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Introduction

Women and Terraces

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The section “Experiences from the field” of this issue of the ITLA journal presents three articles focusing on Women and Terraces approaching the special relationship of women with nature in mountainous areas. A common trait in the articles is the use of innovative methodologies. Group conversations as the source for gathering information, the combination of historical sources with poetry and photography, as well as putting at the centre the personal testimony collected by phone calls. The three articles highlight the voices of women, who express their feelings, memories and reflections about the work and life in the vertical space of the terraces.

The first article is “Stone Breaking in Skirts. Women Building terraces in Pelendri Village, Pitsillia, Cyprus”, written by Dr. Artemis Yiordamli. She transports us to a Mediterranean Island with a long history of a strong agrarian economy, and terraced landscapes crafted with love and sense of beauty. The transformations of life and work are recalled by a group of six local women, between 85 and 60 years old, who narrated and shared their experiences in meaningful conversations from different perspectives. The elder women participated fully in all aspects of the productive work in the terraces with a degree of independence and gratification concerning food production. Although they experienced the harshness of life in their own bodies, they also enjoyed the benefits of living in community. The middle-aged women helped in agricultural terracing without taking actively part in all tasks. The younger women just observed the agricultural work from the distance, concentrating their efforts in reproductive and domestic activities.

All of them remember that modernization of rural life brought some advantages in softening the home duties as well as new opportunities to work away from home on a salary base in the fruit plantations and in the construction of roads. Different than expected, the conditions were unbearable for their bodies, and they were obliged to hand

over their wages earned to the family head or husband.

The comparison of the times, when women dedicated fully to agricultural terracing and their multiple roles as mothers, home carers, food providers for the family, generated the awareness that ecological and sociocultural values are the key for maintaining the terraces productive on the hillsides. Moreover, women who dedicate with self-confidence and self-esteem working on the terraces experience a rewarding relationship with nature.

The second article “Femmene minute cu’ a forza’ e’ nu gigante” (little women with a giant’s power) in the terraced landscape of Amalfi Coast, Italy, by Dr. Giorgia De Pasquale. This contribution traces back the ancestral relationship between women and the steep Mediterranean coastal landscape. While men were dedicated to activities on the sea, women remained working at the terraces masterfully constructed overlooking the sea.


Using historical sources, combined with selected fragments of poetry as well as photos corresponding to the time frame, the author describes a vertical landscape, in which agricultural activities take place. Women walk up and down narrow paths, vertiginous stairs to accomplish the home care duties and the demanding agricultural work only possible due to a bodily confidence and a precise knowledge of the territory. Women’s connection to the vertical space reveals a symbiotic relationship between the female body and steep nature of the landscape, which is the key for the protection of the terraces and its paradisiac beauty.

The third article “Between the countryside and the city: Female Rurality & Situated Knowledge” by the Peruvian sociologist Rocio Romero deals with an unprecedented event in Peru during the Emergency of the COVID pandemic. Between March and December 2020 city dwellers of rural origin returned to their original communities in order to escape from the horrors of minimal survival chances caused by the pandemic and the policy response of total lockdown. A significant percentage of the people returning to the fields were women.

Due to long friendship bonds between the author and Griselda, a bilingual teacher in Puno, they communicated by phone during the lockdown period, conversations that depicted a process of rediscovery of the well-being for the family and the community in the countryside.

This article privileges the voice and the reflections of Griselda. She reconstructs her agricultural knowledge based on memories. Water management, weather forecast, medicinal plants, cultivating the soil and animal raising are explained within the complexities of the natural world, from the Andean cultural perspective that conceptualizes all is alive and humans are part of nature. This worldview is the key to protect and maintain agricultural terraces.

Article



Dr. Artemis Yiordamli (Cyprus):

D. Phil. (Oxon), lawyer, human geographer, is the co-founder of two NGOs now in their 30th year: *Terra Cypria the Cyprus Conservation Foundation*, and *Laona Foundation for the Conservation and Regeneration of the Cypriot Countryside*, which she still directs. Laona Foundation has observer status on the European Landscape Convention, was instrumental in Cyprus adopting the ELC, and in the introduction of landscape mapping and assessment to the island. Aided by EU funding, Laona participated in transferring the methodology to Greece, Jordan and Lebanon. Artemis has a long involvement in working with local communities, and is especially interested in identifying their 'hidden' assets and enhancing their cultural and natural heritage.

Stone-breaking in Skirts

Women building terraces in Pelendri village, Pitsillia, Cyprus

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Artemis YIORDAMLI

Artemis Yiordamli, D. Phil (Oxon), Executive Director of the Laona Foundation for the Conservation and Regeneration of the Cypriot Countryside; director@laona.org

ABSTRACT

In the early part of the 20th century, the island of Cyprus in the East Mediterranean, then a British colony, had a mostly agrarian economy to which the whole family contributed its labour during the harvesting seasons (vineyards, carobs, olives, fruits, potatoes), if not all year round. So, village women were a regular part of the farming scene, working alongside their menfolk, whether it was sowing, tending to their cultivations, or maintaining the dry-stone walls that supported the terraces.

In the fifties and sixties, in the wake of the island's independence came early tourism and light industry, as well as road works and other infrastructure. At that time, while village men joined the work force, it was mainly women who took charge of the family's agricultural activities, including maintaining the terraces on their land (terraces were officially encouraged to support the soils and prevent erosion).

This paper focuses on six women farmers of different ages from the mountain village of Pelendri, in the vine growing Pitsillia area, who exchange memories and observations. They include the choice of stones selected for wall-making; the incentives received as encouragement for maintaining stone walls, in the form of foodstuffs; and the special challenges that women had to face being both full-time farmers, as well as homemakers and carers.

KEYWORDS

terraces, women, Pelendri, dry-stone walls, Cyprus



Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean (9251 km²) and a land use map from the 1950's by geographer Demetris Christodoulou, shows a large part of it covered in terraced vineyards. This is not the case today. Although many terraces survive in the Troodos Mountain range, many are abandoned, reclaimed by natural growth, and others have merged into the hilly landscape, discernible only to the trained eye. The rock formations that underlie the island are of such variety – from creamy-white limestone and other sedimentary rocks to the dark lavas and igneous rocks – that there are noticeable differences between terraces in colour and shape of stone, as well as building techniques (Figure 1). For example, the way of interjecting small stones to close the gaps among bigger ones has a characteristic aspect which differs in the country itself, and also from similar terracing carried out in neighbouring countries such as Syria.

