular stories, capturing marginalized narratives that might otherwise be overlooked, and digitalized photographic archives. Equally significant was the exploration of major community activities and events promoted within these local contexts. Alongside these communal activities, it is essential to acknowledge individual actions, which also constitute significant expressions of mattering, capturing what holds significance for us and why.

This inquiry has explicitly delineated the ontology of caring. Caring is the act of mattering in our world, encompassing all our daily practices and actions. It involves memory and attending to the present moment, as well as caring for others, the land, our surroundings, and the more-than-human. Caring extends to nurturing the future and transmitting this legacy to subsequent generations. These practices of care span from supra-communal governance to communal and individual actions, taking on both material and immaterial forms. While some involve tangible actions signifying mattering, others entail intangible actions aimed at preserving the memory and customs of a place.

These practices define the epistemology of care, encompassing all actions within the concept of a project that are translated into design recommendations. Once again, these actions can be both tangible and intangible. For this reason, the design proposal is divided into two separate frames of interventions. On one hand, directly tangible actions or practices of care are translated into the project design. These are divided into four different sites, with each site embedding a possible application of caring as a tangible design intervention: preventing, maintaining, restoring, and clearing. However, these design interventions also aim to represent the corresponding intangible aspects of the design. For instance, in the case of the Roia River, the design aims to represent how to design for uncertainty through soft and flexible traces on the land and interventions that can be later removed. The site of Apricale serves as an example to represent the vernacular knowledge that is being lost, showcasing ancient agricultural practices, land maintenance, and preservation. The Vallone del Sasso intends to showcase efforts to restore a relict landscape through the collective memory of the local population, while also raising awareness about the floristic richness of the site and its evolution. Similarly, Capo Verde aims to redefine the current land value and the palimpsest of the existing structures.

On the other hand, as previously discussed, there is also the intangible aspect of design, which constitutes a fundamental and pioneering component of the thesis. Here, a reflection on some of the most significant intangible practices of care has been conducted and translated into design actions. The first action involves unraveling, which entails (re-)discovering secondary or marginal stories at risk of oblivion, demonstrated through literary findings from various poets about the unique site. The second action is archiving, which involves remembering and carrying on the legacy, exemplified by my personal family archive to illustrate how individual practices of care and remembrance contribute to shaping the design. The act of maintaining, or keeping alive, is depicted through the atlas of caring practices on the territory, showcasing how care is expressed in diverse intangible forms by the community. Additionally, the action of informing, aimed at sharing knowledge, is partially represented by the thesis itself, presenting these different actions of mattering to the world.

It is imperative to grasp that this methodology aims to be groundbreaking in fulfilling the purpose of this design thesis, which is to demonstrate the validity of the intangible, how one can design with it, and why it should be integrated into the array of design objectives. To achieve this, it seeks to validate curatorial design as well, illustrating how what is not visible can be represented and shared with a broader audience. In this regard, the significance of this methodology lies in laying the groundwork for further developments and research. When referring to "further research," I am alluding to the design actions undertaken within the constraints of time and resources in my thesis. Nevertheless, the underlying message is that designing with care can take on various meanings, primarily influenced by discipline, site, and subject. With this in mind, this framework aims to partially detach from conventional design tools, aspiring to serve as a model for a more culturally informed and site-sensitive approach to both tangible and intangible design.

Tangible Design

Sites Selection and Scales

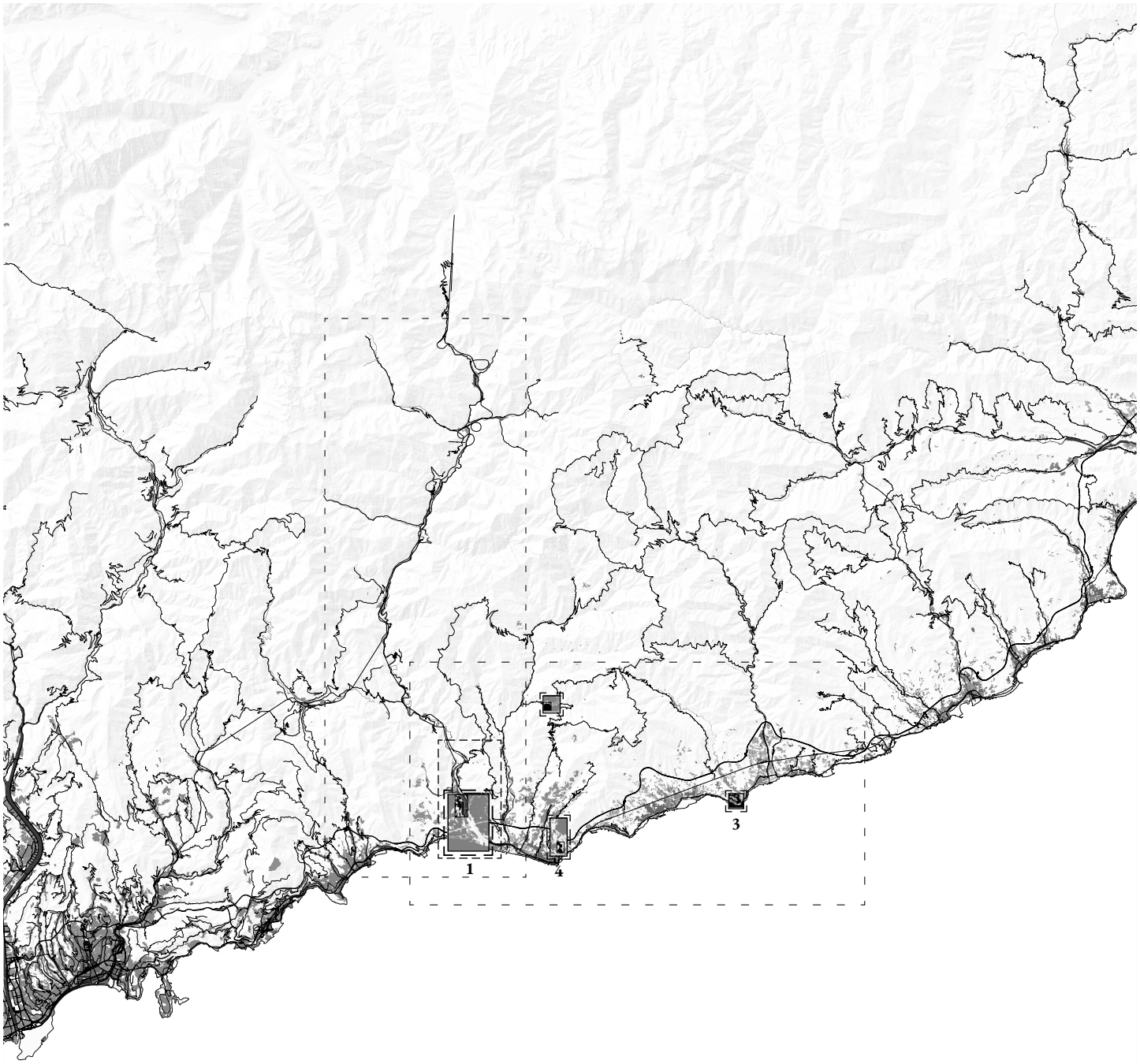
Having examined the primary historical, cultural, and environmental dynamics of the territory, providing a comprehensive understanding of past and ongoing processes, and having established the design approach and methodology to be employed, the implementation of design propositions becomes possible. In this context, two crucial concepts require attention for project development.

Firstly, as previously mentioned, this investigation follows a specific methodology and clear design intentions. The initial step involves the selection of specific sites with well-defined cultural and historical significance. Each site is chosen based on its cultural and historical relevance, representing either a cultural landscape in a state of abandonment or oblivion or marginal stories at risk of being forgotten. Building on this cultural relevance, design interventions are supported by the other two pillars of the methodology: data investigations and practices of the territory. This means that once the cultural relevance of the site is established, data investigations and practices of the place are examined to address the environmental challenges of the sites. Additionally, each site is selected based on its alignment with the previously analyzed four territorial structures, with one of them being the main focus and subject of intervention in each site. This cascade selection process thus requires an initial cultural and then environmental assessment of the importance of the place.

These considerations reveal historical transformations, the current state of instability, and the environmental risks these sites are facing. The design intentions are rooted in the concept of caring, aligning with the emerging trend of heritage urbanism. Additionally, the aim is to contemplate the cultural and historical value of the place, analyzing its current state and what has been lost, with the goal of harmonizing the environment in all its structures and mitigating environmental risks.

Moreover, as illustrated on the map in the following page, it is crucial to conceptualize the project within a territorial framework and to consider the multitude of scales that will be utilized from the outset. The multitude of scales is justified by the comprehensive investigation of each site itself. In specific cases, such as Vallone del Sasso and Apricale, the design interventions are more localized and specific, hence the starting investigative scale can be narrower. Conversely, in the cases of Capo Verde and Foce del Roia, it is crucial to conceptualize these two design interventions as part of a larger system, namely the Ponente Ligure floristic district in the former case and the entire Roya River basin in the latter. This approach allows for the precise design intervention to be justified and understood within a broader territorial scale.

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that while this thesis selects four case study projects, there could be numerous others. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to serve as an exemplar of good practices in mattering and caring within the realm of the tangible, and to suggest how this design approach can be applied to other contexts and subjects, even to other sites of investigation.



Sites

0 7,5 15 km

1 Apricale

2 Vallone dei Sassi, Bordighera

3 Capo Verde, Sanremo

4 Foce del Roja, Ventimiglia

01 — Foce del Roia

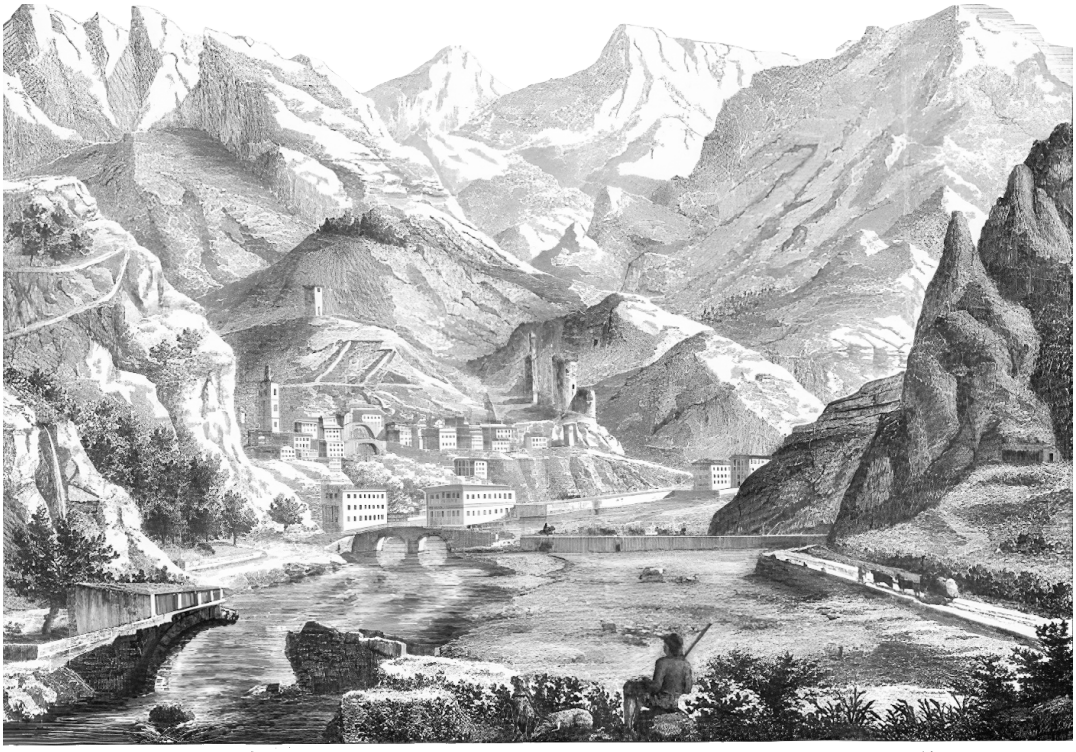
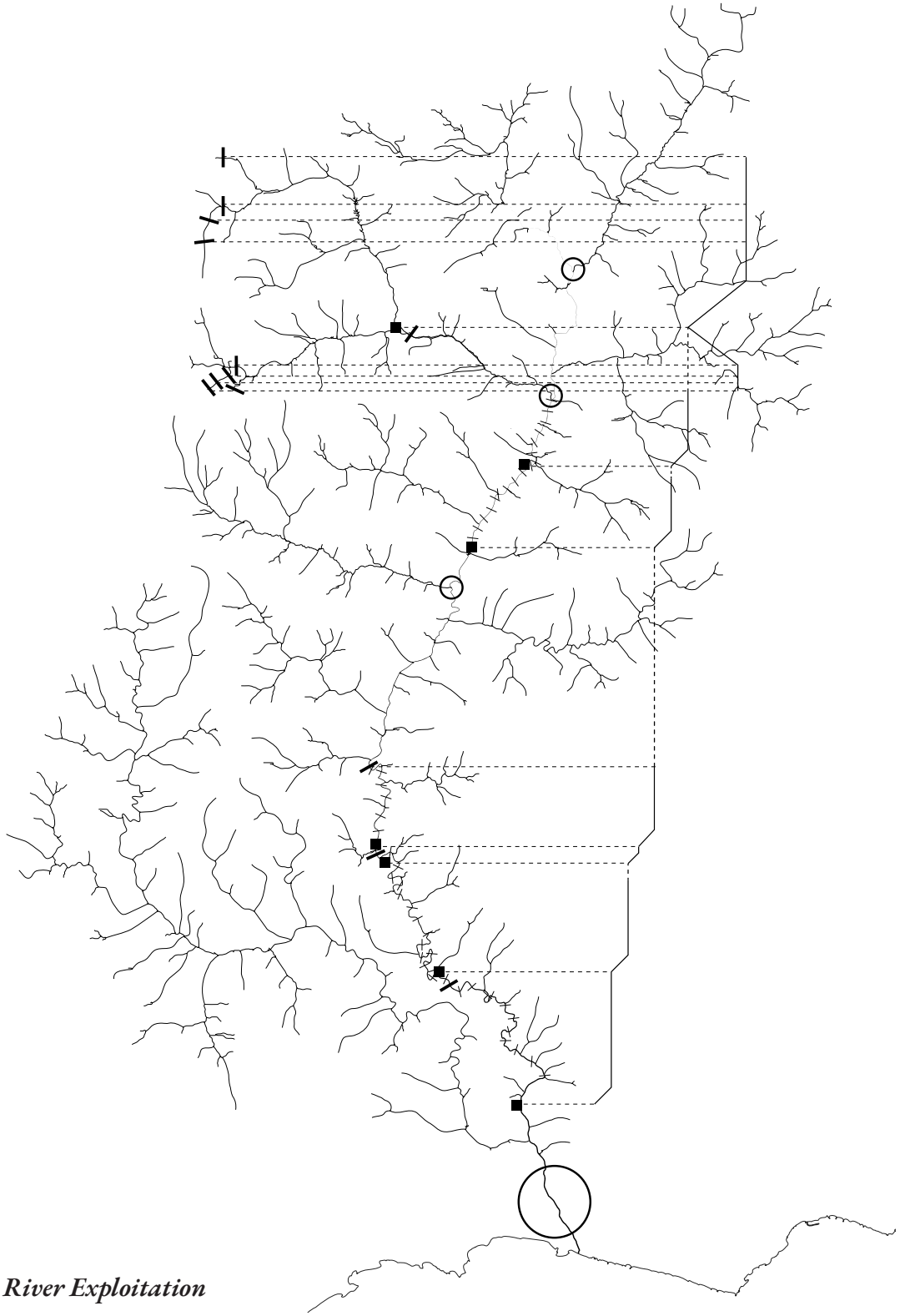


Fig. 17

The project's first focus is on the Roia River, the largest river in the area under examination, originating from the peaks of the Maritime Alps at nearly two thousand meters above sea level and flowing into Ventimiglia after just 50 km.

Culturally, the river and its valley hold significance as an international boundary, with about two-thirds of its course flowing through French territory and its mouth in Italian territory. This unique geopolitical border, which does not align with the natural geographical boundary of the area, has historically divided the Roya Valley between Italy and France (Garibaldi, 2014). The valley's fragmentation has led to a robust local identity, marked by substantial commuting and the presence of language dialects that extend across national boundaries. Ventimiglia, as the final Italian city before the border, vividly embodies this notion of "border territory," showcasing its dual nature as both strategic and vulnerable.

On the environmental side, the river features a swift and steep course, particularly in the upper part of the valley characterized by a canyon-like formation, which opens into a small alluvial plain only near its mouth. Due to the high snowfall and rainfall in the valley, the river and its tributaries have a significant water flow (Garibaldi, 2014). Given these factors, the river has been the subject of large-scale engineering works over the past two centuries, allowing for its exploitation for energy purposes. The first hydroelectric power plants in the Roya Valley were built in the years following World War I. These plants significantly contributed to electricity production in Italy, supplying power to railways, steel complexes, and steelworks. The hydroelectric system of the Roya Valley included at least six main plants and several smaller additional ones. From an ecological perspective, the extensive mechanization of this river

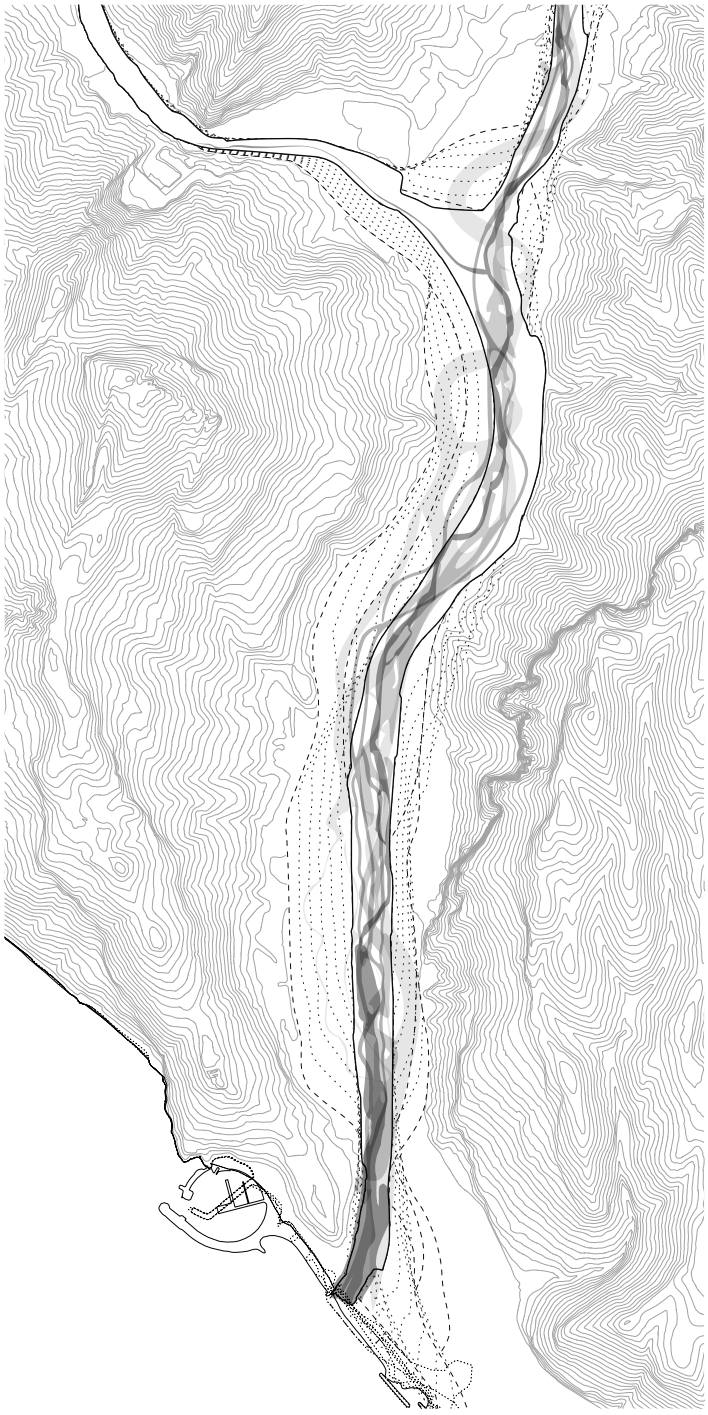


River Exploitation

- Dams
- Hydroelectrical plants
- River Basin occupied
- Canyons

Fig. 18

Fig. 19



Evolution of the Riverbed

- Catchment alteration since 1300
- Coastal Alterations since 1500
- Flows alterations since 1966

