

Thinking with Stones

Decolonising the culture-scape of drystone heritage

water
resilience
drystone
ecocide
extraction

It is late February 2025, and the short, cold, dry spell masks the fact that winter on the island of Cyprus has passed us by. I have been watering my plants since January, sparingly, with guilt, amidst news that Limassol's main Alassa dam has run dry; the Charokokolymbos dam in rural Paphos has also suffered, affecting nearby banana plantations, after it was emptied into the sea having developed alarming structural cracks. There was also an accidental fire at Paphos's desalination plant; or illegal siphoning of water downstream from Pera Pedi dam, by the private encroaching *Land of Dreams* retreat. Some decades ago, planners decided that tenacious terraced communities along the Diarizos river had no future, so their water rights were diverted to elite, privileged tourism industries and intensive agrarian development in the island's east. Now, coastal tourism communities are refusing desalination plants close to the beaches they rely on for revenue. Such extractive water-affected infrastructures which have commodified water to extremes, hint at, but also affect the disappearance of water. Our-as yet- running taps and plastic-bottled water cocoon us from this impending reality.

Entangling intimate experiences and concerns about the drystone terraced landscape, I try to de-center top-down approaches by examining how architecture today impacts this largely left-over landscape body, questioning how the profession has become one of the most extractive, irreversibly burdening the environment. By juxtaposing the small-scale onto a territorial scale, insights into drawing the larger political picture are revealed. What constitutes impact or value when a project 'words' itself into its own epistemic frame, entangled with but not contained by disciplinary norms?¹

Floridou, Sevina¹

¹ University of Nicosia, Department of Architecture, Nicosia, Cyprus.
sevina@spidernet.com.cy

Citation: Floridou, S. (2025). "Thinking with Stones", UOU scientific journal #10, 58-65.

ISSN: 2697-1518. <https://doi.org/10.14198/UOU.2025.10.07>
This document is under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC BY 4.0)

Invited Article 

TRACING WATER LINES

Vanishing water is a huge concern of our island's collective subconscious, harking to a historic time of drought, once again upon us. Medieval folklore recounts dragons controlling water or decades of drought-induced depopulation (Hadjikyriakou, 2023). Legend has it that St Helen, Ayia Eleni, mother to Constantine the Great, became shipwrecked here during the 4th century. Hegemonic narratives have her bringing wood from the Holy Cross and building monasteries, but folklore describes how she found the island depopulated because of drought, when everyone had moved to the Syrian mainland. People returned to commemorate her actions that they said released the waters, by naming a river the Vasilopotamos or Vasilikos (i.e., Royal). It barely trickles today, through waterfalls and glades which locals keep secret.

Further afield, surface irrigation that was practiced for centuries, letting water flow upon the land, was contained in the first half of the 20th century, by colonial cemented water channels and check dams. Colonial commodification of irrigation practices reveals that contested water needs careful unpacking. How did colonial water containment affect the people, their relationship to it and the landscape? What happened when 'efficient' water commodification forced removal of labourers from the maintenance required for the natural irrigation cycles of controlled flooding? Is water vanishing, or has it been subjected to invisible mechanised servitude? Is this a contemporary disrespect of water? How we hold or trace this knowledge through drawn documentation can reveal values of privileged but also concealed narratives.

We wait for rains that never come, like gamblers waiting for their lucky break. Today, rain collection in dams through stalled rivers is the island's chief water investment, together with deep drilling into a receding

