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Heritage-making, landscapes, and experiences in tension in the Southern Andes mountains, Argentina

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ABSTRACT

This paper employs the concepts of heritage-making, communal identity formation, and landscape production to analyse the spaces that contribute to local, provincial, and national identities. Specifically, we examine how these spaces, now valued for their natural and historical significance, shape contemporary collective identity. Our study is located in the Andes mountain range, in an area called Manzano Histórico, in central-western Argentina, which is part of a larger nature reserve created to protect the headwaters of the basin and mountain areas from large-scale economic projects. This paper utilises a qualitative methodology that combines archaeological and historical studies with ethnographic techniques and a survey to describe and analyse the millennial occupation of the region. This continuous occupation has been shaped by multiple ways of inhabiting the world, some dominant and others marginalised or made invisible, resulting in ongoing present-day tensions. The heritage landscape proposed is a partial result of these tensions, a textured, fractured, and patched product of diverse, historically enabled practices. By analysing these spaces, we aim to acknowledge the various ways of being in the world that intersect within them, as well as the identity formations of alterity that hierarchise or invisibilise these practices.

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Introduction

Throughout history, heritage and its production have played a significant role in shaping local, provincial, and national identities that are now increasingly intertwined with the expansion of the global markets. Studies and public policies often designate certain objects, uses, customs, and landscapes as constitutive of a particular population and place and, therefore, worthy of care, preservation, and even commercialisation as cultural and/or natural heritage. To explore how the processes of heritage creation relate to Latin American productions of alterity, we examine the foothills of the Andes in the central-western region of Mendoza, Argentina (Figure 1).

In the late twentieth century, this sector of the Andes transformed from a sparsely populated area into a hub for new endeavours linked with large-scale capitalist economic ventures such as mining, hydroelectric dam construction, fracking, wine production, and high-end tourism. In opposition to these projects, particularly mining, the establishment or expansion of protected natural areas has been advocated by numerous groups as a means of conserving water sources and native flora and fauna. One of the mountain areas included in this category in 1994 was the so-called Manzano

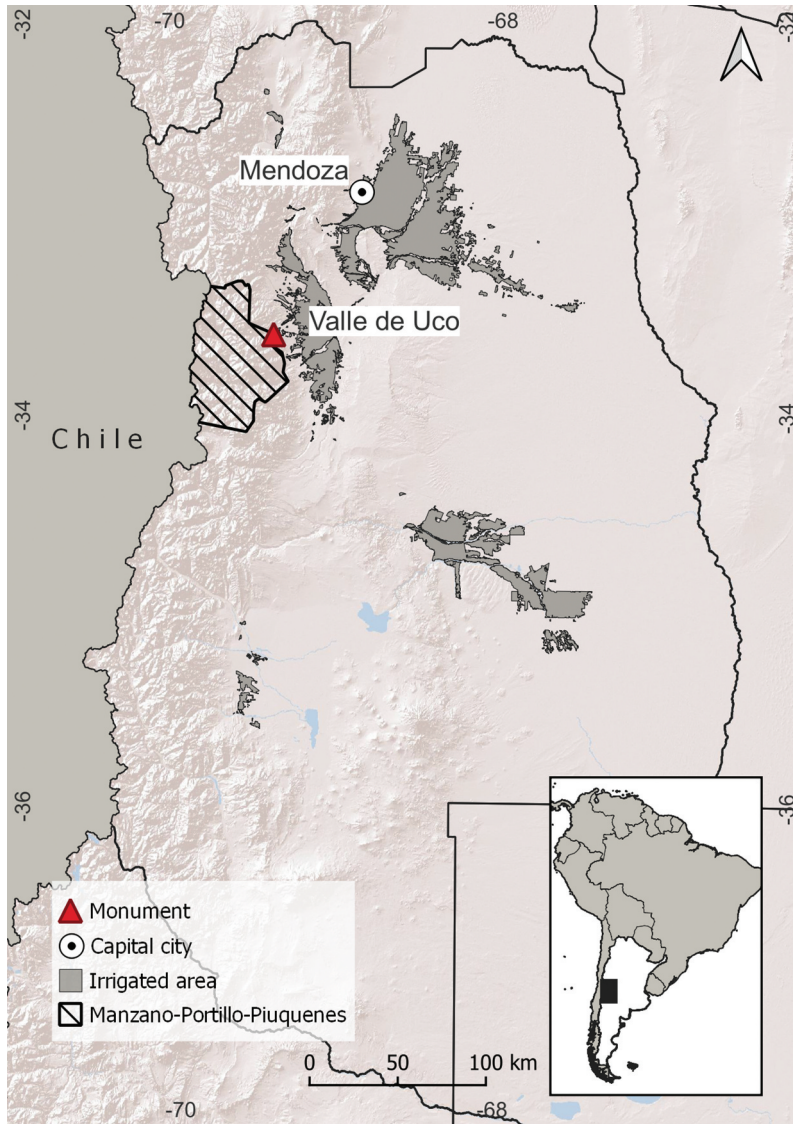


Figure 1. Location of the study area. Source: Inventario Nacional de Glaciares, Argentina, elaborated by Laura Zalazar, 2020.

Histórico (hereafter MH). In 2012, the MH was incorporated into a larger reserve called Manzano-Portillo de Piuquenes (MPP), which extends to the border with Chile (Figure 1). This vast region is key due to its socio-political, economic, and environmental significance as it links with Chile and holds the source of the Tunuyán River, which fosters the development of the Uco Valley, a major agricultural area in the province.

