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COST Action Urban Agriculture Europe

STSM Urban agriculture and territorial heritage elements linked to urban functionalities in Seville's Metropolitan Area

Milan, Italy



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Acknowledgements

Confirmation by the host institution of the successful execution of the STSM

PURPOSE OF THE STSM

The STSMs proposed by Prof. Maria José Prados is “to identify and to analyze heritage elements related to urban agriculture in order to reinforce them as urban functions. The applicant will identify buildings and agricultural infrastructure (farmhouses as cortijos, haciendas, water-mills, wells, water-ditches, ...) considered as valuable heritage elements. Would analyze their relationship with spatial patterns of farms. And may make a set of proposals to promote the relationship between urban agriculture, heritage elements and citizens or visitors”.

Agriculture today is at the same time, as in every historical age, the holder of tangible and intangible heritage: the permanence of this heritage in urban and periurban areas is an opportunity to create new civilian gathering places through the transmission of history and culture related to agriculture.

The investigation will consider the evidence of spatial characters (enclosure, texture, emergency...) formed by historical features (paths, water systems, vegetation/crops, rural buildings_tangible heritage) and derived from common uses, techniques and knowledge (intangible heritage).

The evidence and frequency of historical characters gives the opportunity to formulate suggestions for the preservation and enhancement of landscape quality, taking into account that the transformation of places starts first from the respect of existent signs.

This aim of the STSM proposed by Maria José Prados fit very well with the researches I am conducting about agricultural heritage and the role of agriculture in enhancing cultural heritage.

It was also the opportunity to apply in Sevilla the methodology that I proposed for the UAE book chapter : “AgriCultural heritage. Spatial characters of historical features in Urban Agriculture”, in wg4 part.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE STSM

1_Before the arrival some case study of UA were selected consulting web sites and bibliography: they was decided according the proposal with Maria José Prados. More case studies were visited during the mission, emerged by talking with sevillan contacts at university, expecially Prof. Juan Francisco Ojeda Rivera and Prof. Raul Puente Asuero from the University of Pablo De Olavide. The examples concern farms and gardens where cultural and historical characters are taken into account .

The case studies visited are according the WG 1 division and following the WG 2 “continuum” proposal:

URBAN GARDENING

allotment gardens: Parque de Miraflores, Sevilla

informal gardes: Huerto del Rey Moro, Sevilla

agricultural park: Parque del Alamillo, Sevilla

URBAN FARMING

professional farming

Huerta Julian y Mari, Sevilla

Hacienda Los Molinos de Maestre, Dos Hermanas

Bodega Salado, Valencina

Bodega Gondora, Valencina

NON URBAN ADAPTED FARMING

Cortijo de Gambogaz, Camas

2_The most of documentation was collected via web: actual plan by google maps, historical plans and historical informations by database of Junta de Andalucia, urban plans by Ayuntamiento de Sevilla. In Sevilla

more historical maps concerning the land use were collected by the help of some historians and cartographer at the Junta de Andalucia, mainly Dr. Joaquim Cortes.

3_ An interview based on WG3 questionnaire but adapted to the aim of the present research was prepared, even if mostly semi directive interview was carried out. The key points checked were:

- a. Short description of the activity: history of the activity, people in charge, atc
- b. Markets channels: short commercialisation
- c. Activities in connection with the city
- d. Previous and actual use of each building and of the fields
- e. Relationship with the local people
- f. Historical and actual perception of the farm by the people
- g. Success factors/ Principal problems
- h. Future initiatives

4_ During the visit in situ a visual and sensory analysis was conducted elaborating sketches and taking photos: describe the spatial effects they produce: e.g. buildings forming a courtyard produce a sense of enclosure and a social effect of gathering; a tower is a landmark; an alignment of old trees accompany the walk and the view, etc

5_ Later at desk the evolution of buildings and land use was verified in the historical maps, let emerging the transformations and the permanencies of tangible and intangible heritage trough the help of the following analysis:

- diachronical analysis: fields/buildings farm relationship

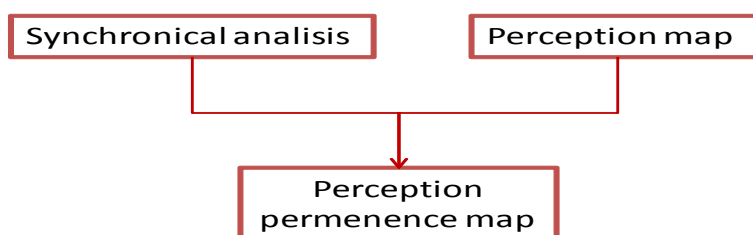
- synchronical analysis: permanencies of tangible heritage

Tangible permanencies of landscape: buildings, paths, water channels, forest/alignment tree/hedgerows, cultivated fields (possible crops, if recognizable)

Intangible permanencies of sense of place, social use, symbolic use, traditions...through the help of historic photos, postcards, pictures, films find in libraries, web sites

6_ Elaboration of landscape perception permanence map with the aim of show the origin of consolidated perception rely to tangible and intangible heritage. This map should help to identify the most relevant elements of built environment that are part of the consolidated memory and perception of people. The map put in evidence the main visual effects produced by historical elements and associate to each simbol a colour belonging to the age of permanencies . So the oldest permanencies are in red, the more recent permanencies are in yellow (synchronical analysis).

This analysis was carried out in the case studied considered more significatives.



7_ Analisis of recurrency of spatial effects

8_ Understand the reasons why they are more frequent and evident

9_ Give suggestions of preservation and enhancement of this characters in relation with the functions

Sevilla landscape characters

The work analysis has started with a general comprehension of main character of sevilla landscape and his historical evolution (thank to prof. Ovieda of University Pablo de Olavide) .