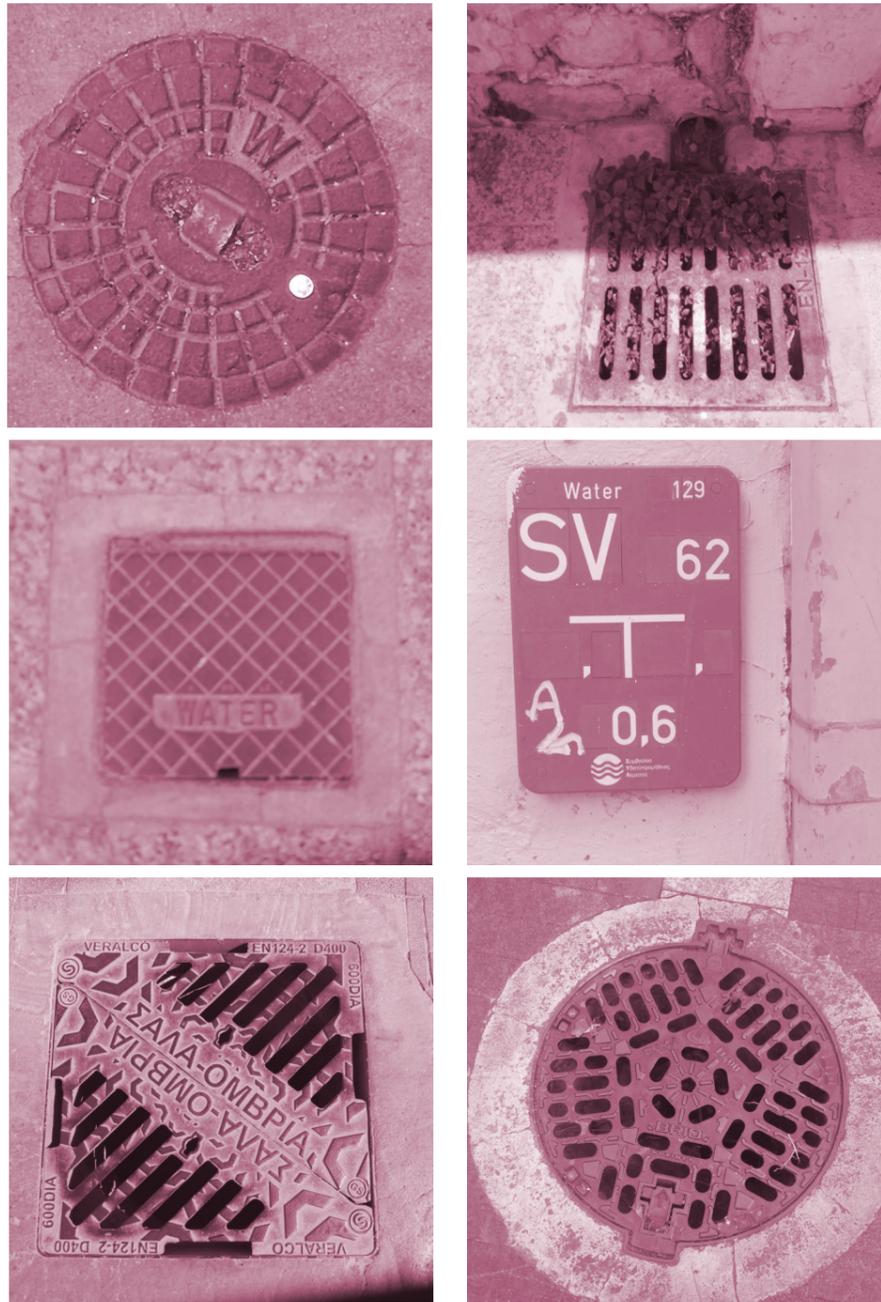


Fig.1 - Perceptions of contemporary urban irreverence: the aesthetics of running water supplied, distributed and expelled.

aquifer. Industrial desalination is seen as the only alternative but water has always been scarce. Yet the body of terraces, stepping up lower mountain slopes, roughly between 300-850m above sea level, have become a landscape liminality enclosed between coastal urban development and protected mountainous forests. Terraces attest to a different way of communal water management that implies alternatives to capitalist models. However, it is this once fertile landscape, which is under the greatest duress from

extractive industrialisation. One can see the intensive quarrying blight, superimposed onto it on both sides of the island's political divide, particularly when flying over; carved-out, kilometre-wide craters spread across the landscape, scarring centuries old terraced slopes. Extractive industrial quarrying intensified half a century ago, after 1974, when a Greek Junta instigated coup, enabled by right-wing Greek-speaking Cypriots, swiftly led to a Turkish military invasion, illegally capturing 40% of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC). The

explosive and immediate brutality of this multi-layered war caused forced displacement of a majority of Greek-speaking Cypriots from the island's north to the south. In areas not invaded, decades-long retaliations towards Turkish-speaking communities by Greek-speaking nationalist factions were politically halted through a population exchange which followed. Thus, the majority Turkish-speaking citizens of the (officially recognised) RoC south, were displaced to the illegal, occupied north (only recognised by Turkey). Since then, both political sides have been perpetuating a separatist, insular, cultural narcissism persisting under the pretext of a frozen ceasefire. Following the island's territorial occupation and political division, intensified quarrying became a backdrop supporting both post-war economies, that have been subsisting separately. In order to do so, both enable outside interests, particularly since intercommunal conflict has suspended the constitution. 1974 became a watershed that has impacted the way of life island-wide, particularly of rural terraced farming communities, intensifying abandonment of their practice. This is experienced as a loss of memory and indigenous farming knowledge on both sides of the divide.