It was the observation that the 'bigger stones' were not so very big in the terraces of Pelendri (a village in the Pitsillia region of the Troodos Mountain range); and the suggestion that this is because women were heavily involved in terracing (adapting the choice of stones to



Figure 1. Dry-stone terrace maintenance workshop in Alona, Cyprus (© Christos Zoumides, The Cyprus Institute, 2015).

their carrying capacity), that led the author of this paper to investigate further. Was this really the case? Was there something to be learned here?

Eleni, a teacher of IT (Figure 2) in the district high school and member of a farming family in Pelendri, agreed to bring together six women involved in stone terracing in the past, for an unstructured joint interview. The process was loosely based on a questionnaire to help jog memories and to ‘move their story along’. It was felt that meeting them all together would act as a springboard, so to speak, helping to bring up more memories and experiences. The meeting took place on a hot July afternoon, supported with delicacies made for us by Eleni, the convener of the meeting, who is also the daughter and daughter-in-law of two of the six lady stone-wallers present. Their ages varied from early 60s to mid-80s. Although their experience was based on working on their families’ land (vineyards and other cultivations) it soon became evident that the older women had the fuller experiences and, also, the more taxing ones. The two older ones had done it all, from selecting and carrying stones to actually participating in building the terraces, whereas the



Figure 2. The five women from Pelendri village who shared their memories with Artemis are seen from left to centre: Antigoni, Nitsa, Anthousa, Xenia and on the front right, Niki. Extreme right: IT teacher Eleni Santi, who made the meeting possible.

70-year-olds had joined the family on the land, helped with selecting and carrying stones, but the heavy work and construction was done by the men.

The two younger women (in their 60's) had helped farm the land, but mainly watched the terracing process, although they claimed familiarity with it. They all assured me that their experiences were typical of their generation and were replicated by women in all the villages of the area. Their narratives exposed the harshness of life for those who worked on the land. All of them carried out their daily domestic chores on top of the farm work, at a time when washing-powder, let alone washing-machines, were an unknown commodity. Two of the older ones had gone into labour during or just after returning from their work on the land, and certainly there was no let up for women during their difficult days of the month in a society to which the sanitary towel was yet unknown. Graphic explanations were given about the use of strips of material which per force were changed only when the women got home in the evening for a wash in the tub, after heating water on a log fire. (Those familiar with hot Mediterranean climates will be aware that exposure to the heat causes much heavier period flows, especially if accompanied by active labour and carrying of weights; so it is to marvel that women kept going, come what may).

Did the women have any happy memories from those times? It appeared not. The only happy memories were unconnected to the land. For example, during the Carnival time (12 days just before Lent) women called upon each other's homes dressed up as men or covered in sheets and had innocent fun.

By contrast, the litany of bad memories were *all* associated with the land and related to aching backs (which persisted through their lives), long hours and demanding fathers. The older ones whose memories were drawn from the 1940s and 50's had been taken out of primary school and put on the land, while the boys were allowed to finish schooling. Loading the family donkey figured often in their reminiscences, as well as a less common experience: the annual visit of the official land steward. He assessed how many metres of terrace had been maintained, what the land had produced, and how long the water flowing through the common water channel, should be allowed to each cultivator for use

on his land. The steward wielded considerable authority. In an agrarian society constantly threatened by the vicissitudes of climate and rainfall, the man who received a monthly government salary commanded immense respect, even today, as they recalled him from their memories. The land steward also claimed respect because he and his men handed out the coupons for the government-supplied free food items: sugar, cooking oil, bully beef, that contributed to the family budget. Our meeting convener, now in her forties, remembered being instructed by her mother to take the coupons and be at a certain field at a certain time so as not to miss out, when the food items van would arrive. The two older women had gone from working on the land to working on the construction of public roads, their terrace building experience having stood them in good stead. They removed the earth and stones and spread the tar in unbearable conditions, due not only to the sun,



Figure 3. *Under such conditions of back-breaking toil from sunrise to dark, few Cypriot women can keep alive the Aphrodite tradition (The National Geographic Magazine, Issue #1, 1928).*

but also to the heat exuded by the flames of the tar-layer machine itself. But the women were paid a regular wage, and they liked the feeling of earning their own pay, even if most of it was handed over to their father.

Many social historians consider that mining in the early 20th century was what took men off the fields, creating the first working classes and the forerunners of trade unions. Working on the roads – a labouring occupation that attracted both men and women – seems to have been over-looked as a major contributor to mass labour beyond the field. And yet, these tasks dating from the 1920's carried on well into the 1950's and 60's, with women as part of the work force, even though they were paid less than men, because of their comparatively lesser 'horsepower' (Figure 3).



Figure 4. *'Helene and her mother are breaking rocks to be used in connection with road work. Though the child's hands were horny with tasks which were suitable for men, a fine spirit speaks from her gentle face' (The National Geographic Magazine, Issue #1, 1928).*

Other women had moved on from picking stones off the ground (Figure 4) on their land to picking oranges off the trees in the low-land orange plantations. At a time when the only means of transport was one bus going down in the morning and one returning in the afternoon, they would leave at the crack of dawn for the two-hour journey on the long and winding road. They wore trousers under their skirts to shield them from male eyes as they climbed ladders pitched against the citrus trees. Their arms ached, and they knew that on return there would be children waiting, meals to cook, cleaning, washing, and ironing; but they were getting a regular wage. For farming families with unpredictable incomes from the land, that regular pay was important and made it all worthwhile.

So, what came out of this meeting in Pelendri village and the stirring of common memories?

The affirmation that women played an active role in terracing in the days when farming was an active occupation. The confirmation that those times were hard, and women had to play all roles: farmer, mother, home-carer, with farming always being the top priority, even as they were about to give birth. And yet, despite the hard conditions, they stated that their lives held more interest, adventure, and novelty than women of the same age today whose lives revolve around 'softer' options. The technological advances that appeared over the years (such as refrigerators, purpose-built bathrooms) improved their quality of life immensely and were never taken for granted. An unexpected find was the fact that women went on from stone terracing to even harder 'careers' as road-makers, complementing, the male workforce. As mentioned, regular pay was the lure that brought women off the farm, so it is fair to say that women, too, contributed to forming the first working-classes. And even though they were not urban, in the sense of being landless and forced into the cities (but neither were most miners landless), these were the first instances in the 20th century of women working outside the family in a 'mixed' occupation with men who were not members of their family.

