Introduction: Contested and Political Landscapes

Eduardo Herrera Malatesta

This book focuses on alternative definitions of landscape in archaeology, particularly those that explicitly address the conflicts, contestations, and political aspects of landscapes. This volume emphasises the non-static, dialogic nature of landscape within a community. It acknowledges how different communities' construction and relationship with the landscape can lead to tensions and even violence with other groups. It highlights the relevance of considering movement, borders, and conflict as a source for understanding how people create their landscapes and how they reshape them during political conflicts. For example, in contexts like colonisation and war, people are forced to adapt to new politics and hierarchies as their personal and communal understanding of the world is deeply transformed. This is visible today as political tensions constantly reshape local and global landscapes. Understanding the creation and contestation of landscapes in the past is essential for understanding political, economic, and cultural manifestations in the present to better organise ourselves for a truly integrative future.

Landscape studies in archaeology have diversified considerably since the first formal forays by processual archaeologists in the 1960s. For processualists, the landscape was understood as an external aspect of human life, considered the backdrop for human actions (Binford, 1980, 1982; Wandsnider, 1992). Processual archaeologists considered landscape mainly in its naturalistic form and as a starting point for comparative regional archaeological research. The post-processualists, for whom landscape was intimately related to human action, later challenged this perspective (Tilley, 1994; Bender, 1993; Thomas, 1993). Strongly based on phenomenology and hermeneutics, within this perspective, the landscape was not external to human experience but rather a part of it. They understood the landscape as the manifestation of people's interaction with their world, and it contained

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everything from their material culture, paths, and architecture to toponyms and symbolic representations (Tilley, 1994). After decades of debates, it can be accepted that the current definition of landscape is roughly how human societies relate to their environment and how, in this process, they create their own representation of the world.

This introduction does not aim at describing the history of this concept in archaeology, as there are many recent historiographic accounts (e.g., Hicks & McAtackney, 2007; David & Thomas, 2008; Darvill, 2008; Patterson, 2008; Kolen & Renes, 2015). Nonetheless, it is important to contextualise the theoretical debates that gave the frame to this book. The chapters that compose this book focus broadly on the consideration of landscape and its political components. Following Bender's groundbreaking ideas on contested landscapes (Bender, 1993, 2001), the chapters reflect on concrete arguments and case studies to explore how the concept of landscape is an arena to study political struggles in the past and the present. By doing this, the chapters also raised important discussions about identities, colonial legacies, decolonisation, and narratives about the struggles between the Global North and South. The aim is to show how the idea of landscape can be used as an arena to debate broader considerations of human processes and histories. The debates presented in this book can be framed within a research line that uses former theoretical debates on landscapes to address contemporary social and political issues and challenges.

The first key frame used in this book comes from the origins and uses of the concept of landscape. The overall context began in the 1990s when landscape studies were divided and disputed between the processual and post-processual trends. A concrete result of the debates and challenges faced during this period was that landscape archaeology lacked standardised definitions and methodologies for its research, and a growing number of archaeologists began to use the concept generically, often implicitly mixing these two seemingly opposite approaches. It was in this context that the landscape concept was identified as being "usefully ambiguous" (Gosden & Head, 1994). In the early 2000s, Anschuetz and his colleagues proposed an alternative to unify the diversity of perspectives within landscape archaeology and suggested considering the landscape as a paradigm (Anschuetz et al., 2001). Their goal was to create a united method for the study of past landscapes based on three approaches that combined all previous archaeological literature and were defined as "settlement ecology," "ritual landscapes," and "ethnic landscapes." Each of these approaches was grounded in the main characteristics of the theoretical trends of that moment, i.e., processual archaeology, post-processualism, and the growing

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interest in Indigenous archaeologies, respectively. To this day, the work of Anschuetz et al. (2001) remains one of the best attempts to bring order and clear methodological structure to landscape research, although its impact has been slight. Probably, the reason for its lack of influence on academic circles is a product of the same issue they were trying to address, i.e., the usefulness of the wide variety of approaches that negates the acceptance of a rigid and standardised structure. More recently, the theoretical debates about the concept of landscape have resulted in the implicit "agreement" that landscape derived its analytical power and utility from the diversity of perspectives and that this actually places the concept of landscape as a concrete standpoint within the discipline (Hicks & McAtackney, 2007; Benavides, in this volume).