Cement and aggregate production today monopolise construction industries of both sides, supported by foreign investment. Construction is prioritised through urban re-zoning, intensive tourism, and 'exclusive' high-rise densification. This represents a slower, sedimentary form of harm to that of sudden war, since both systemic quarrying and building gradually destroy the land's means of water storage; from how water infiltrates mountains, leading down to the artesian coastlands. Extraction is materially intertwined with environmental degradation of both mountain ranges (one north, the other south), and by simultaneous coastal over-development, all in the face of climate change and diminishing water resources that mega-building industries rely upon.

Effused with power-imagery, gentrification actively contributes to the island's post-war, war-torn landscape. Political stalemate creates a vicious cycle that perpetuates ecocide, causing exploitation and landscape degradation through practices which further industrial waste dumping, water-resource manipulation, agricultural annihilation, forced uprooting and displacement of all life, human and more-than-human. Extractive ecocide masks external capital investment on a perpetual massive scale, 'beyond the measure of the land' (Yildurum, 2025).

Material traces of the landscapes' vulnerabilities are invariably uprooted, be they coastal (dunes, low vegetation, shallow lakes, artesian wells, estuaries and lagoons), or folding drystone terraced hills (with unique rock formations, gorges, maquis, carob and olive orchards, creeks, scattered pine, foraging herbs, a profusion of birds and endemic spring wild flowers). Yet, both these environments inspire and constitute the material world of lived collective memory.

THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE DRAWING

Today, the terraced liminality, is both perceived and administered as 'empty'; with no visualisation of context, and scarce cartographic representation - even documentation, of its fragile, diminishing, cultural and natural resources. Colonial cadastral mappings further expand dichotomies referencing geologic topography but with outdated cartography; Regional urban planning maps have digitised legal plot-boundary ownerships but omit 'obsolete' heritage infrastructure (wells, water basins, terraces, sheepfolds, kilns, mills, ancient pathways). A clear understanding of this in-between territorial body, its scale and complexity, is lacking. Thus, many contemporary architectural and construction projects, encroach by replicating non-site-specific typologies. Meaning that it is possible to have long, successful architectural careers without ever coming into contact with the world outside the drawing (Dall, 2024), or ever questioning the sourcing of building materials, or how much water and resources these designs consume.

Colonial era maps iconise the island's (depicted flat) shape, of 9,251 sq Km. It has been stamped for us onto the RoC flag as a post-colonial, unified 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1996) lest we forget to remember it as such. Satellite mappings further displace in our minds the dialectic relationship of slow cartographic



Fig.2a,b,c and d - The process of drystone assembling scaled in 'The Measure of the Land'.²