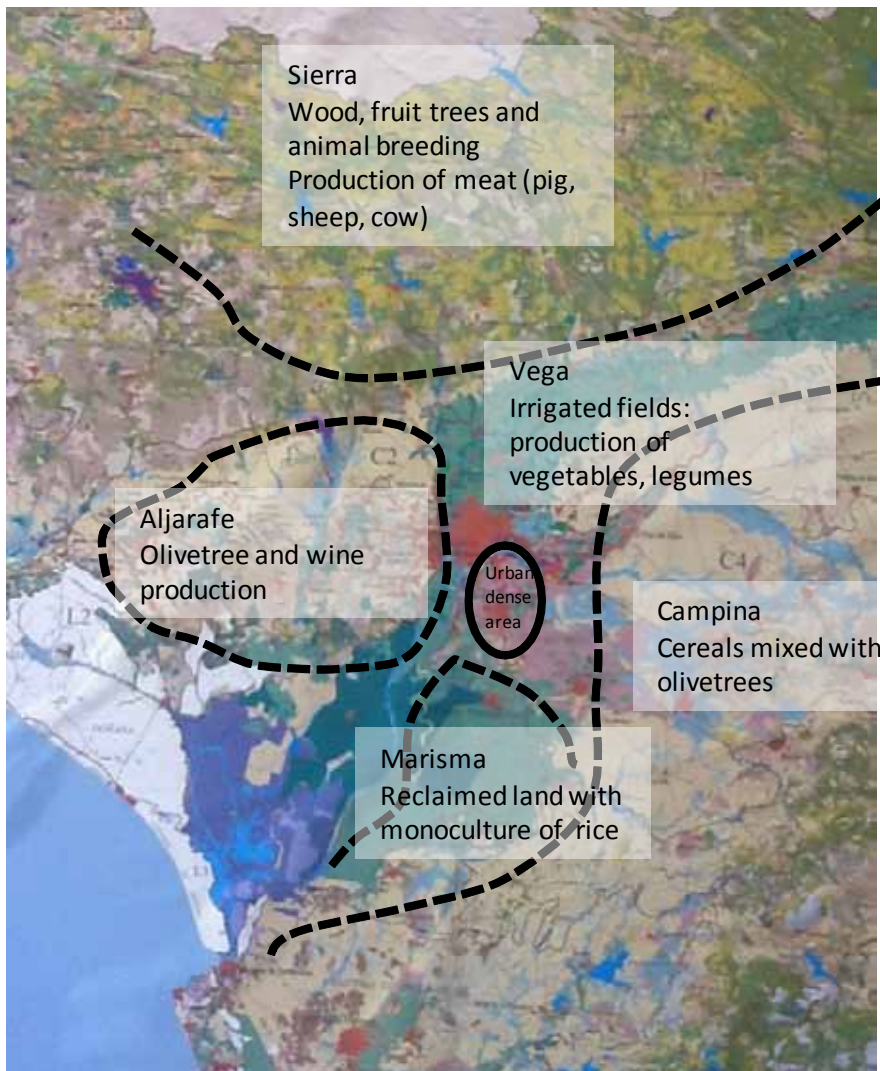
In Roma age the settlements were located on the Campina (dry land with small elevation) The south part of Sevilla (Hispalis roman name) was occupied by Lagustino lake and surrounded by marshlands. The economy was based on fishing. After the Visigot kindom, Al Andalus conquest Sevilla: in a first moment Al Andalus is depending from Damasco, then formed the independent Califato de Cordoba, an independent "taifa" and they start building the irrigation system.

In 1268 Cristian conquest Al Andaluz and in 1492 with the discovery of America, an intense commercialisation of also agrarian production (a third of export had to be local) began.

Most part of the land is property of Church, until 1855 whe bourgeoisie revolution happen and the land was expropriated.

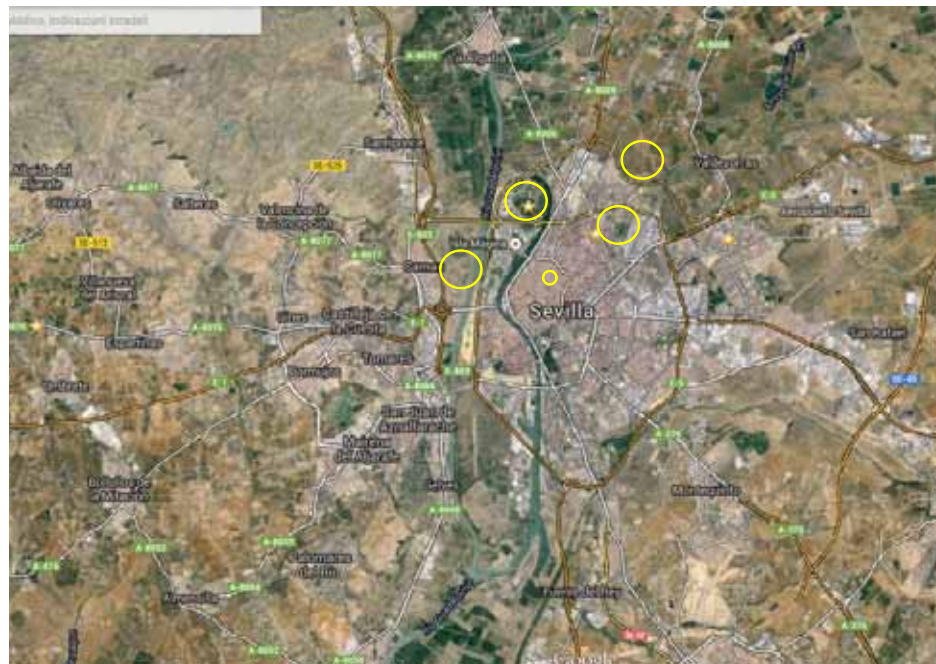
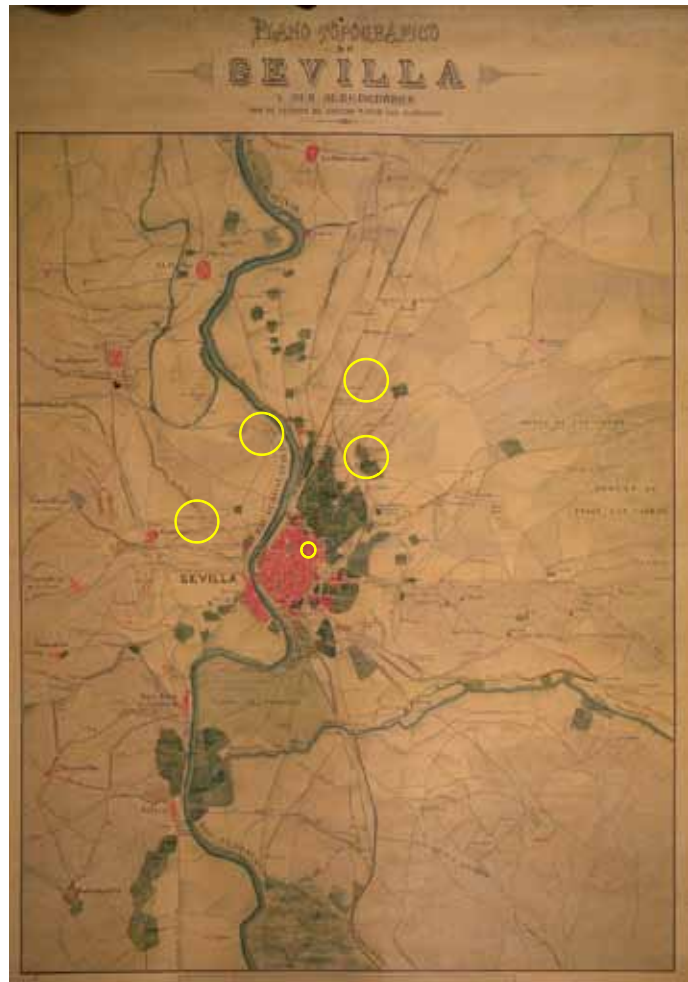
In 1861 the reclamation of marshland south Sevilla started: the State give land as usufruct to private foreigner companies (english, neder-land and french) and in 1939 State received back land.

Here follows a map with the main sevillan landscape and their agrarian productions related to city of Sevilla .



The farm type of Sevillan landscape are:

- cortijo: cereal exploitation with an average extension of 300/400 ha; a third are cereals, a third set aside (for pasture), a third ...; the rural buildings are disposed around a courtyard
- hacienda: big exploitation of olivetrees; 300/400 ha
- casa de campo: small/medium cereal exploitation
- casa de olivar : small/medium olivetree exploitation
- cerrado o rancho: big exploitation of animal breeding



Case studies analyzed in the historical map of 1862 and in the google map : the city expansion is well readable.

