

Valuing Inner Lands

Participatory mapping of cultural landscapes for sustainable tourism development in inner Campania (Italy)

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Introduction

In peripheral Campania, the area of Tammaro-Titerno is one of the 72 Pilot Areas identified by the National Inner Areas Strategy 2014-2020 (Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne, henceforth SNAI), which promotes direct action to support territorial competitiveness through a model of sustainable development, to combat depopulation and the abandonment of local territorial practices. The research intervenes to engage actors of 30 communes and their socio-entrepreneurial fabric to rediscover and illuminate the shared values of the cultural landscape, aiming at building a participatory mapping model that can aid decision-making and territorial governance, and ultimately foster sustainable tourism development.

This abstract introduces the results of explorative research contextualising the study area within the national development paradigm of the inner areas. The author produced reference maps with the use of open software QGIS. Following the collection and aggregation of technical cartography and data from official national documentation databases, these initial landscape values and other attributes were added and processed using QGIS, and then exported to an internet-based mapping interface (Google My Maps) to serve, support and develop the scheduled subsequent participatory exercises in the territory.

Inner Lands

Italy suffers from a demographic collapse that haunts many European countries. Its origins date back to the late nineteenth [centurycenturies](#), and it is now consolidated as a progressively continuous phenomenon. Today depopulation emerges especially when considering and comparing the data of inner mountain and hilly areas with that of the plains and the coasts. The Italian bone territories (inland areas), to use the Rossi Doria (1958) metaphor, were hit by a shift in which the main effects were depopulation, emigration, social and productive depletion, abandonment of the land and

changes in the landscape. These territories which are today the focus of great research attention by public and private initiatives are stigmatised as highly frail and in a growing state of isolation.

When historically contextualised, these inner territories have a 'physiological community dimension' (Castanò 2020) characterised by a unique combination of natural elements. Hills, mountains, large production or transit areas, as well as a collaborative nature deriving from common historical roots, strongly linked to the evolution of production processes and the solution of territorial problems. In the present day, local communities might not demonstrate a high degree of awareness towards the importance of cultural heritage and the care of common goods. However, fostering their collective intelligence has the potential to raise citizens into active and competent interlocutors, as well as interested participants in decision-making processes.

We are in fact witnessing a renewed and more constructive reflection on this so-called fragility. Moreover, its reinterpretation as a condition which is structural, of the territories and their communities, and a shifting perspective of cultural heritage as linked to relational skills and networks. Thus, the need to address the phenomena by identifying interdisciplinary keys to connect the strong local nodes of this wider network of fragility, and to search for new metaphors that reflect local values through the existing consciousness of the territories. There lies a potential to reveal valuable cultural landscapes that highlight local characteristics and promote the inclusion of civic knowledge and communities' skills, building actual milestones for a sustainable future. Under this light, inner areas are instead fertile land for the rediscovery of the complementarity between local identities and production models, for new prospects of sustainability in terms of development and public-private entrepreneurship. Indeed, with the paradigm of sustainability drawing attention to endangered rural environments in the last decades, growing research interest in 'marginal' or 'minor' realities of the internal areas reveals the emergence of new models of active citizenship. In such (relatively) remote and (sometimes) forgotten places there is a latent ability to express and communicate identity values revealing perhaps unprecedented records which are still to be mapped and studied. Invisible networks of spaces and knowledge, landscapes that have emerged time and again to compose the current cultural landscape microcosm. Therefore, this 'predominantly disadvantaged, internal and mountain' territory is now becoming a design and planning fabric, an experimental laboratory of particular sociocultural structures and natural resources being rediscovered for a potential turnaround (Carrareto and Magni, 2020). In this 'mosaic to be recomposed', as described by Varotto (2020), lies Tammaro-Titerno's research territory.

Inner Campania: the study area

Currently, the research area is inserted in the national disadvantaged areas, as defined and mapped by the Regional Territorial Plan Campania (Piano Territoriale Regionale Campania, henceforth PTR), the Provincial Coordination Plan (Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento Provinciale, henceforth PTCP) and the aforementioned SNAI. This official documentation demonstrates the overall homogeneity of the focus area in relation to the development of its socio-economic aspects (progressive marginalisation, demographic impoverishment, abandonment of the traditional agroforestry and zootechnical activities, stagnation of production and economic activities, low urban concentration) and geomorphological characteristics (dominance of hilly and mountainous areas which have been also progressively affected, resulting in degradation and disruption of land and slopes). Eventually, these mountain communities have experienced a decrease in the functional role

and overall identity of their territory, contributing to the side lining of its attractiveness as a tourist destination. In addition and concerning particularly southern Italy, there is a lack of consistent planning for job creation and talent retention amongst young populations, along with the need to innovate in territorial planning and development.

