

CAPRAIA ISLAND AND ITS REPRESENTATION IN AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA:

Recounting a carceral, agro-pastoral and eco-touristic landscape

[Received March 28th 2024; accepted July 10th 2024 – DOI: 10.21463/shima.226]

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ABSTRACT: This article explores the shifting representations of the landscape of Capraia island in popular audiovisual media. Through analyses based on a framework delineated by popular geopolitics we explore three different media categories which have portrayed the island over the last decades: naturalistic and historical documentaries, tourism centred TV programs and vernacular audiovisual representations. The aim was to reveal intertwined discourses within broader socio-political factors and histories. The carceral landscape of the former penal colony declined and was replaced by ecotourism and agro-pastoral activities. These top-down narratives obscured the complexity of islanders' reality, focusing on possible sustainable tourist scenarios as well as romanticising the appearance of a Mediterranean island as near pristine. Nonetheless, if vernacular representations, such as home movies and grassroots interviews, are taken into consideration, local voices and tourist perspectives emerge. We no longer have a one-sided story and polysemy, criticality, and friction become inherent characteristics of recent representations.

KEYWORDS: Island Studies, audiovisual analysis, popular geopolitics, regimes of visibility, ecotourism.

Introduction

Capraia is a 19 km² island in Italy's Tuscan archipelago. It is of volcanic origin and its high cliffs allow few access points to the sea. It is located 64 km from Livorno, 53 km from the promontory of Piombino, 37 km from the island of Gorgona and 31 km from Corsica (Figure 1) and is administered by the province of Livorno. Once part of Greek and Roman trade

networks, Capraia's complex history is linked to its geographical and geological features. The island was a centre of trade and a natural fortress that was hard to conquer. Raided by Saracen and Turkish pirates, the Genoese fortified it with a castle and coastal towers in the 16th century. Under Genoese rule, it played a significant role in the control of the bordering seas. Its strategic importance emerged especially during the Corsican Revolt (1729-1769), when it was used to control southeastern access to the Ligurian Sea. However, the fall of the Republic of Genoa in 1797 marked the end of Capraia's geopolitical importance.

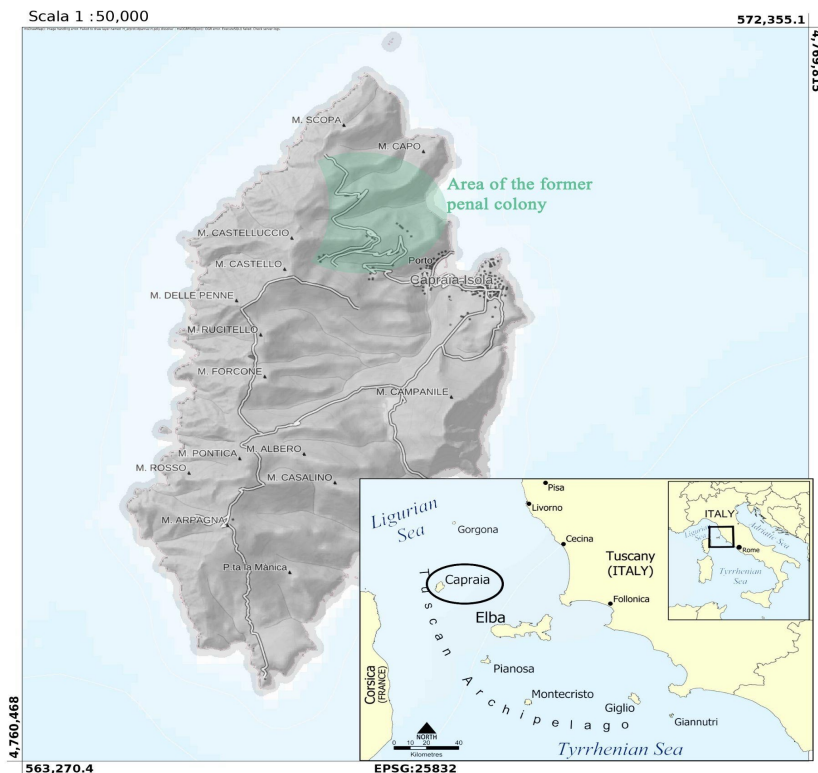


Figure 1 - Map of Capraia Island and its position with regard to Italy and Corsica.

In the modern era, the northern part of the island was developed as an agricultural penal colony that was active from the second half of the 19th century until 1986. Partial isolation has contributed to Capraia retaining native plants, such as garrigue and Mediterranean scrub, and more than 650 plant species are now found on the island along with migratory fauna. Also, its waters are rich in fish species, making it a popular destination for snorkelling and diving activities. As a result, from 1996 onwards, areas of the island outside the former penal colony grounds have been included within the Tuscan Archipelago National Park (PNAT, 2024).

