

Abstract

Lioni is a small town located in Alta Iprinia that presents two orders of problems: a slow and constant depopulation and an urban-naturalistic configuration that has not been resolved since the violent earthquake in 1980. Both issues can dialogue to find a valid solution capable of reactivating a territory in decline. Lioni extends behind a linear system of natural and anthropic infrastructures which characterises its geomorphology. In the design strategy for the re-activation of Lioni, we choose to work on the edge of the city, imagined as an infrascap - between the naturalscape and the urbanscape - that becomes an innovative river park. The project of the "Ofanto INNOV-AGRI-CULTURALRIVER PARK" defines a new porous system that blurs the physical limit of Lioni, in a frame of public spaces with landscape qualities, thus drawing "places of convergence" for multi-actor actions aimed at the social re-appropriation of abandoned territories, through the creation of collaborative agreements relating to the management of common goods, to the growth of widespread forms of circular economy.

Keywords: edge, infra-scape, recycle.

Introduction

On the Santangiolese side of Ofanto, in the Monti Picentini Regional park in Alta Iprinia, there is a place called Li Liuni - «qui vulgariter nuncupatur Li Lyuni», one of the most severely hit centres by the earthquake in 1980. A little city with two types of problems which, although belonging to two distinct areas, can actually dialogue in an attempt to find a valid solution for both, becoming an instrument of territorial reactivation.

On one side there is the plight of depopulation, due to historical, political, and economic reasons, on the other there is the urban-naturalistic configuration where city and countryside sharply counteract without any apparent connection.

Depopulation, abandonment, accessibility: about urban readout

Lioni, in fact, extends close to a linear system of natural and anthropic infrastructures which characterizes its geomorphology: the Ofanto river, territorial director of the town's development, included in a large agricultural belt limited to the south by the highway 7 Via Appia (SS 7) and to the north from the Avellino

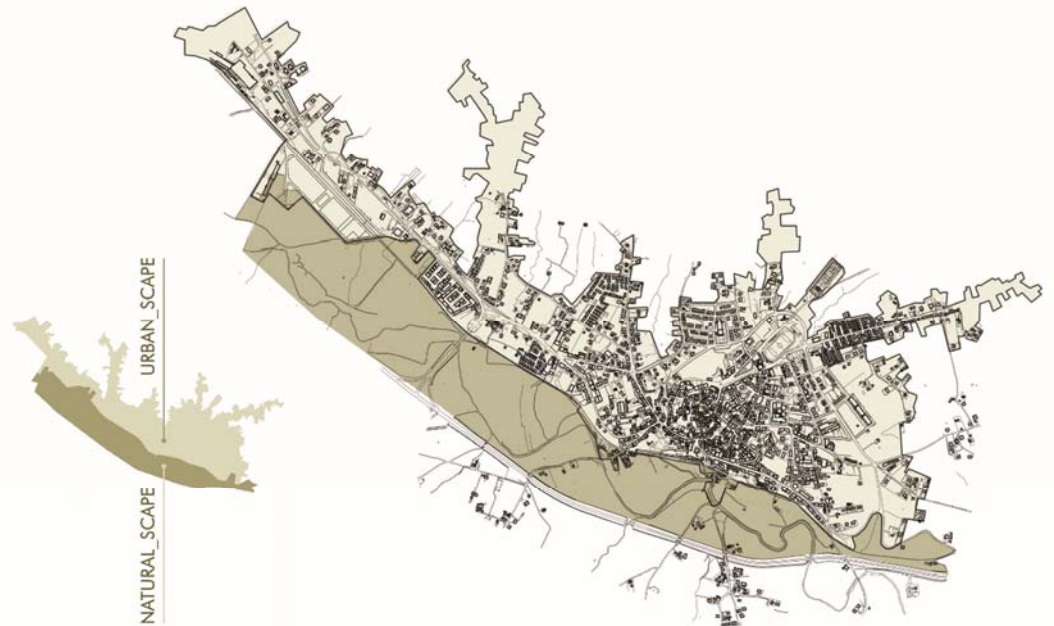


Fig. 1. Critical analysis of Lioni's natural and anthropic morphology. Identification of the two opposing territorial areas separated by the railway system, an urban one (Urban_scape) and a naturalistic one (Natural_scape) (source: authors' elaboration!).