Case studies description and analysis

ALLOTMENTS GARDENS PARQUE DE MIRAFLORES, SEVILLA

The Parque de Miraflores include two historical farms: the hacienda de Miraflores and the Huerta de la Albarrana

Time line

Roman construction I-II a.c

Arabian Torre Almonade, first modern age

XV-XVII many nobles families: buildings + orchards

1689 Jesuit ownership: buildings + olive trees + cereals + orchards with a part of fruit trees + waterwheel

1767 ownership of Duque de Alba

1930 decadence of the olive mill

End '60 beginning '70 construction of social habitat; 1962 Plan General de Ordenación Urbana classified the area as urban park

1983 constitution of Committee in favour of of Miraflores pedagogical Park in order to develop a social cultural program: remodelling of land, plantation of trees. The Committee send to the City Council documentation on the archaeological and historical remains that exist in the area practically unknown to date, with the request of being integrated of part as the labelling as historical and artistic interest site, for their great educational value. The citizens themselves require the administration to take steps to preserve their cultural heritage.

Beginning of the Escuela Taller de Miraflores y el Programa Huerta las Moreras and start of a restoring program of heritage site in the park; allotments gardens are established

1996 : the ensemble of historical and cultural rests of the farm is declared Bien de Interés Cultural and the following year also the historical bridge is restored