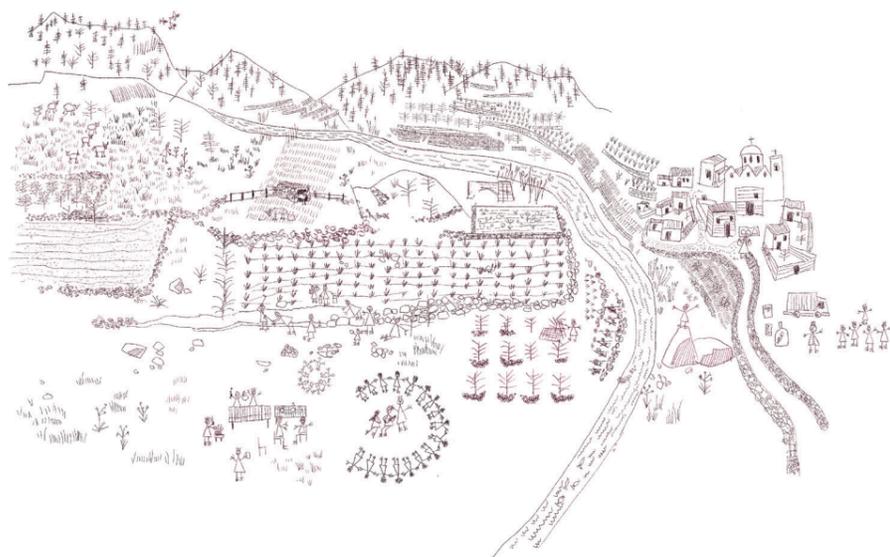


Fig.3 - The Salamiou Terraced Landscape, by Aaron Gatt 2025.³



Fig.4 - Aaron Gatt, codified elements used in the murals for the exhibition titled "To the stones, we lent you our breath and you whispered it back to the earth", pamphlet for the Venice Architectural Biennale, 2025.

and individual measure. We need alternative mappings: of invested time that inform a widened perception of this rural in-betweenness; of experiences, of devoted lives lived along its three-dimensional relief; of convivial labour; of celebrated intangible livelihoods, or even, of immersive experiences in environments of more than human adaptability.

The island's finiteness becomes alarming when effects of extractive policies and environmental degradation are quantified: for example, both 2021 and 2025 wildfires have together destroyed about 200 sq.km. of forest and

largely abandoned terraced landscape, affecting many already struggling rural settlements. The north has shown equal incapability of controlling wildfires. These latest fires alone measure roughly a 2% loss, illustrating an irreversible desertification countdown. Conversely, CopernicusEMS post-event satellite fire-mapping, shows that cultivated drystone terraces inhibit the spread of fires (Azman-Momirski, 2023).

The island's architectural practice distances itself from uncomfortable realities; of military waste; bombs, minefields, discarded bullet contamination, chemical weaponry,

open-air brown-pits, junk-yards, deconstruction sites, disused mines, mine-waste. Capitalocene extraction of the island's resources, particularly where water was once meticulously harvested through communal terracing, turns landscape into wounds of both war and commercial aggression. This perpetuates collective memory loss through displacement and is escalated by a systemic industry which removes meanings from the landscape just like war does, but in the guise of lower-than-war-intensity development. Like war, non-convivial (Given, 2016) development equally defaces and eradicates. Political separation further negates possibilities for former communities to return to ancestral lands, making it also hard for architecture to see a way back into designing a more collective and convivial way of being and becoming, through material practices.

RELEARNING HOW TO GATHER, SORT AND ASSEMBLE

Memory, meaning and knowledge of still active communal ways of living and cultivation through sharing and caring, can inform current projects particularly by exploring the notion of technics as 'poesis' (Heidegger, 1977), as a way of thinking, being in, and engaging with the world. This approach lends itself particularly in the defence of terraced landscapes (Floridou, 2020, Astreou-Karides et al., 2025) created by historically marginalised communities. For, while the island has experienced over 500 years of continuous colonial subjection (Venetian rule 1485, Ottoman conquest 1570, British colonialism 1878-1960), its scarcely mentioned multicultural population has always been stratified horizontally along class instead of vertically along ethnic differences. Meaning that architectural remnants and agrarian practices traced in the topography bear witness to ways of convivial but also non-convivial living (Given, 2016). By studying and analyzing their operational

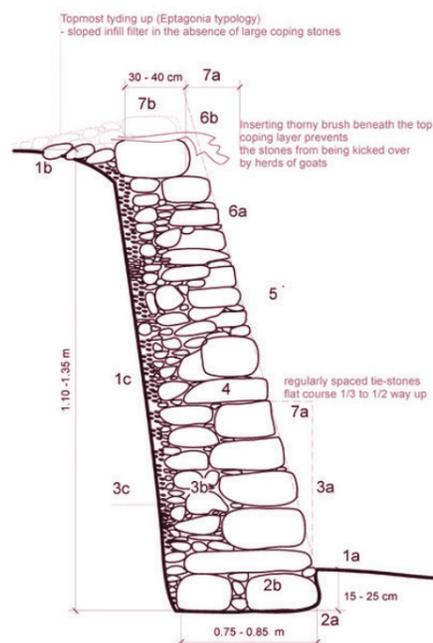
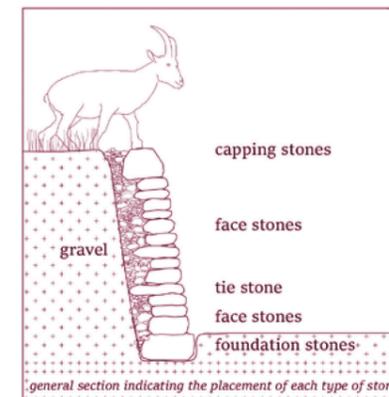