- Rocchetta Sant'Antonio railway line, the real physical limit of the city.

Due to the earthquake, almost the entire building heritage of Lioni was destroyed or seriously damaged, consequently leading to its depopulation and gradual loss of the socio-morphological identity of the city. Despite the serious loss of life, Lioni's population managed to react, albeit with difficulty, through a slow, social, and economic reconstruction, still in progress, which makes Lioni a reference point for all the neighbouring centres. The policies for reactivating local economy and production processes, however, have not completely healed the wounds of the city, linked in particular to the growing loss of a young part of the population - due to the difficulties of communication, connection and accessibility with the rest of the territory Campania, it chooses to abandon these inner territories. As often happens, in cases of partially abandoned centres, the problem of "refunctionalization" is accompanied by the "restocking", catalysis linked to both economic and meta-economic factors.

It therefore appears necessary starting from the search for attraction elements for the development of the so-called "local informal economy" and the parallel promotion of meta-

economic preconditions, aimed at improving the quality of life. These elements can only derive, however, from a careful reading of the territory and from a critical interpretation of the peculiar characteristics of the urban, social, and naturalistic fabric of the centre.

If it is true that the reading of a city takes place through its signs, it is necessary to make its parts recognizable at every level of interpretation: in the specific case of Lioni (Fig. 1), the limit of infrastructure, intended both as a border and as an impediment to the normal enjoyment of spaces, identifying a landmark, that is, a distinctive sign that characterizes the landscape in a unique way and from any point of view.

Waiting spaces

In Lioni, moreover, it is evident that the city-countryside combination is the fundamental and founding of its own structure (Fig. 2): to imagine its future development and its real rebirth, the decoding of the creative force existing in nature and in the river landscape that surrounds the urban system, through its proportions, its rhythms, its analogies, is necessary to understand its 'formative energy'. The city-nature or city-country dichotomy, in fact, has always been a recurring topic in the