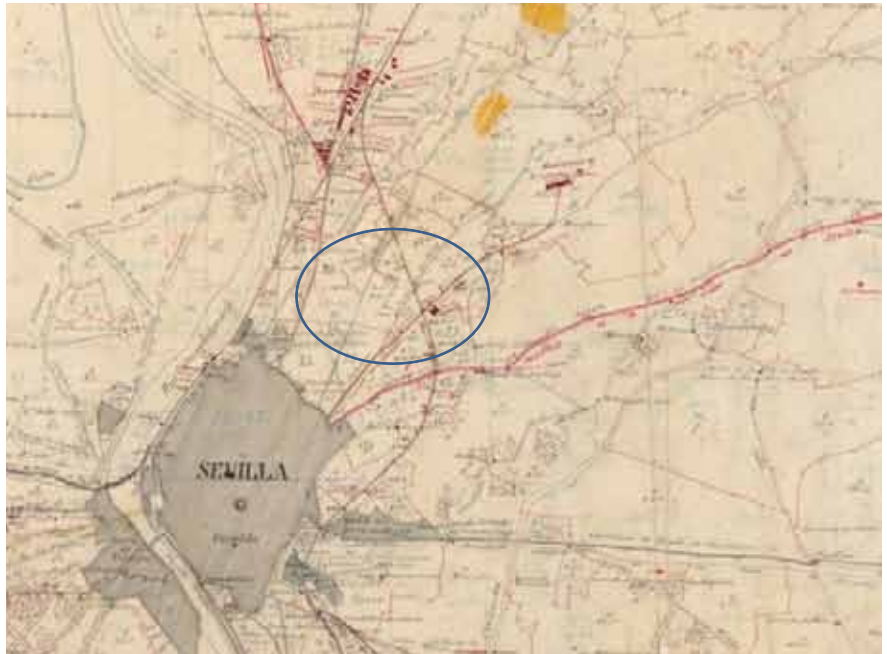
Activities of Comité Pro Parque

- pedagogical gardens
- pedagogical itinerary
- allotments gardens



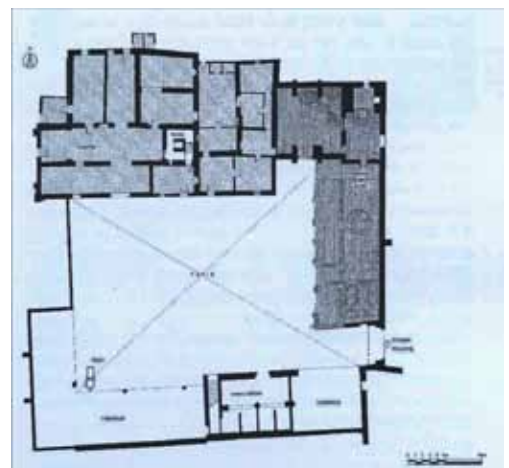


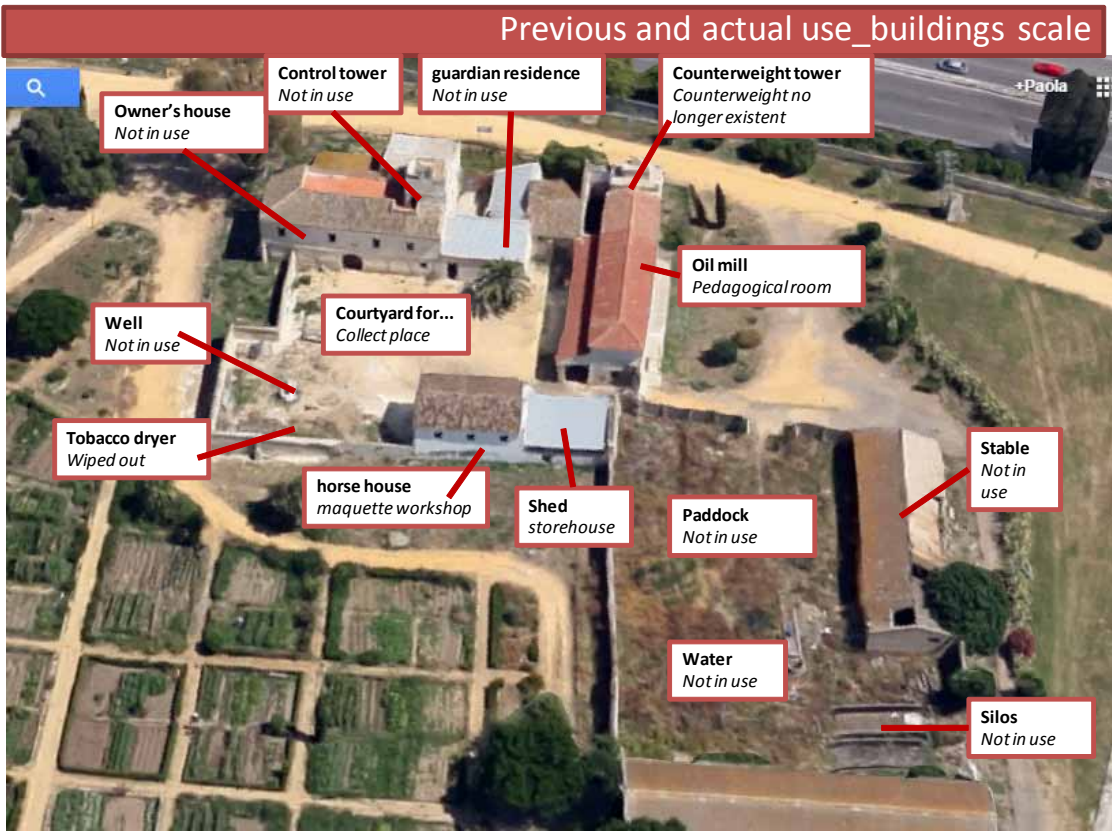
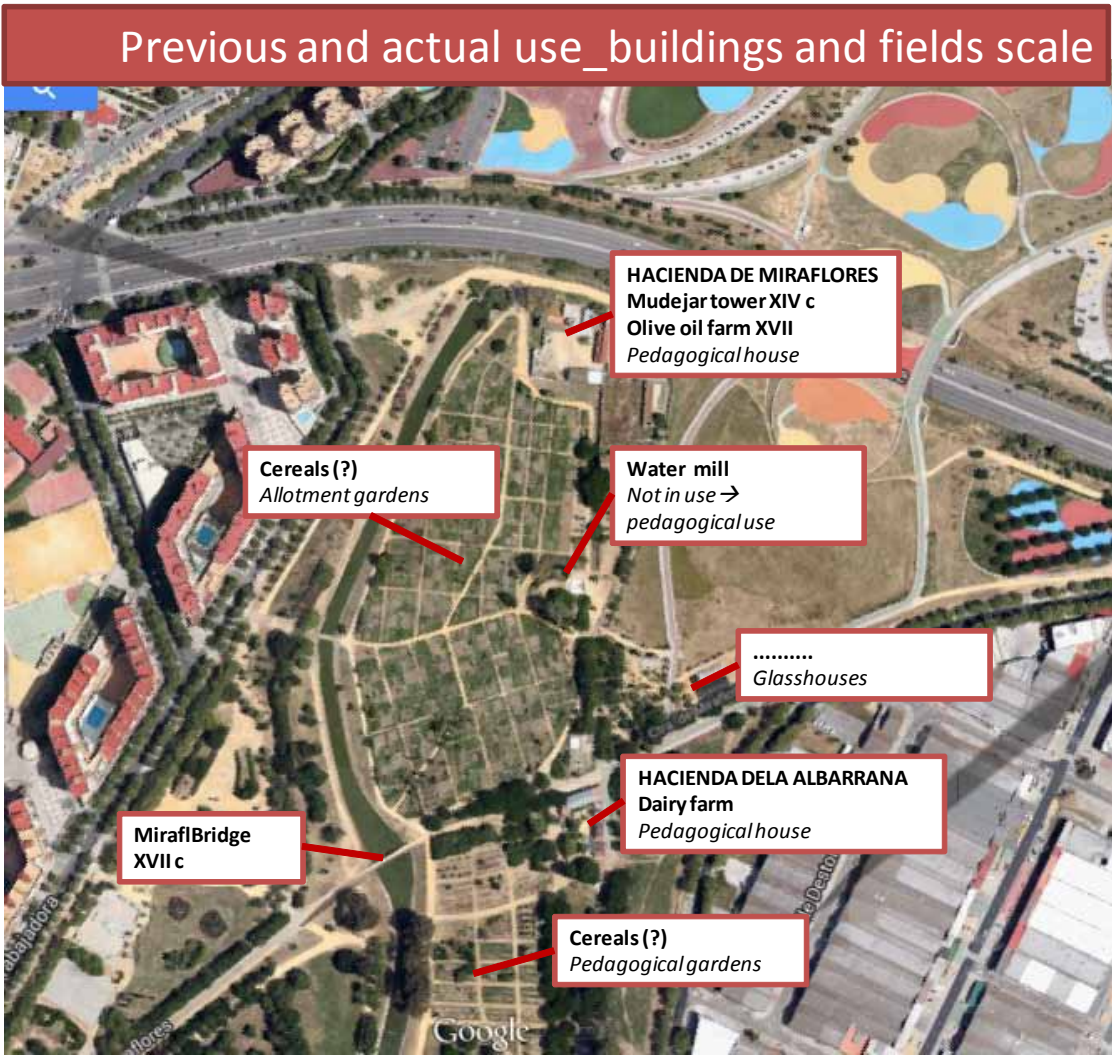
- work insertion
- Social perception (event)
- Tomatoes celebration
- Tomatoes harvest in July
- Oil harvest in November

