Cultivating Archaeological Landscape

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Notes on a Mediterranean Applied Case Study

The paper proposes an interdisciplinary exploration in order to define a set of strategies and tools oriented at planning/design/management of archaeological landscapes, especially featured by productive layers.

The article adopts as a key dimension the “cultivating” approach, which can become a fertile ground for experimentation for developing sustainable and innovative planning methodologies to be applied in layered landscapes. In an extended semantic dimension, the term cultivation can be interpreted as a continuous attitude of taking care of (archaeological) places over time, to preserve and regenerate resources for the future in a holistic vision, also considering economic sustainability and liveability for inhabitants and local fauna. The cultivating approach can preserve heritage places by an active and inventive conservation, also fostering biodiversity and temporal diversity. As a case study, the article proposes the Landscape Masterplan for the Baratti and Populonia Archaeological Park.
For a Semantic Introduction

Before addressing the core issues proposed by this paper, it seems crucial to explore the different meanings of the verb *cultivate*, highlighting its broad semantic extension, as interpreted and proposed in recent works focusing on landscape architecture projects.

In order to do this, we should remind ourselves that the term *cultivation* derives from the Latin verb *còlere* which is supposed to have come from an Indo-European root *kwel*, intended with the primary meaning of “revolving the soil,” “tilling the earth.”¹

Specifically, the Latin word expresses the wide range of cultivation and farming practices, but it also means “to take care of,” “to treat with respect,” “venerate,” and by extension, “to dwell,” “to inhabit” and “to live in.”

In fact, we can enhance how *cultivating* signifies, first of all, becoming sedentary and appropriating a place to till it and make it fertile, therefore passing from the nomadism of hunters/gatherers to the sedentary life that generated the first settlements, following an evolutionary process that in the Fertile Crescent is documented between the 10th and 9th century BC.²

The term *culture* is also derived from the same root and from the future participle of *còlere* and, in affinity with this second germination from the Latin verb, we can place the metaphorical *cultivation* of knowledge, but also the *cultivation* of future projects, thus, from the semantic point of view, constituting an inseparable connection between the practical and the poetic dimension of cultivating.³

The word can also be interpreted as *exploitation* (in particular of the mineral resources present in a specific place, or in the case of intensive agricultural crops), thus assuming an antithetical meaning compared to the nuances of the original vocation, which implies an attitude of care, respect and sustainable and balanced use.⁴

Taking into specific consideration the landscape architecture field, and the art of “making places,” we can highlight how the action of cultivating can be interpreted as the continuity of taking care of places over time.⁵ In fact the word *cultivation* also implicitly incorporates the chronological dimension in both its forms: either the evolutionary process (*linear time*) and of cyclicality/seasonal return (*circular time*).

Due to these aspects of continuity and evolution, the specific practices concerning cultivation (working the land, sowing and planting, pruning, watering, harvesting, in addition to different crop care required by the various species) have to be necessarily guided by an overall and strategic vision that is projective and experimental, and in this sense, strictly related to a *planning/design/project* approach.

Thus, a proactive and strategic vision, generated by that “forward-looking attitude” recommended by the European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2000) seems essential for all the protection,
management and planning processes applied to urban and rural landscapes, in which the project and the care of (and for) the living components, whether plant, animal or human, necessarily involve the ability to project the gaze to the future in order to cultivate its various and unpredictable possibilities. In this sense, the verb *cultivate* has remarkable similarities with the practice of a landscape architect who plans and designs open spaces through the different scales of space and time, taking care of the “void and the living” just like any other crop-farmer.  

1 Cultivating Archaeological Places

Adopting these premises, the aim of the paper is to reflect on issues of active and *inventive* conservation for archaeological systems integrated in a rural landscape, and on their possible *cultivation*, interpreting this term in a broader and deliberately project-based semantic meaning.  

How can we rediscover and reinvent these special archaeological cores making them accessible (from a physical and cultural point of view) for the contemporary era? And what are the visions, strategies and tools that can be adopted for their innovative, compatible and sustainable reinterpretation through the landscape architecture project?  