Human Influence

0 0,5 1 km

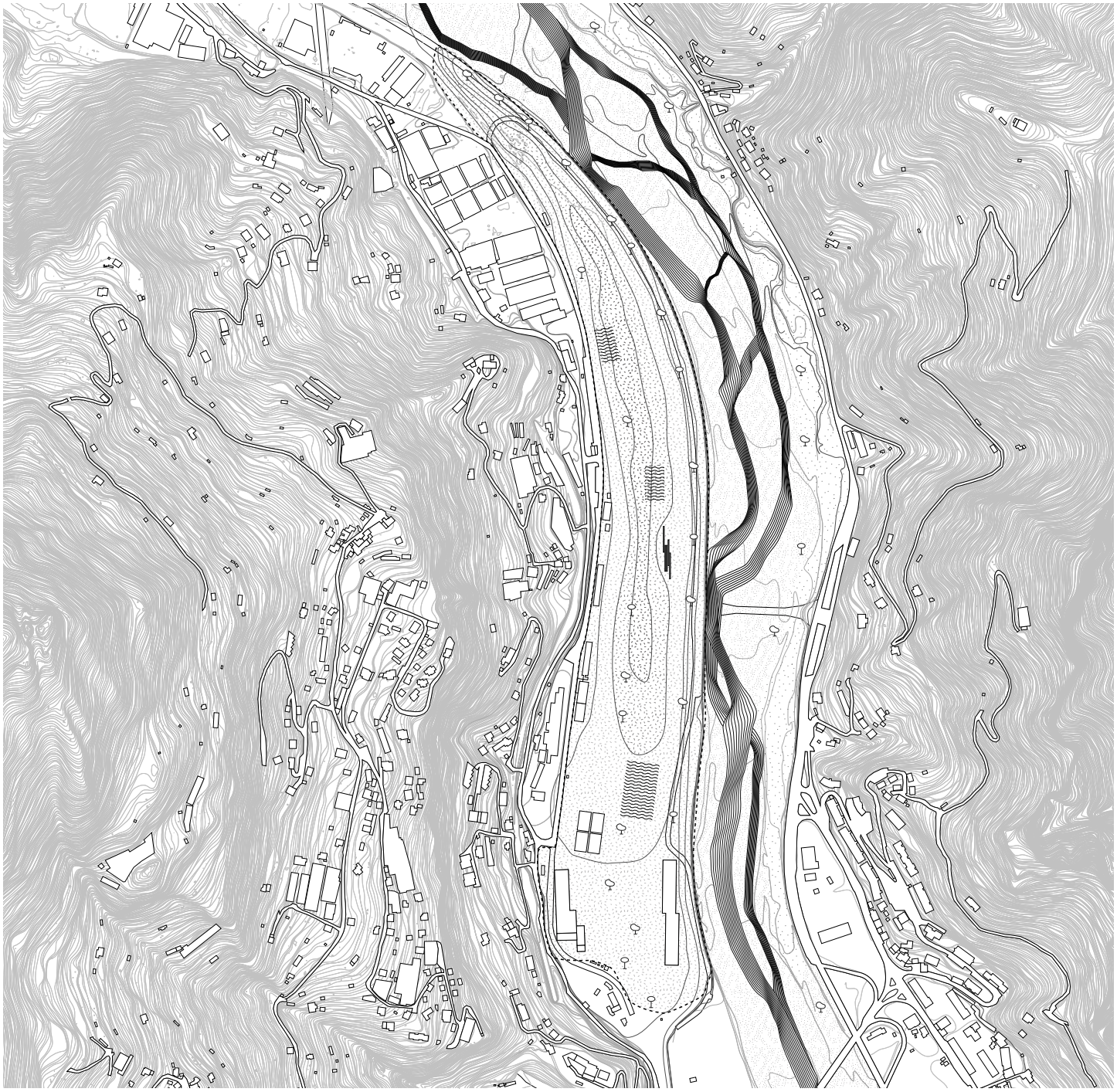
- Embankment 1985-1993
- Embankment post 2000
- Culverted Rivers
- Flood Risk
- Bridges
- Dense Vegetation in the Riverbed
- Scarce Vegetation in the Riverbed
- Industrial Areas
- Infrastructure
- Trains Deposit
- Commercial Areas
- Agriculture/Abandoned Land

has both positive and negative effects on the environmental balance. On one hand, the the creation of barriers allows for flow control and water regulation. Dams can regulate the river flow, preventing floods. On the other hand, the creation of these barriers disrupts the natural sediment flow towards the mouth. Therefore, in the event of extraordinary floods, the massive presence of sediments can increase the river's destructive capacity during floods. Furthermore, dams lead to a general loss of the local ecosystem (Piano di Gestione Fiume Roia, 2007).

Despite the presence of these systems, which can also serve as preventive measures, the river, due to its short and steep nature, is often prone to flooding during extreme weather events, as evidenced by the exceptional floods in 2014 and 2020. This is worsened by constant human alterations to the river's natural bed. With the urbanization and infrastructural development of the river's floodplain, the natural bed has been increasingly narrowed and crossed by numerous bridges, further slowing down its flow during floods. Moreover, in recent decades, the river mouth has undergone massive interventions with rigid artificial embankments. Presently, the river mouth is entirely occupied by industrial and residential establishments, and due to the reduced riverbed, the city of Ventimiglia is highly vulnerable to flooding during extreme weather events (Piano di Gestione Fiume Roia, 2007; Garibaldi, 2014).

Given the current state of significant hydrological disruption in the basin and the increasing frequency of extreme events, targeted interventions are essential to mitigate risks to infrastructure and the urbanized river mouth. Design considerations have began at the scale of the entire river basin, recognizing the need to maintain energy production and address extensive soil sealing in the floodplain. The focus has been on reclaiming and enlarging the riverbed where possible to alleviate stress during floods, particularly critical at the river mouth when water discharged for hydro-energetic purposes re-enters the main riverbed, increasing its capacity. Four intervention sites within the river basin have been identified to create additional space for the river. Three are located in the upper valley near the cities of Tende, Saint-Dalmas, and Saorge, where secondary tributaries meet the Roya River and where inappropriate infrastructure has been developed. Following the flooding event in 2020, which severely impacted these sites, causing damage to buildings and infrastructure, there is a pressing need to redirect development and limit further construction in these areas. Instead, the focus should be on creating amphibious areas, buffer zones between settlements and the river, which are floodable and support the ecological restoration of the affected areas.

Of greater significance, however, is the final project site at the mouth of the Roya River. Situated in a crucial area north of the city of Ventimiglia, between urban settlements and the highway interchange, the railway freight yard called "Parco Roya" was constructed. Covering an area of approximately 20,000 squared meters, it served as a transfrontier hub for goods between Italy and France but was permanently closed in 2014 after a short and underutilized lifespan. The project proposal sharply contrasts with the urbanization and economic development agendas for the area. Aligned with the philosophy of care matters advocated in the thesis, and recognizing the river's intrinsic value, the proposal suggests designing an area focused on renaturalization, community utilization, and mitigating environmental risks.



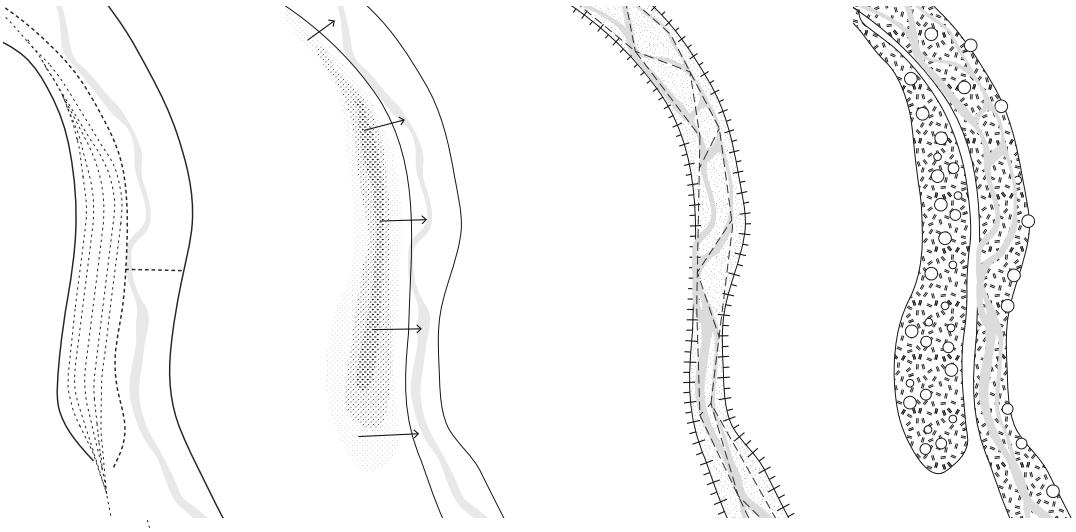
Roya Floodable Park Design

0 200 400 m

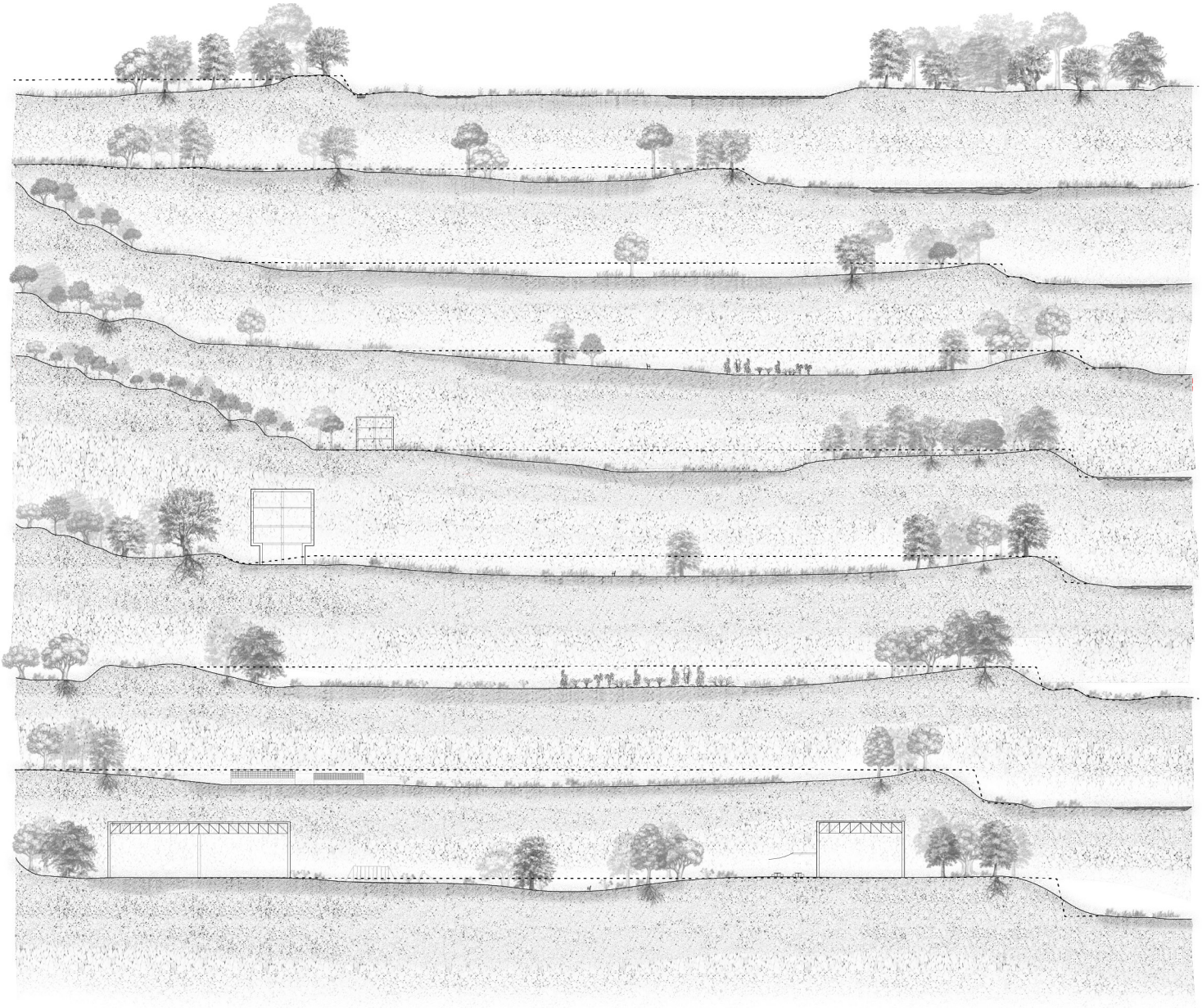
Additional vegetation sites
Community gardens
Floodable park
Intervention limit
Naturalized river bed
Naturalized river

With this objective in mind, there is notable potential in this area for the creation of a floodable park, acting as a detention basin to facilitate water storage in case of flooding, thereby reducing the risk of flooding for the nearby city of Ventimiglia. Currently, the entire project area is situated approximately 4-5 meters higher than the riverbed, separated from it by a concrete containment wall. The proposed intervention involves removing the wall and restoring the riverbanks to a natural state. Subsequently, the former freight yard area, after removing the existing tracks, will be gradually lowered in elevation to about +1 meter (relative to the riverbed). This transformation converts the area into a depression capable of storing water. The material removed, mainly gravel and sand, will be deposited into the riverbed. This action, through natural engineering processes, will facilitate the branching of the river and its naturalization, which is currently hindered by a low degree of sediment. Following these design actions, the project will focus on the landscaping aspect. The intention is to create a floodable park characterized by soft design traces that can be removed in the future and are especially prone to being lost in case of flooding. In this sense, the design reflects the importance of designing for loss and dealing with uncertainty. The creation of this park would facilitate urban regeneration through the installation of facilities and urban installations. Examples of these could include sports areas, new public spaces, plots for community gardens, and the restoration of abandoned railway buildings. To facilitate water filtration, much of the area would feature xerophilic vegetation. Regarding the riverbed itself, in addition to removing the rigid concrete embankments and replacing them with natural engineering structures, greening the riverbed with xerophilic vegetation is planned to increase site biodiversity and slow water flow towards the mouth, reducing the impact of extreme weather events.

In conclusion, this project site, dedicated to the river and its associated hydrological risks, embodies a profound commitment to the concept of caring, which extends beyond human matters, giving voice to the needs of the river itself. This involves providing additional room for the river, restoring the highly engineered river plain to a more natural state, and embracing the inevitability of loss and uncertainty in the design process.



Infrastructure Removal | **Carryover of soil** | **River Renaturalization** | **Additional Vegetation**



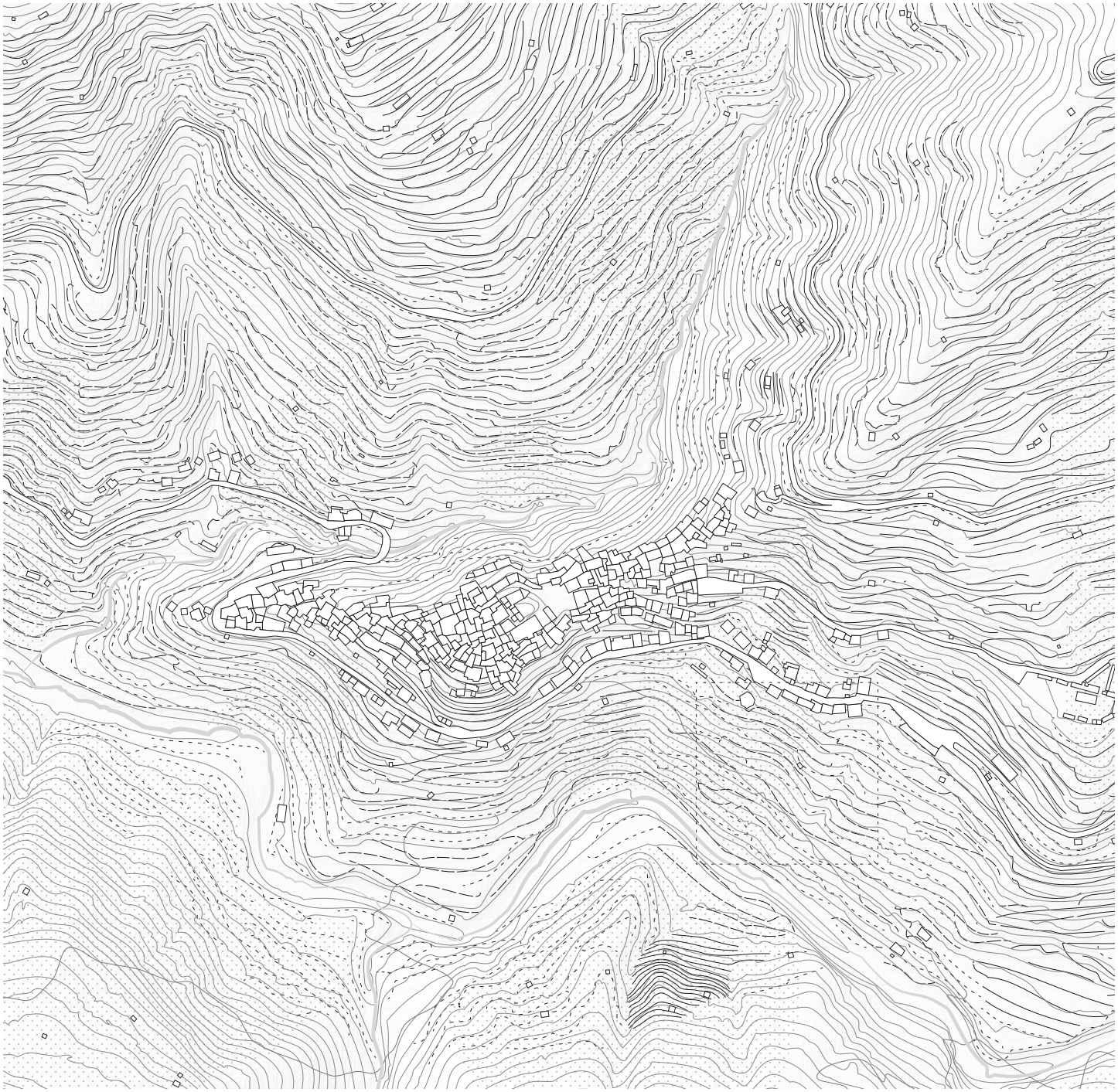
02 – Apricale

The village of Apricale is located in the hinterland of Bordighera, in the valley of the Merdanzo stream, a tributary of the Nervia River, at an altitude of 273 meters above sea level. Its name comes from the Latin word "apricus," meaning "exposed to the sun". The picturesque appearance of the settlement, resembling a cascade of ancient stone houses stretched along the ridge of a steep slope, captures the gaze and leaves an indelible impression in the mind. Surrounding it, the embrace of the countryside, cultivated with typical Ligurian terraced fields supported by dry stone walls. Like the vast majority of inland Ligurian villages, Apricale has experienced a significant population decline in the last century, and this trend continues today. The lands directly adjacent to the village are primarily composed of vegetable gardens cultivated by the population, while those beyond consist mainly of wooded crops, predominantly olive groves whose olives are processed in the local olive press (Garibaldi, 2014).

