

Agrarian voids as dynamic spaces in the contemporary city.

The historic orchards of Nerja, Malaga

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Abstract

Agriculture and architecture are realities in continuous dialogue in many territories where the productive landscape is an inherent part of the built environment, especially those on a smaller scale with an immediate presence in the city, such as the orchards, which has been attacked by urban development, causing a fracture detrimental to historical logic. Through a detailed typological study of the orchards of Nerja, Malaga, this research places these lands at the center of the narrative, providing a historical analysis that addresses the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of the orchard as a holistic space, both agricultural and urban. Using a methodology that combines the study of the historical dimension and the unprecedented contemporary drawing of the orchard in its complexity, the potential and urgency of these agrarian voids in the contemporary city is confirmed. Forgotten and marginal redoubts, whose informal presence currently represents the dynamic, spontaneity and identity-driven escapism of Nerja and its inhabitants.

Agricoltura e architettura sono realtà in continuo dialogo in molti territori in cui il paesaggio produttivo è parte integrante dell'ambiente costruito, soprattutto quelli di scala minore e con una presenza immediata nella città, come l'orto, che è stato aggredito dallo sviluppo urbano, provocando una frattura a scapito della logica storica. Attraverso uno studio dettagliato su scala tipologica degli orti di Nerja, Malaga, questa ricerca pone questi terreni al centro della storia, tracciando un'analisi storica attenta alla singolarità e all'idiosincrasia dell'orto come spazio olistico, sia agrario che urbano. Con una metodologia che combina lo studio della dimensione storica e l'inedito disegno contemporaneo del frutteto nella sua dinamica complessità, si conferma la potenzialità e l'emergere di questi vuoti agrari nella città contemporanea. Ridotti dimenticati e marginali, la cui presenza informale rappresenta attualmente l'evasione dinamica, spontanea e identitaria di Nerja e dei suoi abitanti.

Keywords

Productive landscape, Agriculture and city, Orchard Huerta, Dynamic cartography
 Paesaggio produttivo, Agricoltura e città, Orto Huerta, Cartografia dinamica

Forgotten spaces in the fabric of the city and the countryside

Humankind has never been able to live without a fabric framework. In the face of the apparent disorder of the world, they had to search for meaningful terms, those that when associated with each other, made their actions on the environment more effective, those that allowed them to survive. Faced with the infinite abundance of objects and beings, they sought relationships between them, and in the face of the infinite mobility of things, they sought invariants. (Henri Laborit, *La nouvelle grille* 1974)

Agriculture has historically been a fundamental system for the production of consumer goods, providing for the immediate needs of the population and, at the same time, it has been a system for occupying and organizing the land and the built environments. The result is what could be referred to as an 'ordinary landscape'. The European Landscape Convention, since 2000, recognizes all types of landscapes, both emblematic and those considered more ordinary, in close relation to the communities that inhabit them. In the best sense of the term, 'ordinary' refers to its presence in the everyday life of its inhabitants and its productivity, given by agriculture, keeps it alive and close.

The dissolution of the city as a defined and stable domain, dating back to the mid-19th century (Framp-ton, 1999), along with the progressive distancing of

agricultural dynamics from European metropolises, left much of the pre-industrial city buried beneath the excesses and abuses of the later phase of urban development. "The origin of architecture is not the primitive hut, but marking the land, establishing a cosmic order around the surrounding chaos of nature", said Vittorio Gregotti in 1983, pointing out that architects and urban planners still have the same historical task: to work with the relationship between architecture and territory. Agriculture, and specifically the orchard, closely linked to the city, has faced the accelerated urban transformation in recent decades that has swept away cultivation spaces indiscriminately. This situation has led to the abandonment of historical and morphological growth models, creating a fracture detrimental to agricultural logic, either through occupation or abandonment, following an opportunistic model of use that generates fragmented spaces instead of continuing its genealogy (Calatayud Giner, 2005). This could be understood as a forgetting of the fabric framework.

In addition to this, there is agricultural depreciation, which consists of the devaluation of cultivable land. Currently, there are far more fallow lands than at the beginning of the 20th century, as land occupation practices now consider these spaces as a void that can be used, reserves without value. As Ignasi Solà Morales (1995) pointed out, the term 'baldío' (fallow

land) is applied to land that has ceased to be cultivated. This term is not used to describe wild slopes, the steep mountain meadows, land before dunes filled with thistles or any other environment called 'natural'. Its denigrated reading has long caused the failure of effective incorporation, resulting in islands of inactivity that remain outside the urban dynamics (Koo-hafkan & Altieri, 2016). In other words, places scarcely recognised to the urban system, spaces perceived as exterior within the physical city, which are mistakenly defined in opposition to it and hence their urgency. Their vagueness regarding their current use makes them extremely interesting and potential, as indicated by Gilles Clément (2004), who describes how the greatest diversity and wealth, both from a biological perspective and through idle human activity, finds refuge in these very places. At the same time, their position and spatial logic within the framework allow for their integration as a new geography of the city, a free stratum that aims to help define a new model for urban planning (Magnaghi, 2010).