The MH has been a site of continuous human settlement for millennia and is particularly significant for connecting both sides of the Andes. In the early twentieth century, it was recognised as a key location in the processes of national independence (1810–1826) in the context of the formation of the national imagined community. It became a place of local and provincial rootedness through the veneration of an apple tree sapling, the planting of exotic trees, and the construction of a monument in honour of General José de San Martín, the hero of South American independence (Favre 2017).

Today, the MH has a population of around 270 inhabitants (DEIE 2010), but it is visited by over 5,000 people on weekends, since it is visited for different reasons and by diverse social actors, such as muleteers, or packhorse drivers (formerly dedicated to the trade of cattle and horses with Chile, now dedicated to the transportation of tourists on horseback and/or mules), rural workers, national tourists, mountain sports enthusiasts, and government officials at different levels. Similarly, the surrounding areas have undergone a significant commercialisation process in the last 30 years, mainly associated with large-scale viticulture, elite tourism, and the creation of mountain environments as tourist zones (Pastor, Torres, and Marinsalda Pastor 2020).

Our goal is to recognise and understand how bundles of human-environmental experiences with different temporalities persist and contribute to the tense, conflicting production of heritage landscapes in the MH linked to the formation of local, provincial, and national communal identity. We carefully examine national and Latin American historical processes to understand the current context of the globalised capitalist market's advance towards the mountains. To this end, our theoretical proposal links the concept of heritage-making to landscape production.

The methodology used involves a predominantly historical and ethnographic approach complemented by a statistical sampling conducted in the study area. This approach has enabled us to analyse and describe the spatio-temporal bundles associated with the Andean landscape that persist and shape the heritage creation of objects, environments, and current human-environmental relations. Finally, we argue that analysing the process of heritage-making of mountain landscapes implies recognising the tensions that exist between different ways of being in the world, some past, some present, some others denied, invisibilised, or inferiorised.

Heritage landscapes

Landscapes are commonly perceived as inert physical entities that exist independently of human influence. However, human actions are often directed towards modifying these landscapes in ways that are perceived as logical and practical (Thomas 2001). In disciplines such as cultural geography (linked to the work of Lefebvre 1991), as well as archaeology and anthropology, various authors, generally associated with the ontological turn (Ingold 1993; Thomas 2001), have proposed a mutual interconnectedness where different materialities are in reciprocal relation with human groups. From this viewpoint, a landscape is not just a static setting but an ongoing process that involves the creation of environments, that is, a bundle of spatio-temporal experiences that can coexist in the same place. Similarly, none of these experiences is neutral but rather linked to ways of being in the world (Thomas 2001).

In Latin American contexts marked by a history of colonialism (Quijano 2000), ways of being and producing were linked to the circulation of capital, modern (Latour 1993) or naturalistic ontologies (Descola 2012; De la Cadena and Blaser 2018), and the formation of imagined communities (Anderson [1983] 1993) that subjugated, denied, or excluded ('missing signifiers') Indigenous identities and populations (Alonso 1994; Lenton et al. 2015, among others). In this sense, the occupation of Indigenous lands and the rejection of their potential for ongoing existence, unique perspectives, and cultural practices have played a critical role in the creation of Argentine space and identity (Lenton et al. 2015).

The exclusion of Indigenous continuity, both in practical and conceptual terms (Escolar 2007; Escolar and Rodriguez 2019), led to the consolidation of an imagined community (Anderson 1991). This community was built on three main pillars: the celebrated heroes of the independence movement and their achievements, which marked the beginning of the nation's history; European immigration; and the creation of modern, European-style spaces through landscape construction (Mafferra 2018; Ponte 1999). In addition to rejecting the idea of any ongoing Indigenous or Afro-descendant presence, the imagined community also regarded the areas excluded from land and water appropriation (Saldi 2020) as natural, lacking a history, and associated with backwardness or as mere remnants of Indigenous culture.

At the end of the 1990s, along with the deepening of the capitalist logic through neoliberal policies and the expansion of international markets (Harvey 1990), a process of ethnogenesis and recognition of internal diversity (Escobar 2007) took place throughout Latin America. Paradoxically, Indigenous ethnic inclusions were recognised, but under certain social, spatial, and market-based hierarchies (Briones 2004; Pastrana et al. 2022). To understand this hierarchical inclusion, the concept of national or provincial productions of alterity (Briones 2005; Segato 2002) refers to the production and tracing of fracture lines specific to particular historical processes that configure the matrix of difference production, even in multicultural periods and during the expansion of the capitalist market.

As the recognition of cultural diversity and heritage progressed, what was previously regarded as absolute and beyond questioning came under scrutiny. Heritage began to be seen as the result of selection, dispute, and negotiation about what should be cared for and preserved (Prats 1998). We understand heritage as an open and negotiated process in which ‘different forces push to remember, preserve, and commemorate certain people or events to the detriment of other memories or other recollections’ (Londoño 2022, 127).¹ As suggested by Smith (2011, 42), heritage is a cultural process that involves negotiating memory, identity, and a sense of place. However, this negotiation is often uneven and tied to an increasing logic of cultural consumption, where different ways of being in the world compete for acceptance and validation (Jofré 2015).