There are projects today, notably in villages such as Alona, Platanistasa, and Polistipos in the Troodos Mountain range, working to revive the craft of dry stonewalling, in

coordination with the Cyprus Institute. Men and women attend, mostly as a weekend activity. The focus these days, when agriculture is much diminished, is also on the environmental benefits of stone terraces, as natural habitats and for protection against soil erosion. Cyprus has just suffered catastrophic forest fires (June-July 2021) which burnt out about 55km² of forest and agrarian land. There is much talk of taking action to prevent erosion of the devastated hill sides, especially on land intended to be replanted in due course. Might this lead to a revival of dry-stone walling and the agriculture it supports?


Post scriptum: Since this paper was written the Laona Foundation has organised the restoration of more than 150 metres of stone walls on burnt lands.

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Article



Giorgia De Pasquale (Italy):

Is a PhD Architect. Her activity focuses primarily on Mediterranean landscape, rural areas and architecture of stone. She was born in Rome in 1982, she grew up between the southern shore of Sicily and Pantelleria island. She studied Architecture at the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPS) in Barcelona and at Roma Tre University in Rome, where she graduated cum laude with a final thesis on Mediterranean terraced landscapes (*Riflessioni su alcuni tratti peculiari del paesaggio mediterraneo* was subsequently published as a book in 2013).

From the very beginning, as an architect, she focused attention on cultural landscapes and on the role of contemporary architecture in the protection of built and natural heritage. In 2006 she completed the II level International Master *Architettura-Storia-Progetto* at the Roma Tre School of Architecture (director: Mario Manieri Elia) and, in 2007, a course in Restauración arquitectónica offered by the University of Valladolid (director: Ignacio Bermejo Represa). In 2011, she holds a Ph.D. in Architecture in Venice (Learning from the Mediterranean, International Ph.D. *Villard d'Honnecourt*, was in 2016 published as a book *Viaggio nel Mediterraneo. La costruzione di un paesaggio attraverso l'iconografia dello spazio architettonico*).

Femmene minute cu' 'a forza 'e 'nu gigante **(Little women with a giant's power) in the** **terraced landscape of Amalfi Coast**

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ABSTRACT

Women have always had a fundamental role in taking care of the terraced landscape in Amalfi Coast.

The ancestral relationship between women and their landscape has ancient origins and it is based on the fact that, while activities at sea, since the times of the Maritime Republic, were exclusive to the male world, on land women played all the roles, acquiring a very high knowledge of the territory and a high degree of independence thanks to the prolonged absence of men. *Furmechelle* (little ants) was the name the Amalfitan community called rural women, because of their hard and endlessly work.

Little ants with a giant strength carried during centuries lemons, food, soil, and everything connected with the rural life from terraced gardens as far as the sea.

This article traces the symbiotic relationship between the female body and everyday vertical places of the terraced landscape in Amalfi Coast. Older women proudly remember today: *Avimmo faticato sempre* (we strongly worked all day in agriculture). A form of pride and care that is still present among women and that and that we can use as an important key in strategies of protection of the landscape of the Amalfi Coast.

KEYWORDS

terraced landscape, Amalfi coast, agriculture, rural spaces, mediterranean architecture



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The construction of a landscape

Landscape in Amalfi Coast is formed by the juxtaposition of terraced agricultural patches overlooking the sea and superimposed in an urban micro plot of small hamlets and scattered houses.

As Unesco underlined, this landscape is a significant example of successful interaction between nature and human's work (Figure 1) (Unesco, 1997). Here, patches of semi-wild vegetation coexist with the orderly architecture of the terracing planted with pergolas that form an architectural weave of tiny patches overhanging the sea and masterfully adapted to the orography.



Figure 1. Amalfi Coast in Campania Region. The yellow area was inscribed in the WHL Unesco.

Human activity in the area began with the Imperial Tourism, starting with Tiberius Villa in Capri, and continuing with the colonisation of the coast by Roman patricians looking for a retreat in the Campania Felix. Stazio first describe this wild nature as «divine» (Stazio, 93 AD).

Wild nature turns slowly in a Mediterranean garden of fruit trees, vines and olive trees during the Middle Ages. The large capitals accumulated through the mercantile activities of the Maritime Republic were reinvested in the land. Men and women built stone walls to make the land arable and fertile. And they succeeded. Agricultural activity begins to flourish with the discoveries of the Arab and the *Scuola Medica of Salerno*. This increased the demand for citrus fruits, determining prices in such a way to justify the investments needed to terracing dating back to 950-1025 AD.

In the 12th century, Beniamino di Tudela writes that the inhabitants of Amalfi “have an abundance of fruit, for it is a land of vineyards and olives, of gardens and plantations and no one can do war with them” (Adler, 1907, p.9).

This virtuous co-evolutionary process goes on along for centuries. Since the twelfth century, this flourishing agriculture has been integrated with silviculture, mainly chestnut groves, both for fruit as well as wood, which, as we will see, is closely linked to citrus cultivation. Bare rock was - with wonderful bravery - crushed, dry stone walls were built and the terracing was filled with soil transported by hand from the valley or the overlooking hills so that in 1836 Matteo Camera, inspector of the province of Salerno, writes: “the soil appears fertile and abundant with orange trees, lemon trees, and a kind of large citron trees, called ponsiri [...] orange trees, mulberry trees and many other different plants [...], it seems to recognize a small town of Persia, where each house is located in the middle of an enchanted garden” (Camera, 1836). The whole scene appears between “the peaks of the woods, the crests of the mountains” and the “various jagged edges of the underlying banks, open on an immense sea that spreads out in an endless space”. The view is judged as “varied, cheerful and inexpressible” and “the beauty of the landscape of the Coast is superior to any comparison and description”.

The hard work of men and women created the Amalfi landscape: terraces, scattered houses with vaulted roofs, lemon groves, pergolas, all these elements are crossed by a complex irrigation system made of masonry basins (*peschiere*), masonry canals (*scelloni*) and a capillary network of embankments dug into the ground by hoe.

1.2. The role of women in forging landscape's perception

Women have always contributed to the realization of this paradisiacal landscape. In the ex-Byzantine dukedom of Amalfi some sources show how women had control over property (Skinner, 2015). Throughout the Middle Ages, while men were at sea, women participated in the commercial life of the city, both as entrepreneurs and in agricultural activities.