Nonetheless, despite the unspoken agreement of accepting and using diverse perspectives regarding the concept of landscape, some issues remain. In particular, the concept is still loaded with implicit Western notions of territoriality, identities, visual representations, and the dichotomies between nature and culture that are not universally applicable to every case in every temporal setting (Kolen et al., 2015). This brings the challenge that, while archaeologists can keep using the concept in a *usefully ambiguous* manner, ultimately, and as with any other archaeological phenomenon, the components that take us to define a landscape should be classified from a methodology that explicitly builds from the archaeological record to connect with the abstract representation of past people's interaction with their world. If archaeology is to overcome past struggles, implicit assumptions, and black-box methodologies, it is essential to reflect on the danger of a lack of methodology for landscape research in archaeology (e.g., Barrett & Ko, 2009; Fleming, 2005, 2006). This, by no means, implies considering landscapes as the backdrop of human culture, but it does suggest and calls for the need to classify the material record in relation to the idea of landscape (e.g., Chountasi, in this volume).

A natural, yet quite implicit, development of this need for better classification frameworks has come in the form of a segmentation of the various functionalities and meanings regarding landscape as a whole. For example, the use of the adjective "X-scape" (Criado-Boado, 2015)—after Appadurai's (1990) original work on ethnoscapes—has been abundant in archaeology and anthropology. Other definitions, such as "taskscapes" (Ingold, 1993), "visualscapes" (Paliou, 2013), "soundscapes" (Feld, 1996; Díaz-Andreu & Mattioli, 2015), "seascapes" (McKinnon et al., 2014; Slayton, 2018), "bioscapes" (Pardoe, 1994; Lyman & Oshel, 2014), "islandscapes" (Frieman, 2008), and "spiritscapes" (McNiven, 2003), have been common since the 1990s. However,

some researchers are still debating the analytical contribution of these concepts. For example, Ingold proposed that "[t]he power of the prototypical concept of landscape lies precisely in the fact that it is not tied to any specific sensory register—whether of vision, hearing, touch, taste or smell" (Ingold, 2011, p. 136). Although Ingold himself took part in this proliferation when defining the concept of taskscape (Ingold, 1993), he recently clarified that his criticism was directed at unnecessary and unjustified definitions (Ingold, 2017). Ingold defined the concept of "taskscapes" as a way to temporalise the idea of landscape and not just refer to a specific quality already contained within landscape itself. Again, the lack of explicit methodologies has affected archaeologists' understanding of what landscape is and how it can be defined (see, e.g., Throgmorton, in this volume; Geurds, in this volume).

There is no doubt that an unnecessary proliferation of definitions, especially when founded only upon a fashionable name, will further complicate the theoretical and methodological debates around the notion of landscape. However, when these definitions are regarded as methodological heuristic tools, they become excellent examples to create the necessary methodological bridge between the material archaeological record and the abstract idea of landscape. The aforementioned "X-scapes" should not be opposed to the idea of landscape but rather the medium for a methodologically consistent reconstruction of it. For example, the end goal of research dealing with the interaction of people and their maritime environment should not be to define "seascapes." Instead, to use this concept to bridge the gap between the archaeological record, the analytical models archaeologists use to explain how past societies relate to their maritime environment and how, in this process, they create their interaction and representation of their world, i.e., their landscape (see, e.g., Herrera Malatesta, in this volume).

This book's second key frame comes from considering that landscapes are usually political and contested (Bender, 1993). Over 20 years ago, Bender and Winer (2001) and their collaborators rattled landscape studies with their book on "contested landscapes." This formative volume emphasised the non-static and dialogic nature of landscape within a community. It acknowledged how different communities' creations, perceptions, and uses of the landscape can lead to tensions and even violence among different communities. It highlighted the relevance of considering movement, borders, exile, and conflict as a source for the understanding of how people create their landscapes and how they reshape them during political conflicts. During certain conflicts, like colonisation and war, people are forced to adapt to new politics, hierarchies, and identities as their personal and communal understanding of the world is deeply transformed through struggle and

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force. This is evident today as political tensions constantly reshape local and global landscapes. Perhaps more importantly, understanding the creation and contestation of landscapes in the past is essential for understanding political, economic, and cultural manifestations in the present in order to better organise ourselves for a truly integrative future (see Corcoran-Tadd, in this volume; Egbers, in this volume).

