





ARCHITECTURE OF
TERRITORY
European Countryside

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ILIA'S COAST SEASIDE COUNTRYSIDE

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Ilia's Coast Seaside Countryside

The development of tourism in Greece is an interesting and complex case study. In the 1950s, the Greek government fostered the belief that, instead of driving the country's economic development through industrialisation, the main economic policy should rather focus on tourism. This strategy did not derive from the local economic traditions, but instead, it emerged as a result of the growing demands of the international leisure and travel industry.

It started from the premise that Greek tourism would be based on the economies of 'history' and 'scenic landscape', emphasizing the coexistence of archaeological monuments with nature. The construction of infrastructure, including ports, highways and airports, was an essential prerequisite for the economic strategy based on tourism. The areas with an 'intact' landscape became a synonym for modernisation and touristic development. Still, not all the regions developed in the same way. Some of them stayed blind spots to the international mass tourism, and these are the places where a 'local kind of living' could be found.

One of these regions is the coast of Ilia, a region to which international mass coastal tourism seems to be just arriving.



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Local Coast

With the development of international tourism, beaches with local character, like the ones of Ilia's coast, are rarely found.

p.16

Coastal Settlements and Urban Networks

The juxtaposition of international tourism with local lifestyle is visible both in its infrastructure and in the patterns of local and international tourist influx seasons.

p.32

Coastal Landscape in Transformation

Last century's emphasis on agriculture has radically transformed Ilia's coast. Today, international tourism adds up to this transformation.

p.50

Local Coast under Pressure

Real-estate pressure for the development of coastal tourist facilities leads to the continual land deterioration and drying-up of lakes in the area.

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Accessing the Local Landscape

The vulnerability of the local settlements and of the coastal landscapes of Ilia signals an urgent need for rethinking the relationship between tourism, locality and landscapes in the region.

Local Coast

Coastal tourism is transforming the majority of inhabited coastal areas around the world. The signs of this transformation can be seen and felt almost everywhere on the coasts of Europe, especially in the Mediterranean. Traditional local settlements as well as 'natural' coasts seem to be quickly disappearing, with mass tourism facilities replacing them. Relatively few regions, such as the western Peloponnesian coast, have averted the affects resulting from this kind of development, due to a limited accessibility and poorly developed infrastructure. As a result, these regions offer more local qualities and possibilities, in comparison to the coast developed for mass tourism.

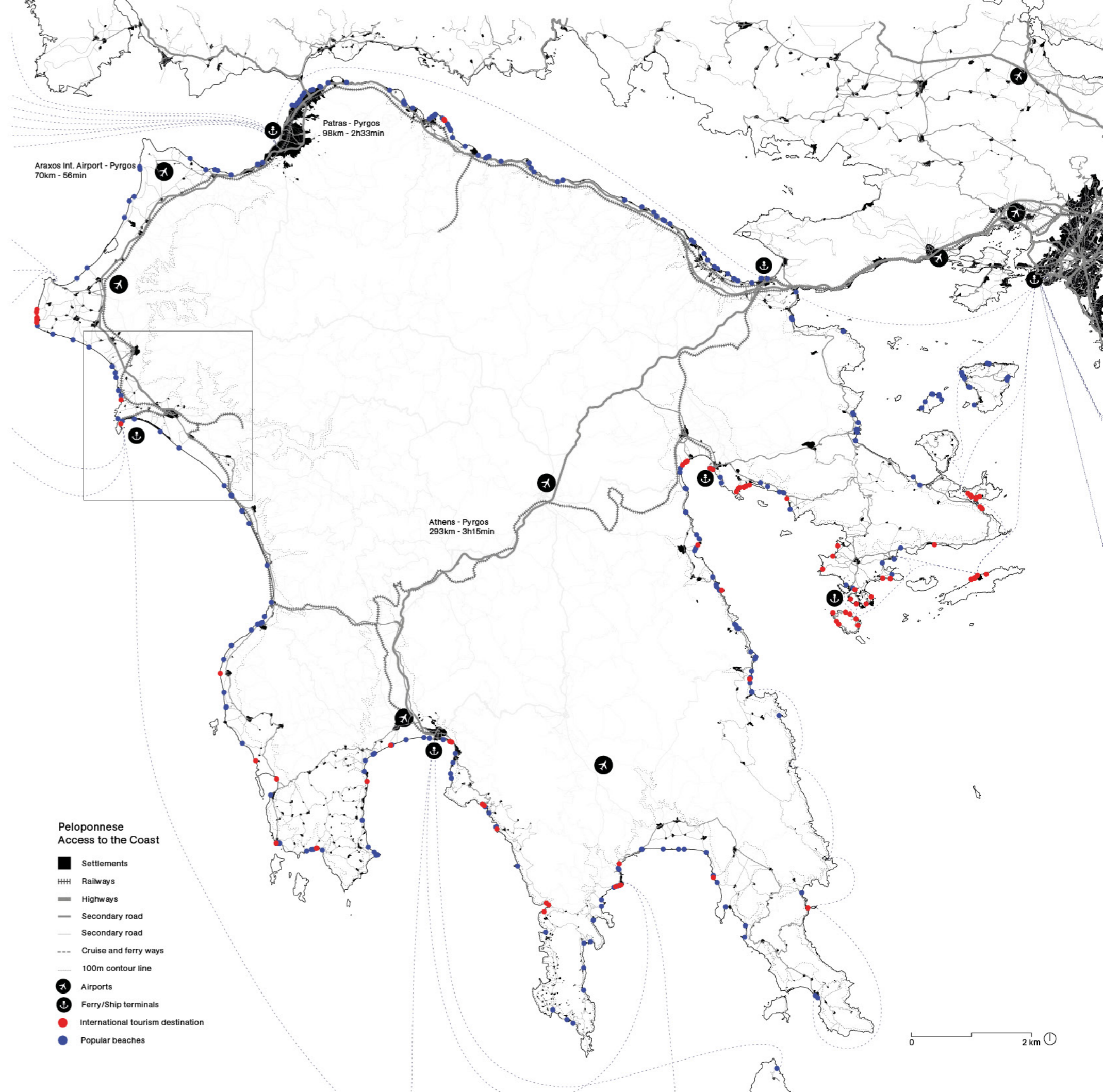
Touristic Coast of Europe

Coastal tourism in Europe is mostly international, particularly in the Mediterranean. Taking Costa Brava in Spain as an example, one can see that international tourism manifests here in a form of high density development. On the other hand, the western coast of Greece seems to be an interesting case, as it still offers international coastal tourism, but with a much lower density.



Touristic Coasts of Peloponnese

In the Greek context, the western Peloponnesian coast could be characterized as more 'local'. This can be explained by the relative inaccessibility of the coast. At the same time, eastern Peloponnesian coast, which can be better accessed from Athens, experienced an aggressive transformation into a tourist hub.



Historical Evolution of Urban Settlements

The coastal region of Iliia has traditionally been one of low density, owing to a prevalence of disease and infestation. This can be attributed to its warm and humid climate, as well as to the great frequency of contact with foreign boats. Additionally, its location and topography offered little protection from foreign invasion. The sparse settlements occurred mostly on hilly terrains close to rivers, that connected the settlements with the sea. After the Greek Revolution and the subsequent liberation from Ottoman Occupation in the 19th Century, the coastal areas became more safe, leading to new settlements springing up along the coast. Fertile but uncultivated plains turned into agricultural land. Raisins became the primary export good of Iliia and they were shipped all over Europe from Port Katakolon. The profitable export of agricultural goods in the 19th century, led to the growth of the regional centres, Amaliada and Pyrgos. The discovery of archaeological sites in Olympia opened the region for travellers wanting to visit the ancient ruins. It was not until the 1980's when newly extended terminal brought a new wave of international mass-tourism. It still remains the main arrival facility for tourists in Iliia.

XIX Century Destination for Seasonal Migration



Family in Viltineika, around 1900

After the liberation from the Ottoman occupation, the coastal land was repurposed for agriculture. Attracted by the cultivable fields, people from Arcadia started settling on the hilly coast. The migrants spent the winter seasons living and working in Iliia because of its warm weather and cultivable land, returning to Arcadia during the summer season. For instance, people from Lasta, an Arcadian village, would seasonally commute to a newly built settlement, Lasteika.



Settlements of seasonal agriculture migrants coming from Arcadia

1883–1902 Introduction of Commuter Railways



Old train station in Pyrgos, around 1902

In 1883 the first railway line was constructed. It connected Pyrgos with Katakolon and was mainly used for the transport of agricultural goods. Seven years later, it was opened to the public. The route, which connected Pyrgos with Amaliada and Athens, was inaugurated on March 29, 1890. Later, in 1902, the route was extended towards south, connecting Pyrgos with Kyparissia. Shortly after, in 1891, the route between Pyrgos and Olympia was inaugurated.



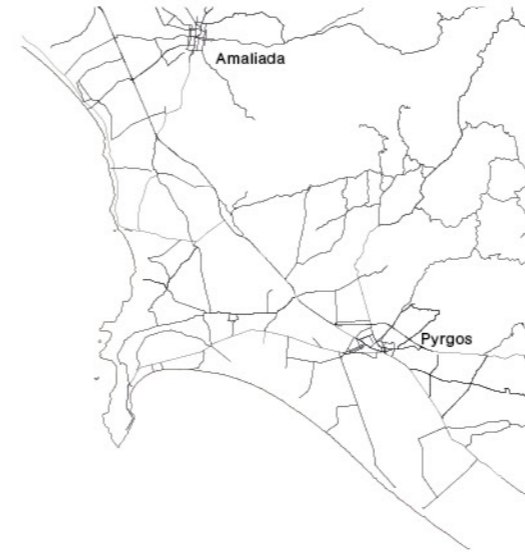
Railway network, 1902

1920–1960 Entering the Automobile Era



A bus driver in Iliia, circa 1957

As automobiles became more affordable, Iliia's road network started expanding. This led to the emergence of sprawls across the region. In particular, the popularity of the 'second homes' close to the beach was one of the main agent of the change in physical and social landscape. Additionally, the new road network led to the intensified urbanisation in Pyrgos and Amaliada, cities that emerged at the time as regional centres.



Expansion of the road network, circa 1960

1967–1969 Agriculture as a State-Run Project. Lake Drainage



Fisherman in Lake Mouria, circa 1950

The region along former Mouria lake was known for fishing. During the 1970s, this area was reclaimed and drained by the Greek state, in order to be exploited for agriculture. The drainage strategy went hand in hand with the construction of a new irrigation system for the coastal region, with the water supply from the Alfeios river. As a consequence, the landscape of boats and fishery was slowly replaced by agricultural landscape.



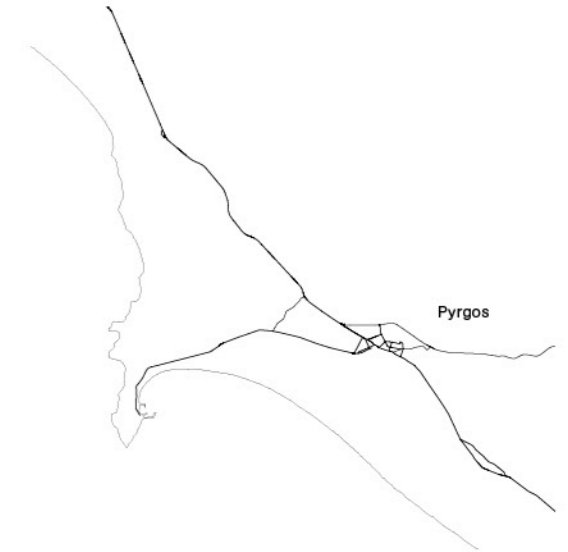
Agricultural irrigation and the drainage system

