

Reviews

Maria Grazia Cianci (a cura di)

Spessori.

Il paesaggio come stratificazione

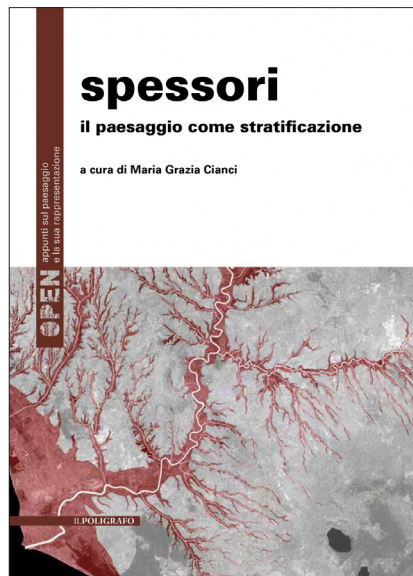
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The book coordinated by professor Cianci is the first volume of a collection of texts on open spaces and their representation, which, although originating in the classes taught at the prestigious *Master di Il Livello OPEN - Architettura e Rappresentazione del Paesaggio dell'Università degli Studi Roma Tre*, which was founded by professor Riccardo Ghio, demonstrates a clear research vocation open to the international scientific community.

The quality of the contributions is guaranteed not only by the high scientific level of the authors, who come from different and convergent scientific fields, but also by the experts who make up the scientific committee, whose careers are internationally recognised.

From the scientific point of view, the collection is a success because it constitutes a clear advance in knowledge by providing a transversal and multidisciplinary view of open spaces in all their varieties, ranging from the rigorous objectivity of cartography to the subjectivity of landscape appreciation, and covering a wide range of scales that extend from the domestic one of the gardens to the territorial scale.

A gaze that is not limited by historical or geographical barriers, as it is open to other continents and cultures, as well as to visions of the past and to the most recent and innovative interventions and projects.

The title *Spessori* (Thicknesses) clearly conveys his intentions: to undertake an OPEN investigation of the landscape, and to recompose its "diverse history, intangible but perceptible through the traces that have configured it", as Cianci rightly defines it in his *Introduction* [p. 13].

As a consequence of this multifaceted and expert approach, and the breadth and variety of its approaches, the book fills a gap in the literature on landscape and provides a holistic knowledge that is essential for all those involved in urban design and city planning, and which is noted by professor Salerno [*Introduction*, pp. 17, 18], who also highlights the relevance of some of the examples analysed in the text.

Aspects linked to the symbolic content and representative value of the landscape are essential before tackling the project, as knowledge of the "genius of the place" [Norberg-Schulz 1980], of those qualities that differentiate it and make it singular and unique, is as necessary as the passion that must permeate any process of design, recovery, or maintenance of the landscape. From this perspective, professor Zagari stresses that "making landscape" consists of setting up a "reading laboratory" [*Introduction*, p. 21] from which it is possible to extract guidelines for action.

This variety of approaches is grouped and developed around four fundamental

themes: the city, landscapes, projects, and representations; all of them are illustrated with a careful selection of images that support and complement the texts and constitute a parallel discourse that invites re-reading and analysis.

Maria Grazia Cianci and Francesca Paola Mondelli address the theme of the city and its current needs by analysing the essential character of meeting and exchange that squares have, and the repercussions on identity and the sense of belonging that the lack of public spaces has on the life of neighbourhoods; they use the example of the *Programma Centopiazze per Roma* competition [pp. 27-47], which was developed in several stages and was characterised by the essential participation of the citizens.

Lola Domènech draws on the reflection that “planning means to a large extent understanding and ordering” [Zumthor 1998], to explore in her contribution *Abitando l'intorno urbano. Altre atmosfere* [pp. 49-53] the Passeig Sant Joan project in Barcelona, whose design has managed to reconcile the values of sustainability and the improvement of urban life with the demands of transport and accessibility.

The future challenges facing the European city are addressed by Enrico Falqui in his contribution *Paesaggi della città globale* [pp. 55-63], in which, through the urban landscape, he analyses current problems such as that of the edges and peripheries, and the transition with the rural environment.

