

Lucania's Landscape and Territory Between XVII and XIX Centuries Through Archival Drawings

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Abstract

Military reasons, disputes over matters of borders, indications on the use of the land, appraisals for damage following natural disasters have led, over the last few centuries, to the production of a considerable archival graphic material, whose study allows us to understand the settlement geography of an area, grasping the architectural peculiarities of buildings and reconstructing their transformations, but also tracing signs of urban reality that have disappeared today, even before the traditional archaeological studies. No less important is the graphic study of these iconographic testimonies to understand the rules of representation known to the technicians of the time.

Starting from the examination of archive folders, among the various papers numerous graphic documents have been traced which allowed to reconstruct the Lucanian settlement geography between the XVII and XIX centuries. A fundamental reflection was reserved to the graphic study of these maps which highlighted the knowledge of the time surveyors on the construction of the represented space, and how these were 'adapted' to the communication needs required by the different commissions.

Keywords: territory design, landscape, cabrei, maps.

Introduction

The importance of reading the iconographic testimonies of the past implies the possibility of reading the transformations that have affected the landscape and the territory in a time frame taken as a reference. Through geometric designs of the territory and symbols, man documents natural spaces and anthropic actions, but the semantic value of the sign used "has always taken on a more important role than the sign in itself, becoming a real language" [Iannizzaro 2006, p. 9]. The change ability of the communication needs, useful to describe the territory and how much it develops, which has characterized the evolution of man in the various ages and in the different civilizations of history, has led to the introduction of a communication based on "visual elements of immediate understanding"

[Iannizzaro 2006, p. 9] that we find, among other things, in the thematic representation of the territory.

Leaving aside the birth and development of the representation of the territory in the civilizations of the past, where we find both the first attempts at depicting the known world, and drawings of the territory on a reduced scale for reasons of confinement between cultivated fields or between areas of different jurisdiction, we want pay attention to particular aspects of representation between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.

In the specific case of Basilicata, cartographic production is mainly linked to the activity of land surveyors where "the practice of representation is essentially linked to the juridical relationships that are established on the earth;

hence the marginality of urban images, almost always limited to symbolic representations within a wider territorial context" [Angelini 1987, p. 191].

The reading of these maps becomes fundamental to read the evolutions that the territory, in the specific case the Lucan one, has undergone over the centuries, and to identify the traces of human activities in the period taken as reference [1].

From the practice of surveying to the technical design of architects and engineers: centuries in comparison

The reappearance of the surveying practice, after its absence during the Middle Ages, is linked to the need for a new management of the territories, where the figure of the land surveyor has in himself legal knowledge –civil, feudal and customary law– and techniques, besides having a recognized power in the legal system. It should also be said that the Neapolitan survey does not record a technological progress between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, as instead occurs elsewhere. In fact, the use of instruments such as the squaring, the compass, the compass and the chain is still used, even when the distance gauge telescope and the preparatory tablet made their appearance, while the use of the triangulation method for measuring is documented of funds.

Fig. 1. Two of the maps contained in the platea of the church of Albano di Lucania designed by the surveyor Angelo d'Ostuni in 1757 (Historical parish archive of Santa Maria Assunta, Albano di Lucania).



"The surveying practise remains fixed to the most elementary knowledge of plane geometry: every shape must be reduced to triangles, rectangles, trapezoids, in order to be measured with rudimentary tools" [Angelini 1989, p. 267].

We will have to wait until the nineteenth century to see the use of the new instruments, probably not suitable for simple surveys of bases and measurements of tracks of moderate length that represent the main land surveying activity carried out in the previous centuries, and that would have made the use useless of more complex instruments [Angelini 1987, pp. 192, 193].

"In the XVIII century, the surveyors had acquired a discreet representative capacity; the works, often executed with skill and taste [...] represented only small extensions of territory. In most cases, as Domenico Grimaldi described in 1780, they were "very ignorant of the first rules of Geodesy, incapable, therefore, of carrying out extensive geographical areas" [Valerio 1993, p. 123].

The production of drawings of the territory, often gathered in *cabrei* and slabs, responds to two fundamental requirements: the maps represent a document to resolve legal questions regarding boundaries, usurpations, easement of passage, etc., or become 'an element' for the inventory of owned assets, as often happens for monastic orders or for secular clergy.

"In the inventory the land surveyor, who is always a freelancer or a clergyman authorized to exercise, has a subordinate position, since it is the intervention of a notary who gives the document legal value; however the geometrical operations constitute the substance and sometimes they are not limited to simple measurements and scale reductions, but also contain hypotheses for a more rational management of the lands: planting of farms, redefinition of contracts, cultivation destination" [Angelini 1987, pp. 199, 200].