Beyond being a classic example of an inland Ligurian village, a clear expression of the social changes that have occurred in the region, the choice of this village is due to its role as the setting for the book "L'angelo d' Avrigue" by Francesco Biamonti (1983). Despite the indirect reference to the village in the book, through the descriptions, it is easily recognizable. The narrative transcends a mere focus on the landscape, evolving into an artistic array of vibrant images. Biamonti, describes the landscape like the colors of a painting. The epiphany in Biamonti's literature unfolds in this book, which ic the sudden realization of the disappearance of this identarian landscape, that of a rural civilization, but above all, a way of existing in th world (Bovo-Romoeuf, 2012). Quoting Bertone's analysis of the book:

> *"[t]he reader can piece together an overall picture, mentally reassembling the scattered mosaic: land of abandoned houses, terraced fields increasingly left uncultivated and dried by salt and aridity; entire deserted villages or inhabited by sparse old individuals or foreigners from the Danish or Dutch plains, buying farmhouses or barns in those vertical villages, seeking sun and some form of reconciliation with the world"* * (2006, p. 45).

Apricale embodies the essence of a fading identity, a population forsaking roots, and Apricale, in particular, embodies the perfect incarnation of the identity of a place that is being lost, of a population abandoning their hometown, and of the profound social changes that have occurred, now giving way to associated environmental changes. The village sits on top of a small hill, faces environmental risks due to neglected landscape maintenance. The terraces once carefully built by farmers surrounding the village are now barely visible under dense vegetation. This abandonment has led to unstable terrain, causing frequent landslides and erosion as soil moves downhill. The main concern is the increased risk of erosion and water flow surrounding the village. Rocky material is gradually shifting downward, raising the chances of erosion during severe weather. To reduce the geo-hydrological risk of this village, targeted interventions on the territory are necessary. An analysis of the current state of the terraces and specific landslide points has been conducted, connected with the natural water runoff and phenomena of runoff, and the general erosive risk of the slopes. The connection between these various investigations shows the points most at risk in this territorial system where anthropic intervention is needed.



Terraced Landscape and Environmental Risk

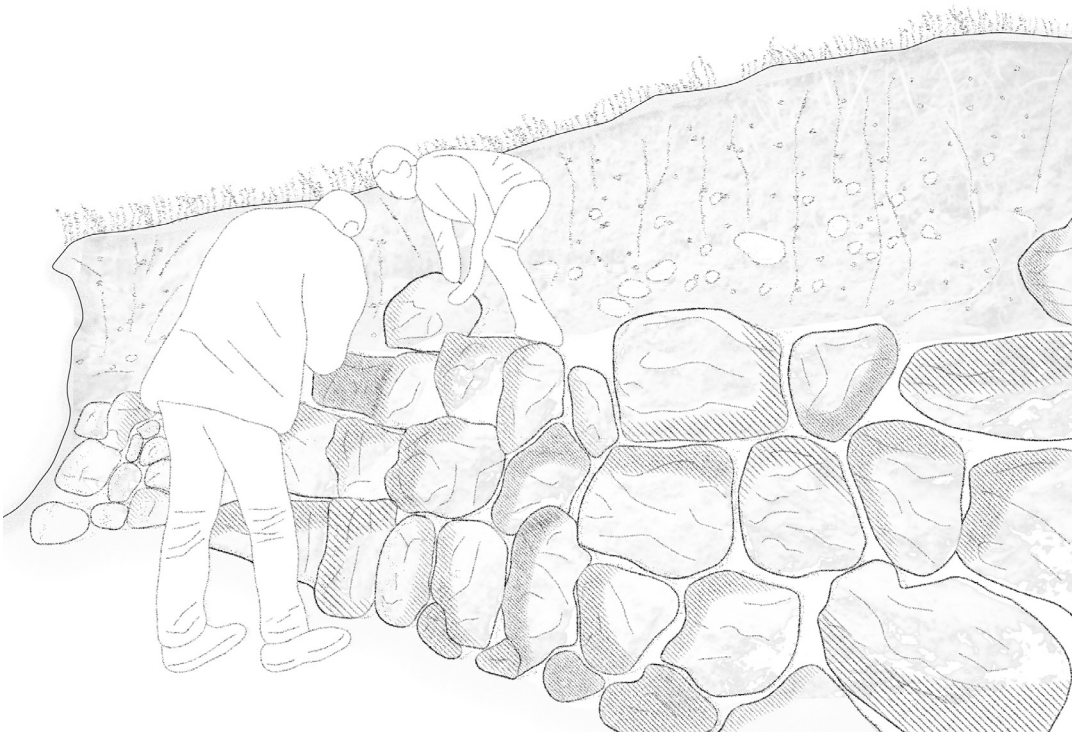
0 100 200 m

High risk of Landslide

Dry-stone walls in use

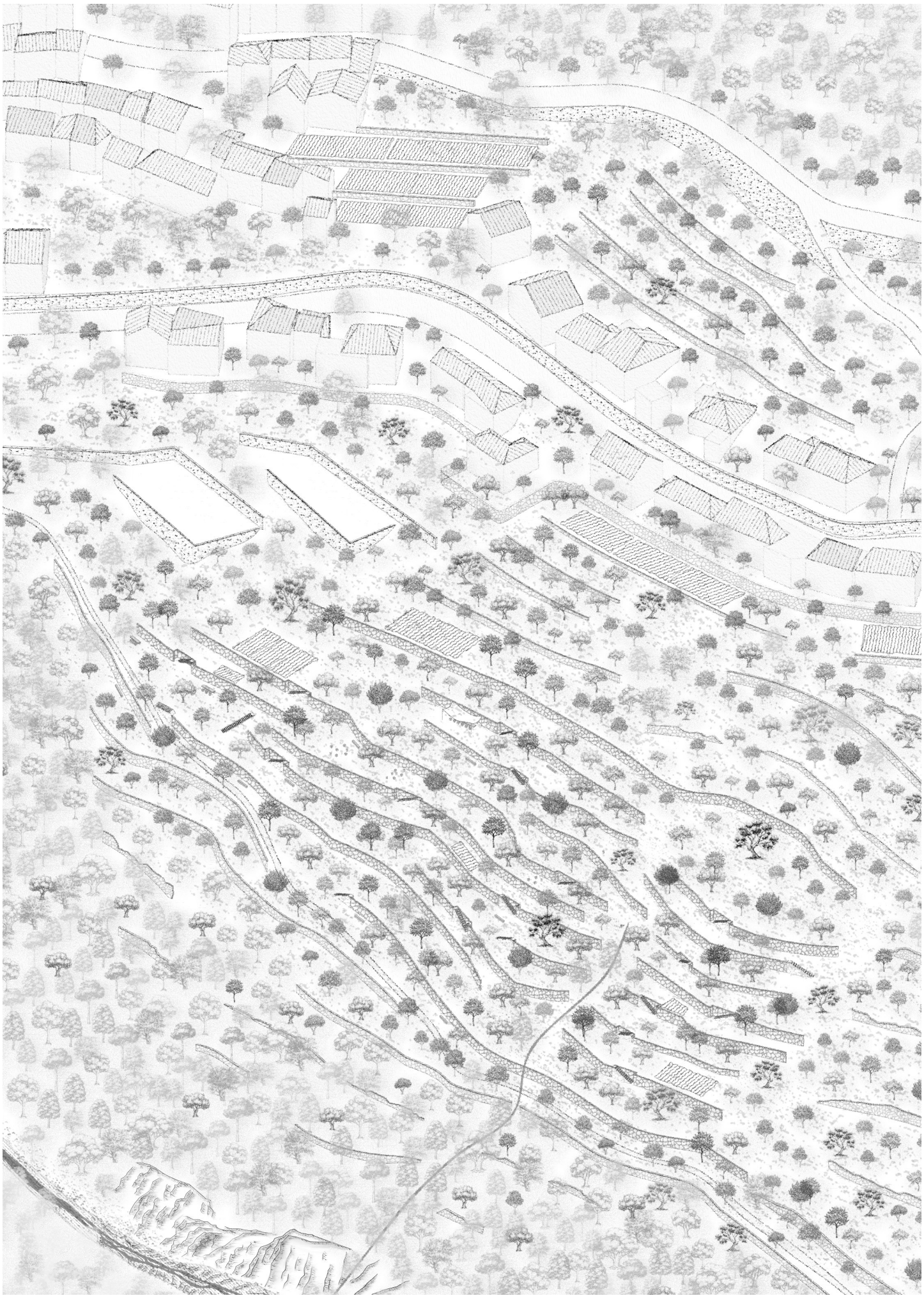
Traces of dry-stone walls

Traces of dry stone walls



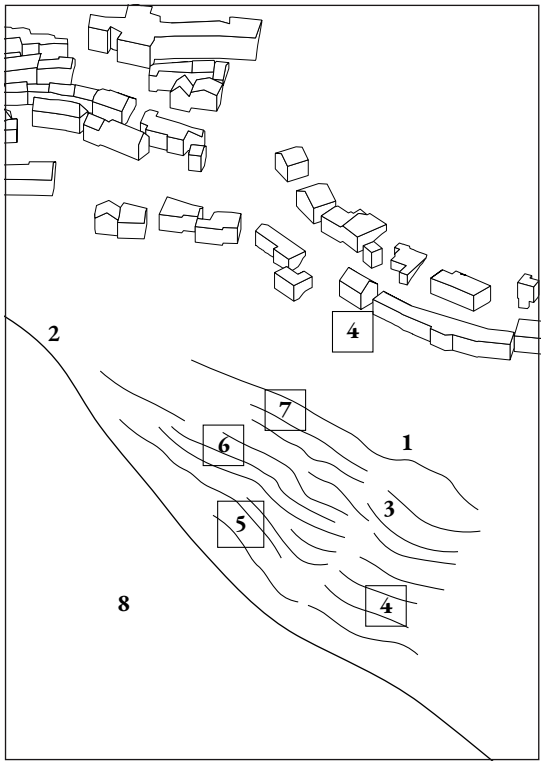
The proposed design intervention involves the maintenance and restoration of the terraced systems located directly beneath the village of Apricale. This territorial engineering aims to mitigate landslide and hydrological risks by significantly reducing erosive phenomena. The restoration of terraces using traditional local techniques, along with the planting of native and resilient plants, particularly olive trees, can effectively stabilize the slopes and decrease environmental risks. Simultaneously, this restoration effort seeks to revive an image of the village that currently only exists in the collective memory of its inhabitants.

The intervention process would evolve in various temporal phases, envisioning a system where terraces near the village are gradually restored by the local population. If this reappropriation of terraces proves successful, the restoration efforts would expand further. Additionally, the restoration process requires minimal materials from outside the context. Following ancient vernacular techniques of dry stone wall construction, these walls are built using stones found directly on the terrain. In this scenario, the task is facilitated by only needing to recover stones from the previously existing but now abandoned terraces. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to carry out clearance work by removing invasive vegetation that has accumulated over the decades, also enabling the identification of valuable trees such as centuries-old olive trees that must be preserved.



The project takes material form in a pilot case located beneath the eastern part of the village, which is currently most exposed to geomorphological risk. Matters of Care are translated in this context as the importance of maintaining the landscape we have inherited to transmit this legacy to future generations. The restoration of the terraced landscape and the preservation of the old vegetation exemplify how the current state of neglect can be counteracted. These actions represent a significant step for the community in conceiving the value of their surroundings and their right to the land and landscape. Additionally, the restoration of this terraced landscape, besides agricultural use, would also be an opportunity to demonstrate how these spaces can become functional, public, and freely accessible to the entire community, as they once were. For this reason, the installation of canopies and seating, made from local waste materials, is also planned to create organic gathering spaces for the community. The intention is to show how, through simple actions such as creating a dining table in the middle of the terraced landscape, the effective use of this place is already enhanced. Furthermore, flexible spaces are planned for the exhibition of artworks from the village's Art Residency and areas that can be used for interactive workshops. Additionally, the restoration of the old pathway, the "mulattiera", which connected Apricale to Perinaldo in the last century, is planned.

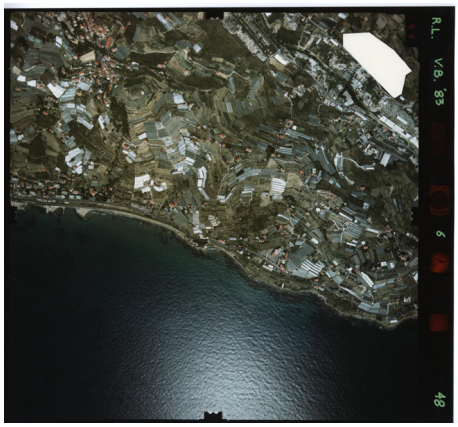
In this case as well, the project has an intangible counterpart that is fundamental to articulate. Through the implementation of this project, it is hoped that the intangible outcome will be the empowerment of the local population in the decision-making process and their direct participation. Particularly, this site aims to preserve the vernacular agricultural knowledge that has been employed by farmers for centuries in this region, which is now at risk of being lost. Sensitizing the population to past local practices should provide the community with the tools to manage their future with sensitivity and care, embodying the preservation and restoration of what they find valuable.



1. Restoration terraces
2. Restoration path
3. Recovery olive grove
4. Creation community vegetable gardens
5. Art Residency
6. Workshop spaces
7. Shelters and community furniture
8. Rewilding

03 – Capo Verde

Aeral View 1973



Aeral View 1983

Aeral View 1993

Fig. 20-23

Aeral View 2003

The origin of the “Riviera dei Fiori” and the floriculture district of the extreme western Liguria represents the most prominent agricultural transformation in the last two centuries. The coastline now displays scars due to resource depletion and structural abandonment.

Examining the evolution of the floral industry along the Ligurian and French coasts, Stacchini, in his work on the diffusion of the "Industria floreale in Riviera" (1947), observes its initial spread from Nice after 1858, gradually encompassing the surrounding areas in the ensuing decades. Preceding World War I, the cultivated area for cut flowers amounted to 60 hectares, expanding significantly to over 350 hectares in the post-war period. The year-round collection of flowers was facilitated by the presence of greenhouses, later being distributed in local markets or transported by trains to the peninsula and Northern Europe, notably France, Germany, and Austria. Following World War II, the floral industry experienced further growth, driven by Sanremo's increasing international popularity, particularly with the establishment of the Sanremo Casino and the Italian Song Festival (Notari, 2019).

Composition of Horticultural Structures

0 50 100 m

Greenhouses in use

Greenhouses already dismantled

Greenhouses in bad conditions

Abandoned Greenhouses

Shade nets

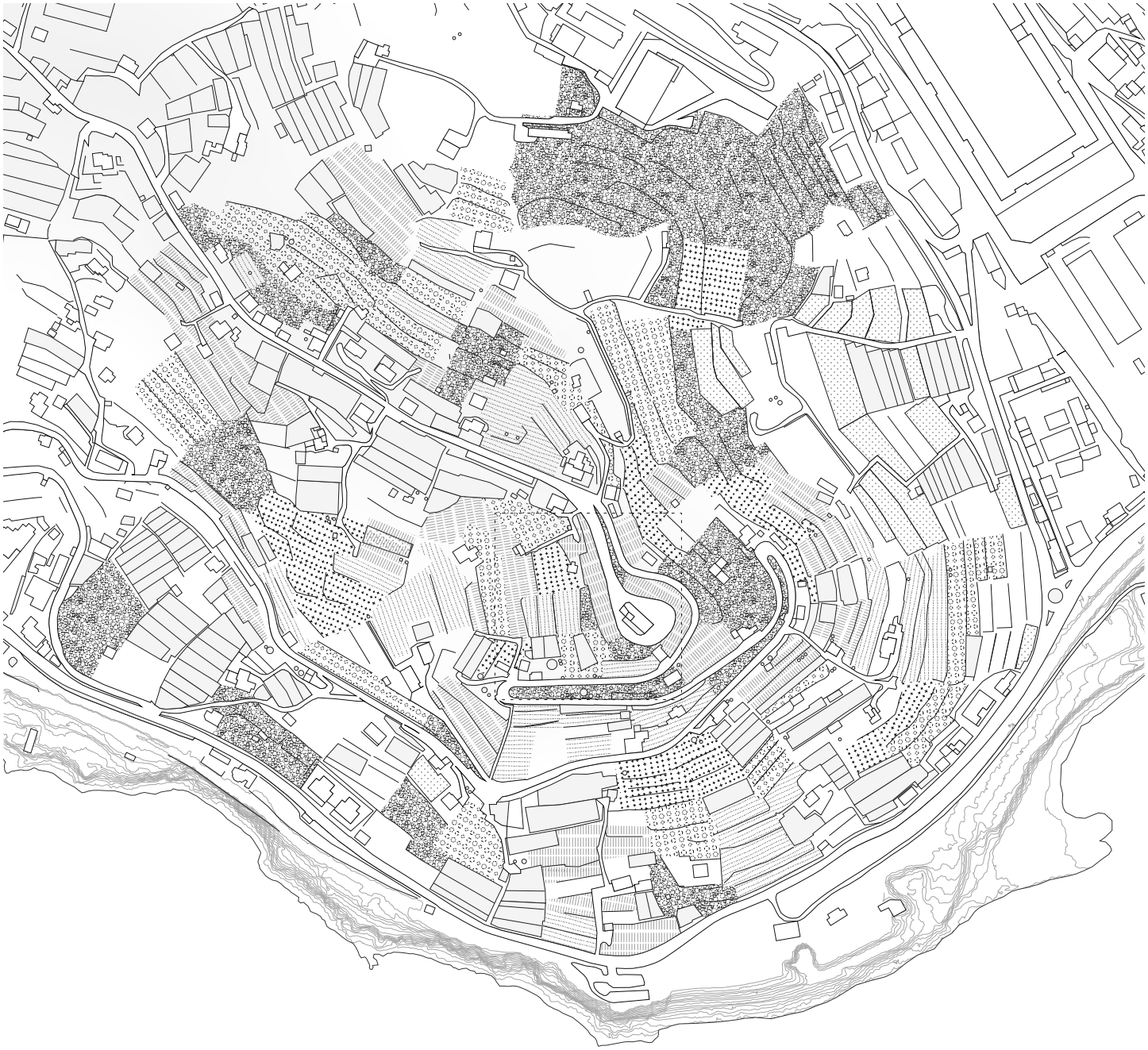
Cisterns

The cultivation of these flowers required fundamental physical-geographical conditions, such as direct exposure to sunlight and growth on rugged terrain. Additionally, it necessitated a constant and well-organized workforce. The alteration of the landscape was significant, involving the redefinition of terraced slopes to accommodate new floral crops through the use of broader and steeper systems (Notari, 2019). To ensure a consistent water supply, cisterns were soon installed near greenhouses or open-air cultivations to collect water used for irrigation. In his essay "La Liguria o della distruzione di un paesaggio" (1955), Cesare Fera vividly describes the formation of this landscape:

> *"The disappearance is radical and due to replacement with rich floral crops. The result is a lunar landscape composed of stone walls and reinforced concrete cylinders, an abstract geometric composition where vegetation is rigorously absent"* (p. 7).

With this historical background, the choice of Cape Verde as a subject for design study becomes evident. This territory, represents the most significant example of greenhouse proliferation in the Sanremo region. Images of greenhouses in this part of Sanremo are abundant, as are the vernacular narratives associated with them. This area signifies the culmination of the greenhouse narrative in the Sanremo territory. The predominantly western exposure, low altitude, slope of the slopes, and water supply through the creation of the Marsaglia aqueduct have made this area of Sanremo one of the first to host the cultivation of cut flowers. Initially, it was mainly open fields, but soon the first glass greenhouses or "ombraie" were installed to protect the harvest. In this context, the dispersion of built structures caused by the emergence of greenhouses is evident, with each family-run business owning greenhouses near their residence. The landscape thus appears as a mosaic composed of homes, greenhouses, and cultivated land.

