

# **Cultural landscape, littoral landscape and mass tourism: A possible synergy.**

**The *macero* as structuring element of the ancient agricultural landscape of Rimini.**

**María Paz Artiagoitia<sup>1,2</sup>, Karla Paola López<sup>5,2</sup>, Valentina Piliego<sup>3,2</sup>, Stella Zoë Schmidler.<sup>4,2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Facultad de Arquitectura, Universidad Mayor, Santiago, Chile.

<sup>2</sup>Master Landscape Architecture Extended, Universidad Politécnica de Cataluña, Barcelona, Spain.

<sup>3</sup>Università degli studi de Ferrara, Emilia Romagna, Italy.

<sup>4</sup>Hochschule Geisenheim University, Geisenheim, Hessen, Germany.

<sup>5</sup>Instituto Tecnológico de Tepic, Tepic, Nayarit, Mexico.

María Paz Artiagoitia\* pazartiagoitia@gmail.com Tel +34685115727, Karla Paola López\* arqpaolalopezk@gmail.com Tel +5215528510132, Valentina Piliego\* valentinapiliego@gmail.com Tel +393401724072, Stella Zoë Schmidler\* stella@schmidler-architekten. Tel +4915251912797.

\*equal contribution

## **Abstract**

Forgotten values of landscape create a historical deposit of interactions between inhabitants and their territory. An uncountable number of landscapes with collective identity are abandoned and mark possibilities for new interpretations of our surroundings in times of crisis. The consumption of territories as natural icons has provoked difficult consequences in the management of nature. The former and actual behavior of treating the landscape generated a littoral crisis in the Mediterranean and this investigation is focusing the coast of Rimini, Italy. Those territories were constantly modified by humans for productive systems like the agriculture. In addition to that, mass tourism, which is not aware of its ecological and social scope, left behind the artificial and unhealthy landscape of Rimini's coast. This investigation is suggesting a second coast for Rimini; decongesting the first coastline with its ecological deficit and distributing the economic income due to tourism over the whole amplitude of the littoral. This second coast is located all over the region of Rimini and Emilia-Romagna, remains of the ancient cultivation of hemp for textiles, water basins called *maceri*. Combining those elements with a new structure in the territory to protect the most sensitive ecosystems can give identity and touristic value to this heritage, also connecting the city and the littoral. The present agricultural landscape could create a constellation of small elements which represent cultural awareness, the restoration of the territorial organization and the possibility to empower the biodiversity and the productive landscape.

**Keywords:** *mass tourism, mediterranean coasts, landscape strategies, resilient landscape, maceri*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The investigative project was developed during the workshop TOURISM of the Master in Landscape Architecture Barcelona (UPC). The target was to transform the touristic situation of the Italian Adriatic coast, based on the strategy of a second coastline - improving touristic regions widely contorted by decades of mass tourism. Operating with exploration and recognition of cultural and natural values of the spaces behind the first coastline, the aim was to emend both, the left behind outback and the overstrained prime coastline, to balance economic, social and ecological side effects. The resultant work generates an intervention strategy by discovering the abandoned cultural landscape elements which provide identity and a new sustainable structure to the territory.

The business of the *sol y playa* tourism<sup>1</sup> seems to reach its point of exhaustion, consuming and exploiting the natural and cultural resources in an inconsiderate extent. The Italian Adriatic coast such as numerous European coastal areas became international touristic destinations and sustain the invasion year by year.

Tourism at the Italian Adriatic coast continues to grow, following an ideology opposing environmental and climatic values and blinded by the trend that at the end of the day could be its own destruction.

Several factors gave these territories the favor of touristic development; political decisions, spacial advantages and the environmental and climatic situation. Even so, urban planning and development strategies have been in favor with the phenomenon of real estate privileges and private investment. The landscape which first bid the highest recreation and holiday potential appears to be the defeated in aspects of protecting it from its damage and consumption.

## 2. THE LANDSCAPE AND ITS MANAGEMENT

Sandra Soto-Bayó, biogeographer from Puerto Rico, describes the landscape as “the integrating unity and repository of all structures and processes which permit the existence of humankind.” At the same time, humans act in the space led by their perception and have the ability to make decisions with awareness.