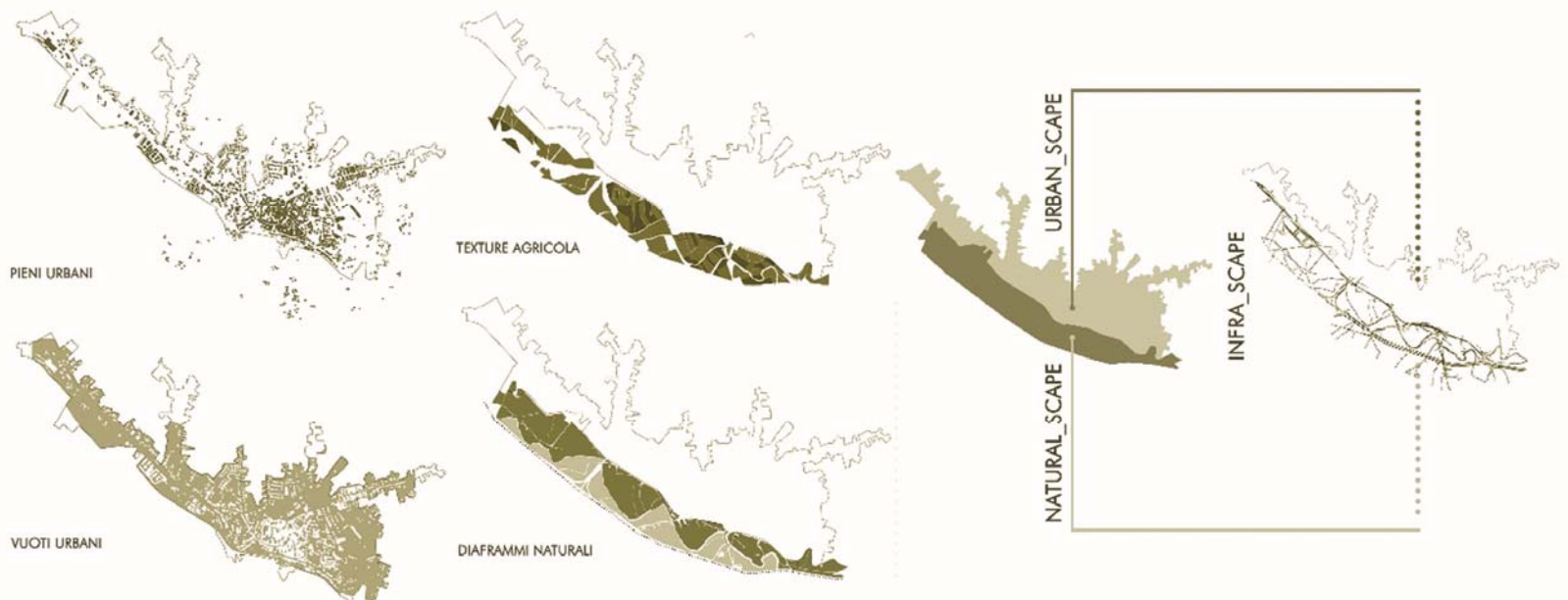


Fig. 2. Morphological analysis of Urban_scape and Natural_scape with the definition of a third type of landscape, the Infra_scape.

western culture, born with the phenomenon of urbanization, intended as the broadest sense of expansion of the controlled territories. Nature is never seen as a mere plant element and cities are no longer only simple agglomerations of buildings, but it is the relationship between the two parts that defines the places, reaching the genesis of the landscape.

Natural environment and artificial environment interact according to an intent of domination over the territory, characterizing its image. However, it is quite understandable that nature is often the one to submit to human development, leading to the creation of those spaces defined by Gilles Clément as “residues” [1], ie land “waiting for a destination” or “waiting for the execution of suspended projects”, exactly like in the linear system of anthropic and naturalistic entities mentioned above in Lioni, which is placed “in the middle” between the city and the infrastructure.

Observing them on a wider spectrum, these “residual spaces” determine the interruption of territorial continuity, revolutionizing weights, and measures between the parts: the man-made infrastructures - the railway section and the Lioni state road - have the better of the natural ones - river landscape -, making them a backside for the territory and clearly separating them from the city. The re-functionalization of the river and agricultural naturalistic belt of Lioni, through the reactivation of the railway section at full capacity, with the inclusion of productive activities aimed at the conscious and sustainable enhancement of local natural, material, and intangible resources, would therefore guarantee territorial continuity and an urban and landscape evolution that operates on these “waiting spaces” as torn flaps to mend. The intent is therefore to reactivate these “non-places” that are “in the middle” and bring them “to the centre”, and according to Susan Sontag’s reflection [2]: “When we say in the middle, we think of someone who wants to remain equidistant from certain choices because he is afraid of taking positions. But being at the centre - isn’t it interesting? The whole story

changes. (...) Being at the centre is opposed to being marginal, and you don’t want to be on the edge of your own consciousness, or your own experience or your own time”.

In this way, bring to the centre of attention those pieces of the city that blend in the confusion of urban discourse and that have a potential for centralization that is still not expressed, reinterpreting the reading given: to do this it is possible to act through the identification of an ecological network which, starting from the fragmented nature of the areas, aims to restore continuity. The general approach to identifying this system is based on the interpretation of the environment, on the recognition of its social value, as well as on its conservation and enhancement through a series of promotion of protective actions.

Infra-scape: the landscape between anthropic and natural infrastructure

One of the main causes of the creation of urban waste is certainly the intersection of the existing city with man-made infrastructure. In fact, transport networks which are built on an already consolidated urban fabric not only distort the connections that have already been established between the parties, but often

manage to place an unbridgeable distance between places. Each type of infrastructure defines a different removal: leveled transport networks establish a clear gap between the spaces which can only be overcome with works in the elevated or underpass; on the contrary, the high infrastructures affect the livability of the territory below the level of the railway or road building, decreasing the active participation in the urban context. From a landscape point of view, the transport networks are configured as static and massive elements, quite intrusive, which do not establish relationships with the elements at its edges - as walls divide continuous spaces, which can be reunited only if these walls are not considered as elements of separation, but as solutions of union. The infrastructures themselves can be considered a dynamic element by changing the point of view. In fact, those who use the city and the landscape through transport, named as travellers, perceive places in rapid succession; the lived environment is not unique, but composed of a multitude of places continuously crossed. Everything that Kevin Lynch analyzed in 1964 from the motorist’s point of view in *The View from the Road* [3] can be applied to all those who travel with any type of transport: the



Fig. 3. Identification of the intervention area in the diaphragm between the railway line and the Ofanto River.