Urban archaeologies are usually integrated within the multiple stratification of cities and are connected with their complexity and temporal diversity, rich in interactions between the different settlement levels, and an index of continuity of occupation, whereas an archaeological complex located in a rural setting generally follows a completely different fate.  

These particular categories of open spaces can be defined as “temporal islands” in the surrounding agricultural landscape system, because they allow access to the historical depth of the places, experimenting with different chronological dimensions.  

In agricultural landscapes, various seasonal practices supporting the crops are cyclically repeated and periodically renewed and modified, in a constant and progressive adaptation to the changing environmental and/or economic needs.  

Archaeological structures integrated within this kind of landscape recognize another type of temporality, no longer linked to needs of use and functional contingencies, but rather influenced by the natural dynamics of alteration of the materials composing them, and by the sequences of the different and evolving ecological processes.  

From an ecological point of view, it might be useful to recall that archaeological sites generally constitute an important reservoir of biological diversity: low anthropic pressure, and the presence of peculiar and diverse environmental conditions, often favour the establishment of rare species finding a habitat favourable to their development in these spaces.  

In rural zones these environments can thus become precious oases of biodiversity and ecological complexity, of course after due consideration of the advisability of vegetation in proximity to archaeological
structures, and the use of appropriate instruments to evaluate their controlled coexistence, such as the index of danger.\textsuperscript{11}

The memory and isolated and unstable remains of a lost, interrupted (or even removed) time, the archaeological presences inhabiting the rural landscape were usually found following the reports (literary or iconographic) of travellers, or they re-emerged fortuitously in response to the tools of the farmers tilling the earth.

The history of archaeological finds in agricultural areas is closely intertwined with the transformations of places and with cultivation practices: in many cases works carried out for the reclamation of the marshy areas or excavations for new tree plantations triggered the first step towards the discovery of the ruins scattered in the countryside of Central Italy, such as the Etruscan tumuli or the rustic villas of the Roman era.

On the other hand, the account of the explorations of archaeological sites in Etruria, Magna Graecia and Sicily, constituting a real \textit{topos} in the travel literature in Italy between the 18th and early 20th centuries, is often usefully integrated with description, understanding and interpretation of the surrounding rural landscape.\textsuperscript{12}

Thus, in narrations of writers, artists and naturalists, the description of ruins populating the countryside of the Maremma or of the Southern Italy is often preceded or followed by considerations on the crops and agricultural practices of the fields surrounding necropolises and ancient cities.

Some of Goethe’s most interesting observations on Italian agriculture and agrarian practices in the 18th century are inspired by an excursion to the Valley of the Temples in April 1787, while in Segesta. The attention of the naturalist and the enchantment of the poet coexist, solicited by an extraordinary rural archaeological landscape: “The district reposes in a sort of melancholy fertility – every where well cultivated, but scarce a dwelling to be seen. Flowering thistles were swarming with countless butterflies, wild fennel stood here from eight to nine feet high, dry and withered of the last year’s growth [...]. A shrill wind whistled through the columns as if through a wood, and screaming birds of prey hovered around the pediments.”\textsuperscript{13}

A century and a half of exploration has consolidated the dialectical relationship between archaeologies and rural landscape hosting them, defining categories and instruments of observation, but, above all, highlighting the alternation between different phases and temporalities. In this sense we can quote the statement of the physician and naturalist Giorgio Santi, who, in 1806, regarding the Roman remains found on the acropolis of Populonia, wrote: “on the slope of the hill we saw reservoir underground a, the external area of which was already covered by a well-connected and well-preserved marble pavement. But this pavement was, according to the usual destiny of such discoveries, unmade without
discretion when it was found in working the field, since here too what was once city is now field, as in Saturnia, in Cosa, in Roselle.”

2 Exploring Mediterranean Peculiarities

It may be interesting to combine the concept of cultivation of archaeological sites with the complex and controversial milieu of the Mediterranean basin, where classical civilizations have left a widespread and complex system of remains, while climatic conditions and the general need for water resource management introduce specific variables influencing in an important way care and construction of the landscapes of the Mediterranean garden.

