

## ONE STORY, MANY REGIONS: REPRESENTATIONS OF EUROPEAN UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Encapsulating Europe into one story has been a perennial challenge for Europeans: from the Hellenic myth of the kidnapped Phoenician princess Europa and its multiple interpretations in the European arts, the topographic representations of Europa as the northern *Oecumene* around the Mediterranean by Herodotos, Erathostenes and Strabo, through centuries of the (de/re)composing of intra-European alliances, invigorated by Charles the Great, in defence of a common cultural identity and economic interests, until Saint-Simon's perception of a common European destiny and Victor Hugo's promotion of a Pan-European cause. More recent syntheses of Europe in "one story" have been offered by authors such as Fernand Braudel in the kaleidoscopic *Civilisation Materielle...*, Edgar Morin in *Penser L'Europe* and George Steiner with *The Idea of Europe* - a courageous blend of ingredients that make the *European spirit* distinguishable globally.

The scientific and social relevance of the messages that "European stories" aim to transmit can be measured in terms of their capacity to identify, extract and amalgamate past and present common denominators, and to foresee emerging ones, which are inherent in the diversity of the material and immaterial features of Europe. In this sense, no wonder that the slogan *In varietate Concordia* (lat. Unity in diversity), has been such a successful political message, launched by the Council of Europe, as it does justice to the multifaceted, yet common, history and future of the continent. Likewise, the founding principles and functioning modes of the European Union, which itself has become a very particular "one story" in worldwide terms, have been based on the model of a "Europe of Regions", that is, on an explicit recognition and active promotion of the diversity of the European natural environment, economy and culture.

The present book brings forward new building blocks for the construction of an open-ended "European story" of the changing relations between nature and society, and pays tribute to the diversity of past and present landscapes and lifestyles across the entire continent - from revisiting the forgotten Aegean islets and the Antiquity of Crete and the Peloponnesus, to detecting ephemeral landscapes in the periurban fringes in Sweden; from assessing environmental and socioeconomic effects of transition in Latvian agriculture and nature-protection policies in Poland, to reinterpreting the vanishing Spanish *dehesas* and literary accounts of landscapes and lifestyles in rural Portugal; from questioning identity aspirations in French Aquitaine and Slovenian Istria, to foreseeing the attractiveness of depopulated regions for retired Germans. This colourful mosaic of regional and local case studies is displayed in the framework, first, of comparative studies of the Mediterranean nature, economy and culture within and beyond Europe, and, second, of new ideas on how to grasp the changing landscapes and lifestyles within the time-space nexus and/or along the local-global interface.

The book consists of a selection of thirty-four articles that are based on papers presented at the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Permanent European Conference for the Study of Rural Landscape (PECSRL), held in Greece in 2004. Inspiringly entitled "One Region, Many Stories - Mediterranean Landscapes in a Changing Europe", this international meeting became an important milestone for the promotion of inter- and trans-disciplinary studies of Mediterranean landscapes and lifestyles, as well as of the role of the region in Europe. Symptomatically, not only Greek, Italian, Portuguese and researchers from other Mediterranean countries, but also the Scandinavians, the Dutch, Belgians and other Europeans contributed to the scientific interpretation of "many stories" of the Mediterranean itself and of its influence and representations throughout the past and contemporary history of Europe. In accordance with PECSRL's traditions, the 2004 Conference in Greece also promoted papers and other forms of sharing research experiences (panel discussions, poster sessions, "speakers' corner", etc.) that did not focus on the Mediterranean itself, but on other parts of Europe, as well as on theoretical and

methodological issues of landscape studies. This has proven to be an important complementary asset for the success of the event, including its relevance beyond the Mediterranean: the *motto* “one region, many stories” was confirmed not only in terms of Mediterranean landscape studies, but also in terms of their synergy, both actual and potential, with similar research endeavours within a wider European framework of “one story, many regions”. Reflections of this synergy are mirrored in the present book. The book is organized in eight thematic parts, as outlined hereunder.