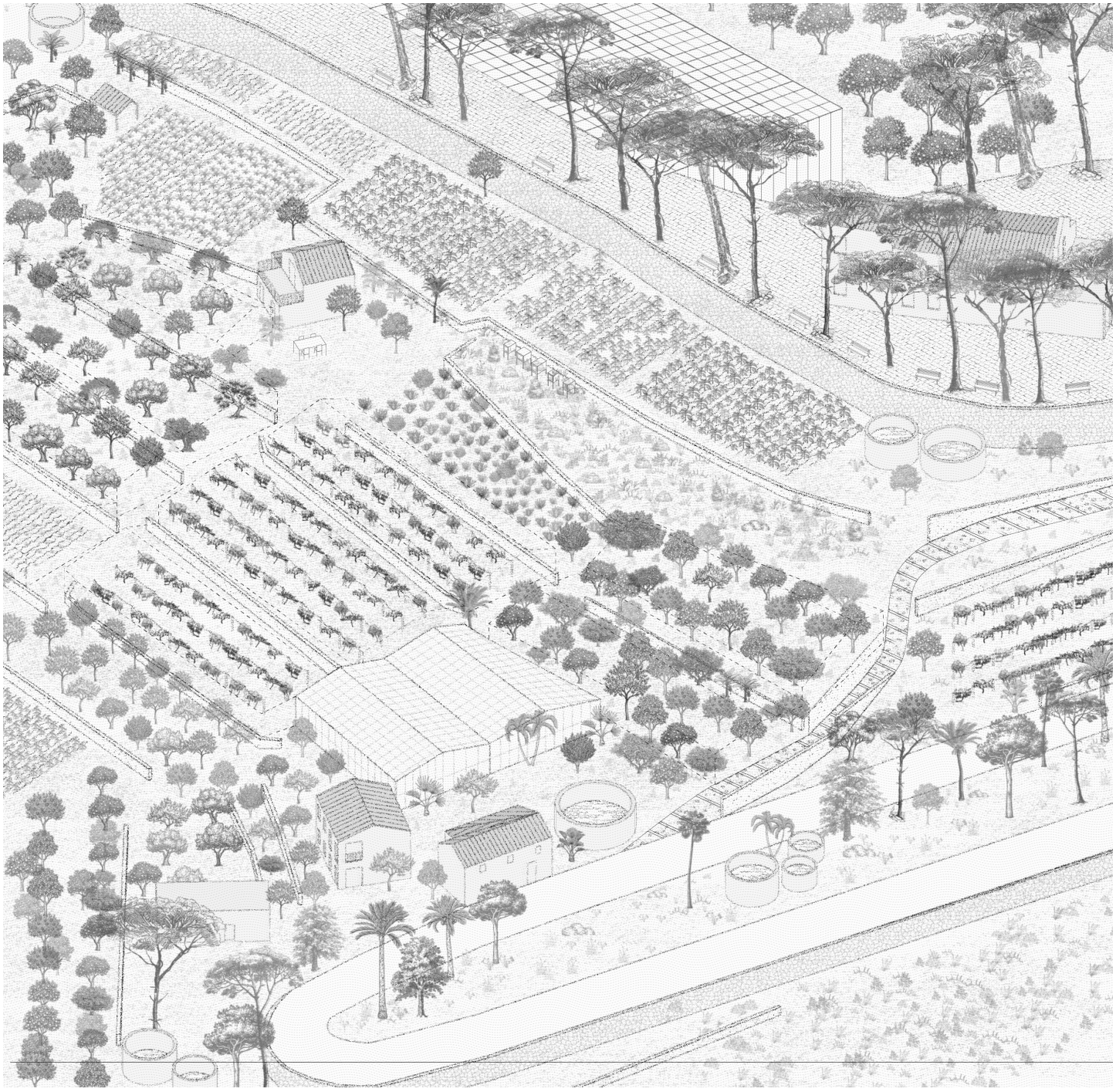
With the marked decrease in demand, the floral industry hub of the Western Liguria has entered a significant state of transition or abandonment (ISTAT, 2021). In the former case, it involves converting cultivation from ornamental plants to the loss of cut flowers. Consequently, the presence of greenhouses for their production is no longer necessary and justified. Moreover, due to the crisis, many floriculture businesses have ceased operations, contributing to greenhouse abandonment. These trends are confirmed by data, indicating a substantial reduction in the number of businesses since the '90s, while the remaining ones show an increase in cultivated area, primarily due to the transformation from intensive greenhouse flower cultivation to extensive outdoor cultivation of ornamental plants. (Pepino, 2023; Notari, 2019)

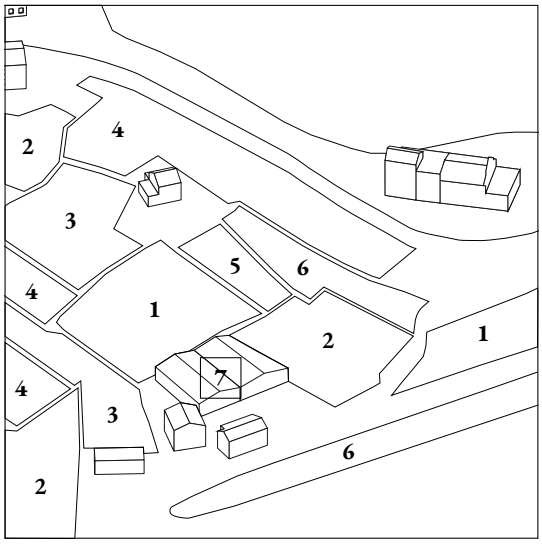


Land Use Design Proposal

0 50 100 m

- Greenhouses in use
- Vineyards
- Vegetable gardens and harvests
- Orchards
- Olive groves
- Rewilding areas
- Cisterns





1. Vineyards
2. Orchard
3. Olive grove
4. Begetable garden
5. Shrubs cultivation
6. Third Landscapes
7. Restored greenhouse

In this design site, caring takes on the meaning of understanding what truly matters to us today. In this context, an evaluation exercise followed by the clearance of territorial structures is essential. Assigning value to the structures around us helps us realize that many existing greenhouses in this area are nothing more than "shells" without any real value, a system that, due to global-scale value changes, has rendered this sector almost irrelevant in the local context. The design statement aims to step back from this state of affairs and propose a conversion of existing structures that starts from the specificity of the place, from the needs of the local population, rather than fueling economically precarious systems. A process of "clearance" of underutilized structures on the territory can not only mitigate the negative environmental effects of these systems but also reveal a landscape partially obscured by these massive structures. It allows us to rediscover the previous landscape configuration where necessary and suggests new ways to utilize these abandoned territories in harmony with the local coastal landscape and a more sustainable vision of local territorial identity.

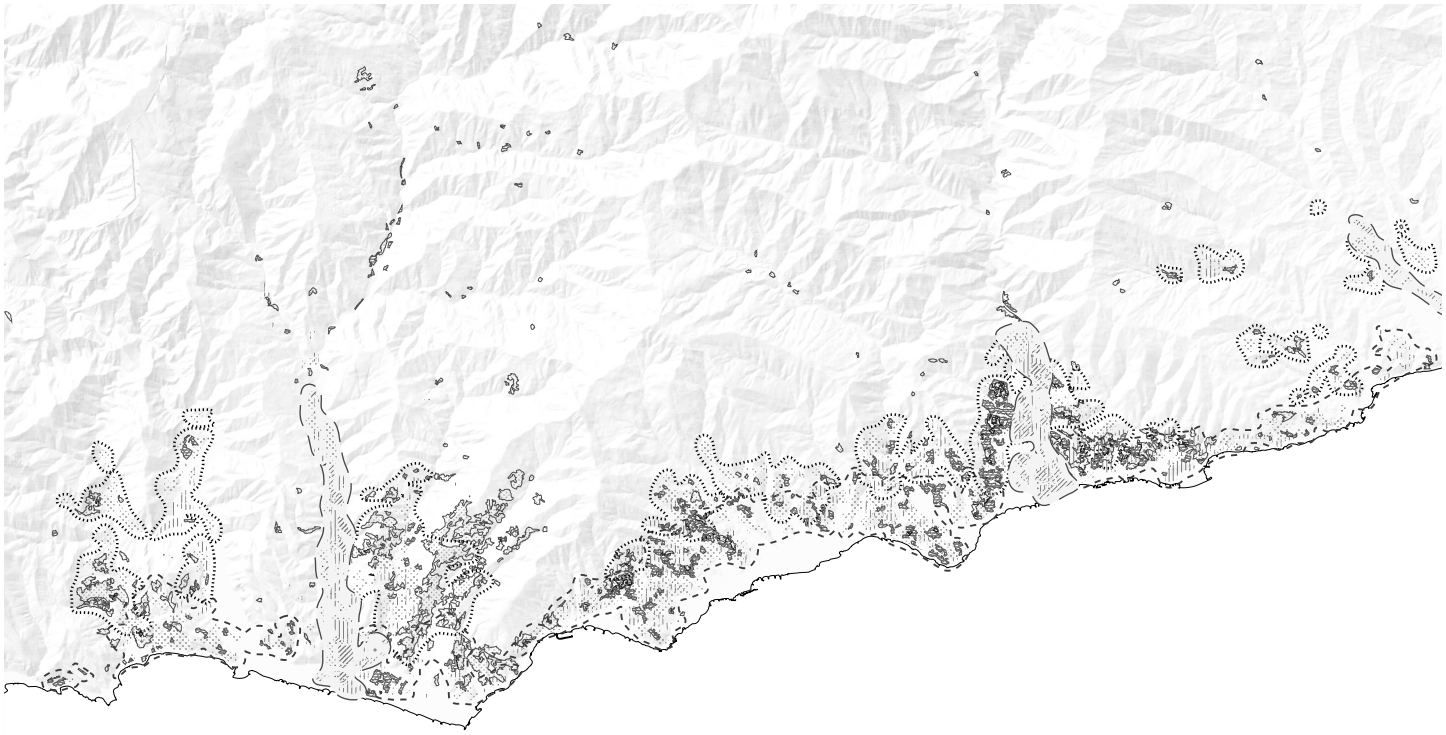
Zooming in on a specific plot of land just below the “Madonna della Guardia”, the design focuses on a site currently dominated by abandoned greenhouses. The proposal involves regenerative land use and the removal of these structures. As depicted in the axonometric drawing, the terraced landscapes, predominantly concrete in this area, are retained to embrace

the concept of adapting what is already there, rather than converting them into dry-stone walls. The land is visibly divided among different property owners, prompting tangible design interventions to suggest new, directly beneficial uses of the land, rooted in ancient traditions but tailored to current needs. Historically, these hills were adorned with olive groves, so the proposal includes their restoration. Similarly, Capo Verde has a long history of Vermentino vineyards, now produced in limited quantities mainly for local consumption. Thus, another design intention is to reintroduce vineyards to increase local wine production. Additionally, reclaimed land from the greenhouses would be converted into additional vegetable gardens, orchards with fruit trees, particularly citrus, and intentionally left partially unused to promote biodiversity and the flourishing of more-than-human life, in line with Gilles Clement's concept of third landscapes.

The backdrop of this study involves understanding the potential applicability of the proposed design across the entire system. Therefore, the ultimate objective involves zooming out once again to comprehend how this conversion can be replicated throughout the entire horticultural district of western Liguria. To achieve this, a comprehensive analysis of the district has been categorized into three distinct scenarios, each defining different design priorities that need to be evaluated.

In the coastal areas, where greenhouses are situated in close proximity to the coastline, significant efforts are focused on clearing underutilized structures, facilitating rewilding processes to restore the coastal landscapes to their original state, and converting the land back to previous uses such as orchards and olive groves. In the mountainous districts, similar efforts are directed towards removing abandoned structures, particularly in remote areas, to facilitate renaturalization processes. Conversely, in lower contexts, greater emphasis is placed on land maintenance and repurposing structures for alternative agricultural practices. The final scenario concerns greenhouses located in the floodplains of rivers, which are typically more densely infrastructure-oriented. Abandonment of greenhouses in these areas is less frequent, and they often assume larger industrial scales. Consequently, the urgency for converting these structures is less pressing. In the few instances where conversion is necessary, the focus is primarily on creating more flexible spaces, preserving agricultural land, and allowing for better management of river resources.

The intangible aspect of this design revolves around recognizing the need to redefine our community and societal values to align with current urgencies and necessities, rather than being bound to outdated economic assets that no longer serve their intended purpose. This entails understanding the urgency to shift away from the existing status quo of land use on the site, which can only be achieved through a shift in mentality.



Greenhouses Clusters

0 2,5 5 km

Greenhouses and vegetable gardens
Nurseries
Greenhouses and agricultural land
Complex agricultural patterns

Greenhouses and vegetable gardens
Nurseries
Greenhouses and agricultural land
Complex agricultural patterns

	Mountain district	Coastal district	Floodplain district
Maintenance of existing structures	○	○	◎
Buffer areas and room for the river			◎
Clearence of obsolete structures	◎	◎	○
Rewilding processes	◎	○	○
Olive groves	◎	◎	
Orchards and other wooden plants	◎	◎	○
Reforestation processes	◎	○	

04 — Vallone del Sasso

The project's focus on narrating a secondary story within the territorial plot highlights the current threat to the uniqueness of this area, which has been a distinctive feature for centuries, notably seen in Bordighera, known as "The City of Palms," where a significant portion of the economy has historically relied on an extensive palm grove. Once vital for agricultural water supply, the Vallone del Sasso has seen a decline in significance due to changes in land use, urbanization, and water management. Despite this, its historical presence persists thanks to the existence of a pedestrian path. Selecting this site for project implementation seeks to create a notable divergence from the numerous urban gardens lining the coastline. It detaches partially from the designing of urban gardens designed solely for botanical exoticism, which, in practice, often lack meaningful integration with their surrounding context. This decision was made for this unique territorial episode within the Ligurian region, where the exceptional landscape is interwined with a well-defined historical significance and territorial identity. (Piana et al., 2019; Carassale, 2014)

According to Giacomo Bracelli, the acclimatization of date palms in the High Middle Ages, influenced by Arab practices, flourished by the 1400s in the territory (Adriani, 1924). Palms, rare on the peninsula, were strategically cultivated with other fruit trees for protection. Interestingly, they were valued not for fruit but for leaves used in Jewish Sukkot and Christian Palm Sunday. The historical proliferation led to Sanremo annually sending crafted palm leaves to Rome for the pontificial liturgy. In the 19th century, palm sales declined, shifting their use from economic to ornamental purposes. Bordighera, however, retained its exceptional palm presence, resisting the trend toward more lucrative crops (Carassale, 2014).
Among the numerous Grand Tourists arriving in Bordighera and marveling at the exotic landscape, Thomas Jefferson wrote:

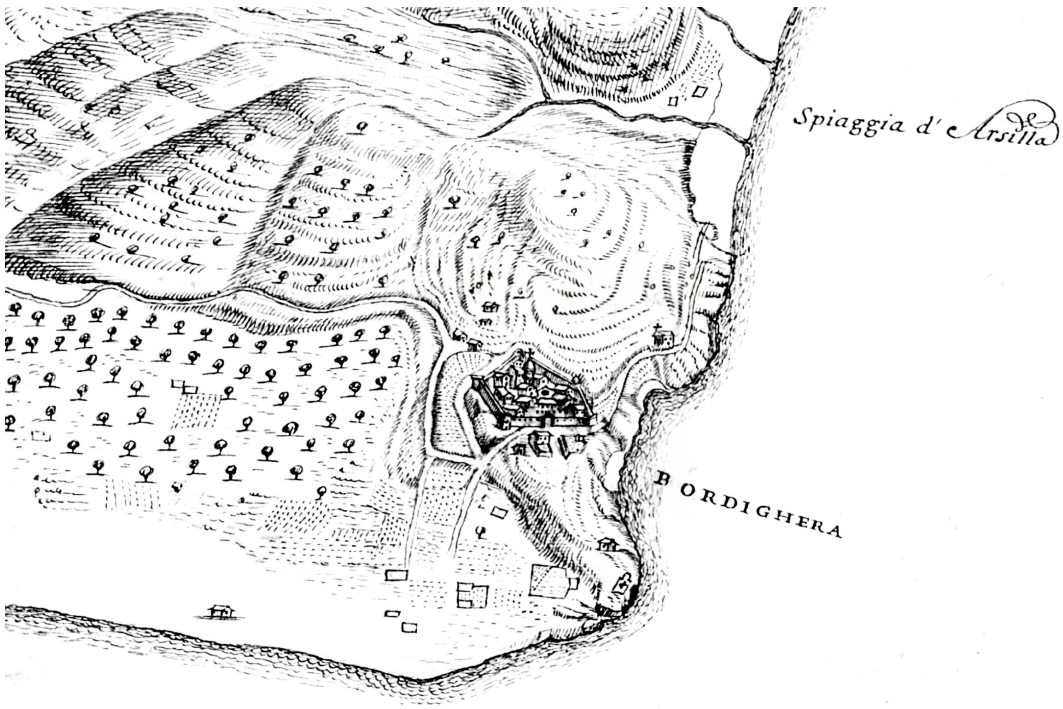


Fig. 24

Fig. 25

> *"There are extensive plantations of palms, on the hills as well as in the plain. They bear fruit, although it does not ripen. Something is done with the central vein, which is highly sought after in Rome for Palm Sunday, making the tree profitable here" (Jefferson, 1997, p. 87-88)*

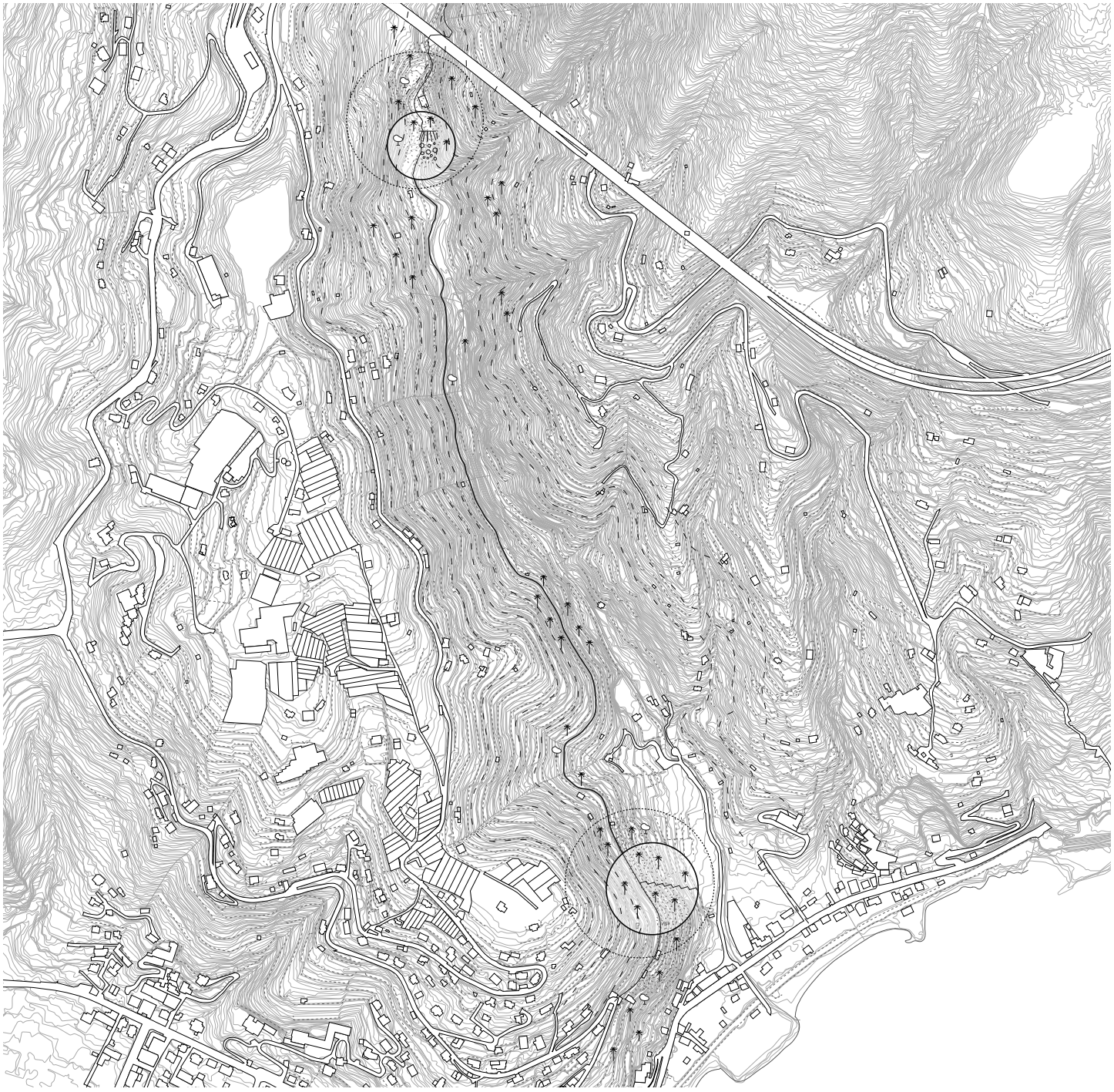
while Charles Dickens described Bordighera as

> *"a place with dense olive-covered mountains and hills adorned with palms, giving the traveler the impression of being transported to Africa due to the pyramid-like appearance of this rare plant in Europe"*
> *(Dickens, 1844-1845, p. 121).*

In addition to these renowned writers, the exotic beauty of the landscape also attracted numerous painters, including Hermann Nestel, Karl Lorenz Rettich, and especially Monet, who created some of the most significant paintings of the Beodo Valley.
In the past, Bordighera's countryside had approximately 12,000 date palms, predominantly of the Phoenix dactylifera species, including Jewish and papal varieties (Molinari, 1869, pp. 14-15). However, as per the 2003 census by Bordighera's technical office, the estimated count had dwindled to 1458 date palms (2003). Due to widespread red palm weevil-induced mortality, the current estimate suggests only a few hundred individuals remain in this section of the territory.