Giuseppe Barbera underlines the peculiar capacity of Mediterranean landscapes to “know how to mix biological and cultural diversity: to handle flora, fauna, and civilizations coming from three continents, with seasonal and geomorphological climatic variability, able [...] to develop different eco-system services.”

We can add the famed literary and iconographic tradition established since the end of the 15th century that has consolidated in the collective imagination the image of Mediterranean landscape heritage as a natural area of ecological and aesthetic contamination and integration between archaeological systems and vegetation.
In light of these considerations, it should be remembered that since the early decades of the 20th century, a series of political and cultural factors along the shores of the Mediterranean have conditioned the vegetation codes adopted for landscape intervention on archaeological sites, which has resulted in a clear reduction in biodiversity through the widespread homogenization of botanical choices.\textsuperscript{18}

The reductive oxymoronic ideal of “immobile nature,” particularly appreciated by the aesthetics of the early decades of the last century, does not take into consideration the wealth of the Mediterranean botanical repertoire, already known in Roman times and reinterpreted by Giacomo Boni at the beginning of the 20th century in his list of species suitable for the Flora of Monuments.\textsuperscript{19}

Today, the aspiration to total site control, protection from possible damage, and ease of maintenance, often undertaken with little understanding of the ecological implications and the relationship dynamics between vegetation and artefacts, frequently leads to the desertification of archaeological areas.

This tendency towards the reduction and simplification of the diversity naturally present in this kind of environment makes the challenge of cultivating historical and archaeological places more difficult, and therefore more imperative,\textsuperscript{20} with the objectives of increasing ecological complexity and resilience and adaptation to climatic stress, in short, of promoting active conservation.\textsuperscript{21}

The work of the landscape architect and of the archaeologist, obviously supported by an interdisciplinary team integrating all the necessary skills for work in such fragile sites, essentially consists in formulating objectives, strategies and interventions to guide active conservation, management and compatible transformations of the places, taking into account the complexity and the chronological component of the existing archaeological structures and landscape systems.

It means being able to work on different scales and to trigger or reactivate historical, cultural, ecological and functional relationships in space and time, preserving the existing heritage of biological and temporal diversity.\textsuperscript{22}

To illustrate this kind of cultivating approach, an example case-study will be reported, concerning the Archaeological Park of Baratti and Populonia, included within the territorial system of the Val di Cornia Parks, in southern Tuscany.

\section{Cultivating a Territory: the Val di Cornia Parks System}

The parks system, a network of parks and museums in the province of Livorno, spanning the municipalities of Piombino, San Vincenzo, Campiglia Marittima, Suvereto and Sassetta, was identified in the 1970s with urban planning restrictions coordinated by the five municipal councils in the Val di Cornia.
Today the Val di Cornia parks system constitutes one of the fundamental factors for the conversion of the local economy, within which cultural resources, protected natural areas, landscapes and tourism services have become major phenomena, and have taken on strategic significance.

In that period of coordinated planning, which in itself already constituted a profound methodological innovation compared to the dominant municipal-based philosophy in the field of planning, the municipal councils perceived that the local historical, archaeological and natural heritage had a distinct unified nature of its own, and that the historical transformations that had shaped it over the centuries, from the Etruscans to contemporary life, would have been more understood, and better communicated, with unified policies of integrated protection, valorization and management. Ever since then, the Piombino promontory, with the ancient Etrusco-Roman city of Populonia, the mining areas in the hills of Campiglia, with the medieval village of San Silvestro, the huge natural coastal areas of Rimigliano (San Vincenzo) and La Sterpaia (Piombino), the hills of Campiglia, Sassetta and Suvereto that surround the river Cornia plain, were all included as part of a single conservation and valorization project. In 2009, it was Italy’s standard-bearer for the MiBAC at the Council of Europe’s Landscape Award.

Indeed, the project that was set up was found, according to the directorate for quality and protection of landscapes, architecture and contemporary art at the Ministry for Cultural Assets and Activities, to be fully in line with the criteria identified by the regulations of the award scheme, and was described by the commission as ‘an example of virtuous balance between incentives for economic development, social equity, public participation, and respect for the environment. An exemplary intervention, aimed at improving the attractiveness and quality of the local area, thanks to the valorization of its environmental, cultural and landscape resources, and thanks to targeted protection and management measures designed to achieve sustainable tourism.’

