

Ludovico Quaroni and his project of a “Garden village” in Apulia (1973)

Territory/landscape/city: the form of the city as a inter-scale technique

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Abstract: Between the half of 60s and 70s, Ludovico Quaroni is in Apulia to carry out a series of projects, including the drafting of the town-planning scheme of Bari. Thanks to his being very often in Bari and thanks to his new project, that for the first time tried out an approach to the city according to his vision of “city-territory”, vision which is alternate to the current so-called “new dimension”, in 1973 two entrepreneurs of the Capitanata¹ (Nicola and Giuseppe Daloiso brothers) sent for the roman master to project a residential settlement in the neighborhood of Margherita di Savoia.

Keywords: city-territory, wet-lands, lagoon landscape, new boroughs, saltworks.

The place

Situated in the south of the gulf of Manfredonia, between the Gargano and the mouth of the Ofanto (the river sailed and sung by Orazio), the city of Margherita di Savoia represents the town-planning inheritance of the settlement on the embankments of the ancient lagoon of Salpi beginning from the IX century b.C.. During this century, there was the settlement of the first Diomedes’ Illyrian line, that will be conquered seven years later by Hannibal and later by romans. These latter refunded it on the opposite side with the name of Salapia (city-trading center of the ancient Argiripa – the current Foggia –, provided by a gat so strategically important that is cited by Vitruvius in his *Tenth book*).

The economic importance of the salt and the extraordinary naturalistic feature will encourage the following historical stages.

During the first stage, Frederick II made of this lagoon one of the main resources of the Empire and the ideal place to study ornithol-

1. The “Capitanata” is the region in the north of Apulia, between the river Ofanto and the Gargano.

ogy. Furthermore, this was his favorite house, so that he made build, in the healthy rises of the near Andria, the magnificent Castel del Monte.

Later, in the end of '600, Charles I of Bourbon, sent for Luigi Vanvitelli for the project of the new Salinas and, at the beginning of '800, his nephew, Ferdinand committed to Afan De Rivera (planner of the first Italian railway line) the big drainage scheme of those soils.

This huge scheme was enlarged during the first twenty years of the '900 and according to it the productive part of the lagoon was re-configured. So the city has the final urban form nearly since 3 centuries, situated definitely on its south side.

Today, apart from representing the biggest salt basin in Europe, the lagoon and the city are among the most important “wet lands” in the Mediterranean (included the main lands of international importance, established by the Ramsar Convention of 1972).²



2. RIONDINO 2012, 2 The *International Convention of Ramsar* was born on 12 February 1971; its goal is to stem the progressive encroachment on and loss of wetlands, according to the principles of the durable development and the preservation of the biodiversity. In 1972, the city of Margherita di Savoia signs the convention, which now represents more than nine hundred wet lands in the world.

This historical-landscape background fascinated Quaroni (together with Salvatore Dierna, his close collaborator to the project), who could not reject the job and accepted it when he came first to make an inspection. But, the job will be conclude with urban plan project and the building will be concluded during the two following decades through jobs committed to other professionals (included those of the Casale’s roman office, or of other local professionals), so that the project has been considered new till today and is not present in Quaroni’s catalogues³.

So, the discovery of the original correspondence⁴ (up till now kept in the archive of “Daloiso building” firm) represents today a precious piece geared to update the general framework of both the master’s production and topics, and to enlarge the knowledge of the rare “foundation villages” projects.

The project

In spite the impossibility of making further level investigation, the important data of Quaroni’s project concerns Piano’s as the instrument linking the different architectural scales. At the basis, one can acknowledge there is the *culture of the project*, that the roman master has carried out in the last years.

This culture is different from the Italian (and not only) disciplinary background, and is based on: the “landscape/architectural” approach; the upsetting of the pre-eminence of the urban planning in favor of the necessary interpolation between urban scale and building scale; the different role of the “norm” (that is nevermore the premise for the future development of the project, but the basis for its forms); this culture intends the city as a “inter-scale phenomenon”, its design as a synthesis of the “environmental phenomena” and its control is offered by Piano’s figurative ability.

