The Shaping of Tuscany

To its many tourists and visitors, the Tuscan landscape evokes a sense of timelessness and harmony. Yet, the upheavals of the twentieth century profoundly reshaped rural Tuscany. Uncovering the experiences of ordinary people, Professor Gaggio traces the history of Tuscany to show how the region's modern conflicts and aspirations have contributed to forging its modern-day beauty. We learn how the rise of fascism was particularly violent in rural Tuscany, and how struggles between Communist sharecroppers and their landlords raged long after the end of the dictatorship. The flight from the farms in the 1950s and 1960s disorientated many Tuscans, prompting ambitious development projects; and in more recent decades the emergence of the heritage industry has raised the spectre of commodification. The book tells the story of how many Tuscans themselves have become tourists in their own land – forced to adapt to rapid change and reinvent their landscape in the process.

Dario Gaggio was born and raised in the outskirts of Florence, Tuscany, before moving to the United States for graduate school. He holds a PhD in History from Northwestern University and is Professor at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He is the author of *In Gold We Trust: Social Capital and Economic Change in the Italian Jewelry Towns* (2007). His research has pioneered the integration of cultural change and political economy from an interdisciplinary perspective, combining historical methodologies with the theoretical insights of sociology, anthropology, and human geography.

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Landscape and Society between Tradition and Modernity

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Acknowledgments

I started working on this book almost a decade ago with a very personal agenda, having grown up at the outskirts of Florence in the 1970s and 1980s. The town where I lived was neither city nor countryside, and it was surrounded (perhaps also haunted) by the vestiges of a rapidly disappearing "peasant civilization." Many years and detours later, after moving to the United States, I confronted my own longing and many Americans' romantic admiration for Tuscany, a place both they and I "knew" so little about. The first people I want to acknowledge are therefore my friends and colleagues who, on American soil, helped me look at my native land with fresh eyes, at once soberly and empathetically. I am deeply grateful for the conversations I had with my fellow historians at the University of Michigan over the years. They make a blissfully long list: Paulina Alberto, Kathryn Babayan, Pamela Ballinger, Howard Brick, Charlie Bright, Kathleen Canning, John Carson, Rita Chin, Joshua Cole, Jay Cook, Geoff Eley, Will Glover, Dena Goodman, David Hancock, Gabrielle Hecht, Nancy Hunt, Kali Israel, Paul Johnson, Val Kivelson, Matthew Lassiter, Farina Mir, Anthony Mora, Gina Morantz-Sanchez, Rachel Neis, Doug Northrop, Brian Porter-Szücs, Helmut Puff, Rebecca Scott, Perrin Selcer, Minnie Sinha, Scott Spector, Paolo Squatriti, Ron Suny, Melanie Tanielian, Tomi Tonomura, and Jeff Veidlinger.

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What started as a somewhat romantic attempt at deromanticizing rural Tuscany morphed into a more subtle exploration of the ways in which a variety of actors have invested (or divested) value in place by telling stories, shaping the land, and readjusting their stories accordingly, in a cycle that is at once a powerful historical process in its own right and a process of history-making, sometimes bordering on (self-) deception. I owe whatever subtlety I have managed to convey in this book to a group of diverse but equally insightful "local informants," who have shared with me their aspirations, achievements, and disappointments. Their Tuscany is now mine as well. They include Alessandro Andreini, Giuliano Cannata, Pietro Clemente, Paola Falini, Antonio Franchetti, Martino Manetti, Gianfranco Molteni, Benedetta Origo, Pietro Piussi, Paolo Pellizzari, Rino Pecci, and several others who desire to remain nameless or only shared with me their first names in short but engaging exchanges. Finally, like all historians, I owe a great deal to many archivists and librarians who were patient enough to indulge my curiosity, often keeping venues open just for me. Again, there are many more benefactors than I can acknowledge here, but a special thank-you goes to Roberta Cortonesi, Elisa Costa, Calogero Governali, and Loretta Veri. I also wish to thank Danielle LaVaque-Manty for helping me with my prose and Rachel Trudell for designing the maps.

Perhaps we should all try to look at (but also listen to, and smell) landscape the way children do, ready to be surprised and willing to believe the stories places tell. Some children grow up to become historians, and they learn to approach places with the kind of jaded skepticism the profession demands. Hopefully, I have managed to retain a bit of the magic that pervades rural Tuscany – the magic of sharing stories and making a coherent tale out of them. In the end, I owe the most to the thousands of people I met as a child, as I ran wild in the woods and backyards of postrural Tuscany.