#### Part One - THE MEDITERRANEAN AND BEYOND

Paul Claval introduces the Mediterranean as a changing aesthetic and cognitive experience of Europeans over past centuries and builds upon the Vidalian interpretation of the *genre de vie* of the Mediterranean peoples and the diversity of humanized landscapes, rooted in nature.

Denis Cosgrove juxtaposes the geography and evolution of the Venetian *città diffusa* to the superficially very different landscapes in the metropolitan region of Los Angeles in order to reveal significant similarities and suggest lessons in understanding and managing the new cultural economy of space.

Peter Howard suggests how a perceptual history of place can be developed by using images of the Mediterranean made by English artists from the mid-eighteenth century onwards and traces the changing attractions of the Mediterranean in the eyes of northern Europeans.

Adalberto Vallega discusses how the scientific understanding of the landscape and of its role in planning and management have been stimulated to lodge culture and nature into integrated visions, and what this means in the light of the concurrent impulses created by the European Landscape Convention and the adoption of the concept of the “cultural landscape” by UNESCO.

#### Part Two - GREEK ANCIENT FUTURES

Odd Stabbetorp *et al.* discuss the field survey methodology used in order to delimit the Arcadian *polis* of Tegea, in the Peloponnesian peninsula, and explain the importance of their results in terms of spatial information on ancient areas of human activity, with implications for the contemporary management of historical landscapes..

Maria Koziraki describes the cultural landscape of Knossos, the birthplace of the Minoan civilization, and how it is paradoxical that large numbers of tourists are not encouraged to comprehend this landscape, which is contemporary and historic, central and closeted, anthropogenic and natural, and stable and ephemeral.

Torgrim Sneve Guttormsen applies a landscape historical approach to the trans-European East-western route Via Egnatia in Macedonian Greece, one of the first great roads between Rome and Constantinople, and today a new and modern motorway that raises theoretical and planning issues related to the sustainability of local rural landscapes.

Based on ethno-archaeological and archaeo-ecological surveys of several Dodecanese islets in the Aegean Archipelago, Vernicos *et al.* introduce an interpretation of the islets as cultural landscapes and seascapes, dynamic, networked and contested, historically shaped by human practices and agency, often bearing a “home identity” and nostalgic references for their inhabitants.

#### Part Three - ROMANS, ARABS AND NEW EUROPEANS

Johannes Renes presents the afterlife of the Roman period in present-day Netherlands with respect to three periods: the Middle Ages, when the surviving Roman fortifications were endowed with new functions; the Early Modern Period, marked by a fascination with past culture that generated interest in the research and preservation of Roman objects; and the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when

these objects came to be regarded as heritage and have become subject to use in tourism and identity politics.

Philippe Mignot *et al.* bring forward methods and results of research on medieval landscapes and settlements in Murcia, Spain, marked by defence sites and complex irrigation systems, based on their geo- and ethno-archaeological studies conducted in the Atlas Mountains, Morocco, where a similar irrigation system and settlement pattern, as well as local granaries still prevail today.

Tobias Plieninger queries the historical construction and land uses of the savanna-like *dehesa* ecosystem in the period 1700-2000, based on a complementary analysis of cartographic, written and oral historical evidence, pointing to the challenge of advancing the system under current socioeconomic conditions by developing “modern” sustainable practices, while maintaining the “traditional” ecological amenities.

Mattias Qviström and Katarina Saltzman present an interdisciplinary research project on ephemeral landscapes at the rural-urban fringes of Malmö and Gothenburg in Sweden, focused on the disappearance of landscape values that give place to new, temporal ones as part of the transformation from rural to urban development.

#### Part Four - CLAIMED AND RESCUED IDENTITIES

Marjanne Sevenant and Marc Antrop raise the problem of comparing different data sources and geographic scales to assess land use intensity and dynamics in a rural Mediterranean landscape in light of the Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, and its effects on biodiversity and landscapes due to the induced abandonment of production in less accessible areas.

Mimi Urbanc explores ways in which regional identity is socially constructed and the distortion of the usually clear process of shaping and institutionalizing a region, such as is the case of Slovene Istria whose identity is evolving among the distinctive ethnic features of the Slovene, Italian and Croatian parts and emphasising its Mediterranean character.