Quaroni tries to apply these elements to the village scale keeping the

3. CIORRA 1989 (sez. Apparati) the only text in which this project it is cited, even if with another name.

4. The discovery by the author of the correspondence has been possible thanks to the helpfulness of the “Giuseppe Daloisio s.r.l. building firm”, based in Margherita di Savoia (Italy).

rules established by the drafter of the town-planning scheme and coming up to buyer's expectations.

Buyer's goal is to realize an area that respects the nature, so with a low density of population: a sort of garden-city to locate on the opposite side of the Salpi lagoon, sloping it down by two kilometers about from the urban center. It is a locating hypothesis that takes advantage of the inherited effort of the inhabitants to find soils useful to enlarge a city restricted between the lagoon and the sea.

The project area⁵, nearly flat, is on 4,50 meters on the sea level and it is lacking in buildings. The main characteristics are those of the region scale, including the grill that stems the salt basins, the faint network of the sheep tracks, the channels used to drain waters (among these, the most important is linked to Ofanto and used by Rivera, at the beginning of '800, to start the drainage scheme of the Salpi lagoon).

A set of "*environmental and productive structures*" – Quaroni writes in the project report- that will become the most important reference for the future morphological structure. In fact, the aim of the roman master is "*to carry out the structuring of the settlement in a direct relationship with the structure of the environmental neighborhood, solving adequately the functional and morphological links between the area to be built and the marginal agricultural areas.*"⁶

These are some of the guide principles that will:

1. characterize the new settlement according a very neat and joint structure, based on clear hierarchies between public and private domain and on the central role of the Square;
2. give the settlement some "*forms of morphological/volumetric connection with environmental neighborhood*"⁷, including in in the general

5. Intervention area, corresponding to the *insulae*: C27-28-29- F30-31 of the town-planning scheme.

6. "[...] environmental structures" and "productive uses" that Quaroni recognizes as "[...]fundamental characteristic of the area, that has been for the project one of the most important references to set and solve the total morphological structure of the zone, where It was clear, since the first stages of the project, that, being the region free of infrastructures and building forms, the intervention had to carry out the structuring of the settlement in a direct relationship with the structure of the environmental neighborhood, solving adequately the functional and morphological links between the area to settle and the marginal agricultural areas".

7. Cfr. Ibidem.

urban-regional-landscape phenomenon;

3. configure the settlement as the beginning of settlement process, aimed to end with the organized link of the city.

Obeying the rules of the town-planning scheme, aimed in those years to overcome the growth limit set by the Salinas, the village is intended as the first stage of a settlement process that will surround the whole salt basin on the east side of the lagoon (i.e. "the Queen zone" designed by Luigi Vanvitelli).

The aim is to change the role of the ancient basin, from a geographical limit to the *core* of the new urban set. It will become an instrument through which one can "*promote and allow a qualified and organized landscape-building development of the area*" [...] beginning with "the complete integration of the urban-growth areas, the center and near areas" [...] "in order to give a more complete and qualified condition to the different areas, that will constitute the new structure of the city."⁸

According to Quaroni, this aim can be achieved only through a formal-prescriptive project: a "planning framework", able to guarantee the future unity of the structure. This "planning framework" should have been the first stage of the village: a type of "morphological multiple" intended to guide the future growth.⁹ Meanwhile, the chosen "scale", instead of being the settling one of the village, would be regional.

Structure of the region and water-bearing landscapes, urban and rural tracks, considered as a fundamental basis for the project, become the meanings of the new proposal, whose direction is suggested by the plan of the agricultural sheep tracks and by the direct relationship with the basins.

Differently from the "near" village "La Martella"¹⁰ (realized

8. Cfr. In the Project Report, p. 9.

9. Accordingly, the *insulae* "have been considered as organic parts of a landscape-building solution", being complementary to the remaining *insulae* of the new settlement domain established by the town-planning scheme". Furthermore, the intervention in object has been considered as "[...] a reference for the following interventions, whose aim will be to have a landscape-building solution coordinate for the area." Cfr. In the Project Report, p. 7.