If heritage is a partial result of the unequal negotiation between what can and should be shown, remembered, recognised, and experienced, then landscape is a (partial) product of this negotiation and these tensions. According to Küchler (1993), it is no longer memories that are inscribed in the landscape, but rather the landscape is a concrete spatial texture (Curtoni, Lazzari, and Lazzari 2003), shaped by processes of remembering, forgetting, and the active work of memory. Similarly, as Rufer (2010) points out, if history is a linear mechanical representation of events over time, memory is a discursive representation of experience, where time is not linear and does not structure events. In our case study, the apple tree and the monument are presented as objectifications that symbolise unquestioned heritage (the ‘authorised heritage discourse’, Smith 2011), but their temporal and spatial sequence is intersected by other experiences and memories that are not ordered in time or space. Viewing the landscape as memory enables us to see it as a complex and dynamic entity, shaped by various parallel ways of experiencing the world and living in and perceiving space and the environment. It is a product that is constantly being negotiated, unfinished, and often marked by contradictions.

Therefore, our proposal is to approach the landscape as a ‘heritage landscape’, which results from the complex and uneven processes of negotiation that shape distinctive environments, reflecting discourses related to practices, experiences, and identity formations that vary in terms of recognition and expression. To better understand these processes of landscape production, we use the concept of ‘bundles’ (also called packages or constellations), which refers to how actors involved in the relational production of places select, link, group, or cluster different elements such as memories, practices, and materialities (Massey 2005; Pierce, Deborah, and Murphy 2011). In the case of the MH, we focus on processual bundles that are marked by a long and complex history, marked by identity matrices with fractures stemming from traumatic events during the colonial period (sixteenth-nineteenth centuries) and the Desert Campaign (late nineteenth century). Despite being suppressed and often invisible, these fractures continue to affect the landscape to this day (Lenton et al. 2015; Segato 2007).

Methodology

In order to identify bundles of practices and experiences related to the production of heritage landscapes in the MH, we worked from the review and study of archaeological and historical background and sources and conducted an ethnographic study along with a questionnaire. Regarding the archaeological background, we reviewed studies on sites, places, and mountain

roads studied by local archaeologists. As for bibliographic and historical sources, we consulted specific literature on the independence process. We also reviewed unpublished documents and newspapers in the General Archive of the Province of Mendoza (GAPM) that documented the construction of the monument (1930–1940) as well as the yearly celebrations from 1940 to 2020. Additionally, we gathered virtual journalistic notes related to the creation of the MH Natural, Cultural, and Landscape Area and the Manzano-Portillo de Piuquenes Natural Protected Area from 1994 to 2020. In parallel with this background and source study, in February and August 2021, during the summer holiday and the national commemoration of General San Martín's death, respectively, we conducted a survey of 42 visitors distributed throughout the main meeting points (the monument, the campgrounds, the banks of the surrounding streams, the plaza, and the more distant but easily accessible sites) to know the origins, perceptions, and experiences of these visitors (Mendizabal 2006).²

In addition, between February 2021 and December 2022, we made observations of the sites frequented by visitors and locals, using different levels of participation based on walking through these areas. We observed commemorations of General San Martín and other events related to gatherings of muleteers. These observations were complemented with four open interviews with MH residents and four interviews with officials with a key role in the care and maintenance of the area and the creation of its museums. We analysed the experiences of both visitors and residents with regard to the places within the reserve, as well as the materialities of those places.

Using information gathered from background research, primary sources, observations, surveys, and interviews, we postulated the process of heritage-making of mountain landscapes.

Mountain range landscapes of the Manzano-Portillo de Piuquenes Reserve (MPP)

Human settlement and the resulting co-production of landscapes date back to approximately 10,000 years before present and continued into the colonial period (Cortegoso et al. 2010; García 2003; Lucero 2016) and present day. The native landscapes of Indigenous forager and agricultural groups were transformed during the colonial period by Hispanic-Creole estancias, intensive cattle ranching, and trade circuits between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans (Gascón and Ots 2020; Ots, Cahiza, and Gascón 2015). In this trans-Andean trade, some Indigenous people were valued as muleteers to cross the mountain range because of their knowledge of the territory (Espejo 1954, 177–188). The MH was part of the Estancia Los Chacayes, used by Spanish colonists since the early seventeenth century (Chaca 1964, 556) to breed and fatten cattle that were then sold to Chile through the Portillo de Piuquenes pass, a trade and smuggling route. The Estancia del Manzano was first historically mentioned in 1733, probably because part of this land was planted with apple trees. The document also refers to it by its Indigenous name, Priunante (Espejo 1954, 639).

The South American War of Independence against the Spanish Empire (1810–1825), whose main leader was General José de San Martín (Yapeyú, 1778-Boulogne-sur-Mer, 1850), was organised in the province of Mendoza. During this process, the Estancia del Manzano was confiscated by the state and transformed into public pastures for the livestock (mules and cattle) that supplied the San Martín troops stationed in the Uco Valley and the army during the War of Independence (Molina 2016). The column of the Andean Army, commanded by José León Lemos, passed through these lands on its way to Chile through the Portillo de Piuquenes pass in 1817. The same route was taken in the opposite direction by José de San Martín to return to Cuyo from Rancagua, Chile, in January 1823. His arrival and stay in El Manzano were documented by his godson, Colonel Manuel de Olazábal, who reported that 'they spent the night in El Manzano' (Olazabal 1942, 119).

