



21st Century Landscape Sustainability, Development and Transformations: Geographical Perceptions

Giovanni Messina, Bresena Kopliku (Eds.)

Preface by Elena dell'Agnese

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Editors



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*21st Century Landscape Sustainability, Development and Transformations:
Geographical Perceptions*

Giovanni Messina, Bresena Kopliku (Eds.)

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6. Heritage and tourism: the case study of the Magna Grecia Park

Mattia Spanò

6. Heritage and tourism: the case study of the Magna Grecia Park

Mattia Spanò¹

Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to show in the wider regional context the Magna Grecia Park project, which consists in the construction of a monumental theme park in Crotone's province, inspired by the VI century BC Magna Graecia, when the city was a leading *polis*. To give back its lost centrality is the designers' and promoters' main intent, believing the park could be an opportunity of growth and development. It's a massive operation, established on the crossed actions of private investors, public institutions, and civil society. Thus, great attention is needed to evaluate the pros and cons of the MGP in the bigger picture. The stakeholder analysis has been a crucial tool to find a general trend: the actors involved stressed out the possible positive impact, although underlining the severe absence of a functioning infrastructure could constitute an obstacle.

Keywords: *Crotone, Calabria, Magna Grecia Park, Stakeholder analysis, Heritage.*

As a discipline investigating relationships between terrestrial inhabitants, which might be human, natural, or hybrid, geography could have a key role in social sciences, putting on display the multi-scalar network constituting the Earth, specially between semiotic and bio-geographic spheres through which pass social relationships (Dematteis, 2021, p. XX).

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1. Introduction: origins and future

I would like to delve into the heart of the matter of this paper by recalling some of my thoughts published in the newspaper *il Quotidiano del Sud*, dated June 27, 2022. Just few days before this date, the Magna Grecia Park project was presented in Crotone and I felt compelled to give my contribution to the cause, to shed a positive light on a tormented territory in South Italy. My contribution reconsidered the profound meaning of each *return-investment* on cultural Heritage, both material and immaterial. Such valuable gestures, each one with an *inexhaustible resonance*, can be configured as an exercise of theoretical and practical expansion. In perspective, it was then attempted to dwell on the following question: «Why investing in the past?». It was tried to expand the perimeter on one assumption working as a horizon for renovated itineraries of work: every act of returning to the past should translate into a *comprehensive rebirth* of the present.

To obtain the above-mentioned purposes, the Magna Grecia Park project should continuously and concretely help the region's rebirth. Nonetheless, it is necessary to rigorously examine the economic and environmental sustainability of the project. Thus, the hints in my previous article need to be probed in further Heritage-touristic research, that is the intention behind this paper. My study consists in a composite and multi-scale analysis in which the structure, lineaments and directions of the project disrupt in the dialogue – between past, present, and future – with the broader regional context in which the Magna Grecia Park should (or at least could) be. Since this is a complex and time-consuming manoeuvre, that requires the interaction of public and private actors, stakeholder analysis was applied, interviewing ten key actors. My purpose is to understand if the construction area, already characterized by multiple and diverse *points of interest*, could proceed towards an overall improvement that can relaunch the regional economy and tourism, through a cultural and environmental protection operation.

2. Heritage and tourism

The term Heritage is layered and ambiguous because it refers to a complex of practices that changes over time and space depending on the individual or collective using it. It is not surprising, then, that it acquired different nuances of meaning (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996), on which experts still debate today (Dell'Agnese & Pollice, 2021). Beyond the innumerable

perspectives composing and animating the intense debate, it is necessary to highlight a key aspect: the semantic spectrum of *Heritage* significantly exceeds the mere and obvious link with the past. Quite the opposite, it also refers to the actual exploitation of the past; consequently, the term has been hybridized with *concepts-scenarios* such as culture, identity, places, society, economy, politics, conflict (Graham *et al.*, 2000). *Heritage*, thus, embraces not only what is more properly considered the historical-natural wealth of a geographical area but also to its living culture and administration – between conservation and use; between past, present and future (Di Matteo, 2023).