Geographically, the Sasso Valley is a narrow coastal valley preceding Bordighera's historic centre. Emerging from the extensive historical palm grove on the mountain's western slope, it appears relatively narrow and undeveloped, featuring dwellings and terraces on the mountain ridges. The entire valley is crossed by the ancient Beodo pathway on the orographic right, linking the valley floor to mountain slope cultivations. Historically, a minor trail existed on the opposite valley side. The central valley portion is narrow, expanding into a wide basin that formerly housed a water feature and small waterfalls (depicted in various paintings), precisely where the highway viaduct now stands. The trail vanishes after the mentioned viaduct.

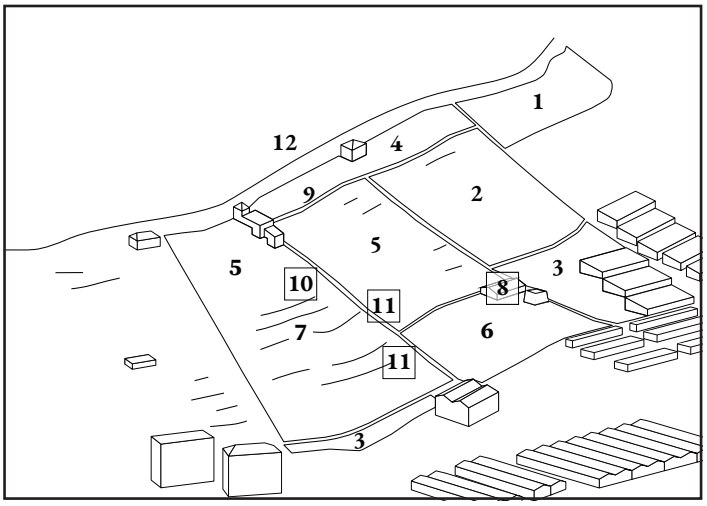
In order to fully justify the selection of this site for the proposed intervention and to articulate my design intentions and the tangible and intangible value of the project I am about to propose, I will draw a compelling connection in the following paragraph between the Vallone del Beodo and the garden of Kolymetra. By referencing the description provided by the renowned agronomist Giuseppe Barbera in his book "Il Giardino Mediterraneo" (2021), which recounts the remarkable garden and the process that led to its recognition of exceptional value, I hope to validate my choices within my context using the same motivations.



Valley-Scale Design

0 50 100 m

- Additional vegetation sites
- Palm groves improvement
- Waterfall restoration
- Path restoration
- Puntual intervention sites
- Valley delimitation
- Terraced landscape



1. Maintenance ancient palm grove
2. Polycultural system
3. Vegetable gardens
4. Community facilities
5. Beodo ecological and educational garden
6. Experimental garden
7. Restoration of terraces
8. Nursery for plants
9. Events auditorium
10. Community crops
11. Old buildings restoration
12. Restoration Beodo path

To prevent further deterioration of this territory, it's crucial to acknowledge its rich cultural and natural heritage, intertwined with historical, literary, and artistic significance. Yet, mere defensive measures are inadequate; a deeper connection with the material and spiritual needs of its cultivators and inhabitants is necessary, as they consider it an integral part of their cultural identity. This landscape exemplifies traditional agriculture, blending nature, history, and perception in intricate ways, contrasting sharply with today's monocultural agricultural landscapes. Its value extends beyond heritage preservation or biodiversity conservation. An ancient olive tree standing alongside its dry stone wall, is not relics of the past but rather symbols of the future, representing the evolving needs of our social and cultural systems. Consequently, the project revolves around developing an intervention that couldn't have been the outcome of a completely new project. A traditional agricultural landscape isn't designed but rather recovered by reading the traces left by history, the remnants of artifacts, old crops, and the memory of those who have cultivated this land.

Exploring the specifics of the initial site, its significance lies in its strategic proximity to the village and its potential to become an exemplary garden. The project involves the creation of a garden that serves as a "exhibition of itself", demonstrating traditional production systems, the mixed landscape of the palm grove and other agricultural crops, and the terracing system itself. To achieve this goal, the project is subdivided into various interventions across designated project zones, some requiring more workforce than others. In areas densely populated by the palm grove, the primary focus is on vegetation maintenance. Across much of the site, the project

entails revitalizing abandoned terraces and establishing an exhibition garden that functions as both a biodiversity garden and an educational hub. This garden will exhibit local flora, including shrubs, orchards, olive trees and the historic palm grove, illustrating the coexistence of these systems within the agricultural landscape of the past. Moving downstream, additional features include an experimental biodiversity garden and a nursery for cultivating new plant species. Meanwhile, the upper segment of the project involves renovating the pathway to enhance accessibility and creating spaces for community use, such as communal gardens, canopies and a flexible area that can serve as an informal auditorium for events. Furthermore, plans include the restoration of primary staircases, and, if necessary, ancient agricultural architectural artifacts. Through these interventions, the project aims to preserve the cultural and natural heritage of the site while fostering community engagement and environmental stewardship.

The second site, situated towards the valley's end, where the highway viaduct now stands, constitutes a relatively targeted project intervention on a smaller scale. Acknowledging the historical and cultural significance of the past waterfall and pond in this place, as evidenced by numerous historical references and artistic representations, the project aspires to revitalize this ecosystem. Presently, this area is markedly degraded, with the stream nearly absent, the path expanded to the extent of hiding the waterfall, and the riverbed is extensively modified. Aligned with the philosophy of philological restoration, this intervention seeks, through archival evidence, to revert the landscape to a prior state, to the greatest extent feasible, allowing it greater value and prestige than its current condition. The proposed interventions are straightforward in nature. They include the introduction of new palm specimens, particularly in proximity to the stream, and the naturalization of the riverbed through the deployment of indigenous stones and gravel sourced onsite. Additionally, the recreation of the waterfall would occur organically, facilitated by the installation of larger rocks to recreate the necessary elevation drop. Such an intervention would resurrect a segment of this valley with profound historical and cultural import, unfortunately lost to contemporary neglect.

Regarding the intangible dimension of the project, emphasis is placed on fostering awareness and disseminating information among the public concerning the significance and exceptional qualities of the landscape under analysis. This, in turn, underscores the imperative of its protection and preservation. Specifically, attention is directed towards the intangible knowledge encompassing agricultural and floral practices, alongside the comprehension of local biodiversity and its conservation. Moreover, the intangible heritage's intrinsic value is underscored, alongside the necessity of transmitting, through various archival means, the collective memory associated with the locale.

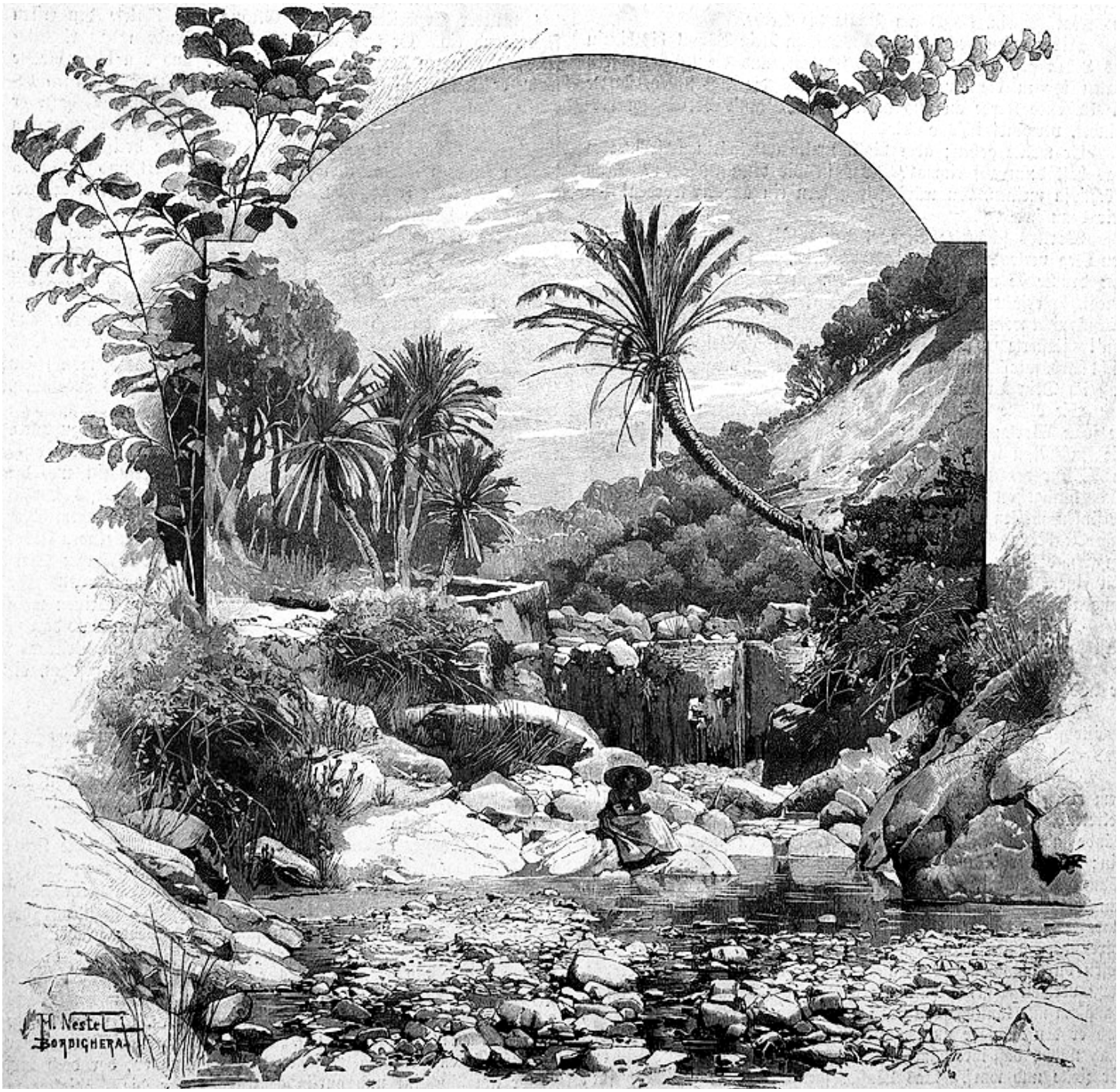
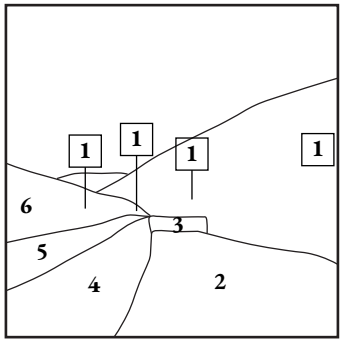


Fig. 26

Historical Pond and Waterfall Restoration



1. New Palm Trees
2. Recovery river bed
3. Restoration waterfall
4. River buffer
5. Improvement path
6. Autoctone vegetation

Intangible Design

Curatorial Statement

Through the exploration undertaken in this thesis, I have encountered a multitude of phenomena that I later recognized as embodying the essence of caring practices. Realizing that my design trajectory would orbit around these Matters of Care, as elucidated by Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2017), the necessity to gather and systematically catalogue these caring practices emerged. This curatorial practice, which I regard as a counterproject of significance, is driven by the desire to elucidate how the intangible epistemology of care manifests in diverse forms within the focal site under scrutiny.

The curatorial project aims to illuminate my personal insights into what these practices of care signify to me and how they are manifested. This exercise has been conducted through an exhaustive investigation, delving both retrospectively into previous findings and prospectively into further research, to unearth the significance of what mattering means: the intangible reflections of communal practices. This quest for understanding has led me to consult informal local digital archives, delve into private photographic collections, analyse local manifestations and exhibitions, explore the transmission of traditions and vernacular language, and examine the initiatives of community associations, including their statutes aimed at safeguarding and celebrating the local heritage. Additionally, individual archival and mattering practices have been meticulously examined. In essence, this research constitutes a collection of what might conventionally be regarded as ephemeral or peripheral practices—the everyday rituals and habits. However, within this framework, these practices are intended to be proudly showcased as exemplary demonstrations of individuals and communities actively shaping and valuing their existence.

The culmination of this exploration, results in a curatorial archive structured into three distinct sections, each dedicated to showcase a component of my findings. The first part showcases marginal narratives written by local poets and writers. These excerpts echo diverse perspectives and interpretations of the landscape, embodying an intangible archive of vanished landscapes and vernacular practices.
The second part focuses on the concept of archiving as a means of

remembrance and preservation. Here, the design outcome is exemplified by my personal family archive. The intention here is to transcend from a purely subjective interpretation of my family archive, as much as possible, and to objectively investigate the caring practices upheld by members of my family in past generations. In doing so, the importance of individual practices is highlighted, aiming to perpetuate the realization of what I consider to be the precise embodiment of the concept of the "Planetary Garden" (Clément, 2015).

The third section delves deeper into the significance of maintaining caring practices. This is accomplished through the presentation of a synthesized elaboration of select intangible multidisciplinary "good practices" of mattering observed on the site, spanning both individual and community levels.

Finally, I seek to emphasize the inherent openness of these curatorial attempt. The forthcoming insights are derived from my personal interpretation of the concept of care as applied to this site, employing the tools at my disposal. Namely, my deliberately digitized personal family archives and the multidisciplinary digital archival research. This curation undoubtedly has the potential for extensive expansion, encompassing all conceivable intangible practices that may emerge from a dedicated site visit, direct interviews with individuals, consultation of local archives not readily available on-site, and thorough exploration of more remote areas within the territory, uncovering hidden and less common practices.

Literary Findings

"Numerous towns and villages, some gracefully seated on the shore, bathing their feet in the silvery waves, some stretching up the mountain sides like a flock of sheep, or thrown picturesquely aside a lofty bridge, with here and there a solitary sanctuary perched high on a sea-washed cliff, or half lost in a forest of verdure at the head of some glen; marble palaces and painted villas emerging from sunny vineyards, gaily flowering gardens, or groves of orange and lemon trees; myriads of white casini with green jalousies, scattered all over hills, once sterile, but now their scanty soil propped up by the terrace shelving above terrace, clothed to the top with olive-trees,—all and everything, in short, of man's handiwork, betokens the activity and ingenuity of a tasteful and richly-endowed race." (Ruffini, 1855, pp. 1-2)

"We used to go there to see fairy tale-like villages, stone houses that showed to the valley their injured and unchanged pride. [...] Going to those villages was like entering a primitive world that [...] was something more intense, a resistance of the distant past, a memory of the human contradiction-unacceptable, but very real-of the stratification that History imposes upon us". (Orengo, 2001, p. 54)

Literature and poetry are undoubtedly practices of care, serving as fundamental tools for transmitting legacy to future generations. They embody a strong commitment to archiving and preserving cultural heritage. Through writing, words achieve immortality, passed down from generation to generation. Particularly through the descriptive efforts of writers, play an indispensable role in keeping alive the imagery of landscapes that have since vanished. They offer a clear means to recall and describe how a particular place once was. Especially pertinent to the site under analysis, literature has been a crucial instrument for investigating landscape changes over time, and to trace back features of the territory which are now fading away.

"Liguria is transforming and destroying its old face because it is a region rich in life and activity. But this should not mean accepting an ugly transformation, the loss of its distinctive features, or the creation of an anonymous face made up of "seaside" coasts and industrial suburbs. As Mumford says, "the natural conditions of a region, far from being nullified by the growth of culture and technical skills, are actually magnified,'but only on the condition that these developments do not act in an anarchic and destructive manner as they do today'". *(Fera, 1955, p. 7)

"When flowers are mentioned, the habits of literary language weave delicate and sumptuous suggestions around the words. But here, flowers imply something quite different: where flower cultivation reaches, the landscape becomes barren and uniform to ensure maximum sun exposure without anything casting shadows. There are terraced lands, slightly inclined, supported by walls much straighter than the usual crumbling walls of the terraces". *(Calvino, 1985, p. 2384)

Moreover, literature has always been the preeminent tool for scholars and learned individuals to denounce change, elucidate social and cultural transformations throughout history, and vividly describe them. Through their writings and personal perspectives on the matter at hand, writers are able to shed light on the critical issues or changes affecting the territory. This resonance not only informs the population but also encourages a critical awareness. By highlighting these changes, writers aim to initiate a debate on the subject, drawing attention to it and thereby framing it as a matter of care.

"If we do not connect landscapes to history, we cannot recognize them as a heritage of more or less shared images which, depending on the interpretation we give them, establish or re-establish the identity of local societies in continuous evolution; in the same way, albeit on a different scale, landscapes themselves contribute to the construction of the evolving identities of the individuals who compose such societies." (Quaini, 2007, p. 483)

"Just as in the last one hundred and fifty years a diaspora of Ligurians took root in the Americas, so in recent decades new masses have settled in Liguria, at different social levels: from the inhabitants of the long residential strip, mostly from the north, to the relocation of entire villages from the south, which have provided fundamental labor contributions to Ligurian agriculture and economy. Within a few generations, Liguria will be spoken of in new terms, which we cannot yet foresee. Representing an old way of "living Liguria," only the limpet clinging to the rock will remain." (Calvino, 1985, p. 2389)

Writing serves as an immensely powerful tool for articulating one's ideas, provoking discussions, and fostering reflections on matters of care and the significance of our world. In this context, writing becomes a means to engage in debates about future concerns, the evolving nature of issues, and the ontological implications of our surroundings. Through writing, the author expresses their opinions and, consequently, their unique caring perspective, speculating on the significance of the world and the ongoing evolution of our environment. Importantly, the author applies their knowledge to envision future possibilities emerging from these considerations.