Today, the island is at a crossroads: the carceral landscape of the past can (or is planned to) be replaced by new (economic) revitalisation projects triggered by national actors and some of the island's inhabitants. This new orientation is linked to natural resources and agricultural elements (such as wine production) and (eco)tourism, which, however, are

struggling to take off. There are many reasons for this including the island's distance from the mainland (it is closer to the French island of Corsica than to Italy). Its status as "minor island" has resulted in depopulation and the dwindling of citizenship services (ANCIM/ENEA, 2019). Despite various European and national projects aimed to enhance the island's liveability (see, for example, Governo Italiano, 2024) the limited nature of health and educational facilities on the island has prompted continuing depopulation (ANCI Toscana, 2024). In this context, the process of representation (and self-representation) is fundamental for gauging the possible futures of this island and also for considering it as a possible example for similar case studies. In this regard, Dittmer's (2008) assertion that both discourse production and the audience are embedded in cultural, geographical and historical reality is pertinent: hence the necessity to explore both the context of Capraia and its shifting carceral, agro-pastoral and touristic landscapes.

The historical, political and socio-economic context

Since accorded recognition by the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) program in 2015, the Tuscan archipelago (comprising Gorgona, Capraia, Elba, Pianosa, Montecristo, Giglio and Giannutri) has been designated as a biosphere reserve. This status aims to preserve "precious treasures of biodiversity, an extraordinary geological and geo-mineral heritage, but also evidence of notable historical, archaeological and cultural value," including the largest marine park in Europe (PNAT, 2022). Sustainable tourism activities such as trekking, kayaking and mountain biking, snorkelling and diving are preferred, through which Capraia's "landscapes, sounds, colours and scents can be experienced and where innovative strategies to combat climate change, promoting quality agri-food production and contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda," have been widely promoted (PNAT, 2022).

With regard to tourism activities, it must be acknowledged that while ecotourism has emerged because of dissatisfaction with mass tourism (Antari & Connell, 2021), Capraia has never experienced anything approaching overtourism. On the contrary, tourist presence is actually decreasing (Regione Toscana, 2022) in tandem with the number of local residents over the last decades (ISTAT, 2023). Despite its 'green' and sustainable premises, eco-tourism must be considered in a broader perspective, especially in contexts where economic monocultures can take root. From a critical perspective, ecotourism entails a colonial/exploitation logic where areas of untouched 'wilderness' first become protected, then become sites of leisure and recreation, and eventually turn into commodified spaces (Voumard, 2019; Fletcher, 2015; 2023). In this sense:

ecotourism may be seen to capitalise on the loss of 'undeveloped' areas due to the expansion of extractive capitalist production, in the same manner as conservation generally. Many ecotourism sites, in fact, explicitly market themselves as desirable destinations based on the probability that they will cease to exist down the road. (Fletcher, 2023, p. 6).

In particular, concerning the UNESCO-Biosphere Reserve process, recent studies confirm that these are "simply political and economic products that have little in common with the theoretical environmental and sustainable development dimensions described in the UNESCO framework" (Paül et al., 2022, p.8). In Mazzino & Gherzi (Eds.) (2004), Emanuela Morelli explains how the complexity of such landscapes is structured around the ancient

balance between humans and nature in the constant (re)making of the island, meaning that the UNESCO biosphere conservation programs must in future include the role of communities as fundamental aspects (2004, pp. 223-224). For instance, the role of the penal colony and the future of the whole area are of vital importance in relation to political aims and local imaginary. In this regard, it is well known how islands face exacerbated socio-environmental issues in respect to the mainland (Malatesta, 2018). For instance, water scarcity is addressed through transport from the mainland (with tankers and underwater pipelines) or with local desalination plants; energy production is not linked to the national grid and islands rely on local biodiesel production; and the transport of unsorted waste is linked to mainland plants by ship transportation, which adds to the disposal costs. Also, socio-economic issues like unemployment, a lower GDP per capita, hyper-specialisation and a high degree of dependence on a limited range of activities or sectors, such as agriculture and fishing and limited (summer) touristic activity, remain a substantial problem (ANCIM/ENEA, 2019).