This forgotten framework is both a historical and morphological constant, but at the same time, it is a constant in the identity and functioning of many cities. Its contemporary value lies in being a possible response to the environmental and climate emergency, reflecting on food systems and the need for the

94 renaturalization of built environments. As Rem Kool-

haas pointed out in the exhibition *Countryside the Future* (2020), the current emergency increasingly highlights that the keys to sustainable development and the survival of cities must shift towards a recognition and reconnection with rural contexts.

The expectation of a filled void

The contemporary discourse has brought to the centre of the debate the crisis of territorial occupation, which Serge Latouche (2009) has revealed with his theory of degrowth, a continuation of the report produced by MIT in 1972 under the title *The limits of growth*, which already revealed the risks of unlimited expansion¹. His position argues that there is currently no sustainable form of growth, any new construction and therefore occupation is unsustainable. Nowadays, a multitude of authors deal with the subject from different concepts and perspectives that end up with a common edge: the expectation of emptiness. This approach is of great interest especially in agricultural land whose productivity has been called into question and therefore many of them have ended up being occupied.

The relationship between the absence of use, of activity, and the sense of freedom, of aspiration, is fundamental to understanding all the evocative power that these lands have had on the perception of cities in recent years. Empty, therefore, as an absence, but

also as a promise, as an encounter, as a space of the possible and the expectation of it (Almarcegui, 2003). This stance towards forgotten spaces is in turn in line with the most current trends in relation to urban sustainability. Not to extend more buildings over the territory but to complete what is already occupied with greater density and intensity, filling in the necessary urban voids, in order to protect more clearly and effectively the free areas that have not yet been contaminated or degraded (Batlle, 2011).

Making direct reference to the expression of Ramón Folch (1990) recognising these spaces as “voids filled with values”, the idea that historical agricultural land and its dynamics are a specific type of heritage made up of both natural and cultural, material and immaterial elements, which reflect a very significant historical relationship, given that agricultural activity has been an integral part of and sustains cultural processes of transmission of knowledge and traditions (Niles, 2008), becomes more complex. Today, orchards are forgotten places where the memory of the past seems to predominate over the present. They are obsolete places in which certain residual values seem to be maintained despite their complete disaffection from the activity of the city and the new productive structures (Mata Olmo, 2010).

Another view of the fullness treasured by these empty spaces is that proposed by André Corboz (1980)

through the idea of the palimpsest: “The inhabitants of a land tirelessly erase and rewrite the old scribbles on the ground”. Framed within the objective of understanding the landscape beyond an outcome, the productive agricultural landscape is unique in having an inherent diachronic component in which actions and interactions imply a state of constant change resulting from natural and human factors. It is therefore urgent to assume the current conditions and phenomena occurring in these spaces as triggers for their understanding and contemporary action project (Secchi, 1984).

At the same time, it should not be lost sight of the fact that the countryside, once seen as a place of agricultural work, has become a landscape associated with leisure and residential practices. This transformation poses another challenge in trying to integrate traditional agricultural practices with new urban demands. In this context, memory plays a crucial role, as one must consider the traces of the past in one's projects in order to preserve the identity and history of places by making agricultural practices play an active role (Donadieu, 2015). Can contemporary cities be designed to feed nearby city dwellers and create the conditions for a liveable space (limited natural and anthropogenic risks, public leisure areas, attractive green surroundings)? Isn't local food one of the desirable conditions for the habitability of the urban