10. "La Martella" village, realized near Matera (Italy), was designed in 1951 by Ludovico Quaroni and his team composed by M. Agati, F. Gorio, P.M. Lugli, M. Valori, on behalf of UNRA-Casas.

20 years before), in this context Quaroni is interested not in the rural world and in the effort to integrate it in the new settlement, but he is interested in the necessity to show its natural power, bringing it in a stable Project design. This would be aimed to avoid any unforeseen change which is not related to the general principles of its Project.

The result is a *forma Urbis* different from the original one: this form, instead of confirming the characters of the established city, seems to be very similar to the “foundation” villages realized in Apulia between 20s and 30s: these were little urban systems characterized by building *continuum* with a low density, “closed” (but only ideally) in a quadrangular form of the natural sides, intended to resolve the relationship with the countryside, or as in this case, with the water-bearing system.¹¹

The result is a settlement system different from the “linear” one established in the city, underlining, through its assertive characteristic, the pre-eminence of the foundation act as the beginning of a possible, new landscape process, committed to the different role of the water.

Its deterrents are the huge rural region in which it will be realized and the solving of the geographical condition, that had obliged the first city to limit its sides between the lagoon and the sea.

Quaroni lists the most significant aspects of this condition, planning an intervention based on “[...] complexity and *completeness criteria, nearly similar to those deeply-rooted in the “historical” area of the city.*”¹² These criteria concern not only the organizational and functional aspects (these latter based on the “**disposition of the driveway and pedestrian crossing, from the *morphological point of view, and on the “unit” control of the building characteristics of the structures and services*”**¹³),

11. “The general criteria adopted to conclude the project depend on the evaluations referring mostly to environmental characteristics” and they aim, at one hand “to “close” some spaces in the settlement, in order to define, according to very precise criteria, the urban area, different from the agricultural “open” area. On the other hand, they aim to find a solution for the building on the sides, so as to appropriately connect with the (agricultural) neighborhood, intended not to be built.” Cfr. In the Project Report, p. 9.

12. Cfr. In the Project Report, p. 6.

13. “[...] variants aimed, on one hand, to set a more adequate morphological and functional relationship between the structure of the building and the form of the spaces for the public use (routes and their articulations); on the other hand, to have a closer integration between the different residential neighborhoods and between the areas intended to manage services.” Cfr. In the Project Report, p. 7.

but overall phenomenological-perceptive aspects, aimed to avoid the risk of "becoming peripheral" – also only visual – of the new village.¹⁴ Following these criteria, the project manages a system of ways that, even though mark the outlines established in the town-planning scheme, establish themselves some variants aimed to the maximum organic level of morphological-functionality, not only with the settlement but also with the city. The aim is to obtain the closest integration and continuity, not only between the residential areas, but also between them and the important characteristics of the region.

Similarly to the city, this request is translated in a morpho-typological compound program, characterized by considerable volume variations, despite the buildings are not very tall.¹⁵

In fact, the chosen *types* of building are those able to "[...] offer different "residential" conditions and also an efficient "connection with the regional neighborhood". These are: semi-detached houses, built on semi-closed yards, "stand alone building" for one or two families (both with one or two ground floors), apartment house with two or three floors, "block building", with on the ground a "service plate".

Very interesting are the volume articulations that compose every type of solution and that are organized to embed "L"-arranged buildings (as in the case of the single block, that make reference to the Apulia farms) or to morphological extroversion (as in the case of the continuous aggregates), set in by using different heights. Very interesting is also the building structure that composes the urban *continuum* of the near city.

Their localization in the Project (suggesting the experiments made in 1964 for the "Casilino quarter" in Rome) is the result of a morphological-elevation system aimed to the gradual "shelving" of the buildings with respect to the landscape phenomena. In this system, the

14. According to Quaroni, what has to be avoided is "[...] to avoid the risk of "becoming peripheral" of the area, and it can be avoided by setting a landscape-building structure, able to satisfy, from the functional and environmental points of view, the life exigencies of an urban settlement." Cfr. In the Project Report, p. 11.