In order to understand the contemporary landscape, we need to consider the historical relationship of the island with the top-down economic projects that characterised its past. As in other cases, depressed or isolated areas were revitalised by factories and other organisations that brought new jobs and development (Perkinson, 1994). At the beginning of the 19th century Capraia became a free port and the location of a tobacco factory (Gambardella, 2008; Brizi, 2005). After the closure of this operation in 1873 a third of the island became a penal colony in what seemed a spatial fix and panacea for its economic crisis (Morin, 2013; 2014). With the imposition of the prison (Figure 2a, 2b), the island community was re-territorialised and the prison absorbed the productive and reproductive activities of the island population, creating an ambiguous relationship of dependence between the community and the institution. While the total population of the island was between 300-400, the inmates numbered around 250 and the latter carried out agricultural work in the vineyards, fishing and shepherding, while also having to do maintenance work for most of the island's buildings (De Siervo, 2008; Ciccotti, 1970).



Figure 2a - Interview with the former penal colony guard (left) and 2b - the penal colony (right) (Source: *Linea Blu: Capraia* [RAI, 2007]).

Except for the area of the former penal colony, Capraia was accessible to outsiders. Since the 1950s it has been a popular location for fishing tourism. In 1986 the prison was closed and, after more than twenty years of neglect, some areas of the former penal colony were given to private companies for civilian use (Morelli, 2002). Today, on the grounds of the five main buildings of the prison, there are several wine-producing companies, a farm holiday facility and a cheese factory.

In the light of recent developments, Capraia is witnessing a gradual erosion of its prison landscape and the rise of a contemporary enogastronomic, agro-pastoral and eco-tourist landscape. If we consider the island's prison landscape as the product of the relationship between human labour and the natural environment, the terraces on the heights of the wine-producing colony, which are disappearing into the Mediterranean scrub, are a metaphor for the changing identity of the island. The touristic revitalisation of the island has to deal with what has been referred to as the post-prison 'problem', involving the re-use of the buildings and the context in which the closure took place. The uses of the buildings and the political, social and cultural significance of the sites themselves are elements of the evolving landscape (Moran, 2014).

This process is common to many prison islands around the world, including Wadjemup (Rottnest Island) in Australia, where the former prison was converted to an hotel and the island into a nature reserve (Stasiuk and Hibberd, 2017). These areas have become nature reserves with the aim of preserving ecosystems (Morelli, 2002) and promoting the protection of some of the islands' endemic species (Calzolaio, 2022). In this context, it should be acknowledged that the aesthetic and natural value of the island, which is presented as pristine, is the result of the forced labour of the prisoners and the limited consumption of land. In fact, the whole island has been shaped by the activities of the prisoners, which, although they gave the illusion of conserving nature, had an enormous impact on its ecology. There is no lack of evidence of the conflict that existed between the management of the colony and the Municipality of Capraia, due to the incompatibility of the interests pursued by the two institutions, in particular because the former did not bring the desired economic benefits to the village (Brizi, 2005). Finally, it is worth considering how the inhabitants have always been excluded from and penalised by this conflict.

There are cases in which some former prison islands have invested in their history, both ancient and recent (Cardillo, 2021). There are few such examples in Capraia. In the national park and in the village there are the old *palmenti*,¹ that bear witness the island's historical wine production. On several occasions, this past is used to give historical context to the growing food and wine industry (Morelli, 2002), but little space is given to the historical memory of the prison. This can be seen in the shifting landscape (Cosgrove & Daniels, 1988) and, in particular, in the terracing on the heights of the former open-air workhouse.

Wine production is one of the most representative elements of the island's development. The presence of three wineries is part of the process of institutional patrimonialisation aimed at recognising the heritage of rural production areas (Gabellieri & Gallia, 2022). A number of wines have been produced in the area, such as Palmazio or Aleatico, the latter being an autochthonous vine of the island. Today, as with other national areas, the wines of the Capraia terraces are considered "heroic" (Rombai, 2011). This classification risks forgetting and rewriting the history of the landscape. The slopes around the colony were covered with these traces of anthropic presence, but today there are only a few spots where these vines have been recovered. The landscape is therefore made up of the terraces, which now appear blurred to the eye, often collapsed and increasingly covered by dense Mediterranean scrub, and other small plots that have recreated the terracing system of the new farms. In the case of the terraces, we are witnessing the overwriting of a prison tradition with a representation from wine and food marketing, a landscape of toil in which the "hero" is the wine producer, while ignoring the past of violence inscribed in the work of prisoners (Nixon, 2011).

¹ Ancient stone vats used for the fermentation of crushed grapes in wine making.

Popular Geopolitics and the Island

Islands have been extensively represented in cinema, television and various forms of video, especially by outside producers who have largely narrated them through their own perspectives. The result is that media representations of islands often tend to reproduce idyllic ideas of islands, rather than reality. The separation between fiction and reality becomes more evident (and marked) when considering popular media – i.e., easily accessible media content produced for a mass audience – with its “increasing importance in shaping reality” (Saunders 2012, p. 83). As dell’Agnese (2021, p. 2) affirms, “the media convey (and in turn are influenced by) a particular way of seeing the world and our relations with that world, human and nonhuman.” By consequence, “trying to figure [it] out... is important not only for analytical interest but also, and perhaps above all, to understand if it is possible to intervene” (2021, p. 2).