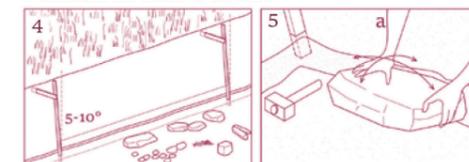
Fig.5 - Drystone wall section detail, Sevina Floridou.⁴

chains (Catapoti-Relaki, 2020), particularly of drystone construction which evolves in just three steps of gathering, sorting and assembling, consequences and implications become apparent and meaningful.

The eastern Mediterranean's almost 10,000-year-old 'Fertile Crescent', arching from Persia, across Mesopotamia over the Levant, has cultivated terraced foodscapes by interconnected communities. Cyprus shares this geography that determines its history in the long duration (Braudel, 1946). Yet, in the Capitalocene, this wider region has experienced late-industrial transformations that fracture communities and land through systems of value extraction. The disruption of these relations by colonial, genocidal and ecocidal violence, has seen the continuous displacing of people and militarising ecologies. From the early 20th c. convivial farming communities of Asia Minor and Armenia, have been erased to militarise corridors through Kurdistan, and Syria, continuing throughout the century to farming communities along the Euphrates, Palestine, Lebanon and Yemen, devoured by western-enabled military expansionism. Surviving drystone practicing communities may perhaps be last remnants of this ageless foodscape,

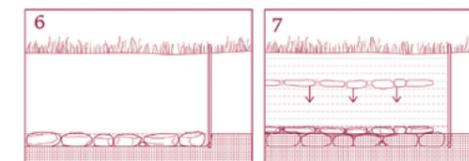


Stone types. Foundation stones are the largest stones available. Face stones have a clean vertical surface and are more or less rectangular. They are used for the outer face of the wall. Gravel is comprised of the smallest stones available that will be used to drain out water. Infill stones are medium-sized, irregular-shaped stones. Chinking stones are small, flat, irregular-shaped stones that are used to stabilize larger stones. Tie-stones are oblong stones that should span the width of the wall and help bind the wall together. Capping stones are thick stones used to cover the top of the wall. Corner stones have at least one distinct 90° corner and are used to construct the corner of the wall.



4. Place poles at an angle of 5-10° at either side of the trench and tie a cord from one to the other to use as a guide.

5. Place the foundation stones so they do not move or wobble. The next course will stabilize them completely.



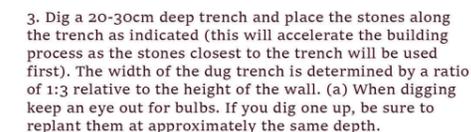
6-7. After completing the first course of foundation stones continue with the next course of face stones working your way with infill stones from the front towards the back of the layer so that the wall thickness is at least two stones thick. The gap between the face stones and the embankment is filled in with the gravel. proceed to the next course only after completing the previous one.



1. After ploughing the field, collect the surfaced stones and move them to the construction area.



2. Sort the collected stones according to their types.



3. Dig a 20-30cm deep trench and place the stones along the trench as indicated (this will accelerate the building process as the stones closest to the trench will be used first). The width of the dug trench is determined by a ratio of 1:3 relative to the height of the wall. (a) When digging keep an eye out for bulbs. If you dig one up, be sure to replant them at approximately the same depth.

drystone manual by Aaron Gatt

Fig.6 - Aaron Gatt, Biennale pamphlet illustrating a modified, contemporary drystone operational chain of gathering, sorting and assembling.

which carry value beyond farming functionality, to evoke artscapes, memoryscapes, craftscapes and languagescapes.

