Diamantis Panagiotopoulos
Pietro M. Militello (eds.)

Modelling Archaeological Landscapes

Bridging Past and Present in two Mediterranean Islands

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Contents

Preface 1

Part I: Documenting and Reconstructing Archaeological Landscapes

Modelling Archaeological Landscapes. Bridging Past and Present in two Mediterranean Islands 7
Diamantis Panagiotopoulos & Pietro M. Militello

Ancient Landscapes in Eastern Crete: the (Re)making of the Isthmus of Ierapetra in MM II 19
Thomas M. Brogan

The Margi River Valley 43
Laura Maniscalco

Sicilian Landscape and A-structural Architecture from Survey to Virtual Reconstruction: the Case of Calaforno Hypogeum 57
Marianna Figuera

The Early Bronze Age Funerary Landscape of Calicantone (Sicily): Internal Planning and Visual Features 81
Katarzyna Żebrowska

Part II: Interpreting Archaeological Landscapes

Archaeological Landscapes as *Landscape Commons*. A Learning Experience: The Landscape Project for the Enhancement of an Archaeological Site between Etna and the Sea 103
Simona Calvagna

Minoan Heritage and the Negotiation of Tradition. Aspects of an Archaeological Ethnography at Archanes, Crete 119
Esther Solomon

Part III: Intervening on Archaeological Landscapes

Is the Past Sustainable? An Economic Perspective 177
Ilde Rizzo

Modelling Peripheral Archaeological Landscapes. Challenges and Perspectives of a South Cretan Case Study 193
Diamantis Panagiotopoulos

"In the Midst of Mountains". Messara: a Passage through Space, Myth, and Time 213
Vassiliki Sythiakaki, Kalliopi Galanaki, Kyriaki Vakaloglou, Anna Genitsaridi, Alexandros Bitsavas & Georgios Petrakis

The Minoan Palatial Centers as a Future Nomination to the World Heritage List: Challenges and Perspectives 235
Elena Kountouri, Constantina Benissi & Kyriakos Psaroudakis

Creating Identity: Hidden Cultural Heritage, Ancient Landscapes, and Cultural Routes in Sicily 247
Rodolfo Brancato, Valeria Guarnera, Thea Messina & Paola Santospagnuolo

Modelling the Absences through Survey: the Case Study of Syracuse 277
Rita Valenti

Heritage Management or Counting Curls? Recent Developments in German Academic Institutions Dealing with Classical Archaeology and Cultural Heritage 291
Sandra Kyewski & Mario Rempe

Modelling Archaeological Landscapes

Bridging Past and Present in two Mediterranean Islands

Diamantis Panagiotopoulos & Pietro M. Militello

Diamantis Panagiotopoulos Institute of Classical Archaeology and Byzantine Archaeology, University of Heidelberg || **Pietro M. Militello** Department of Humanities (DISUM) · University of Catania, UNICT

A living past for the present: Changing perspectives

The importance of the past for shaping the fabric of contemporary societies has been recognized since the Renaissance (and perhaps even earlier) and has been widely used in the process of Nation Building in the Western World of the 19th and 20th century (Dietler 1994; Bassi and Cané 2014; Galaty 2018). Until a few decades ago, however, the real or imaginary past, as mirrored in the material or immaterial cultural evidence, was used in a top-down process (from the political or cultural elites) of ideological construction especially by authoritarian regimes (Manacorda 1985; Hamilakis 2002, 2007). Today, a different, quite opposite, idea has come to the foreground, as demonstrated by the many EU Horizon Calls or Cost Actions. It recognizes the importance of cultural heritage in shaping a wider, supranational identity, creating a feeling of belonging and social inclusiveness, and also improving collective well-being through a bottom-up process. This new current is no more a question of a direct link between people and their "ancestors" but refers to the awareness of the complex and rich history of humankind, shaped by different cultures and societies, where both important and ordinary people can be considered as agents of transformation. The attention is no more focused on few important moments (such as the Classical Age) and monuments (monumental temples) but on a historical continuum that arrives in the contemporary world from the depth of time encompassing all aspects of ancient societies. This kind of history materializes itself in monumental and simple tombs, huge temples and minor sanctuaries, palaces and small dwellings, precious objects and humble artefacts. The process of reconstructing the past is no more conceived as the interpretation of few scholars

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but as the result of an interplay among different actors (Joyce 2002), including local communities, other stakeholders, and even immigrants.