Another peculiarity is that the cartographic production in Basilicata is not homogeneous and is strongly linked to aspects of the local tradition developed in relation to the large landed property and feudal customs: "In the lands where the barons and the church demand the tenth, that is a proportional service to the product, the surveyor does not serve the social organization and the design never reaches acceptable levels; in lands where use is to collect land, a performance commensurate with the area cultivated by the settler, the experiences are early and higher. In the mountains, where a subsistence economy is based on small peasant property and on the communal

uses of pasture and wood, there is no local production of papers until the nineteenth century; on the plain where the great fiefdom dominates, the cartography summarizes all the essential data of agricultural management" [Angelini 1989, p. 267]. In a region like Basilicata characterized by a morphological heterogeneity and a different political-social organization, what has been said explains the quantitative and qualitative diversity of the cartographic material preserved.

Another important theme is the iconographic aspect still linked to the tradition that characterizes the entire production of the 18th century, and of which we still find a trail in that of the following century. An example of this is the cabrei produced for the monastic structures that represent a conspicuous cartographic corpus that has come down to us [2]. These documents are the result of the need to manage the assets owned by convents and monasteries, and is these cartographic materials, contained in

Fig. 2. One of the pages of the sketchbook of the royal surveyor Giuseppe Pinto with the funds of the convent of Santa Maria la Scala di Venosa of 1773 (ASPZ, Raccolta cartografica di agrimensori venosini (XVIII-XIX secolo), vol. 3, doc. 166).