Drawing on language, our island's ongoing intercommunal conflicts from the mid 20th c. and subsequent uneasy ceasefire, has led to fragmenting memory, particularly witnessed in loss of indigenous water-sharing terminology. Post-invasion displacement of over 30% of the population has decimated vocabularies, manipulated between two official languages that both disdain their dialects, in which, however, caring for land and water

is inscribed. Within this context, shared resilient drystone practices and their vocabularies, preserve and teach a way of opposing systems of dispossession and ecological degradation, defending instead a system of value rooted in collective care and fair access to the land.

An intersection point between such convoluted realities occurs with our own transience, when crossing over human agency into the natural world. Drystone construction can thus conceptualise a return of architecture to one of its original roles; one that creates relationships between people and which fosters meaningful

Sources:
 A. Θεοδοσίου, Α. Πήττα, (2022). Εγχειρίδιο Κατασκευής Δομών σε Ορεινές Αναβαθμίδες στην Κύπρο. 3PRO-TROODOS.
 Γ. Μιχαήλ, Ε. Παγκρατίου, Ν. Πουλογιάνη, (2009). Εγχειρίδιο Επεριθητικών Κατασκευών: Τοίχοι. Interreg II
 Donatella Murtas, (2023). Pietra su pietra. Costruire, mantenere, recuperare i muri in pietra a secco. Semirurali.

relationships between humans, and the more-than-human environment. This counters the industrialised, privatised 'architecture as spectacle', denouncing it as extractive, exclusive (and exclusionary).

The sophistication of assembled stones has always witnessed entropies inherent to each epoch; stones become dry registers of data, measuring instruments of time, investment, assets, population decline, but also of growth and innovation. In Salamou for example, within a radius of 5 Km, 2000 years of continuous farming history are identified through oral memories of drystone. Stone age querns lying about, push back agriculture another 7000 years.

Just as the penciled stripes along a doorpost in our house marking our daughter's height speak emotionally to us, they are more than just the height of our child: they also bear witness to our life of raising her, of her growing up. Emmerik (2022) likewise imbues architectural landscapes with poetry where the geological, the natural world and human imagination converge.

CONCLUSION

My own positionality resonates with Berta Flaquer's mention of Henri Lefebvre's insight, that urbanization as a process of architectural drawing and design does not begin or end at a city's boundary, but needs to engage with landscape which is fast becoming an undefined, liminal space on the edge of (ever encroaching) urbanity. Observing his own hometown in the Pyrenees transformed by sulphur extraction, (Lefebvre, 1970) was led to theorize the transition of the rural to the urban—or what he called the process of urbanization. This led him to formulate the radical hypothesis of the *complete urbanization of society*, if left unchecked (Flaquer 2025).

How then, does architecture design sustainably in the midst of extractive processes that are tipping beyond the physics of entropy? The current established order of our profession often begrudges the

intangible art of drystone, asking, "But is this architecture?" and, "Why is it architecture?" Re-learning from alternative ways of defending and care of landscape resources, through collective engagement can integrate into architectural drawing, so as to bridge divides, montaging between ecology and aftermaths of conflict. Yldırım (2025) proposes a concept of 'War-torn Ecologies' a term gesturing towards shared grounds that unite short and long-term affects of all forms of violence. Yldırım considers how these are lived in and resisted in the present by humans and more-than-human life. Architectural drawing needs to learn from, and design around these.

In contrast to the architecture of building, where the natural is typically supplanted by artificial practicalities, Emmerik defines the field of landscape architecture as shaped by a multi-faceted interconnectedness between humans and environment, coexisting with the natural, the cultural, between the tangible and the imaginary, the practical and the poetic.

Architecture needs to evolve a grammar of site-specific deep mapping that takes such creative resilience into consideration, and alternative ways of being need to be considered in design, beyond the anthropocentric measure (within the



Fig.7 - October 2025, drystone workshop, Limassol.⁵

Capitalocene) which places humans above nature.

Both Emmerik and Yldırım support a radically inclusive attitude, a principle of equality, where humans realise that there is no separation. The close-up materiality of drystone construction bears this out; a merging that initiates re-defining architecture's relationship to the land, requiring that it touch the earth lightly.

Engaging with drystone practices, one becomes aware of Yldırım's proposed 'montages' of small-scale resilient events, often surviving only as memories, onto the larger political picture. Such actions de-center definitions of top-down approaches, allowing scholars and architects to explore other meanings in their designs that evoke different valuation systems (Ireland 2017, Ireland et al, 2025).