1978–2016 Infrastructures for International Tourism

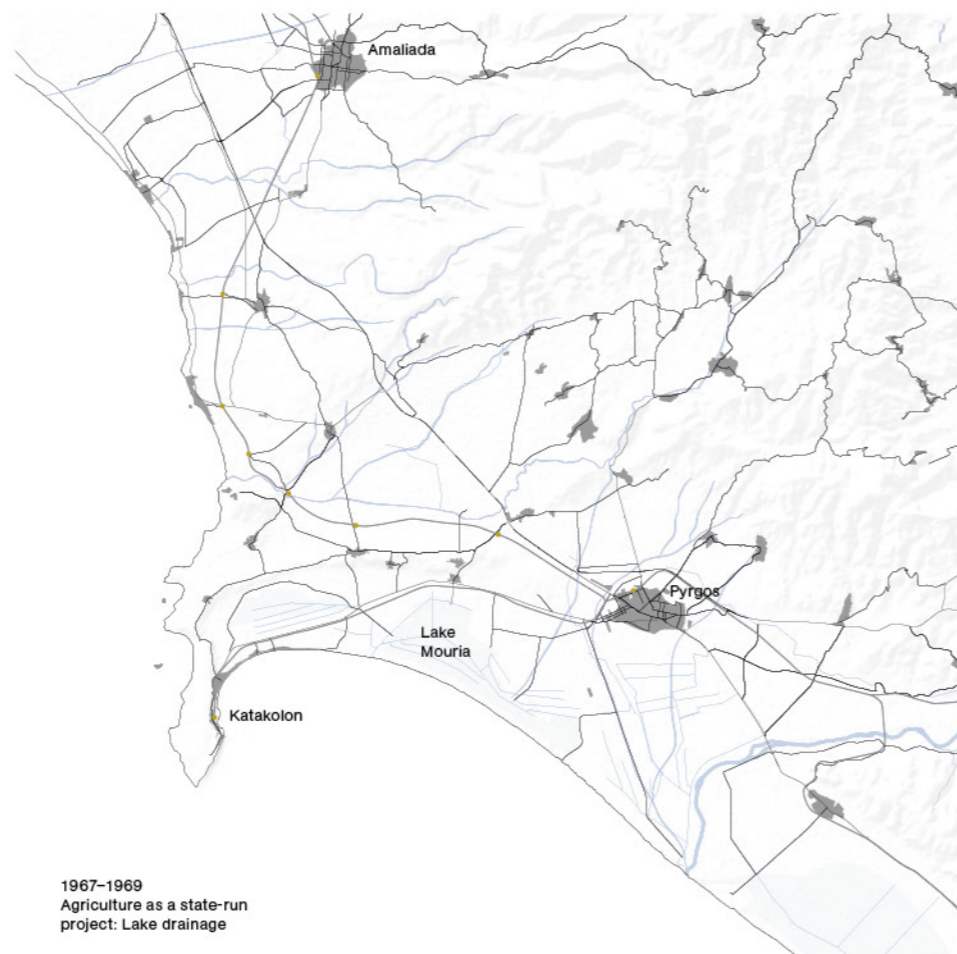
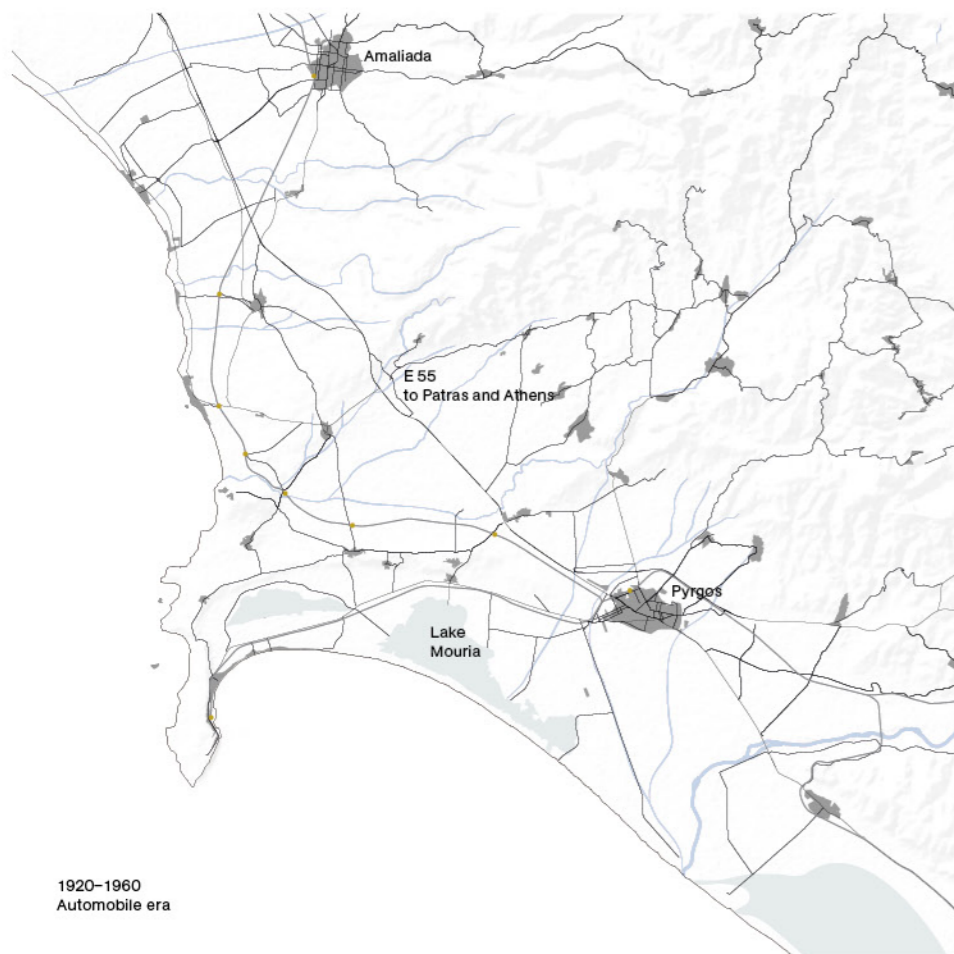
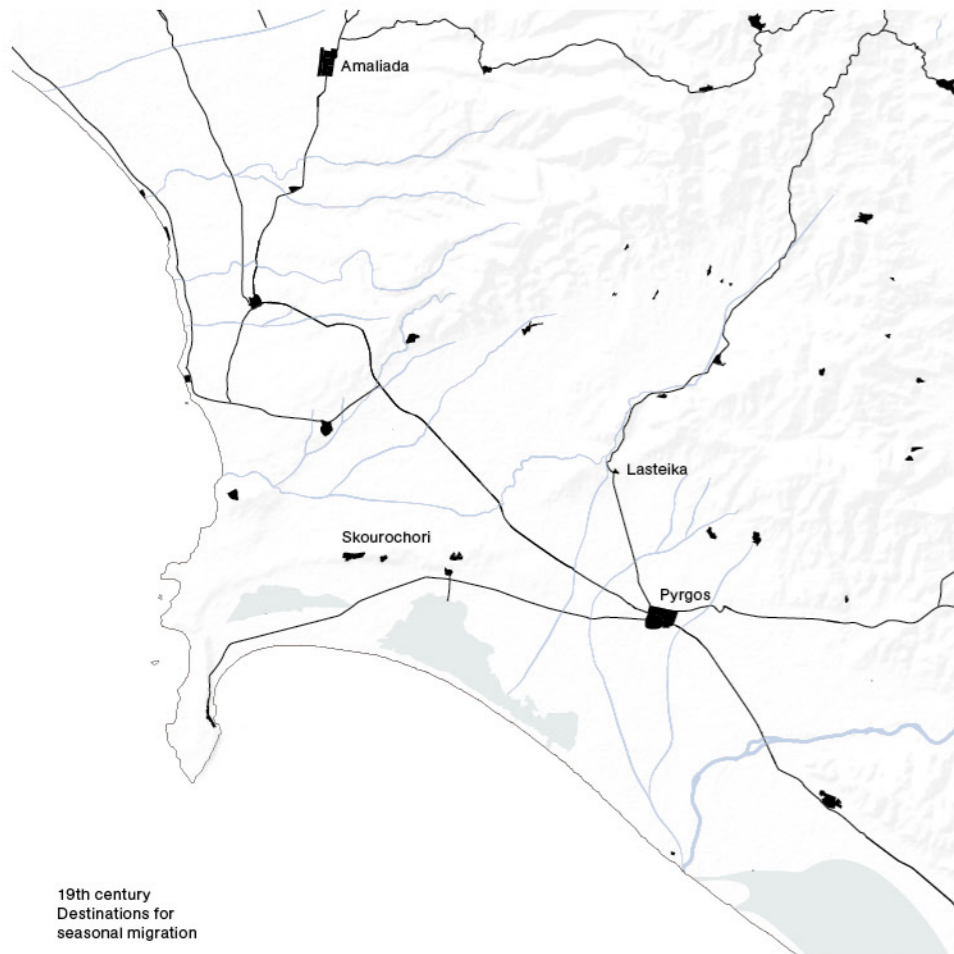


Quay in Port Katakolo, circa 1930

Port Katakolon was constructed for the transport of agricultural goods. However, since the discovery of ancient sites in Olympia, travellers started pouring to Katakolon. Thus, the port was extended and adapted in order to receive and serve cruise ships during the 1980s. Following this trend, the National Road E55, that connected Iliia's coastal regions with the International Airport at Patras, was built in 1978. This stimulated the construction of resorts on the beach.

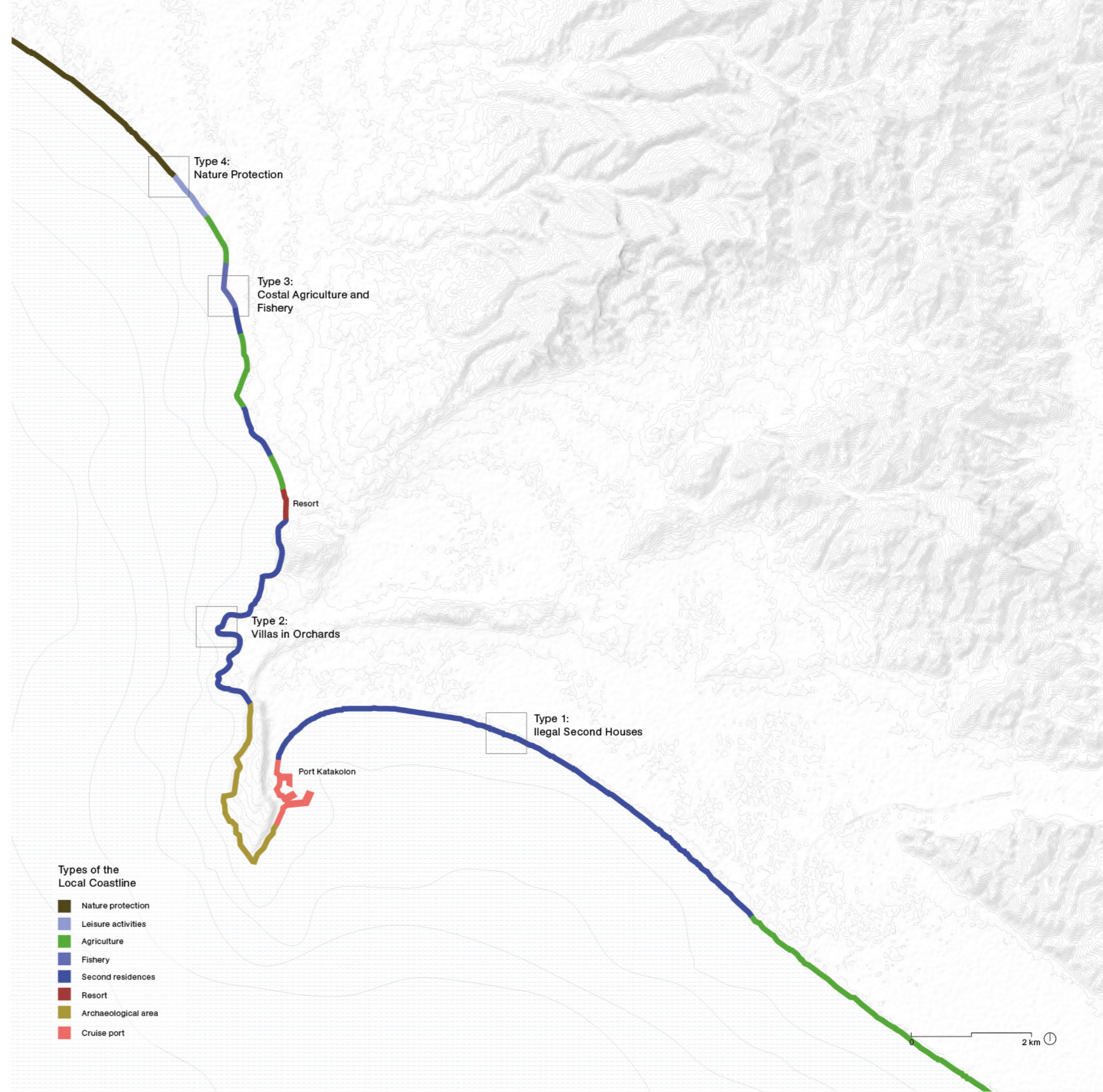
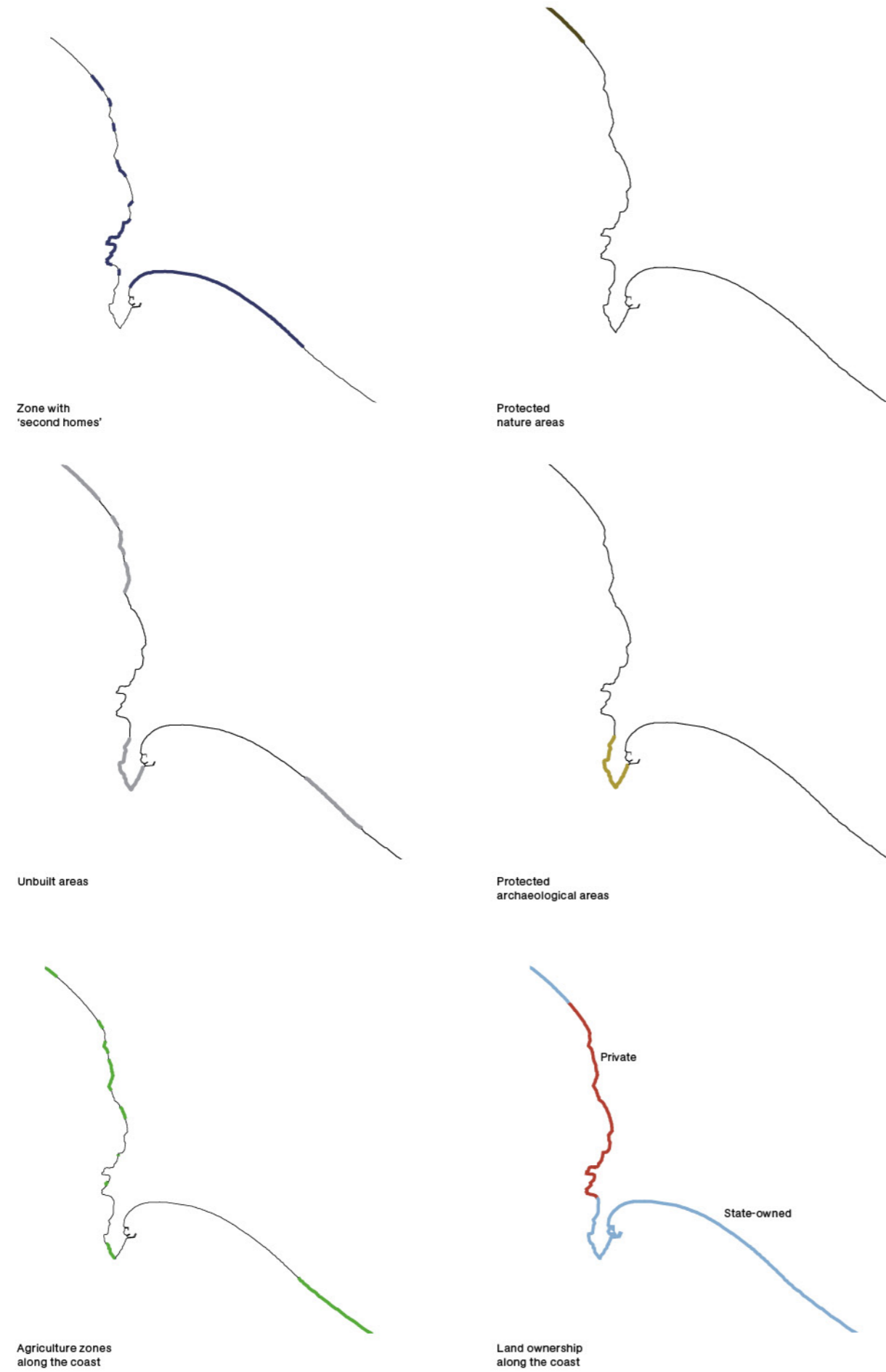


Expansion of the port and national road network, 1980s



Searching for the Local Coast

By looking at the coast of Ilia, we can identify certain characteristics of what can be labeled as a 'local coast'. The coexistence of these characteristics aids the development of various local occupations along the coastal line. Nonetheless, there are only two kinds of international occupations that seem to be rather isolated from the rest of the coastline.