These are the faces of the polyhedric weave of Heritage tourism, whose history is not less jagged nor exempt from still intense debates (Gilli, 2005). It is one of the most productive and studied segments of international tourism over the past few years. The related scientific research has mostly focused on aspects concerning supply, demand, management, interpretation-explanation, authenticity, and policy. Several key-points will be analyzed in my research, starting from a basic assumption: the historical memory of the landscape-cultural Heritage can only be realized through the dynamic protection of the same, aiming at the economic-social rebirth of the territory.

3. Retracing ancient Kroton: territory and points of interest

In my newspaper article, it was argued that now the project could allow to concretely retrace the “streets” of *Kroton*, while visiting the actual Crotone, generating an economical and cultural growth. The previous reflection stems from the project’s ambition of reviving the essence of a 6th century BC Magna Graecia *polis* in the guise of a “theme park”: a period when Crotone soared as one of the main philosophical, artistic, and cultural theatres.

The intention behind the project was to restore in a modern way the lost centrality of Crotone and its districts, through the help of the homonymous foundation², and the promised adhesions of public institutions. Thus, it’s appropriate to examine the expected construction site.

So far, the foundation has selected an undisclosed site in the region around Crotone. The choice is based on the project’s feasibility and sustainability. Despite being ranked almost at the end for life’s quality³, the city and its surroundings present different points of interest. It’s a

² <https://www.fondazionemgpk.it>, website examined on November 3rd, 2023.

³ <https://lab24.ilsole24ore.com/qualita-della-vita/>, website examined on December 18th, 2023.

worthy threshold to pause on: including a point of interest and a local variety is a necessary but non-sufficient feature of a touristic destination (Andergassen *et al.*, 2013). It's fundamental 1) to consider if these points of interest are properly exploited; 2) to give an explanation in the present study. Thus, an overview of some of these locations will be provided.

3.1 *Capo Colonna*

A relevant role in the region belongs to the Greek and Roman archaeological Heritage of worldwide significance. Sited around ten kilometres from Crotone, Capo Colonna is the location of the *national museum and archaeological park of Capo Colonna*. The area, with a surface around 50 hectares, touch the eastern extremity of the homonymous promontory. *Capo Colonna* derives its name from the surviving column, on the brink of the crag, of the Doric temple of *Hera Lacinia*, dated V century BC. In the extended sacred area, expanding around the temple, has emerged a more ancient cultural site containing some manufacts of the so-called *Hera's treasure*, now recollected in the *National archaeological museum of Crotone*.

By recalling the Heritage of Capo Colonna, emerges another important tile of the broader cultural mosaic: the *National archaeological museum* in Crotone is an historical institution designed to preserve the material and immaterial traces of Calabria's historical Heritage. The museum's action should be in synergy with the various actors involved in the cultural Heritage sectors (Costa, 2013, p. 74). Opened to the public in 1968, following numerous adaptations and extensions, the museum offers an expositional path that develops chronologically from the rise of the ancient Greek colony of *Kroton* to the Late Antiquity. Comparing the two museums, the one sited in Capo Colonna hosts mostly Roman relics and the partially reconstructed marble cover of the *Hera Lacinia's* temple.

This feature underlines the historical and cultural reach of the entire archaeological site, which is beyond a simple exposition of historical frames from the Greek colonial period. The site contains the traces, both visible and invisible, of a long-course human presence dating thousands of years, in a tradition still renewing itself. Nearby the ancient city walls, – consisting of two parts: the older Greek level and the Roman level made of rhomboid blocks – it's located an *accommodating area*, dated around IV century BC; moving north, there are the remains of the Roman settlement identified as *Croto*, a colony established in 194 BC; the ruins of a Roman villa and the thermal baths, both datable around the III century AD.