“I see myself reflected in this landscape; this barrenness sustains me. I recognize myself in the olive tree embedded in the wall, in the shrub that lives in the burning sand.”
(Sbarbaro, 1920, p. 150)

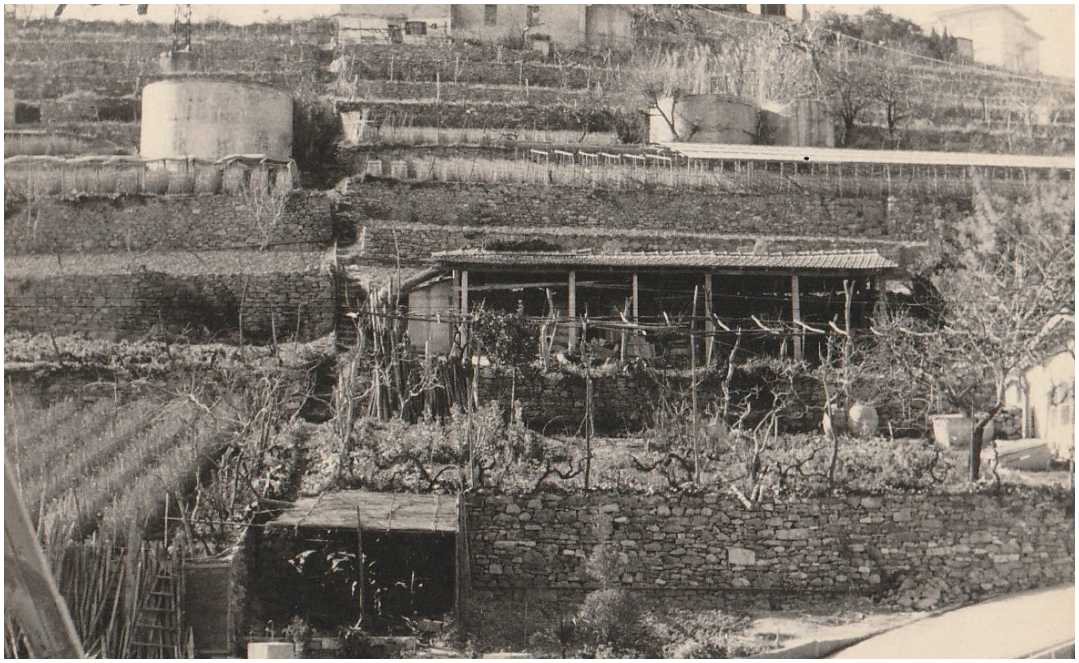
"The immobility of things protects against the passage of time and changes. Everything has always been and will always be the same: the festivals, the funerals, the imprisoned existences, the depersonalized personal destinies, the poverty that comes from centuries." (Biamonti, 1983, p.4)

"If one wants to describe a place completely, not as a fleeting appearance but as a portion of space that has form, meaning, and reason, one must represent it as being traversed by the dimension of time. (...) In other words, the true description of a landscape ultimately contains the history of that landscape, the entirety of the events that have slowly contributed to determining the form in which it presents itself to our eyes, the balance that manifests at every moment between the forces that hold it together and the forces that tend to disintegrate it."
(Pagano, 2015, p. 62)

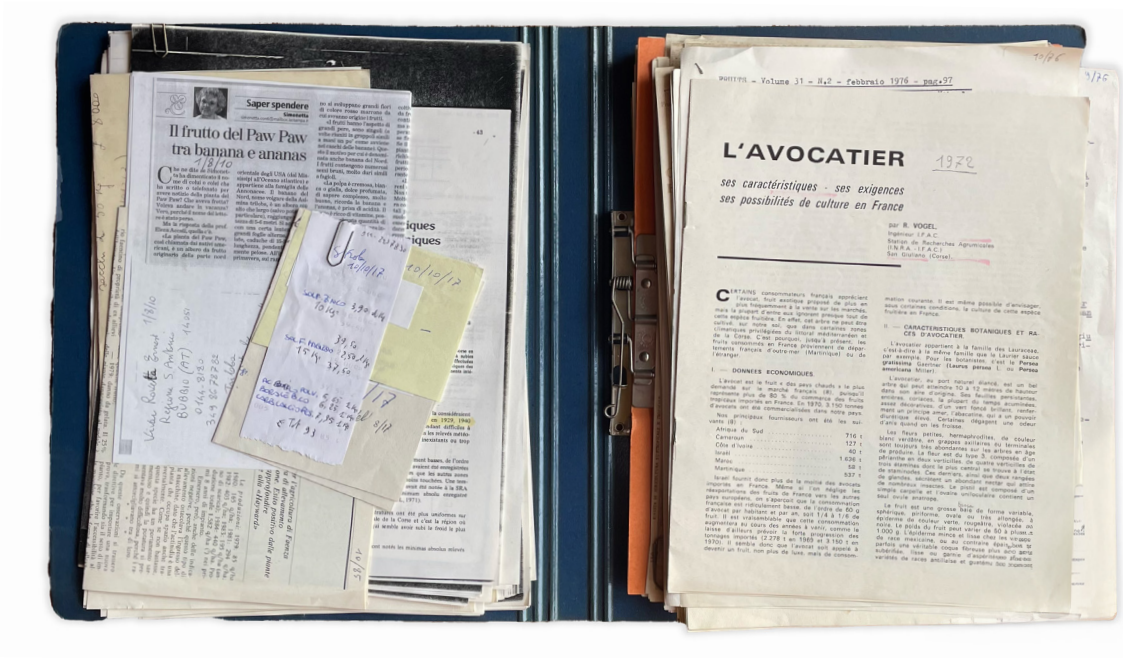
Finally, literature and written works frequently employ metaphors and analogies to elucidate complex concepts, rendering them accessible to a broader audience. Through this technique, writers can communicate profound insights by simplifying intricate ideas or elevating them to a level of abstraction beyond the tangible realm. Once more, writers harness these literary devices as remarkable tools for conveying their perspectives, immersing themselves in their surroundings, and articulating their emotions through diverse means. Literature thus serves as a medium for transcending abstract thoughts from the realm of the unspoken into tangible words and material reality.

Personal Archive

The analysis of my personal historical archive commences, with a clear understanding of the facts, three generations ago, with my great-grandfather Giovanni Battista, known as Giobatta, and great-grandmother Iolanda, as caring assumes its initial form in this account through the transition from the hinterland, from a small village named Cetta, to Sanremo, where they purchased a plot of land near the locality of Solaro, with the move offering greater job opportunities and improved social conditions, leading to the construction of greenhouses and the cultivation of cut flowers, primarily carnations, where Giobatta, inclined to follow the prevailing research theories of the time, following the expertese of Mario Calvino, engaged in intermingling different species to obtain new hybrid varieties.



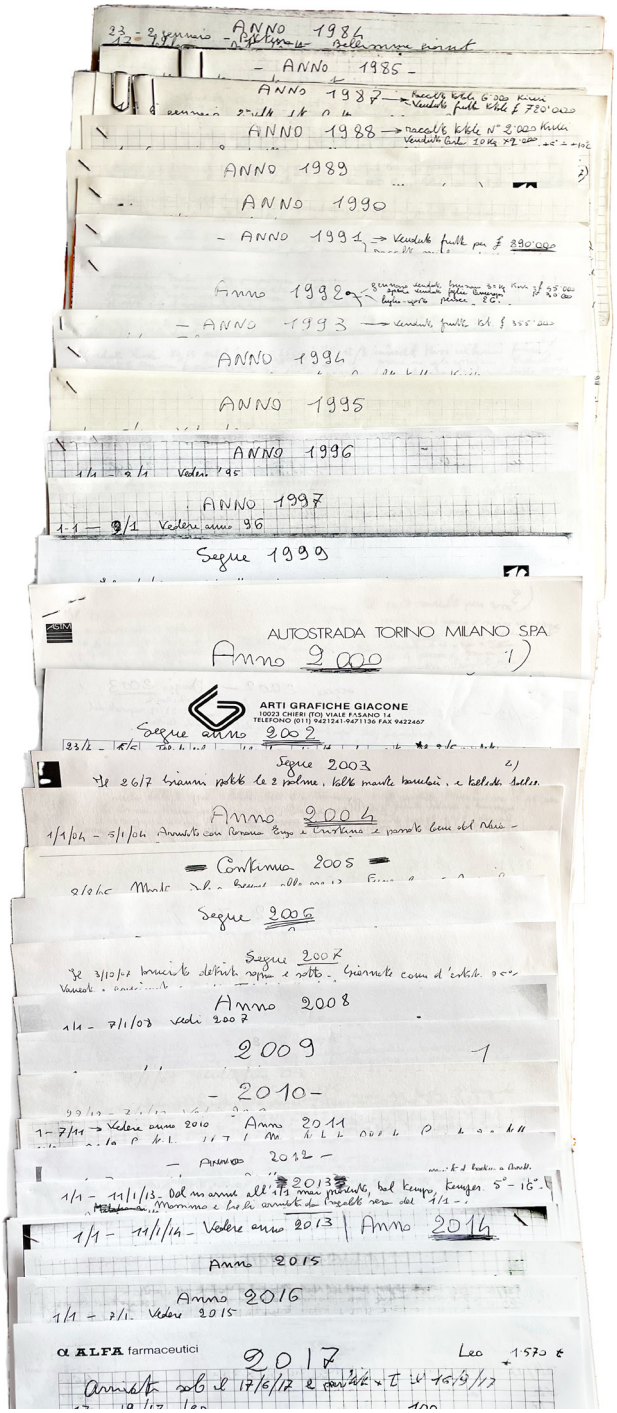
For my family, practices of care entailed tending to the plot of land they had acquired and deriving a livelihood from it, particularly crucial during the war years when land ownership signified fortune and self-sufficiency. My great-grandparents personally tended to the land, planting new trees as needed, harvesting flowers, and caring for occasional farm animals, necessitating their full-time dedication to their property and home. As the generational shift occurred with my grandmother Silvana marrying a foreigner from Turin, the responsibility of maintaining the land became increasingly challenging for the aging couple. Eventually, with nobody capable of sustaining the agricultural system, the existing greenhouses were dismantled, paving the way for a complete reconversion of the land.



Upon my grandfather Sergio's retirement, the couple found themselves with more time in Sanremo, allowing them to both pursue their passion for maintaining the land they had cultivated over the years, with my grandmother tending to ornamental plants and my grandfather planting new trees, particularly exotic ones, and experimenting with their survival in the mild Mediterranean climate, embodying processes of endemism, intermingling, and assemblage between different plant species, even before the concept of the Planetary Garden was conceived by Gilles Clement (2015), demonstrating his self-made nature by creating an extensive library of botanical and biological research and deeply engaging in experimentation with various plant species.

Caring also takes the form of pausing, waiting, and exercising patience as nature takes its course. By planting new plant species until the entire plot of land at their disposal was filled, my grandparents had nothing left to do but wait. They waited for winter to pass each year, for the dormant trees to begin bearing fruit, and for the trees to grow larger and demonstrate, year after year, the success of the care and dedication they bestowed upon this plot of land.

Mattering in this world entails refraining from exploiting the land but rather accepting the fruits that nature offers us, diligently carrying out the same maintenance practices year after year, including clearance and plant care, to ensure rich harvests every year. Beginning with individual action, one becomes somewhat more self-reliant, gaining a heightened awareness of their work and a consciousness of the labor required to successfully carry out these practices. However, in a sustainable world, these practices must be continuously perpetuated, as they are not only necessary but fundamental to envisioning a society that is more conscious of its consumption and waste.



Estratto dall'estate 2014:
Il 16/08 raccolto tutte e 32 pesche di settembre perché marcivano. Il 17/08 tolto ninfee dalla vasca e messe altre due piante. Il 18/08 con Milvia tagliato molti rami delle 3 felloje. Il 19/08 mattina piovuto. Il 20/08 Maurizio pulito stufa. Il 25/08 pulito vasca dei pesci. Elide partita con Daniela. Il 28/8 cadute alcune asimine. 26-28/8 Comperato 14 kg cuor di bue per la conserva, 1€. Il 31/8 cadute due grosse asimine dalla pianta di Rossana: Milvia le porta a Torino. 1/9 incominciato mangiare fichi brogiotti. 2/9 Gita a Dolceacqua e da Adolfo. Il 5/9 preso una elle sue piante e seminato fave. Comprati altri 5 kg pomodori e fatti 10 barattoli conserva. Il 7/6 inizio di settembre belle giornate con l'estate che non aveva fatto a luglio ed agosto: Il 6/9 caduta la prima asimina 1216. Il 19/9 finito di raccogliere asimine.

Extract from Summer 2014:
On 16/08, gathered all 32 peaches from September because they were rotting. On 17/08, removed water lilies from the pond and added two more plants. On 18/08, with Milvia, pruned many branches from the 3 feijoe trees. On 19/08, it rained in the morning. On 20/08, Maurizio cleaned the stove. On 25/08, cleaned the fish pond. Elide left with Daniela. On 28/08, some pawpaws fell. From 26/08 to 28/08, bought 14 kg of oxheart tomatoes for preservation, 1€. On 31/08, two large pawpaws fell from Rossana's tree: Milvia took them to Turin. On 1/09, started eating Brogiotto figs. On 2/09, Trip to Dolceacqua and to Adolfo's. On 5/09, took one of his plants and planted broad beans. On 5/6, bought another 5 kg of tomatoes and made 10 jars of preserves. On 7/6, early September had beautiful days with summer weather that had not been seen in July and August. On 6/9, the first pawpaw fell: 1216. On 19/9, finished picking pawpaws.

One of the greatest treasures I believe I have inherited is the archive meticulously curated by my grandfather. Every year, he diligently documented their garden with a multitude of photographs, meticulously noting the year and description on the back of each picture. This careful organization has greatly aided the construction of this archival chapter. Moreover, he would accurately record every significant action in his diary, providing a comprehensive record of his daily activities. In my view, this is the essence of what a practice of care embodies: caring through archiving, acknowledging the work done, synthesizing and valuing it, and ensuring that the legacy lives on. Today, I am able to recognize that my grandfather mattered, as I am here writing this, thanks to his dedication and far-sightedness.

As I have attempted to illustrate throughout this entire project, the fading of caring becomes evident, as it has been throughout another generational shift. As my grandparents aged, it became increasingly challenging for them to tend to the entire plot of land, particularly those practices that required more workforce. The tangible effects of vulnerability have manifested in our garden. Due to lack of maintenance, terraces are prone to collapse during extreme weather events, exacerbated by water retention and a lack of oversight to ensure the stability of the stones. This neglect has rendered us vulnerable to external phenomena, such as the onslaught of invasive species. Caring entails, even in troubled times, recognizing the importance of our actions and perpetually acknowledging the significance of our legacy and inheritance.

As a new generation assumes full responsibility and consciousness of the privilege we possess, it becomes imperative once again to underscore the urgent need for a paradigm shift and the pursuit of caring for ourselves, for the present moment, for our extraordinary heritage, and for the meaningful shaping of the future. We possess all the tools necessary to recognize the inherent value of what we hold in our hands and the great potential it holds for the future. The richness of my heritage begins with acknowledging it. The future starts from my actions.

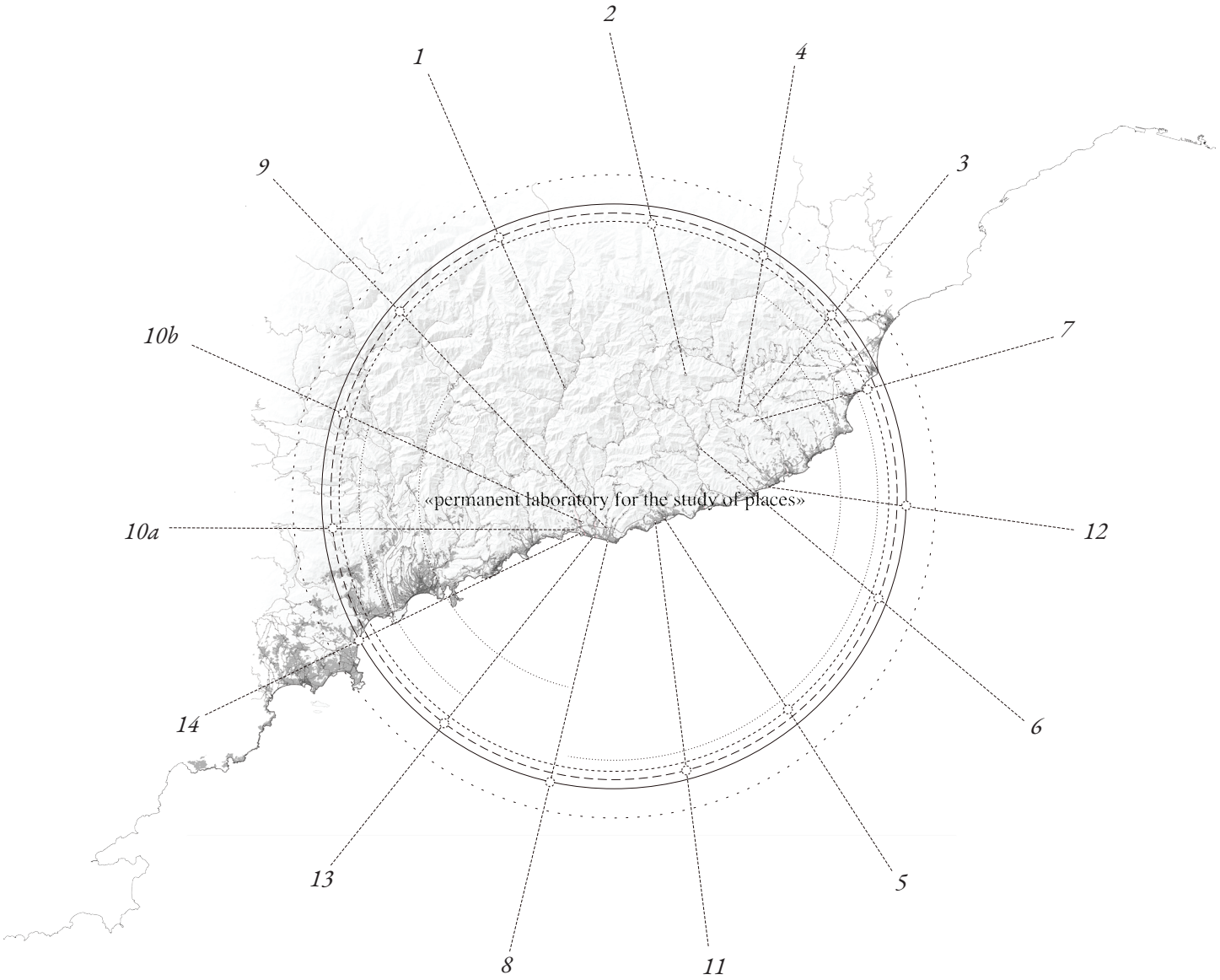
Caring Atlas

The final chapter of this curatorial exhibition explores a territorial-scale investigation into various practices of care already taking place within the community. Specifically, it examines how these practices manifest and are articulated through different mediums and activities. The aim is to showcase the informal and ephemeral efforts carried out by the population, which are actively dedicated to maintaining the land and its structures. Due to time constraints, this investigation was conducted using digital archives. The research included both formal and informal archives, private collections, local websites focused on historical and environmental research, databases, online exhibitions, folkloristic websites, associations, community events, and individual stories and practices.