In the nineteenth century, the Uco Valley served as the frontier between the emerging provincial state and the Indigenous communities (Puelche and Pehuenche). The provincial state exerted control over the territory through military forts and villages, as well as by negotiating peace with certain Indigenous groups. After the process of eliminating the native population south of the border and appropriating their lands (a process called the Desert Campaign, 1879–1884), the

provincial state consolidated its territory and moved towards the concentration and control of water resources. The imposition of a wine-growing economic model led to the creation of a new landscape, which was characterised by the parcelisation of land and water infrastructure, the planting of forests with exotic species, and the massive influx of European immigrants. The construction of this landscape became a nodal identity reference that distinguished ‘civilised’ spaces, a symbol of triumph over the ‘desert’ and regional agricultural development (Montaña 2006; Ponte 1999). In this process, the large estates of the Uco Valley, once dedicated to livestock and wheat production, became insular plots of fruit trees. Until the twentieth century, the estancias Los Chacayes and Manzano were the boundary between two models of land use: to the east, arable land with fruit trees; to the west, an area inhabited by muleteers or ‘baqueanos’ for the cattle trade with Chile (GAMP 1866).

The nation’s imagined community was part of the liberal project of the second half of the nineteenth century. It included the integration of new immigrant populations, justified the conquest of Indigenous lands and bodies, and created a narrative that would strengthen the Argentine nation-state as white, homogeneous, enlightened, liberal, and republican (Gordillo 2016, 2020; Rufer 2010). In this narrative, San Martín was portrayed as a heroic figure: a strategic politician, a successful military leader, morally impeccable, modest, wise, and charitable. State efforts to create a sense of communal identity continued into the twentieth century, during the interwar period and the presidencies of Juan Domingo Perón (1945–1955) (Bragoni 2019; Philp 2015). Academic conferences, statues, and celebrations in honour of San Martín proliferated throughout the country during this period (Bragoni 2019).

Within this national context, a process of heritage-making began in the 1930s in the MH, among other ‘Sanmartinian’ sites in Mendoza. This process was driven by a local collective action led by José Scaravelli³ and was later redirected by the national government’s interest in strengthening national identity. At the local level, Scaravelli and other Tunuyán neighbours promoted an afforestation campaign and organised a commemoration at the site every August 17 (the anniversary of San Martín’s death). In 1938, Scaravelli submitted a request to declare an apple tree sapling in the MH as a ‘provincial historical monument’. The basis for this request was that San Martín had rested under this tree upon his return to Mendoza, according to his interpretation of Olazábal’s chronicle. Meanwhile, the site began to be used as a recreational area and was included in the promotion of tourist sites by the Provincial Tourism Directorate.

In 1941, Scaravelli received the support of Eva Duarte de Perón (the President’s wife), and in 1949, he succeeded in passing a law to expropriate the land for a park and the construction of an equestrian monument commemorating the arrival of San Martín at El Manzano. The ambitious project was executed by the sculptor Luis Perloti,⁴ who made an atypical equestrian statue of San Martín, similar to the one painted by Fidel Roig Matons⁵ in 1943. The design of the monument was based on Olazábal’s account of the arrival of San Martín: mounted on a mule, wearing *Criollo* (Creole) clothes (not his uniform or military medals), that is, a poncho and hat in the style of the Chilean muleteers, and greeting Olazábal affectionately. Behind the equestrian statue, the muleteers who accompanied him on the mountain crossing were also sculpted in bronze, and the ensemble was completed by a monumental sculpture of a woman, ‘her eyes looking straight ahead and her arms at the sides of her body, conveying a sense of detachment’ (of glory and honours) (Favre 2017, 215).⁶ The monument was inaugurated on 31 December 1950, as part of the official celebrations of the Sanmartinian Year (the hundredth anniversary of San Martín’s death).

Since the late 1930s, the MH has been visited every August 17 by official commissions and people participating in the celebration (Figure 2a). Over time, this location has transformed into a popular tourist destination, thanks to its captivating forest, flowing stream, and picturesque campsite situated at the base of the Andes (Figure 2b). The initial residential area was established during the 1970s, designed as weekend homes. However, it wasn’t until the 1980s that the current urbanisation of the area took place. During this time, additional neighbourhoods and infrastructure projects, such as roads and services, were built to attract more tourists to the region. The natural beauty of the location was utilised ‘to promote summer and winter sports activities’, as reported in the Los Andes daily on

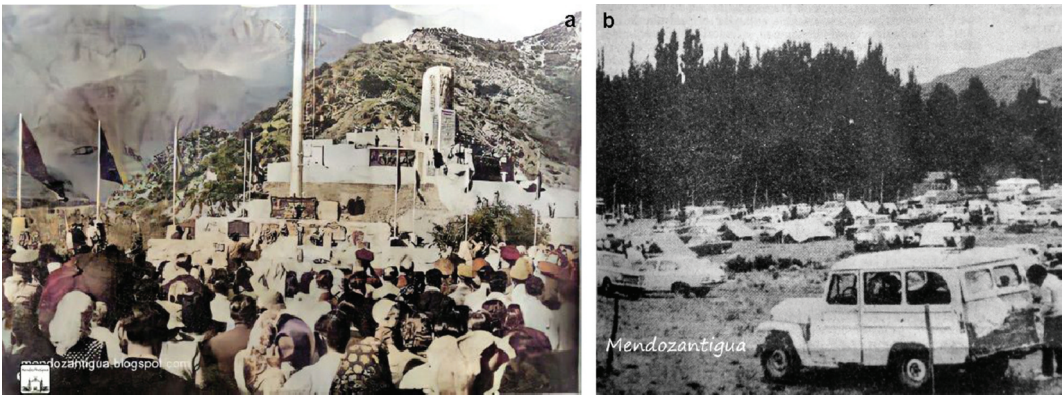


Figure 2. Historical photos of Manzano Histórico. a) January 1951; b) People camping, 1985. Source: Rufino, E. Mendoza Antigua (blog). April 13, 2023.