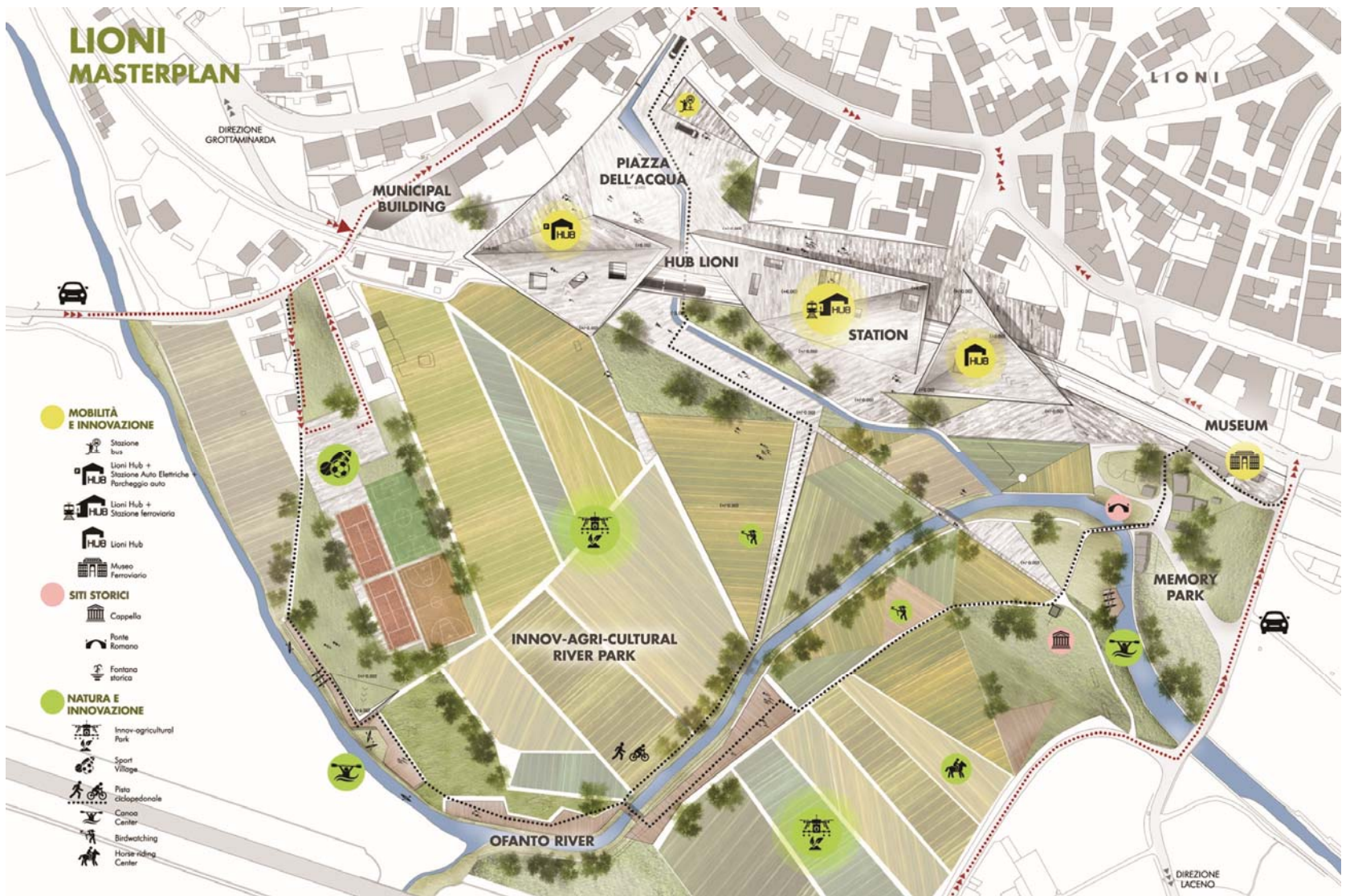


Fig. 4. Masterplan: the new system of urban public spaces, the three soil-volumes of the LIONI HUB and the Innov-Agri-Cultural River Park.