By protecting the values and identity of a territory, its depletion could be prevented. It is the dynamic vision of landscape which has the idle capacity to generate a sustainable process which ensures its constant maintenance to lead and balance the induced transformations by social, economical and ecological processes. (Busquets Fabregas y Cortina Ramos, 2009)

## 3. HISTORIC LANDSCAPE AS TRANSFORMATOR

According to the *UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage* of 1975, cultural landscapes are defined as places of joint work of humankind and nature which symbolize significant stages in the history of society and human settlement.

Despite the growing sensitivity of society to the value of landscape, especially the *cultural landscapes*, there continues to be a conflict between its conservation and devastation due to the processes of urban expansion of cities. Therewith the landscape stops deteriorating, it is necessary to develop instruments

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<sup>1</sup> It is to assume that the weary model of *sol y playa* (sun and beach) was intensively developed on the Mediterranean coast during the Fordist stage, mostly in the 60s, which resulted in the unsustainable product that we call mature tourism territory. The product *sol y playa* itself is not yet exhausted, as other models of sun and beach are still in force, and there are other Mediterranean models that despite the massive occupation have not been pillagers of the landscape since the planning of the tourist space has been effective. (Martí, 2014).

that allow us to overcome the struggle between land management and heritage so that they can work together. Investigating how well managed landscapes can be a solid foundation an attractive for alternative tourism in constant expansion.

Tourism has invaded the coasts, territories which ever since have been natural, rural and productive zones. Hybrid and fragmented spaces have been created, degrading its symbolic and cultural content which previously have it life.

The social reorganisation of leisure and the excessive habits of consume created new landscapes. In the case of coastal areas it increased the use pressure of the littoral.

In the region of Emilia-Romagna the scenic contribution has had some landscaping approximations. Clear chains of rivers, canals and mountains create a fertile territory, connections between cities and villages led to the wide expansion of agriculture with its respective diversity of nature and tradition. Those areas have not yet managed to capture the attention for a new integral vision of tourism that takes into account the diverse values of the territory, rescuing the identity of the mature tourist destinations<sup>2</sup> which conserve the physical environment and take the protection of cultural assets as a priority.

Analyzing the landscape permits truly comprehend its morphology, its components and how they are affiliated with each other. By investigating the sources of different authenticities of a territory by dismantling, organising, classifying and distinguishing the episodes that built the current landscape, we can reveal the memory of a place. This approach serves as a strategy to generate new visions of planning and design, directing to a different construction of tourism and territorial planning. A strategy that not only contemplates the restoration of mature tourist spaces, but also contributes ecologically, culturally and socially to the territory that is offering touristic services.

#### **4. DESCENT OF THE LIMIT LANDSCAPE**

This approach focuses on the investigation of elements of opportunity, a landscape resource that, when smartened up in its value and complexity, cease being invisible in the pattern of the territory but becoming part of the guidelines that help to project land use planning and policies - creating a tourism of steady transformation and adaptation. Mentioned occurs a structure of territorial authenticity, revealing the local identity that deserves to be projected and supported.

To achieve this approach, the history and ground of the so-called limit landscape seeks to understand how the forgotten space between urbanized shoreline and inshore mountain ranges can reveal the scenic resources of the area.

It is a forgotten, expectant transition space, something like the “hinterland” or “border landscape” between two treasured landscapes - that of the coast and that of natural parks - which has lost the intrinsic values of an agricultural activity in decrease, but that is in patrimonial regard, the excellent candidate for the reformulation and transformation of the tourist environment, located near the sea, and at the time open towards the interior. (Goula, 2009)

#### **5. PROJECT SITE OF STUDY**

Emilia Romagna is one of the main regions of Italy referring to its socioeconomic characteristics. Its name comes from the road “Via Emilia” built in the second century that crosses Italy from the northern Po Valley to the Adriatic Sea. It has a geographical strategic positions since it is located in

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<sup>2</sup> Allusion that since the eighties is used by experts to define unsustainable products that inevitably deteriorate what was often their only resource: The landscape. (Goula, 2009)

the center of tours and railway lines that connect in both, north-south and east-west, with the rest of the state and the European Union. It is one of the most industrialized areas of the country, then as now. This territory includes the provinces of Bologna, Ferrara, Modena, Parma, Reggio Emilia, Piacenza, Rimini, Ravenna and Forlì-Cesena.

