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## Emerging urban landmarks as vulnerable heritage

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# Emerging urban landmarks as vulnerable heritage

## Editoriale

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Valentina Russo

This issue of *Eikonocity* aims at bringing to the attention of scholars themes concerning the history and consequent vulnerability – mainly structural and aesthetic – of the ‘emerging’ elements of the historical buildings, conceived as tangible signs of the urban landscape identity in European historic centres. As recent Italian earthquakes have evidenced (L’Aquila, 2009; Emilia Romagna, 2012; Abruzzo and Umbria, 2016-2017), many historical buildings or parts of them, although having a significant role in the formation and expression of urban image, are highly at risk not only for physical safety but also for the collective memory they preserve. Visual poles as domes and towers, as authentic *topoi* of the city skyline, aggregate social values shared over the centuries and translated into landscape signs from different cultures during the history of local communities: they are important key-elements in the urban formation process intended as a long life collective project in which, as Michel Jacob pointed, citizens continually define their relationship with nature and territory. By the response these symbols of urban history are able to offer to natural or human hazards it largely descends the preservation of urban landscape image in the frame of identity and community cultural values.

Starting from this premise, we publish here six papers presented at the EAUH Congress taken in Rome in 2018, with reference to the Session *Vulnerability and Resilience in the City Landscape: Domes, Bell Towers and ‘Emerging’ Architecture as Visual Poles and Signs of Urban Memory from 15th to 19th Century* chaired by Alfredo Buccaro and me. The studies hereby presented start from two cities that symbolize Western culture, Paris and Moscow, marked by forms of architecture that have shaped and defined the urban landscape in a resilient way over the last two centuries: the Panthéon and the Ivan the Great Bell Tower of Kremlin: forms of architecture that are both the object of contributions that interweave unpublished documentary sources with rich historical iconography.

The attention moves, then, to Italy presenting researches that deepen the genesis and characteristics of the civic towers from the Middle Ages to the early 20th century, between subalpine territories and central Italy, with specific attention to the complex choices that we are called to face following earthquake collapses. The journey through the ‘emerging’ architectures is therefore directed in the far south of Italy with studies dedicated to the phenomenon of Sicilian houses-towers, deepened in two exemplary cases in the urban contexts of Palermo and Comiso.

As this issue of this journal invites us to reflect, interpreting the urban landscape in its multifaceted identity and affording current and cogent issues of reconstruction, partial

reconfiguration or restoration of buildings that have marked collective spaces influencing their perception by communities constitute conceptual and operational actions deeply conjoined: frequent moments and needs of our time – as the final reviews highlight, too – in front of which only a deep historical-critical excavation can find results in cultural and qualitatively appreciable interventions on a ‘special’ built heritage.

Naples, June 2020