Coastal Settlements and Urban Networks

The coast of Ilia has maintained a very strong and predominantly local character, even though Port Katakolon has been one of the major cruise ship ports of Greece, with a large annual influx of international tourists coming to visit the heritage sites of Olympia. The coexistence of 'the local' and 'the international' is also reflected in the overlap of the networks they create. While the urban network serving international tourism is characterized by a linear configuration, defined through entrance gates and specific destinations, the local networks are much more complex structures with common services and activities.

International Coastal Settlements

Port Katakolon is the entry point for international tourists arriving by cruise ships, looking for the emblematic ancient Olympia. The beach resort is the main destination for these tourists.



Katakolon
Cruise port



Resort Miramar
near Kalakeika

Local Coastal Occupations

The predominant heterogeneity of Ilia is immediately evident. Most of the settlements have preserved their local character and a way of living, even though new activities have been sprung up in these places. For instance, a new open-air cinema was built in a forest.

Type 1: Illegal Second Houses

The coastal settlement zone, which is approximately 10 km long and 200 m wide, is mostly constituted from 'second houses' of Ilia's residents, positioned between the sea and the former lake. In Mouria, these settlements

are technically illegal as they are built on a public land. A formalisation of these settlements by the state is still expected by its inhabitants.



Illegal second houses
near Spiatza



Road inside illegal second
houses near Katakolon

Type 2: Villas in Orchards

Villas are the most common typology of second houses. Sprawled along the coast of Ag. Andreas, they are located on the hilly outcrops and usually built on a private land. Many of the villas are surrounded by olive groves.



Ag. Andreas
Villa



Ag. Andreas
Villa

Type 3: Coastal Agriculture and Fishery

For centuries, the marina of Palouki has been strongly linked to the nearby inland settlements. It represents one of the few access points to the Ionian sea. The port has maintained a local character

and is used mostly as a meeting point, or for fishing and sailing. Agricultural fields surround the port. It is also known as a camping destination for local tourism.



Palouki
Promenade



Palouki
Fishery marina

Type 4: Nature Protection

The forest near Kourouta is a coastal dune and is designated as a 'nature protection zone'. On a normal weekday, it is common to see people walking dogs or jogging here. During summer, people build temporary huts out of salvaged wood from the beach

to shelter themselves from the sun. The open-air cinema in the forest is rebuilt every year and attracts many visitors.



Summer huts
near Paralia



Public cinema in the
forest near Kourouta



Sticks indicating
eggs of Turtles

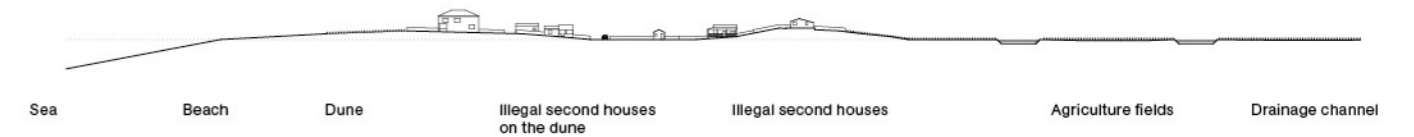
Type 1:
Illegal Second Houses



Illegal second houses
near Katakoton



Kiani Akti
Aerial view



Section A-A:
0 20 m

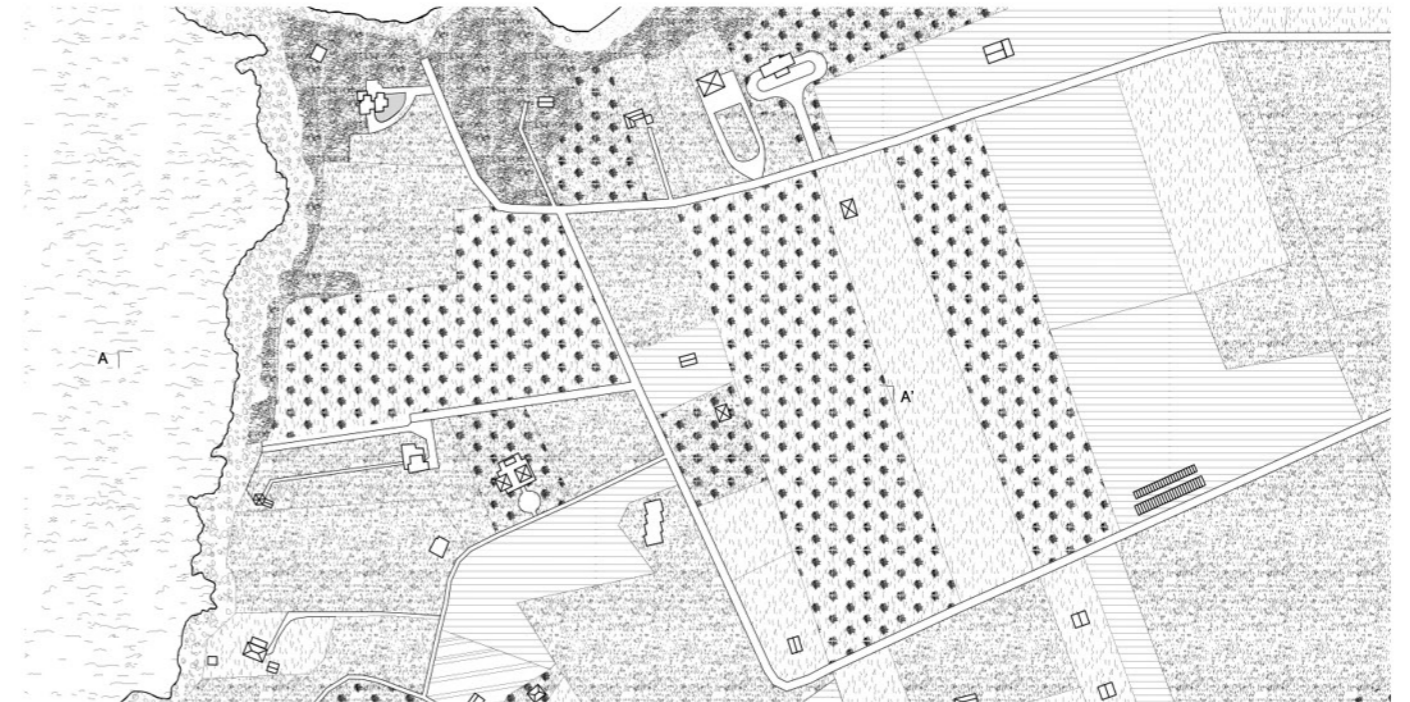
Type 2:
Villas in Orchards



Summer villas near
Ag. Andreas



Ag. Andreas
Aerial view



0 200 m



Section A-A
0 20 m

Type 3:
Coastal Agriculture and
Fishery



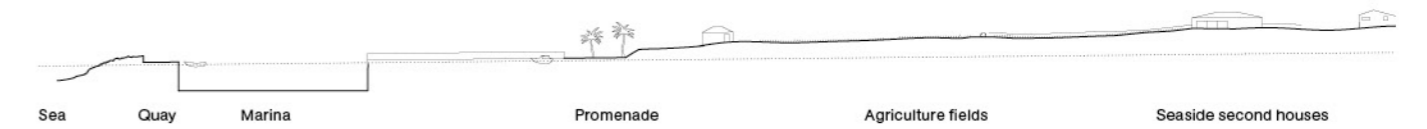
Palouki
Fisher boats in the marina



Palouki
Aerial view



0 200 m



Section A-A*
0 20 m



Forest near Kourouta



Kourouta, aerial view of the forest as a protected site



0 200 m



Sea Beach Huts Dune Forest Open-air cinema

Section A-A*
0 20 m

Introducing Seasonality

In Iliia, it is possible to differentiate seasonality in patterns related to international tourism and local living. The 'international pattern' consists of mass tourism, that concentrates in specific locations. This pattern is generated mostly during the summer months and reaches its highest frequency during the initial weeks of autumn. The 'local pattern' is maintained by locals from the nearby villages that use their seaside second houses during these months. During summer, most of the local people live in their second houses, as the beach provides a more comfortable temperature than inland villages. In winter, these villages are partially inhabited during the weekends.



Port Katakolon Quay

Two different versions of international tourism are identifiable on Iliia's coast. The first type refers to the stop-over cruise ships at the Katakolon port that bring up to four thousand passengers per ship. The stop-over lasts approximately for six hours, just enough time for visiting the Olympian heritage sites. Consequently, the shops and touristic facilities in Port Katakolon are opened only during these hours. On the other hand, tourists looking for more exclusive beach holidays, arrive mainly at the Araxos Airport (Patras) and are driven through national road E55 directly to their resorts. The resort provides all the needed facilities. As a consequence, souvenir shops can be found along the streets leading to the resort.

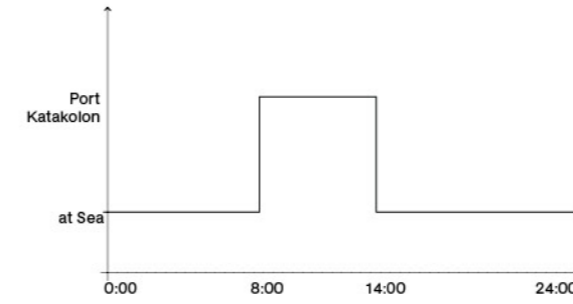
International Pattern



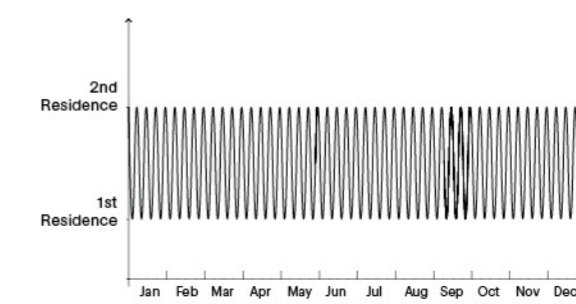
Street in Myrtia

The local pattern refers to the small villages with populations between 200 and 800 inhabitants, whose residents, in order to fulfil their basic life needs, create a network of service sharing between the old head villages, smaller old village centres and beach centres. However, their autonomy is possible only up to a certain degree, as they still depend on the bigger centres, Pyrgos and Amaliada. This dependency mostly refers to the access to places of higher education, health care, shopping malls and other similar amenities.