## 6. PROGRESS OF THE TOURISTIC BUSINESS IN RIMINI - REVEALING THE COMPLEXITY

Until the 18th century the city of Rimini spread out only within its city walls. Only in 1843, after a mass in the Malatestiano temple, the pope inaugurated the first balneary of the city, the “Stabilimento Bagni”. The church made the tourism in Rimini begin. This opening assisted the city in reconnect with a zone which before before was swampy and abandoned, giving it a productive use and attracting people to go swimming in the Adriatic sea. During the conflicts in terms of the Unification of Italy and an intense flood of the river Marecchia, the balneary got desolated. In 1868 the townhall of Rimini purchased the balneary, renamed it Kursaal and opened it in 1873 to attract tourists from all over europe during a historic moment, at the beginning of the movement of the Grand Tour. Resulting, it started the period of wayfare at the elite of Rimini which continued until the 1920s, then being affected by the fascism and the medio-bourgeois. By this, came into being fascistic colonies; summer camps for pupils at the hands of the fascist party and their particular principles. From then on there was the right of holiday in Italy. After the second world war, Rimini was open for new constructions and continued gradatim to attract more tourist to the zone. But the real economic upturn came in the 1950s when there were built plenty of hotels at the fist coastline, generating an erratic trend and being the starting point of serious problems associated to the landscape, the canalisation and the artificiality. Nowadays the coastal landscape is destroyed, the water quality is miserable and the beaches are artificial. But the policy of *sol y playa*, the keen price and the entertainment facilities continue attracting people.



Figure 1. Aerial images of the first coast line / interior of Rimini, Google Earth.

## 7. CURRENT TOURISTIC PATTERN AND THE CONSUMPTION OF REGIONAL LANDSCAPE RESOURCES

The consumption of territories as scenic icons set off important consequences regarding the maintenance of natural spaces. The current monitoring and schedule of landscape generated a littoral crisis in the Mediterranean Basin, in this case at the coasts of Emilia-Romagna in Italy. Those territories of constant modification by various human actions - productive systems such as regional businesses - have been suffered in the course of time from the consequences.

For its part, the mass tourism, is not aware of the consequences of its active consumption of the coastal landscape, retarding the systems of natural renovation of the littoral of Rimini and beyond that, the global consequences which are already rolling along, about to change the first coastline as we know it.

The social potential, such as the economy and the environment need to be recuperated to reveal a forgotten part of a cultural landscape, encouraging new usages which are compatible with its current ecological status. The target is to create a structure inside the territory which is capable of protecting its own scenery, hence it could create identity and touristic value to this heritage, incorporating the city and the coastal littoral.

## 8. RIMINI - BORDER LANDSCAPE WITH TREASURE

Rimini is a city that has had a accelerated growth and touristic development during the last decades on the basis of the uplift of the Italian economy in the 1950s. The city was founded presumably by the Umbri during the first millennium before Christ<sup>3</sup> between rivers, directly related to the water and its traits. In the first centuries, the settlements lay close to the coast and suffered floods, mainly from the Marecchia river. In the middle ages the village displaced itself and settled the valleys, basically to have been in a strategic position in times of conflict and for being able to develop agriculture on the fertile land. In the Renaissance, the historic center was built and the hemp cultivation for textile production started. In between the farmlands accrued small pools of water to manufacture the hemp, the commonly called maceri.

## 9. LOST CULTURAL LANDSCAPES - THE MACERO

Since the 14th century the region of Emilia-Romana has been one of the most important areas of hemp production for textile industry at European level. The low profitability of its production and the laws against the cannabis consume on one hand and at the same time the fast urban growth generated the neglect of this productive system - letting behind numerous scenic elements, scattered over the land, which are no longer traceable to their very own history.



Figure 2. Annual maceri cycle, representation created by the authors, part of workshop.

In Rimini the parcels of land became orchards which mostly contain small water basins: the maceri. They were key elements in the production of hemp as they are used to macerate the shrub into textile. Besides, they were used by the farmers as place of amusement and refreshment during summer and when winter for food supply in the form of pisciculture. They are small elements of 500 to 1000 square meters which represent an important impact to the agricultural territory: the Mediterranean coast of Rimini is to be 34 kilometers long. The sum of the maceri's shores is 134 kilometers - a second coast.



Figure 3. Water shores of Rimini - Mediterranean (left) and maceri (right), representation created by the authors, part of workshop.

<sup>3</sup> Strabon: Geographika. 5, 217.