Female labour was so important that in the eighteenth century, when the cultivation of lemons becomes the main activity, women became the backbone of the coastal economy, carrying heavy baskets of lemons (57 kg) on their heads (Figure 2), going down and up



Figure 2. Women carrying lemons in Valle dei Mulini, Amalfi, ca. 1905.



Figure 3. Women carrying wine in Piazza del Duomo, Amalfi, ca. 1905.

the narrow paths and vertiginous stairs of the Amalfi Coast. They used to walk in a single line along the steep slopes of the Coast with huge bags on their heads (Figure 3), with their backs straight and the head bent by the weight; without shoes, feet wrapped in rags, they walked with slow and proud step, despite the exhausting effort: a line of only women who looked like many little ants, in dialect *furmichelle* (little ants).

Over the centuries, the women of the Amalfi Coast continually descended and ascended their landscape: from home to the high mountains in the morning to collect firewood (Figure 4), and then lunch, the care of children and again a change of height, downhill or uphill, to reach the water sources or places of trade, to reach the lemons and bring them down to the sea, where the boats waited for the products to leave. The continuous up and down, which began in the morning and ended in the evening, created an inevitable symbiosis with the landscape (Figure 5), a bodily confidence with the spatial relationships of the paths and steps that still persists in women.



Figure 4. Women carrying wood, Amalfi, ca. 1905.



Figure 5. Women carrying stones and water, Vettica Minore, ca. 1905.

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

In this article my purpose is to approach the essence of this relationship, between the landscape and the body of women, using the words of some elder ladies, born in the higher parts of the Amalfi Coast between 1910 and 1920, interviewed by Rita Di Lieto and published in the book *Il lavoro delle donne. Storie delle zone alte della Costa d'Amalfi* (Di Lieto, 2015).

The testimonies are organized in an altitudinal order, that is, by landscape systems: from the forest of the mountain down to the sea, passing through the limestone rock, the ravines, and the cultivated terraces.

3. MOUNTAIN

The existence of a mountain near the sea was very important for the development of the local economy: inner areas provided water energy to drive mills, both oil mills and paper mills; firewood and charcoal provided thermal energy; chestnut wood was used for construction, furniture, boats and for the pergolas of vineyards and citrus groves. Although the recurring image of the Coast is that of lands that vertiginously overlook the sea, in reality there is an internal part from which many resources originate.

Women began to become familiar with the 'inner Coast' at a young age. The girls, in fact, had the task of *carriare* (carrying) the water from the springs to the house: they carried buckets and amphorae repeatedly up and down. Once they grew up, women could carry anything on their heads. Up to the post-war period all the products of the forest were carried down on foot on the head:

*Ho portato tutto dai boschi: sacchi di carboni, fascine, frasche, pali
Comme sunva miezajuone, accussi me menavoa copp'a muntagna
e venevo ccà a dà a sugà 'o criaturo*

*I carried everything from the woods: bags of coals, faggots, branches, poles.
As soon as I heard midday ring, I would run down the mountain to nurse the baby.*

Maria Paolillo in Migliorati

*Pur'io chella vita aggio fatte. Che vulite fa.
'E carbon, 'a ffrasc, 'e pali...secondo 'o tiempe, chelle che c'era a fa se faceve.*

*I've lived that life, too. What you want to do. The coals, the branches to cover the lemons, the
poles for the arbors...depending on the season, whatever needed to be done was done.*

Raffaella Pacileo

*Tenevamo i boschi. Si tagliavano, si facevano i pali, le fascine;
tenevamo gli animali e andavamo a prendere 'e ffronn' pe sott 'e vacche.
Facevo due viaggi al giorno...*

*We owned the woods. We cut them down and made poles, faggots.
We owned the animals and went into the woods to get leaves to put under the cows*

Fortunata Bellina

4. ROCKS AND WILD PLANTS

The limestone ribs descending down from the Lattari mountains in rough lines, break in great successive leaps to the sea and determine a series of precipitous spurs, wild gorges (Sestini, 1963). Near to the rock, in the wild fields, women usually gathered *o libbàno* (*Ampelodesmos mauritanicus*) and braided its sharp leaves to make brooms or mats.

Harvesting these leaves was a dangerous operation because the leaves cut the hands.

Mamma, che vita! E chi s' 'o ppò scurdà! Me facevo tutta ammatagnata, ammalagnata, tuta lividi, ero piena di rabbia e pensavo: e ché, non so comm all' aut, io?

Mom, what a life! And who can forget it! I was getting all battered and bruised, I was full of anger and I thought: what, I'm not like the others?

Celeste Galileo

The women also made rolls of dried grass to give to the cows:

O jévan a bagnà, ce mettévan io e Rosa, tutt'è doje, una da un lato e l'altra dall' altro, nginucchiata pe terra, cu 'nu mazzariello gruoss, facèvan 'na vranca 'e erba, arravugliàven vicin a chillo mazzariello e giràvan tuorno tuorn'.

Once it was wet, Rosa and I, all two of us, one on one side and the other on the other, knuckled down on the ground, with a large stick, we made a pile of grass and rolled it around the stick turning around

Celeste Galileo

5. CULTIVATED TERRACES

On the terraces, women took care of all agricultural activities: they shelled the ears of corn, crushed grapes, collected olives, 'e *sciusselle*, carobs; hoed the earth. In lemon gardens, being lighter, women climbed over the pergolas for pruning. They covered lemon trees when winter was coming; they tied the lemon branches to the pergolas. When it was time to uncover the lemons, they collected the bundles and carried them to sell them to the ovens.

*Io andavo sempre scalza, trasportavo i limoni da sotto Torello a Minori
e da Pastena e Pogerola ad Amalfi. Tenèvo 'e sole sotto 'e pièr!*

*I used to walk barefoot, carrying lemons from Torello to Minori and from Pastena and
Pogerola to Amalfi. The soles of my feet were so calloused that I looked like I had soles under my
feet.*

Elisabetta Aceto

Women also helped in the construction of the *macere*, the stonewalls, in support of a husband or father: they carried the stones, selected them in homogeneous groups, they transported the ground, they prepared concrete.

6. BEACHES AND SEA

Near the sea the women were in charge of the selection and packaging of the lemons. The fruits were patiently wrapped, one by one, in white tissue paper, while the top row consisted of lemons wrapped in coloured and decorated tissue paper. In this way, the thin and delicate tissue paper not only protected the fruit but also promoted, along with the product, the landscape and culture of the Coast. On the paper was printed Pulcinella, the donkey with the baskets and other local symbols to accompany the lemon to the conquest of distant worlds. Appropriately packaged in boxes, lemons were loaded onto sailing ships (Giuliano, 2001).