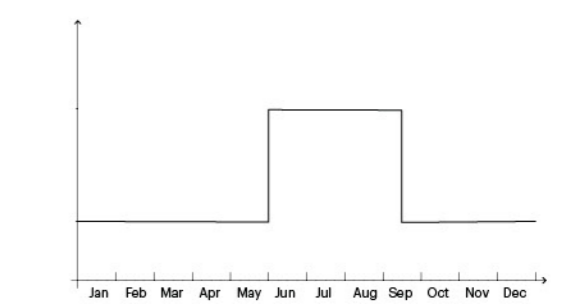
Local Pattern



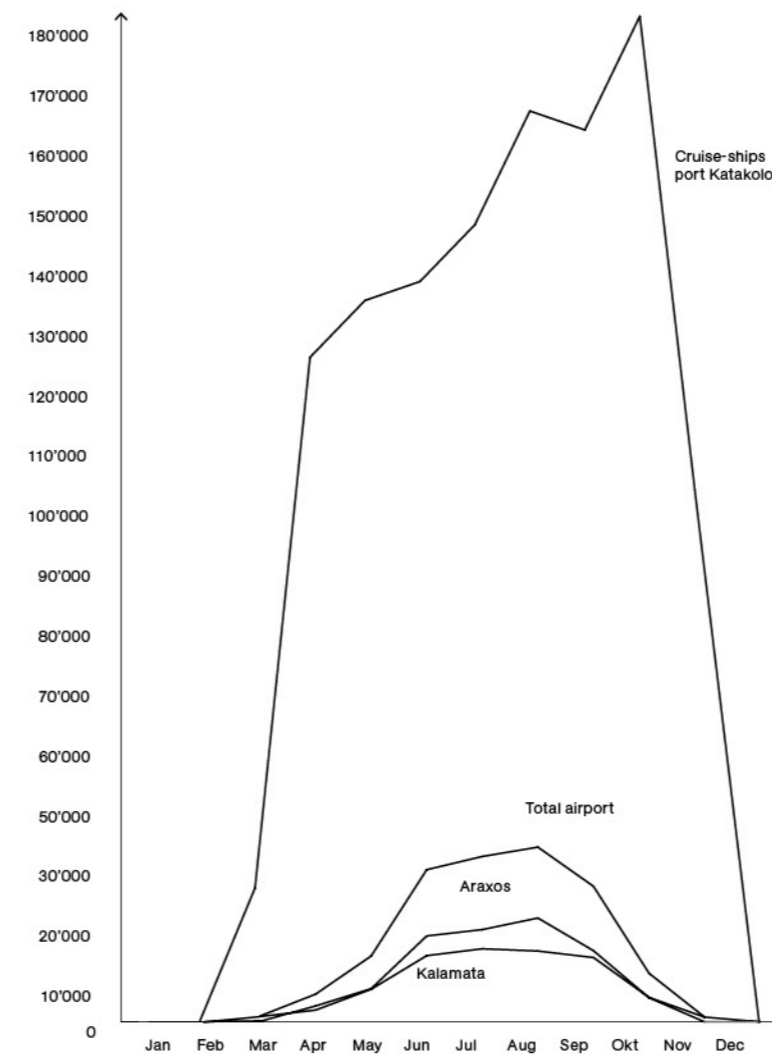
International pattern: Cruise ship stopovers at Katakolon



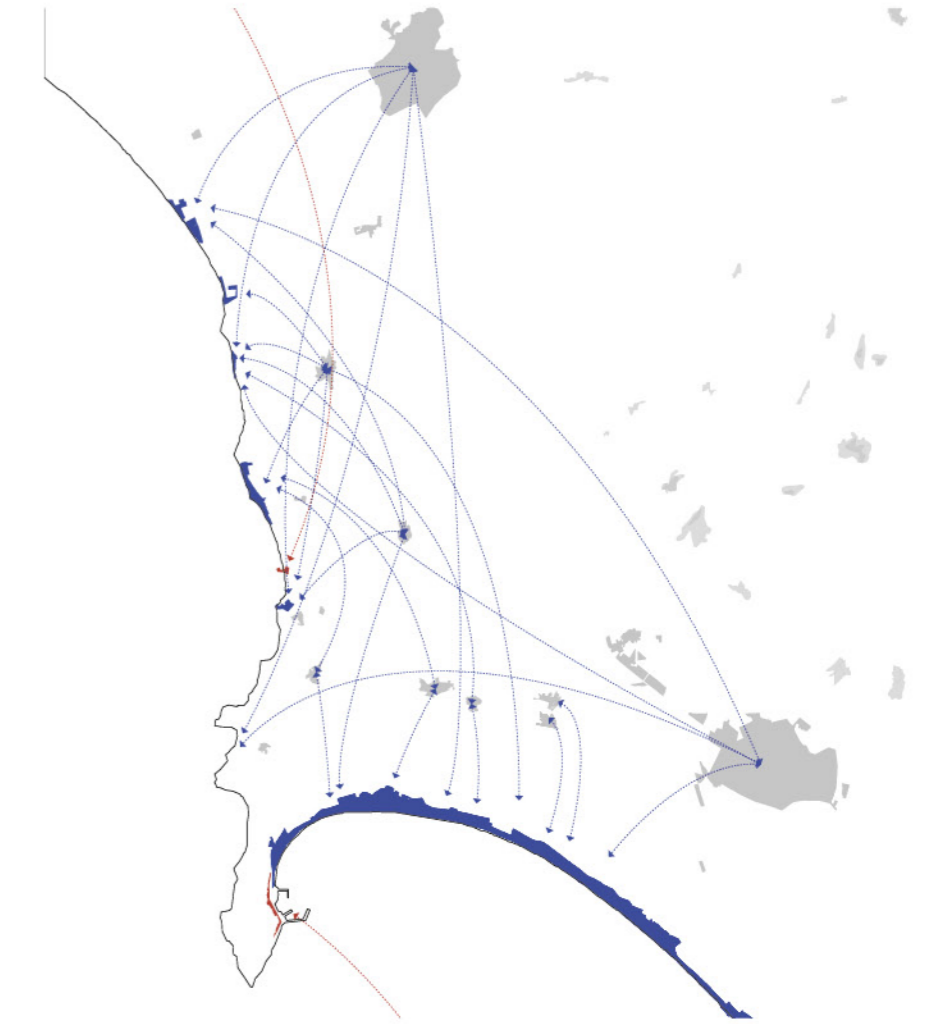
Local pattern: Weekly cycle



Local pattern: Seasonal cycle



Number of international visitors arriving via cruise-ships or airports



Circulation of locals to "second-homes" inside Iliia

International Pattern

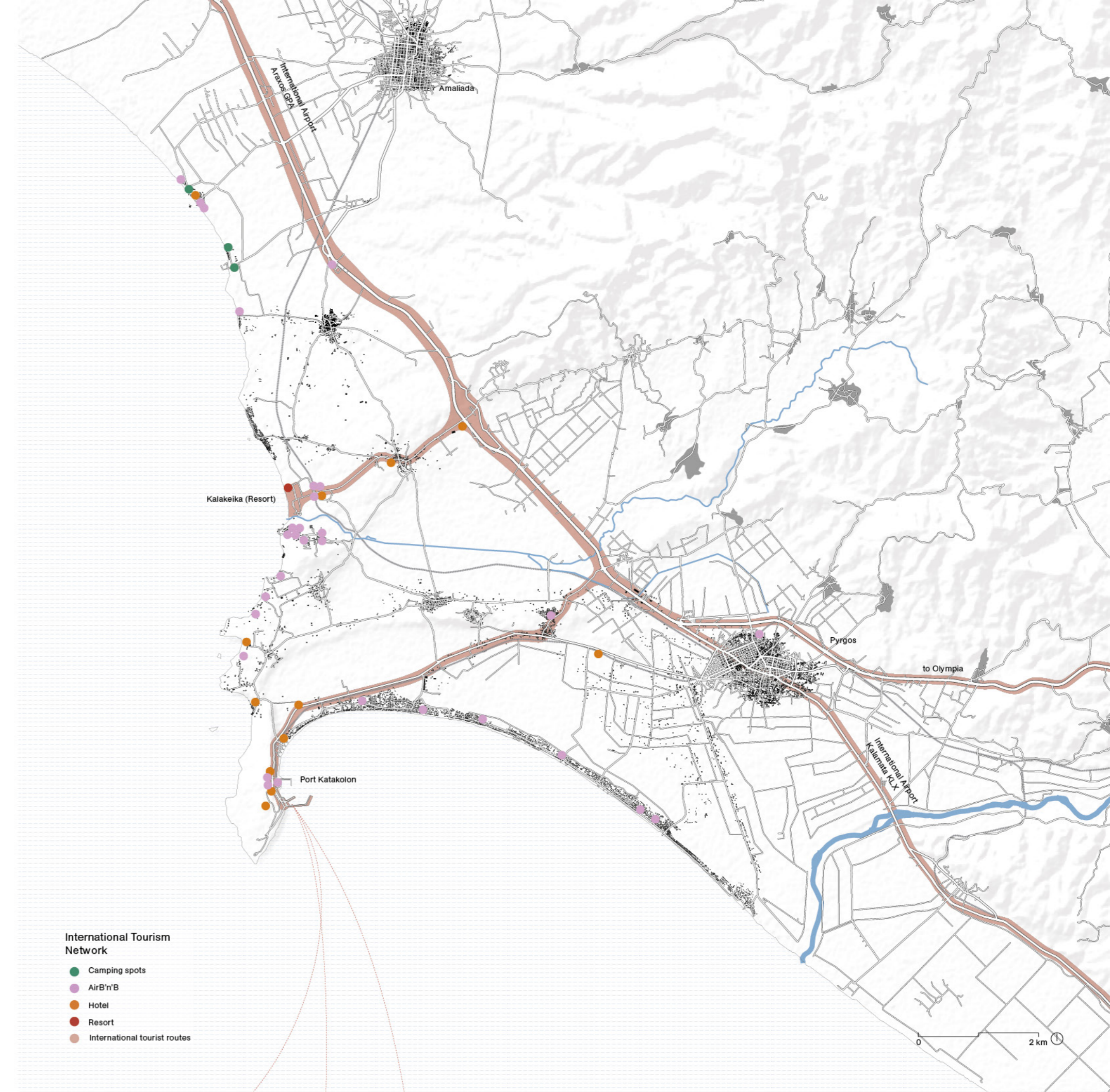
Helmut (62), Engineer
Hanna (52), Secretary

"This is the second time we have taken this route with the cruise ship, that's the reason we would now skip Olympia. But most of the people from our cruise ship have gone there today. It's really relaxing to travel on a cruise ship because almost everything is planned for you. We don't have to worry about taking the wrong train or bus. That's why we try to repeat this every year."



Port Katakolon

The shops in Katakolon open only during hours in which cruise ships are docked there, thus serving only international tourists staying up to 6 hours in Iliia.



Local Pattern

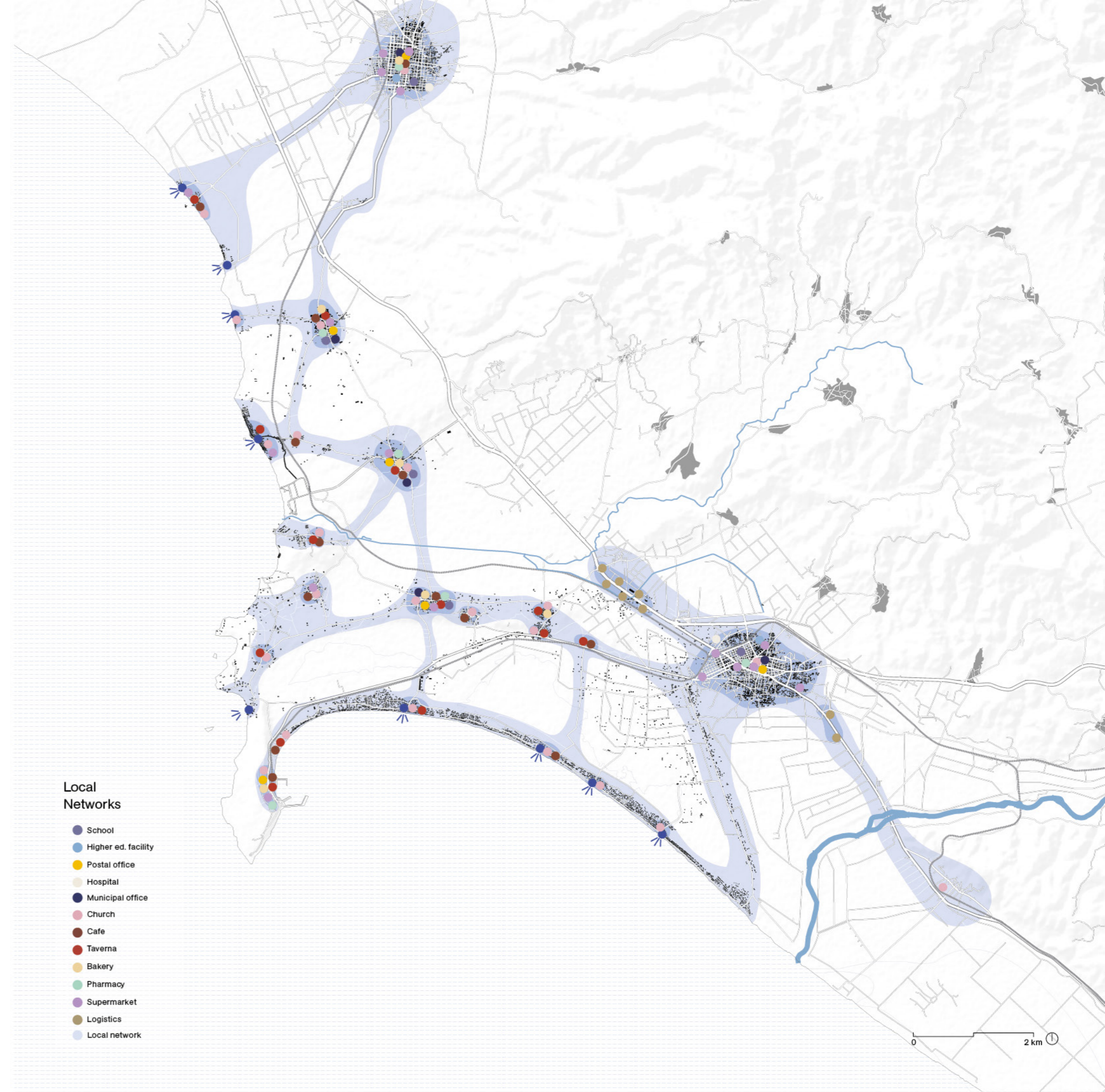
Nikos (35), Farmer

"I live here in Skourochori. I used to work on a cruise ship, but being a farmer gives me more freedom to enjoy life. I can dress as I wish and don't have to laugh when I don't want to. I do have a second house on the beach, as everyone else here does. I go there sometimes on weekends but I am mostly there during the summer."



Skourochori

Skourochori is one of the old head villages. All services here are located on the main road which leads up to Myrtia. It represents a local centre for the nearby villages when it comes to offering access to daily services.



Coastal Landscape in Transformation

During the last century the coastal landscape of Iliia has experienced profound transformations. The construction of infrastructure for agriculture has been one of the strongest factors in this radical change. Urbanisation processes, such as the illegal occupation of land, have added to the transformation of the landscape, making it more fragmented. Aggressive and unregulated changes in support of the development for international tourism, are the new forms of pressure, making the landscape vulnerable.

Type 1 Coastal Dunes: in Transformation



Wooded dune overgrown by *Pancretium Maritimum*

Due to the unique biodiversity they offer, coastal dunes act as natural barriers that protect interior areas from water intrusion and from high sea waves. Together with the beach, they are considered to be public spaces. However, coastal dunes are at risk of disappearing if the construction of touristic beach facilities continues unimpeded.