Today, the study of landscape is accepted as an interdisciplinary field within archaeological research that brings together concepts and methods from a wide range of other disciplines, ranging from geomorphology and ecology to cultural geography, performance theory, and the arts. Nonetheless, the classical notion of landscape is strongly tied to Western thought—and particularly to north-western Europe, where it developed during the Middle Ages within a specific context of people's relationship to the land (Olwig, 1996). Later, as the landscape painting genre developed, the idea of landscape started to become closely related to the history of visual representation (including the invention of perspective and cartography), enlightenment science, and Western convictions about human–nature relationships. In this specific context, the landscape came to refer to a sense of territoriality, visual perception, and domination over nature (and others). However, it can be safely assumed that Western values did not characterise human living activities in the same way or to the same degree in deep history and/or in other regions of the world. Following recent trends in the discipline of archaeology, we are exploring critical reformulations of the landscape concept (e.g., on "contested taskscape," see Herrera Malatesta, in this volume; on "terrorscapes," see Koren, in this volume) as well as alternative notions (such as "thirdspace," see Egberts, in this volume) that may better fit the spatial and cultural realities of distant and contemporary societies.

The Structure of the Book

With this book, we explore via concrete case studies the many possible ways to interpret and use the landscape concept. This book brought together researchers whose clear political and theoretical perspectives have led them to explore how conflict-laden contexts shape and reshape landscapes during different historical eras around the world. The chapters that comprise this book touch on topics around how landscapes are being transformed through designed creation, powerful appropriation, and contestation, such as the ones resulting from colonial contexts. This includes the roles and meanings of boundaries, borders, and walls in the regulation of movement

and belonging; the conceptualisation of landscape as "moveable" instead of spatially fixed; theoretical reflections on the uses of landscape in the archaeological discipline; resilience practices and their impact on the reshaping of colonial landscapes; the role of material culture as a means of creating and/or transforming colonial landscapes into landscapes of resistance and resilience; and, finally, the politics of landscapes in the past and the present.

The first chapter, "On Contested Taskscapes" by Eduardo Herrera Malatesta, presents a theoretical debate on the importance of considering the political aspects in the concept of landscape and particularly in the concept of taskscape. The author uses Ingold's notion of taskscape and Bender's notion of contested landscape to create a unified concept of contested taskscapes that articulates the complexity of the archaeological record with abstract definitions of landscape. Yet, in order to define a clear methodological frame to relate the material record and the definition of landscape, Herrera Malatesta presents a discussion on the notion of the archaeological site, which also takes him to define a more appropriate term to articulate site with taskscape. In this sense, by developing two methodological concepts—"sites as tendencies" and "contested taskscapes"—his chapter aims to contribute to global debates on landscape research and cultural transformations in archaeology.

Chapter 2, "Archaeology in the Tripartito: Landscape and the Nation-state in the South-central Andes" by Noa Corcoran-Tadd, discusses the Tripartito landscape and the nation-state in the south-central Andes. In this exciting piece, the author focuses on exploring the relationships between histories of border-making, the practice of landscape archaeology, and the emergence of new transnational approaches. Corcoran-Tadd argues that these aspects reflect how, via heritage regulation and scholarly praxis, the nation-state remains a central force in shaping the investigation and understanding of archaeological landscapes in Latin America. Corcoran-Tadd explores several ways in which archaeological attention to the material frictions between landscapes, mobilities, and border-making from the late pre-Hispanic period through to the early 21st century can help open new models of transnational scholarship in a research area where cross-border ties and contested histories remain delicate points of discussion.