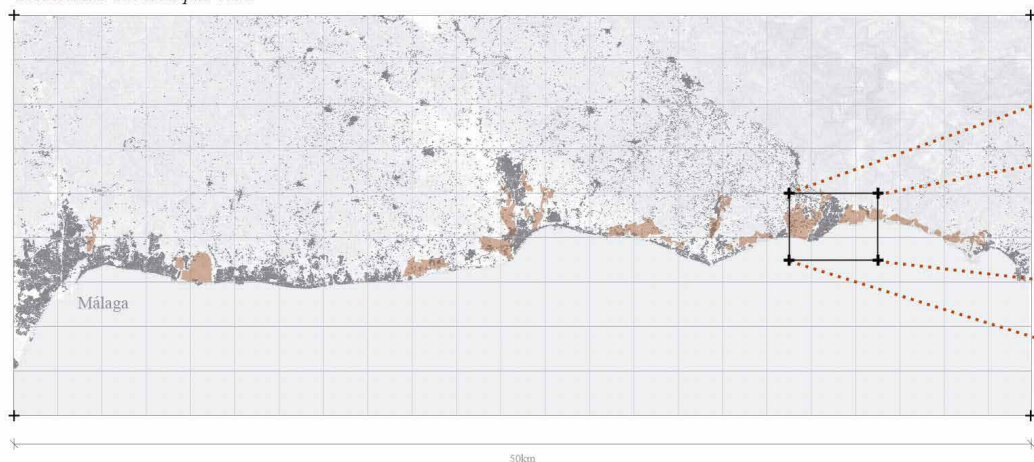
Territorial *The Axarquía coast*

Fig. 1 - Diagram of the different scales of the huerta of Nerja. Data obtained by consulting and contrasting historical orthophotos, the SIGPAC (Geographical Information System of Agricultural Plots of Spain) viewer and historical territorial planimetry of the IECA (Institute of Statistics and Cartography of Andalusia), (drawing: authors' elaboration, Celia Chacón-Carretón).

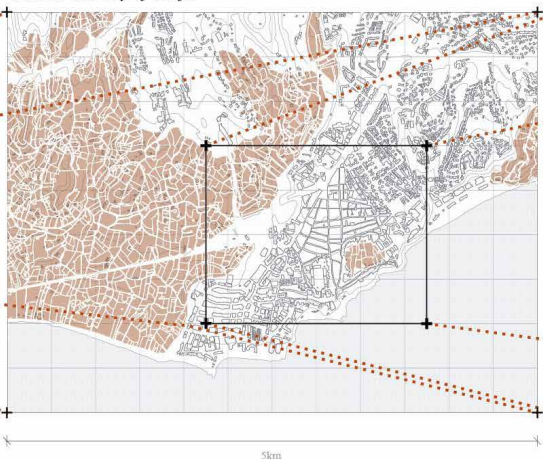
region? Within this idea, agricultural land, and especially the orchards, propose a fabric to be unravelled in order to give place to the free spaces of the contemporary city and its processes.

The Carabeo orchards of Nerja as a dynamic contemporary productive space

Traditional irrigated land, known as orchards, is a very characteristic agrarian system that has been identified as one of the main Mediterranean landscapes still in operation today (Meeus et al, 1990). As Pierre Donadieu points out it is in the cities “from Cadiz to Barcelona, up to the south of France” that we are witnessing increasing resistance to the disappearance of public agricultural space (2006). The choice of the orchard² specifically within the agrarian corpus is not trivial. Its fundamental idiosyncrasy is the reason for the interest and the approach taken in this study; the orchard is a historical agrarian structure of small dimension compared to other cultivated lands whose productive path remains dynamic from season to season, producing a close relationship between the land and its inhabitants. The selection of the study of the historic orchards of Nerja as a singular case is

due to the fact that their evolution and subsequent growth has remained linked to agricultural activity, producing a strong historical continuity with regard to the productive agricultural use of its soils from an economic, social and cultural perspective.

The hypothesis proposed by this research lies in the enduring relevance and transformative potential of agriculture within architectural thinking, particularly through the figure of the orchard. Conceived as an elementary yet autonomous spatial unit, the orchard is not only a productive landscape but also a generative architectural form capable of articulating complex spatial systems. These systems unfold across multiple and interrelated scales – from the typological to the urban and territorial (fig. 1) – without reducing the landscape to a single, regional dimension. On the contrary, landscape must be understood as a relational construct that emerges through temporal and spatial processes, constantly shaped by ecological dynamics, cultural practices, and infrastructural frameworks. Within this expanded field, the discipline of landscape architecture is not merely a backdrop or environmental supplement to architecture, but a disciplinary lens through which space is under-

Urban *The city of Nerja***Typological** *The historic orchards of Carabeo*

stood as mutable, processual, and deeply embedded in time. Thus, when we speak of the “architectural sense,” we refer not to a fixed object or form, but to a mode of thinking that recognizes design as an operative strategy—one that integrates the rhythms of cultivation, occupation, and transformation across scales. In this context, the orchard becomes both a tool and a metaphor for a landscape-informed architecture: one that is capable of engaging with the lived environment as a dynamic and evolving territory.