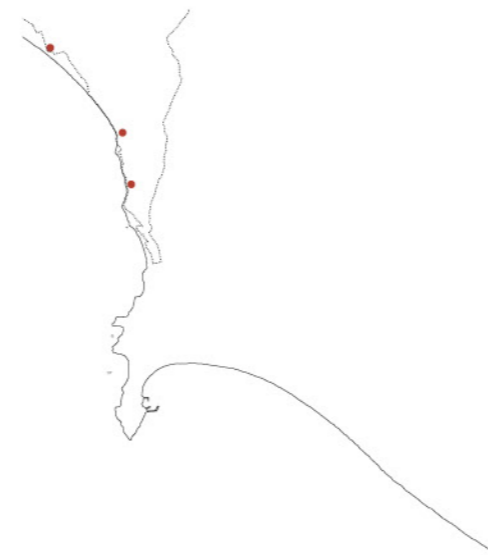
Pancretium Maritimum

Type 2 Fertile Flats: Ground for Touristic Growth



Potato field near Palouki

Fertile grounds are located close to the coast and have been nicknamed 'California #2', because of their ultra-fertile soil. These fields are under tremendous real-estate pressure and their value has increased manifold because foreign investors from countries like USA and Switzerland are interested in building beach resorts here.



Planned resorts

Type 3 Hilly Coast: Protected Stability



Medieval ruins near Ag. Andreas



Sheeps blocking the streets

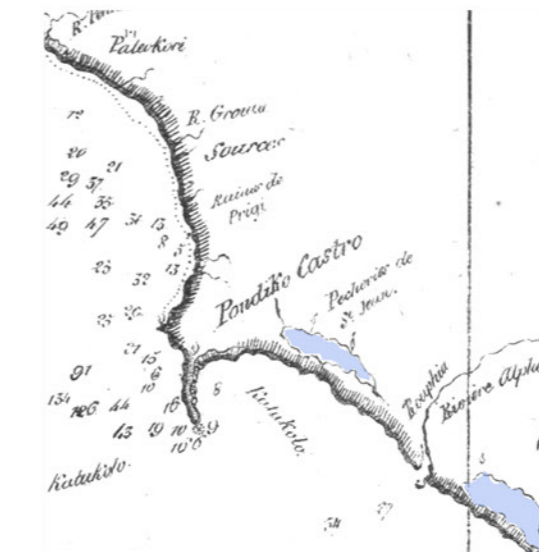
Since the ancient times, the shoreline has been constantly retreating, leading the ancient city of Phea to submerge in the rocky coast. Today, because of its character of an archaeological protected site, the hill has remained almost completely unbuilt, with forest covering up the ground almost in its entirety. Still, few of the mountain trails, used by shephards and hikers, remain.

Type 4 Dried Lake: Blocked Transformation



Hunters in lake Mouria around 1910

The large site where Mouria lake stood almost 50 years ago, spanning at approximately 6 square kilometers, is owned today by the Greek state and being used as a garbage landfill. The drainage of this lake has led to a fast drawdown of the water table in the region and a deterioration of the groundwater quality. Additionally, it led to a diminishing agriculture production, owing to the soil erosion and an increasing abandonment of the fields combined with an enormous surge in electricity consumption.



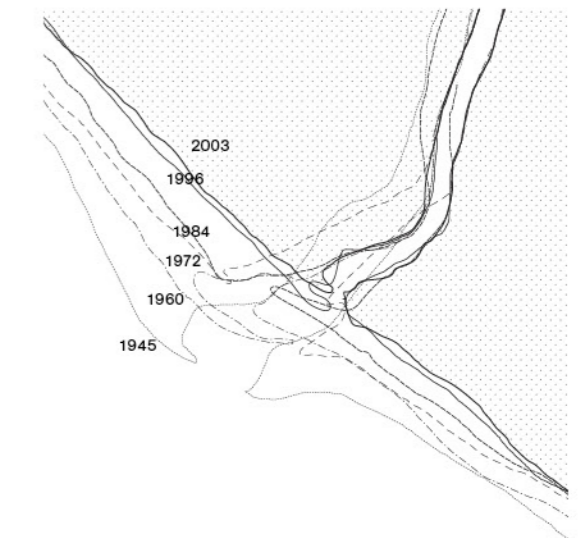
Iliia, 1840

Type 5 Alfeios River: A Tool for Transformation



An abandoned illegal second house

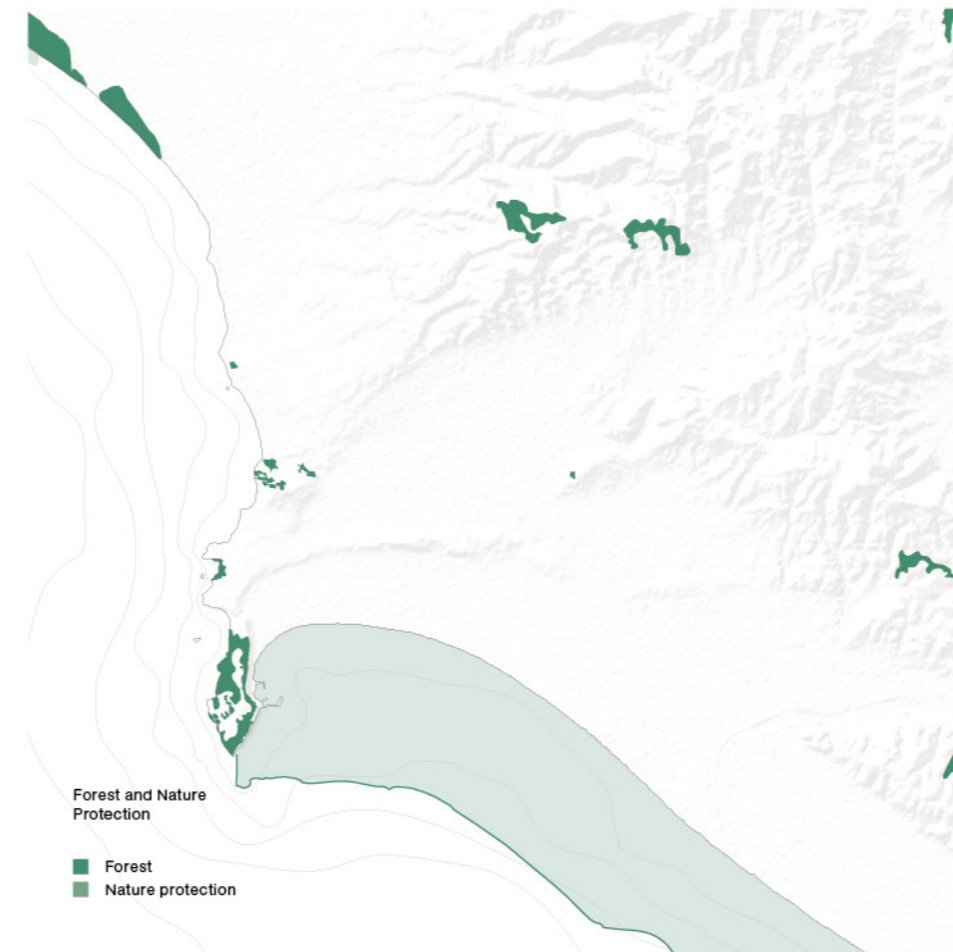
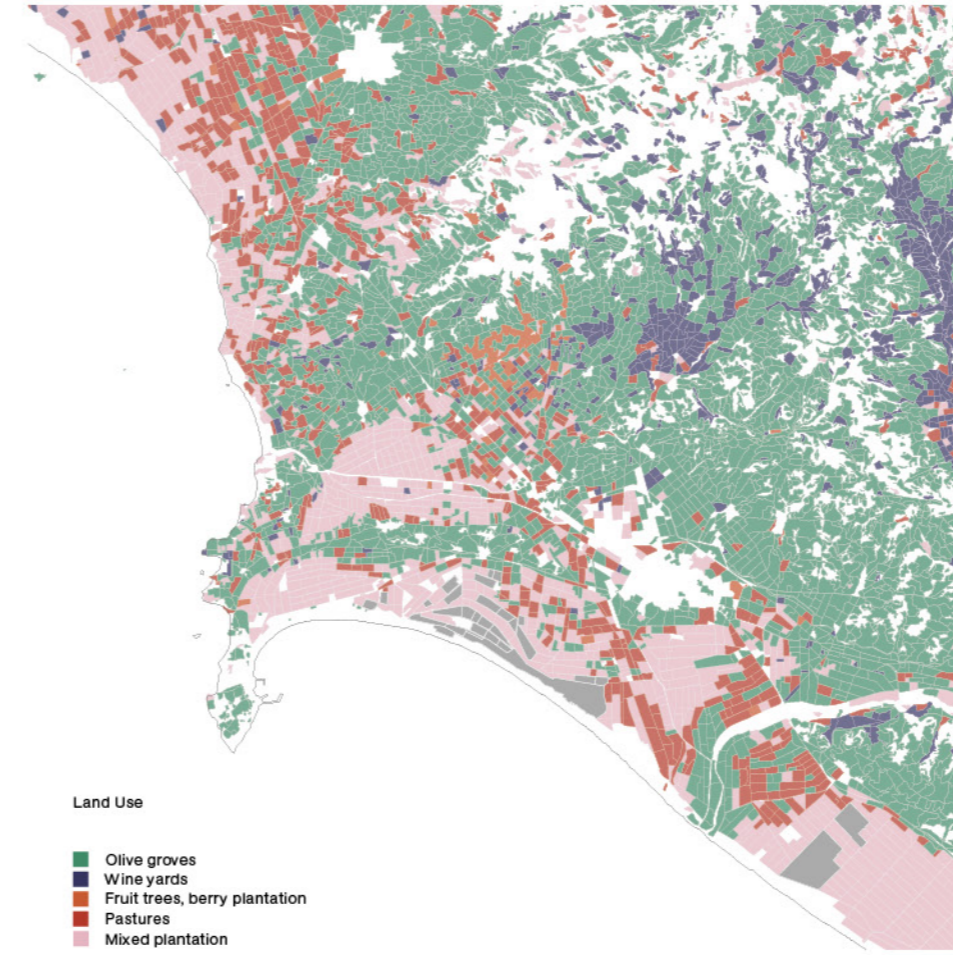
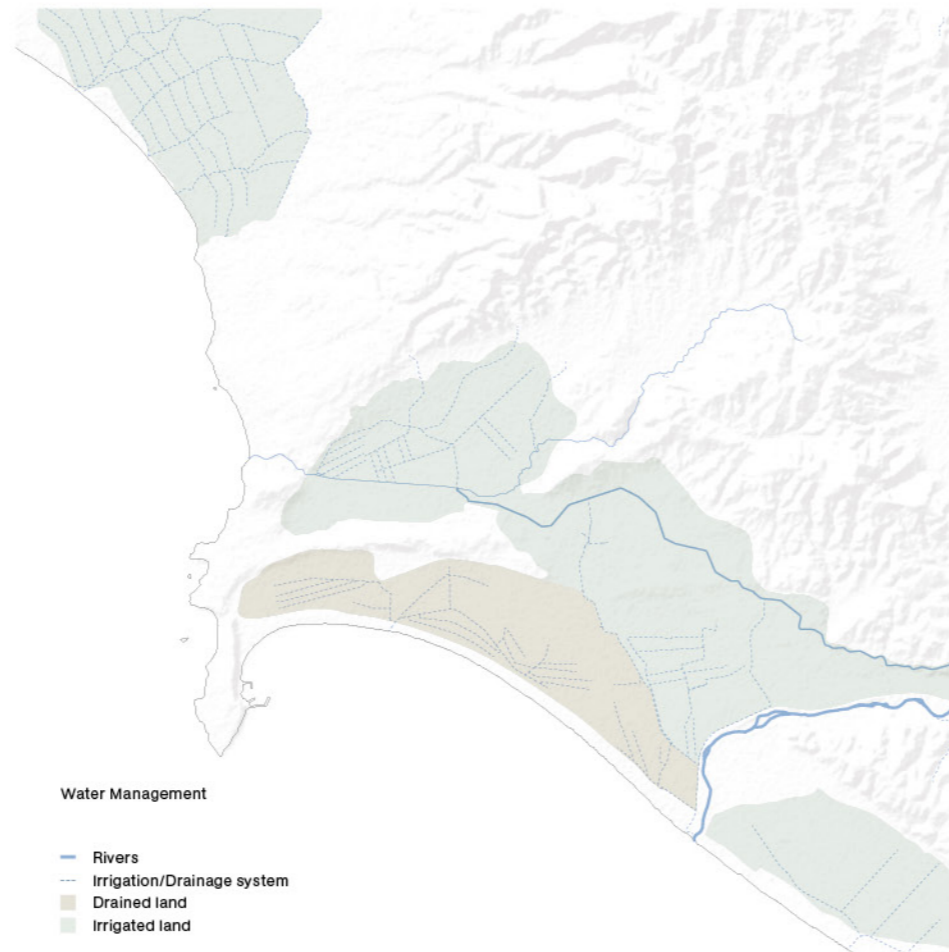
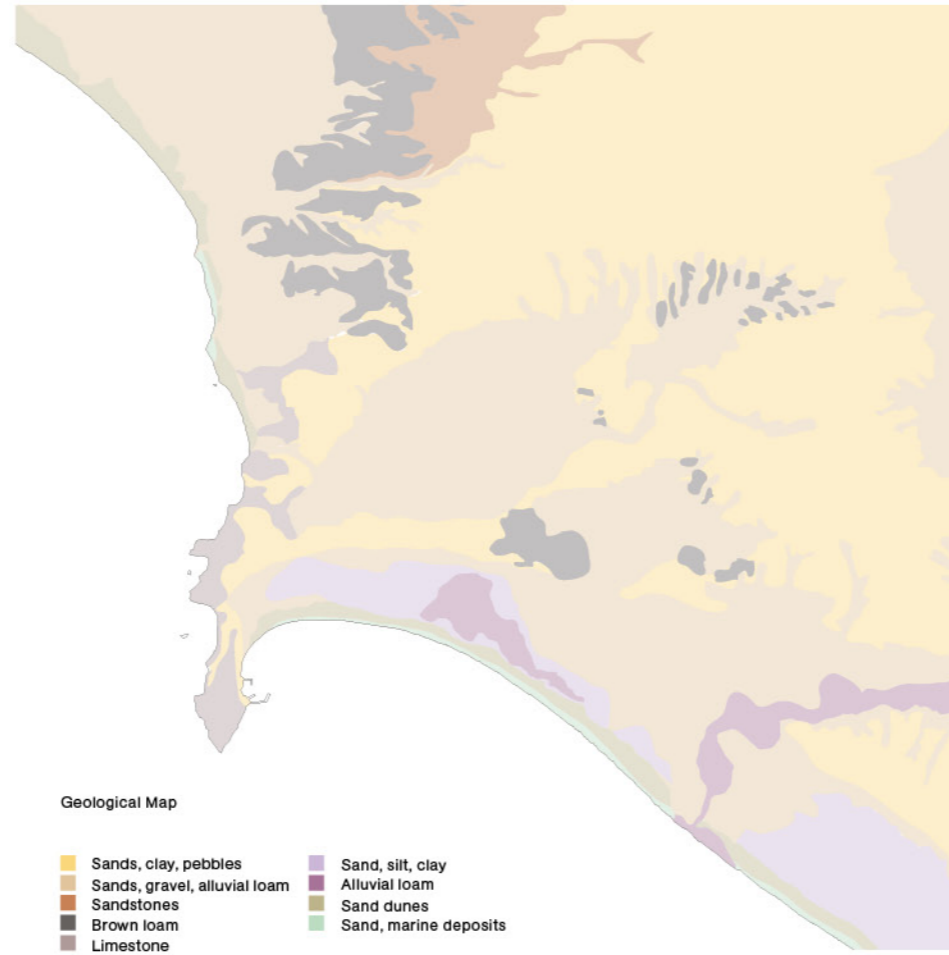
The Ladomas and Fokas irrigation dam was constructed during the 1960s. It redirects approx. 70% of the water stream for agricultural purposes and blocks most of the fluvial sediments. This has caused the retreat of the shoreline by up to 400 meters leading to the destruction of illegal settlements, as well as erosion of river banks.



