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

Giovanni Messina, Bresena Kopliku (Eds)

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### 2. Cultural Heritage as a Mirror of Sustainable Development. Its Potential Roles and Functions in Areas of Environmental Crisis: a Case Study

*Valentina Castronuovo*<sup>1</sup>

#### Abstract

The indirect destruction of cultural heritage through various local and national development plans is the subject of the research. As a systemic problem, it is directly linked to the global environmental crisis and to the specific cultural and social values of contemporary society. Among the areas where this short-circuit is particularly evident, Taranto - one of the most populous urban centres in Apulia (a region of southern Italy), whose case study is the subject of this study - is a typical place where, alongside the ineffective means of protecting and regenerating the territorial heritage, it seems crucial (for “the few”) to favour systems of industrial and military growth that have caused an environmental disaster. Urban abandonment, disintegration, social degradation, impoverishment of the quality of urban life, disease, death, compromised use of land and water are just some of the effects of “productive development at any cost”. A development policy that also reproduces the obvious effects on

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the cultural heritage of the area, which today represents a synthesis of the deep ecological crisis of the city: a widespread heritage stratified by almost three thousand years of history, whose impoverishment is the order of the day after repeated collapses and static instability, calculated here, methodologically speaking, from censuses and quantitative statistics from primary sources. The aim of this study is to demonstrate the need for a renewal of the development dynamics of the area under study, with a view to a regenerative coexistence of resources and assets within the paradigm of a culture of sustainability.

**Keywords:** *Cultural Heritage; Cultural heritage damage; Environmental crisis; Urban policies; Sustainable Development.*



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