





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

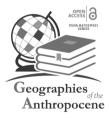
Giovanni Messina, Bresena Kopliku (Eds.)

Preface by Elena dell'Agnese

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Editors





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The book series "Geographies of the Anthropocene" edited by the Scientific

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Geoethics focuses on how scientists (natural and social), arts and humanities scholars working in tandem can become more aware of their ethical responsibilities to guide society on matters related to public safety in the face of natural hazards, sustainable use of resources, climate change and protection of the environment. Furthermore, the integrated and multiple perspectives of the Environmental Humanities, can help to more fully understand the cultures of, and the cultures which frame the Anthropocene. Indeed, the focus of Geoethics and Environmental Humanities research, that is, the analysis of the way humans think and act for the purpose of advising and suggesting appropriate behaviors where human activities interact with the geosphere, is dialectically linked to the complex concept of Anthropocene.

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## Preface

Dealing with the sustainability of cultural landscapes seems to be a challenge today. Cultural landscapes, as Carl Sauer (1925) wrote, are nothing more than the phenomenologically observable expression of the relationship between humanity, understood as a social system, and the context in which it moves, lives, prospers, decays, and dies.

The examples of transformation are innumerable, and it is certainly not easy to account for them, as is attempted in this volume, which articulates its research questions in a series of spatial and transcalar perspectives. Thus, the book begins by considering landscape features as symptoms of decline and change, then moves on to talk about neighborhoods that need to be revalued and capitalized, then to consider regional spaces, and finally it broadens its gaze to global perspectives of contrasts and growth differentials that are in danger of being exacerbated, rather than mitigated, by technological change, which casts sometimes its negative fallout (its waste) on the poorest and most marginal spaces.

Within this articulated framework, the Mediterranean Fair (Palermo) becomes a visible symptom of the crisis in the economy that made it necessary, or at least useful, a crisis made even more explicit by the advent of the pandemic, and also of the end of "a Mediterranean productive dream," as the authors of the contribution write. A similar crisis of a system that wanted to focus on productive development at all costs is manifested in Taranto, again through a landscape of abandonment and ruins. Reinventing functions to the territory, which are expressed through the landscape, or recovering its history, therefore becomes essential. Beyond the urban landscape, which needs to be reinvented or heritagized, the rural landscape also presents significant challenges, which can be addressed, also in this case, by processes of patrimonialization, as it is happening in the rural spaces of the island of Salina, or in the Etna Nord wine "district".

If society changes, and consequently the territory and the landscape that are its expression change, the way of looking at the landscape, framing views of it, and examining and disseminating particular aspects of it can also change. A university degree can certainly play a role in changing your attitude towards changes, as demonstrated in the chapter about students enrolled in different courses a t the University of Turin and their attitude towards climate change. But even the way you look at the landscape can play a role. New media become a way to emphasize certain aspects of daily life (the bakeries), and a tool for "mediatizating" nature. Tourism landscapes may be enhanced by social media, be revitalized by a process of patrimonialization thanks to them, or simply be discovered/rediscovered (such as the cases of Magna Grecia Park, in Crotone, or of Sicilia Archeologica). Platforms can play a relevant role in changing the urban landscape, as in Tirana, as the digital transition, in general, can do, albeit with a different velocity in different contexts, with the risk of increasing, instead of bridging, geographical gaps (and of producing a big amount of E-waste, which difficult disposal is likely to fall precisely where the benefits of transition are least, and where development and transformation not always go hand in hand).

So, from the urban scale of a single urban item, albeit quite big, such as the Fiera del Mediterraneo in Palermo, we ended up reasoning about Africa, and of the consequences on the territory (and on the landscape) of the digital transition. Society changes, and its cultural landscape as well.

At all levels, and at all scales.

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