In *Roma: nuove rovine e nuove ecologie* [pp. 65-71], Francesco Garofalo uses the silent invasion of ailanthus in the landscapes of Europe as an excuse to address the need to preserve urban

ecosystems, and especially vegetation in urban areas, of which the ruins in Rome are an outstanding example of coexistence.

Water is a major compositional element in urban landscape design and a symbol of the identity of cities, as Giulia Pandolfi points out in *L'acqua che piega la forma urbana* [pp. 73-79], after reviewing its historical values and uses on the basis of some representative examples.

Gabriele Paolinelli develops in his *Pistoia Ongoing Masterplan 2014-2016* [pp. 81-89] an academic proposal for the master plan of the city of Pistoia, which is an example of the possibilities that urban design opens up for research, as well as its character as a laboratory of ideas in which all kinds of dynamics and phenomena come together.

The second group of contributions is developed around different approaches and examples of landscapes. In *Discontinuità nel paesaggio moderno: il Campidoglio di Chandigarh* [pp. 93-99], Darío Álvarez raises the issue of discontinuity as a characteristic of the landscape, which is manifested in the composition of the elements that make it up, such as topography, the treatment of water or vegetation.

The changes introduced by man into the natural environment are the focus of Giovanni Buccomino's contribution entitled *Un altro paesaggio è possibile (alla ricerca di rane in città)* [pp. 101-105], in which he supports the need to design with nature and to integrate biodiversity into landscape design.

In *Paesaggi della stratificazione* [pp. 107-113], Lucina Caravaggi takes up the essential theme of stratification that gives the book its name, interpreting and analysing the different dimensions involved to form an organic unity.

Francesco Careri presents the development of several didactic experiences in *Giocchi di paesaggio* [pp. 115-121], in which the satisfaction of transforming reality with one's own hands is combined with personal experience of the landscape and theoretical conceptualisation, as solid pillars on which to base small urban interventions.

Simona Ceschin approaches the importance of *La vegetazione acquatica e ripariale del Tevere e il suo inquadramento ecologico ai fini della gestione e progettazione dell'area* [pp. 123-129] from different perspectives, such as the historical evolution of the plant life, the changes in the structure of its groupings or its ecological analysis.

In *Jacques Simon. La poetica di un acrobata. I suoi paesaggi* [pp. 131-137] Daniela Colafranceschi recalls the generous legacy of the late professor and landscape painter, characterised by his provocative and non-conformist attitude. Teresa Gali-Izard extends this homage to the master in *Ricordando Jacques Simon* [pp. 139-145], stressing the importance he attached to fieldwork, play and the value of contrasts, as well as the value he placed on people's participation.

Bruna Pollio proposes a transversal analysis in *Elementi di progettazione del paesaggio* [pp. 147-155] in which geological dynamics, the potential of nature and historical modes of land use are involved, using the interesting example of the Tiber valley in Lazio.

In *I micropaesaggi di Gordon Matta-Clark* [pp. 157-167], Marta Rabetto-Martin evokes the artist's critical and inquisitive gaze in projects such as *Reality Properties*, *Fake Estates*, in which he establishes new territorial relations that annul the concepts of scale, limit and interstice.

Álvaro Soto identifies the mounds formed by the stacked straw *Monumenti effimeri. Costruzioni nel paesaggio* [pp. 169-175] as mutable elements of the landscape, with forms that are as functional and evolved as they are ephemeral.

This thematic block closes with the chapter by Emanuele Von Normann *Del ri-conoscere e dell'appartenenza* [pp. 177-181] dedicated to the need to reinforce identity and a sense of belonging through the design of open spaces.

The projects described in the following set of interventions are examples of good work and craftsmanship, in the sense of mastery of methods and techniques.

Monica Bertolino shows several examples of the work developed in her Argentinean studio in *Territorio, paesaggio e contesto in America Latina. Riflessioni e interventi* [pp. 185-195], highlighting the importance of promoting local and regional values in architectural, urban and landscape projects.

