

“SEGNi DEL PAESAGGIO AGRARIO”: A SCIENTIFIC AND ARTISTIC RESEARCH ON RURAL LANDSCAPE AND ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IN SOUTHERN ITALY.

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ABSTRACT

The rural landscape of Southern Italy is the result of centuries of interaction between natural resources and human practices. In the areas between *Basilicata* and *Apulia*, livestock farming was central from the Middle Ages until the early 20th century, shaping a territory organized around transhumance. This seasonal movement of herds across long distances required an articulated system of infrastructures, including *tratturi* (routes), *masserie* (farmhouses), and *jazzi* (sheepfolds). These elements formed a cultural and architectural heritage of great historical value, now largely abandoned. Profound socio-economic changes after WWII led to the decline of traditional economies, causing the disuse of rural structures. As a result, many sites are now ruined but remain largely unaltered, preserving original features that are worth documenting. This heritage demonstrates a sustainable relationship between human activity and the environment, offering lessons relevant to contemporary debates on resource use and cultural preservation. The research combines historical sources with architectural and territorial analysis, supported by digital survey techniques applied to case studies. Since current knowledge is fragmented, the study establishes a general framework method to deal with this issue. Alongside this scientific approach, the author develops an artistic project through engraving, aimed at evoking the sensory and emotional dimension of these landscapes. The dual perspective—analytical and artistic—seeks to highlight the complexity and evocative power of a cultural system at risk of extinction. The ultimate goal is to promote awareness of this heritage among both specialists and the wider public.

Keywords: Rural Landscape, Architectural Heritage, Digital Survey, Engraving

INTRODUCTION

Looking at the architectures of the past, what interest us most—and from which we can still draw lessons today—is the organic way in which humans were able to interact with the territory, understanding it and making the best possible use of its resources according to the intellectual and material tools available at the time. The relationship between human settlement and territory is a profoundly rooted bond articulated on multiple levels. In historical architecture, nothing is accidental; rather, it is the result of knowledge stratified over centuries, which shaped a settlement culture that—up until the advent of the Industrial Revolution and, consequently, of modern construction techniques—represented, era by era and place by place, the most refined way of building, grounded in a *regola d'arte* (rule of art) born of experiences gradually consolidated and validated.