15. "[...] to set environmental and organizational compound situations, representative of a settling condition not marginal. This have to be made despite the density established by the town-planning scheme for the building of the area and its peripheral localization, as respect to the current urban center." Cfr. *Ibidem*.

houses with the yard are in the inner part “*resulting, from the morphological and organizational point of view, in the “central” and “bearing” structure of the settling structure of the area*”; the houses with one or two floors are in the middle and marginal parts (i.e. in direct contact “*with the agricultural neighborhood and with the area for parks, gardens and services*”). Lastly, the series of the comb-arranged houses are oriented of about 60° with respect to the Salinas side, in order to “open” to the “views” of the urban center.¹⁶

This last phenomenon ends the project being its urban/landscape counterpart. These dispositions and the strategies employed by Quaroni give rise to the general plan and, overall, to the perspective view of the charting of the Project. Actually, this is the result of a real *inter-scale* involvement of the real characteristics and of the ideal vocation of the region.

16 . These are the criteria for the morpho-typological disposition:

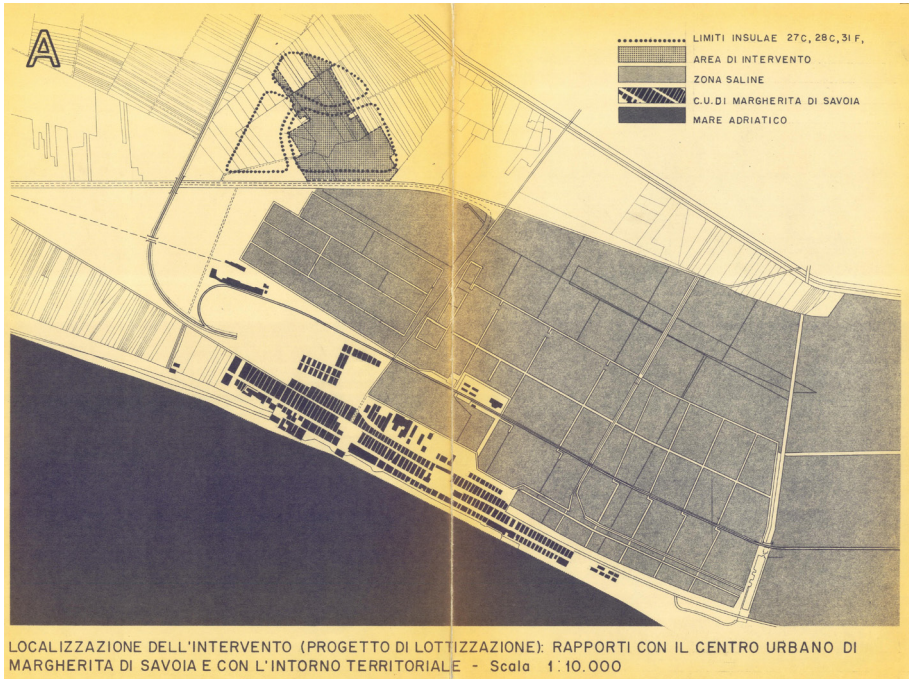
“Diagonal disposition of three residential courtyard houses made up, on two sides, by apartment house with three floors with a “pilotis” ground floor where there can be localized some important commercial services and, on the other two sides, by two-floor apartment house for residential aims. The courtyard houses are in the inner part of the area (system integrated by the three residential *insulae* and by the two service *insulae*) resulting, from the morphological and organizational point of view, in the “central” and “bearing” structure of the settling structure of the area”.