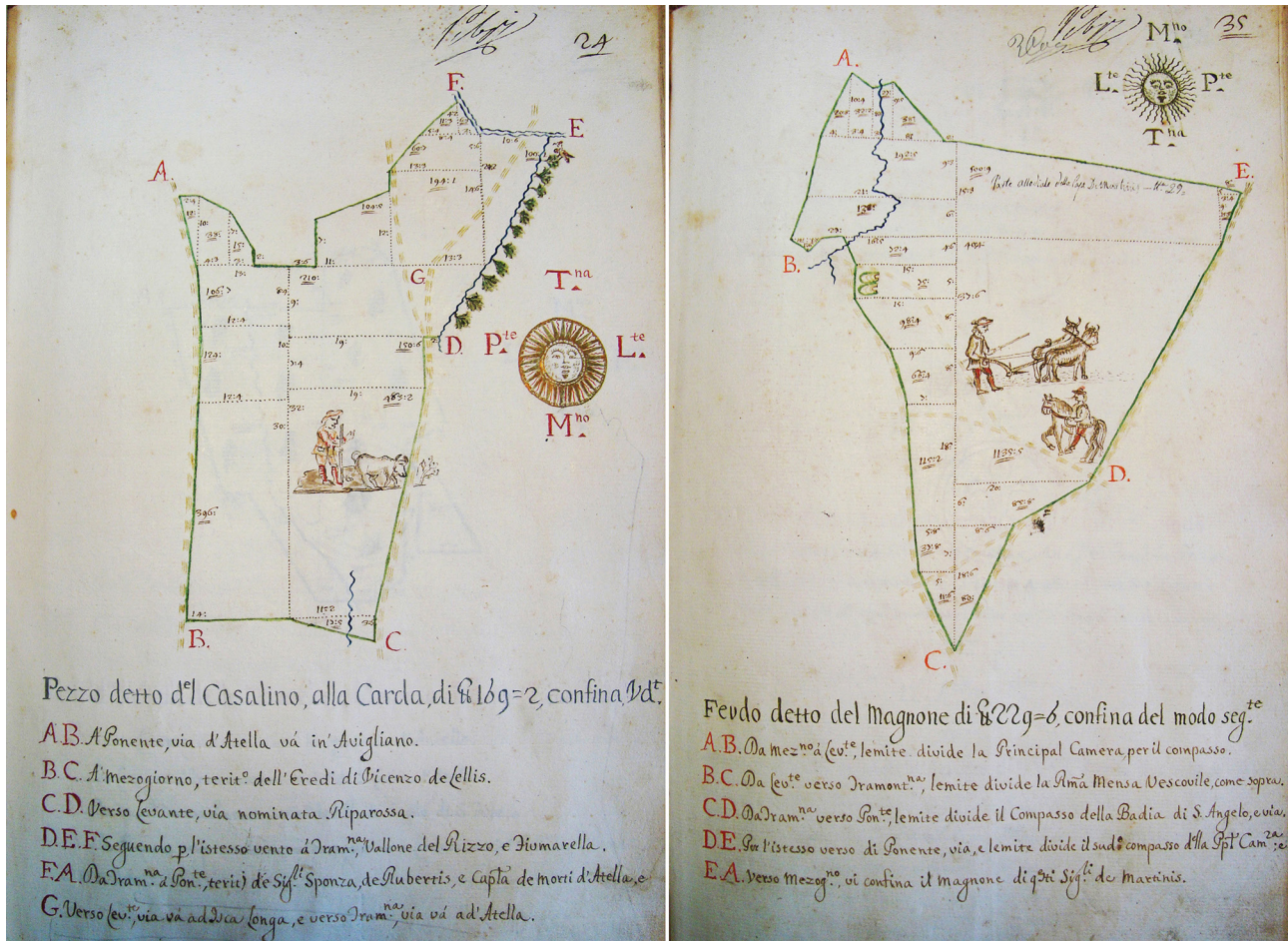


the audiences, which provide us with information on the organization of the territory, on the roads, as well as on the location of abandoned houses of which today we no longer have traces on the surface.

In them we have the coexistence of the technical-geometric aspect, with which the boundaries of the different backgrounds are returned, and an 'iconic' representation,

still tied to the tradition of medieval papers [3] with which they are given indications on the crops, on the physical elements morphological and on the architectures present. The graphic synthesis adopted aims at exemplifying the visual reality, thus becoming complex to separate the drawing from the symbol. The 'repetitive' elements, in fact, are returned by resorting to the use of icon-drawings that

Fig. 3. Two maps of the Holy Spirit of Atella convent designed by the notary and land surveyor Gerardo Musio in 1770 (ASPz, Corporazioni religiose, vol.3, docc. 24-35).



do not make a legend necessary to encode what is represented. Particularly interesting is the representation of trees and plants where, in many cases, it is so true that it is immediately possible to identify the species represented (fig. 1).

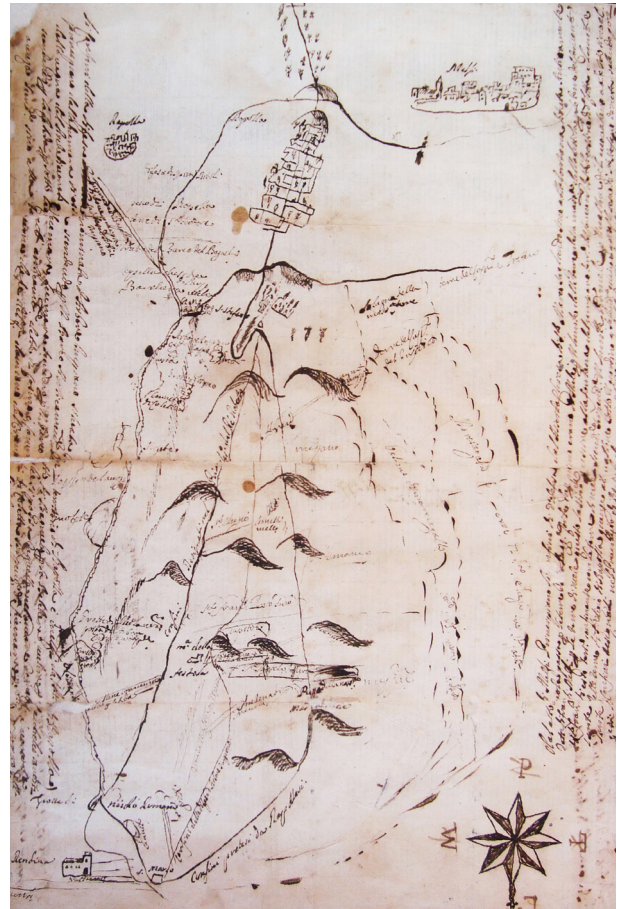
Real miniatures suggest the cultivated species, the agricultural activity practiced, the eventual forest cover and the presence of buildings, mainly farms, monasteries or farmhouses, to which the represented territories are substantially head (fig. 2).

Another peculiarity, then, concerns the geometric construction of the design. In fact, if the territorial plots are returned to the plant with geometrical foresight also, in some cases, using triangulations, and each drawing is accompanied by a graphic scale and by the indication of the cardinal orientation, the icon-drawings used for the elements listed above are rendered by resorting to a reversal of the representation plan with respect to the plan, and without any foresight in reducing the scale proportional to that used for the restitution of the boundaries.

Among the various graphic testimonies contained in the audiences and concerning the Lucan territory, that of the Benedictine female monastery of S. Spirito of Atella, designed by the royal notary or surveyor Gerardo Musio [4] in 1770, is accompanied by true and own miniatures of the agricultural activities carried out in the represented lands, in which the men working in the fields are depicted (fig. 3).