In Chapter 3, "The Dramatised Landscape of Juktas: A Topoanalytic Approach to a Minoan Peak Sanctuary in Crete," Maria Chountasi presents a fascinating discussion on the dramatised landscape of Juktas, providing a topoanalytic approach to a Minoan peak sanctuary in Crete. Her argument lies in the fact that although there is an intensified pace in the

current research on Minoan peak sanctuaries, in most cases, it either lacks a synthetic approach or its full extent of synthesis is exhausted on the criteria for identifying a peak sanctuary, thus employing passive approaches to the Cretan mountainous sacred landscape. From this, her contribution analyses the gaps in current research on Minoan peak sanctuaries and examines Bachelard's phenomenological approach to landscape as a methodological tool for emphasising the active interaction between humans and their surrounding environment. She concludes by showing that the sacred landscape constitutes a dynamic framework, a *topos* where ritual performances are enacted, ordinary realities blur, participants' inner and outer worlds fuse, and communities can integrate and transform concrete places, such as mountains.

Chapter 4, "Lived Space of Displaced People: A Comparative Approach to Contested Spaces in Iron Age Northern Mesopotamia and Modern Berlin," by Vera Egbers, is a passionately written discussion on the lived space of displaced people. The author presents a comparative approach to contested spaces in the Iron Age in northern Mesopotamia and in modern Europe. Egbers argues that archaeology grapples with the materiality of past subjects' perception and organisation of space as drawn from objects, landscapes, architecture, and pictorial or textual representations. Generally, what emerges from these data is a dominant or normative conceptualisation of space. She uses Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre to assert that "space" is not a given but a product, arguing that every society produces its own (social) space that subjectivises its members. In this chapter, Egbers uses a comparative approach to address the question of hidden forms of lived space. She compares the materiality and possible perception of deportees in Urartu and Neo-Assyria in Iron Age northern Mesopotamia with the narratives and experiences of present-day refugees in Europe.

In Chapter 5, "The Landscape of Moving Tree Trunks and Other Unnatural Phenomenon: Contesting Archaeologies from the Global South," O. Hugo Benavides takes the debate to the 19th-century Ecuadorian Amazon, where explorers who sat on exotic "moving tree trunks" (actually, boa constrictors) are used as a metaphor to reflect on key archaeological concepts and particularly on that of landscape. Benavides focuses his vibrant discussion on the shift in the archaeological discipline to perceive landscapes as a natural phenomenon and consider them as contested arenas loaded with multiple levels of cultural production both in the past and the present. Furthermore, he elaborates that the concept of landscape as a contested, resilient, and political entity is an epistemological shift that has resounding importance in the Global South.

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In Chapter 6, "Landscapes of Power and Resilience: Aristocratic-Driven Landscapes in the Duero Basin," Jesús García Sánchez develops a strong discussion on the landscapes of power and resilience in the aristocratic-driven landscapes in the Duero Basin. He aims to explore how landscapes and territories can serve as proxies in the study of social organisation and inequality in the Late Iron Age of the Iberian Peninsula. He argues that the organisation of graves and burial contexts shows a social pyramid dominated by the aristocracies of the eastern Iberian world. The settlement pattern based on fortified and isolated hillforts reflects a world controlled by warrior elites, whose main political and economic strategy was to maintain a warfare state. Thus, rural populations were forced to shelter in these largely fortified hillforts, while warriors used warfare to increase wealth, prestige, and social control. His chapter aims to explore how landscapes are social proxies and how the dynamics of power and inequality can be traced by studying these socialised built environments.

Chapter 7, "Changing Landscapes, Changing People in North-western New Mexico" by Kellam Throgmorton, is an interesting reflection on the political framework of the concept of landscape and focuses on landscape ontologies as landscape politics in the Chacoan interventions in north-western New Mexico. Throgmorton argues that the idea of landscape in today's archaeological and heritage practices is key to understanding the complex and multi-layered contexts for its study across time. For example, traditional Indigenous homelands overlap with resources of economic value and are entangled in an array of national and regional land statuses. Throgmorton's chapter presents a key point that landscapes of the past were as political as those of the present, and he presents this argument by using the case study of how the Pueblo inhabitants of what is now north-western New Mexico engaged in political action through the restructuring of cultural landscapes during the late 11th and early 12th centuries AD.