Belonging to the province of Benevento in the Southern Italian region of Campania, the area comprises 30 small communes, their absolute number of residents falling between 515 and 7,701 people each. It occupies 867.60 km² of the northwestern border of the province between the Massif of Matese, the Tamaro Hills and the Telesina Valley, representing 41.90 % of its total area. Fig. 1 demonstrates the area's sparse urbanisation centres corresponding to the depopulation phenomena; the poor conditions of complementarity and integration between the smaller centres of the different sub-centres systems; insufficient modern road facilities in the eastern portion and no direct major road link between the different sub-areas.

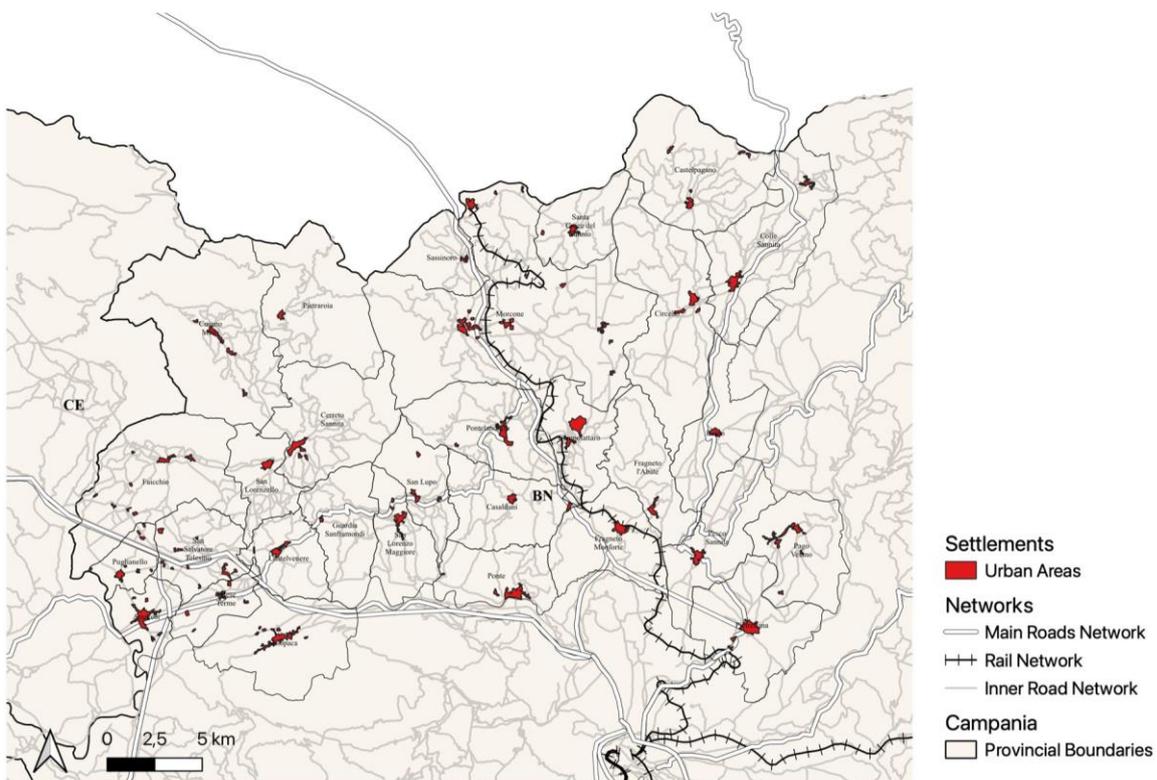


Fig. 1. Networks and settlements. Author's elaboration on the PTR 2008 cartography.