It is emblematic to note how in some of these drawings, as in the stalls of the Holy Trinity of Venosa designed in 1774 by the surveyor and painter Giuseppe Pinto [5], are also indicated buildings in ruins that evidently represented references in the territory: the ancient it is functional to the contemporary as a reference element or perhaps also for the recovery of building material. In addition to the audiences, which as mentioned represent a sort of inventory of immovable property owned by convents, monasteries and secular clergy, the map produced for “confinement operations” concerning disputes between fiefdoms and universities”, entrusted to professionals higher than the royal land surveyor, it becomes a necessary tool for comparing documentary sources –fiscal, diplomatic, feudal documents– and direct analysis on the ground [Angelini 1988, p. 21]. These maps are often accompanied by a legend that helps to tell the territory, and are among the richest documents on the agricultural and settlement landscape of Basilicata. Streams, hills, roads and buildings

Fig. 4. “Confinazione della difesa di Albero in Piano in territorio di Melfi e Rapolla”, copy of 1697 of a map of 1547 (ASPz, Azienda Doria Pamphili, pianta e disegni, map 8).



–castles, farms, chapels, mills, caves and ruins of buildings and farmhouses– represent fundamental elements to define the boundaries with greater skill and, therefore, are reported by returning, at times, a less geometric view and closer to the picturesque views of the territory represented. Of course, as in the case of the previously analyzed slabs, attention is paid to the presence of specific crops returned using icons represented with the same rules described for the previous case. In particular, the restitution of the orography of the territory is made either by resorting to two-dimensional representations of the reliefs by overturning the representation plan, or by introducing in some cases a view of the top of the same and, with the aid of color and nuance, we try to emphasize the altitude (figs. 4, 5).

It should also be emphasized that in these maps the variation of the reduction scale factor adopted in relation to the extension of the territory to be represented does not involve the use of different graphic annotations for the elements represented, given that it makes these documents fairly homogeneous. The pictorial aspect in all

Fig. 5. "Pianta delle due linee di confine segnate a color rosso, una delle quali corrisponde alla indicazione di Marsicoveteresi, e l'altra a quella di Calvellesi, con le aggiacenze della campagna de' due comuni Comuni e di Viaggiano", 1845, July 20, Tommaso Curcio judicial architect (ASPz, Intendenza di Basilicata, Atti demaniali, b. 583, fasc. 269 – Calvello-Marsicovetere).



these documents coexists with the metric and geometric restitution of the territory, while not giving, in most cases, detailed information on the actual position of the elements in the same territory. But despite this, the result achieved allows us to interpret the evolution of many of the Lucanian realities, and the reading of the map is directly linked to the artistic skill of the surveyor. The territory is represented in these maps through a threshold that becomes the thin border between representation and truth, objectivity and subjectivity, and where the tools of drawing become a means by which the drawing-artist describes what he sees, and where he passes content and messages related to his culture and vision. However, a care for the details that provide important information for the study of the Lucan landscape emerges: the color used in some maps for buildings that probably refers to the material used for the construction, the indication of the sense of plowing with different orientations, the presence of rows of vines, olive trees and fruit trees, the graphic suggestion for a grazing arrangement of the bottom, etc., which make these drawings the forerunners of the subsequent

Fig. 6. "Metà del feudo della Grancia di proprietà degli eredi del fu don Luigi Blasi sito nel tenimento di Brindisi", Camillo Giordano architetto - 1843 (ASPz, Tribunale civile di Basilicata, Perizie e atti istruttori, b. 29, fasc. 21 – Brindisi Montagna).