Not so far from the Roman remains, rises the *Nao Tower*, erected during the XVI century by the will of the Habsburg Emperor Charles V, as part of Napoli Kingdom's coastal watchtowers. Beside the tower is located the Sanctuary of Saint Mary of Capo Colonna: constructed between the XI and the XIII century, it acquired its actual structure following a restoration in 1897. Still today, the Sanctuary is the end point of a cultural procession that the devotees of Crotona undertake the third Sunday of May, to celebrate the Virgin Mary: it's a 15 kilometres-long night-pilgrimage connected to a Greek ritual. It co-emerged alongside the pilgrimages that the inhabitants of *Kroton* conducted to honour the goddess *Hera*. Then, under a process of cultural symbiosis due to the advent of Christianity, it was reconfigured and embedded as a form of Marian worshipping. Despite being Dionysius the Aeropagite the patron saint of Crotona, celebrated on the 9th of October, the most intensely felt festivity is the one dedicated to the Virgin Mary of Capo Colonna, that involves the community beyond the mere time extension of the pilgrimage. The sacrality embedded in the site, emerging from past uses and the contemporary traditions, still echoes today.

3.2 *Capo Rizzuto Marine Protected Area*

Much more extended, partially out the municipality of Crotona, is another important point of interest: the *Capo Rizzuto Marine Protected Area*. The marine reserve, with a surface measuring around 15 thousand hectares and extending linearly for 42 kilometres, is one of the largest in Europe.

In this context, it is worth remarking that «Today, cultural heritage plays a central role in the narratives of coastal regions and in their reorganization as places and/or containers of historical, cultural, social and economic safeguards» (Ivona, 2021, p. 126).

The *Protected Area* includes a significant Heritage, both naturalistic (numerous special areas of conservation) and historical (some mentioned above). Among them, one deserves a special mention, without disrespecting the others, highlighting a site that autonomously emerged as one of the main touristic and economic point of interest: the Aragonese Castle (Fig. 1) of *Le Castella* – standing out as an important film location in many productions, which have given value to its environmental features (Nicosia, 2021).

It's important to pause on the specific features of those cultural Heritage sites, especially if described as follows:

The fortunate co-presence of natural conditions, landscape, climate [...] acquires at least a triple value for the territory where they belong: they are privileged witnesses of the history and evolution of the region; they have a strong architectonic relevance; they can be prestigious sceneries used for social events (Di Liberto & Mercatanti, p. 141).

Thus, it's appropriate to pause on the possible consequences that the castle produce, and – why not? – to consider the touristic impact of art exhibitions located and hosted inside monuments and buildings, part of the cultural Heritage, as some of the recent research suggests. Indeed, they possess a certain power of attraction based on a pre-existing receptivity of the monuments: those are possible development lines that, beyond the mere fruition of the castle, constitute diversified itineraries and impulses for the growth of the region, exploiting multiple points of interest.

Speaking about castles it is worth to mention the Castle of Charles V, an IX century medieval fortress in the historic centre of Crotone. Modified across time, today the Castle has a particular architecture, weaving together different styles, tangible signs of the alternating political and social powers in the history of Crotone. Beyond the cultural offer in north-east Calabria through museums, sites, art exhibitions, not of less interest is to examine theatre performances and music events (Tosto, 2013). Above all, from its roots, if not being the original cradle, the territory was at least one of the first and most important centre of elaboration and development at the beginning of Western Civilization.

3.3 *Sila National Park*

Another relevant point of interest, not so far from the construction area of the *Magna Grecia Park*, is the *Sila National Park*. Tripartite in Big Sila, Greek Sila, and Small Sila, the park's perimeter is contained in 19 municipalities, divided among three districts: Catanzaro, Cosenza, and Crotone. The total surface of the reserve is 74.000 hectares. First, it's necessary to underline the rich geologic Heritage, strongly linked to the geographic location: from the wide variety of arboreal species in the colourful woodlands (constituting the 80% of the total surface) – among which stands out the black pine of Calabria –, to the fundamental presence of ponds, used for multiple purposes; from the polychromatic fauna to the landscapes used as grazing land and plantations that speckle and shore up the wide stretch of woodlands. An interest centre that serves, overall, as the intersection among territorial tutelage, socio-economic development, and sustainable tourism, inside which it's possible to

try different activities (Skiing, trekking, sledding, rowing, mountain biking, horse riding), in a region with a high density of historical, archaeological, and natural Heritage.