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Women's vertical world

We have seen how women were involved in many activities in the different altitudes of the landscape of the Coast, but the prevailing activity was that of transport: from the forest

to the sea, from the house to the village, women transported food, children, lemons, earth, wood, coal, water and wine.

The indispensable role of women manifests itself in the rhythm of a poem by a local poet, Giuseppe Di Lieto, titled 'E Furmechelle:

*E squarciaron' 'e muntagne, fabbricann' 'e macerine
poi regnennelle cu 'a terra r' 'e campagne a nuje vicine;
arrivava su una barca che attraccava a 'o Vignariello
e li femmene 'a carriavan oltre 'e torr' d'o Castiello.*

*E piantarono i limoni con sistema originale,
sostenendoli co' 'e pertecche, in un modo assai geniale;
e 'sti pertecche arrivavano sui traini a 'o Vignariello
e li femmene 'e carriavano oltre 'e torr' d'o Castiello.*

*Bisognava concimare e 'o cuncime p' 'e giardine
se scampava a rint' 'e puzz' delle case cittadine,
e 'o letame s'accucchiava sempe 'mmiez' 'o Vignariello
e li femmene 'o carriavano oltre 'e torr' d'o Castiello.*

*Cummugliavano cu 'e frasche, contro 'a grandine e 'a gelata,
tutte 'e piante d' 'e giardine, poco prima d' a vernata.
E curvate sott' 'e frasche, sempe 'a for' 'o Vignariello
chesti femmene 'e carriavano oltre 'e torr' d'o Castiello.*

*Poi veniva la raccolta, e cu' 'a forza 'e 'nu gigante,
chelli femmene minute sotto 'o sforzo massacrante
'e na sporta assai pesante, fin' abbascio 'o Vignariello
'e carriavano cantanno 'a copp' 'e torr' d'o Castiello.*

*E 'ntunavano 'na nenia che pareva 'na canzone,
e 'o pensiero gli volava alla misera magione
addo' attuorn' 'o fuculare tre criature e 'o picciusiello
aspettavano 'o ritorno 'a copp' 'e torre d'o Castiello.*

*And they broke the mountains, building dry stone walls
then filling them with earth from the nearby countryside;
the earth arrived on a boat that docked at 'o Vignariello
and the women carried it beyond the tower of Castiello.*

*And they planted the lemons with an original system,
supporting them with pergolas, in a very ingenious way;
and these "perliche" arrived on trawls at Vignariello
and the women carried them beyond the tower of Castiello.*

*It was necessary to fertilize and the fertilizer for the gardens
was taken inside the wells of the town houses,
and the manure was always piled up in Vignariello
and the women carried it beyond the tower of Castiello.*

*They covered with branches, against hail and frost,
all the plants of the garden, just before the winter.
And curved under the branches, always in front of Vignariello
these women carried them beyond the tower of Castiello.*

*Then came the harvest, and with the strength of a giant,
the tiny women with an exhausting effort
and a very heavy bag, till down to the Vignariello
and they used to sing in the tower of Castiello.*

And they sang a song that sounded like a song,

*and their thoughts flew to the miserable mansion
where around the fire three children and an infant
were waiting for the return of their mother from the tower of Castiello.*

While the poet tells about the landscape, the terraces, the boats, the pergolas, the lemons, the genius of the coastal community, the last verse is always the same, dedicated to women *the femmene che carriavano cantanno 'a copp' 'e torr' d'o Castiello*. A constant in the landscape, the point to which we always return: the woman.

As they were carrying, the women were able to create moments of cheerful sociability and support for each other. Singing played a key role, music helped to alleviate fatigue and calmed the children.

In walking, a parallel female world was formed, in which the rhythms were dictated by the older women, called *caporali*, who organised the routes, often acting in concert with another older woman, called “marescialla” who supervised the selection, storage of lemons and packaging in the warehouses.

In walking, women's work is freed from direct male control. The subordination of women to their fathers and husbands is temporarily interrupted in the dynamism of *carriare* activity.

In this feminine world a supporting economy lived, where women raised children with the support of other women and elders. Children were often taken out onto the terraces, in small baskets if infants, or free to play if older.

Carrying children, food, wood, sacks of coal, barrels of wine, baskets of lemons, baskets of vegetables, grass, water, from one terrace to another, women lived their territory in a very intense way, extending the care of their hearth to the entire landscape system. This shared history between women and landscape plays an important role in landscape protection strategies today.

The women of the Coast have long lived in harmony with nature, tending the land, cultivating it and harvesting its fruits. They were the last guardians of the rural landscape during the Second World War, when, in the absence of men engaged in fighting, women took full responsibility for the territory and an unparalleled degree of autonomy. After that the landscape slowly changed and the process of cultivated land erosion began. When comparing 1954 to 2016, the quantity of citrus grove areas really contracted, changing into urbanised area and forestation process (De Pasquale, Nofroni, Savelli, 2021, pp.51—54; De Pasquale, 2019; De Pasquale, 2018, pp.709—724). The abandonment of terraced fields determines the loss of a landscape heritage of enormous value and preludes to the complete physical and cultural desertification in Amalfi Coast (Laureano, 2004, p.97).

In this area the preservation of the landscape represents one of the fundamental objectives of sustainable development (Formica, 2010), as underlined by UNESCO (WHL 1997) and by the candidacy in process of the Amalfi Coast to become part of the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), a project by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), that has the aim of mobilising global awareness and support for dynamic conservation and adaptive management of agricultural systems and their resulting landscapes.

The richness of the Amalfi Coast landscape is «the result of both human intervention and the benevolent hand of nature, which makes it also a place full of charm where sea and mountains passing through the wide-open spaces for cultivation, merge in perfect harmony».

If we understand the landscape not only as a historical construct, but as a symbol and expression of the relationship of human beings with nature, we must believe that in this relationship we can find the basis for sustainable planning, balancing landscape conservation and development.

The landscape of the Amalfi Coast is the unconscious result of the agricultural and social practices of the past. But the landscape is also an evolutionary space, both in concrete

terms and as a field for the collective imagination, therefore a sustainable development of the territory must consider the permanence of traditional agricultural practices, rituals, uses (Antrop, 1997, pp.105—117; Agnoletti, 2014, pp.66—73). Such a complex territory from a hydrographic, geological and morphological point of view, can only survive through a capillary maintenance of the territory that only a conscious and widespread use by its inhabitants can guarantee (De Pasquale, 2021, pp.41—46).