This process has been especially apparent in the field of archaeology, in which monuments and objects exert an effective influence on people's imagination. As a consequence, one of the most important challenges of the 21st century is the development of strategies for the management of our cultural heritage with the aim to provide new solutions for the preservation, development, processing, and presentation of ancient relics. After a long period during which classical archaeologists confined themselves to tackling exclusively scientific problems, the discipline has tried in the last years to open itself to society and the wider public. By engaging itself in issues at the very heart of current debates, Classical Archaeology strives now to clearly demonstrate its role as a discipline with pronounced social relevance.

Landscape as a tool to access the past

In this broadening of the concepts of 'past' and 'cultural (also archaeological) heritage', the notion of landscape can be both a powerful tool and a unifying concept, providing a backdrop against which we can fix material traces scattered along a long span of time from the distant past till our days. (Cultural) landscape has today a special meaning, not to be confused with other apparently similar concepts, such as 'environment', 'habitat' (the natural space in which the man must interact), or 'territory' (the area controlled and exploited by a human group) (Jackson 1984; Heiland 2019; Kühne 2019). According to the definition stated by the European Convention in Florence in 2000, landscape is "an area or territory which is perceived by local communities or by visitors and whose appearance and character arises from the action of natural and/or cultural factors" (European Landscape Convention, Florence, 2000). Two elements are crucial in this definition: first, the dynamic and historical nature of landscape, interpreted as a palimpsest of the secular stratification of human activity, continuously evolving and transforming itself over time, and second, its strong connection with cultural heritage.

At the same time, however, one of the main tasks for archaeologists has become the reconstruction of the physical and psychological relationship between man and habitat (settlement, resources, structures) in a given past. This **Archaeology of the Landscape** explores both the physical and psychological dimension of the man/environment relationship. As Żebrowska correctly reminds us in the present volume, "archaeological landscapes explore the relations between past social aspects and the environment, while archaeological -scapes remain predominantly social constructs". From this perspective, landscapes, islandscapes, seascapes, landscapes of memory, and landscapes of power can be also considered as part of the archaeology of cognition.

Since the 1980es (and even earlier), Landscape Archaeology has experienced a dynamic growth which around the turn of the millennium exercised a strong impact on archaeology in general and started transforming it (Fleming 2006; Ashmore and Blackmore 2008; Johnson 2012; Kluiving and Guttmann-Bond 2012; Carson 2022). For quite a long time, archaeologists tended to focus exclusively on the material remains of archaeological sites, neglecting their natural environment as well as the manifold ways in which the latter determined the cultural trajectory of ancient communities. The impressive development of landscape archaeology, its novel methods of digital documentation of spatial data and—last but not least—the concerns of a society that rapidly transforms itself fostered a major shift of the archaeological interest from 'site' to 'landscape', opening totally new possibilities for the dynamic—scientific and social—engagement of archaeologists in regions with rich cultural and natural heritage.

We call such regions '**archaeological landscapes**', i.e., regions that, through the combination of an unspoiled nature with a rich history of visible monuments, offer the possibility of a new perception of nature and culture. In contrast to frozen archaeological sites, which present themselves to visitors behind a fence as fossilized monuments, 'archaeological landscapes' are intended to be areas of a living experience of the past, in which the geography, geology, fauna and flora, monuments, people and their traditional practices can be opened up as an inseparable whole. The concept of the 'archaeological landscape' has to be exploited as a more diverse alternative to the rigid concept of the museum, which presents the past in sterile showcases, in which the exhibits are usually torn from their original context of use. The contribution, which archaeologists can make towards the shaping and the sustainable development of an archaeological landscape, is to provide a narrative (Praetzelis 1998; Pluciennik 1999) and to enable an enhanced experience for the visitors. The latter can take the form of story-telling, physical experience and—in the diametrically opposite aspect—of virtual reality and reconstructions, both indoors and outdoors. To tell a story means to provide the reader, or the audience, with a rich interpretation of the past that is based not only on the mere description of the monument.