Regression of the coastal line

Landscape Conditions

The main characteristic of Iliia's coast is the extensive agricultural production, which differs depending on the different layers of landscape conditions. The overlapping of these layers refers to two major conditions, one at the north and the other at the south of port Katakolon. In the northern part, the combination of a flat terrain, good irrigation infrastructure, sedimentary soil, and private land ownership, ensure ideal conditions for good agricultural production. The land towards south of port Katakolon is also characterized by a flat terrain, but unlike in the northern part, it is predominantly 2m below the sea level. The previous existence of the lake Mouria left a very unique soil condition.



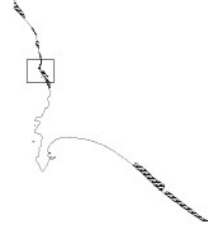
Coastal Landscape Types

The coastal landscape of Iliia has experienced various transformations mainly due to the infrastructure built for agricultural production and tourism development. The irrigated and drained areas are faced with a gridded land par-

cellisation and canalisation. They are becoming more and more fragmented, a state of things especially visible at the sea front, where illegal occupation have led to a complete disappearance of the coastal dunes in some areas.



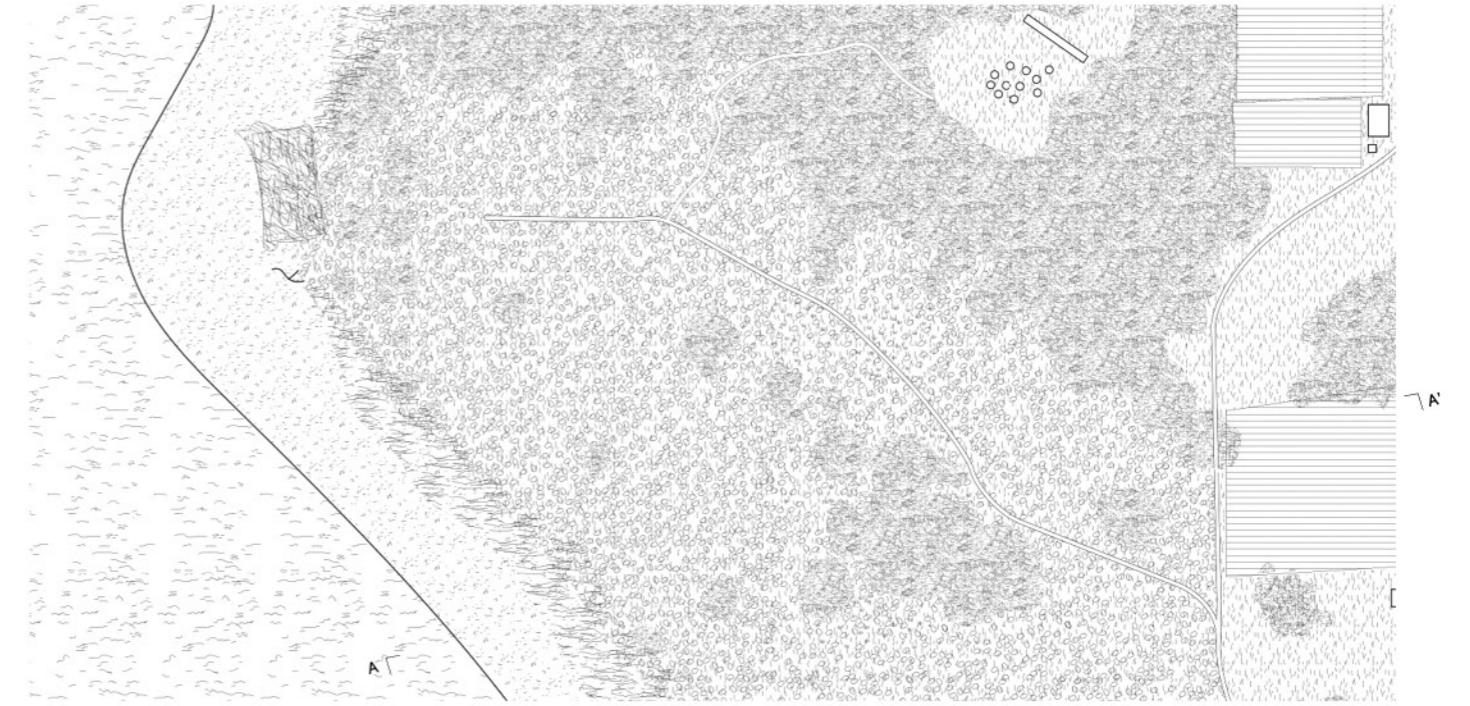
Coastal Dunes



A dune at the coast of Ilia



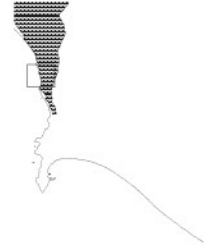
Aerial view, coastal dune



Sea Beach Huts out of wooden sticks Wooded dune Agriculture fields Agriculture fields

Section A-A'
0 10 m

Fertile Flats



Potato field in the fertile flats



Aerial view with a planned resorts



0 200 m



Sea Beach Wooded dune Agriculture fields Farmer houses Agriculture fields Drainage channel Agriculture fields

Section A-A'

0 20 m

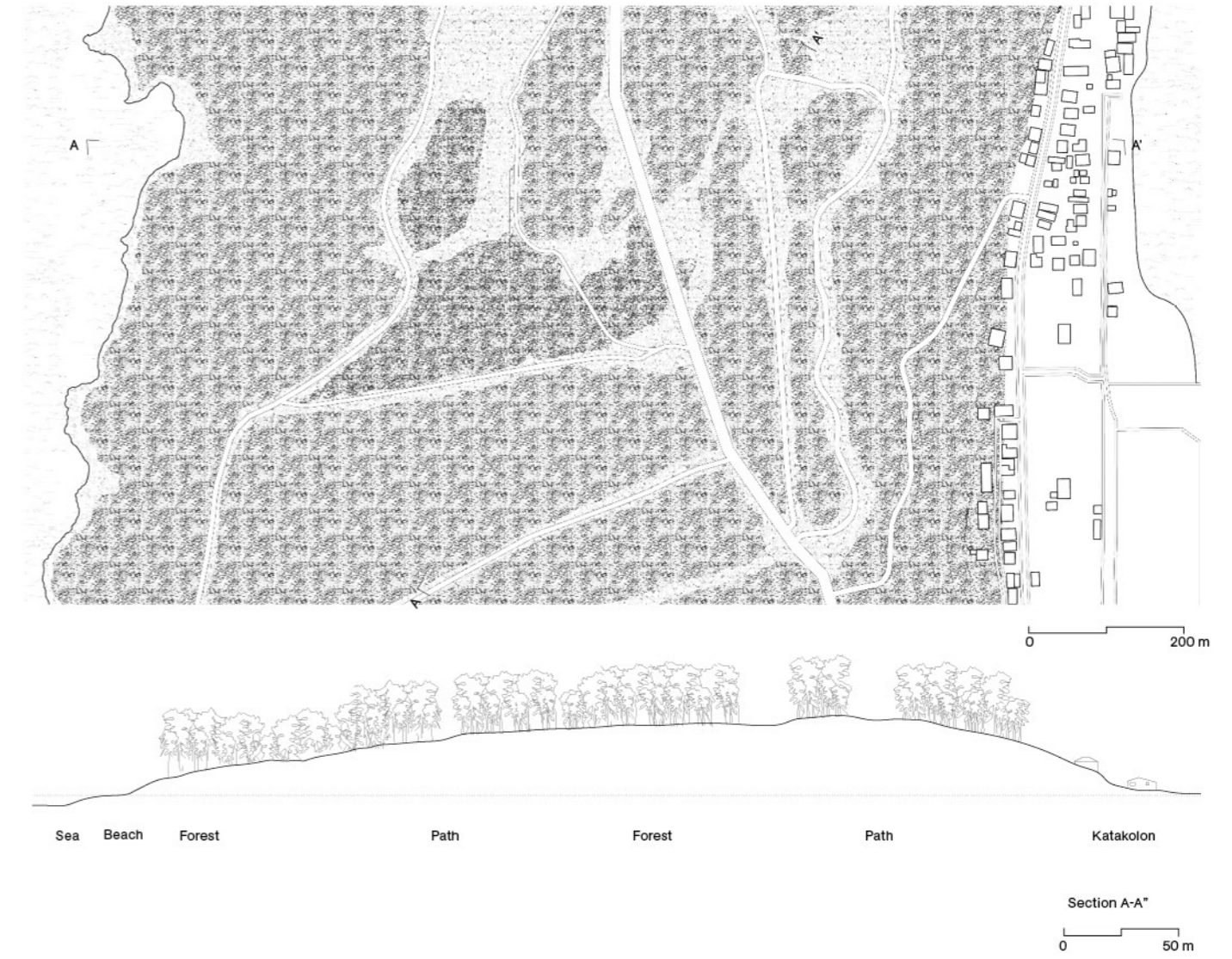
Hilly Coast



Hiking path near Skafidia



Aerial view of the archaeological sites



Dried Lake

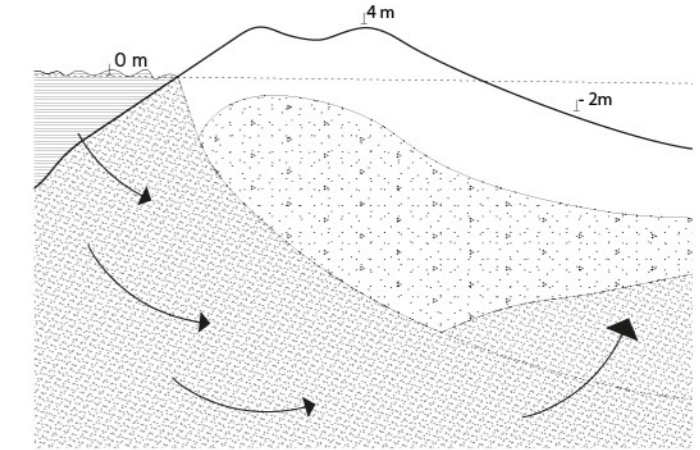
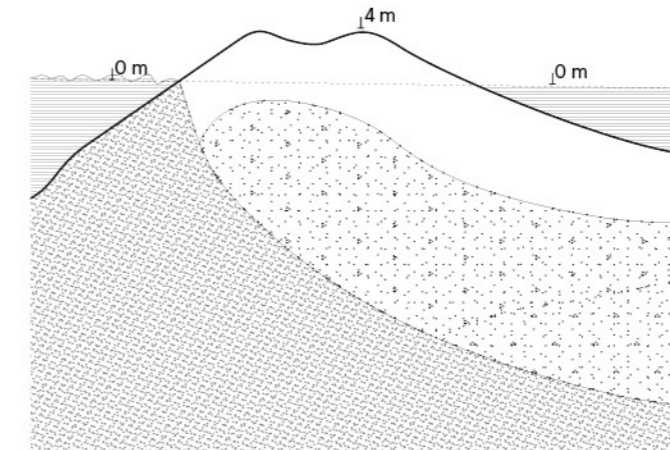


Dried lake

View from Granitseika towards the dried lake



Aerial view of the abandoned land



Salt Water Intrusion

The drainage of the Mouria lake during the 1960s has caused the water table to drop down drastically. As a result, salt water intrusion has been facilitated. It has not