The central question brought forward by Marie-Dominique Ribereau-Gayon is: to what extent can a landscape be considered Mediterranean? Answers are provided through a diachronic anthropological analysis of Aquitaine and the Moors of Gascony, South-western France, an Atlantic area that was pejoratively known as the “French Sahara” until 19<sup>th</sup> century and is nowadays subject to integration into France’s Mediterranean Arc.

Evangelos Nikolaidis and Aggeliki Dimitriou analyse the causes and effects of the water level drop of Lake Doirani on the border between Greece and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and suggest that the market alone cannot be the driving force to the solution of the environmental problem and the restoration of the landscape around the lake.

#### Part Five - BACK TO NATURE AND AGRICULTURE

Nele Vanslebrouck *et al.* deal with the problems and possibilities of reconstructing wetland landscapes on the coastal area of western Zeeland Flanders on the Flemish coastal plain, where during the later Middle Ages and the 16<sup>th</sup> century marine influence had greatly ravaged the old medieval landscape, including floods provoked for military reasons that wreaked havoc and covered large parts with sediments.

Michel Sivignon presents the flooded and marshy Greek wetlands that mostly disappeared through reclamation works during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and how radical measures for land improvement were accepted, both for economic and public health reasons, but then were considered dangerous for biodiversity. The case study refers to the Karla Lake in Thessaly, which was drained in 1960. Today, dikes are being built to refill it.

Thymio Papayannis and Aphrodite Sorotou argue how the Mediterranean wetlands, such as those at the river mouths of the Po, Strymon, Meander, and Nile, and lakes like Prespa and Kastoria have been an important type of landscape in terms of natural and cultural heritage, and how their modern reclamation was first aimed at fighting malaria and then motivated by the profitability of intensive horticulture or arboriculture, or by settlement expansion associated with tourism. An analysis of landscape conservation and management in the area of Prespa Lakes is presented.

Guido Badino *et al.* describe the procedures applied in a field survey of seasonal patterns of bird distribution, aimed at defining the effects of local habitat and landscape structure on the breeding and wintering of bird communities in the oak forests of north-western Italy. The results suggest that forest fragmentation into small patches is likely to be detrimental to the bird community on the whole, and that mature, large forest patches with complex edges favour several species throughout the year.

Marco Isaia *et al.* deal with the influence of landscape heterogeneity and agricultural practices on spider communities in Italian vineyards in northwestern Italy. It was suggested that an increase in landscape heterogeneity provides an increase in ambush spiders and specialized predators while an increase in sheet web weavers appears to be related to homogeneous landscapes. This kind of research could represent a necessary starting point for biocontrol purposes in agroecosystems.

Paniza Cabrera *et al.* focus on the negative effects of the subsidies promoted by the Common Agricultural Policy on reduced biodiversity in the Mediterranean. The relentless expansion of olive trees, which replaced cereals and resulted in landscape uniformity and reduction of diversity is analyzed on the basis of the evidence from the province of Jaén, Spain.

#### Part Six - RECOLLECTING LIFESTYLES, RECOMPOSING LANDSCAPES

Evy Johanne Haland brings forward a comparative analysis of rain-making rituals in ancient and modern Greece performed by farmers to ensure the growth of crops and the following harvest. Despite many changes in the dynamics of history, it can be claimed that the modern festivities observed in rural Greece can throw new light upon ancient Greek rain-making rituals, and give a clearer picture of how ancient people perceived the way they could influence the gods to ensure their livelihoods from agriculture.

Ana Isabel Queiroz argues that past legacies and memories serve as a reference, a baseline for understanding today's management challenge, which is demonstrated by contrasting recent land-use information with the writings of Aquilino Ribeiro from the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century regarding the forces shaping ecological, economic and cultural values of *Terras do Demo* (Devil's land), a mountainous region in Portugal.

Karen V. Lykke Syse provides the background to Norwegian post-war agricultural policy and, by presenting the results of an ethnographical research project, explains the theoretical basis and practical use of ethnographic fieldwork and oral history as an alternative tool to study historical changes in the landscape, as well as rural populations' values embedded in the landscape.