## 10. AVOIDING FAMILIAR MISTAKES

To define the aimed kind of tourism for the second coast, there was developed an fictive index of proper density for recreation, taking in count the current situation at the first coastline. All eleven beaches of Rimini have been analyzed regarding their length, the proportion of open water and beach and the number of rentable sunshades. Presuming the full exploitation of the existing facilities two persons per sunshade as maximum occupancy the result consists of two values: first, the “leftover” space of beach and water per person and second, the number of persons standing in line to bathe if all people would like to swim at the same time. This simple image shows the drastic situation of the currently operated tourism management.

To ensure more balance between tourism, existing nature and wellbeing of all parties for the new touristic strategy, the index macero was developed. The maceri were classified by various criteria such as current usage, their water area, adjacent open space, a.o. The settlement density and the accessibility were ratified and created a reasonable tension for the different kinds of maceri.

At the twelve maceri vetted as an example there would be space for almost 400 visitors. In total there are around 800 maceri in the region of Rimini which could release pressure from the collapsing first coastline.

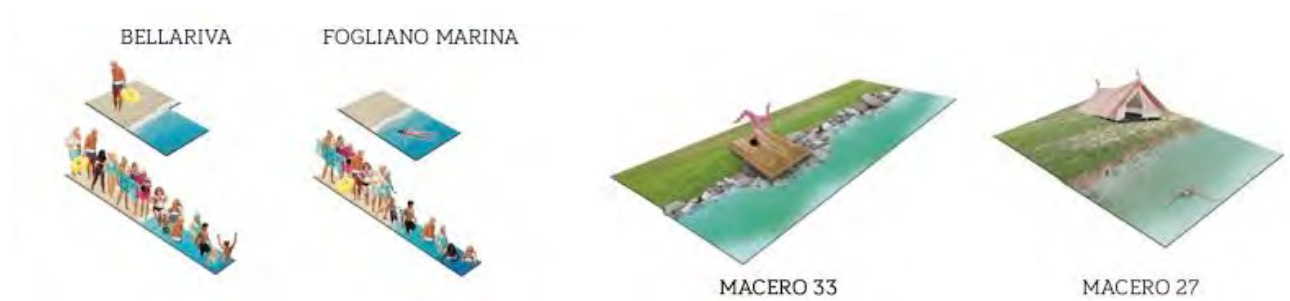


Figure 4. Analysis of the density of the coast (left) and the interior (right), representation created by the authors, part of workshop.

## 11. THE SECOND COAST - THE MACERO AS STRUCTURING ELEMENT

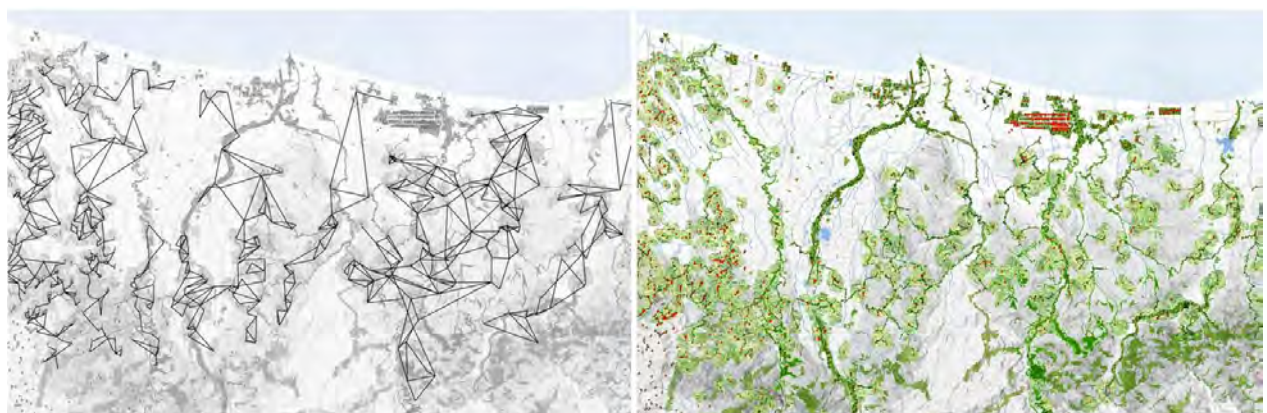


Figure 3. Water shores of Rimini - Mediterranean (left) and macer (right), representation created by the authors, part of workshop.