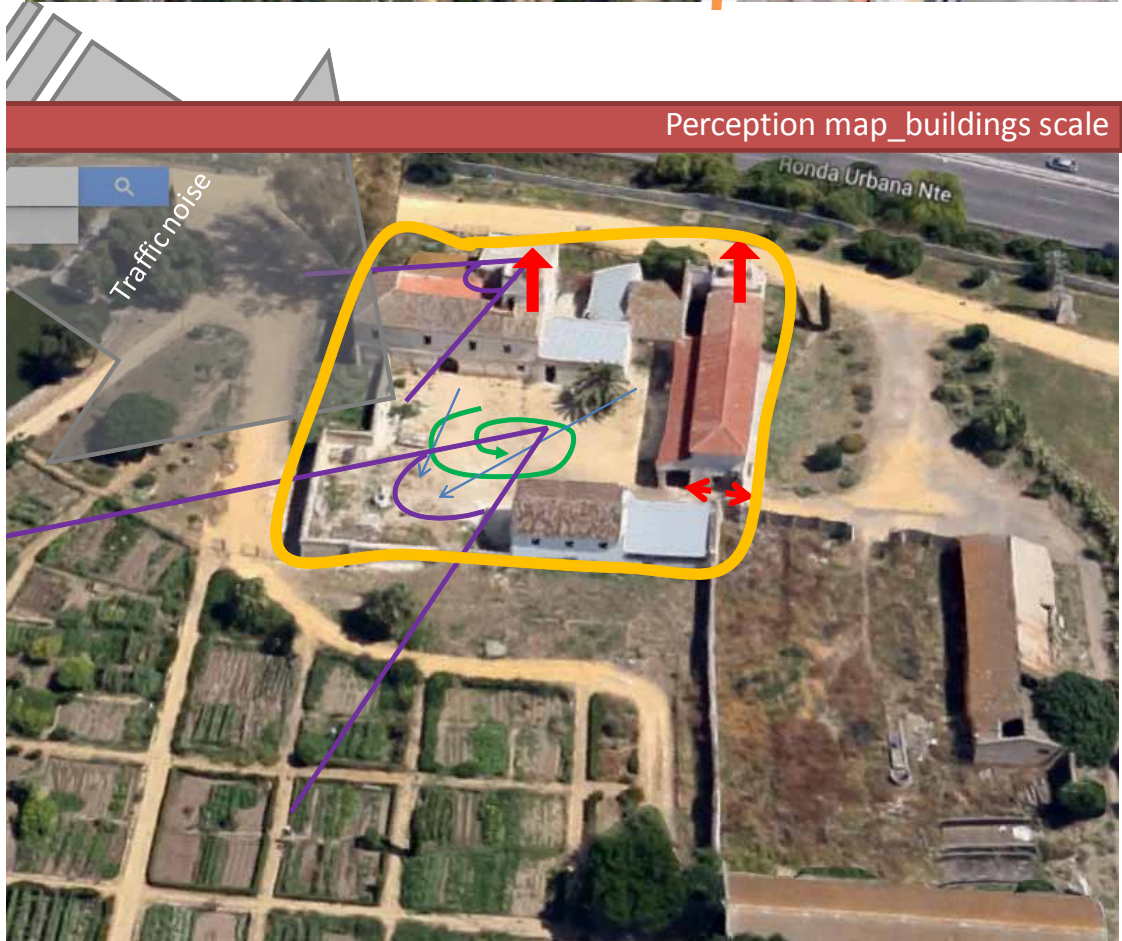


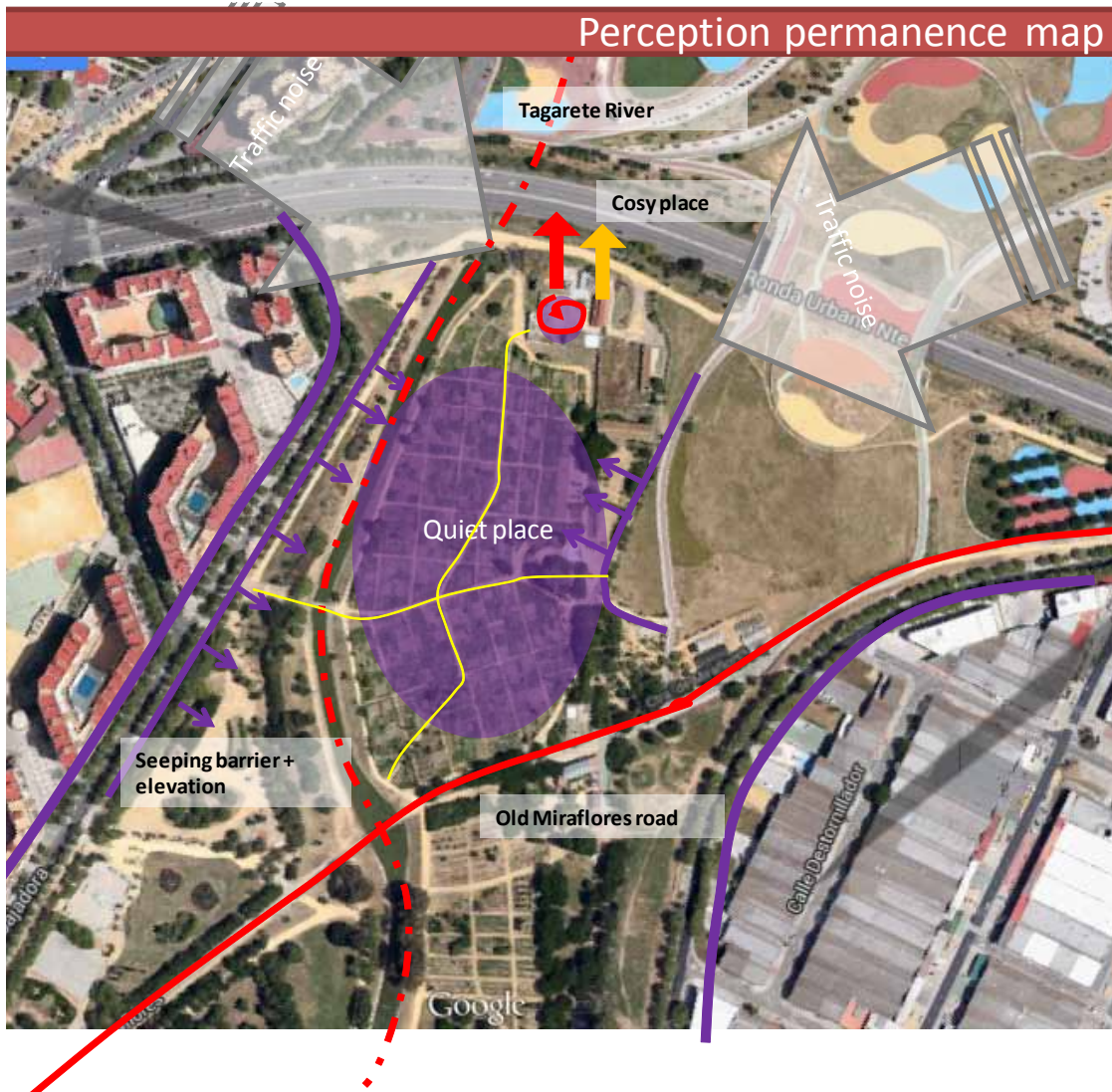
Seville, landuse map 1873

The cultivations in Miraflores farm were vegetables, and legumes permanent irrigated (RC regadio constante + HH hortalizas, hilaras y legumbres)











URBAN PARK PARQUE DE ALAMILLO, SEVILLA

The reference to Cervantes is also written in a panel at one of the entrance of the parks.

First map citing Alamillo site dated 1757, plan of the sevilla boundaries.

Old connections: vereda del alamillo and Cordel de Gambogaz, old food road to bring animals from the countryside to sevilla passing though Monastery of Cartuja and then to Triana gate.

XIX c. "One of the richest part of the surroundings of Sevilla, rich in mandarinos" historian said

1870 first toponimous Huerta del Alamillo (farm+garden)

1873 Non irrigated fields, with rotation of wheat, barley and rye

1926 Alamillo is a property system of 18 farms owned by José Garcia Rodrigez, El algabeno

1947 became property of last son José Garcia Carranza (total prop-erti 300 ha)

Activities

- orange tree cultivation
- public space for events indoor and outdoor
- urban park ("english style")
- plots rental for professional horticulture (social insertion)



Historical social perception

- El Alamillo: a place very rich in fish cited by monks in the XV century,

"te suplican que esta tarde/alla cuando el sol no arda, y hiere el rayo sencillo/en el famoso Alamillo/ hagar de tu vida alarde" El Rufian dichoso of Cervantes 1587-1590,

"Aceitunas como el cuerpo, sabalos del Alamillo" a poetry of Lope de Vega (1562-1635),