Elytis (1979), sums up hope for a shared future of resistance; particularly defending living and terraced landscapes:

"... [Society today] looks and sees nothingness. We gaze in the same way and see the totality of everything. Where the Truth lies, will become apparent one day when we are no longer here. But it will be, if it is worthwhile, the work of one of us. And that will save the honor of us all - and the honour of our time..."

WORKS CITED

ANDERSON, Benedict (1996). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London, New York.

ASMAN-MOKMIRSKI, Lucija, Bevk Tadej (2023). *Firescapes in Slovenia*, Faculty of Architecture University of Ljubljana, 13th Eucaland Scientific Workshop, *Firescapes, Institute for Research on European Agricultural Landscapes (EUCALAND)*, Conference presentation, Kalavassos, Cyprus, 31st March-2nd April.

ASTREOU-KARIDES Seta et al. (2025). "To the stones, we lent you our breath and you whispered it back to the earth", Cyprus deputy Ministry of Culture – Department of Contemporary Culture and Fisherwomxn.

BRAUDEL, Fernand (1995) *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II*, reprinted, University of California press.

CATAPOTI, D, RELAKI, M. (2020). *Why the Neolithic is (r)evolutionary*, Journal of Material Culture, journals.sagepub.com/home/mcu, p. 1-20.

EMMERIK, Joost (2022). *Taking Root*, Inaugural lecture, Academy of Architecture, Amsterdam University of the Art, p.6.

DALL, Amica, et al. (2024). *Material Cultures, Material Reform, Building for a Post-Carbon future*, Mack, mackbooks.co.uk, p. 12, 80-85.

ΕΛΥΤΗΣ, Οδυσσεύς (1979). *Η Βαρβαρότητα, Δήλωση του ποιητή Οδυσσεύς Ελύτη*, 19 Οκτωβρίου 1979, με αφορμή την αναγγελία για τη βράβειυσή του με το Νόμπελ Λογοτεχνίας.

<https://www.imerodromos.gr/odusseas-eluths-h-varvarothta/>

FLAQUER, Berta (2025). Territories of Extraction: Mapping Palimpsests of Appropriation, Landezine, 16 July.

https://landezine.com/territories-of-extraction-mapping-palimpsests-of-appropriation/?utm_source=breno&utm_campaign=Landezine%20Weekly%2016_07&utm_medium=email

FLORIDOU, Sevina (2020). *The Small Vast World: Abandonment and Revival of Terraced Vineyards in Salamou Cyprus*, Journal of Terraced Landscapes Vol 1 num 1, 103-129, University of Coventry, Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR) DOI:10.5281/zenodo.5840379.

GIVEN, Michael (2016). *The precarious conviviality of water mills*, Archaeological Dialogues, 25(1), pp. 71-94, University of Glasgow,

IRELAND, Tracy (2017). *Quotidian Utopia: Orhan Pamuk's The Museum of Innocence and the heritage of love*, *Future Anterior*, University of Canberra.

THWAITES, Denise, TURNER, Bethaney, IRELAND, Tracy, eds. (2025). *Alternative Economies of Heritage: sustainable, anti-colonial and creative approaches to Cultural Inheritance*, Routledge, New York.

TRENTIN, Mia Gaia (2020). *Cahiers du*

centre d'études Chypriotes No 50, Centre d'études Chypriotes, Lyon, 'Ecole Francaise d'Athènes, p.277-304.

XATZHKYPIAKOY, Αντώνης (2023). *Χερσαίο Νησί*, Ψηφίδες, Θεσσαλονίκη, p.361.

YILDIRIM, Umut (2023). *War-torn Ecologies, Human and More-than-Human Intersections of Ethnography and the Arts*, in *War-torn Ecologies, An-Archic Fragments: Reflections from the Middle East*, ed. by Umut Yildirim, Cultural Inquiry, 27, Berlin: ICI Berlin Press, pp. 1–25. https://doi.org/10.37050/ci-27_1

YILDIRIM, Umut (2025). *Plenary talk 2, War-torn Ecologies, An-archic Fragments: Reflections from the Middle East*, Celadon Conference, Learning with Mountains: Recalibrating how we understand art and planet, Celadon Center for Arts & Ecologies, Nicosia, Kapedes, Cyprus, 07.02.2025.