The landscape of an island can be represented in an appealing manner as a tourist destination, concealing less attractive elements and highlighting symbols and *iconemi*,² such as the palm tree, which immediately connect the island to a certain idea of a paradise vacation (dell’Agnese, 2018). Other times, however, political interests lead to the construction of narratives aimed at highlighting the economic, cultural, or political interests of hegemonic positions on the mainland. In this context, the voices of the island’s inhabitants (both human and non-human) are silenced and nullified, especially if they are contrary to the desired narrative. The choice of Capraia as a case study allows for a reflection on the power relationship that popular media has in constructing the tourist imagery of small islands and, above all, in influencing island reality through hegemonic narratives far from local perspectives. The scale employed is thus extremely localised, mirroring the localised nature of the policies that affect it. Nonetheless, it can be considered as a micro-ecological metaphor of the dynamics concerning media, islands, and hegemonic discourses on a global scale.

The theoretical framework of this study is that of popular geopolitics. This is utilised both as a tool for analysing and dismantling hegemonic narratives in popular media that have depicted Capraia at various historical moments over the past two decades, and for comparing these audiovisual documents with vernacular productions created by tourists and video interviews conducted with the island’s inhabitants. This reflects that the main goal of the discipline is to investigate both popular geopolitics produced by elites and the representations generated by non-elites (Purcell et al., 2010).

The investigation of popular geopolitics emerges from within the realm of critical geopolitics and constitutes an integral component of it (Pickering, 2016). However, this discipline acknowledges that geopolitics manifests as an everyday phenomenon existing beyond the confines of academia and the policy sphere. It unfolds within the domain of popular geopolitics: the “geopolitical discourse that citizens are immersed in every day” (Dittmer, 2010, p. 14). It aims to understand “connection between power and knowledge, and, in particular, the power of representation over reality” (dell’Agnese, 2021, p. 4) and “the role of media and popular culture in shaping our understanding of the world around us” (Bos, 2019,

² Turri (1998) identifies *iconemi* as elementary units of perception. They consist of visual references with a strong semantic charge of the cultural relationship between society and territory. In other words, the *iconema* represents the imprint of a territory, the distinctive features of the landscape.

p. xiii), by being interested in how popular culture constructs and reveals spatial and political field of meaning (Saunders & Strukov, 2018). As Pickering reaffirms – quoting Dittmer – the term “popular geopolitics” inherently encompasses two dimensions: the everyday manifestations of geopolitics, disseminated through diverse media channels, and the scholarly examination of said everyday geopolitics (Dittmer, 2010). Consequently, scholars of popular geopolitics must scrutinise media in its myriad forms since “any form of representation that has as its object the depiction of spaces and/or spatially connoted individuals constitutes a form of knowledge/power capable of producing a discursive narrative and deserves to become an object of research” (dell’Agnese, 2021, p. 22). Purcell et al. (2010) posit that cinema, magazines, comics, and newspaper cartoons, along with non-elite-produced representations, constitute vehicles for disseminating elite geopolitics. Following these considerations, and given the nature of Capraia Island, this study has considered, on one hand, television programs, films, and promotional or naturalistic tourism videos; and, on the other hand, tourist representations in the form of home movies made between the 1970s and the 1990s.

The primary tool for the analysis of popular geopolitics is the multimodal discourse analysis, a qualitative research method aimed at studying the influence that both verbal and non-verbal texts have within their social context and vice versa. It investigates power structures and how discourse is influenced by the society and culture in which it is situated. Specifically, it aims to analyse “the set of taken-for-granted categories used to make sense of the world” and “what the author considers natural and normal without questioning” (dell’Agnese, 2021, p. 27). The investigation of discourses does not necessarily require texts containing an explicit environmental message but can be directed toward those texts that seemingly lack it. In fact, a discourse analysis may reveal how certain representations, ideas, and forms of knowledge have become part of “common sense” (Grayson, 2018), that is, everything that is taken for granted and normalised in a particular society.