The landscape identity of the area represented in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 is formed not only by the presence of historical, archaeological and material resources which enhance the quality of the places but by the complex relational system between them and the natural heritage. These constitute the historical memory of the landscape still remaining today. The Telesina Valley contains, for instance, remains of Samnite settlements, the Telesia site, and other historical testimonies of the relationships that characterised the area over time. To facilitate strategical development, the PTCP characterised the territory in fifteen "landscape units" within three macro systems: (1) environment and nature, (2) settlements and cultural and landscape heritage, and (3) infrastructure and services. They are of

relative diversification since they do present features of ecological, functional, historical and cultural peculiarity which represent their common observable identity; but do not constitute closed and separate territorial districts, as they relate to and interfere with each other in context. There are three archaeological sites strategically considered of great interest in Cusano Mutri (Archeological Park of Telesia, currently closed for visitors), San Salvatore Telesino and Telesse Terme and several extra urban historical heritage sites of relevance.

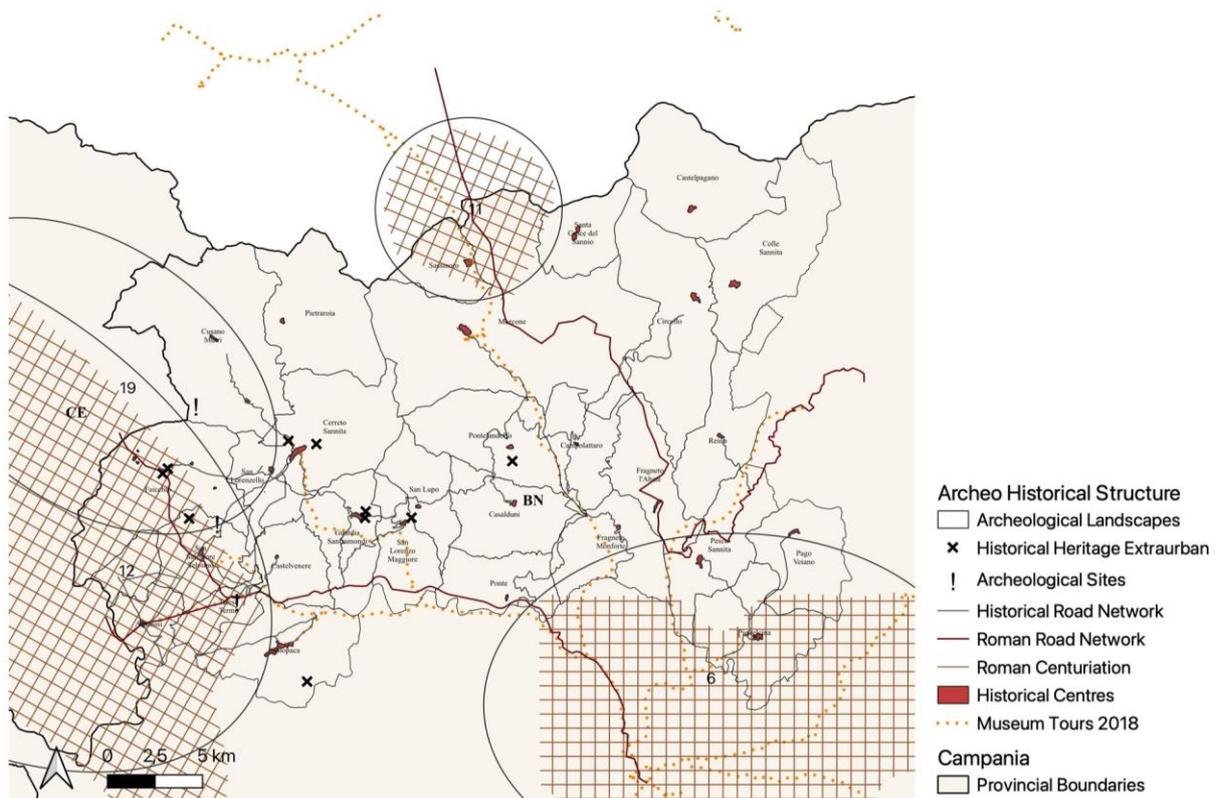


Fig. 2. Historical and archaeological landscape features. Author's elaboration on the PTR 2008 cartography.

The area falls within national biological corridors represented as Sites of Community Relevance (SIC from Italian designation) and Special Protection Zones (ZPS). Of the six regional parks in Campania's territory, two of them extend partly towards the area, the Regional Matese Park towards the northwest border, and the Regional Taburno Camposauro Park on the southwest border. Natural landmarks of the territory are the Taburno massif and the long mountain ridges of the Matese.

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Conflict of Interests Disclosure

The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

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