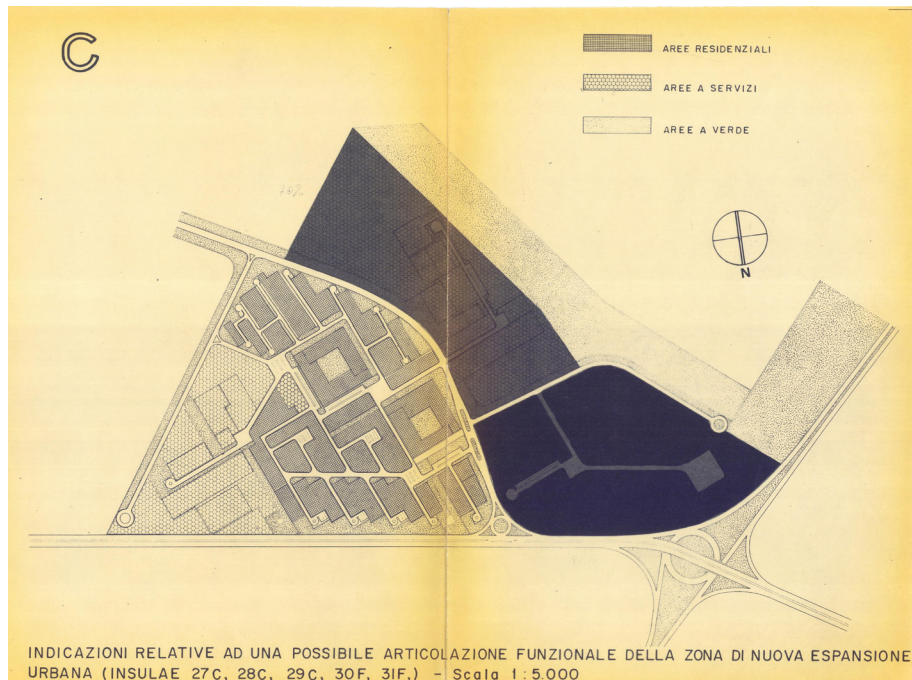
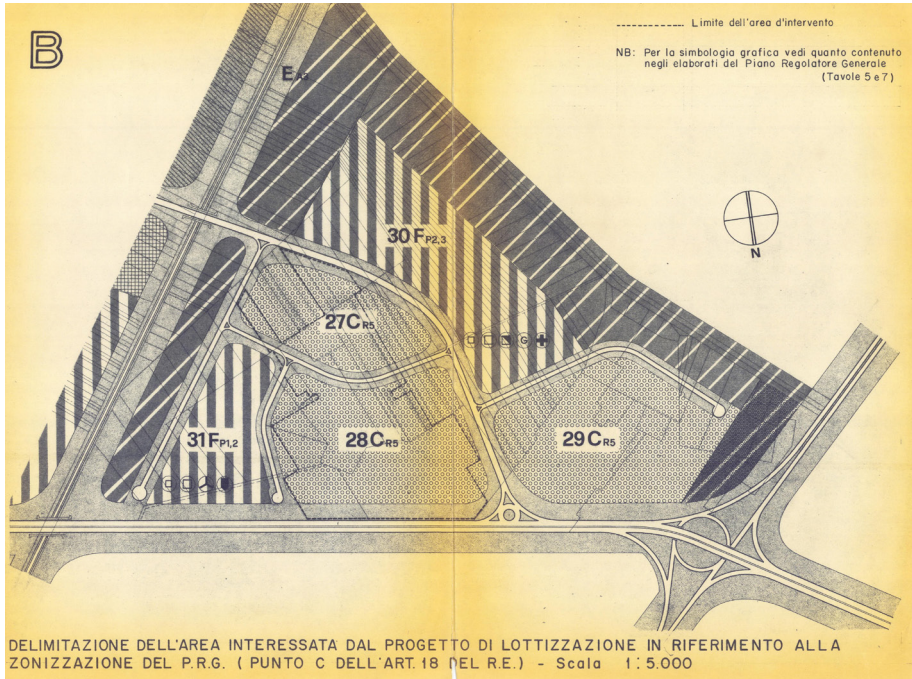
“Disposition of two series of block building intended for houses or commercial primary or secondary services, on the side of the alignment axis of two courtyard. This disposition completes, from the morphological and organizational point of view, the “central” structure of the settling structure of the area”.