17 August (*Los Andes* 1982). The promotion of festivals in the area brought together a primarily local and provincial population, fostering a sense of community and belonging (*Los Andes* 1984, 12 February).

Heritage circuits and landscapes under tension

At the end of the twentieth century, the globalised market affected the Uco Valley in different ways. On the one hand, large-scale mining projects faced strong social opposition. Social movements were launched across the province, especially in the Uco Valley, in order to prevent mining activities. They achieved this by advocating for the approval of Provincial Law 7722, which prohibited the use of toxic substances and promoted the expansion or creation of protected natural areas (Wagner 2014). On the other hand, projects linked to the international market for high-quality wines were able to materialise. Through large investments, consortia of international owners accessed groundwater, displaced native flora and previous crops, and planted large vineyards that extended towards the mountains (Bustos 2014; Cerdá and Martín 2021; Larsimont 2016, 2019; Montaña 2006; Rojas et al. 2020; Saldi and Petz 2015) (Figure 3). The national, provincial, and municipal governments provided substantial support to these viticulture projects, which were also included in the tourist circuits promoted by the province abroad.

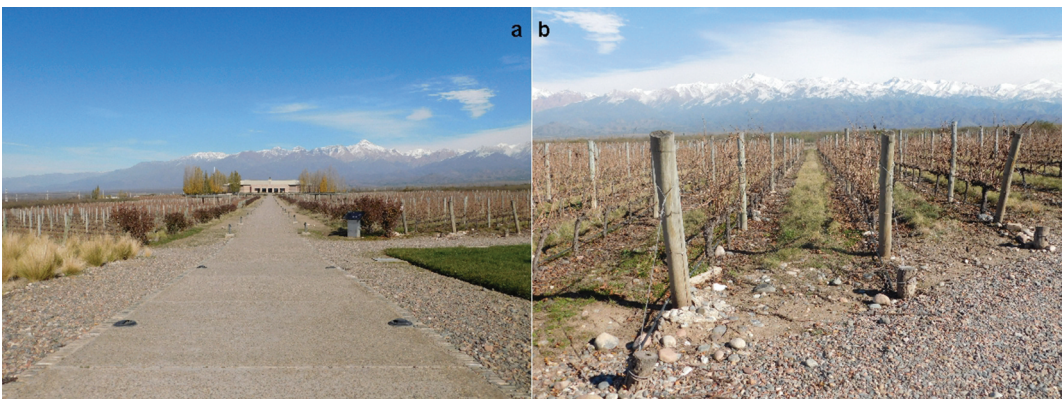


Figure 3. (a-b) Winery landscape adjacent to Manzano Histórico. Source: Leticia Saldi, 2017.

Both processes affected the MH site in one way or another. Until the end of the twentieth century, the few inhabitants continued to raise horses and mules and to raise, move, and trade cattle with Chile. Due to changes in international trade regulations for cattle and goats, this activity declined dramatically (Torres et al. 2022). In 1994, as large estates were being established for high-altitude viticulture, the area was designated as the Manzano Histórico Natural and Cultural Landscape Reserve under Provincial Law No. 6128. This was done to safeguard the monument, the apple tree, and the exotic flora planted around the 1940s. Subsequently, in 2012, as part of the social mobilisation to stop mining projects, this area was incorporated into a larger one called the Manzano-Portillo de Piuquenes Provincial Natural Reserve (Provincial Law 8400/12), which now spans from the MH site to the border with Chile (314,000 ha), from 1700 masl to about 6000 masl on the Chilean border in the Andes (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Natural Protected Area Manzano Portillo de Piuquenes. Source: Inventario Nacional de Glacières, Argentina, elaborated by Laura Zalazar, 2023.

Foreign capital associated with wine and high-end tourism has been able to position itself in the irrigated area of the Uco Valley and on the mountain slopes, changing the landscape. MH is accessed from two roads: Provincial Routes 89 and 94. These roads are often subject to the expansion of vineyards and the construction of large wineries, which are guarded by private security and can only be accessed after prior registration through virtual networks catering to international tourism. On Route 94, just before reaching the MH, alongside a vast expanse of vineyards and an opulent winery, one can find a popular sanctuary known as India Muerta, whose approximate size is 15 m by 70 m (Figure 5a).⁷ The regular offerings (candles, images of saints, vehicle licence plates, even human ashes) left by passers-by prompted the town council to instal signs, tables, and seating areas surrounded by native trees near the sanctuary. Approximately 500 metres further on, within another vineyard property, a metal sculpture of an Indigenous woman stands about ten feet tall (Figure 5b). Unlike the India Muerta, this sculpture is on private property and has no accompanying information.

At the entrance to the reserve, we noted the various uses and representative sites and identified four distinct circuits intended for walking, short stays, and general circulation (Figure 6). Circuit 1 (Figure 7) is associated with the legacy of the Sanmartinian Campaign, which began in the 1930s with the afforestation of pine and other exotic species, the grafting of the apple tree, and the creation of the monument. Over the next few decades, a hostel, two stone buildings for the maintenance staff, and a fish hatchery were built in the area. Today, both the municipality and the staff of the Directorate of Natural Resources are responsible for the upkeep of these facilities. According to interviews with former officials of both institutions, this space was renewed during the municipal administration that began in 2004, with the drafting of a script and interpretation panels about the life of San Martín and the importance of the MH in the War of Independence. For this purpose, two museums were created, one by the municipality called *Muestra Sanmartiniana* and the other by the Directorate of Natural Resources of Mendoza. The latter was inaugurated in 2005 under the name *Museo Hispano-Criollo*, with the aim of publicising the results of the archaeological research that had been carried out in the MH. During the next municipal government, however, the museum underwent an abrupt change, shifting its focus towards the exhibition of taxidermied animals. As a result, the archaeological samples were downsized and became decontextualised (Ots and Saldi 2022).