In this vision, it becomes essential to resume the dynamic role of women as custodians of the landscape. Over the centuries, women have cultivated, tended gardens and forests, raised children and cared for the elderly. They have governed cows, pigs, chickens and rabbits, feeding them and cleaning stables, pigsties and chicken coops in total autonomy. All this created a very strong bond between women and nature.

A Pogerola ritornai finalmente a lavorare la terra, che è sempre stata la mia passione.

In Pogerola I finally returned to work the land, which has always been my passion.

Agostina Gambardella


The protection of the landscape also passes, therefore, through taking care of this love and passion, feeding it with the creation of places that can facilitate female agricultural entrepreneurship, helping women in the management of their time, children, work.

The creation of rural spaces for sharing (agrarian nurseries, toy libraries, training spaces, seed storage facilities, time banks) is an extraordinary opportunity for the permanence of knowledge, love and landscape.

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Article

A photograph of a woman, Rocío Romero, standing in front of terraced fields. She is wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a light-colored poncho over a dark shirt. She is holding a small object in her right hand. The background shows terraced fields with some structures and a body of water in the distance.

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Between the countryside and the city: Female Rurality & Situated Knowledge

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ABSTRACT

This text deals with the experience of Griselda Yanque Mamani, a 75-year-old farmer and retired bilingual teacher from a South Andean Aymara community in the Puno region of southern Peru. It focuses on Griselda's reintegration into rural production, oriented towards her family's well-being, taking up the knowledge and productive practices learned since childhood with her parents and grandparents. A process in which she brings together different kinds of knowledge and sustainable agricultural practices through the re-appropriation of different farming techniques.

KEYWORDS

Andean highland agriculture, terraces, women's perception, situated knowledge



Introduction

The experiences narrated by Griselda are set in the context of the Covid19 pandemic, in the time frame of the quarantine from April 2020 to November 2021. This caused the movement of rural migrants established in major cities to return to their rural areas of origin, an unprecedented event in the history of Peru. Griselda, like a large majority of women, returned from the city, Puno, to her rural community, Huancarani, located in the peninsula of Chucuito, in the high Andean region of southern Peru.

The focus on this specific case in the circumstances of the Covid pandemic, can be understood as a resurgence of women's knowledge. It highlights a set of Andean traditional agricultural practices as well as new knowledge which emerged in the return from resilience actions related to appropriate choice of productive technologies pondering selectively the advance of the market in the high Andean zone. This text underlines the use of native natural healing resources, especially the role of women in food agriculture for self-consumption and in family health since before the crisis period.

Thanks to a close friendship with Griselda Yanque Mamani, widow of Arpasi, I was able to collect her testimony due to multiple telephone conversations during the most critical months of COVID. The body of her narrative in her own voice and rural expressions reveal the challenge of reconstructing a large repertoire of knowledge about natural and agricultural resources that rural women situate in the context to resettle in the Altiplano territory of the peninsula of origin.

The Well

Griselda's physical return to the community where she spent her childhood is embedded with innumerable memories. Above all, the upbringing of water occupies a special place of emotions and meanings, which she tells us as follows:

"Grandfather Mateo was from the community of Huancarani, near the cattails, and my grandmother was born a short distance away, in the village of Platería. One day grandfather started digging under the ground near his house. He had noticed a trickle of water and bubbles

in a small natural water well a few metres from the house. It was a Hachapujo! he said in our Aymara language, it was a spring well. Grandfather suddenly started to dig around the outlet, but it came from the bottom of the earth and the water kept gushing out and increasing day after day. That pampa where his house stood was a large pasture. There, like any other person in Huancarani, grandfather herded his sheep and walked from one place to another, crossing paths with his neighbours and their animals on the same road.

Over time, he began to share the Puquio, the spring, with other neighbours of the pampa, suitable areas for planting. We call the hole where the water comes out of the ground the Pujo or Puquio, because the natural water comes out every time and every day more and more. It must have been a very small well at the beginning, but more and more water came out and it got bigger and bigger.

The well was with small stones and the grandfather, Tata Mateo, started to put cement around it as protection because when it rained the water overflowed and people came to fetch water more and more often.

Then grandfather began to clean it better and to enlarge the waterhole that we call Hacchapujo, the Pozo Grande, others also called it Haccha Wawaja, or Wacha Chucuito in Aymara, changing names to the well became a cause of affection and joy and people came every 15th of August to celebrate it. They came loaded with piskiños (quinoa pancakes), which were boiled like biscuits mixed with nutritious Andean grains and lime”.

Griselda concludes...

“If this well doesn’t dry up...and it doesn’t go down, whether it rains or not, then it can never dry up... Those who walk until late tell that at night a cockerel visits the water well, also a cow. As soon as it gets dark – say the neighbours – they keep coming from different places to collect water, especially those who pass in front of the well.

I’m going to put one more layer of cement around the well . Everyone in the community of Huancarani is fetching water from the Hacchapujo in front of my house, pulling water from the

well. They come and go to fetch water to wash clothes, taking great care to throw the used water away so that it doesn't contaminate the pure water of the Hacchapujo".

She continues thinking... "the neighbouring community of Luquina has an irrigation canal that comes down from the hill, because the water from the lake in front of Luquina has decreased so much that the lake is further and further away... In Hacchapujo I might have to put a layer of cement around the well, so that visitors do not dirty it or throw stones into the water as if they were playing... they could damage the water".

The story of **Hacchapujo**, the young lake of clear water born in Huancarani continues to sprout with the care of Griselda for the good of the land and the water. She is conscious of having become the caretaker of the water of the puquios to share with her neighbours while the highest lake in the world continues to sicken with mine tailings descending into the lake, in the current of the rivers.



Figure 1. Griselda in the Altiplano environment: dry season of extended plains at 3800 m altitude at the shore of Lake Titicaca with mountain ridges 4500 m high (photo by Maribel Chambi Yanque).

Sowing and rain

When Griselda prepares her land for sowing, she digs the soil to check if there are rests of potatoes affected by worms. Around the family house she checks for weeds and removes them early to free up some more space for planting beans and potatoes. She plans to sow part of the area where her eight sheep graze. She will slaughter one of them with the help of a nephew and share with her daughter, son-in-law and three granddaughters what she has sown and the meat from the sheep he has tended.