Through this investigation, an atlas has been created to actively demonstrate how these actions are central to the concept of designing with care. It illustrates how the world and our surroundings are shaped by our everyday practices. This chapter aims to raise awareness among the audience by showcasing these diverse care practices, highlighting their presence within the territory even if they are somewhat hidden. It proposes further development and emphasizes the importance of these actions for the project's overall goals.

In particular, it is essential to reflect on the temporality of these different mediums of investigation. The findings have been categorized into three distinct groups based on the durability of these processes over time. Some activities are temporary, providing a fleeting remedy or alleviation of environmental issues and requiring ongoing maintenance. Other actions fall within the spectrum of long durée, meaning they have a direct, tangible, and visible impact on the territory that leaves lasting marks. The final category includes writings and articles, which, due to the nature of this medium, are considered eternal and everlasting.

In this sense, the intention of this chapter is to sensitize the audience by actively showcasing these diverse practices of care and how they indeed exist within the territory, even if somewhat hidden. It proposes to further develop and emphasize the importance of these actions for the overall goals of the project.



Spatialization of Intangible Caring Practices

- Temporality
- Momentary
- Long Durée
- Eternal
- Connections

1– The initiative seeks to revitalize Brigasca culture by preserving its language, values, and heritage for the fragmented Brigasca community. It aims to safeguard and enhance both historical and artistic legacies, encompassing natural landscapes and ancestral cultural treasures. Efforts are directed towards preserving and restoring material, social, and cultural heritage through various initiatives. This includes restoring "monuments of popular culture" like local furniture and vernacular architecture, and collecting diverse materials such as family photographs, old drawings, letters, and newspapers, as well as promoting traditional singing choirs. The statute clearly outlines a commitment to fostering local heritage and initiatives, both tangible and intangible.

2– The main objectives of the center are to promote environmental education pathways aimed at fostering sustainable behavior change and to disseminate interdisciplinary topics necessary for a mindful and informed management of the territory. Additionally, they aim to educate about the discovery of the territory through knowledge exchange and hands-on learning activities, and to encourage active participation to develop a critical awareness of environmental issues. This educational centre works as a clear exemplification of direct community participation on the territory

3– The concept of the ecomuseum is intriguing as it directly aims to promote territorial development. Each ecomuseum is a unique and continuously evolving entity, dynamically defined by local resources, relationships, and processes, making it impossible to fit into a singular and reproducible model. In the case of the Museo Acquarone in Lucinasco, it exemplifies a form of descriptive-diffuse museology where the entire territory, including architectural and landscape features like olive trees, terraces, and mule tracks, is conserved and curated. This approach represents a tangible reversal of current practices, countering the trends of abandonment and neglect observed today.

4– The art of reconstructing dry stone walls, as depicted in these images, stands as one of the most iconic and fundamental ancestral techniques within this territory. Its significance is both tangible and intangible. Tangible in its constructive act, serving as a method for protecting the land, and intangible as it perpetuates ancient practices and construction techniques from the past, which remain immutable and perpetually achievable over time.

5– Caring actions, including individual efforts, can manifest as temporary measures aimed at nurturing our environment and averting the surrounding environmental degradation. In this context, practices like beach cleaning, facilitated by both organized efforts and individual contributions, serve as a testament to the impact and validity of our actions and behaviors.

6– Corrado Bologna's narrative in "A Lecca" recounts his grandfather's yearly maintenance of drywalls. It highlights the importance of preserving material structures and individual narratives, emphasizing their value for the future.

7– This picture, also extracted from the same newspaper, depicts an image from the "giurna du fen" in 2018. This event showcases the ancient practices of haymaking using scythes and the preparation of hay bales using traditional methods. In this instance, such local events play a fundamental role in informing a wider audience about ancient vernacular practices.

STATUTO DELL' ORGANIZZAZIONE DI VOLONTARIATO
"A VAŠTÉRA ÜNIUN DE TRADISIUN BRIGAŠCHE ODV"

1

Recuperare difendere e valorizzare la cultura brigasca.
Riconferire lingua, valori, cultura e radici alla Gente Brigasca, culturalmente e storicamente coesa, ma politicamente smembrata e dispersa;

Tutelare e valorizzare il patrimonio storico ed artistico inteso anche naturale e come insieme di beni materiali e culturali tramandati dag

Tutelare la lingua brigasca nelle sue varianti, proponendosi:
La compilazione di una grammatica brigasca e di un dizionari brigasche;
La pubblicazione di ricerche sulla storia, l'antropologia, la psi l'ecologia, la letteratura popolare, la religione, il canto, la demogr naturali, l'etnomedicina che interessino la cultura brigasca;
L'introduzione della scrittura bilingue nella segnaletica stradal indicativa di locali aperti al pubblico o di esercizi commercia

Proteggere il patrimonio materiale, sociale e culturale mediante le ir si dà qui di seguito un elenco esemplificativo:
Creazione di case-museo, possibilmente coordinate, che raccolg autentico fornito in donazione o in prestito da privati cittadini o da Tali case-museo saranno strutturate secondo criteri scientifici e la del materiale sarà bilingue;

- Rimessa in pristino dei cosiddetti "monumenti della cultura usufruendo del lavoro volontario – per il valore etico dello stesso – le risorse umane, tecniche ed economiche che l'ODV riuscirà a re monumenti si elencano a titolo esemplificativo: antiche botteghe castagne, fornaci a calce, mulini da grano o da castagne, folloni (parm case per api (cae d'arbinée, sciamére), edicole sacre (capëléte, p fontane, poggioli, scale, porte, finestre, fienili, stazzi, forni, casotti, mulattiere, ecc...;
- Raccolte di fotografie familiari, disegni e pitture antiche, lettere di combattenti ed emigranti, giornali, documenti privati e pubblici, fotografie e diapositive dell'attuale situazione ambientale ed umana; cori per il canto tradizionale;

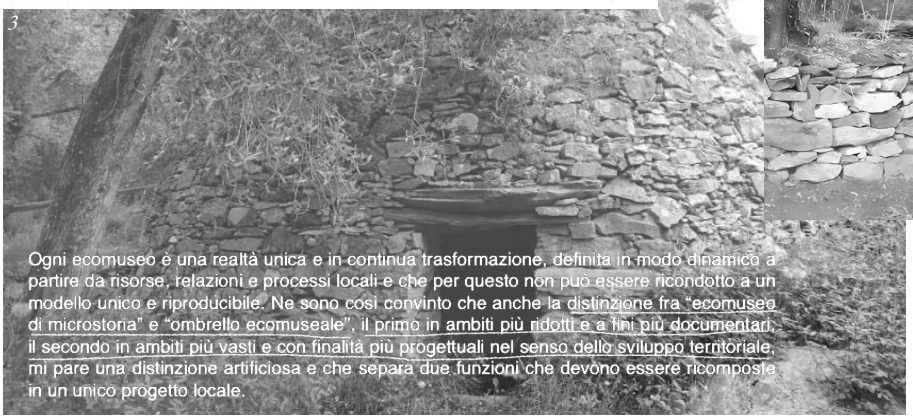
2

IL CENTRO DI EDUCAZIONE AMBIENTALE ALPI LIGURI

GLI OBIETTIVI

Il servizio formativo/informativo portato avanti dal centro si pone come obiettivi:
1. La promozione di **percorsi di educazione ambientale** volti al cambiamento dei modelli di comportamento necessari a perseguire uno sviluppo sostenibile.
2. La **diffusione di tematiche interdisciplinari** necessarie per un'attenta e consapevole fruizione e gestione del territorio.
3. L'**educazione alla "*scoperta*" del territorio** attraverso la realizzazione di attività di scambio di conoscenze ed esperienze e la promozione di iniziative learning by doing; la conoscenza e la divulgazione della biodiversità, con particolare riferimento alle specificità locali.
4. L'incentivazione di **forme di partecipazione attiva** finalizzate allo sviluppo di una coscienza critica nei riguardi delle problematiche ambientali.

3



4

Ogni ecomuseo è una realtà unica e in continua trasformazione, definita in modo dinamico a partire da risorse, relazioni e processi locali e che per questo non può essere ricondotto a un modello unico e riproducibile. Ne sono così convinto che anche la distinzione fra "ecomuseo di microstoria" e "ombrello ecomuseale", il primo in ambiti più ridotti e a fini più documentari, il secondo in ambiti più vasti e con finalità più progettuali nel senso dello sviluppo territoriale, mi pare una distinzione artificiosa e che separa due funzioni che devono essere ricomposte in un unico progetto locale.

4. Un'esperienza da conoscere: il Museo Acquarone di Lucinasco (IM)

Lo sviluppo è avvenuto "secondo – i più recenti criteri della musealità diffusa ecodescrittiva". Il museo comprende tre sezioni – le più antiche prevalentemente ubicate in edifici del borgo: un gombo con la raccolta etnografica, una casa contadina (o meglio dell'ultimo pastore della mon- tagna), una cappella per la raccolta di arte sacra. Ma l'intero territorio è patrimonializzato e curato in tutte le sue emergenze architettoniche e paesistiche a cominciare dalle piante di ulivo, dai terrazzamenti, dalle mulattiere, e dalle dimore temporanee dei pastori (casoni) alle caselle, ai pozzi e canali, ai mulini e marcitoi della canepa, alle cappelle, e così via, a coprire tutte i particolari e infiniti dettagli di un territorio fortemente umanizzato, dove è ancora possibile leggere nelle tracce ancora visibili pratiche cessate e saperi in via di forte degradazione per i noti processi economici e di rinaturalizzazione ma che il sistema mussale ha saputo contrastare, favorendone anche la loro riattualizzazione

4

Quaini, M. (2015). Quale "museo" per il Paesaggio e per quali funzioni? In "A. Lecca"

5

6

Mi portava, nonno Antonio, a ricostruire i suoi muri. In verità ero io ad accompagnarlo, più per il suo affetto e la mia curiosità che per utilità reale, quando, finite le stagioni delle piogge, nell'estate per me vuota di impegni (a parte i noiosi "compiti delle vacanze") e per lui sempre piena delle fatiche quotidiane (le bestie da accudire, le uova e il latte da vendere, chissà quante altre cose che io neppure capivo), dopo aver passato in rassegna le *fasce*, decideva che era il momento di prendersi cura di quelle pietre franate, tutte in fila a ridosso di un salto nel terreno. Guardandole taceva, con l'occhio serio, attento, sollecito, lo stesso, umano ma professionale, dell'infermiere che disinfetta una ferita, del chirurgo che ricu
Carne e ossa erano per lui quella terra, quelle p
bassi, tutti uguali e tutti diversi, a me sembrav
provare a me stesso l'incosciente coraggio de
pietra erano rughe sulla pelle della terra, segn
edificarlo, il tempo, come un muro.

7

8– In this context, the activity of this magazine is centered around the act of preserving memory. The "Archive of Memory" represents how the magazine engages with the territory. The process of memory preservation, facilitated by the magazine's collaborators, involves various approaches, including internal and external sources, field research, and local interviews. Today, this section of the magazine serves as a space for transmitting memory related to the documentation of the territory. At the same time, it serves as a repository for unpublished sources related to popular tradition, which are also made available in digital format for sharing. Through this article, the intention of archiving as a means of informing future generations and keeping this legacy alive is evident. The memory remains intricately connected to the documentation of the territory.

9– The graphical icons on the website "A Cumpagnia du Ventemigliusi" offer insights into local history through archival investigations and narrative anecdotes, contributing to a broader understanding of the territory. Another significant icon, created in 1995, represents the magazine "Intemelion, annuale di studi storici," serving as a crucial archival and historiographical resource for understanding the territory. The scholarly editorial board publishes numerous interdisciplinary articles annually, enriching our comprehension of the area.

10– "Intemelion. Quaderno annuale di Studi Storici" views memory as intimately linked to the territory, rather than just a spatial boundary for historical discourse. From its inception, it included the "Archive of Memory" section, which still exists today, hosting local recollections that blend material culture and shared imagination. The journal's dedication to memory as a scholarly foundation is evident in its revitalization, with recent issues focusing on the history of common people, reflecting its evolving historiographical sensitivity.

11– The Facebook group of Famija Sanremasca represents a classic example of a shared informal archive, where personal historical archives and images are posted for dissemination to a wider audience.

12– "Storia Patria" is a society based in Savona. Its activities include the annual publication of "Atti e memorie" (beginning in 1888 and still ongoing), journals and the organization of historical conferences and lectures. The society plays a significant role in promoting Ligurian culture and history, offering valuable contributions through its extensive editorial and research activities.

13– These numerous icons represent the various cultural sections within the association "A cumpagnia di ventimigiusi." Through these icons, one can observe the vibrant cultural and traditional activity, which encompasses activities in multiple fields and initiatives. Some examples include the singing company, the academy, the local theater, the editorial part, and many others. The activity of this association serves as an exemplary model for the rest of the territory, showcasing active local practices and, above all, a sense of community belonging.

14– "Bricioli" represents an extensive effort to transcribe oral stories for future generations. It serves as a pure exercise highlighting the importance of archiving for dissemination, mitigating the risk of oblivion.

Cultural Heritage 2018[1].
Le Memorie, il territorio e la storia

moria dei luoghi e delle tracce del passato. In questo senso l'attività di questa rivista sperimenta il fare memoria. L'*Archivio della memoria* è quella sezione che rappresenta appunto il modo di operare di *Intemelion* sul territorio. Il fare memoria quindi, grazie ai collaboratori della rivista, è connotato da approcci diversi, tra fonti inedite e private, indagini sul terreno e attestazioni storiche localizzate.

Il titolo della sezione fin da subito ha giocato sull'accostamento dell'archivio alla memoria. Una sorta di ossimoro, ricercato per liberare il concetto di archivio da una certa immagine presente polverosa, di carte e oggetti accatastati, seppur con ordine. A fianco la memoria: racconto, testimonianza, immagine o ricordo è una ripresa del passato complessa. Un appello ai lettori per la costruzione di questa sezione della rivista ha accompagnato quindi la redazione del quaderno annuale fino al 2012. La raccolta di usi dialettali e semantici, a partire dal lessico intemelio, ha formato un *corpus* documentario sulla scia degli stimoli che ha saputo dare Renzo Villa. Questo approccio è proprio dei lavori firmati dagli accademici di cultura intemelia. La sezione della rivista è stata concepita dunque come uno spazio aperto, facilmente accessibile e insieme di raccolta affidabile, che ha traghettato nell'era delle *digital-humanities*. In seguito ci è sembrato opportuno eliminare l'appello, poiché le proposte alla redazione si sono fatte via via più complesse e il dibattito storiografico sulle memorie aveva acceso i riflettori sul rinnovamento dei percorsi di ricerca. Oggi la sezione della rivista si configura come lo spazio per la trasmissione di una memoria connessa alla documentazione sul territorio; mentre per altri versi si presta a contenitore di fonti inedite e legate alla scrittura popolare, che si offrono anche in pubblicazione digitale aperta per essere condivise.

8

9

«laboratorio permanente di studio dei *luoghi*»

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11

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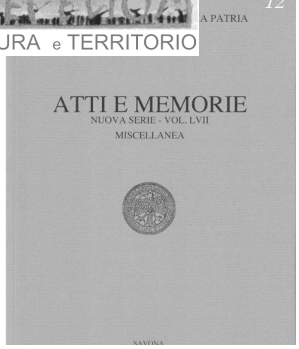

10

Tra testimonianza e storia. Il laboratorio storiografico

«Intemelion. Quaderno annuale di Studi Storici», la rivista che ospita il presente contributo, è geneticamente legata alla memoria e alla sua intima connessione con il territorio, inteso non come confine spaziale entro cui circoscrivere e rinchiudere il ragionamento storico bensì come *pretesto* per sviluppare un discorso diacronico e problematico. Tale relazione strutturale è posta in essere sin dal primo numero pubblicato, il quale contemplava infatti la sezione «Archivio della Memoria», giunta sino ad oggi: si tratta di uno spazio dove hanno trovato ospitalità brevi ma vibranti rievocazioni della memoria locale, a metà tra cultura materiale e immaginario condiviso. La predisposizione a considerare la memoria come uno degli assi portanti della produzione scientifica di «Intemelion» ha visto a partire dal numero sedicesimo una rivitalizzazione attraverso due studi orientati verso la storia di gente comune, sul solco di una sensibilità storiografica che si è consolidata l'anno successivo[7].

Archiving so that others can take over

13

14

Bricioli

Prenderò lo spunto da una poesia popolare pignasca che mi fu gentilmente fornita, in una prima versione, da un cultore locale, Cristoforo Allavena. Il testo è (era) caduto nell'oblio, era conosciuto solo dai vecchi e solo a *bricioli*. Quei *bricioli* furono radunati in un testo che oggi viene di nuovo cantato. Nella primavera 2001 ebbi occasione di sentirlo cantato da una banda di studenti pignaschi, con un testo che, in confronto con la prima versione, era stato arricchito di 10 versi[2]. È questo il testo che segue.

Conclusion

Conclusion

This thesis has advanced novel approaches to addressing urban design challenges, focusing on the Maritime Alps region as a case study. Grounded in a robust theoretical framework, the research has illuminated critical aspects of the territory, delineating ongoing processes and identifying key criticalities of the region.

By integrating poetry and local literature into its investigative methods, the thesis has challenged conventional research paradigms. It begins by acknowledging the region's cultural impoverishment and identity loss, tracing the roots of displacement and narrating the ephemeral narratives of the territory to counteract oblivion.

Critiquing current practices, the design is contextualized within caring practices for the territory, exemplifying a more site-sensitive and culturally based approach. Insights into heritage futures and the concept of the planetary garden have been explored, establishing a new methodological framework that redefines care as a design tool and elucidates its ontological and epistemological significance. The design encompasses tangible and intangible aspects, each with distinct sub-interventions. Tangible design translates into concrete spatial outcomes, while intangible design manifests as a curatorial project, beginning with a curatorial statement and outlining diverse care practices.

In conclusion, this thesis underscores the imperative of expanding urban design boundaries through a culture-based approach. It demonstrates how this approach yields distinct research and design outcomes compared to solely evidence-based methods. Employing a multimedia approach to research and synthesis has fostered interdisciplinary collaboration across urbanism, humanities, and environmental studies, resulting in a design that integrates heritage conservation and restoration, both tangible and intangible. This culture-based approach, centered on the concept of care, introduces a pioneering methodology that opens avenues for application across disciplines and advocates for continued research and development in the field.

Reflection

Evolution and Assonances

The decision to embark on this thesis journey originates primarily from a deeply intimate and personal standpoint, arising from a profound attachment to the place unlike any other in the world. Consequently, it represents a means to not only explore and comprehend this territory but also to unveil aspects of my own identity through this exploration. The motivation was to challenge myself by approaching the site from an entirely novel perspective, beginning with a deliberate emotional attachment and progressing towards a critical examination of its complexities and criticalities. Interestingly, as the design process unfolded within the framework of "matters of care," in retrospect, the thesis emerged as a manifestation of a deeply personal caring statement to the site. It is this sense of care that motivates the investigation and the desire to deepen my understanding of the site. It is rooted in the recognition of the significance of my personal history and heritage, acknowledging the legacy that has been passed down to me. Moreover, it is through the practice of caring that the complexities and challenges inherent to this site can be properly evaluated and addressed in the design process. This thesis represents an experiment fueled by a genuine sense of responsibility and commitment to both the site itself and the broader context of personal and cultural heritage. It is through this lens of care that the exploration and design interventions are approached, aiming to navigate the complexities of the site with sensitivity and purpose.