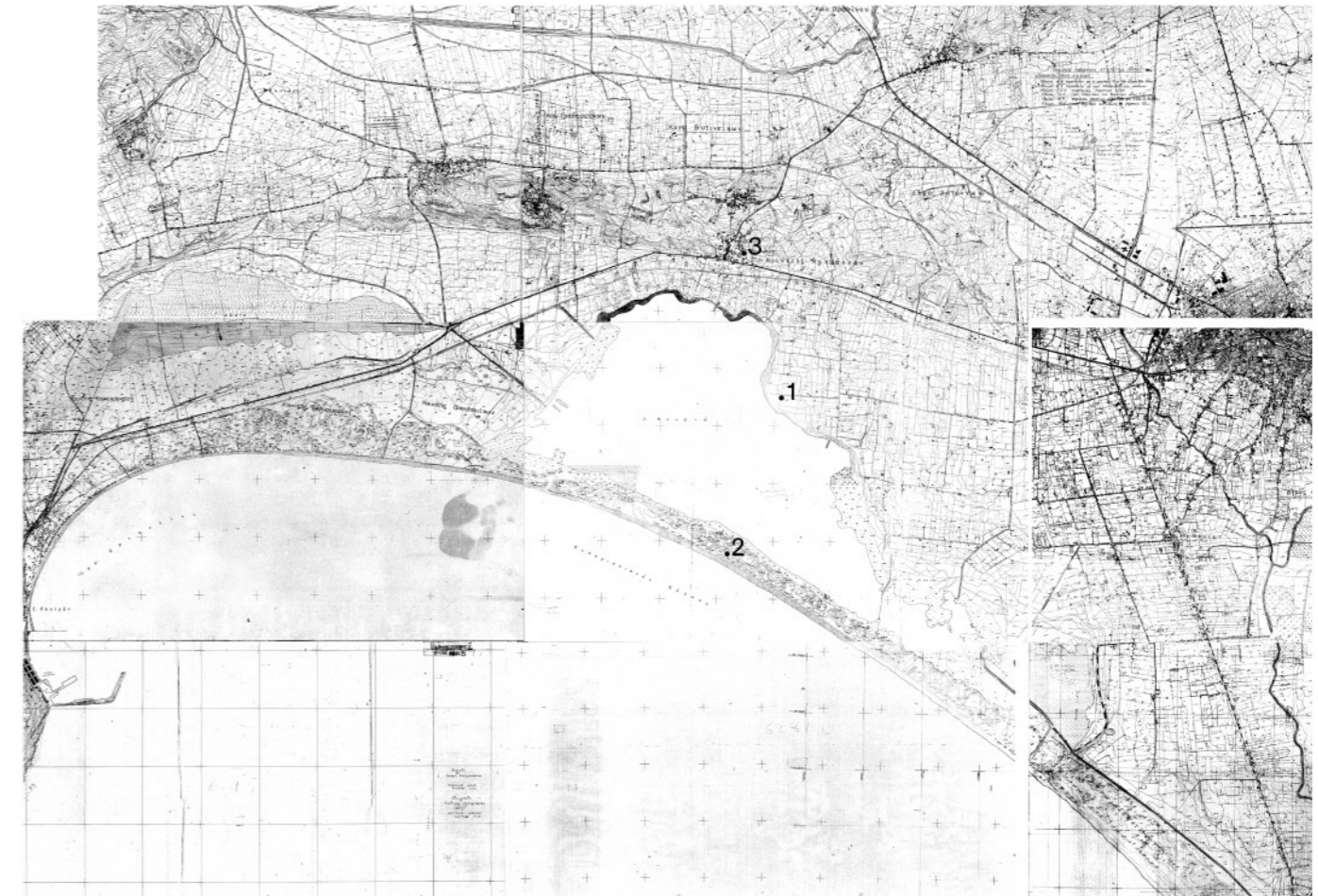
only deteriorated the ground-water aquifer, but has also led to deterioration of the local soil conditions and to the abandonment of several agricultural fields.



Fisher hut in former lake Mouria, in the 1960's



Fishermen in lake Mouria, circa 1930



Parcelation plan, shortly before the lake drainage, around 1960

The History of the Lake Opens Potentials

- 1 Streets connecting the lake with the nearby settlements as a recreational area.
- 2 The lake is part of the development of second houses.
- 3 Traditional fishermen's village.

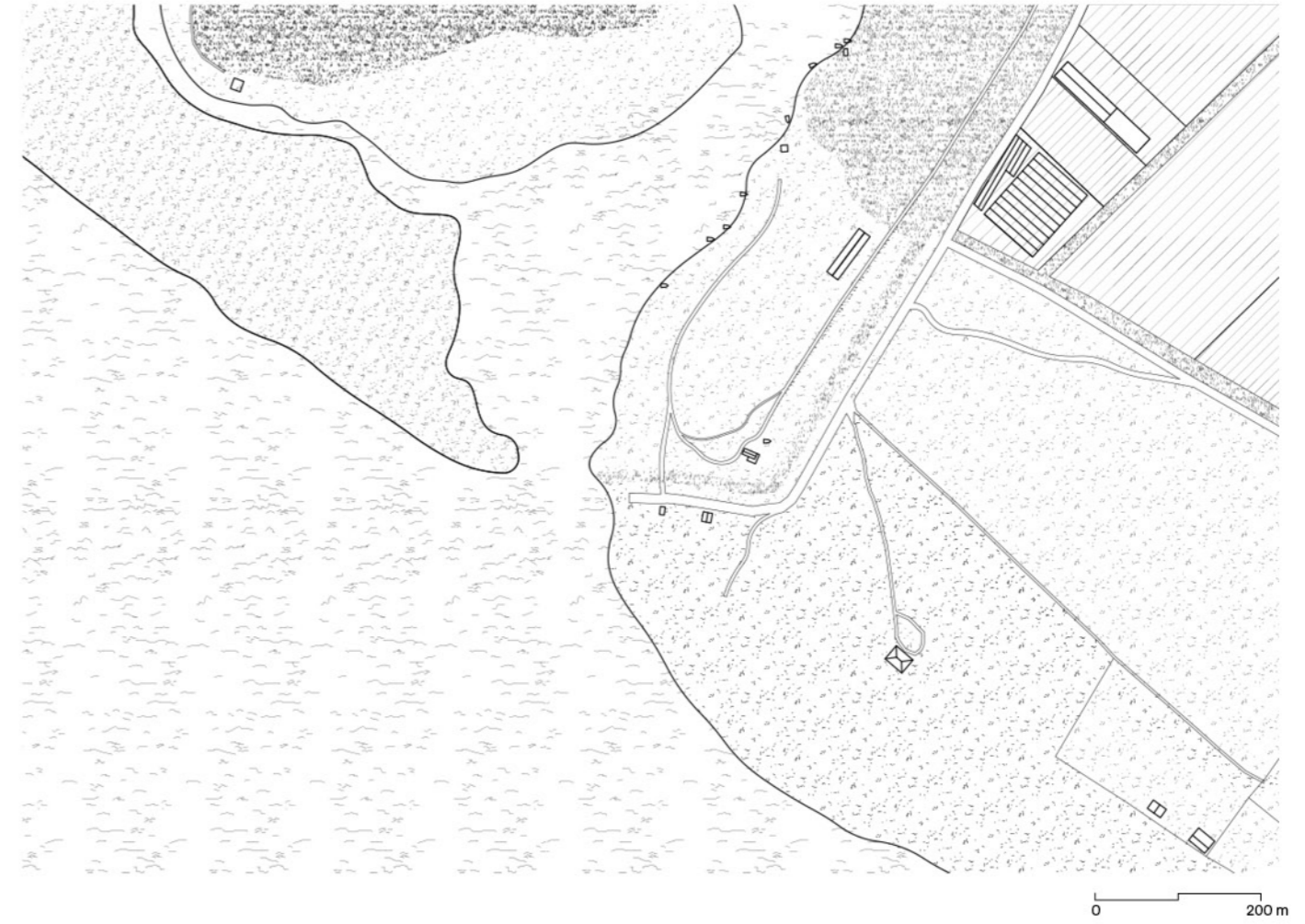
Alfeios River



The riverbed of the Alfeios River



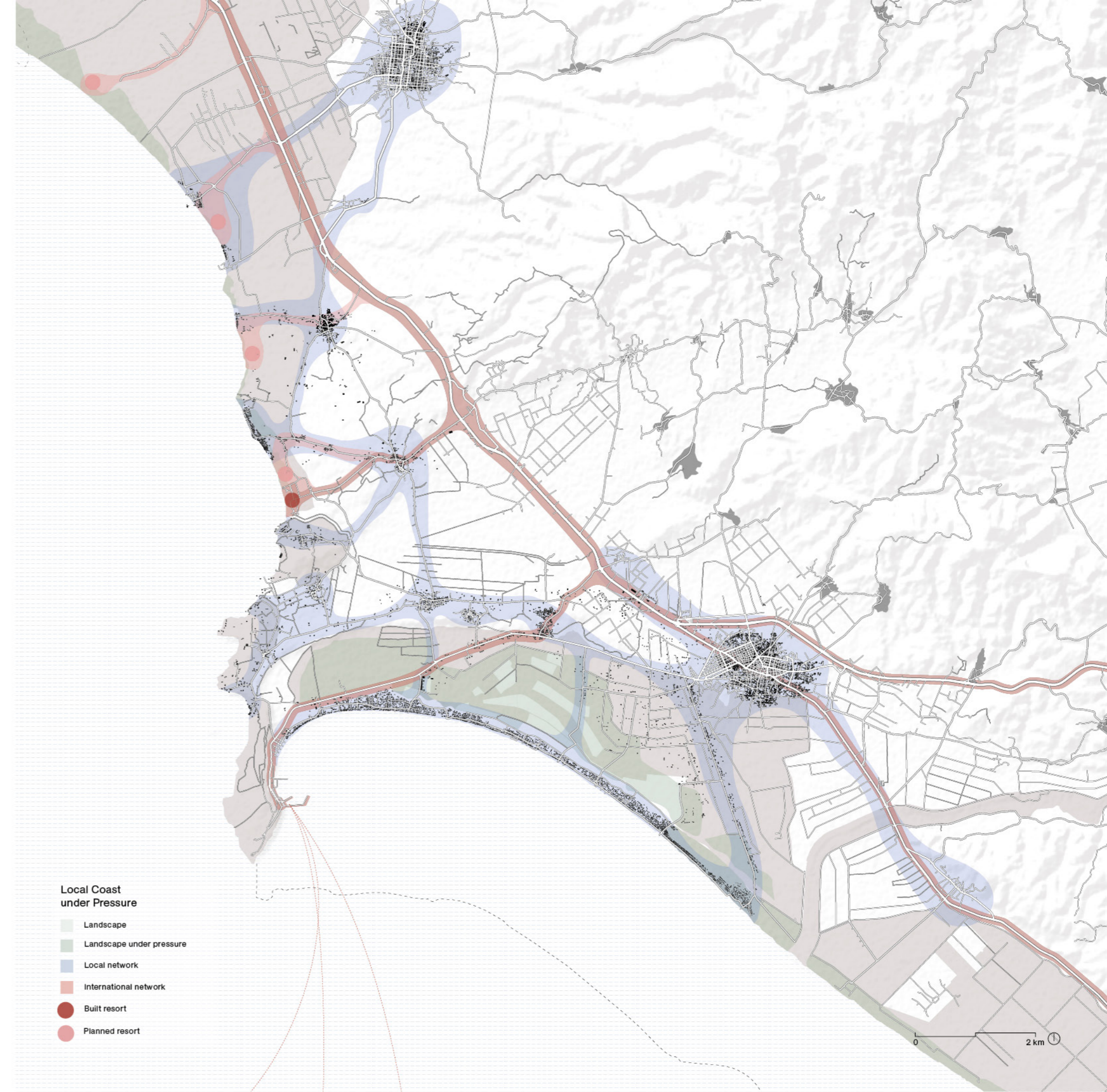
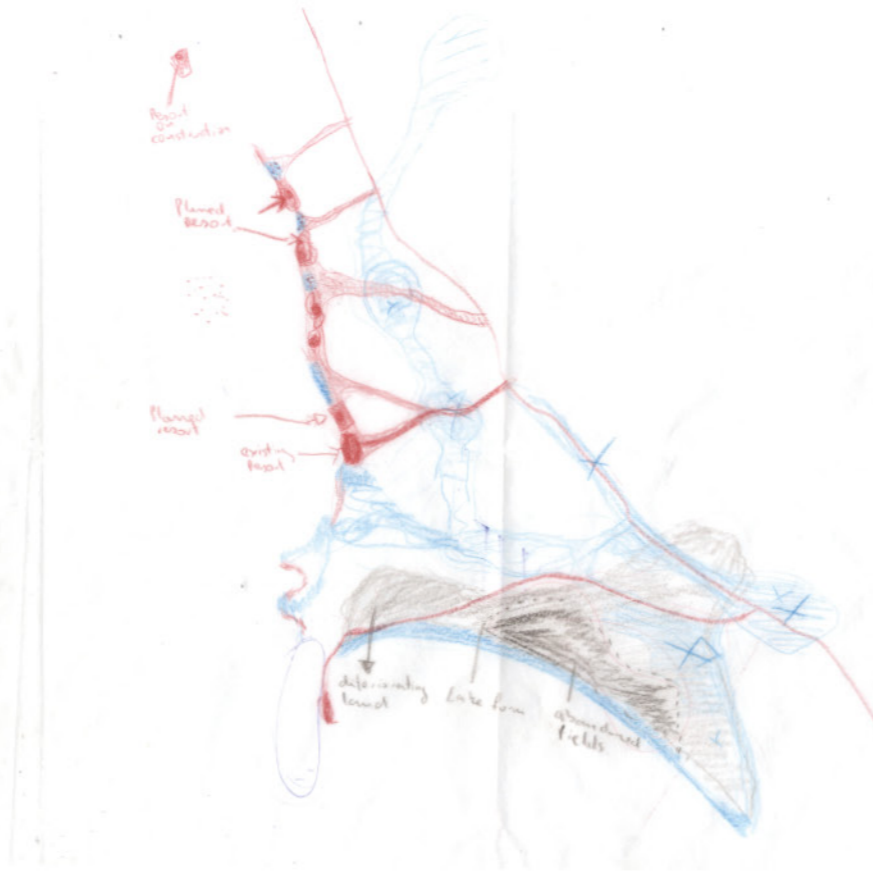
Aerial view of the river mouth of Alfeios



Local Coast under Pressure

Looking at the tendencies of transformation of Iliia's coast, it seems that large-scale touristic facilities would be arriving here soon. This will fuel the expansion of the existing network of services and infrastructures for international mass tourism, which is mainly concentrated along the connections with the arrival area. They are being owned and managed by private investors. Therefore, a further fragmentation of the landscape will probably involve resorts replacing fields. As a consequence of this expansion, public access to the beaches will be greatly affected, as the beaches will become privatised, at least unofficially, with possible flattening of the dunes to allow for tourists to access wider beaches. Simultaneously, the ongoing deterioration of land in the area occupied formerly by the Lake Mouria is causing a slower, yet profound fragmentation of the coastal landscape. After the drainage of the lake, problems with underground water intrusion started to appear, affecting the fields in the area around the former lake and later extending the affected area up to the fields near the city of Pyrgos. The abandonment of the fields is one of the results of the ongoing deterioration particularly because agricultural productivity has significantly dropped.