A nephew helped her during this year's harvest, she recalled that before, at the age of 5, 7 or 8, children already knew how to work in the fields because they had accompanied their grandparents without having forgotten what they should do to help them according to their age and energy. At the age of seven, all the girls and boys helped with small tasks. Griselda remembers this with pride. She also remembers the difficulties on rainy days when they had to walk home on the wet ground a few minutes after a storm as well as the relief she felt when the mud would dry sooner rather than later and everyone got a hot soup with potatoes, fish and all their favourite products would be waiting for them at home.

"The grass would not always be green, because everything eventually dries up," she thought to herself. For Griselda the rain was the most unforgettable part of sowing. There was no worse worry in a well-sown field than drought.

Medicinal plants

The Highlands of Puno have always been a paradise of valuable curative herbs, nowadays recognised in Peru and the world. Many species useful for the pharmaceutical industry are cultivated in the Andean fields of the Puno highlands, well known by the local population and appreciated for their properties to maintain the health of the population of the entire high Andean region.

From the beginning, returning to the community, Griselda's fear of contracting COVID awakened the desire to protect herself from the pandemic. She and other women of

her community, Huancarani, began to share the medicinal plant-based preparations with which their grandparents used to cure their ailments. Griselda says that since her childhood:

"If we felt sick, we used to cure ourselves with herbal teas boiled with the curative herbs of our area, roasted flaxseed, roasted airampu, flowering nettle. All previously roasted and put to rest to reduce fevers. Then we used to put beaten egg with a little sugar on the heel of the foot, on the palm of the hand and on the stomach to reduce the fever. To bathe we used to boil herbs with thorns such as Anuchapi (dog's thorn) and ayrampu or ayrapitu. Our grandparents used the thorns of Anuchapi against measles and other diseases. They bathed with it and drank it against pain. The Sancayo thorn was also taken and is still used in herbal teas, as it has a small fruit and its thorn".

Griselda associates these plants with many other traditional treatments that are not forgotten and could be used to alleviate the symptoms of COVID. For example, the natural remedy, with the wild herb called **Kalla Pura**, full of sharp thorns that is extracted from the ground with a pickaxe and then boiled, drinking its juice cures any illness. Also, Jiruch Api, another healing herb, is mixed with **Kalla Pura**. Both cure ailments by taking them in an infusion or using them in the personal bath.

Griselda reveals a very particular perception about the application of natural remedies:

"In this COVID pandemic, in the countryside we relied on wild remedies using black chicken broth and guinea pig broth. Women are the ones who handle this health knowledge; men don't care and don't handle this knowledge. They heal in other ways, they move away from this form of healing, that is why we women have cured ourselves more. In Puno, women are stronger than men. More men have died of COVID 19 only a few women passed away. It was also noticeable that in this pandemic women had more work and men not so much."

So concludes Griselda with the good reasoning of a concerned teacher open to new learnings.

Signs - Forecasts

When it comes to sowing, Griselda introduces us to a complex world of knowledge with categories of time and space closely related to the observation of the behaviour of the natural world where everything is a network of probabilities.

“We start thinking about sowing in June so that we can have food harvested by April and May at the latest. In other words, we plan as we have learnt from our grandfathers and grandmothers in the past: watching the movement of the birds as they fly from far away to our lake at certain times of the year after lay eggs and wait for the birth of their young among the cattail reeds of Lake Titicaca on the Chucuito peninsula.

The birds make their nests in the totora reeds every year. Since our grandparents we have learned to foresee when the rains will come, because the birds have also known how to foresee the rains in order to lay their eggs in a safe place. To do this we look at the reed beds to see how high the water will rise in the lake when the rains start to fall and where they can safely lay their eggs until their young are born. To do this, the birds have observed the water level and the height of the cattails from their high flights, until they decide where they will place their nests, skilfully attached to the cattails at the edge of the lake.

Since we were children, we have watched the birds waiting for the birth of their young. Our grandmothers taught us long ago the importance of sharing the birds’ calculations in making our decisions in many aspects of life. Primarily in the planning of planting, we must observe the altitude chosen by the birds to lay their eggs. We must observe where they have laid their eggs between cattails until they hatch, and the chicks come out. We call all this forecasting and those who read the signs well are respected and called “señaleros” or “señaleras”. Almost all of us who live on the peninsula of Chucuito are used to reading these signs from the birds or know someone who does it with care for the plants and animals.

In order to think and predict results, we see and listen to the signs of nature. We know for example that the fox is in the habit of howling. The time to plant potatoes coincides with the time when the fox cries. Usually, it is October or November. But if the fox cries at the beginning, in

the middle or at the end of these months, only then should we plant. There are good days to choose. We must know which day is good. For example, we choose by significant dates, in relation to rain, not just Catholic saints. The year that is well marked gives good yields.

When this has not been done, we must look in the almanac. For example, the almanac will tell us that sowing should be on Tuesday, and we will say, no, Tuesday is a bad day. In the doubt we will then see if it is a full moon or not... We will keep looking for one more sign to make the decision without delay."

Planting in ridges

Observing the natural world goes hand in hand with understanding different agricultural systems and the characteristics of crops. Griselda explains to us in which climatic conditions she grows which crops and whether she does it on terraces or in ridges, and distinguishes the roles and knowledge between men and women:

"... If it is going to rain, we will raise our ridges which we name Waru Waru , higher furrows prevent our crops from rotting. If we read that it will not rain, then we make the furrow less high without risk. We read each year, comparing the height at which the birds lay their eggs, from one time to another, achieving their reproduction. If we read that the altitude rises, we know that it will rain more than in the previous year or vice versa.

The sowing of Waru Waru is like that of the terraces, but in a humid and flat area, enabling precisely raised furrows. The high level of the furrow carrying soil prevents the rotting of the stems of the potato plants and the fruit.

Between September and October, we start planting for harvesting between February and April. When it is going to rain, we raise the furrow higher so that the potato or what we have planted is not rotting. And when we read that it is not going to rain, then we make the furrow lower, but in general it is higher, because it often rains.