In *Paesaggi fluidi nelle agglomerazioni urbane ad alta intensità* [pp. 197-203], Andreas Kipar studies the changes that the social and demographic structure of European cities is undergoing, focusing on the transformations that Essen has undergone and the strategies it has followed to turn its 2010 European Capital of Culture into a Green Capital in 2017, as well as its applicability to other European cities.

Identity is also the theme of the contribution by the MADE team of Michela De Poli and Adriano Marangon, entitled *Identità e paesaggi_incontri* [pp. 205-211], which advocates basing the project on an effective and unprejudiced balance between human

interventions and the demands of the natural environment.

Stefano Magaudda addresses the important topic of *La governance delle infrastrutture verdi. Programmi, piani e progetti per i nuovi paesaggi dell'Agro Pontino* [pp. 213-224] applied to the case of the agricultural landscape of the Pianura Pontina, of which he makes an interesting geographical analysis with a view to promoting its recovery, paying particular attention to the network of irrigation canals and the historical treatment of water. The catalytic capacity of public spaces to catalyse relationships is the theme addressed by Christopher Marcinkoski in *L'azione catalitica dello spazio pubblico* [pp. 225-231], which he promotes through the search for the latent opportunities offered by the territory and the convenience of arousing public debate as a form of citizen participation.

With the interesting example of the *Paesaggi mediterranei. Dimitris Pikionis e il Parco archeologico dell'Acropoli di Atene* [pp. 233-239], Franco Panzini analyses the compositional methods of the engineer and landscape architect, based on simplicity that avoids stridency and blends in with the surroundings.

The last section is devoted to the numerous possibilities offered by the representation of landscape.

Working on the urban scale, Daniele Calisi reports in *Il paesaggio urbano. Analisi e rappresentazione digitale come strumento di conoscenza* [pp. 243-251] the experiences arising from the fruitful collaboration between the Gabriele D'Annunzio University and the Abruzzo Region, and the multiple possibilities offered by the integration of manual and digital media and techniques.

In *Esplorazioni grafiche in Argentina: tra arte, architettura e paesaggio* [pp. 253-261], Emanuela Chiavoni presents the interesting graphic experiences that arose during a study trip in Argentina: an emulation of the Grand Tour that made it possible to compile a wide variety of descriptive and analytical graphic records at different scales on these vast territories.

The interesting results of a photography workshop are the subject of Stefano Cioffi's *La sedimentazione dell'immagine. Considerazioni su un workshop di fotografia* [pp. 263-269], in which the visions of the great masters and conceptual currents were combined to work on Rome's Porto Fluviale, swinging between reality and fiction. Giacomo Costa explores the evocative and communicative power of images in *La rappresentazione dell'irrealtà* [pp. 271-277], delving into their ambiguities and the processes they trigger in the observer.

Francesca Fabiani's contribution entitled *Fotografia e territorio. Commitenze ed esperienze collettive, tra memoria storica e pratica contemporanea* [pp. 279-289] also deals with photography, but in this case focusing on its capacity to document reality and to transmit stereotyped images, and on the successive initiatives that have explored them.

Valerio Morabito analyses the capacity to narrate experiences and concepts in the chapter *Idea-rappresentazione* [pp. 291-301], warning of the current imbalances between meaning and image and between representation and idea.

The volume closes with a chapter by Massimo Siragusa entitled *Il paesaggio antropizzato in Sicilia. Un luogo come metafora* [pp. 303-307], in which he sets out his search for keys to reading the

surrounding landscape, which he does on the basis of three solid lines: urban evolution, reconstructions and the constructions of the agricultural world. The reading of this first volume of the series does not disappoint, and

offers a panorama as broad as it is suggestive, arousing emotions as necessary as those expressed by Goethe [Goethe 1887, vol. 2, p. 148]: "I was excited by the bold, the crossed-out, by what was drawn with wild lines of

Indian ink, by the violent, I could read even that which, with a few features, was only the hieroglyphic of a figure, and I appreciated it immeasurably".

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