Figure 1 – The Aragonese Castle sited in Le Castella (Photo by the author).

4. Magna Grecia Park

Once passing through and around the construction site of the *Magna Grecia Park*, it's necessary to consider the impressive spatial requirements of the project: 160 hectares, a feature that would make the MGP one of the largest theme parks in Italy and one among the largest in Europe considering its surface and number of attractions.

Inside the area, the project includes the reproduction of the Ionic coast from Taranto to Syracuse, along which were established the most important Greek colonies of Magna Graecia and Sicily. The *poleis*, accurately duplicated, would run along an artificial lake of 20 hectares simulating the Ionian and Tyrrhenian Sea. In these terms, the intent of the entire project, at first glance, could appear exceedingly ambitious. Surely, it's not simple to attempt a scaled reproduction of an entire seacoast spanning from two poles, covering around 400 kilometres. On the other hand, it's clear that the purpose behind the idea is to revive the overall greatness of the Magna Graecia, sacrificing the absolute loyalty, dimension-wise. Thus, as highlighted by the designer Antonio Lidonnici:

Each *polis* will have its temple, its main monumental building, its workshops, and market centre – of course, following the Magna Graecia style – on a real scale reproduction; [...] some actors will recreate the inhabitants of the various structures, and advanced technologies will be used to experience the cultural heritage: virtual, augmented, mixed reality; holograms, artificial intelligence, virtual production, motion capture, motion tracking. [...] Outside the city walls, but inside the perimeter of the *polis* extended area, an agricultural area (wine yards, olive groves, cereal farms) and an animal farm will be included, both equipped with educational labs.

Next to the *Polis* area, the project includes two other thematic sections: the *Village of Knowledge* and the *Ancient Greece Olympics*. The former, with the vigil stare of the statue of Pythagoras, will include a series of pavilions, divided in expositive thematic areas: it is the truly theoretic area, even though the project's concept swings from recreational to educational intentions, passing through the techno-scientific mission. The latter, instead – the *Ancient Greece Olympics* – should have inside multiple real size arenas, with re-enactments of ancient sporting events, physically or through VR technologies. Thus, as demonstrated by the planned sailing in the artificial sea, the intention is to give substance to a concrete experience, as the touristic sector ask loudly:

[...] in contemporary times, the roots of the heritage get value and significance due to the contemporary representation, thanks to the creative and educative potential, and because of ways of representation (narrative, dramas, real and hyperreal experiences, storytelling) based on entertainment and incitement (Dallari, 2013, p. 16).

These ideas are the foundation of the *vision* and *mission* of the project creators and supporters. Thus, Antonio Lidonnici uses the following words to describe what just mentioned:

The Magna Graecia Park is not only a theme park but an open-air museum of the ancient Magna Graecia: it's possible to have fun and learn at the same time; the entertainment is the medium to acquire information about the great characters of modern Western Civilization; figures that completely changed our culture, that have changed the world, and that are actual still today. [...] The project, that has become highly specialized, embraces essentially the world of the ESG (Environment Social and Governance): it has not only an economic impact but mostly social, environmental, and territorial effects. [...]; fundamentally, it lays on the bond among three business assets: the entertainment and the touristic sector; the environment and the natural energetic sector; the housing sector, that involves the real estate and residential business.

The project includes the residential area that, as the name suggests, it involves the construction of many accommodating structures, with a housing capacity of approximately eight thousand people. Already have been designed modules as branded residences, bungalow, suite hotels and a resort, equipped with mooring points directly connected to the residences. About that, Lidonnici states:

The idea is not only to host the visitors of the park, but also to create an innovative area – similarly to many other parts of the world – to think in terms of long-term renting, since the structure can become, for all intents and purposes, a city. There will be sport facilities – with tennis and paddle courts, bocce fields, a gym – and a shopping centre including the services for the residents, from the doctor on call to the shops, to the grocery stores.