If digital reproductions and virtual immersion can be a powerful tool of communication for engaging with cultural heritage (see e.g. Averett, Gordon, and Counts 2016), as many conference participants pointed out, a different—and by no mean less effective approach towards a better understanding of past lives—is the physical experience of the landscape, as it presents itself to us today. This 'archaeology of senses' (Hamilakis 2015) linked with the archaeology of landscapes was one of the main challenges of our project. Walking through the mountains of the Asterousia, feeling the wind, perceiving the smell of shrubs and trees, experiencing the time and effort necessary to reach a peak sanctuary, understanding the possibilities to control the sea can allow a deeper contact with the past. It also helps us to define more accurately the meaning of some widely used terms, for example the notion of "wild" which did not remain the same through the centuries, due to the changing effects of human activity and climate changes.

In its two-fold significance as culturally formed space and analytical category, the concept of the 'archaeological landscape' provides a juncture between past and present as well as between archeology and society. Therefore 'archaeological landscapes' are of crucial importance not only for archaeology but also for society. This is especially true in Italy and Greece, where the overwhelming number of excavated architectural relics of the past (cities, settlements, temples, theaters, villas, etc.) makes the design and implementation of innovative concepts imperative. Beyond the self-evident necessity to preserve ancient remains and to protect them from decay, we have to exploit their potential as starting point of a region's sustainable economic development. Such concepts represent the only sensible alternative to current, worrying plans for the market-oriented development of peripheral regions which do not take into account the fragility of their natural and cultural heritage and will therefore have irreversible consequences for the physiognomy of untouched landscapes. All these different nuances of the concept of landscape have been dealt with in the two aforementioned workshops.

The first workshop "Archaeological Landscapes: towards a Multisensory Perception of Space and Time"

The first workshop took place between 8 and 10 June 2018 in the picturesque and isolated village of Kapetaniana in the mountainous region of Asterousia in southern Crete. Focusing mainly—but not exclusively—on the cultural heritage of the island, the workshop explored novel ways for the perception and management of archaeological landscapes and especially the importance of the latter for the sustainable development of peripheral Mediterranean regions. It worked therefore at a mesoscale level, between single sites and wider regions. The workshop's basic aim was to provide a platform for discussing strategies of experiencing the past and present of heritage landscapes as a sensible whole. The papers and the lively discussions stressed how such strategies should involve all senses and ensure a more intense and comprehensive link between man, environment, and history. Archaeological landscapes, as defined above, provide the decisive connecting link between (a) past and present and (b) environment and history. This can foster the creation of an infrastructure which will offer visitors the possibility of experiencing unspoiled landscapes by employing all senses and/or will embed them as active or passive participants in the local way of living. The novel strategy of a balanced development of local cultural resources can enhance traditional practices and thus provide the local population with a promising economic perspective which will be in harmony with the specific character of the region's environment and history.

Several papers demonstrated the multifarious ways of reconstructing the diachrony and significance(s) of archaeological sites and landscapes by employing traditional and cutting-