This is why this study approaches the orchard in its most holistic potential by identifying its historical dimension and re-establishing an account of its journey, paying special attention to its dynamic and ephemeral processes, both those relating to the traces of its historical agricultural activity and its current use as an informal open space endowed with such important, everyday events. Through a rigorous process of data collection using historical planimetries, photographs, orthophotos and planning documents, the historical presence of the orchard and its prolonged siege and gradual disappearance are confirmed. In this process of mapping and restitution of the history of the orchard, the lack of attention given to this reality, which is always subordinated to the

constructed projects without entering into its recognition and valuation, is confirmed; therefore, the historic orchards are depicted for the first time, making it possible to confirm their complete evolution from their origin, agricultural expansion and current presence as an urban void. To this end, it is decided to go beyond a graphic representation focused solely on the most immediate physical aspects, generating a cartography that aims to capture the complexity of the space, paying attention fundamentally to the orchard in its most holistic behaviour and the current ephemeral processes, which are not normally recorded graphically (Chacón-Carretón et al., 2023).

Nerja’s location on the coastline of the Axarquía coast (Málaga), as well as the difficulties arising from its road access, kept the town absorbed in its agricultural activities, although not without potential growth associated with them. Since then, Nerja has continued to expand, creating an interesting pattern that began with the first settlements of high agricultural productivity subjected to a strong anthropic action in the flat areas near the sea. The agricultural system of the orchard is a complex reality that extends throughout the territory in a series of layers – all of them contain to a greater or lesser extent his-



Fig. 2 - Cartography of the orchards and the agricultural landscape dynamics, city of Nerja. Data obtained by consulting and contrasting historical orthophotos, the SIGPAC (Geographical Information System of Agricultural Plots of Spain) viewer, planimetry of the general urban development plans of Nerja (PGOU 2000 and 2010) and historical planimetry of the IECA (Instituto de Estadística y Cartografía de Andalucía), (drawing: authors' elaboration, Celia Chacón-Carretón).



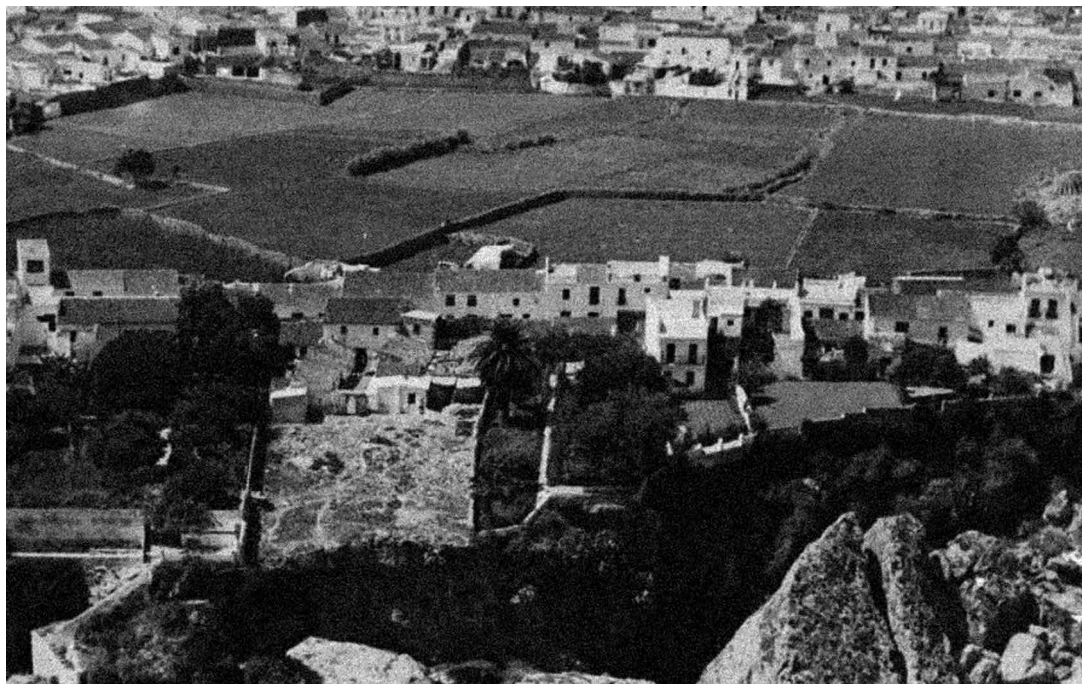


Fig. 3 - Historical photograph of the orchards and the hamlet of Carabeo street, Nerja. Anonymous. (source: Diana Cobos).