NOTES

1. This text derives from research prepared for an exhibition and a catalogue, co-curated for the Cyprus Pavilion at the 2025, 19th International Architecture Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia by the author. The exhibition presented drystone heritage through its effects on 'land as landscape', while the multi-authored catalogue explored 'land as language'. One month after its release, the catalogue was officially banned by the Cyprus Deputy Ministry of Culture, following a presidential order, which censored the work for not adhering to the "official political narrative", and for including the two Cypriot dialects instead of modern Greek; despite the fact that freedom of speech is enshrined in the Cyprus constitution. The writers and publishers did not accept the censorship and the catalogue sold out. Opinions, mistakes or positions cited here are solely those of the author and do not reflect official political positions and opinions of the current government of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC).

2. The Measure of the Land' expresses the material world of collective memory: (2a,b) Panayiotis Panayiotou, Salamou drystone mason explaining how stones are selected and wedged together without the use of binding mortar. (2d,e) A drystone orchard enclosure located south-east of Salamou and possibly dated to the 14thc. through a traveller's description. Photographs by Demetris Loutsios, 2025.

3. The Salamou terraced landscape is one of a series of murals by Aaron Gatt, for the 2025 Cypriot participation titled "To the stones, we lent you our breath and you whispered it back to the earth", presented at the Venice Architectural Biennale. The exhibition evolved on the author's research and the murals undertook the role of alternative mappings, inspired by medieval secular graffiti (Instagram: Cypriot graffiti), which is being collected by Gatt for Mia Gaia Trentin's work on medieval inscriptions. Gatt's mapping narratives derive from a collective preparatory engagement between the biennale team, of architects, artists, writers, and local craftspeople, who worked together with social anthropologists Maria Angelica Salas and Timmi Tillman, of the International Terraced Landscapes

Alliance. Salas and Tillman shared their Participatory Action methodology which they have evolved to help farming communities from all over the world, to remember shared heritage that modern way of life has pushed into oblivion, bringing it out of deep consciousness. The exercise outcome reflects transformations but also disruptions of broader geographical and socio-political context, rooted in deep memory, through a grammar of rudimentary illustrations that the team collectively adopted.

4. The drystone wall section detail illustrates the sequence of assembling by identifying 8 different stone sizes when collecting and clearing them from farm-fields: (1a,1b) Lower and upper ground level. (2a) A foundation trench is dug out. Its depth is determined by the stability of soil, the quantity of rain. (2b) Alternate foundation stones are laid ("put to sleep") in two parallel rows with the next row laid across, the upper stone always covering the lower joints between stones. (3a) Regular faced stones are selected for the front of the wall. Those that touch are said to "kiss" in the local dialect. (3b) Irregular stones are wedged behind each face stone and the horizontal width of each layer is tightly packed in, behind each ascending row with smaller chinking stones. (3c) The back is filled with progressively smaller, irregular stone wedges, terminating in gravel infill that needs to be poured in beside the earthen scarp, to form a filter that helps to increase the surface area of flowing rainwater, thus retarding its flow while helping it infiltrate the soil. (4) At regular intervals horizontally, and every 3-4 rows vertically, through-stones are placed to span the width of the construction in order to tie together the two sides of the stone wall. (5) As the wall progresses upwards, it must do so at a slant, to secure its stable settling against the scarp slope. (6a) Smaller stones are used progressively upwards, with careful shaping of the last row before the capping. (6b) The top of the wall is shaped by large, heavy capping stones, if available, or a slanted filter sloping inwards to contain silt run-off preventing it from washing away. (7a) The slope is determined as 7.5-15cm every 30 cm, or a cm in for each row. (7b) The overall slope is about 10 degrees. In order to test the slope, you lay your back against it; it should feel comfortable. Gaps left between the stones, or even constructed, become habitats for flora and fauna.

5. October 2025, drystone workshop to inaugurate the historic orchard of Niki Fytidou, courtesy of Limassol Municipality to whom it was bequeathed. The circular drystone exhibit of the 2025 Venice Biennale was reconstructed here as a space of informal community gatherings, together with volunteers from 'Friends of the Earth'. Photograph by Melios Agathangelou.