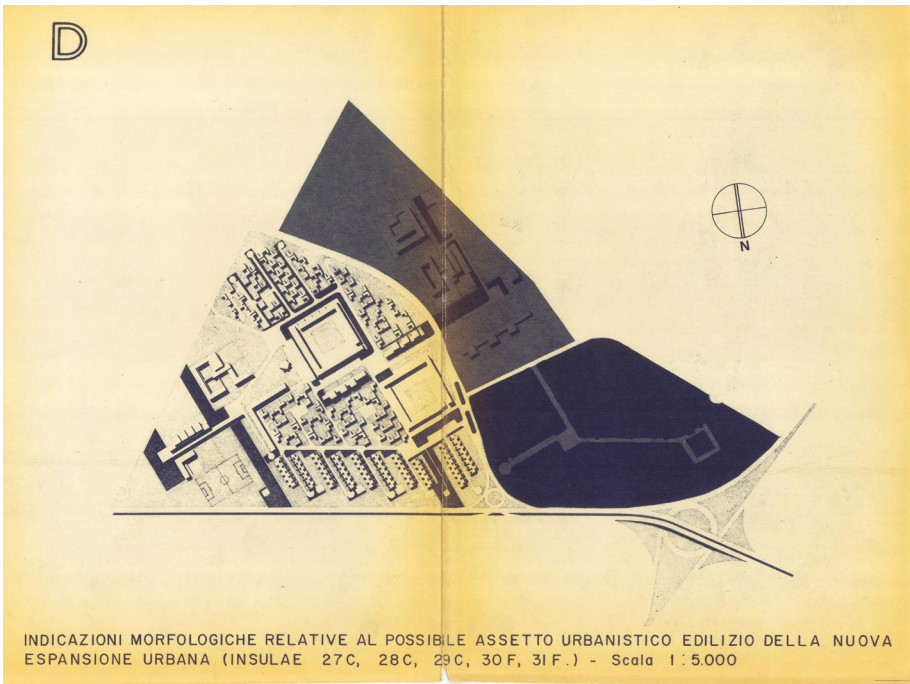
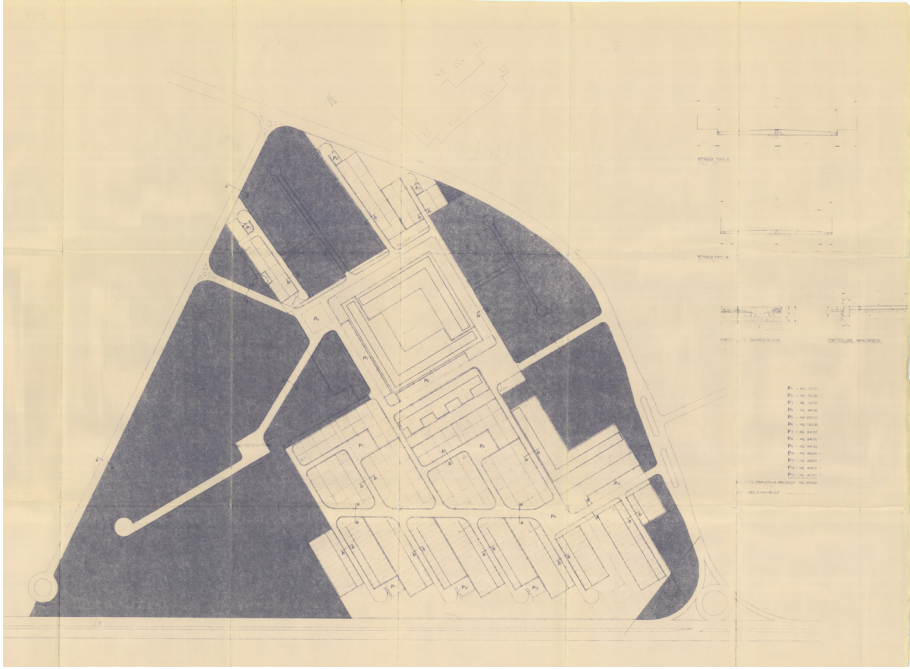
“Against the Salinas, in the part accessible from the urban center, disposition along the ring-road of a continuous series of row houses with two floors. This series has a sense of direction (with a 60° inclination with respect to the ring-road) allows a relative “close” of the settlement to the views from the outside, while it allows, from the inner settlement, the far “views” from the “rising” parts of the urban center to which combs are open”.