Fig. 4 - Historical photographs of the orchards and the hamlet of Carabeo street and its historical dynamics related to everyday life and agricultural activities, Nerja (source: Archivo Legado Temboury, Biblioteca Virtual de la Provincia de Málaga).

torical elements that have been maintained and have allowed the traceability of the orchard— that allow the functioning of the productive system, both from its historical continuity and its economic viability. The system of parceling the crop, the hydraulic system of irrigation and water management, the system of livestock trails and topographic clearings and the set of building structures that accompany the agricultural exploitation. The main products that have been developed and continue to this day are sugar cane and the cultivation of avocado, mango, loquat... (fig. 2).

At the turn of the century from the 9th to the 10th century, there are references to a military formation accompanied by a farmhouse with an agricultural estate that would gradually form small rural communities made up of one or several families, who dedicated themselves to exploiting the surrounding land for their livelihood. Prior to this, it was decided to build another building, somewhat distant, in an uninhabited place on the coast itself, which would eventually play a decisive role in the birth of contemporary Nerja and its layout. In the first half of the 17th century, the relationship between these two buildings was consolidated with the construction of twenty-six houses within the agricultural fabric framework of the orchard given the original farm that had arisen with the same idiosyncrasies in the surroundings of that first agricultural estate (Capilla, 2006; 2016). This ham-

let would develop, with the orchard-house being the typological unit of urban growth. From this primary configuration, the morphology began to acquire very special characteristics in line with its expansion and agricultural productivity. The conjunction of streets was developed through a series of single-family houses of two, or at most three storeys, of narrow size, which were always adjoined to each other along party walls. After a two-bay structure, in most cases, there was an orchard. Each orchard in adjoining party walls with other orchards continued to generate the urban fabric and to fill the territory with large productive agricultural voids inside them (figg. 3 and 4).

Within this process, the peri-urban landscape of the voids located near the Carabeo street known as the Carabeo orchards, stands out. It is there where the agrarian and urban plot structure originated, and where today there are still orchards and vestiges in the form of traces within a singular urban void within the consolidated city. This process of creation of a space where the orchard, housing buildings followed one another in parallel for centuries, has been followed by a much more accelerated process of destruction. The growth of Nerja, intensified by its conversion into a major tourist resort around the 1960s, attracted national and international tourism whose initial trajectory already hinted at its subsequent strong development. The long-established agricul-



Fig. 5 - Historical postcard with the Carabeo orchards and the increasing appearance of tourist constructions.
Anonymous (source: Postales Antiguas Todo Colección).



Fig. 6 - Historical postcards with the orchards in relation to the first period of the presence of tourism.
Anonymous (source: Postales Antiguas Todo Colección).

tural activity, with centuries of continuous productivity, took a back seat. The urban development impulse that the municipality experienced and continues to undergo makes the relegation of this occupation both present and emergent, in which the agrarian and urban dimensions clash and oppose each other on an economic playing field, spurred on by the incipient tourist potential of the coastline.

This shift could be described in terms of productive change; Nerja goes from being profitable in terms of agricultural consumer goods to being profitable in terms of tourism. Consumption, but in this case, associated with leisure and above all with seasonality and transit. There was therefore the initiation of the coexistence of the two worlds, the settled and the thriving. On the shores of the Mediterranean coast, bathers, locals and visitors, began to congregate just a few metres from the backdrop of the agricultural landscape. Linear sugar cane plantations separate, or rather sew together, these two scenes. The sand, the bathing costumes and the beach fridge are just a few metres away from the vegetable plantations and the crops. This very peculiar situation is unfortunately destabilised by the pressing speculation due to the over-zealous management of tourism. Apartment buildings and hotels, the former already visible in the background of the image, which are not identified with the architectural and urban type of the area, are

saturating the land, converting cattle tracks into asphalted streets, public spaces into private ones and occupying the orchards (figg. 5 and 6).

From the 1980s onwards, the development of the historic orchards of Carabeo was absolutely destructive. This productive void became disconnected from the territorial agricultural fabric, isolated and encapsulated within an increasingly built-up city. A large part of the orchard units was converted into the current Plaza de España and the informal car park of the historic centre, the latter being the last remaining agricultural space within the urban framework. This process is produced by means of a totally aseptic architecture that is completely foreign to the vernacular typology of the orchard-house, the destruction of the layout of the cultivated plots and, lastly, the intrusion of an informal car park that paves practically the whole of the land, leaving only a few orchards in contact with the buildings. By analysing orthophotos and other urban planning documentation, it has been possible to see how the orchards have remained neglected or subordinated to a building trend that, far from responding to agrarian and urban logic or even to contemporary needs, takes advantage of any surface area for its private tourist profitability. These traces, recovering this idea of inertia, remain in many cases converted into other urban elements; private gardens are the most repeated response that is in-



Fig. 7 - Historical evolution of the typological scale of the historic Carabeo orchards, Nerja. Data obtained by consulting and contrasting historical orthophotos, the SIGPAC viewer (Geographical Information System for Agricultural Plots) and planimetry of the general urban development plans of Nerja (PGOU 2000 and 2010) (drawing: authors' elaboration, Celia Chacón-Carretón).

tertained with different modalities of extensions, terraces and outdoor domestic spaces (fig. 7).