edge methodology.[1] **T. Brogan** tried to bridge the gap between the scattered evidence provided by the Mirabello region and its complex history, arranging the archaeological evidence into different landscape 'spheres': Settlements, crafts, burials, rituals, or underwater space. The author discussed all these landscape elements in relation to the *chaîne opératoire* of different crafts, in an attempt to reconstruct a more compelling narrative of the Mirabello's Protopalatial scape as an entity. In her paper on "Asterousia. The holy mountain", Th. Vrentzou presented the rich history of the Asterousia mountain range which was determined by the tension between its peripheral position and its role as a bridge between the island's hinterland and the sea. E. Margaritis discussed the fresh and impressively rich insights that bioarchaeological data can offer for the study of domestic and ritual activities in Minoan sites ("Food preparation and deposition in the domestic and ritual landscape of Minoan Bronze Age"). K. Athanasaki demonstrated the significance of a 'qualitative database' as an effective means for a comprehensive mapping of cultural data (including geomorphology, archaeological information, toponyms, etc.) bridging the past with the present ("Developing a deep-mapping approach for the study of the Cretan cultural landscape"). Further contributions tackled the problem of contemporary roles of the past. Taking the ongoing excavation at Minoan Koumasa as a case-study, **D. Panagiotopoulos** explored the potential of the diachrony of archaeological sites and their wider environment not only as an object of scientific enquiry but also as an incentive for the sustainable development of marginal Mediterranean regions. In a similar vein, V. Savvatianou and N. Athanasopoulou ("Re-placing memory in memory places. A 'topological' perspective on the Early Bronze Age archaeological sites of southern Crete") explored the *genius loci* of Early Minoan cemeteries and its potential for their modern revival as heritage sites. How inextricably linked to each other past and present of a place may be was demonstrated in **E. Solomon's** contribution, in which she analysed the modalities of negotiation, representation, and consumption of heritage at a local level as well as its implications for collective memory in the Cretan town of Archanes. In her thorough approach, she included not only the Minoan ruins but also the landscape and 'traditional' architecture and discussed them through the interpretative key of a dynamic relationship between objects and society in the creation of self-representation. As a positive example of sustainable development, Archanes has used the opportunities provided by national and EU funds to restore traditional houses (*archontikà*), recreating and authenticating an "Archaniote tradition" which makes modern Archanes very different from 'anonymous' large towns in Crete. More important still, this process took place with the active participation of local people who adopted a different way of engaging with and appreciating the more remote (Minoan) and more recent (architectural) past. **V. Sythiakaki**, **K. Galanaki**, **K. Vakaloglou**, **A. Genitsaridi**, **A. Bitsavas**, and **G. Petrakis** illustrated the

1 The authors of the published contributions are indicated in bold letters.

construction of an innovative way of communicating archaeology in the Mesara area. The new Museum of Mesara (AMMe) is conceived not as a traditional container of artifacts but as a gate to the archaeological sites throughout the valley of Mesara, whereas the Network of Cultural Routes of Mesara will provide a set of thematic routes through the environmental and cultural heritage of the region. In this way, landscape, services (AMMe and infrastructures), and archaeological remains will create an interwoven system of appealing destinations with positive effects on the development of the area. **E. Kountouri**, **K. Mpenissi**, and **K. Psaroudakis** presented data and insights relating to the preparation of the nomination file for the inscription of the Minoan Palaces in the UNESCO World Heritage list. The main objective of this collective work, which required the active involvement of many stakeholders, is to demonstrate why Minoan palaces are worth to be included in the list. The significance of public archaeology was emphasized in N. Galanidou's paper on "The Neolithic Archaeology of Crete in the public sphere" in which she presented the challenge of making a cultural period with scanty archaeological remains accessible and—more important still—understandable to a broader audience. N. Papadimitriou focused on a non-Cretan territory, the Laurion area, as an example of neglected heritage which due to its multileveled cultural significance deserves a better attention by archaeologists and other stakeholders ("Neglected heritage. A diachronic approach to environment, economy and culture in the Laurion area, Attica"). St. Chlouveraki underlined the significance of conservation for a modern management of archaeological sites and showed why conservation work must not be just a post-excavation procedure but the determining parameter for the planning of a systematic archaeological excavation ("A systematic approach towards the conservation and management of archaeological sites"). Finally, Ch. Fasoulas explained the strategies of a modern geographical approach to the Cretan landscape discussing the Hellenic UNESCO Global Geoparks and their contribution as an incentive for the regional sustainable development ("The contribution of Geoparks in the regional sustainable development: the case of Hellenic UNESCO Global Geoparks").