a cronical of 1624 about the king Felipe IV,

"Alli en al Alamillo, donde se pescan los sabalos, albures y sollos" in a

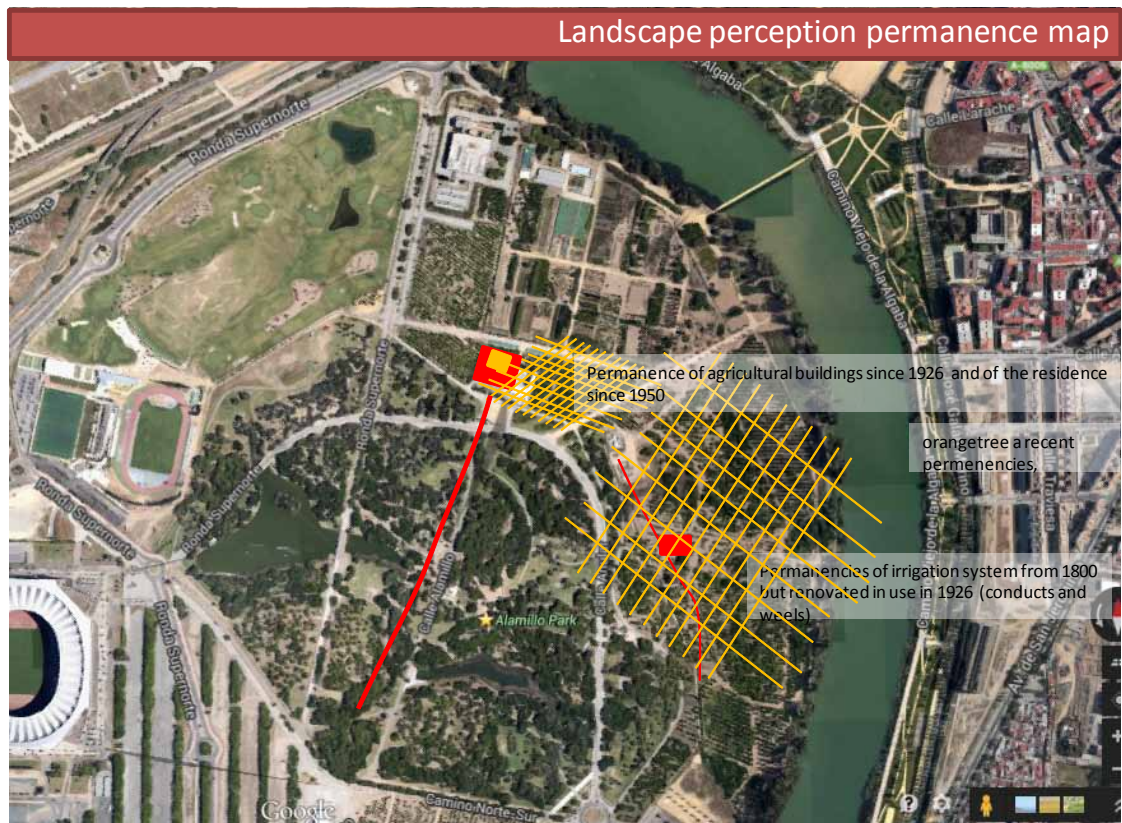


book of Velez de Guevara in 1647

Social perception

- sport place: media marathon in Isla de la Cartuja
- religious and symbolic place: passage of Macarena statue
- spare time: place of game and picnic. Open natural form spaces are preferred to cultivated place of orange tree (spring time)





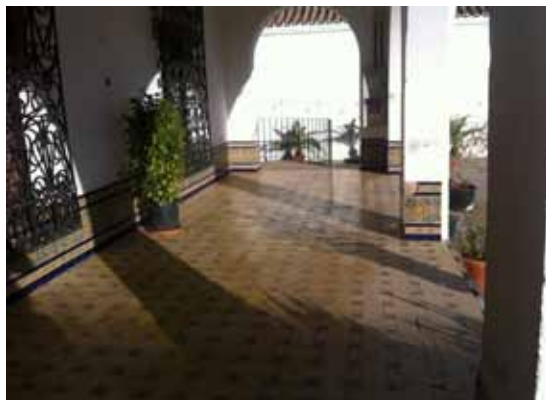
From 1926 oranges, citrus trees, (+ poplar and eucalyptus) olive trees, cereals. From 1950 mandarina and orange tree and cotton and tobacco + bee breedings



Previous and actual use_buildings scale



Permanencies of orangetree irrigation system





Threshing machine actioned by a steam motor, Gambogaz, 1880

NON URBAN ADAPTED FARM CORTIJO GAMBOGAZ, CAMAS

Originally an “alqueria” arabian farm, autonomous and self sufficient with orange, olive and figue production (also wine)

Cartuja S. Maria de la Cuevas: orange, olive, vineyard, cereals policy of a agricultural system by S.Bruno Monch

Confiscation process in XIX

1851 Antonio Maria de Orleans

Property of Ignacio Vasquez (1807-1873) 525 ha and centre of a agrarian system of farms located in the province of Seville, from the Sierra mountain to the campina.

He create in Gambogaz an experimental workshop modernising agriculture, introducing machines like dryer and threshing machine from England

He made up a machinary museum

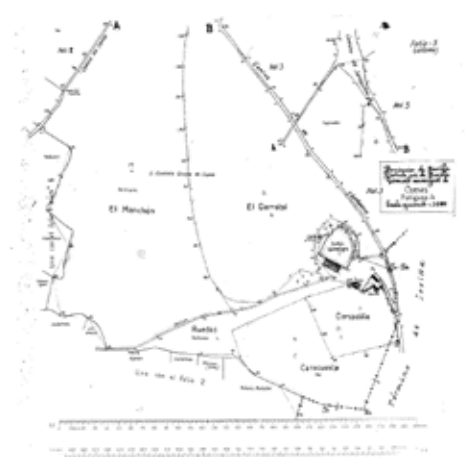
Creation of a School of agriculture in Gambogaz

Josè Vasquez inherit Gambogaz and the cereals land

1936 General don Gonzalo Queipo de lano

1976 Expropriation of part of land of the farm due to ACTUR and then due to Expo 1992

Division in many owners. and partially unused



Camas municipality map 1876 and Gambogaz farm 1961



City skyline is still far away (up)

Actual social use (below)

Different level of fields in order to limit water flows



URBAN ADAPTED FARM

LOS MOLINOS DE MAESTRE, DOS HERMANAS

Timeline

- presence of a medieval tower called Torre Mochuela
- end XVII c Diego Maestre, merchants with plamenca origin, found an hamlet and in 1724-1727 construction of second patio and trasformation from a farmstead to a oilmill; 300 aranzadas (measure unit) of cultivated land
- 1749 440 ha cultivated: 231 ha olive tree (mainly table olive tree for exportation to America), vineyard and pinewood (Cadaastre del Marques de la Ensenada)

Owner: Almudena Maestre Domecq. Forth generation of the same family owner.

Restaurated 15 years ago, from 2002 until 2009

Jury of Europa Nostra award 2010 mention "for the careful and gradual restoration that has made its owner of this estate of olive groves, built between XIV and XVII centuries and example of conservation of a monument that has remained since its founding in private hands" ..

Activities

96 ha olive oil tree (they are removing of three hundred century old olive table trees)

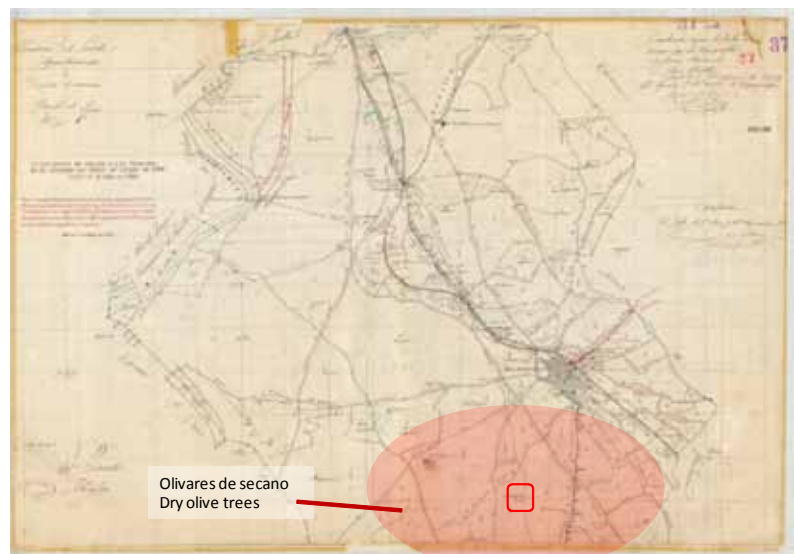
leek cultivation

rent of olive courtyard for event (buildings and open space)

