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SOMA 2012

Identity and Connectivity

Proceedings of the 16th Symposium on Mediterranean
Archaeology, Florence, Italy, 1–3 March 2012

VOLUME I

Edited by

Luca Bombardieri, Anacleto D'Agostino,
Guido Guarducci, Valentina Orsi
and Stefano Valentini



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Foreword

An Archaeology of and in the Mediterranean

It is with great pleasure that we are presenting the Proceedings of the 16th Symposium on Mediterranean Archaeology, held in Florence on March 1st-3rd 2012, to the scientific community that have attended to this important event as well as to those who will be reading them. First of all we would like to express our gratitude to the authors who have contributed to accomplish this difficult task in a relatively short period of time.

The 16th annual meeting of the Symposium on Mediterranean Archaeology hosted a large number of specialists and students from different research fields coming from all parts of the world. As for the previous meetings of this symposium, the SOMA continues to provide an important opportunity for scholars and researchers to come together and discuss their work within major cross-cultural themes.

The large attendance of scholars and the strong public participation created a stimulating context and highlighted the increasing importance of interdisciplinary studies, crossing lines between single disciplines and regionalisms and analysing more properly the Mediterranean entities in comparison with the ancient neighbouring contexts of the Near East and Northern Europe.

Modern historiography has shown an increasing need to place a greater emphasis on the study of the ancient Mediterranean inside a wider “natural” cultural and geographic horizon.

The first use of the term Mediterranean (from the Latin word *mediterraneus*, ‘in the middle of the land’) as we know it goes back to the seventh-century AD *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville and since then it became the ‘Sea *par excellence*’, gradually enriching its own values. A complex of different reflections on the Mediterranean traditions, as well as diverse approaches to it, created a deep stratigraphy of significances through time. During the second half of the twentieth century, some prominent scholars sought new ways to approach the trans-Mediterranean interaction, basically distinguishing between history *of* and *in* the Mediterranean.

Amongst the most relevant comprehensive studies, it is worth mentioning Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell influential works reassessing the nature of the Mediterranean since antiquity, focusing the centrality of the sea to the cultures of those sharing its shores: “*In the ancient geographical tradition the sea shapes the land, not the other way about. [...] This logical priority of the sea [...] resulted principally from the centrality of the sea to communications*”¹

This conception of the Mediterranean obviously owes much to the historiography of the *Annales*, and mostly to the work of Fernand Braudel. *Annales*’ critic reflection particularly contributed to the

¹ P. Horden, N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea. A Study of Mediterranean History*, Oxford 2000, p. 11.

picture of a Mediterranean common *milieu*, outlining common aspects within new models of interactions, migrations, assimilations and definitively acting as a strong basis for future archaeological discussion.

As known, for Braudel what mattered were not individual events but the processes of the *longue durée*; Similar processes within the ancient Mediterranean reflect different faces of a recurrent contrast between fragmentation of the landscape into micro-regions and impulse to interaction and exchange.²

Two contrasting processes that produce two mutually dependent concepts: *Identity* and *Connectivity*. This way, ‘Identity and Connectivity’ was chosen as a single theme for the 16th Symposium on Mediterranean Archaeology.

The 16th edition of the SOMA saw a large participation of scholars and young researchers engaged in a fruitful exchange of ideas. More than 250 papers were presented within the 35 sessions, 145 of which are present in this volume; and more than 350 people attended to the symposium in the different halls that were hosted by the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Florence and by the S. Jacopo church of the Center for Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies (CAMNES) and the Lorenzo de’ Medici Italian International Institute. The over 250 speakers coming from more than twenty countries from Europe and the Middle East to the United States and Australia, contributed to a broad and rich debate on the history and conservation of the ancient Mediterranean archaeological heritage.

Three days in search of a possible definition of Mediterranean Archaeology can only begin with the most appropriate question: Does a Mediterranean Archaeology exist?

While any prompt definition is surely lacking at the moment, one can perhaps retrace the on-going steps and trends of its gradual introduction within the archaeological lexicon and debate. Contrasting trends still exist between who interprets Mediterranean archaeology as the factual sum up of different regional units, from time to time linked with each other by incidental events, and who is inclined to forge ahead with the identification of deeply related common structural mechanisms.

Covering a wide geographical area, marked by great cultural diversification and encompassing a large chronological time span, from prehistory to the medieval period, the 16th SOMA represented an ideal arena to discuss, argue and compare methodologies, new approaches and trajectories of current archaeological research and debate centred on the Mediterranean area. What emerged is a general permeability in a wide interacting system, obviously of different intensity, duration and

² J. Guilaine, *Les racines de la Méditerranée et de l’Europe*, Paris 2008, p. 82.

reach, between territories lying next to the shores but also involving and affecting indirectly inner and distant regions, with the circulation and diffusion of recurrent cultural elements. Phases of irregular contacts and phases of more active and direct interactions produced a multifaceted identity, which included numerous local cultural areas, marked by the emergence of different dynamics contributing over the years to build the regional identities within an enlarged and Greater Mediterranean area.

The Mediterranean Sea bridged different coasts providing a cultural and social link and the ideal space where cultural phenomena, commodities and ideas emerged, developed and were shared, accepted or rejected.

As expected, three days searching a possible definition of Mediterranean archaeology can only lead to discover many possible definitions of it. In this perspective, connecting identities can finally strengthen the desire to broaden the horizon of a strong scientific forum:³ a multi-disciplinary historical, archaeological and anthropological perspective can contribute to an in-depth, shared understanding of the complex cultural structures of the territories orbiting around ‘the sea in the middle’ or attracting Barbarian, Asiatic and exogenous populations towards its coast and rich lands.

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³ A.B. Knapp, “Editorial”, *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 1(1988), p. 6.; A.B. Knapp, J.F. Cherry, P. Van Dommelen (with contributions by N. Terrenato, C. Knappett, J. Sanmarti), “Editorial: JMA’s Silver Anniversary (1988-2012)”, *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 25.2 (2012), p. 5.

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