The second workshop: "Archaeological Landscape and minor cultural Heritage. Reconstructing the Past as a living entity"

The second workshop took place in Scicli (Sicily) between 10 and 12 October 2018 and focused on the scientific, social and economic role of 'minor' archaeological sites as well as on innovative strategies for the preservation and presentation of non-monumental architecture. The goal was to make innovative mediation concepts possible even in a small financial, organizational, and spatial framework (microscale). By the notion of 'minor sites', we indicate the huge quantity of isolated monuments scattered among the countryside. They are mainly represented by 'architectural' traces (not only huts and houses but also rock cut

tombs and dwellings, dolmens and caves) sometimes impressively affecting today's landscape and creating a widespread network of evidence, increased from year to year by (often rescue) excavations. Such non-monumental, small sites represent a large part of Mediterranean cultural heritage but are often cut off from touristic routes, concentrating on major archaeological complexes, often located in larger towns or areas with well-developed touristic facilities. From this perspective, some of the 'minor' sites cannot be considered minor at all but owe their handicapped condition to the peripheral location with respect to the main cities and main communication routes, such as Taormina, Syracuse, Agrigento, Selinunte, and Piazza Armerina in Sicily, or the Minoan palaces in Crete.

Minor sites possess however a huge scientific, social, and even economic potential. From a scientific point of view, they can be a source of rich archaeological knowledge, reflecting past material practices, land use, and symbolic expressions of power. Architecture may provide a huge material for narration—relating to its symbolic value and the complexity of its components—that has been until now neglected by archaeologists. From planning to building, from stone quarrying to wood-cutting and construction, from the social status of its owners to the long lasting life, architecture gives food for story-telling. From a social point of view, such monuments, which have been known for centuries and have entered the collective imagination as part of communal identity, bear the potential of becoming a driving force for the development of local economies.

Following these premises, the workshop provided an arena of discussion for the following topics: a) how to collect—from a scientific point of view—most of the knowledge 'minor' sites can provide, mainly through a proper analysis and survey; b) how to develop strategies for an efficient communication, based on a holistic narrative and a deep, multisensorial, real or virtual experience of these monuments; and finally c) how to enhance the social and economic value of 'minor' sites, ensuring a sustainable development.

As to the first topic, the landscape approach has been considered the main interpretative key by many authors. In her analysis of the Margi River Valley, **L. Maniscalco** correctly underlined how "[t]he landscape not only exists as a physical entity . . . but also exists as a creation in our minds", even if she uses a more objective approach in the reconstruction of the habitat of the Margi area from Prehistory to the Byzantine times, including botanical analysis and pollen diagrams. A visual perception analysis is proposed by **K. Żebrowska** for the reconstruction of the visual structure (the vision-scape) of the Early Bronze Age necropolis of Calicantone. In doing so, she puts together the hard facts of the tombs' location and decoration and the emotive perception of space, experienced through movement and vision. The reconstruction and perception of archaeological landscapes was also the main topic in a few, not published, articles by S. Todaro, O. Palio, and M. Turco (Etna area) and E. Giannitrapani (Sicani area), whereas historical considerations about the role of architecture were proposed by L. Hitchcock for the prehistoric Mediterranean, and Tsakanika for the medieval and modern periods in Greece. Finally, V. Kyriakidis illustrated the wide potential of

everyday objects to acquire historical significance thus becoming part of cultural heritage through an analysis of the development of bathroom devices in pre- and post II world-war Greece, and to be more specific, the introduction of the "bidet" in the bourgeois houses that was employed as a display of modernization.

Digital technology received special attention revealing itself as an effective tool for enhancing 'minor' sites, providing virtual reconstruction or immersive experiences. A.M. Sammito, F. Buscemi, M. Di Vincenzo, and N. Di Carlo presented a virtual reconstruction of the Early Bronze Age landscape of Calicantone, centered on the narrative burial rites. **M. Figuera** illustrated the advantages of the laser scanning in the survey of rock cut monuments and the dissemination of knowledge, discussing Calaforno, nearby Giarratana.