sense of movement, rhythm and space alters depending on speed, which, although varying according to the type of vehicle chosen, remains much higher and more sustained than that of those who enjoy the city as part of a resident community. Using a play on words, what is called landscape by inhabitants, it is called passage by travelers. If we speak, therefore, of space as a practice of places and not of the place, it means a double displacement: travellers' of course, but in parallel also landscapes' of which he always has partial visions. The journey builds a fictitious relationship between gaze and landscape. It is therefore necessary that architecture becomes an image of places where it is only possible to perceive them, making a network of services a work of art and an experience to follow it. Natural infrastructure, for its part, is inextricably linked to concept of ecological network at the geographical scale: there are ecological networks of a large area, based on elements on a regional scale, which interconnect on a national and transitional scale, and ecological networks at a local level. The latter generally consist of four elements: central areas -core areas-, with high naturalness which are already or may be subject to protection; protection zones -buffer zones-, or transition zones, located around high natural areas in order to guarantee the

indispensable graduality of the habitats; connection bands -ecological corridors- linear and continuous landscape structures, of various shapes and sizes, which connect the highly natural areas to each other and represent the key element of ecological networks, as they allow the mobility of species and the genetic exchange, an indispensable phenomenon for maintaining biodiversity; point or "sparse" areas -stepping zones-, small surface areas which, due to their strategic position or their composition, represent important elements of the landscape to support species in transit on a territory or host particular microenvironments in critical habitat situations. In the case of river landscapes as for Lioni, there is a mix of genres: rivers are certainly core areas, but due to their morphology they are configured as corridors. They facilitate the evolution of new dynamic relationships between the components but because of their urban development they have mostly lost the function of natural infrastructures in favour of those built by men. In this sense, the landscape project must become central again because it builds new identities for communities and quality open spaces for socialization: in relation to the size and mutation of the physical space shaped by agricultural practices, to the economic value of food production in relation to fertility the soil, the availability of resources, the processes of

transformation and distribution of food, the location of the production places with respect to their consumption; in relation to biological, pedological, hydrogeological and phytopathological analysis, through which we shape a process of environmental sustainability to promote and conserve biodiversity in relation to ecological values; in relation to adaptive methods to imagine open spaces according to events caused by climate changes.

Starting from the margin: designing diaphragms to regenerate the city

In the light of the previous reflections, the project for Lioni, developed by the writer, envisages the creation of an innovative river-agricultural park (Fig. 3, Fig. 4) aimed at the presence of innovative and specialized crops, a place for research, experimentation, and production.

It is proposed, in the first instance, the redefinition of the arrival to the city of Lioni from the west front, through the SS400, with the creation of a new public space in front of the existing municipal building and a HUB that incorporates the railway section, modeling itself as element halfway between the landscape and the city. From the new square, users coming by car will be able to access the new car park located in the first building of the LIONI HUB and proceed on foot or alternatively

rent the electric cars stationed there. Access to the city with the railway line does not undergo changes in its route: the trains that will arrive in the city will pass through the buildings that make up the LIONI HUB (Fig. 5).

The three volumes of the HUB are presented as large, perforated shelters, below which transparent volumes house the various commercial activities and services designed to encourage new entrepreneurship aimed at innovative and creative sectors. The HUB system crosses the beams of the tracks, effectively mending the urban area (Urban_scape) with the agricultural one (Natural_scape) and presenting itself as a game of artificial soils which, at different heights, create new public spaces aimed at the community and new crossings and connections with the landscape.

The PIAZZA DELL'ACQUA (Fig. 6) defines a new public space for the city, thus determining a dynamic image of access to the city of Lioni: by recovering the layout of an ancient canal - now underground - the square is characterized as a place for sharing, transit, and break.