Dell’Agnese (2021), identifies three key steps to build effective research in this direction. The first step involves analysing the content to search for a direct message and whether the geopolitical discourse in which the author is situated is explicitly expressed. In the case of the media texts analysed, a clear and direct message is rarely evident. Touristic promos are evidently tourism oriented. However, a great number of other discourses can be grasped in the intertext. The second step involves considering the genre of the text. The audiovisual texts covered in this article had to be considered in the context of their genre. For example, it is expected that a touristic promo will explicitly convey a touristic image of the island. However, it is necessary to ask how it is done and what choices are behind the processes, such as the reorientation of policies and the resolution of a negotiation between important actors that affect the island and the islanders. Were some aspects of the island hidden while others were emphasised? Was the perspective of the residents taken into account and how? The third step is to understand that both the audiovisual author’s apparent message and the world it takes for granted can be grasped in different ways through analysis. This involves examining the text, structure, images and sound in the films, specifically, investigating how certain representations, ideas, and forms of knowledge have become part of common sense (Grayson, 2018), that is, everything that is taken for granted and normalised in a particular society.

A final consideration has to be made about the main discourses regarding Capraia island we have taken into account. These are three principal ones:

- The touristification of the landscape;
- The (in)visibility of the carceral spaces;
- The issue of neoliberalising ecotourism as a technical fix.

Regarding the touristification of the landscape represented in the media texts analysed, a key concept to consider is the destination image, i.e., the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination (Crompton, 1979), based on information processed from a variety of sources over time (Gartner, 1994; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997). Moreover, Connell (2005, p. 776) argues that “destination images tend to be more affected by non-promotional communications” – such as fictional films, documentaries, TV programmes or online videos – “than by the efforts of tourism agencies.” As a consequence, it emerges from the influence that any kind of audio-visual source has to create the destination image a tourist has of a place, and what is expected from that place. And if these influencing sources do not consider the perspective of the residents, the result is a narration which influences reality and that respects only what is expected by tourists. We will explore how the texts describe Capraia by asking what is hidden or evidenced about the island in them and how the landscape is romanticised or presented as idyllic?

In relation to regimes of visibility and invisibility regarding carceral spaces, the main focus of our investigation was to interrogate the audiovisual documents about their representations of the former prison in relation to the past, present and future of the island and its inhabitants. Specifically, we investigated the role of the former prison in the island’s representations in relation to the island’s future prospects, and through which regimes of visibility its landscape is represented. Finally, regarding the last theme, we stress how the aim of ecotourism entails a vicious cycle of “neoliberalizing nature” (Fletcher, 2023) or, as Voumard puts it, ecotourism “is depicted as the mean to turn ‘sleeping’ assets into effective prosperity” (2019, p. 18). In other words, the island faces the risk of (re)entering the processes of economic exploitation, as in the colonial logic of the past, since preserved resources and heritage are commodified in order to generate value for tourist activities. In this context, the audiovisual documents have been scrutinised to understand how the new ecotouristic vocation has been narrated, conveyed, and/or marketed. In particular, we asked whether nature is portrayed only as a tourist attraction, whether there is a difference between how distinct media texts portray nature and tourism and how did the authors of these texts approach ecotourism on the island.

Audio-Visual Analysis

Capraia has been represented in different media over the last two decades and the small island is often evoked by stereotypical images. The prison, an agent of landscape during the last century, is disappearing, replaced by the new ecotourism and agro-pastoral orientation. In this section we consider six audiovisual texts that represent the island in order to identify how the shifting landscape has been portrayed in both institutional and vernacular texts³ during the last two decades. They have been divided into three different thematic areas:

³ The audiovisual documents selected in our research were produced in Italy for an Italian audience. Consequently, all non-Italian produced audiovisual materials were excluded. This choice was determined by the nature of our analysis, which considered the complex island-State geopolitical dynamics. Audiovisual material produced by the national TV network RAI were prioritised, as well as Istituto Treccani, Italy’s top publishing company in the cultural field. The inclusion of the documentary *Capraia: Un’isola di ali, onde, e falesie* was the result of archival research at the Sondrio Film Festival, the oldest and most important film festival in Italy focused on nature documentaries. Finally, for the use of

1. Historical and naturalistic documentaries;
2. Tourist promotional videos;
3. Vernacular narratives.

The first two groups reflect a top-down narrative, a reproduction of the dominant understanding and perspective which results from institutional gazes. These documentaries often depict nature in an essentialising way and the second type comprises videos that depict the island as a tourist destination. The first two categories can be considered as projections of agencies that want to attract a certain type of tourist. Finally, the third dimension of analysis concerns vernacular narratives that reflect tourists' perspectives. These manifest a touristic gaze which largely ignores local people.

The first series of videos are documentaries that describe a landscape created by nature. *Capraia un'isola di ali, onde e falesie* (Ennio Boga, 2018) begins with a recurring narrative of the island as a place to "escape to," "a shelter," and an "unexpected destination". It shows the cliffs, the natural park and the blue sea that surrounds the island. The only sign of the anthropic passage is the Zenobito Tower (Figure 3a), described by the narrator as "imposing and ancient," representing human control over nature, as it is built over volcanic flows. It seems abandoned, a *memento* of past human presence now left amidst the proliferation of Mediterranean scrub. To underline this sense of "wilderness", no humans are represented on-screen.