Paola Pressenda and Maria Luisa Sturani focus on the process of "heritaging" the landscape through its assimilation amongst objects and themes dealt with in museums. Also, the authors bring forward a number of critical reflections based on the classification of Italian Ecomuseums according to the role assigned to landscape in their themes and activities, and on a closer examination of a case study from the Piedmont region.

#### Part Seven - CONTEMPORARY PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES

Simon Bell *et al.* deal with the Latvian countryside and rural landscape, which is undergoing radical change following the fall of the Soviet Union, but regarding which no assessment of the values of the older, traditional rural landscapes and their importance to the national culture or sense of national identity had been made. Methodology and the results of a study aimed at comparing land use change with memories and assumptions about the past and current perceptions of the people in selected sample areas are presented.

Karl Martin Born and Elke Goltz devote their article to the issue of motivation of the migration flows of the elderly people from West Germany and Berlin to the attractive rural areas in East Germany, and question whether these people integrate in and support their new local communities, arguing that these questions might also be applied to the Mediterranean areas where migrants from Central and Northern Europe might have similar effect on local communities.

Witold Woloszyn and Ewa Skowronek discuss relationships between tourism, economic development and environmental protection and management in the Kazimierz Landscape Park in Poland, and draw attention to possible solutions concerning problems of the tension between the preservation of environmental values and tourism, agriculture, housing and infrastructure development in the context of appropriate environmental and land use planning policies.

Edmunds V. Bunkse examines travel and tourism as two distinct modes of human mobility. It is argued that while it is impossible to reconcile the inherent contradictions between travel and tourism in famous tourist destinations, in the case of rural landscapes there are unexplored possibilities to accommodate both, and these possibilities are examined in a case study of evolving rural domains in Latvia.

#### Part Eight - TOWARDS NEW PARADIGMS

Veerle Van Eetvelde and Marc Antrop bring forward the issue of integrating natural and cultural themes in a more balanced way in landscape typologies, and present methods to obtain cultural maps, derived from other thematic maps, from historical topographical maps, from statistical data, and from settlement analysis, with the transformation of data in continuous GIS-data layers. Applied to Belgium, a method is proposed to perform landscape characterisation based on the integration of all themes in a raster map, the cells of which are assigned a particular landscape type.

Zoran Roca and Maria de Nazaré Oliveira–Roca point to the gap between identity/development rhetoric and practice, and call for an alteration of the dominant conceptual-methodological paradigm: top-down research and macroscopic data sources and methods need to be integrated with those that are part of the participatory approaches at grassroots levels, in order to allow the detection and assessment of power-relations among local and global development stakeholders behind the (re/de)generation of territorial identities, materialized in landscapes.

Jelier A.J. Vervloet draws attention to the fact that the field of cultural heritage has enlarged its scope: from individual archaeological and architectural objects/relics to a more encompassing concept of the cultural landscape, which makes individual monuments part of a spatial framework. For this reason, policies and planning practices need to be reoriented, from the preservation of individual monuments to the conservation of regions, and take into account the development dynamics influencing their morphology.

Michael Jones discusses the relationship between landscapes and law. It is argued that legal institutions, both of formal law and of customary rights, are significant not just for the physical shaping of the landscape but also for the conceptualization of landscapes. Law and landscapes are both shaped by conceptions of justice as well as by contestations over what is “just” or “unjust” in different societies, which may then be played out and/or leave physical traces in the landscape. Some results and conclusions of the international research group on Landscape, Law

and Justice, based at the Centre for Advanced Studies at the Norwegian Academy of Sciences and Letters are presented.

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The famous Portuguese geographer Orlando Ribeiro wrote in his *O Mediterrâneo, Ambiente e Tradição*: "Brought up on the respect for the ancient civilization values, the Mediterranean does not unconditionally sacrifice the reason for its existence to time, money, or efficiency – the three great idols of the modern world. A breeze of liberty and fantasy now and then still descends from its clear sky." Is this why the Mediterranean has been such an endless inspiration to, and refuge for, scientists and travellers from elsewhere? Is this why its beauty and wisdom are so dear to Europe and beyond? The present book offers various answers to these questions.

Zoran Roca

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