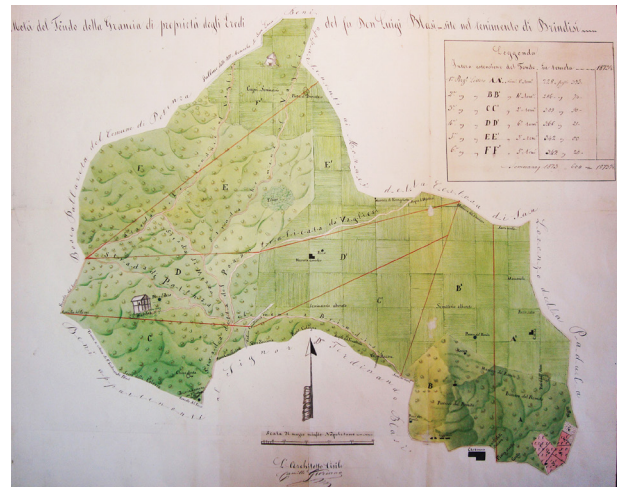
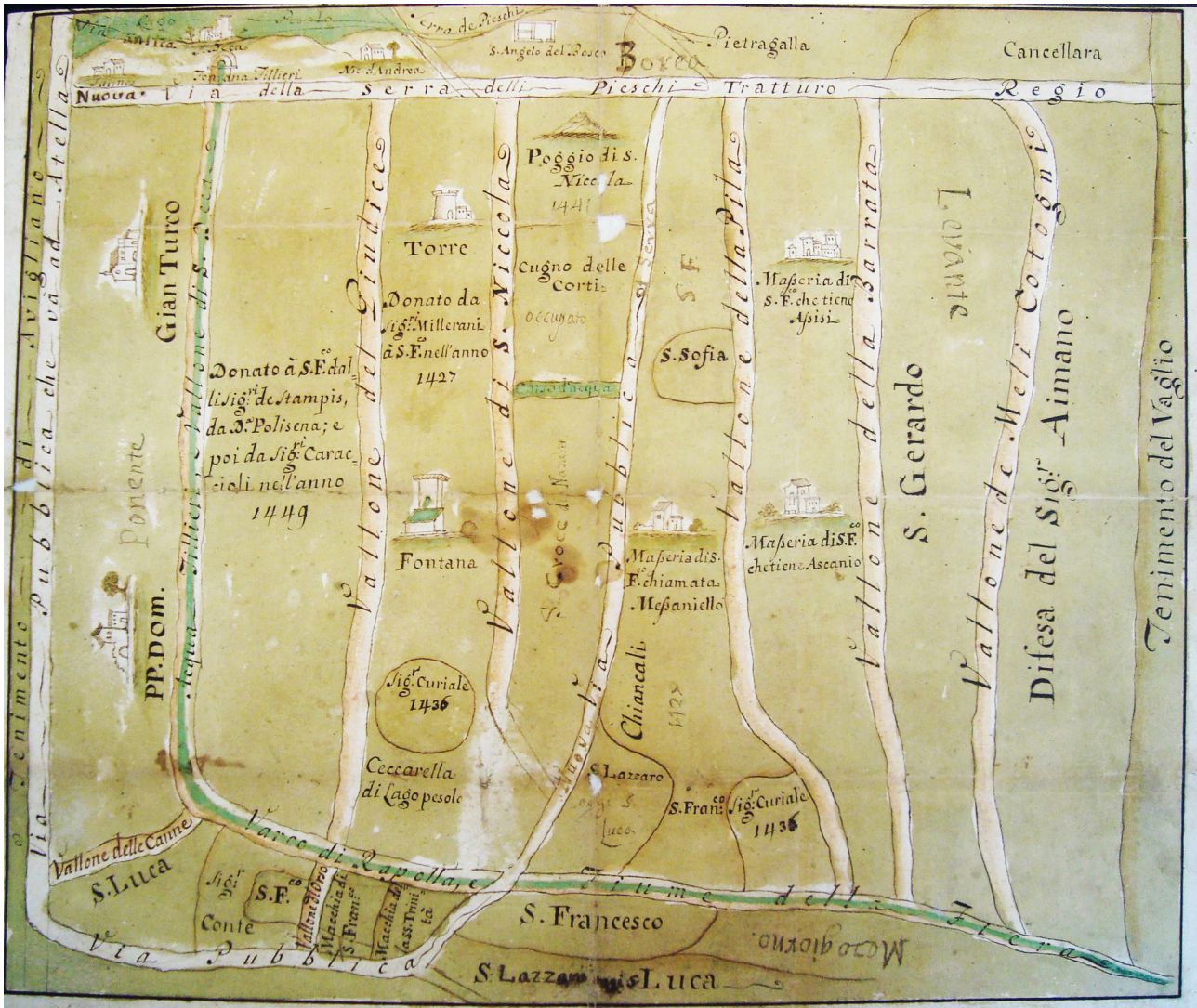


Fig. 7. "Poggio S. Nicola", late seventeenth - early eighteenth century (ASPZ, Intendenza di Basilicata, Atti demaniali, b. 564, fasc. 13 - Avigliano).



thematic maps. Furthermore, a hierarchy of the elements represented emerges: the physical-morphological components, the anthropic elements understood as traces and architectures, and the use of the land (fig. 6).