Together with the three thematic areas and the residential section, the project includes an administrative area, the systems area, a 9,5 hectares water park, and a shopping centre, serving also as a local agricultural market (Nicoletti, 2021). From this point of view, the park could become a showcase for local produce and companies; just as it would be possible to become an event location or an exhibition centre, using the impressive six pavilions of the exhibition complex, already included in the project.

In this frame of reference, the following quote of Walter Santagata is emblematic: «Tourism suffers from the *Grand Tour* syndrome», to avoid which «it would require structures that illustrate the story and fame of the locations, out-and-out gateways to our culture that are almost completely absent», in a way designed to provide an answer to the actual touristic needs of «bringing visitors in touch with the local traditions»; meaning also the contact with «concrete and breathing experiences, through fairs, festivals and relationships with local associations» and «typical artisanal manufacturing» (Santagata, 2013, p. 2). Thus, the project appears, considering its link with the surrounding territories, not so far from what it should be, as experts of the touristic sector inevitably outline.

Last but not least, it is the postgraduate campus, that would include a higher research institute of Magna Graecia's history: «a structure that has the ambition of becoming a hub and spoke of many centres distributed all around the world among university departments, foundations, and institutions focusing their research on Magna Graecia». These are the conclusive words of the engineer Lidonnici.

About the environmental asset, the project includes different facilities

designed to protect the environment, with the intention of realizing cutting-edge structures that, besides covering the park's energetic requirements, would also have a positive impact on the territory and the exceeding energy could be redistributed to the broader geoeconomics area. Here follows few examples of energetic facilities: a seawater purifying and desalination facility, a solar pond, a photovoltaic production facility, and an aerobic bio-digestive system to dispose of all the waste of the entire park.

In addition to that, it has been estimated that the MGP could provide 2500 direct job places, and more than 5000 other indirect job places, not to mention the impressive total profit of the entire enterprise, an operation of great impact, directed to reinvigorate a regional economy mostly exclusive and stagnant.

5. Stakeholder analysis: theory, literature, and method

The *Stakeholder analysis (SA)*, originally used in the economic and political research sector, has revealed itself as a valid instrument in every field involving individuals bearing interests (Kvale, 1996; Duxbury, 2012). Thus, it is used for some time now in a widely inside the geographic research sector (Cannizzaro *et al.*, 2017). Related to the subject of the present paper, the contribution of the stakeholders was of fundamental importance: the different opinions drew from the interviews have significantly enriched my attempt of zooming in and zooming out the project's bigger picture.

The selection consisted in a preliminary identification of the potential stakeholders interested in or affected by the MGP project. Here follows the prearranged list of the classes of stakeholders, inside which ten privileged speakers (PS) have been identified and interviewed:

- Entrepreneurs.
- Local and regional CEOs.
- Public bodies and public institutions.
- Project designers and promoters.
- Associations and activists.
- Artists and researchers, endorsing the revivification of the region.
- Residents.
- Press.

Here follows, the list of the roles of each stakeholder in his specific sector (Tab. 1):

PS n.	Role	Sector
1	Activist/Hotel Manager	Tourism
2	Partner Manager	Finance/Start-up
3	President	Confindustria Crotone
4	Marketing manager	Local business
5	MGP engineer, project creator and designer	Freelancer
6	Manager	Cultural Heritage exploitation
7	Writer	Research
8	Journalist	Local Press
9	Scholar	Resident
10	Administrative director	Local business

Table 1 – *The list of the roles of each stakeholder in his specific sector.*

The interviews were structured on six fundamental questions:

- 1 What's your opinion about the actual situation of the MGP's construction area?
- 2 Do you consider well-structured and sufficiently promoted the points of interest inside the province of Crotone?
- 3 Environment-wise, do you consider the realization of the project sustainable and feasible?
- 4 Do you judge the actual public transportation system of the region as sufficient and in line with the scale of the project? Or could it be considered an obstacle?
- 5 Do you believe that the monumental project would be convenient or disadvantageous for the region? In other words, what are the pros and cons?
- 6 Do you consider that all the key actors involved have been operating in favour of the project's realization?