The parks system is thus, first and foremost, a project of territorial valorization that has set itself the mission of “cultivating” places of cultural and natural interest. It develops an awareness of their value by means of research, protects their peculiar characteristics and local memory through planning, and invests resources to make them accessible. The can be managed in a system-based rationale that, in an overall and integrated way which is easier to understand, is capable of representing the transformations that have left their mark over the millennia on the sites, the history, and the landscapes of the Val di Cornia. All this with the aim of contributing to economic conversion, in response to declining economies (such as mining and metallurgy) which, ever since the last decades of the last century, had given unmistakable signs of structural crises which, in the case of the mines, were irreversible.
Speaking just a few years after the archeo-mining park of San Silvestro was inaugurated, this was how Riccardo Francovich summed up the philosophy behind the project and the creation of the Sistema dei Parchi della Val di Cornia: “An incisive archaeological investigation does not only involve the people who actually work on it, it also involves local area policy in general [...]. In this context, therefore, one cannot contemplate conducting an archaeological excavation, unless it be purely for the purposes of rescue archaeology, without first making arrangements for, or at least envisaging, the drafting of a project. Without the culture of a project, any planned archaeological intervention makes no sense.”

It is in this peculiar and unprecedented administrative context that a fundamental role was played by scientific research, in particular archaeological research. This has proceeded hand-in-hand, and inseparably, first with territorial planning (guiding it in locating the perimeters of the parks) and later with interventions to make the valorized features accessible to the public, in other words to hand the social value of scientific research back to the communities. These are all phases in a single process which, not without some difficulty, has been put into effect on a large scale in the Val di Cornia parks system.

4 From Research to Valorization: the Archaeological Park of Baratti and Populonia

It was thanks to the initial archaeological research, and the subsequent state-imposed restrictions, that the decision was made towards the end of the 1960s to block a development in the Gulf of Baratti. The site was
around 1.8 million cubic metres in size, in the form of new buildings (including hotels, villages and villas), envisaged under the planning scheme adopted by Piombino Town Council. These plans were thwarted in 1970 by the Public Works Ministry on the advice of the Superintendency, which was opposed to the scheme, and thanks to a radical change in the position of Piombino Council itself. Indeed, ever since then, Piombino Council would always include the promontory of Populonia and the Gulf of Baratti among areas to be protected, owing to the extraordinary archaeological and landscape features of value to which it still bears witness today, creating

fig. 3  Populonia, Baratti Gulf in the sixties (Parchi Val di Cornia Archive).

fig. 4  Populonia, Baratti Gulf in the seventies (Parchi Val di Cornia Archive).
the preconditions for the birth of the Archaeological Park of Baratti and Populonia.

By subtracting portions of the territory from speculative interests, which would have destroyed them, the historical-identity heritage was preserved by starting a process of economic recovery and regeneration destined to implement identity, sense of belonging and cultural value. The crossroads is always the same: knowing how to distinguish between destructive crops and creative crops, of future and well-being.

In this territory, over the following decades, the most innovative models of institutional cooperation were tried out, often interpreting

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fig. 5  Populonia, Baratti Gulf nowadays (Parchi Val di Cornia Archive).

fig. 6  Populonia, crops on the acropolis (Poggio del Molino), first half of the 20th century (Parchi Val di Cornia Archive).
The undeniable beauty of these places, some of which were unknown even to local people up until a few years ago, goes hand-in-hand today with a rare opportunity for scientific documentation, and to once again make the long and complex history of this territory available to the public.²³

The same direction and the same methodological approach were used to plan the interventions financed by the ministry’s public funding,²⁴ presented to the public on 30 March 2018.

In this case, however, thanks to the awareness developed in the first years of management, and thanks to constant engagement...
with the public, most of the interventions were dedicated to improving understanding of the archaeology of the area of the ancient city, inevitably the hardest information to interpret.  