The second circuit (Figure 8) consists of two sectors: the first one has food stalls, restaurants, a public square with wooden tables and benches, a small amphitheatre, and craft stalls. The second part of the circuit includes various symbols, such as a wooden Christ on a monumental cross and flags representing Latin American Indigenous diversity (known as ‘wiphala’) on the artisans’ stalls or carved on a rock at a junction of the circuit. These symbols create an heterogeneous atmosphere within the circuit. The second sector is comprised of three campsites that have been created over



Figure 5. Indigenous allegories on Route 94. a) India Muerta Sanctuary b) Bronze sculpture. Source: own archive, 2021.

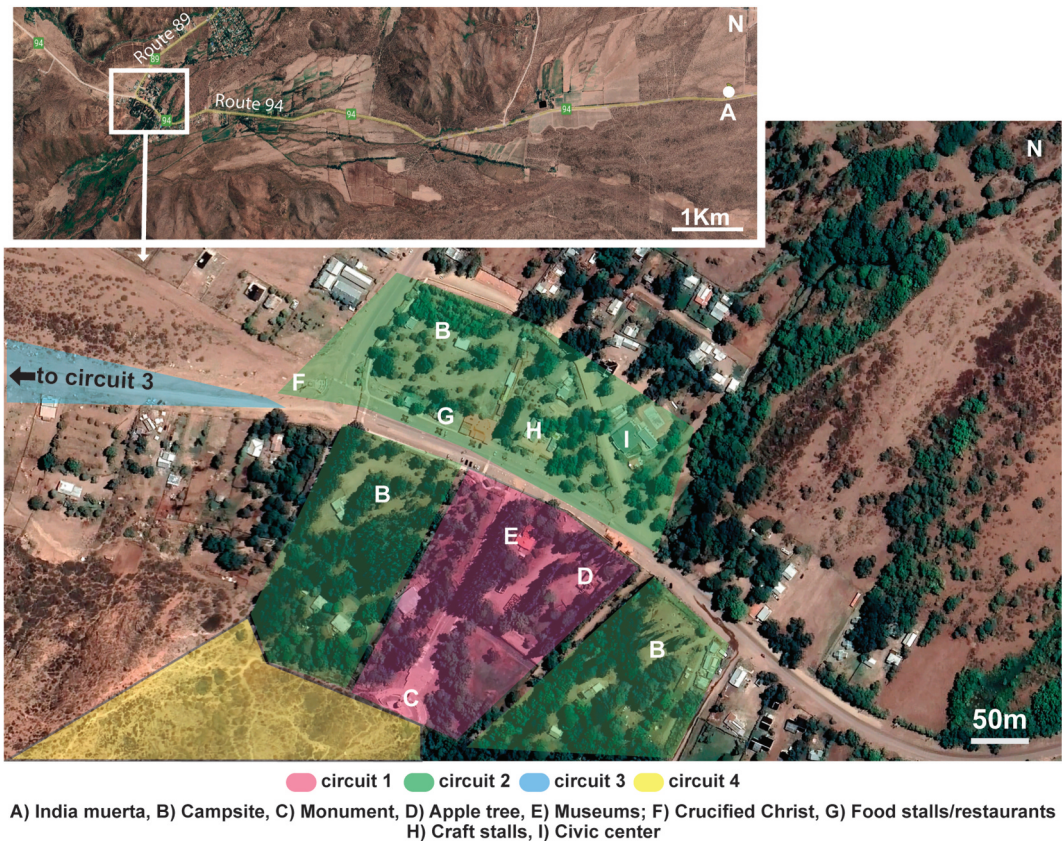


Figure 6. Circuits in Manzano Histórico. Source: Google Earth modified by the authors.

time by people's usage since the 1930s. These campsites have been further developed and consolidated by the infrastructure built by the municipality during different periods since the 1980s, as reported in the interviews and journalistic notes.

The third circuit (Figure 9) is the open space from the large crucified Christ (1800 masl) and the Lemos and Scaravelli settlements to the Portinari shelter (2500 masl). It is made up of the memories, trails, and ancestral practices of the muleteers. It was the focus of interest for the inhabitants of the Uco Valley and the municipal governments for the construction of an international route that did not prosper but whose roads opened by bulldozers are still used (Lacoste 1996). Certain areas of the site are designated for mountain sports, including cycling, running, trekking, and off-road vehicles such as motorcycles or pickup trucks. These activities have been promoted through tourist programs since the 2000s. This circuit can be travelled by car, van, or on horseback.

The fourth circuit (Figure 10) is situated behind the monument and includes trails to Mount Manzano or de la Cruz (2222 masl) that lead to three viewpoints. Although some signs warn against passing through due to the bad condition of the trails, many people visit this circuit, especially during the San Martín celebrations, attended by numerous young families and inexperienced mountaineers. This circuit is probably the least formalised, as the small posters displaying local flora or San Martín scenes at the viewpoints appear to be neglected, suggesting that previous efforts to promote the area were unsuccessful.