The interviews took place between December 2023 and January 2024, via internet and on the phone. A common line has emerged from the different answers, despite the stakeholders' different areas of employment. Shown below, there is a synthesis including some statements from the interviews.

6. Results

Most of the actors involved believe that the MGP's construction could provide positive and multiple impacts to the region. At the same time, they stress out the plausible controversies to be encountered in a regional context full of potential yet characterized by profound structural flaws. Almost all the stakeholders agree upon considering Crotone and its province a crossroad of attractions. Besides the aforementioned locations, the PS 1 placed side by side two more sites of great beauty and global scientific relevance: the salt dome of Zinga, that the ISPRA (Higher Institute for Environmental Protection and Research) recognized as a natural geo-site of national interest; and secondly, the Vrica GSSP (Global Stratigraphic Section and Point), which is referred to as the beginning of the Calabrian (a subdivision of the Pleistocene Epoch) by the scientific community. The field of emotional geography argues that the feelings caused by the geological sites complements their scientific value (Gregori, 2010; Puttilli & Santangelo, 2018).

Despite the abundant natural and historical Heritage, mostly negative opinions emerged from the interviews about the actual exploitation of these points of interest, being insufficient and inadequate. It depends on a specific problem pin-pointed by most of the stakeholders: the poor infrastructural system – in Crotone, and generally in Calabria. The opinions were almost unanimous. The nearby areas of Crotone can rely on two functional and logistic points: Saint Anne Airport and the Port. The pertaining authorities have already disposed a requalification plan, carrying out the bureaucratic procedure to update the state highway 106 (from Sibari to Catanzaro), and slowly working on the *Sibari-Catanzaro Lido* railway⁴.

However, most of the stakeholders believe that the project could impact positively the transportations infrastructure network. Nevertheless, the opinions diverge:

«It has been said that the MGP could possibly contribute pushing the institutions to improve the infrastructural network. I think that

⁴ <https://www.mit.gov.it/comunicazione/news/strade-ok-ai-cantieri-sulla-ss106-jonica-per-3-miliardi> , website examined on December 21st, 2023.

this kind of construction project it's not sufficient by itself because other factors come into play [...] not so easy to overcome» (PS 2).

«So, I believe that a project of such size could give a huge incentive to create structures and infrastructures useful for the project good-end results, not only in the realization phase. It seems an inverted logic, but I believe it makes sense» (PS 7).

«[...] The project could favour the upgrade of the infrastructures (port, railway, state highway 106, airport), extending their interconnection» (PS 3).

The PS 6 stressed out the need of a previous infrastructural upgrade of Crotona, to build up a missing cultural identity and a wide appealing dimension: only a contemporary and innovative city, equipped with an updated offer can concretely exploit the existing natural and historical Heritage. It's the mission of the complex project *Antica Kroton*⁵, already under construction.

«The issue of becoming an area with a touristic and cultural appeal does not end with having the sea, a seafront (**Fig. 2**) or mountain areas: it means providing a city with an offer that allows visitors to choose Crotona, basing their choice on its cultural history. But we have never given value to our cultural history. Today, after many years, however, has been insured that Crotona would acquire its own physiognomy, where culture serves as a growth engine – without it, it cannot succeed. [...] So, if I manage to give the city a strong cultural identity, externally appealing, then I can argue that this ambitious project can possibly merge and conjugate opportunities of creating an integrated touristic offer» (PS 6).

Not so distant, the PS 2 highlighted the need of a multi-step marketing plan, designed to represent a project and an area capable of wide appeal. Thus, Walter Santagata's suggestions are very precious: it's necessary to bear some characteristics of the contemporary cultural tourism, among which stands out the so-called «evil of the superstars», which dims many touristic locations of great relevance that lack a proper and wide mediatic coverage (Santagata, 2013). Following the semiotic of touristic appeal (MacCannell, 2005), for a location to become a touristic destination it should be highlighted

⁵ <https://www.comune.crotona.it/Antica-Kroton> , website examined on December 21st, 2023.