Another particular case is represented by those maps not produced to describe the land properties geometrically or qualitatively, but in these cases, although the rules of the territorial survey are no longer valid, we can still obtain important information on the organization of the roads, on the presence of buildings chosen for their importance linked not so much to their architectural level, but rather because recognizable references in space. Another feature of these cards is the return of the hydrography that marks, together with the roads, the territory and its subdivision. However, references to land use and the scale of representation are not included, as proof of the purely indicative purpose of the areas depicted. An example is the map drawn up probably between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for the controversy underway on some properties between the convent of San Francesco di Potenza and the count of the same city [6] (fig. 7). Other examples comparable to this are represented by the maps produced, during the nineteenth century, for the subdivision of municipal territories into cadastral or contribution sections [7]. Also in these cases within well-defined boundaries—those of the municipal territory with the indication, in some cases, of neighboring centers—the elements represented are only urban and extra-urban road

layouts, which often become the margins between the various sections, the inhabited center returned without any reference to its true consistency, but simply drawing the major architectures enucleated from the compact building fabric (the latter made instead in a symbolic manner) and recognizable by a caption or by emphasizing the architectural elements that make up like towers, domes, bell towers, stairways. With the same graphic features the extra moenia architectures are also drawn, mainly monumental fountains and chapels (figs. 8, 9).

Similar graphic devices can also be found in the maps for the subdivision of the territory into cadastral sections produced in the same period (fig. 10).

Fig. 9. Division of the territory of Bernalda (Matera) in contribution sections, 1807 (ASPz, Direzioni delle contribuzioni dirette, vol. 37 – Bernalda).



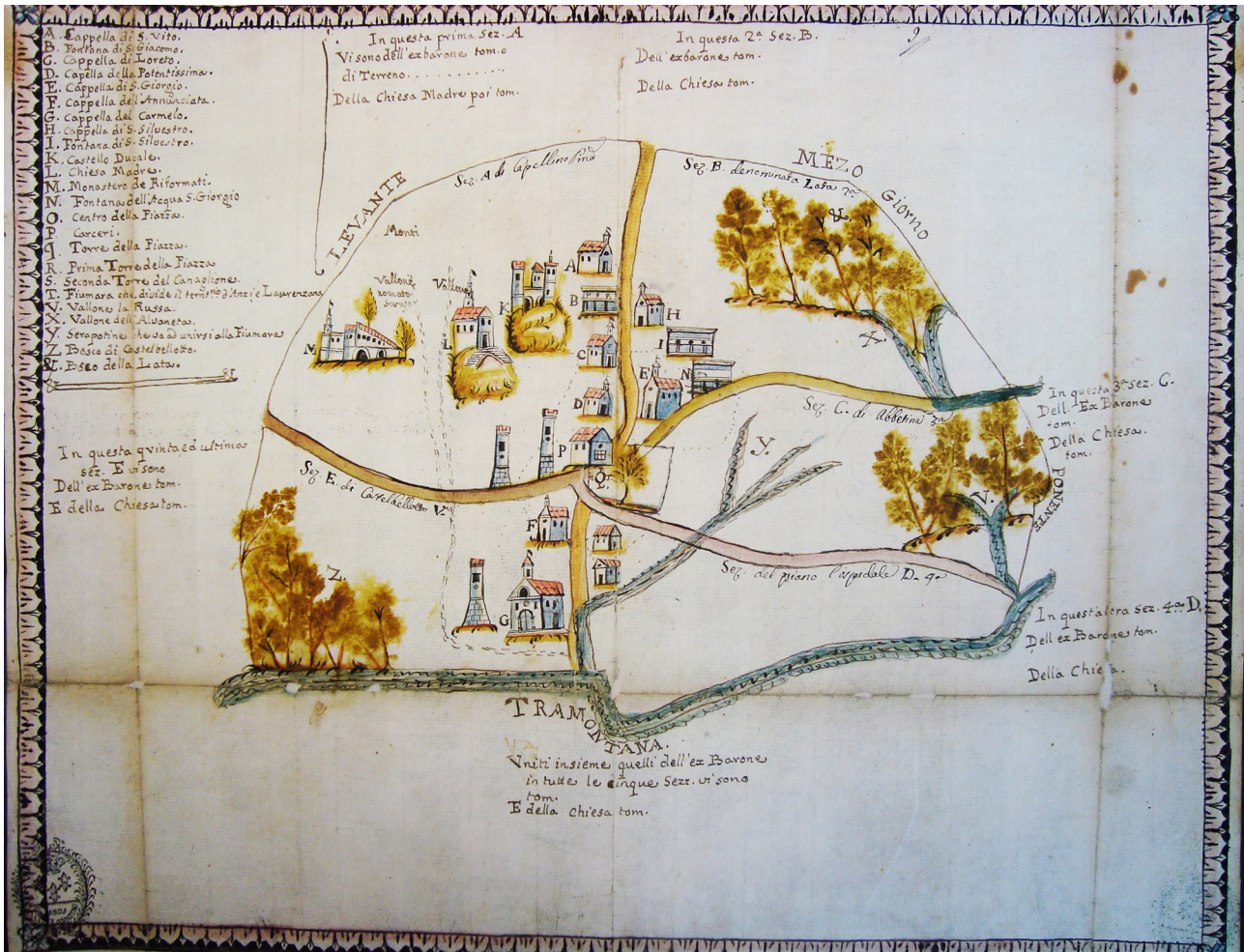
Fig. 8. Division of the territory of Craco (Matera) in contribution sections, first half of the nineteenth century (ASPz, Direzioni delle contribuzioni dirette, vol. 40 – Craco).