It all depends on the root, if it is longer, then the furrow will be wider. And if it is narrower, then



Figure 2. Griselda and her granddaughters: Intergenerational transmission of Andean agricultural knowledge and practices triggered by the pandemic (photo by Maribel Chambi Yanque).

the potato will come out on top. And if it comes out green, it will be bitter. The furrow is close to the other one only if it is wider, as it is in the ridges that we call Waru Waru. It also depends on the length of the root. For example, the imilla potato, a small, white potato, does not grow many roots. Another potato needs a lot of space, something more, like a metre and a half. From a distance, it can be planted high up with water at the base between each one, this is how we make the Waru Waru furrows.

We women have been able to cooperate by working in Waru Waru and sowing terraces with the pickaxe: we have been able to do it alone. The Waru Waru that is made by two men raises the ground high to place the seed on top. The woman is the one who places the seeds and the guano. It is a shared work, but when there is no man, we work between two women.”

Griselda proudly acknowledges that the largest well-preserved **Waru Waru** are in the village of Acora and have been declared an archaeological heritage site, due to the historical importance of an ancestral technology.

Farming on terraces

Griselda remembers clearly that in her childhood the hillsides were cultivated on terraces, flat surfaces built on stone walls. During her childhood, Griselda helped to build cultivation terraces with her grandparents. As she grew up, she saw how they had stopped farming on terraces because of their advanced age. Several neighbours in the community began to alternate their time cultivating for family food with other activities in the town or in the capital of Puno to earn additional income. They returned to the fields to sow and harvest; the rest of the time they dedicated themselves to small commerce or various jobs in the capital of Puno.

In recent years, donkey or mule power began to be used to prepare the furrows for the annual sowing of crops on the terraces. These animals have always been highly valued for their energy and for requiring less food than bulls.

Griselda remembers her grandparents' terraces during her childhood in the village of



Figure 3. Griselda lived immersed in the city life but due to the pandemic she returned to her rural roots bridging modern and traditional knowledge (photo by Maribel Chambi Yanque).

Platería. Her grandparents had built terraces in a field adjacent to the place called Ccota. These terraces have been planted for as long as anyone can remember. Around 1990 they were abandoned by the community. Despite this, they are still majestic and very much visited by locals and tourists from different countries. In the following decades, tractors began to be used for mowing and sowing in cultivated areas.

“We never went back to the yoke of oxen that gave us food.”, Griselda recalls kindly and sure that in the past the work was harder than in the present. Her memories of farming on the terraces with her grandparents date back to her childhood and culminate at the age of 15 when she travelled to the capital. Today there are no more cultivated terraces as there used to be. There were many cultivated terraces in the area where her parents and relatives lived.

She explains that the abandonment of the terraces has been due to the expansion of trade facilitated by the construction of a road linking the countryside with the cities of Puno and the nearby border with Bolivia and has led to a great deal of commercial activity and opportunities for migration back and forth.

She also tells us that in recent decades, the use of tractors was introduced and expanded among rural neighbours, encouraged by the opening of new markets for Andean grains such as Quinoa or **Tarhui**. The use of the traditional yoke was not replaced by new tools they coexisted for some time, the old and the more modern ones. The work in the fields was accelerated by renting a tractor for half an hour to an hour, depending on the terrain.

Local food in times of emergency

The Covid 19 pandemic has been a reason to go back to raising sheep by fattening them every day in the pastures of Huancarani, near Lake Titicaca. The sheep are complementary source of food for her family, her daughter and son-in-law, and her granddaughters and son-in-law, who live in the city.

In the case of Griselda, she cannot produce all she needs for daily life. She goes to the fairs and markets near Huancarani, in the town of Acora or in Chucuito. Her small pension

is enough to support her stay in the countryside, where she produces foodstuffs such as quinoa and potatoes, as well as for her daughter and three granddaughters. With that fund she could cover the needs of all of them. In the nearby village of Acora and in Platería, she obtains local products such as beans, oca and fruit brought from other regions to the weekly market as well as the precious food during her work, the small fish **Pesqe**, which still manages to survive in Lake Titicaca.

Griselda, like other women, prepares at home dishes of quinoa with **chuño**, dried white potato and fish, with milk or cheese. She also eats alone or with her granddaughters, eggs and trout, small **Qarachi** fish or boiled crab with **tunta**, dried black potato. Sometimes Griselda travels to the nearby city of Puno to collect her monthly allowance as a retired teacher. At other times, her daughter travels to the peninsula of Chucuito where she meets Griselda, bringing her the amount of her pension from Puno. Until then, Griselda keeps up the routine of her work in the fields, weaving, sowing, grazing the sheep and taking care of the pure water of the **puquio** that her father left to her care and for the use of all the neighbours of Huancarani.

Sheep raising

In certain periods the people in the countryside look after more than 20 to 30 sheep. However, Griselda analyses aloud which results in the following reasonable calculation:

"I have seven ewes, but only three guagüitas (babies) have had offspring; only two more will be due to lamb soon. With those offspring, that would make ten ewes, with two more due in November".

Griselda remains calm during this trial period; there is no work for now other than herding the ewes, preparing their food in the morning and knitting in the late afternoon. Before nightfall, she will put the sheep to rest. She will also rest from six o'clock in the evening indoors, knitting warm jumpers for her granddaughters. Her thoughts, worries and dreams revolve around the responsibility she assumes as follows:

"Now we must sow.

So, there are good days to choose from, not just any day,

we must know which day is good. We choose dates, rainy days or Catholic saints' days.

If the year is well marked, then it will give good production.

When it is not well marked, we must grab our Almanac.

Sometimes it says Tuesday and we say bad day ...

Then we see if it is a full moon in our Almanac. We read the Bristol Almanaque others read the official SENAMHI weather report..."

Final reflection

I have presented this text respecting the structure and form of the oral narrative, according to Griselda's childhood memories and recollections as well as present reflections and practices. Much of it is written in her own words, the product of telephone conversations during the year 2021. It has been an enriching process of family dialogue with a woman, a friend who the COVID pandemic led her to resume her agricultural activities following the logic and voices of her memory from which emerged themes finely attuned to her natural environment.

I would like to emphasise that since the state of emergency decreed by COVID 19, Griselda spent a brief interlude in the city of Puno to fulfil her civic duty to vote and elect the new president of Peru. On her return, she confessed to me that it is better to be in the countryside than in the city. In the countryside, she works in the open air, lives in front of the great lake, enjoys a social atmosphere of solidarity, mutual help and appreciation for the agricultural work. In other words, the crisis opened to her the possibility of recreating the Andean Buen Vivir, which is nothing more than a commitment to rural life, in coexistence with nature, where many forms of life are possible.



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