The development of these four circuits is the product of intermingled socio-historical processes related to the mountain range crossing from pre-colonial times and later to the formation of



Figure 7. Circuit 1. a-b) Visitors around the monument on August 16, 2021. c-d) Official ceremony on August 17, 2021. Source: own archive.

national and provincial communities and the creation and maintenance of local recreational areas from the mid-twentieth century to the present. Therefore, the four circuits together form the textures of the heritage landscape, derived from the discourses and official heritage policies implemented over time and from the experiences of the diverse social actors that make up this space.

Experiences, memories, and heritage in tension

Most of the visitors interviewed were over the age of 29 (75%) and reported being accompanied by family and friends (Figures 11a,b). Forty-three percent came from the city of Mendoza and its surroundings, 33% from the Uco Valley (Tunuyán, Tupungato, and San Carlos), and 24% from the rest of Mendoza or other Argentine provinces (Figure 11c). A high percentage (71%) had visited the MH on other occasions. Most visitors (85.7%) were there to engage in leisure activities such as relaxing, socialising with others over a picnic, drinking mate (a popular infusion in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil, that people share with each other) or having a barbecue. A small number of visitors were there to work in the food trucks or craft stalls or to participate in sports such as running, motocross, or mountain biking.

It is noteworthy that 83.3% of the visitors to the MH knew the monument and its surroundings (Circuit 1), but only 45.2% ever visited the Sanmartinian Museum. Most of the people interviewed did not know the history of San Martín and showed no interest in it, except for one person from a different Argentine province. Likewise, more than 80% of the sample did not know the high points (above Circuit 3) or identify the mountains and large glaciers inside the reserve, and 90% had never been to the Argentine border.



Figure 8. Circuit 2. a) Craft stalls; b) food stalls; c) park; d) stream. Source: own archive, 2022.



Figure 9. Circuit 3. a) Route 94; b) Captain Lemos Settlement. Source: own archive, 2021.

Finally, the survey asked for open-ended responses about why they visited the site and what materialities of the place they highlighted. We found that people repeated the same words: tranquillity (16), mountains (16), nature (8), water (16), streams (11), landscapes (8), San Martín (7), forest (3), or being in the shade of a tree (4) (Figure 12). People enjoyed the sound of the streams, the mountain landscape, and being surrounded by mountains, although they admitted that on some occasions the site was crowded. Therefore, the place and the materialities associated with nature were the most meaningful and valued, while the epic story of San Martín, his legacy, and the monument took second place and remained in the background.



Figure 10. Circuit 4. a) Trail and lookout point; b) infographics. Source: own archive, 2021.

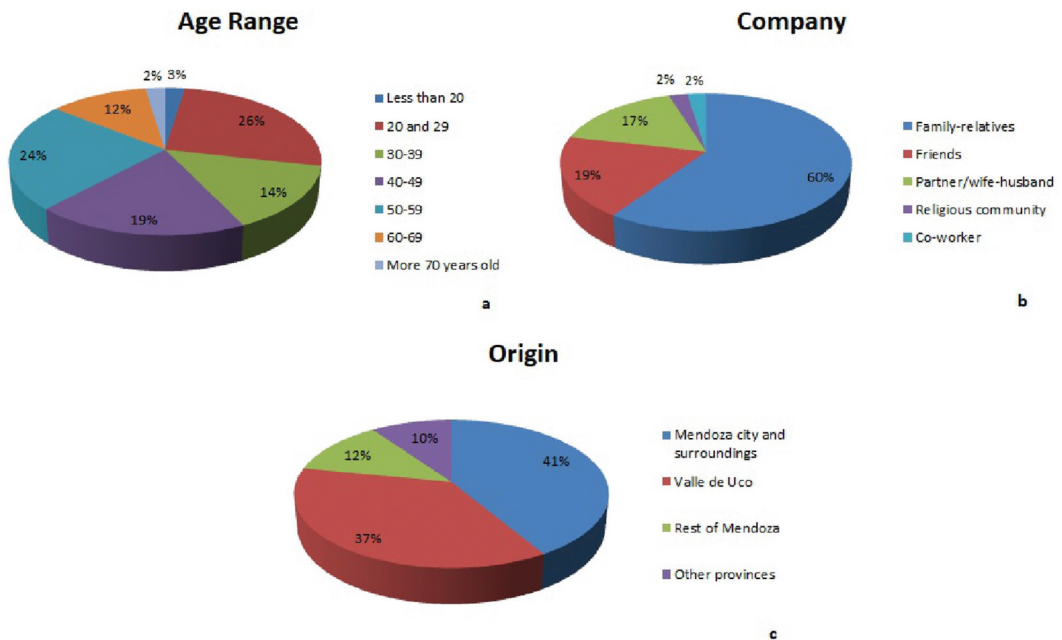


Figure 11. Survey results ($N = 42$). a) Age range; b) company; c) origin of visitors. Source: own survey, 2021.

Our observations and interviews revealed that the local population rarely visits Circuit 1 but tends to frequent Circuit 2 and, to an even greater extent, Circuit 3. At the beginning of the latter, the packers and their families offer horseback rides and stay for several days in tents erected with poles, cloth, and leather. During an interview, a local guide informed us that the location was chosen by all the muleteers and the mayor. Our observations and interviews also revealed that the muleteers possessed extensive knowledge of the entire MPP and held a critical perspective on San Martín's crossing of the Andes. They commonly expressed sentiments such as 'we've been doing this all our lives', 'he met with the elite; he didn't change anything for us', and 'who helped him cross the Andes? And we keep doing it'. Although they did not define themselves as Indigenous people, they have wondered about the continuity and/or possible kinship with those who helped San Martín to cross the Andes. This doubt recurs in the conversations, with participants identifying themselves in some way with these pre- and post-colonial populations.

what has been presented as a historical place associated with the presence of San Martín and/or pristine nature is the product of a set of experiences and ways of inhabiting the space that diverge both in the past and in the present.