Figure 3a - The Zenobito Tower (left); and 3b - the penal colony (right). (Sources: *Capraia un'isola di ali, onde e falesie* [Ennio Boga, 2018] and *Capraia Isola LI: Il paese* [Treccani, 2018]).

The second video, *Capraia Isola (LI) - Il paese* (2018), produced by Treccani, presents the history of the island in an encyclopaedic documentary, showing the beauty of the National Park and then moving on to an anthropological description of the island. Both are presented without conflict, with neither section emphasising the island was a contested space with a contested identity. The institutional, historical and naturalistic perspective offered by Treccani portrays a landscape of emptiness, where very few humans appear, and is narrated by an off-camera voice. The video shows that economic activity could produce prosperity despite the prison (Figure 3b), which gave a double edge condition: the opportunity not to emigrate for the locals and the impact of the migration flow of prison workers in town. This is the only moment in which the documentary portrays the island as a contested place. The

amateur archive material, we considered the time-period during which the former penal colony was still active.

only images of humans appear in scenes concerning touristic activities and viticulture. Finally, it describes the island's contemporary revitalisation thanks to attractions of trekking, snorkelling and the traditional product of the island: wine.

The second institutional group of videos are the promotional TV programmes broadcasted in the national public TV channel (RAI), which are more related to marketing the island. *Aspettando Geo* (RAI, April 27, 2023) was as if it were a flying bird's description of the island (without the voice of inhabitants) made for a potential tourist who is looking for wilderness and traditional life in a romantic setting: "a place of peace, tranquillity, where nature and time dominate and flow slowly" (Figures 4a-4d). It emphasises the safety of the trekking paths in the National Park that were created in 1996. Animals can be observed and perhaps photographed as "they are not dangerous". The focus then moves on the locals, who appear as witnesses of traditions, in the rituals of rural life, often essentialised, as in the description of the local products they make. They are a tourist attraction themselves. It may seem an island without problems, with similar facilities to those available in the rest of Italy, where even if it is difficult to find a job, you can always find a solution and give space to creativity, like other local entrepreneurs running their activities of wine and cheese production, or fishing. When the video refers to the former penal colony, the new activities are presented as a way out of suffering. Now the entrepreneurs' businesses enrich the previously abandoned buildings. Finally, the prison building is now transformed "in what were once prison cells, barrels containing the nectar of Bacchus have taken their place." Wine production has always created a landscape that symbolises physical labour, sometimes exhausting and based on exploitation, a landscape of violence (Nixon, 2011). This representation is never seen in the videos, which show the passing of the baton of the agricultural tradition from the prisoners to the new entrepreneurs in a 'sweetened' way, without showing actual workers, as "sweating bodies" (dell'Agnese, 2018) recovering small parts of the vine terraces.



Figure 4a - The terraces on the former penal colony area (top left), 4b - the farmer and his sheep (top right), 4c - Massimo and Rossana's bed and breakfast (bottom left) and 4d - the "nectar of Bacchus" (bottom right). (Source: *Aspettando Geo* [RAI, April 27, 2023]).

There is a significant shift in the representation of the island as an attractive place to live in. It is shown as offering the opposite of urban life – here one can find clean air, empty roads, and pure, healthy and tasty ingredients that are appealing in their simplicity. The destination appears so idyllic that people like Massimo and Rossana, the owners of a holiday farm, are introduced as having moved to the island to improve the quality of their lives. Two other promotional videos of Capraia made by RAI in different years (2007 and 2010) also merit attention. The dates, although relatively close to each other, generated very different portraits that, according to the political context, completely change the perception of the future. A close analysis shows the distance between the policies and the citizens, who do not have any agency because their voice comes after the political decision, and not before. An episode of *Linea Blu* (RAI, July 31, 2010) was made when the prison buildings were finally released for civilian use. This was the result of years of conflict between the prison and the municipality, as described above. The concession of the building was part of a larger project of the improvement of the image of the island. Since then, the production of goat's cheese and wine has been revived. The historical moment that the video represents is characterised by an optimistic perspective on the anticipated new activities, but it was not clear quite what these will be. It is interesting to note the question that the interviewer asks an older resident about the future of the former colony by pushing for a constricted answer: "A hotel? A beauty farm? A small holiday farm owned by people of Capraia?"