Figure 2 – The seafront of Crotona (Photo by the author).

by a *marker* (D'Eramo, 2019, p. 49). These have been the sceneries that the designers and supporters have faced from the beginning: «the presentation of an out-and-out project will soon come up beside the first concept presented a year ago. [...] According to that, the constitution of an advertising committee will take place with the task of promoting the project in the world» (PS 5).

Environmental sustainability-wise, more than one stakeholder paused on the related specific issues: it's a crucial side, depending on multiple factors, hardly measurable without having a clear frame of all the pivotal factors. It's appropriate to remember, as stated by the designer, that the environment is one of the three main assets included in the project.

7. Final remarks

From my research emerged the need of a multilevel plan, through whose intertwining undertake a global renew of the calabrese area: from the increased exploitation of the points of interest around Crotona and Calabria, to the urge of updating the overall infrastructure and urban system; from strengthening the historic-cultural identity to a structured cultural marketing campaign. It consists of a general manoeuvre, attentive of the environmental protection and exploitation, that bases itself in involving the entire area, both socio-economically and politically: public and private actors that, from different perspectives, inhabit the same geographic reality (Pollice, 2021). In other words, it's necessary to work on the objects-representations-practices braiding, three apexes in a constant interaction of what Marcello Tanca presents as the ontological triangle of geography (Tanca, 2018).

Then, every relevant intervention should emerge and evolve from a different way of thinking. In a region massacred by the failure of promises of growth and development, slowed down by bureaucratic and technocratic tendencies, the risk of cancelling the bond between living being and urban-natural environment is higher (Sini & Pasqui, 2020, pp. 25-26). Nevertheless, as stated by PS 7, in Crotona and Calabria, «the resources already exist, in terms of natural beauty, geographical position in the Mediterranean Area, and human resources. Working on improving, even the sentimental resources will come back: enthusiasm, sharing, cooperation, involvement».

Between environmental strengths and serious infrastructural deficiencies, reasons for fascination and harsh confrontations with a context that is all too often static, the Magna Grecia Park is configured, meanwhile, as an opportunity for a reasoned return to the territory. To talk about it, while waiting for the Foundation to communicate the latest implications of the project, means to support an approach that considers as a collective enterprise an economic-cultural rebirth of the territory that is based on environmental protection.

So, it is important to work on the actual and *mobile shape* of the territory: it means to revive the uninterrupted and asymptotic longing for possible worlds that, on the pleasure of the never soothe discovery (here returns Dematteis, cited in the exergue), lays the foundation of all the disparate humans' declinations of inhabiting the world.

Here emerges again the profound theoretic and pragmatic meaning of the geographic research, in its full significance and centrality: inhabiting knowledge, making and dismantling the maps of our thought-action system, and returning to the collective dimension through a repetition that, still is

and always will be, a renovation without which it's neglected the individual dimension. In other words: returning to the ancient meaning of *polis*, in the inextricable bond of past, present, and future, towards an aspired perfectibility.

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Territories continue to transform due to endogenous and exogenous development drives. The thickening of logistics and transport networks, large commercial hubs, energy supply options, agricultural and industrial policies, tourism and migrations constitute then, individually and in a systemic sense, some of the lenses available to read the transformative dynamics of territories in the crucial current geopolitical context. In addition, the increasing reach of digital technologies in the spaces and practices of our daily lives, has changed the way we perceive and use the landscape. These transformations find a reified outcome in landscape transitions, becoming a foothold for a trans-scale geographical reflection. We therefore want to insert this volume on this horizon. In fact, we have wanted to stimulate the geographical community to try their hand at landscape analysis to identify, through methodological and/or applied research contributions, problems, practices and trajectories inherent in the transformative dynamics of territories, compressed between the urgency of development and the need to change the energy and consumption paradigm.

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