To analyse this complexity, we presented concepts related to the production of landscapes, the formation of identities, and processes of heritage-making. We proposed to characterise these landscapes as bundles of spatial and temporal experiences that endure and contribute to negotiations on what deserves recognition and how it is valued within the national and provincial constructs of alterity. This means acknowledging the diverse groups, their practices and experiences that shape a national or provincial territory, even in multicultural and globalised contexts.

The set of concepts employed to analyse landscape composition in the MH leads us to introduce a further concept: 'suture', introduced by Stuart Hall in 1996 to explain the construction of identities in the era of globalisation. Hall (1996) proposes that 'suture' is an imperfect and incoherent connection that stitches together various materials originating from different sources. It is produced through historical formations and specific discursive practices that mark differences and create exclusions. Using the medical metaphor proposed by Hall (1996), the texture of the landscapes analysed is a product of these sutures, meaning that the groups that characterise them expose lines of fracture subject to the set of available and historically enabled identity categories and locations. The formation of landscapes and the creation of heritage are never-ending outcomes of diverse ways of being in the world, both in the past and present. These ways are constantly evolving and can be seen as bundles that are tenuously connected and, at times, in conflict with one another.

By analysing archaeological, historical, and ethnographic data, we were able to establish that this mountainous region has been a site of interaction and exchange since pre-Hispanic times. Additionally, we presented the process of heritage-making in the early twentieth century, which corresponded with the emergence of a national and provincial identity that celebrated white, European values, disregarding any ongoing connections with the Indigenous communities. As part of this identity formation, Europeanised landscapes were created at the provincial and local levels, such as an apple tree, a monument, and a forest of pine and fruit trees in the case of the MH. These elements were integrated with the ubiquitous Andes mountain range. In this new composition, the local imagined community hierarchically recognised the presence of muleteers, immigrants, and even local elites while excluding the Indigenous people who were present before, during, and after the independence process. Over the years, this mountainous region has evolved into a hub for muleteers and inhabitants from the Uco Valley, a recreational destination for regional and provincial visitors, and a tourist attraction for both national and international tourists.

The enduring existence of these diverse ways of inhabiting and using space has given rise to what we refer to as 'circuits'. These circuits activate memories associated with various practices and activities: visiting museums, the monument, and the tree to learn about national history (Circuit 1); hosting large family gatherings (Circuit 2); riding with muleteers along the Andean route or exploring mountain trails (Circuit 3); or hiking to viewpoints where native flora dominates beyond the monument (Circuit 4). Although the four circuits differ significantly from one another, they are interconnected through spatiotemporal bundles, fractures, and subsequent sutures that reflect divergent and sometimes conflicting ways of existing in the world.

Once again, tensions that have their roots in colonial and republican times persist into the era of globalisation and are marked by the exclusion or erasure of Indigenous presence. However, explicit expressions of Indigenous presence constitute a crucial suture in the heritage landscape that resists such erasure. For instance, the India Muerta site along the way to the MH, the display of decontextualised archaeological artefacts in the Museum of Natural Sciences, and stone or fabric representations of the Indigenous flag (wiphala) in Circuit 2 are examples of such expressions. Furthermore, the muleteers, who have been living in the mountains for generations, share their practices and knowledge about their Indigenous heritage but without recognising themselves as such.

Therefore, in order to recognise and evaluate spaces that are proposed as worthy of preservation, it is necessary to: 1) account for identity formations of alterity and their

associated landscapes; 2) acknowledge the political, social, and economic forces that shaped these spaces; 3) analyse the development of these landscapes as bundles associated with diverse networks of experience; 4) recognise the sutures incorporated by these spaces, that is, account for how memories, practices, and experiences contribute to the overall landscape; and finally, 5) account for how these landscapes are utilised, experienced, and reproduced, considering how some memories survive from marginalised or opposing perspectives while others attain hegemonic status and become integrated into authorised heritage discourses. Meanwhile, other memories hold significant meanings for local identities that strive to endure despite the state's attempts to limit or commodify them.

Notes

1. Our translation.
2. This survey was designed for this research and is part of the Project called, "Heritage-making, collective memories and disputes in Tunuyán Superior river, Mendoza, Argentina". This paper forms part of this project.
3. Antonio José Scaravelli (Italy 1895-Argentina 1958). He studied medicine in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In 1927, he arrived in Tunuyán, and in 1931, he founded the first hospital. He exerted a strong influence in Tunuyán as a doctor, a politician, and cultural manager. His agency was fundamental in the creation of El Manzano as a sanmartinian site (Mendez 2020).
4. Luis Perloti (1890-1969), was an Argentine sculptor with a very profuse monument production all around the country. He won several public contests to build commemorative, funerary, and allegorical sculptures inspired by Latin American traditions. The Return to the homeland monument in El Manzano was one of the most important in his repertoire.
5. Fidel Enrique Jaime Roig Matóns (1885-1977) was a Catalan painter and musician who lived in Mendoza since 1908. His artwork gained anthropological and historical value due to his interest in the local landscape and traditions. Especially well known are the series of paintings (acuarela and charcoal) about Guanacache Lagoons and Huarpes, and the sequence of Andes landscapes and the Sanmartinian campaign, called "Epic landscape".
6. Our translation.
7. According to the signage of the place, an Indigenous woman, who was escaping from the attack of an enemy group, died when she tried to spend the night in the open and in low temperatures.

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