It should not be possible to separate Nerja from its landscape image. The town is the projection of society on the territory and therefore its identity is maintained by those who continue to live there. Its specificity, although evolving, has certain constituent elements linked to the agrarian practices that historically conditioned its urban development. The deep attachment of its citizens has led to a history of resistance of more than 25 years; actions and public demands that have crystallised from the local authorities of the community of Nerja. The use of productive spaces as elements of social protest against the perpetuation of historical leases that prevented the acquisition of farmland by farmers beyond the tenants is noteworthy. Added to this are the various current mobilisations in opposition to tourist saturation that

have been evidenced in manifestos in which local bodies and experts express their urgency³. The city includes original mediations with agriculture and today their relationship is far from being fully recognised and respected, not even as an open public space.

Added to this situation is the most provocative aspect of this void. In spite of being under speculative real estate pressure for tourism, its informal and ephemeral use is what stops it from being occupied. It is in the Carabeo orchards that the Nerja fair is held every year in October. A festivity whose spatial necessity is only guaranteed by this empty space; a central place, of generous dimensions and whose formalisation allows it to support diverse activities, structures and assemblies which in turn interact with other points of interest in the historic centre of the town. In addition to this event, there are so many other spontaneous activities such as street markets, concerts,

small communal gatherings... and even informal gardens that allow the image of the historic orchard to survive and be updated. The main urban itineraries converge at this point, either to reach the Balcón de Europa as the nerve centre of the most touristic Nerja, or in the urban routes that connect the different urbanisations with the coastline and the urban facilities that are developed on the edges. Far from needing occupied spaces, even with public uses, it is becoming noticeable how Nerja requires this void in the grid as the most propitious place to live in a highly densified city without open spaces that go beyond the scale of the street and the square; the Carabeo orchards are the last redoubt of public space within the very high compactness. A leisure area which, although local to the city in the form of a public space, is of interest beyond the urban limit when it is understood as an opportunity to establish a larger network of free spaces associated with the larger historical productive landscape that relates it to the territory. It is a space of escapism that has already been confirmed by the multitude of activities that take place in it, inherent to its most nuclear urban system and one of the most important identitary images of Nerja and its inhabitants where their traditions converge (figg. 8 and 9).

All this makes it possible to rethink the city's open space systems when there is already a spatial and identity logic to which they are subject, where their supposed indefiniteness and current informality is

the driving force behind the possibilities that this area offers. This change of productive paradigm, from agricultural to touristic, and from touristic to social, has given rise to a resurgence of opportunity in these lands, while the most identitarian tradition always prevails.

Towards a new cultivation of space

The paradox presented by the case of the historic orchards of Nerja is an unprecedented opportunity. This space is not located on an urban boundary or in an undefined position; the orchard is located in the centre of the city, at its origin. In spite of its unquestionable historical morphology and productive behaviour that has sustained its evolution from the first agricultural settlement to its subsequent development and current urban configuration, the Carabeo orchards have suffered a great process of marginalisation and neglect, which has only been compensated by real estate pressure of a highly speculative nature that does not respect their value. This pressure, which continues to besiege these lands to this day, competes with the social impulse that permeates through ephemeral activities related to local traditions that aspire to a space that welcomes and recognises them, a space in turn capable of being part of a larger system of open spaces in the form of landscape infrastructure of an agricultural nature.

In this situation, the role of architecture inevitably becomes difficult. It seems that the whole destiny

