

---

# *Angoli salienti, angoli rientranti e linee rette. La descrizione geo-cartografica del Parco Naturale Regionale di Porto Conte nei Processi verbali e nel Sommarione dei beni rurali del Comune di Alghero*

**Marina Sechi Nuvole**

L'Alguer/Alghero: Edicions de l'Alguer: Azienda Speciale Parco di Porto Conte, 2022. 215 pp. (Biblioteca del Parco)

ISBN 978-88-99504-49-6

---

**JOSEP M. PANAREDA CLOPÉS**

Institut d'Estudis Catalans

*jmpanareda@gmail.com*

The analysis of old cartographic documents affords new perspectives on territorial transformations from different approaches, such as changes in land uses and occupation, relations between natural systems and human activities, social crises, the development of communications and toponymy, and changes in the natural landscape, especially the terrain, the river networks and plant cover.

The book *Angoli salienti, angoli rientranti e linee rette*, by Marina Sechi Nuvole, is a good example of this. On the basis of the presentation and contextualisation of various texts and large-scale cartographic documents, it provides a highly detailed description of the territorial organisation and land uses from the mid-nineteenth century in the current grounds of the Porto Conte Regional Natural Park (L'Alguer/Alghero, Sardinia).

Marina Sechi is a geographer, a professor of Geography at the Università di Sassari (Sardinia), a scientific coordinator of educational projects and seminars on local culture and toponyms prior to the unification of Italy in different subregions in northern Sardinia, a member of the Toponymy Commission of the Municipality of Sassari and the coordinator of the Toponomastic Working Group of the City and Territory of L'Alguer/Alghero. She has published various books and articles on the landscape, cartography and the land register. In reality, the book reviewed is a compendium of her most important archivist and interpretative works about the area of L'Alguer/Alghero.

The book begins with a preface by Mariano Mariani, director of the Porto Conte Regional Natural Park, and an introduction by Raimondo Tilloca, president of the Porto Conte Regional

Natural Park and the Capo Caccia Isola Piana Protected Marine Area, two highly suitable people who effortlessly introduce the reader to the topic of the book. They discuss the essential features of its content while citing the name of the main documents that Marina Sechi uses. With this preface, readers learn what the book is about, beyond their praise of Sechi's work and the book's usefulness to scholars and society.

The main body of the book contains five parts: an outline of the documents with the basic bibliography (pp. 9-80), notes (pp. 81-122), annexes (pp. 123-140), maps (pp. 141-189) and indexes (pp. 195-215).

The first part has the same title as the book itself, including the subtitle, and begins by justifying the book. Sechi claims that the cartography and documents consulted (*processi verbali di delimitazione dei territori* and *sommarioni dei beni rurali*) are geo-archival instruments that enable us to investigate and learn about the environmental and territorial transformations resulting from past actions and to critically evaluate the territory's developmental dynamic. She upholds the importance of archival studies in understanding the economy, culture and landscape of our ancestors, especially on a local scale. She highlights topographic aspects, whose origins people today seldom know.

The first documents she comments on are the *Carta Real* from 26 February 1839 and the *Regolamento per la ripartizione dei terreni* from 15 March 1839, both of which sought to improve agriculture. They contain guidelines for drawing up the land register. The priority was to delimit the plots of land, their type of ownership and their value or category. The triangulation works enable fairly precise topographies to be made at different scales, and the symbols used to depict the terrain make the visual representation easier to understand. In such a rugged coastal territory, highly precise position measurements and the depth of the seafloor near the coast are needed. The description of the reference points, accessibility, constructions and uses are extraordinarily valuable baseline information for understanding the changes that took place in the mid-nineteenth century.

Marina Sechi comments on the difficulties of obtaining all this information and the changes proposed to improve the resulting information. Land surveyors and their assistants are the ones who collected the information that was compiled in the *processi verbali di delimitazione*, and the book reproduces the results for the territory of L'Alguer/Alghero. It follows a route which establishes numbered points used to obtain the corresponding information (next points, distances, presence and condition of constructions, type of ownership and uses, etc.).

The author includes three tables with data on the municipality of L'Alguer/Alghero during the 1847 campaign. The first one contains information on the names of the different sectors established, their area and the type of terrain in terms of its use. The second and third tables present tentative and definitive calculations, respectively, with more detailed data according to the observation points on the routes.

The second part of the book includes the texts of the 121 notes from the first part. They are relatively extensive annotations and text references that complement the main text and are essential information in understanding Marina Sechi's contribution to geocartography.

The third part contains two extensive annexes with detailed data per plot, such as the owner's name, the place where it is located, the agricultural quality of the soil, the area, its value in the land register and any further observations.

The fourth part is a presentation of the maps (clearly reproduced in colour) corresponding to the territory of L'Alguer/Alghero at different scales. Figures 4a and 4b show cartographic fragments at a scale of 1:10,000. Figures 5 and 6 are sheets from the *Portolano dell'Isola di Sardegna*. Figure 7 is the *Foglio d'Unione del Comune di Alghero* at a scale of 1:50,000 with a diagram showing the division of 47 cartographic sheets. The next nine figures (8 to 16) are sheets of cartographic surveys at a scale of 1:5,000. Figures 17 and 18 include cartographic sheets at a scale of 1:20,000. There are similar sheets in figures 19 to 22, but with no indication of the scale. Figures 23 and 24 show the oldest maps, the former from 1742 and the latter from 1360. Finally, figures 25 to 27 are reproductions of a document in which the king grants privileges to the village of L'Alguer/Alghero.

The fifth and last part of the book includes features that can assist readers to peruse or understand the book, such as the abbreviations used, an index of the civil and religious organisations referenced, an onomastic index, a toponomastic index and finally the book's table of contents.

Marina Sechi's book is interesting in two ways. First, it provides a highly detailed geocartographic description of L'Alguer/Alghero, especially the Porto Conte Regional Natural Park, while it also provides a plethora of information which can serve as a foundation for future research.