In drawing up the project’s development outlines, consideration was thus given on the one hand to heritage conservation needs (accentuated by visitor access and the progress of archaeological research), and, on the other hand, to visitors’ needs, in terms of understanding the archaeology and expanding services, beginning with an analysis of problems that emerged during this period of management. With these interventions, the supplementary project thus secured the protection of the assets, the acquisition of new archaeological knowledge, scientific and academic communication, and the needs of visitor access.

Indeed, the interventions carried out in this last decade have involved areas in which at times there were very different levels of research, conservation and valorization. This necessitated a wholesale review of the systems of access, supports and information panels along visitor routes, and of the practical fixtures and fittings, integrated with pre-existing ones, but at the same time projected toward a further phase of planning.

The need to harmonize the interventions can hence be seen, and to integrate the strategic development guidelines for the area into a single overall system, with a Masterplan for the Park Landscape. This later became the policy basis for the “Strategic Cultural Development Plan,” the substantial appendix to the Valorization Accord between the Cultural Assets and Activities Ministry, Tuscany Region, and Piombino Town Council, entered into in 2007.

Indeed, ever since the first meetings of the technical discussion group set up by Tuscany Region to draft the accord, it was decided that it would be advisable to see to it that the strategic objectives included the joint drafting of a cultural development plan. It was intended that this plan should not just be a statement of intentions, but instead should represent a concrete management tool on the part of the town council for activities aimed at valorizing and allowing access to the public, in line with the quality standards set out under the regulations currently in force.

Within the same Strategic Plan, it was also deemed appropriate, in compliance with the provisions of the legislation regarding the enhancement of public cultural assets, to hope for a future expansion of the areas affected by this agreement in order to include the whole heritage of the system of parks and archaeological museums of the Val di Cornia.

### 5 A Masterplan for an Archaeological Landscape

It now seems important to focus specifically on the Masterplan for the Park Landscape, drawn up in 2016 and 2017 by an interdisciplinary team as part of a regional project financed by European funds. It was devised as a crucial tool intended to integrate and harmonize planning, design and management levels, considering both heritage values and living resources.
Indeed, in the territory of ancient Populonia, the landscape context and the network of visible archaeological features are intimately connected, forming an integrated and inseparable complex requiring specific multidisciplinary attention on an ample timescale.

Constructed as an instrument to orient landscape transformation in strategies and projects, the masterplan was conceived as an active interface between the super-ordinate planning level and future project processing on the park scale.\textsuperscript{40}

The operational scope of the masterplan is the entire archaeological park, with its two recognizable thematic sectors corresponding to the logic of the Etruscan and Roman settling of Populonia and which coincide with the two main visitor ambits: the area of the acropolis, or the \textit{upper city}, with its sacred buildings and public spaces, and that of the \textit{lower city} where the ancient port was located near the industrial iron works and the necropolis.

The \textit{acropolis} and the \textit{lower city}, together with the historical defensive system, are integrated into an extensive network of archaeological and heritage elements found outside the perimeter of the park and which extend over the entire promontory of Piombino: the Monastery of St. Quirico, the burial features, and the various excavation sites along the coastline of Baratti and on the surrounding hills.

A system of pathways runs through this archaeological complex: inside the park are thematic itineraries for visitors while outside the park, a network of trekking paths follows the historical routes of the promontory, such as the \textit{Via dei Cavalleggeri}.\textsuperscript{41}

Born of the intention to coordinate the complexity and multiple scales of the transdisciplinary strategic guidelines, the masterplan has been configured as an instrument to orient the planned interventions in time and space. This will be done according to a long-term strategic vision which intends to integrate the conservation objectives of the archaeological patrimony with those of the landscape management of the park.

To provide these orientations and create coherence between the various sectors of the park’s territory, a series of differentiated plans have been produced to offer programmers direction and guidelines at the various scales of the plan and project.

Firstly, a strategic overall view of the entire landscape system of the Gulf (1:7,500) in two different temporal phases orients the categories of interventions inside the thematic and archaeological areas, and on the network of internal and external connections (also in relation to soft mobility), proposing differentiated options for the treatment and potential extension of the margins of the park.\textsuperscript{42}

For the various thematic landscape ambits, a series of interventions have been proposed, essentially involving three different kinds of action: 1. restoration and active conservation of the archaeological patrimony; 2. landscape configuration and management of the vegetation;
fig. 7 Masterplan for the landscape of the Archaeological Park of Baratti Populonia: overall plan (from the Masterplan’s dossier 2017).
3. communication and translation of the archaeological, botanical and historical contents. There are various design intensity gradients for each type of intervention, corresponding to the level of professional and specialized competence/expertise necessary for the design and construction phases.