“Variable disposition of houses with one or two floors in the middle areas between the “courtyard” and the “band”, that organizes, with a nearly constant thickness, the series of the row houses; and on the sides of the settlement in direct contact with the agricultural neighborhood or with the area for parks, gardens and services of the *insulae* F31”.

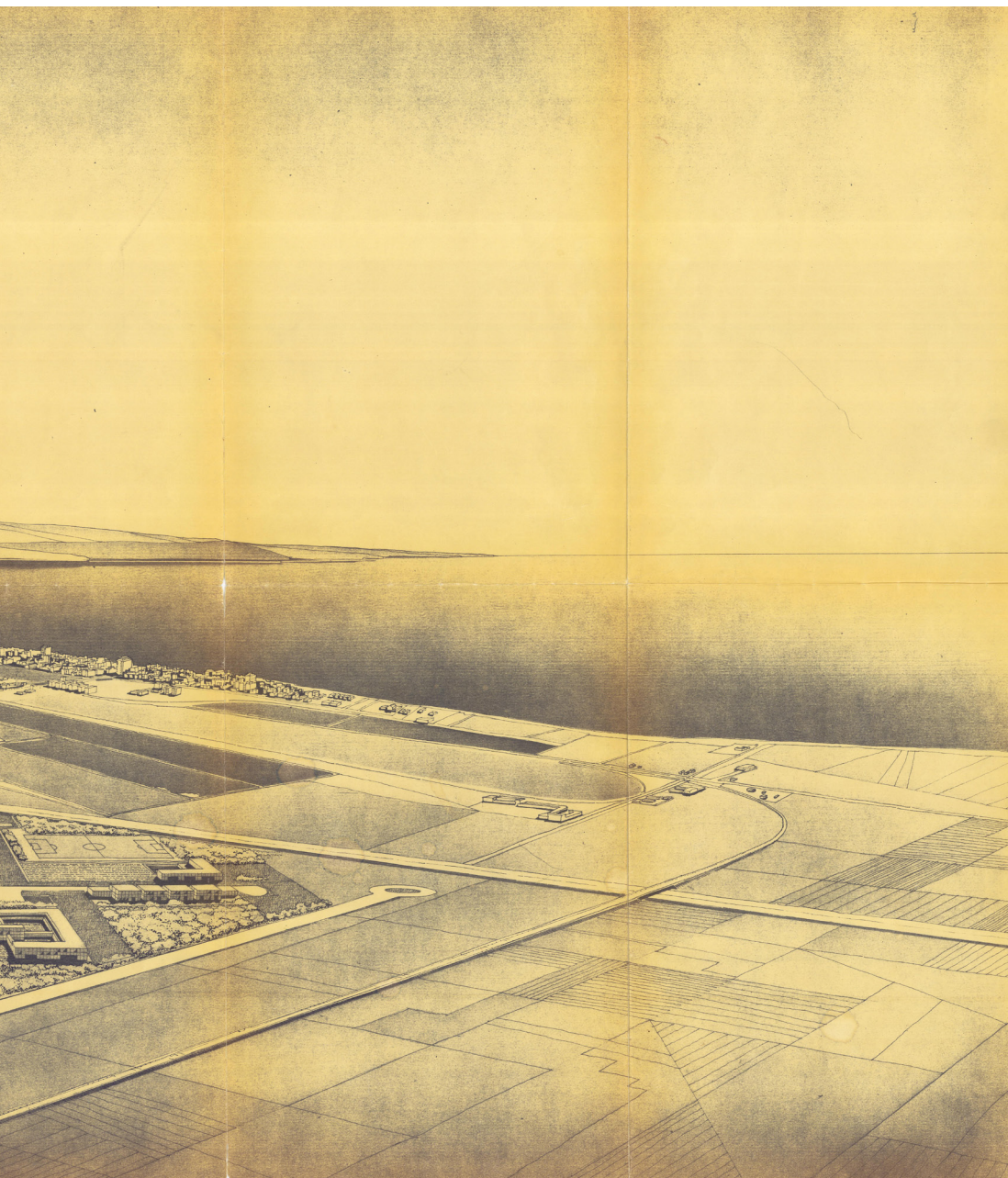
Cfr. In the Project Report, p. 16.











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