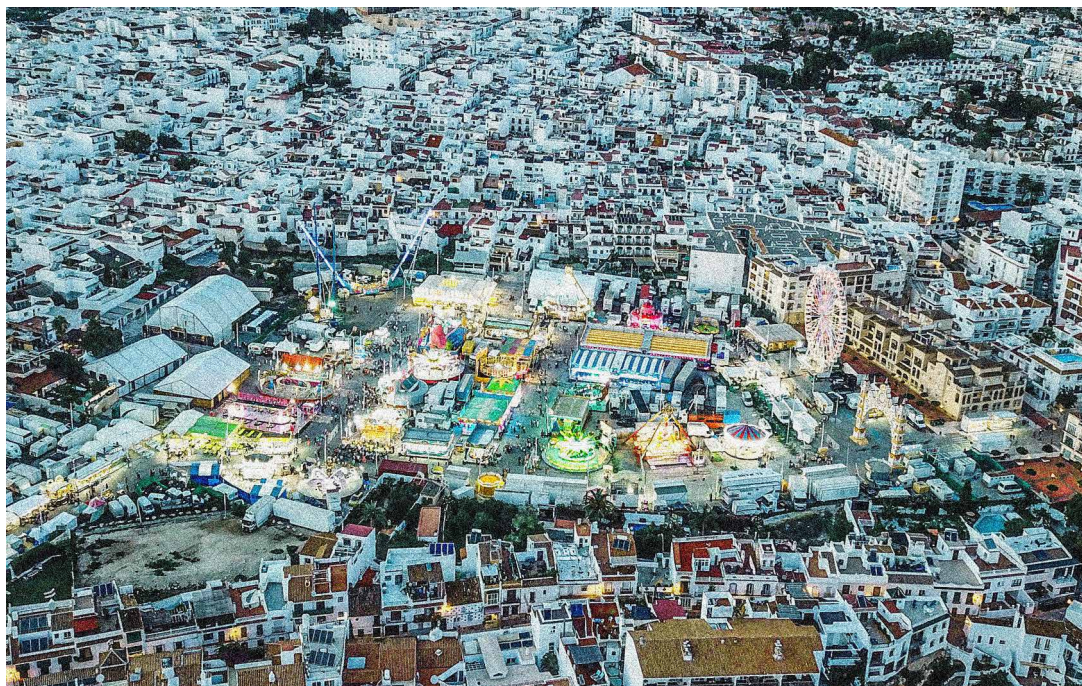


Fig. 8 -Aerial photograph of the Carabeo orchards during the Nerja fair (source: Nerja town hall website).

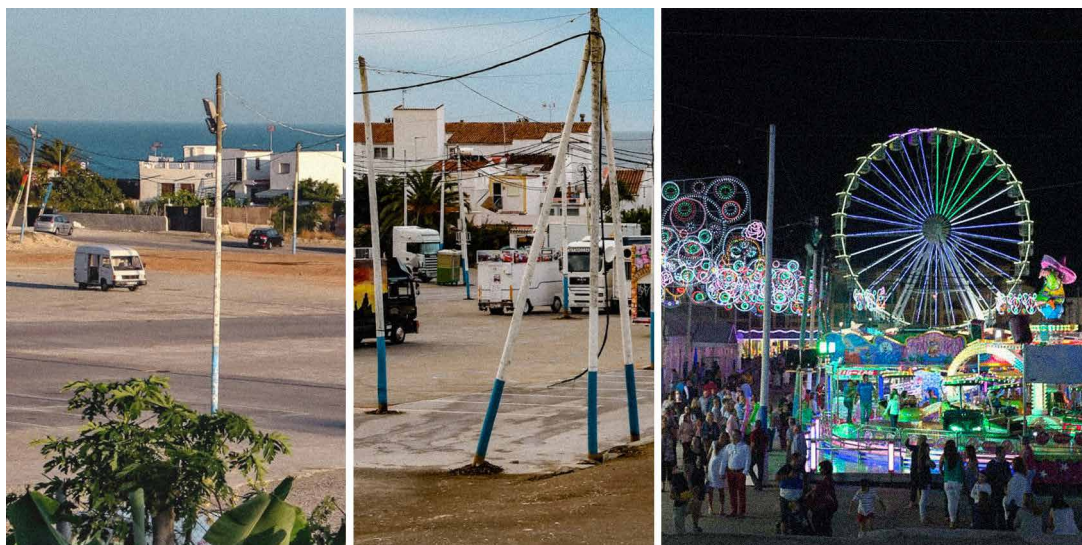


Fig. 9 - Current photographs of the Carabeo orchards during the Nerja fair, its assembly and everyday life moments (photo: Miguel Ríos).