A series of planning documents extended to the open space scale (1: 2,500, 1:1,000; 1:500) for the areas of greater complexity and importance (like the acropolis, with the Roman forum area) completes the repertoire of maps so as to provide ground planimetric schemes to support future definitive and executive project designs.

Lastly, to give substance and concreteness to the orientation provided by the masterplan, and to allow its immediate application in ordinary management and extraordinary maintenance, an operative dossier has been prepared at a detailed scale comprising a series of project files on the architectural and landscape systems and on the various materials, including costs and technical characteristics.

6 Cultivating Biodiversity

Due to its complexity, diachrony, and biological and temporal diversity, for the last twenty years the territory of Populonia and Baratti has been an ideal laboratory where exploration and theoretical and practical experimentation have been developed regarding the complicated interactions generated between landscape and archaeological remains.

The working guidelines proposed by the masterplan indicate another possible vocation for this exceptional landscape involving experimentation on the management of greenery in an archaeological environment: if well conceived, it might contribute to the conservation of the existing historical elements and improve biodiversity and cultural accessibility, besides of course constituting an important ecological aid to bettering the environment.

Considering the consolidated symbiosis of landscape and archaeological features characterizing the park, particular attention has been paid to the integration and management of compatible greenery in order to conserve and increase resilience against hydrogeological risks and reduce fragility, in its broadest sense, related to increased access and usage.

In general, the shared objective of the team of designers was to work with local botanical species and associations wherever possible to optimize the ecological compatibility of the interventions and economic sustainability, and to save on resources.

The landscape integration of demarcation and fencing was realized with a differentiated polyspecific hedge repertoire of thorny evergreen species, as well as with morphological modelling and ha-ha.

Ground protection was considered to be among the essential objectives: in the zones at a higher risk of being washed away/eroded and subject to issues related to visiting, carpeting with a mantle of vegetal “cushions” composed of thorny xerophile species with reduced

43 See the entire Materiali per Populonia series, published by Edizioni all’Insegna del Giglio, as of 2002, and later by ETS.
44 Among the evergreen species are: Pistacia lentiscus, Rhamnus alaternus, Myrtus communis, Phyllirea latifolia, Phyllirea angustifolia, Arbutus unedo; among thorny species: Prunus spinosa, Crataegus monogyna, Paliurus spina-christi.
45 The so-called “ha-ha” is a morphological delimitation device used mainly in the construction of landscape parks starting from the early 18th century.
water necessities was proposed, which would function as natural deterrents. Moreover, a suggestion was made to use ground-covering species with a low danger index, such as *Lippia repens* and *Lobularia maritima*, to denote ongoing research activity and thus both indicate and protect the areas awaiting excavation.

Several escarpments inside the park needed stabilizing and consolidation to avoid further rilling, erosion and landsliding issues. For these situations, the masterplan proposed initial morphological remodelling followed by consolidation, by firstly introducing pre-seeded grass matting containing fertilizers and granular improvers and subsequently planting stabilizing tree species such as *Teucrium fruticans*, *Spartium junceum*, and *Myrtus communis*.

Vegetation has also been used as a support to increase physical and cultural accessibility to monuments by eliminating restrictive barriers and substituting them with living devices and also reproducing *in vivo* arrangements that aid understanding of the ancient spatial logic, such as the garden of the *Roman Domus* placed on the acropolis.47

The basic idea was to suggest a possible spatial organization of the original, no longer detectable, garden. Thus the garden space was envisaged based on numerous literary and iconographic sources referring...
Among the rich variety of examples we can recall the wall-garden of Livia’s Villa, the Domus of Farnesina and paintings of Casa del Bracciale d’oro, in Pompeii. For the bibliography among a huge repertory: Pierre Grimal, I giardini di Roma antica (Milan: Garzanti, 1990); Aude Gros de Beler, Bruno Marmiroli, and Alain Renouf, Jardins et paysages de l’Antiquité, Grèce et Rome (Arles: Actes Sud 2009).