In the other *Linea Blu* episode (RAI, June 16, 2007), there is a completely different feeling about the state of the island. It is nineteen years since the prison was closed and abandoned, and the presenter of the video interviews the mayor of Capraia, who denounces the state of the prison. In both *Linea Blu* videos, the relationship between the island and the prison is contradictory: great relations between the prisoners, the people and the prison officers, the same between the islanders and the prison officers, but on a different scale, an undeniable tension concerning the presence of the prison in the city. The video promotes the description of the uniqueness of the nature of the island and the differentiation made by the National Park on the spaces of preservation of the ecosystem: three areas, the "natural reserve," the protected area and the town. This reflects that the main landscape agent at this time was the National Park, which for years has been creating hiking trails in the island as part of an investment in eco-tourism.

If, in 2010, the space of the colony is described with the need to remember a unique experience of coexistence between prison and locals, the older video has an opposite vision. The 2007 episode interviews the mayor, who, after years of conflict with the prison institution, has no interest in talking about the patrimonialisation of its history. This can be seen when she states that the vine terraces, which are certainly one of the island's peculiarities, should not be remembered as the result of the prisoners' work, stressing that they existed before the prison. She sees the spaces of the penal colony as a possible extension of the park, where new trails can be created. The end of the video leaves the viewer with the hope of new ecological transformations on an island that should have the potential to change, but none of the projects about the penal colony could have been foreseen.

Finally, the last group encompasses representations from the grassroots that, in some way, serve as a counterpoint to institutional narratives of touristic or naturalistic promotion. In this case, only one audiovisual text will be considered, namely the video *Marea Analogica* (Michele Lezza, 2021), produced by the private cinema archive 8mmezzo of Livorno in collaboration with a local web broadcaster. This work is significant as it operates on two levels: visually, it is a silent montage of various Super8 home movies from vacations films and videos made by tourists visiting Capraia between the 1960s and the 1990s; sonically, it is

a montage of different interviews conducted with the island’s inhabitants in recent years. Consequently, the images provide a visual counterpoint to what it is said by the residents. A dual analysis was conducted: one that considered only the archival material, namely the tourists’ perspective on Capraia when the penal colony was still active (or recently closed); and one that considers the interviews with the island’s inhabitants, thus capturing their voice (finally).

Regarding the images produced by the tourists, it must be considered that they were taken from the perspective of the tourist gaze. A gaze falls upon what the tourist expects to see, a gaze that identifies “what is visually out-of-ordinary, what are the relevant differences and what is ‘other’” (Urry, 1990, p.145). This is, thereby, a gaze that develops and reproduces the tourist’s destination image. The images, predominantly of a familial nature, may include the presence of and military personnel. The tourist is not seeking out the prison or the carceral dimension, but some elements of it cannot be hidden and inevitably emerge from the filmic text. This also recurs in other texts, such as in the work of the Italian intellectual Giorgio Cesarano, who visited Capraia for underwater fishing during the 1960s (Raboni, 2011). In ‘Il giorno di Capraia’ (1966, p. 13) he tells the story of a tourist (probably himself) who walks through the streets of the port and witnesses the beating of two prisoners who were there to repair fishing nets. The tourist described by Cesarano turns his face away from the fight, just as the ‘mechanical eye’ of the camera often moves away from inmates and guards, but it is still possible to notice them in the background. Conversely, what captures the late 20th century tourist’s attention is the presence of animals such as dolphins, shearwaters, and fish, also captured with underwater cameras.

Analysed texts	Represented landscapes		
	Carceral	Agro-Pastoral	Eco-touristic
<p>Top-down institutional narrative [Historical and naturalistic]</p> <p><i>Capraia un'isola di ali, onde e falesie</i> (Ennio Boga, 2018);</p> <p><i>Capraia Isola (LI) - Il paese</i> (Treccani, 2018)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mostly hidden; - In the past, an opportunity not to emigrate; - A landscape of emptiness due to the penal colony. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wine production as possible economic activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If present, tourism is portrayed as an economic opportunity.
<p>Top-down institutional narrative [Touristic]</p> <p><i>Aspettando Geo</i> (RAI, April 27, 2023);</p> <p><i>Linea Blu</i> (RAI, June 16, 2007);</p> <p><i>Linea Blu</i> (Rai, July 31, 2010)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Romanticised; - The suffering of represented by the prison is now replaced by economic activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new form of agriculture and pastoralism portrayed as touristic attractions; - Romanticisation of the manual labour; - As currently the main life-sustaining activities currently in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capraia is portrayed as a place of peace and, tranquillity, where nature and time dominate and flow slowly. A perfect location for tourism.