Thesis Map



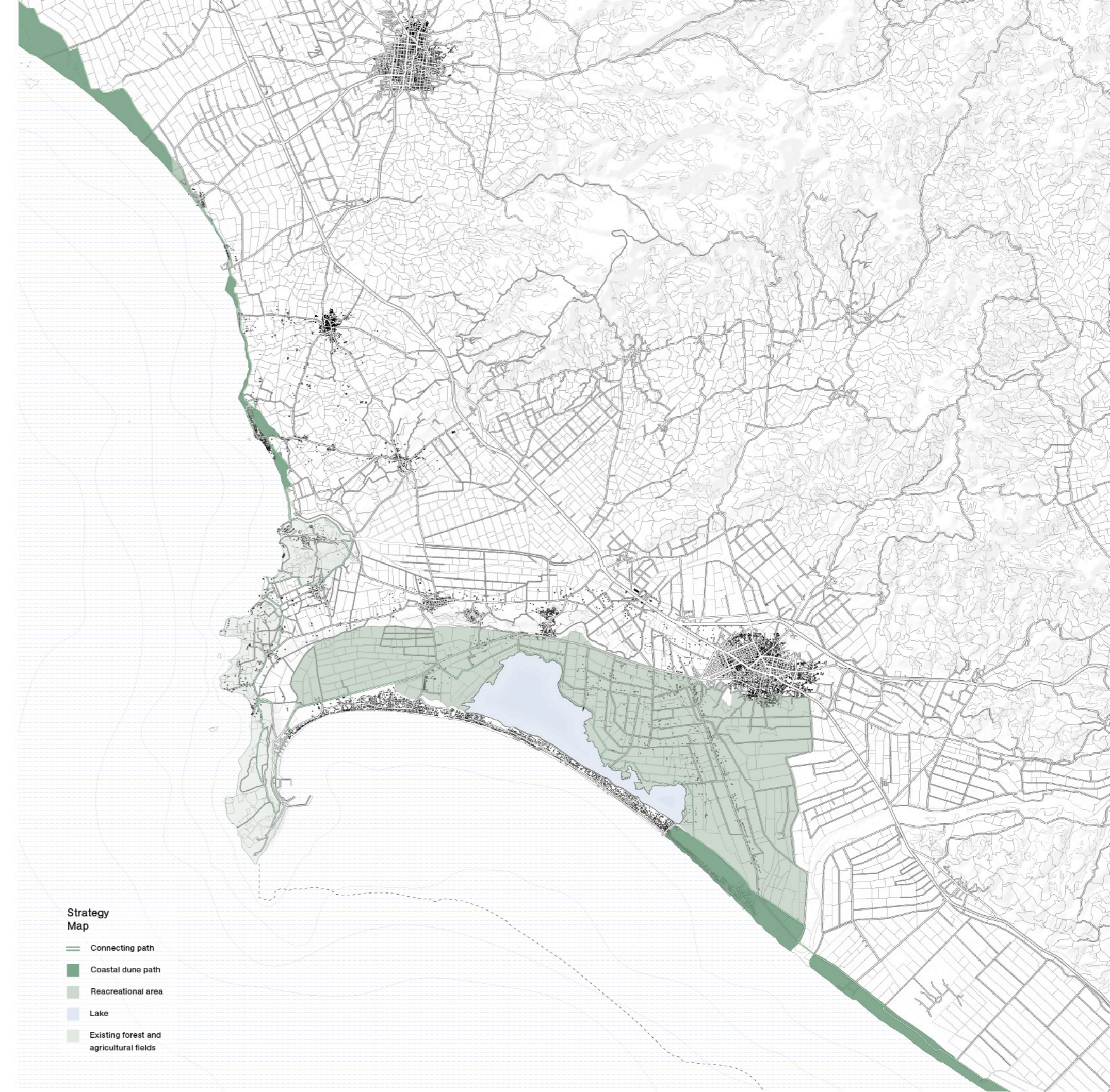
Accessing the Local Landscape

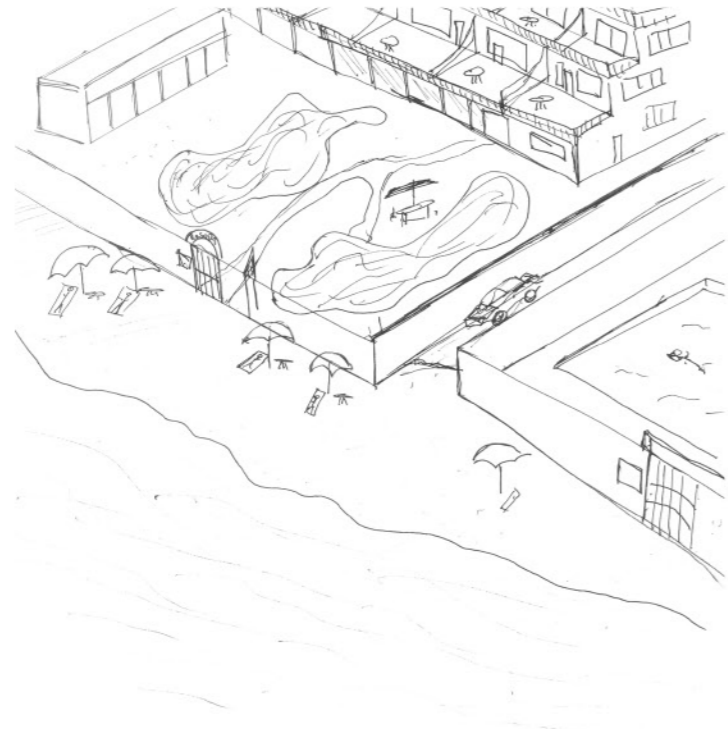
Territorial Project

In an attempt to counteract the ongoing fragmentation of the coastal landscape, pressured by the tourism real-estate industry on the one hand and the ecological deterioration from drainage of lake Mouria on the other, the project aims to strengthen the coastal landscapes by designating some areas as protected nature zones.

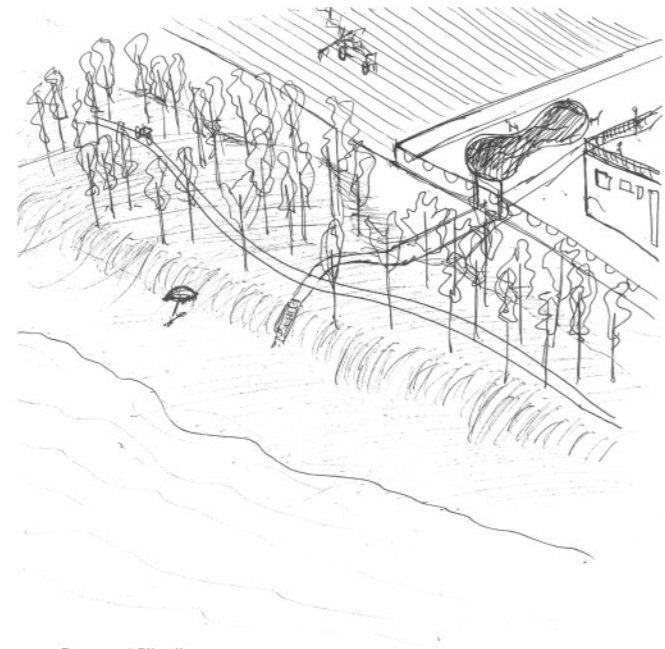
Situated on publicly owned land, the project seeks to integrate the fragmented coastal landscape as one and uninterrupted landscape entity.

One of the interventions involves a network of paths that interconnect several fragments of dunes along the coast. The existing local activities in the ecologically protected areas of Iliia are supported, stimulating the local population towards a more diverse use of the landscape for new kinds of activities. Another intervention consists of a partial refilling of the former Lake Mouria, that would avert a further deterioration of the agricultural areas around the lake. The deactivation of the drainage pumping station and the recovery of the connection of the lake with the Alfos River are the key aspects that will help complete the restoration and prevent saltwater intrusion. The project, instead of solely focusing on the protection of eco-systems in the region, aims at considering the protected nature areas as potential public spaces. On a larger scale, these interventions can be integrated and even replicated through a series of interventions along the western coast of Peloponnese.





Current Situation:
A gated coastline



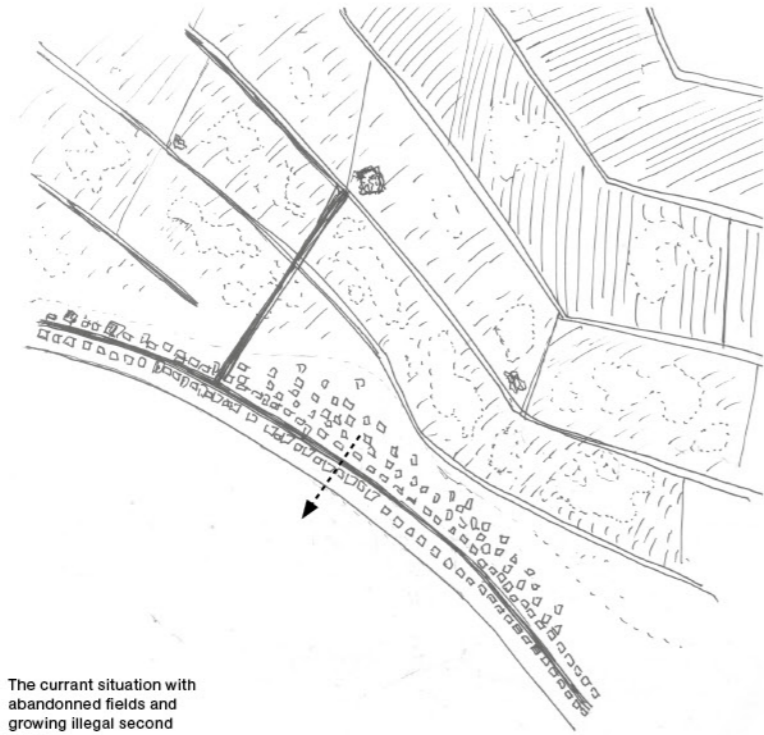
Proposed Situation:
A public coastal landscape

The unofficial occupation of the coastal dune by large-scale touristic facilities is an ongoing process of claiming publicly owned land. As a consequence, the access to the beach for local people has

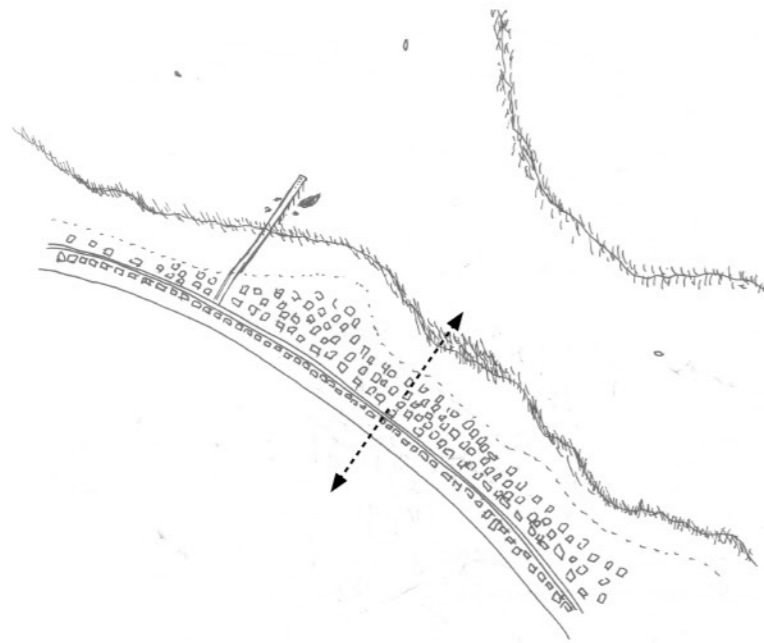
become restricted. By designing the coastal landscape in order to increase the potential for local activities, this project aims to insure an access to the coast for locals and foreign tourists alike.



The coastal dune path



The current situation with abandoned fields and growing illegal second houses.



The proposed condition where the lake is part of a way of living in the coast of Iliia.

The refilling of the lake provides a solution for the currently abandoned fields, representing an opportunity for the entire region. The lake would support the local coast with recreational area.



An artistic impression of the refilled lake Mouria