As for the type of vegetation, to be contained in removable vases to avoid problems in the underlying layers, and to allow removal in case of necessity or critical environmental problems, the choice was oriented towards the botanical species of the Flora known and used in Roman times. This has been amply documented by Giacomo Boni and researchers such as Anna Maria Ciarallo, and among these preference fell on local or naturalized species compatible with the area’s arid climate, characterized by marine winds, and offering easier maintenance.

7 A First Step of Implementation
The final planning intervention involving the Park, currently in the process of being implemented, is in line with the strategic content proposed by Masterplan.

The Executive project for interventions of active conservation and valorization of the archaeological and landscape heritage of the Park of Baratti and Populonia proposes measures to conserve the archaeological and
landscape heritage, and a series of coherent and integrated operations to valorize the features present in the park, and to narrate them to visitors.

This project works on the two main contexts, the historical and the thematic ambits, which are reflected in the two differing visitor sectors: the area of the acropolis and the area of the necropolises in the lower town. Here, the project has been particularly focused on a series of infrastructure and functional interventions more connected to an improvement in management, devoting special attention to the component of vegetation, which is one of the most changing features of this landscape, but also one of the most fundamentally defining, at the same time.\(^{51}\)

As regards the acropolis, the project sets out to conduct a general reconfiguration of the open spaces that make up the ambit of the visit, supplementing the current existing routes and itineraries. This will necessarily be accompanied by major restoration and conservation works, to supplement the work done thanks to previous funding.

For the ambit of the necropolises, the predominant aspects of the project which is underway are related to the reconfiguration of the area of the entrance to the park, to make it more functional as regards an understanding of the services and the system of paths and roads, and supplementing a number of sections of fencing from the point of view of landscaping.

With a view to assuring continuity and coordination between the research phases, the restoration phase, and the subsequent valorization of the archaeological features, the interventions that are envisaged have been drawn up by planning staff in constant synergy with the authorities responsible for protection and conservation, with the team from the Universities of Siena and Toronto, and in coordination with the Parchi Val di Cornia company.\(^{52}\)

## 8 Outputs and Research Prospects

This paper has proposed an innovative and integrated approach in the protection/planning/design/management of a Mediterranean archaeological rural landscape, trying to explore the concept of cultivation through the illustration of an applied case study in southern Tuscany.

The *cultivating* approach seemed particularly appropriate to express the continuity of an integrated and holistic process, in which planning, design and management are coherent parts of the same vision, as recalled by the guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention, which state that: “Landscape action is a combination of protection, management and planning conducted over one and the same territory.”\(^{53}\)

*Cultivating* is also an appropriate term to take the care of living elements into account within the planning of a territory over time, aiming to increase landscape complexity, resilience, biodiversity and temporal diversity.
Indeed, working on the landscape of an archaeological site means understanding, accompanying or managing processes and dynamics, according to multiple existing temporalities (those of the various archaeological documents and those of the present, spontaneous or cultivated plant component).

As experimented in the Populonia and Baratti case study, a territorial landscape masterplan envisioned and drawn up by a transdisciplinary group seems the most appropriate tool to orient transformations over time in such a complex and integrated environment. In this way a coherent and strategic vision can be developed and heritage protection and territorial project can be harmonized through diverse time and space scales of intervention.

Moreover, it seems important to highlight how, in the active conservation of heritage (archaeological remains, but also historical landscape features), protection, management and *mise en valeur* are part of the same integrated vision which has to be continuously nourished by archaeological and applied research, in a sort of virtuous cycle and mutual exchange.

We would like to close this contribution with a wish.
That same strategic coherence that led to the construction of the project of the Val di Cornia Parks System, today should be read as a first piece that laid the methodological foundations for a further phase of *cultivation*. Indeed, just as a landscape whose layers continuously change according to natural and/or human factors, those called to administer and manage the territory in the public interest must also be able to renew their visions and goals according to new *quality objectives*. 