The second topic, which dealt with the development of strategies for an efficient communication, received an even larger attention, and widened the participation to both architects and archaeologists. O. Palio proposed the elaboration of a narrative intentionally created for prehistory, whereas **S. Calvagna** illustrated the experience of a workshop of architecture aimed at the revitalization of the archaeological site of Santa Venera al Pozzo. As in Zebrowska's article, the immersion within the landscape is also in this case a fundamental step of research, yet now not for recovering the ancient perception of space but for shaping a new one, a landscape common, based upon the use of pieces of land as orchards within the archaeological area. Architects gave other important contributions to the workshop's topic that could not be included in the present volume. In an introducing lecture in Catania, **R. Valenti** discussed the problem of how to make archaeological remains in urban areas visible before reburying them, bringing as an example the case of Piazza Duomo in Syracuse. Furthermore, M. Vanore analyzed the different, and in some cases opposite, perception of space in archaeology and architecture. **R. Brancato**, **V. Guarnera**, **T. Messina**, and **P. Santospagnuolo** focused on the recent popularity of 'cultural routes' in several European and Mediterranean countries by taking the *Antica Trasversale Sicula* and the *Magna Via Francigena* as two Sicilian case-studies. In their thorough analysis, they highlighted the potential of a bottom-up approach for the modelling of ancient/historical tracks, discussed the tension between historical facts and current interests and finally demontsrated how the collective effort of creating new narratives can be decisive for the strengthening of the island's identity.

As to the third topic, two papers were devoted to aspects of management and sustainable development. The theoretical framework was set by **I. Rizzo**. Possessing both economic and cultural values, cultural heritage can produce benefits in education, identity, cohesion, and collective well-being that cannot be provided through the market. However, this implies that economic analyses of costs (for the preservation and enhancement) and benefits are difficult to evaluate. Many questions arise: What is worth of being preserved? Is it better to rebury ancient ruins? How much should we reconstruct? What should be the role of private and public intervention? Why can we not accept the idea of selling anony-

mous artefacts, belonging to mass-production, in order to increase incomes for the preservation of more important monuments? Finally, F. Niccolucci presented his experience from the Maremma Park in Tuscany as a model for a unifying approach to cultural heritage, natural landscape, and economic activity. Until a few decades ago, Maremma was a peripheral, underdeveloped area due to presence of marshes and an economy based on breeding bovines. Yet in recent years, starting from these weaknesses, the institution of a park in Maremma tries to foster touristic presence and transform local economy.

Conclusions

Due to the wide-ranging meaning of cultural heritage that encompasses such broad subjects as research, preservation and conservation, management, and planning, and involves many actors and competencies, the entire project was an experiment with a certain risk, given the different backgrounds and interests of the participants. Experienced archaeologists as well as younger researchers, members of the archaeological services, experts in cultural management, architects, economists, and finally representatives of private societies working with the cultural heritage had the opportunity to come together, discuss with each other, share their experience and gain new insights into much debated issues and persisting problems. We were overwhelmed by the energetic participation of all colleagues and PhD students as well as by the lively and in some cases passionate discussions revolving around the manifold significance of cultural heritage. What we have learned is that all stakeholders have an urgent need to discuss all these important issues of modern cultural management relating to archaeological sites, including matters of preservation and presentation but also of the sustainable development of local communities. Therefore, we do hope to continue this dialogue in the future.

The importance of such an approach is also evident for our discipline, Classical Archaeology, which in many European countries quite often tends towards an academic elitism, avoiding a direct contact with a broader audience and the engagement with topics which are very relevant to modern society. While in recent years innovative strategies for an effective and sustainable cultural management of excavation sites have been employed in the context of numerous field projects, their significance in academic teaching still remains rather low. Not only individual courses but also entire study programmes in most (classical) archaeological institutes are still dominated by the traditional genre-related fields which convey a very rigid understanding of the discipline, as the closing paper of this volume by **S. Kyewksi** and **M. Rempe** underlines. Due to this methodological and thematic stagnation, the gap between the traditional subject matter on the one hand and new challenges and growing demands of a rapidly developing society on the other is widening. One of the main goals of the planned project was therefore to demonstrate the crucial importance of

modern cultural management to the participating PhD students—and now to all those who may read this volume—and to give them an insight into specific strategies for an effective management of archaeological landscapes.

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