of architecture has always been occupation, setting limits, order, form... It belongs to the very essence of architecture that it is an instrument of organisation, rationalisation, productive efficiency capable of transforming the uncultivated into the cultivated, the wasteland into the productive, the empty into the built-up. To the question of what to do with these spaces, the most immediate answer given by the present study is the act of attending to their own behaviour. Not to the planned, efficient city, legitimised through the argument of occupation, but quite the opposite, through attentive listening to the flows, the energies, the rhythms that the passage of time and the loss of limits have established. The answer lies in the plot itself; not to seek a single outcome for it, but to leave space for its development in relation to a discourse that brings together the agrarian and the urban, centred on the idiosyncrasy of the orchard as the generator and perpetuator of this emptiness. This study also reveals the need to create a multi-functional space. Agriculture is its reason for existence but its contemporary use is its reason for permanence. Against the stalking of urban speculation and the loss of its status as an open space, a series of interventions are proposed to formalise its daily use. It is considered appropriate to implement a public space design that emphasises its behaviour as an urban agricultural park, i.e. a series of structures designed to allow the stay as a square –children's play-

grounds, sports facilities, weekly markets, the fair... – but in combination with the use of a public orchard. This idea would be formalised in collaboration with the farmers in relation to the community of Nerja by creating a possible cooperative farm that would be based on economic profitability. The architectural design would therefore take the form of small supporting structures designed supporting the historical layout for a cultivated garden with the aim of maintaining as much empty space for leisure –ensuring its accessibility, sustainability and inclusiveness– and agriculture as possible (fig. 10).

Somehow we feel an attachment to structures that encourages us to wish them to be immutable. But the contemporary city in its complexity is the privileged domain of continuous change. The history of cities, and more exemplarily of agriculture, shows that humankind has constantly fought against these changes by controlling and modifying them. Encouraging vigorous agricultural structures and avoiding the obsolescence of these lands can help to prevent the fragility of territories subject to all kinds of aggression. Firstly, it will be a matter of understanding and promoting agriculture: the culture of the land, the experience of years of human intervention for productive purposes, the repertoire of images and techniques of agricultural landscapes, the ideal process for managing landscapes. Secondly, the experience of traditional agriculture, cultivation techniques, soil conser-

Fig. 10 - Cartography of the Carabeo orchards, Nerja. Data obtained by consulting and contrasting historical orthophotos, the SIGPAC (Geographical Information System of Agricultural Plots of Spain) viewer, planimetry of the general urban development plans of Nerja (PGOU 2000 and 2010) and historical planimetry of the IECA (Instituto de Estadística y Cartografía de Andalucía), (Drawing: authors' elaboration, Celia Chacón-Carretón).





vation, erosion control, use of water resources, etc. will be the starting point for dealing with the application of new spatial management systems. Thirdly, we will start from the acceptance that agriculture requires a new landscape project, and, in the same way that in the past all the agriculture that we now value and want to preserve has transformed its territory, perhaps we will be able to reinvent its use and application in dialogue with other aspects of identity such as festivities, cultural activities and sustainable tourism. The Carabeo orchards of Nerja could be maintained according to their historical processes, optimising the resources used and obtaining greater social benefits. In contrast to the usual difficulties involved in the effective planning of new open spaces, which are of-

ten linked to speculation, these spaces will no longer be empty, but full; they will no longer be places to be planned, but places with which to establish new links and which, through regulations, will be legitimised. A space of reconciliation between city and countryside, of cohesion, activation and local encounter. A place for spontaneity and the cultivation of culture.

Only in emptiness resides what is truly essential. You will find, therefore, the reality of a room, not in the ceiling and walls, but in the space that those entities enclose. The usefulness of a pitcher lies in the hollow that contains the water, not in the shape of the vessel or in the clay with which the potter shaped it. Emptiness is all-powerful, because it can contain everything. Only in emptiness is movement possible. (Lao Tseu, *The Book of Tea* 2005)

Notes

¹ This argument is constantly being updated due to the contemporary importance of this discourse. Among the many contributions we would like to point to *Beyond the Limits* (1992) and *The Limits to Growth: The 30-Year Update* (2004) by the same authors and *Limits and Beyond. 50 years on from The Limits to Growth, what did we learn and what 's next?* (2022) by Dennis Meadows and Jørgen Randers with a new block of theorists who, from an interdisciplinary vision, seek sustainable ways of inhabiting the interstices of the finite planet.

² The orchard is recognised as one of the historical agrarian production systems. Therefore, although the current practices of creating ex novo or new urban vegetable gardens and their benefits

are recognised, this research focuses on the historical orchard. Cultivation on small plots of land, generally enclosed, where fruit, vegetables and legumes are grown.

³ An example of this is the short film *SE VENDE El último vergel*. A documentary series on the impact of tourism and real estate development on the Costa del Sol displaying Nerja and Maro specifically in relationship with the struggle of different social movements trying to find new narratives and solutions. This was one of the main results of a research project R+D (*Tourist saturation in Spanish coastal destinations. Strategies of degrowth from the social dimension*, 2019) <https://danielnatoli.com/proyectos/se-vente/>

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