During the nineteenth century, the figure of the surveyor changes again, and is increasingly often flanked by that of the architect. The subversive laws of feudalism and the suppression of monastic orders lead to the need for greater production of surveys of the territory, above all to resolve disputes related to the new reorganization of the

state and former feudal territories. The need to define precise boundaries between municipalities also leads to the need for detailed maps of the territory [8]. It is in this phase that old surveys are recopied and updated for an updated knowledge of the territory aimed at governing the same.

Fig. 10. "Mappa delle sezioni catastali del comune di Laurenzana", 1807 (ASPz, Intendenza di Basilicata, b. 625, fasc. 559).



With the Napoleonic reorganization of the administration of justice, appraisals are often carried out by technicians who compose expert books. From the examination of the documents produced it is clear that by their very nature we resort to more objective representations of the territory. "With the cadastre and with the suppression of religious corporations, a long season of studies has been concluded, of which the land surveyor was the protagonist" [Angelini 1987, p. 203].

Fig. 11. "Topografia del sito sovraneamente approvato per la riedificazione del distrutto Saponara", civil engineer Francesco Pagliuca, 1859 (ASPz, Consiglio d'Intendenza, map 19).

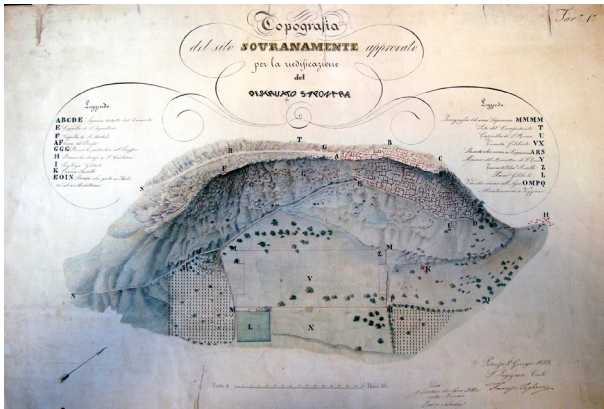


Fig. 12. "Pianta del dominio di Melfi", XVIII century (ASPz, Azienda Doria Pamphili, cas. 66, sez. II, b. 367).



Study papers for the construction of public works: reclamation of areas, definitions of tracks, construction of hydraulic works and, more generally for the improvement of living conditions, are the reasons that explain the production of maps throughout the nineteenth century. There are also episodes, though isolated, of graphic survey for the documentation of the damages in the centers hit by seismic events. A significant example is the survey of the center of Saponara, today Grumento Nova, written after the destructive earthquake of 16 December 1857 [9].

In the table (fig. 11), designed by the engineer Francesco Pagliuca, the territory of Saponara is represented with the indication of the crops present, of the hydrography, of the road network, in addition to being detailed the areas hosting the temporary shelters for displaced persons, the ruins of the town and the hypothesized area for the delocalized reconstruction of the center [10].

Urban centers in Lucan maps

The representation of the inhabited centers in the maps between the XVIII and the XIX century deserves a particular deepening.

At first we are facing a purely symbolic restitution of urban centers and very far from subsequent cadastral plans or from the views that had been circulating in the courts of Europe for some centuries. In fact, as early as the second half of the 16th century, the designers 'portrayed' the cities and "emphasized the constituent elements (walls, doors, towers, and monuments) and their geometric shape, real or ideal" [Cerotto, Rispoli 1995, pp. 3, 4]. It is in this way that complex and stratified urban realities, whose reading becomes immediate, are returned, even with a few pencil strokes.

The urban views become "the junction of art and science and the crossing of multiple skills" [Cerotto, Rispoli 1995, p. 111] where it is possible to find a subtle boundary between the technical and symbolic representation of the represented reality, and where, naturally, the subjective contribution of the artist who sees, studies, breaks down the city, and then realizes the work.

The various centers of which we have documentation are, instead, drawn in the maps of the territory resorting, once again, to simple symbols that give little quantitative and qualitative information of the center itself (fig. 4). Analyzing the various maps we can only understand the

dimensional hierarchies between cities and neighboring countries –more or less houses in relation to the size of the center– or if these are characterized by military architecture (doors, walls, castles and towers) or buildings of cult dimensionally significant (figs. 8, 10).