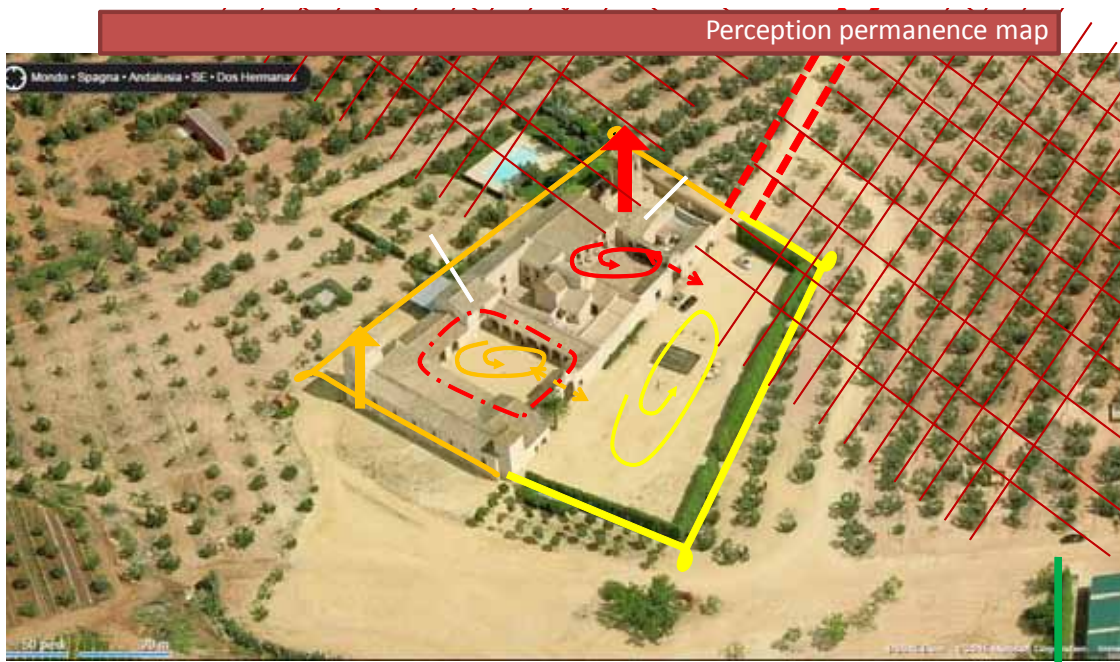
Social perception

"The table olive are no more rentable, we prefer olive oil tree" Maestre family





Dos Hermanas, landuse map 1876





URBAN ADAPTED FARM

BODEGAS GONGORA, VILLANUEVA DE ARISCAL

Timeline

1574 Foundation of the Hacienda S.Rafael; construction of an enormous oil press

1682 conversion of the farm from oil to wine production due to Don José de Góngora y Arando (from Hacienda to Bodega); market success for export to America (a third of cargo ship to America must be local product); 100 ha vineyard (or more) around the village of Villanueva;

1950 sell of 85 ha of vineyards

2015 three vineyards for 15 ha; later used also for wine, declared National Heritage; is functioning one a year for the mosto press; owner from seven generations

Actual activities (ev related to UA)

- production of special wine "chocolate wine"
- selling: direct sell 10%; 40% local and regional market (restaurants, hotel); 5% export out of Europe; 30% big market chain (Carrefour)
- rent of old cave for events (once a month approx)

Social perception

"To be listed is a warranty for the future"

"We have an heritage" (Ignacio Gondora)





MAIN RESULTS

Overview analysis of UA in Sevilla: constraints and opportunities

Different forms of UA are present in Sevilla: from formal to informal activities and space, like in other Spanish cities (e.g. Barcelona) and many Mediterranean/European countries like Italy.

There is a huge heritage in farms, partly in good, partly in very bad conditions: the consciousness of this heritage is present in owners that have small form of short food supply chain (mainly direct sell).

The valorisation of this heritage is conceived mainly as location for events (parties, ceremonies, events) where the buildings have a preminent role compared to agrarian landscape: emblematic is the case of Hacienda Los Molinos de Maestre where centenary olive trees are uprooted in favor of new more rentable ones, without considering the opportunity of valorisation of heritage olive trees as a living and recreational space. Living the heritage indoor spaces can be accompanied by a landscaping (landscape design) of heritage outdoor spaces.

The small agricultural heritage is very rich and has a great potential for enhance landscape value and reconnect people to his local identity, especially the irrigation system: more actions can be done to restore and even re-use it (as in Parque de Miraflores), valorise it and networking in order to let it recognisable by the public. The enhancement should start from the people with a bottom-up approach and from the public goods as examples of appropriation of public space: the process of defense and valorisation in Parque de Miraflores started in the '80ties from a group of people with a need to discover the place they lived in and do it in an associative way.

The administration support (from municipality) for developing short supply chain is weak: presence of farmer's market is still weak, compared to the consolidated historical markets (Triana, Feria, and so on) where products come mainly from Mercà Sevilla (wholesale). The municipal policies are still in favor of an ecological agriculture rely to educa-

tional functions (huertos sociales y pedagógico in Huerta del Rey Moro and in Parque de Miraflores).

The permanence of a compact and well identifiable area of horticulture in the North of Sevilla is a resource to keep and enhance, nor to consider open space for new urbanisation: many cities have lost this historic presence (Milan e.g), other cities keep a large horticultural belt (Granada e.g). Preserve a part of it as historical and productive zone can be a bridge for creating a pleasant and enjoyable space for citizens: landscaping the horticultural fields with variety of crops, adding alignments trees and/or hedgerow, along the roads, creating place for rest and see, restoring and re-using the previous irrigation system, communicating the interventions to the citizens.

Professional horticulture is certainly the easiest system of agriculture to be understood by people (compared to cereals or dairy or wine) because it refers to the family gardening and helps to keep the supply role of the county for the city.

Recent modification of the river stream (corta de la cartuja in 1982) has altered the historical physical relation between the farms in the East part of Sevilla, notably between Alamillo and Gambogaz and the Monastery of la Cartuja: this relation should not be reestablished only through a pedestrian bridge for reconnecting the two parts of land, but should also be reinforced by the creation of thematic pathways. This is aimed to communicate the historical role assumed during centuries by these farms structuring the periurban landscape of Seville and participating to the local economy.



Identification of spatial effects related to historical heritage

In the following table are resumed the main spatial effects identified in the case studies with the tangible elements related to them, the permanencies of intangible elements they produce and the opportunity of valorisation related to UA.

Spatial effect	Historical tangible element	Historical and cultural meaning <i>Permanence of...</i>	Opportunity for UA
sensory perception	form material uses	skill and techniques work organization social perception/symbolic	
Enclosure from inside	Courtyard clearing	Work place Spare time place	Social place Market place Exhibition/event place
Enclosure from outside	Rural ensemble closed by wall	"compactness" of work and social rural life	Understand the role and the functioning of a farm directly close to urban context Comprehension of social rural life
	Hedgerow, dry stone wall, fence for pasture, for vegetables and fruits gardens	Historic limit/barrier A form of protection Skills to prepare it and maintain Signal of a valuable content Signal of property Native species	Ancient form and technique of protection with new uses (e.g. ancient hedgerow for protecting new allotment gardens)
Visual penetrability and permeability <i>Physical limit without a visual protection</i>	Alignment tree (depending of the species) Low Fence Low hedgerow	Techniques to maintain/trim	Visibility for people Social contact
Visibility from high position	From a hill/slope, a high building (e.g. from a tower)	Previous relation between farm and fields; work organization and symbolic role	Visibility for people Reinforce the social inclusion; participation to a common work (e.g. for urban gardening)
Break/opening	Gate of a courtyard/of a vegetable garden	entrance sign: functional and symbolic role	Public accessibility to an agricultural site when keeping open
Go alongside	Road (+ canal) + alignment tree	Historical way of planning and irrigate land Historical connections in the plain	"mise en scène" of historic road connections
Isolation	Farm surrounded by open fields	Visual emergency in-between the fields, evident in a urban fabric context	Understand the previous spatial and functional relation between farm and fields
High mark	Tower, pigeon tower, mirador	Belvedere in a low fabric context (view from high position) Reference to the previous communication system	Understand landscape structure
Linear connection	Historical Road, path Canals	Market roads from country to city (e.g. the ways of food to the city markets) Recreation roads	Baseline for new short supply chain and for recreational way
Corridor	Alignment trees Tree crops	Agricultural techniques
transparent cover	Glasshouses	Agricultural skills for reproducing plants	Social contact Pedagogical activities
Seasonal variety	Vegetable gardens, flower gardens, polyculture in small plots	Horticultural skills Seasonal employees work Seasonal changes perception (related to vegetables and fruits)	Social contact Historical direct link with production and consumption (country feed the city)
Semi cover space	Tree crops crown (e.g. olivetree, orangetree etc..)	Agricultural techniques	Recreational activities