<p>Vernacular [Tourists]</p> <p><i>Marea di Analogica</i> (Michele Lezza, 2021) [without voice-over]</p>	<p>- Neither hidden nor romanticised, at most avoided.</p>	<p>- Narrated as a peculiar feature of the island.</p>	<p>- Cine-tourists portray nature as a leisure or commodity.</p>
<p>Vernacular [Residents]</p> <p><i>Marea di Analogica</i> (Michele Lezza, 2021) [with voice-over]</p>	<p>- As part of the islanders' current identity.</p>	<p>- New form of agriculture and pastoralism seen as a possibility to work.</p>	<p>- Locals are diffident towards tourism and tourists. - Job opportunity.</p>

Table 1 - A schematic representation of the six audiovisual texts analysed, divided by into thematic groups, and how they portray the three landscapes of Capraia.

These aspects are explained through voice-over interviews in which the residents reflect on the impact that tourism has had on the island and their expectations for its future. They discuss underwater hunting, which was particularly popular among tourists in the past century. The former penal colony, on the other hand, is described by residents in a matter-of-fact manner, neither to be concealed nor romanticised. It has existed and played a central role for the island, and now it is part of their memory and island identity. For example, they elaborate on the *sardegnolo*, an animal (usually a donkey), used as the means of transportation by inhabitants and prison personnel before the construction of the pier. Finally, the interviews primarily reveal the perception of the island of Capraia and its future for its inhabitants, who respond to the question “What is Capraia for you?”. In their responses devoid of the romanticism and idyllic narratives of institutional audiovisuals, numerous problems of living on the island emerge, from growing up as a teenager to economic issues: “for young people, Capraia is only a starting point; everything is outside.”

Conclusion

In this article we have explored and described the representation of an island at a historical crossroads. The landscape of the past risks being replaced by new revitalisation projects determined by the national policy and by some of the inhabitants of the island. The shifting carceral, agro-pastoral and touristic landscapes can be seen through the discourses on Capraia island present in popular media, specifically in audio-visual texts considered as valuable material that sheds light on the new policies of the island. What emerges is a process of general revitalisation of the island that threatens the fragility of its territory. As Fletcher (2023, p.6) points out:

ecotourism may be seen to capitalise on the loss of ‘undeveloped’ areas due to the expansion of extractive capitalist production, in the same manner as conservation generally. Many ecotourism sites, in fact, explicitly market themselves as desirable destinations based on the probability that they will cease to exist down the road.

The new vocation of the island is based on agricultural development (such as wine production) and (eco)tourism, which, however, are struggling to take off. In relation to the (economic) future of the island, and in particular to the agro-pastoral sector, the idea of

relaunching wine cultivation as a peculiar and traditional activity constitutes a serious asset. This can be seen today within the project of “territorial, landscape and social patronage” (*Wine News*, 2022), with the goal to help Capraia in reviving viticulture on the island.

The different representations show how top-down narratives have reproduced the institutional gaze which superimposes an intertwined vocation of nature and tourism, a both ecotourist and agro-pastoral dream, essentialising and flattening the environment. To create an image for the island that attracts a certain type of tourist, the regimes of representation have to highlight exemplary cases narrated without friction. Stories are often cut off from their critical parts, but, in some cases, we were able to recover, and reconstruct some shadowed parts. This is the case of the *Linea Blu* episode *Storie di Capraia* (2010), which aims to present people’s accounts of their time in prison in a positive light – “there were great relationships between the people who worked in the prison,” as one local interviewee said), while acknowledging a difficult relationship with the penal colony. Others are used to imagining a sustainable future with eco-tourism as an economic solution, but not the problems that might arise from the difficulty of living permanently on the island. Rossella, for instance, works and lives there only a few months per year. The *Aspettando Geo* documentary instead makes a more comprehensive encompassing narration of the island where unique and pristine nature are the perfect set for a romanticised (audio and visual) tale of a Mediterranean island where ‘time stood still’ and patience and loneliness serve as reconciliation with nature. This regime of representation often excludes the voice of the islanders and can create a collective amnesia about the history of the island, especially the prison past. On the other hand, polysemy, criticality and friction are inherent characteristics of the vernacular representations considered.

In conclusion, this article has attempted to bring out a complex and multifaceted island reality that has been ignored by top-down narratives. Unlike the mainstream actors, who are able to “turn their faces away” (like Cesarano’s tourist) from what they don’t want to encounter, there are no one-sided stories: the mechanical eye of the camera accidentally catches the policemen in the background while trying to portray a holiday port, the islander’s voice behind the *Marea Analogica* videos testifies how difficult it can be to grow up on the island, and finally, that not all the island’s inhabitants see Capraia’s new tourist vocation as a panacea.

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⁴ Not available online.