The railway station merges with the new HUB, presenting itself as a piece of a single large infrastructural system that connects the city with the river landscape, crossing the bundle of tracks. In front of the station and in connection with the city center through, it was decided to reconfigure a real PIAZZA DELLA STAZIONE, the beating heart of the infrastructural system on the urban side (Urban_Scape). The third volume of the HUB also overlooks the new square, a place of exchange and ideas, which, like the first three, crosses the tracks and allows the arrival through its walkable roof to the area of the river-agricultural park. From the HUB volume system, it will be possible to cross the tracks and access the river-agricultural park through a series of paths and green spaces.



Fig. 5. LIONI HUB: the railway station and the relationship with the Picentini Mountains.



Fig. 6. PIAZZA DELL'ACQUA: the new square.

From here it will be possible to access, on the east front, the MUSEUM AGORÀ, a new parking area in front of the RAILWAY MUSEUM which will be built in one of the existing FS buildings along the track bundle.

The arrival in Lioni from the east front, via Via Ofanto, will allow the redefinition of a new city gate characterized by the presence of two ancient artifacts, the Hannibal Bridge (Fig. 7), and a small chapel. In this area - also reachable from the MUSEUM AGORÀ and from the HUB area through the construction of a new bridge over the Ofanto river - the project involves the creation of a MEMORY PARK (Fig. 8), with the enhancement of the historical presences and the green arrangement of the area, as well as a small square and a pier for mooring canoes.

From here, it will be possible to reach the large and innovative naturalistic, agricultural and sports park, INNOV-AGRI-CULTURAL RIVER PARK with a multidisciplinary and multifaceted character. The park extends in the area defined to the south by the Ofanto River and to the north by the railway bundle, and hosts activities mainly aimed at the innovation and design of resilient natural landscapes and permeable soils of high spatial and eco-systemic quality for the improvement of urban microclimatic conditions. Innovative cultivation methods (Fig. 9) will be envisaged, places for research, training, experimentation, and production, created with ephemeral and flexible architectures in relation to changing needs. The creation of nature paths and the related green sports activities (Fig. 10) will make it possible to bring back to life an effective connection between the city of Lioni, the neighboring landscape of the river area and the more distant landscape of the Picentini Mountains, allowing the activation of new points of view and previously unknown glimpses.



Fig. 7. MEMORY PARK and the ancient Hannibal Bridge.



Fig. 8. MEMORY PARK and the ancient chapel.

In turn, the park will be able to generate naturalistic, cultural and food tourism anchored to network strategies and incentives for forms of accommodation linked to recycling.

Conclusions

The strategies proposed to reactivate these spaces start from the margin: it is necessary to “recycle” the “edge” of the landscape for ecologically oriented, collective, social, and productive uses. Aim to rediscover the original natural vocation, avoiding other land consumption. It is necessary to ensure that what Gilles Clément defines the “natural genius” [4] is still expressed, which is the ability to naturally regulate their relationships in order to be able to develop the daily dynamics of evolution. However, the conception of “nature for nature itself” in an urban context is difficult to survive and, speaking of urbanised rural territories, the connection with agriculture is immediate. In a historical moment like this in which we try to enhance local resources, known as “zero-kilometer”, respect for the environment also passes through the return to the cultivation of products. Even if it is no longer possible to use the traditional system of the single garden in the enclosure of one's own home, it is once again possible to resort to the participation of the resident community. It is necessary to design “diaphragms”, transforming the naturalistic-infrastructural system that characterises the physical limit of the city of Lioni into a frame of public spaces of landscape quality for the identity, social life and security of territories and the safety of territories and community.

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Fig. 9. INNOV-AGRI-CULTURAL PARK: innovative cultivation methods.



Fig. 10. INNOV-AGRI-CULTURAL PARK: naturalistic promenades and sports routes.

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NOTES

1. The figures included in the paper are extracted from the project developed by engineer Chiara Barbieri and architect Giovanni Zucchi as part of the ARiNT Level II Master "Architettura e Progetto per le Aree Interne. Ri_Costruzione dei piccoli paesi" 2018-2019.