By mapping the elements related to the landscape formed by the ancient agriculture, the maceri become an important entity, just like a constellation within an interactive universe. It transforms itself into an opportunity to restore and preserve the landscape.

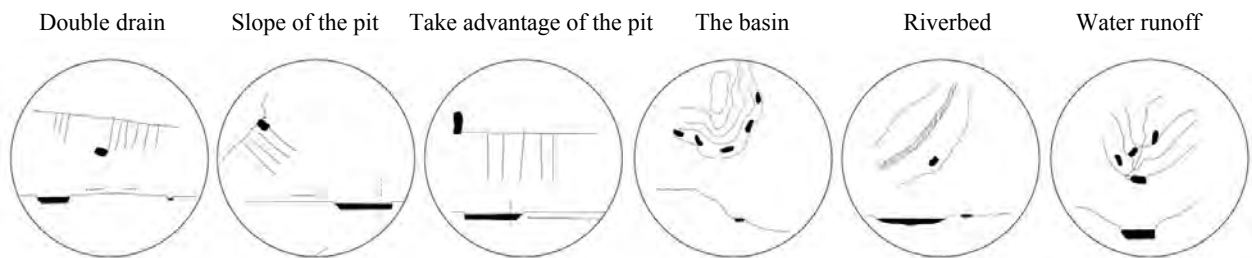


Figure 7. Maceri water maintenance patterns, representation created by the authors, part of workshop.

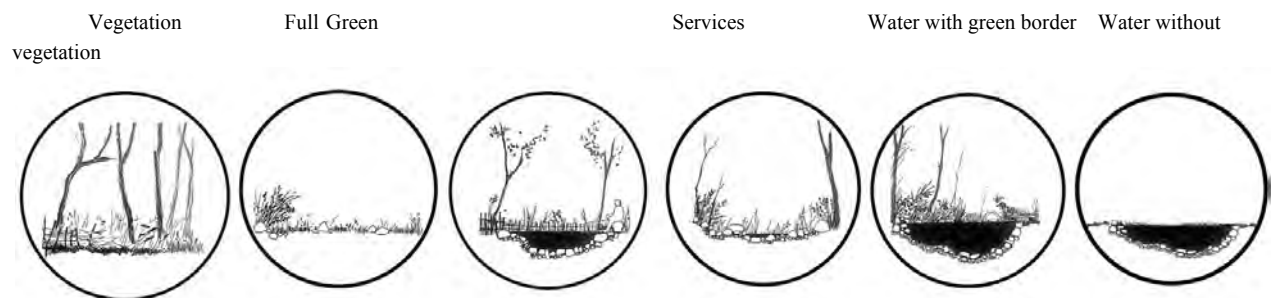


Figure 8. Typologies of the physical evolution of the maceri, representation created by the authors, part of workshop.

The study of several maceri in association with its ecological hierarchy, the useage and the storage of water permit new interpretations with sui generis: fish farming, shelter, or simply ecological connectors.

Striving a sustainable tourism, the maceri fulfil a great capacity of physical attributes such as water surface, area of accessible open space and ecological connection. Furthermore they have the ability to generate a synergy between cultural landscape and the conscious tourism.

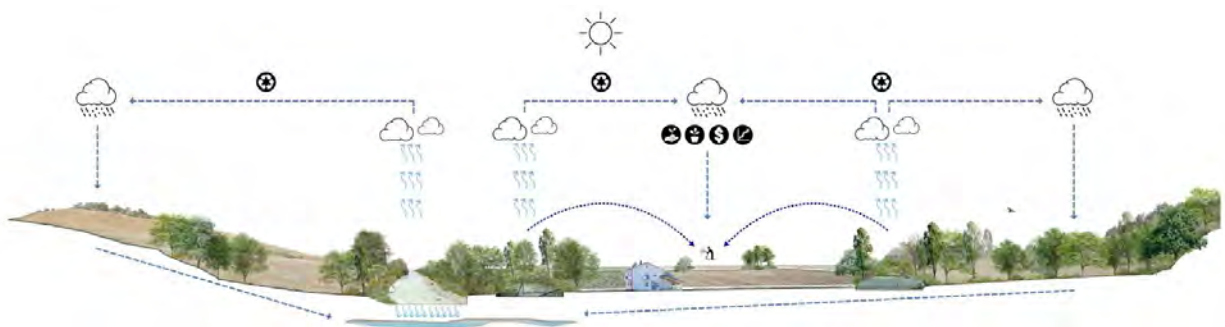


Figure 9. General section of the water cycle, representation created by the authors, part of workshop.