Chapter 8, "*Cruzando la Cerca*: Indigenous Mounded Landscapes in Nicaragua" by Alexander Geurds, presents a captivating discussion on the process of reconstructing past landscapes, with a case study from southern Central America. Geurds argues that the strictly impressionistic, Western definition of landscape is often an uncomfortable fit for archaeological analyses. Such tension easily becomes palpable when early-16th-century Spanish descriptions designate parts of present-day Nicaragua as a garden of paradise. Archaeological cases where forms of public architecture favour a view of the intentional creation of landscapes invoke notions of cosmological ordering and forge a strong link between the concept of monumentality

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and landscape. Geurds argues that in this context, landscape becomes a planned endeavour that rests significantly on a notion of human agency.

Chapter 9, "Pretoria, Drawing Board of the Apartheid Regime" by David Koren, is a powerful account of the terror landscapes of Pretoria in South Africa. Koren argues that Pretoria, the capital of South Africa, became in 1948 the seat of a (white) racist regime that introduced Apartheid. Subtly, this regime managed to control the lives of more than 80% of the entire population. The non-white population was involuntarily encapsulated in an all-encompassing system that determined where you could live, on what benches you could sit, whom you could marry, and what type of education you would get. The mechanisms of terror were active on different levels and ranged from sophisticated bureaucracy to brutal forced relocations, imprisonment, and torture. The ideological representations of races in public spaces are equally intense, just like the creation of nominally independent homelands, an important tool to deprive black South Africans of their citizenship. Koren discusses how present-day society is still struggling to deal with this complex and poisonous heritage.

The ideas presented in each chapter contribute to the larger discussions on how the Western and hegemonic ideas of landscape have overpowered and silenced other perspectives and voices in the past and the present, as discussed by Bellón and Rueda in their discussion chapter. As mentioned before, the idea of landscape was popularised in the context of landscape painting and the dominion of man and reason over nature and emotions. This, together with the predominance of the visual aspect of landscape, were the foundations of the processual trend, but also filtered towards some post-processual works and has become a standard definition today, particularly within digital archaeology. Furthermore, the fragmentation of the sensory experience of landscape in this context speaks more about the frames from which Western academics classify the world, as well as how they hyperspecialise on specific topics than an effort to understand how other cultures would classify their landscape and include their voices in the research. This, in general, is the result of decades of perpetuating implicit colonialist and asymmetric relationships between the Global North and South. Following Curtoni (2015, p. 41), it is important to consider that "hegemonic archaeology bears its colonial imprint and exhibits the principles of universality, objectivity, and rationalism that characterise modern Western science." This has also passed along to the notion of landscape. Genuinely engaging other voices and perspectives, as well as considering alternative ontologies, requires alternative methodologies and considerations of how cultures, materialities, and histories create landscapes and how those

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landscapes, in turn, influence cultures, materialities, and histories. These methodologies can, of course, use specific aspects of the sensory experience of landscape as long as the overall experience is not left behind. Within this alternative perspective, and to overcome the coloniality of thought in archaeology, an approach based on relationality could be a solution (Walsh & Mignolo, 2018). A relational archaeology (Gnecco, 2009) is one that seeks to create a dialogue with other perspectives, epistemologies, and ontologies, where there is no dominant voice but rather the possibility for dialogue (see Corcoran-Tadd, Throgmorton, and Geurds, in this volume). Finally, a decolonial relational landscape archaeology is based on the direct effort of bringing other silenced voices to the forefront. It aims to understand how their specific experience in the world has contributed to the creation of their landscape. This landscape does not need to be anchored on traditional ideas of landscape but rather seeks a diversity of perspectives and perceptions (See Benavides, in this volume).

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About the Author

Eduardo Herrera Malatesta is a Venezuelan archaeologist specialising in landscape research, regional surveys, and geographical information systems (GIS). He studied anthropology with a specialisation in archaeology at the Universidad Central de Venezuela (BA) and the Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Cientificas (MA). He then specialised in GIS in archaeology at University College London (MSc), and later, he got his PhD in archaeology at Leiden University. He has held postdoctoral positions at Leiden University and at Aarhus University as a Marie Curie postdoctoral fellow. He has recently started a position as a postdoctoral researcher at Leiden University.

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