Beginning from the site as the basis of my thesis, the journey of problematization, site investigation, and design proposition has organically unfolded from it. If compared to a metaphorical decision tree, my thesis process has been marked by several divergent paths, moments of critical introspection, and personal choices that have defined its trajectory towards a specific direction. Each decision made, whether in the selection of investigative paths, methods employed, or design aspirations, reflects my personal standpoint concerning an uncharted terrain, giving my thesis the liberty to unfold among endless possibilities. To provide a clear example of this, during my initial meeting with my first mentor, Luisa Calabrese, I expressed my intention to disregard entirely, despite the coastal nature of the region, any focus on or exploration of the sea. Its significance was deemed negligible for the progression of my thesis, and throughout my entire process, it has remained acknowledged but passive.

Of particular interest is how the subjects investigated, encountered challenges, emerging questions, and ensuing resolutions have shaped the evolution of my thesis topic, empowering me to adopt personal stances at various moments of its progression. My thesis has sought to challenge, at different moments, the boundaries of the urbanism discipline, aiming to expand certain concepts and notions that may not initially appear directly relevant to our field. In this regard, the thesis has served greatly as a process of personal evaluation. The length of this journey has afforded me ample opportunities for reflection, moments of stepping back, analyzing, evaluating, and contemplating what is optimal. It has been a voyage of self-discovery as well, as the design choices I made inherently reflected my interests and served as a direct manifestation of them. Consequently, this process has allowed me to articulate clearly my intentions as a researcher and designer, my personal positioning on various issues, and my perspectives on the current global landscape and its many challenges.

The systemic examination of the primary territorial subject of my thesis, along with the exploration of diverse domains such as humanities, landscape, geology, hydrology, and heritage, has provided a comprehensive understanding of the interconnected facets. The design synthesizes these various aspects, reflecting my interests and findings from the investigation, illustrating their interconnection and cohesion on the territory itself.

The guidance and approach provided by the Transitional Territories Studio have significantly shaped the outcome of my thesis. The studio's emphasis on robust theoretical investigation resonated with my aim to fill my design work with a strong conceptual dimension. This year's focus on "Altered Nature - Poetics of Change" in the studio's investigation aligned perfectly with the territory of the Maritime Alps, which I have examined. This region serves as a compelling case study illustrating the concept of altered nature, showcasing human impact on the landscape, its processes of transformation, degrowth, and decay within current practices. At the core of my thesis lies the philosophical framework proposed by the studio, emphasizing the intricate connections between evolving natural processes, societal practices, and geopolitical frameworks. Central to the research inquiry is an exploration of disruption, ongoing instability, and the contributing factors to this sense of alienation Moreover, the studio encouraged critical thinking, interdisciplinary approaches, and innovative design exploration, which formed the basis of our studio practice. The exposure to various theories and lectures throughout the year equipped me with the necessary theoretical underpinnings to navigate the thesis and facilitated a detachment from my preconceptions about the site.The theories and lectures presented throughout the year equipped me with the necessary theoretical background to navigate the thesis and encouraged me to approach the site with new perspectives.

The thesis adheres to the comprehensive investigative approach delineated in the "Delft approach" (Nijhuis, S., Stolk, E., & Hoekstra, M., 2016). It places particular emphasis on integrating research and design holistically, ensuring that design interventions are supported by a robust theoretical framework and research validity. This approach entails a thorough examination of territorial dynamics across various scales, aligning closely with the multidisciplinary education model of this track. Central to the thesis is an emphasis on site-sensitive design, where interventions are made according to local dynamics and coherent with the surrounding context. This holistic approach is in line with the overarching objective of designing for change, acknowledging the prevailing state of instability and advocating for a redefinition of current practices. It resonates with the track's mission to develop solutions for environmental and social challenges. Sustainability and addressing the ongoing global instability are integral aspects of the investigation, reflecting a commitment to finding solutions at the core of the research.

Framework and Methodology Assessment

Throughout the development of this thesis, urban design as a discipline finds itself in a state of challenge, necessitating the emergence of novel methodologies to envision existence under varied paradigms and their ensuing consequences. Since its inception, the thesis has inherently pushed against the confines of contemporary urban projects, delving into the intricacies within our field and the diverse interpretations that urbanism embodies, both in scholarly inquiry and practical application.

This thesis advocates for unconventional approaches to enrich urban design and research, recognizing the imperative for diverse modes of information to shape the urban discourse. It envisions a convergence of art, science, and technology to redefine the boundaries and objectives of urban design. Through innovative exploration, the thesis has underscored the transformative potential of incorporating artistic mediums, such as poetry and literature, into urban design processes. These methods not only inform but also serve as potent tools for design conceptualization and implementation. Consequently, the thesis has broadened the spectrum of inquiry methods, embracing diverse forms of artistic expression alongside scientific data analysis, archival investigations, and more.

It becomes evident that the project's exploration of alternative approaches to investigation has indeed been fruitful. It has validated the notion that a purely evidence-based method may not suffice in capturing the full significance of a project. The inclusion of a culture-based perspective alongside quantitative analysis has proven to be essential in understanding the true essence of the site and its complexities. Furthermore, the process has exeplified the necessity for a more culturally sensitive and care-based approach to urban development. This reaffirmation stems from the recognition that culture has historically been a significant catalyst for urban evolution. The integration of cultural assets into urban development strategies has emerged as an imperative response to contemporary urban challenges. The evaluation of design sites, initially rooted in historical and cultural relevance, has been subsequently reinforced by the urgent environmental considerations associated with their criticality.

In light of these reflections, it is evident that the project's dual investigation into both cultural and environmental criticalities has been both meaningful and necessary. This approach has underscored the interconnectedness of these facets within the urban landscape and has informed the development of holistic design strategies. As the research progressed, it became increasingly clear that the theoretical foundations laid at the outset were indispensable in fostering a comprehensive understanding of the project site and its complexities. This reflective process has reinforced the importance of maintaining a enlarged perspective and a multifaceted approach in urban design inquiry.

Another crucial moment in the thesis journey arose during the inception of initial design aspirations. It became evident that this project's essence was deeply rooted in the preservation and restoration of the region's rich historical and cultural heritage. This realization came after a thorough exploration of the territory's tangible and intangible values.

Once this conceptualization phase concluded, the imperative of conserving this unique landscape was firmly established. However, it is crucial to note that this realization did not mark the culmination of my design aspirations. Rather, it prompted a deeper exploration into the distinction between the notion of heritage between the domain of urbanism and architecture, a distinction I sought to address in my thesis. While architectural restoration was well-documented, landscape discussions tended to lean toward conservation rather than active restoration. My thesis sought to bridge this gap, expanding the concept of restoration beyond buildings to encompass landscape architecture and urbanism. Thus, my project aimed not only to preserve but also to restore elements to their original state where necessary. Highlighting the role of history in shaping landscapes reaffirmed the importance of delving into the past to inform future designs. This underscores the necessity of a comprehensive archival investigation, which proved instrumental in justifying design decisions.

Another significant revelation in my thesis was the recognition that, within the realm of heritage urbanism, my design intentions inherently centered around the significance of the site, emphasizing the importance of caring as a fundamental aspect of my design proposition. This realization prompted the need to establish a well-defined methodology for understanding how these practices of care are formulated and translated into design actions. Consequently, there arose a necessity to redefine and reposition the ontology and epistemology of care, extending beyond the confines of urbanism. This resulted in the development of a comprehensive methodology that not only has implications for urban design but also holds potential for application across various disciplines. It underscores the efficacy of care practices as potent design interventions.

This attempt involved redefining and repositioning the ontology and epistemology of care, transcending the boundaries of urbanism. The resulting methodology serves as a foundational framework that can be further refined and expanded across various disciplines, affirming the efficacy of care practices as potent design actions. Through this process, these actions naturally fell into categories of tangible and intangible manifestations. This delineation represents the final innovation of my thesis exploration: to demonstrate the significance of the intangible, elucidate how it can inform design, and advocate for its integration into the spectrum of design objectives. In fulfilling of this objective, the methodology has sook to validate curatorial design, reaffirming the connection between art, humanities, and our practice. It serves to exemplify how elements that may not be immediately visible can be represented and integrated as design actions. This multifaceted approach highlights the intricate interplay between tangible and intangible elements in shaping the built environment, emphasizing their collective significance in the design process.

Evaluation and Relevance

The academic and scientific significance of the thesis lies in its quest of expanding the boundaries of what constitutes an urban design project. Throughout the project, a multimedia approach to researching and synthesizing the problem field facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration between urbanism, humanities, and environmental studies. The increasing complexity of challenges and the abundance of knowledge available have highlighted the absence of objective and universally applicable truths. This allows for the exploration of various methods and novel approaches to addressing current issues.

The employed methods, such as combining heritage conservation and restoration within urbanism and the exploration of designing with the intangible, push the boundaries of contemporary urban design projects. However, two points particularly underscore the academic and scientific relevance of this thesis from my perspective.

Firstly, it emphasizes the importance of incorporating humanities, particularly the arts, into urban design investigation methods. This graduation project aims to demonstrate how these disciplines can actively inform urban design practice, enriching our field. Secondly, it lays out a comprehensive methodology for caring as a design practice. This work pioneers the exploration of the diverse meanings and applications of this concept across multiple domains, both tangible and intangible, and demonstrates how it can translate into successful design actions. By elucidating a well-defined methodology for this endeavor, the thesis opens avenues for the application of this concept in other disciplines and underscores the need for further research and development in this area.

This graduation project holds profound ethical significance as it champions a fundamental shift in our current practices, advocating for a paradigmatic transition towards nurturing sustainable values for both humans and the more-than-human world. The thesis takes a decisive political stance, critiquing the prevailing disregard for the environmental crisis exacerbated by global population growth and the glaring absence of coherent political vision concerning environmental concerns.

The acknowledgment of capitalism's detrimental impact on natural resources and its consolidation of power underscores the imperative for a paradigm shift to reevaluate the prevailing status quo. It underscores the urgent necessity to cease the depletion of resources and the exploitation of land, aiming to ensure that human presence on this planet does not lead to its depletion.

Additionally, it seeks to arrest the standardization processes that corrode the distinctiveness of local cultures and identities. This thesis is not aimed at perpetuating the ignorance of the global challenges we face today, continuing a state of "ignorance" derived from the Latin word 'ignorare', meaning not to know. Instead, through the knowledge at our disposal in the present day, along with the substantial technological competencies available, it proposes a return to a path of revisiting our lifestyles and habits. In this regard, it suggests a return to a way of living that fosters a deeper connection with our surroundings, an ethos that harmonizes with the intricate ecosystems of which we are a part. This entails a reevaluation of consumption patterns, a reconsideration of the ecological footprint of our daily choices, and a recalibration towards practices that promote ecological balance and resilience. Furthermore, promoting biodiversity conservation, protecting natural habitats, and advocating for equitable access to resources are crucial aspects of this transformative vision.

By advocating for a holistic approach to sustainability that integrates ecological, social, and economic considerations, this thesis seeks to catalyze a profound shift in consciousness and action, fostering a harmonious coexistence between humanity and the natural world. Amidst evolving dynamics of human and biosphere interactions, the project underscores the strengthening of historical, social, and environmental connections. This shift deepens our understanding of social change dynamics and redefines the roles of individuals within their environments. Within this evolving landscape, the significance of the landscape itself emerges as paramount. It serves as a reservoir of metaphors, aiding our comprehension of the complexities and challenges of our era.

The thesis addresses this need for a paradigm shift through the principle of caring. It begins with a deeply personal and introspective inquiry into why we should care about our surroundings and our collective future. This ethos of caring transcends various scales, extending to the governmental and global levels. At the community level, caring takes on particular resonance, as it introduces novel values within communities, empowering them to actively shape their surroundings and preserve their culture and history. As this attitude extends to the global scale, it evolves, prompting the formulation of a new set of values aimed at regenerating society as a whole.

Connection between Research and Design

This design approach diverges from the conventional "Research through Design" methodology proposed by van Dooren (2014). Instead, it initiates with a thorough phase of analysis and investigation before proceeding to the design proposal and the commencement of the design process. This division is deemed essential as it ensures that the design proposal is grounded in a deep understanding of the site, as previously emphasized.

A robust theoretical foundation is indispensable from the start to acquire the requisite knowledge for problematizing the site and conducting comprehensive investigations into its primary structures. As previously mentioned, the research extended beyond the conventional boundaries of our research field, incorporating unconventional methods. During this initial stage, research played a key role in identifying and narrowing down the research to the primary subject of investigation. Consequently, research was fundamental in discovering the problematization of the thesis and later understanding the systemic functioning of each territorial subject and its principal processes.

The design proposal could only emerge after acquiring this informational background. Subsequently, the thesis's development began to align somewhat with the "Research through Design" methodology, albeit not conforming to its classical definition. As outlined in the theoretical framework at the thesis's outset, moments of reflection prompted questions that necessitated theoretical knowledge and personal positioning on the subject matter. Executing the design proposal led to an exploration of the approach for implementing the design, raising questions about the various design approaches and possibilities. Transitioning from territorial synthesis to the detailed analysis of each site required an understanding of the main processes at play in the territory. After defining the design method or line of thought, additional research was essential to discern how to translate intentions into design actions, particularly in designing through care, reflecting on both tangible and intangible aspects.

In conclusion, the interconnection between research and design in this thesis was not linear but punctuated by reflection moments that led to personal statements and decisions, subsequently raising further questions and prompting the quest for additional theoretical insights. Research paralleled design from the thesis's inception to its conclusion, addressing questions that arose along the way.

Transferability and Further Research

The robust methodological framework employed throughout this thesis aims to demonstrate how the insights and approaches discussed can extend beyond the confines of the specific site under examination and be applied to different contexts. Utilizing literature and poetry as potent design tools serves as a prime example of this methodology. By prioritizing local poets and literature, valuable insights into the essence of the place were gained. This practice, defined as Geocriticism by Westphal (2007) , underscores the effectiveness of employing diverse perspectives within the same context. Thus, this methodological approach can be adapted to various contexts, as demonstrated by this thesis. Moreover, the literary exploration was informed by works such as Giuseppe Barbera's (2021) book on the Mediterranean garden, highlighting the depth of understanding that can be achieved through multidisciplinary archival research. This exemplifies how a comprehensive approach to research can enhance one's understanding of a place, even for those less familiar with it. In essence, this thesis serves as a testament to the applicability of such methods. In summary, the methodology demonstrated in this graduation thesis has the potential to be applied in diverse spatial realities, transcending specific territorial subjects and criticalities.

Within the framework of my design, four specific investigation sites were chosen based on their cultural significance and environmental degradation. These selections were made after a thorough literature review and investigative process, which laid the groundwork for my research paths. While numerous sites could have been chosen, these four were deemed particularly relevant within the broader context. This deliberate selection underscores the potential transferability of the design outcomes to other locations. By emphasizing the importance of heritage preservation and practices of care, the design approach can be tailored to suit various contexts.The intention behind the design conclusions was to demonstrate the replicability of my recommendations across the territory, highlighting how a culture- and site-sensitive approach could contribute to the cultural and environmental regeneration of the region as a whole. Furthermore, the same selection process, rooted in a cultural approach rather than solely evidence-based criteria, could be applied to entirely different contexts globally, further validating the effectiveness of this approach in addressing urban challenges. As previously discussed, the methodology employed for the practices of care also holds relevance for its potential applicability to other projects and domains. This underscores the need for further research on the matter, particularly exploring the various manifestations and implications of designing with care.

This thesis represents the culmination of a selection and narrowing down of various philosophical and theoretical frameworks, which have paved the way for new perspectives on urban design projects, current criticalities, and innovative problem-solving approaches. The breadth of topics that can be further explored, analyzed, and assessed remains incredibly intriguing to me, even as this journey concludes. It inspires a renewed commitment to perpetuate this research holistically, transcending the boundaries of what has been explored in this thesis.

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Images and Re-adaptations

Fig. 1: Le comté de Nice et Oneille. Blaeu, J. (1648-1665). J. Blaeus grooten atlas, oft werelt-beschryving, in welcke 't aerdryck, de zee, en hemel, wort vertoont en beschreven: eerste deel des aerdkloots-beschryving, inhoudende de afbeeldingen en beschryvingen der landen op het aerdryck. T'Amsterdam

Fig. 2: Historical postcard from Sanremo. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/groups/1023879401074361/media

Fig. 3: Historical engraving of the Gulf of Sanremo. Author unknown. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/groups/1023879401074361/media

Fig. 4: The domain of Urban Design. Adapted from Ghosh, Mainak & Nag, Sanjib & Roy, Satyaki. (2015). Evolving Process of Application of Methodology for Visual Perception of Urban Place: Case Study of Kolkata. DOI: 10.1007/978-81-322-2232-3_39

Fig. 5: Sketches at San Remo. Illustration for The Graphic, 13 November 1875. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/groups/1023879401074361/media

Fig. 6: Drawing of the Roman God Janus. Reprinted with permission of the artist, Andrey Kokorin

Fig. 7: Mario Calvino on the road to San Giovanni. Moreschi Archive. Retrieved from https://www.sanremoliveandlove.it/centenario-italo-calvino/tappa-35/.

Fig. 8: Aerial view of Arma di Taggia. Geoportal Region Liguria Photo Library. Region Liguria Photo Library. Historical perspective photos of the coast - ICCD National Aerial Photo Library. Frame 3001. I-BUGA slides - Year 1970.

Fig. 9: Aerial view above Latte. Geoportal Region Liguria Photo Library. Region Liguria Photo Library. Frame 3176. Ventimiglia. Type I-BUGA slides. Year 1970.

Fig. 10: View of the plain of Bordighera. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/groups/254989184676680/

Fig. 11: Limon S. Remi. Plate from 'Hesperides' - painting by Vincenzo Leonardi, engraving by Cornelis Bloemaert.

Fig. 12: Villa Ormond Botanical Gardens in Sanremo. Retrieved from https://bibliotecadigitale.regione.liguria.it/opacbdl/opac/bdl/collezioni_digitali.jsp #cartoline.

Fig. 13-14: Relationships between the lithological nature of the substrate and the stones used to build terrace walls. Adapted from M. Pappalardo (2002) "Anthropic Terracing in Liguria," Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana Roma - Series XII, vol. VII (2002), pp. 283.

Fig. 15: Terraces in Monte Caggio. Retrieved from M. Macchi (2019), “Itinerari”, in Camminare nella storia. Tra Monte Nero e la valle Argentina, Arma di Taggia, Atena Edizioni, p. 46.

Fig. 16: Mechanisms of Terraced Landscape Breakage. Adapted from "The Outstanding Terraced Landscape of the Cinque Terre Coastal Slopes (Eastern Liguria)" by Pierluigi Brandolini (2017) p. 241. In Mauro Soldati and Mauro Marchetti (Eds.), “Landscapes and Landforms of Italy”. Springer.

Fig. 17: Vue de la ville de Tende (View of the city of Tende). Extrait de Nice et ses environs, 1812. Nice, Bibliothèque de Cessole. Auguste de Louvois (dessinateur). Melle Boquet (graveur).

Fig. 18: Eugène Isabey (1861). Ventimiglia, View from the East (Vigliani Collection).

Fig. 19: Edward Lear (1865) Edward Lear. (Christie’s Collection).

Fig. 20-23: historical aeral view of 1973, 1983, 1993, 2003. Fototeca Geoportale Regione Liguria. Fotogrammi: 005_0046, 006_0048, 008_0097, 008_0088.

Fig. 24: The Health Office of Bordighera in the mid-18th century in the work of Matteo Vinzoni. In E. Marengo, Manuscript Topographic and Chorographic Maps of Liguria and its immediate surroundings preserved in the Royal State Archive of Genoa, Genoa 1931, pp. 37-38. Retrieved from https://liguriaponente.wordpress.com/2018/08/02/il-commissariato-di-bordighera-a-meta-xviii-secolo-nellopera-di-matteo-vinzoni/

Fig. 25: Claude Monet (1884), Palm Trees Bordighera, W.875.

Fig. 26: Under the Palms of Val di Sasso near Bordighera.(1894). After an original drawing by H. Nestel.