## 11. CONCLUSION

In summary it can be said, therefore, that the approach of an integral vision and the intent of comprehending the landscape as connecting unity of all kind of processes and elements - allowing humans to exist - makes it possible to connect with traditional dynamics in a more econscious way. Nowadays it is necessary to promote new sociocultural perspectives and, on the basis of these, searching new opportunities to restomod, equilibrate and maintain our territories.

In the special case of this investigation, the maceri represent the abandoned cultural landscape and have the capability of generating a multilayered system for Rimini, attempting to ease the existing pressure of the first coast line and reactivating the limit landscape following this resilience strategy - to generate an alternative and sustainable tourism of *sol y playa*.

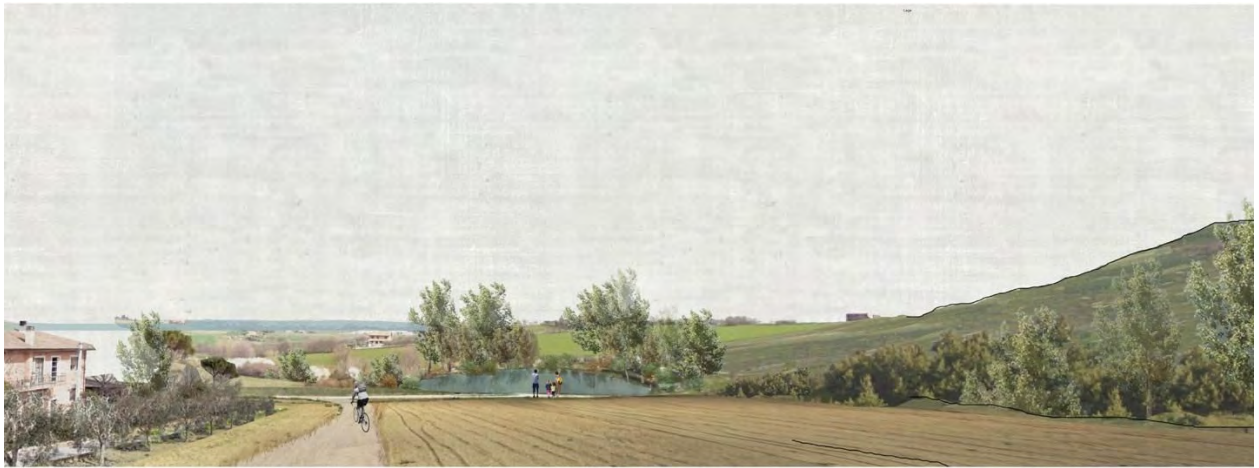


Figure 10. Photomontage of a renovated macero in the mountains, representation created by the authors, part of workshop.



Figure 11. Photomontage of a maceri in the coastal lowland, representation created by the authors, part of workshop.



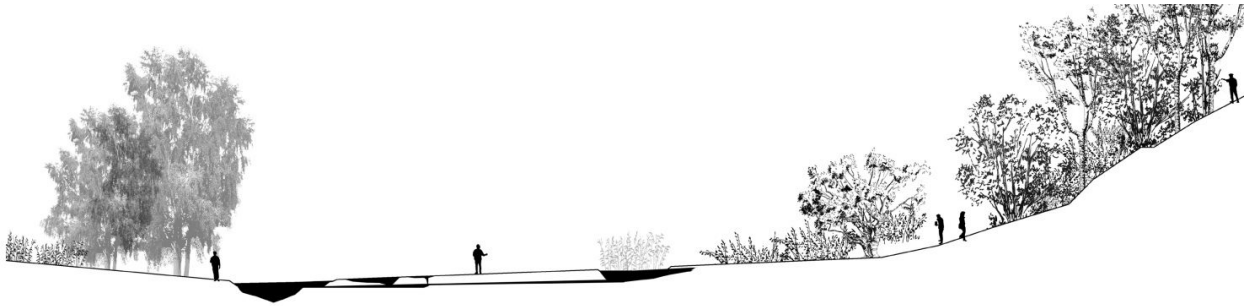


Figure 12. Illustrative section of the functional context of the maceri, representation created by the authors, part of workshop.



Figure 13. Illustrated vision of a recovered maceri, representation created by the authors, part of workshop.