The reason for this graphic ‘choice’ for the restitution of inhabited centers is linked to the nature of the designs produced, ie we are dealing with maps whose purpose is ‘legal’ management –definitions of boundaries, use and income– of the represented territories.

In particular, the architectures symbolizing power and faith are emphasized (fig. 12) which become expressions of the city and points of orientation in the surrounding territory. Prospective measures are also adopted in order to be able to return, within the urban fabric, buildings that are visible only from different points of view, in order to obtain a complete graphic description of the represented reality, surely arising from the observation at sight of reality itself, but certainly far from a scientific relevance of the existent. It is only in the nineteenth century, “when a direction of urban government is affirmed in the legal systems” [Angelini 1987, p. 191] that a cartographic production will start paying attention to a ‘truthful’ representation of urban centers. A good example of this are some of the plans for the division of the Lucanian centers into census areas designed in 1881 [11].

Conclusion

The examination of Lucanian archival sources reveals the attention that, land surveyors earlier and architects and engineers later, paid to the representation of territory.

The improvement of graphic techniques and the innovation of representative tools have given, above centuries, a production of maps and cabrei more reflective of reality they wanted to represent. In addition to this graphic production merely technical, many others graphic expressions have come to us –travellers draws, sketches and miniatures– which give a picture of a certain place at a given moment.

The study of these documental evidences means to trace the evolution of natural, agricultural or urban landscapes or of suburban areas in spite of big cities and important territories set of historical and cultural events object of historiography and research.

What emerge is a territory rich of analysis cues and ar-

chitectural, urban and historical peculiarities which are evidences of the different cultures that thrived enriching with new signs the landscape. The comparison with what was happening in other Italian or European contexts identifies differences and similarities with the ‘Lucanian case study’ by revealing contact points among different realities often connecting various geographically distant locations, this allows to read the study of different maps and their evolution –from the symbolic and geometric drawing to the modern cartography– in a wider context.

Fig. 13. “Topografia del terzo della Pila del feodo della Lionessa”, 1876, September 19 (ASPz, Azienda Doria Pamphili, cas. 106, sez. X, b. 652).



Notes

[1] "Through the iconography of a site it is possible to describe characterizing morphologies, to detect and analyze recurrent typologies, thus to decipher a second-level portrait of the territory within the landscape image, a mixture of relevant elements and interpretative elements coming from the complex of historical and scientific disciplines, and capable of studying the functional and practical 'meaning' denoted by the signs and paratactic and syntactic organizations used for its representation" [Mazzolemi 2005, p. 34].

[2] The slabs or *cabrei*, graphic or descriptive documents of the properties of convents and monasteries are, following the suppressive laws of the French Decade and unitary post, transferred to various financial offices in order to allow the assessment of the properties and revenues of the different goods. Following the royal decree of 1911, October 2 n. 1163 are paid to the State Archives of Potenza. See: Verrastro 2004, p. 32.

[3] Medieval papers are characterized by the presence of figurative elements that "describe and tell, with a prevalence of drawings on symbols" [Iannizzaro 2006, pp. 38, 39].

[4] State Archives of Potenza (ASPz), *Corporazioni religiose*, vol. 3.

[5] ASPz, *Corporazioni religiose*, vol. 200.

[6] In the specific case of this map the titles of possession that prove the ownership of the convent of the land object of the controversy are also reported. See: Angelini 1988, pp. 22, 23.

[7] With the single property contribution, introduced with the decree of the 8th August 1806, and by which the taxes in force until that moment were replaced by pursuing an equal contribution for all the landowners (according to quotas established by the Council of State, divided among the districts by the Provincial Councils, divided among the various Municipalities by the District Council, and thus subdivided by the decurions among the different owners), it became necessary to produce maps of the municipal territories on which the different sections were indicated. At the center of these drawings are represented, through sketches, the inhabited centers of which a symbolic image is provided. See Principe 1991.

[8] "The cartography that is produced in border disputes by judicial experts and part technicians, although it cannot be framed in precise models, generally responds to a univocal procedural scheme: the comparison between a documentary tradition (diplomatic, feudal writings, fiscal, judicial), which constitutes the complex of the historical memory of the territory, and the investigation on the ground" [Angelini 1988, p. 21].

[9] ASPz, *Consiglio d'Intendenza*, map 19.

[10] On the reconstruction of Saponara after the 1857 earthquake. See: Damone 2018, pp. 90-99.

[11] ASPz, *Prefettura di Basilicata, Atti Amministrativi (1878-1882)*, Census of 1881.

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