Some remarks

The most recurrent spatial effects in the Sevillian case studies are:

- inside enclosure, related to courtyards
- high mark, related to counterweight tower in oilmill
- break/entrance, to courtyards
- linear connections, related to roads

Some of these are specifically related to a typology of Sevillian historic farm buildings, like counterweight tower in haciendas (olive tree farm). The diffusion of olivetree cultivation in Andalucia has influenced over time the conversion of previously cereal farms (cortijos) in olive-tree farms (haciendas). The presence of the visual effect of the tower is a sign of economic and agrarian evolution occurring during the centuries, so is a cultural message.

All of them are presents in any agrarian context obviously with local declinations due to cultural and historical peculiarities.

Some spatial effect are very useful to enhance social relationships: in case of necessity of new form of enclosure, low and/or permeable hedgerow has to be preferred instead of inaccessible walls.

The linear connections based on ancient road system should be used as main layout for enhancing the historic relationship between country and the city and reinforce the new connections of services that can be established.

The creation of a network of UA forms in the city is essential for increasing the market opportunities of UA as well as the cultural role: a network of gardens can enhance the wellbeing, the environment, social relations..., a network of farms can enhance the market opportunity, the permanence of agricultural land and the recognisability face to institution.

The presence of historical elements and their spatial effects in a context close to the city carries out a social task and help local people to understand the identity of place they live in.

Conservation of tangible elements without valorisation actions are unuseful: the most the action is related with agriculture and new forms of agriculture offering services and goods to the citizens, the most will be incisive.

Conservation and valorisation of single elements are unusefull: the force of conservation action must be connected in a network creation.

FUTURE COLLABORATION WITH THE HOST INSTITUTION

Future collaborations envisaged with Maria José Prados of University of Seville concern different approaches to the valorisation of cultural heritage, related to the preservation of environment and the opportunities of people recreation. The discussion during the field visits was useful to exchange the different approaches to the rural heritage and confront the suggestions coming from the two different backgrounds, national culture and context.

Other collaborations were taken with the experts meet during the field visits in Sevilla and in Granada:

- prof. Jesus Santiago from University Pablo de Olavide,
- prof. Raul Puente Asuero from University Pablo de Olavide, who is participating to the COST ACTION Allotment gardens
- prof. Alberto Mataran and José Castillo, from University of Granada.

Several purposes of exchanges in future projects are envisaged with all of them, starting from a packed email exchange from now.

FORESEEN PUBLICATIONS/ARTICLES RESULTING FROM THE STSM

The first collaboration envisaged in a short time is the participation of the professors meet during the STSM to a publication edited by Lionella Scazzosi and myself, concerning the cultural role of urban agriculture called "AgriCultura".

Prof. José Castillo invited me to submit an article to the electronic revue Revista del patrimonio. <http://www.parquedelalamillo.org/>

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<http://www.parquedelalamillo.org/>

AKNOLEDGEMENTS

I would like to sincerely thank Maria José Prados, not only for having me received at University and given me the opportunity of accomplishing the STSM but mainly for his so kind welcome and company: that make the mission a fruitfull life experience.

My thanks is also to all people helping me in looking for the case studies and accompanying me: Jesus Santiago and Marta, Raul Puente Asuero, Marion and Luciano of the Huerto del Rey Moro, Alberto Mataran and José Castillo, from Granada.

To all I adress my authentic mercy and my wish to share future collaboration and personal exchanges.



FACULTAD DE GEOGRAFIA E HISTORIA
 DEPARTAMENTO DE GEOGRAFIA HUMANA

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Maria-José Prados, full time professor at the Department of Human Geogaphy at the University of Seville, confirms as representative of the host institution the successful execution of the STSM by Paola Nella Branduini, from Politecnico of Milan.

- Purpose of the STSM;

The purpose was to identify and to analyze heritage elements related to urban agriculture in order to reinforce them as urban functions.

- Description of the work carried out during the STSM;

We had identified buildings and agricultural infrastructure (farmhouses as cortijos, haciendas, water-mills, wells, water-dêches, ...) in the urban and peri-urban context considered as valuable heritage elements. We analyze their relationship with spatial patterns of farms, their historical permanencies and the actual perception. Finally as part of the fieldtrips, we have worked together on the reinforce on their relationship with to spatial patterns of urban farms.

- Description of the main results obtained.

The discussion with Paola Branduini let emerge different consciousness of people in the quality of landscape and in the potential of agriculture as a cultural motor for Seville. And allow us to make a set of proposals to promote the relationship between urban agriculture, heritage elements and citizens or visitors.

- Future collaboration with the host institution (if applicable);

We have planned to collaborate in further research applications at national to local level, together with the possibility to cooperate on a broader research frame at UE level.

- Foreseen publications/articles resulting from the STSM (if applicable);

We will include the case study analysed in Sevilla in a book concerning an overview of case study about the cultural potential of urban agriculture. We will prepare a paper about the results of the join research that will be presented to a scientific journal for publication into the latinoamerican scientific community.

- Time of declared STSM from 16/02 to 07/03/2015

Signature

Maria-José Prados

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COST- the acronym for European COoperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research- is the oldest and widest European intergovernmental network for cooperation in research. Established by the Ministerial Conference in November 1971, COST is presently used by the scientific communities of 35 European countries to cooperate in common research projects supported by national funds.

The funds provided by COST - less than 1% of the total value of the projects - support the COST cooperation networks (COST Actions) through which, with EUR 30 million per year, more than 30.000 European scientists are involved in research having a total value which exceeds EUR 2 billion per year. This is the financial worth of the European added value which COST achieves.

A "bottom up approach" (the initiative of launching a COST Action comes from the European scientists themselves), "à la carte participation" (only countries interested in the Action participate), "equality of access" (participation is open also to the scientific communities of countries not belonging to the European Union) and "flexible structure" (easy implementation and light management of the research initiatives) are the main characteristics of COST.

As precursor of advanced multidisciplinary research COST has a very important role for the realisation of the European Research Area (ERA) anticipating and complementing the activities of the Framework Programmes, constituting a "bridge" towards the scientific communities of emerging countries, increasing the mobility of researchers across Europe and fostering the establishment of "Networks of Excellence" in many key scientific domains such as: Biomedicine and Molecular Biosciences; Food and Agriculture; Forests, their Products and Services; Materials, Physical and Nanosciences; Chemistry and Molecular Sciences and Technologies; Earth System Science and Environmental Management; Information and Communication Technologies; Transport and Urban Development; Individuals, Societies, Cultures and Health. It covers basic and more applied research and also addresses issues of pre-normative nature or of societal importance.

