

MOBILITY AND MEMORY IN THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE MIDDLE SEA: DIACHRONIC INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPLORATIONS OF A COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP

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Over the last decade, the resurgence of migratory flows as well as the growth of other forms of movement of individuals and groups has attracted much attention within and beyond academia. While the pandemic has represented a considerable restriction to personal mobilities, the large masses of people currently on the move across the many crossings between the global south and north in the Middle Sea (and elsewhere) seem to suggest this was only momentary.

Following this macroscopic historical trend and the important scientific developments of the so-called third science revolution, particularly within archaeology and history, mobility has been primarily explored with a temporal focus centred on its very act, rather than its effects in the medium and long term. Yet, time and memory, and related understanding of places were arguably critical in articulating the relationship between the identity of residents and newcomers, producing the background upon which dynamics of clash or tolerance unfolded.

In order to analyse this topic and the related issues, we planned the Conference *Mobility and Memory in the Archaeology of the Middle Sea: Diachronic interdisciplinary Explorations of a Complex Relationship* with a twofolded aim.

The scientific aim was to produce an in-depth diachronic and interdisciplinary assessment of the relationship between mobility, identity and memo-

ry in the *longue durée* of an area that has been one of the main foci of mobility in the world, the Mediterranean, (broadly intended), one of the privileged avenues of east-west encounter through the last few millennia. We welcomed contributions from the broad field of Archaeology and Heritage Studies dealing with the Mediterranean, addressing issues like:

- The role of memory and related places, objects and practices in promoting clash or mutual respect between identities of newcomers and established communities.

- The articulation of memory in situations of displacement where individuals or groups have been completely removed from their original place, such as those currently characterising the eastern coast of the Middle Sea (as well as many other areas).

- The ethics and politics of the memory of mobility.

The idea of the Conference came from the research project *Landscape of Mobility and Memory* led by Francesco Iacono. Nevertheless, the topic is the focus of other research projects. Therefore, Andrea Gaucci and Federico Zaina have been part of the Scientific Committee. All the members of the Scientific Committee hold courses within the Master's Degree curriculum *Applied Critical Archaeology and Heritage* (ACRA). The Conference, indeed, has been fully integrated within the activities of a.y.

2021/2022 of the Master's Degree course and it involved actively students as part of the Executive Committee, thus fulfilling the teaching aim at the basis of the initiative. We designed it like the first of a series of Conference which will address to different cutting-edge topics of the archaeological research during each academic year.

The organisation of the Conference would have not been possible without the essential work of the Executive Committee's members: Matteo Bartolucci, Vittoria Faccio, Emma Beatrice Farina, Michael Kjær Hæstrup, Teodora Santandrea, Ludovica Schiavone and Renan Falcheti Peixoto.

The Conference was held at the Department of History and Cultures of the University of Bologna, between 17-18 December 2021, and it opened with the keynote lecture, *Archaeologies of Migration and Border Crossing in the Mediterranean: What was Moria?*, held by Yannis Hamilakis of the Brown University (USA).

The Conference was divided into four sessions. The first session was dedicated to theoretical and ethical issues, while the other three, mainly focused on case studies, followed a chronological sequence (Prehistory, Ancient period, Contemporary period). It was attended by international scholars from countries like Italy, France, Spain, Netherlands and Germany with multidisciplinary expertise encompassing archaeology, anthropology, architecture and engineering among others.

1st session:

Zaina, F. (Politecnico di Milano), & Nabati Mazloumi, Y. (University of Bologna). *Lost heritage, Living Memory and Moving People. Introducing the Lost Heritage Atlas initiative.*

Iacono, F. (University of Bologna), & Falcheti - Peixoto, R. (University of São Paulo). *Migration off track: From the "Third Science Revolution" to a Human-centred Archaeology of Mobilities.*

2nd session:

Gori, M. (ISPC-CNR). *Memories in Stones, Memories in Clay. Mobility, Landscape and Memory Across the Central Mediterranean in the 3rd mill. BC.*

Cavazzuti, C. (University of Bologna). *Mobility and Homophily Among Middle/Late Bronze Age Communities Seen Through the Spread of the 'Urnfield Model'.*

Schievano, M. (Ca' Foscari University of Venice). *Pirates, Traders and the Concept of Identity in the Late Bronze Age, Early Iron Age.*

3rd session:

Álvarez-Martí-Aguilar, M. & Machuca-Prieto, F. (University of Malaga). *Apotropaia from the Motherland: Catastrophe, Identity and Memory in the Phoenician diaspora.*

Denti, M. (Rennes 2 University - IUF). *Greek Migrations from the Aegean to the Ionian Coast of Southern Italy, in the 7th cent. BC: Shared Territories, Goods, Rituals, Heroic Memories, in an Aristocratic Perspective.*

Da Vela, R. (University of Tübingen). *The Memory of Little Things. Miniature Objects, Memories of Mobility and Encounters in the Iron Age Northern Apennines.*

4th session:

Attema, P., Ippolito, F. (University of Groningen) & Pollon, N. (University of Bologna). *Arberëshë Migration in the Sibaritide (Calabria, south Italy): Landscape Archaeology, Past Mobility and Present-day Community Identity.*

Di Cola, V. (Roma Tre University). *The Ravennati in Ostia Antica: A recognition of material evidence for an archaeology of memory.*

Bravaglieri, S. (Politecnico di Milano). *(Forgotten) Military Mobility During the Cold War.*

The conference was attended in person by a large audience, who participated in the discussions following each contribution and also in the final debate. This demonstrates on the one hand the interest in the topic of the conference and on the other hand how certain instances of mobility, i.e. that related to the participation to a conference, are not hindered by fears and risks (in relation to health concerns in our case) if the purpose of the journey is considered relevant.

Finally, we would like to thank the Department of History and Cultures, which funded the initiative as fully fitting its research and teaching strategies, and also the Open Access Journal *Ocnus*, who accepted to publish a selection of contributions after a double-blind review. Indeed, the success of the initiative led us to invite the speakers to publish their papers in *Ocnus*. We are grateful to the authors who submitted the paper but equally thank all the speakers who participated in the Conference and shared their research.

The four papers published in *Ocnus* stem from the contributions of the Conference's 1st, 3rd and 4th sessions:

R. Falcheti - Peixoto & F. Iacono, *Urnfield Connections: Rethinking Late Bronze Age Mobility.*

M. Denti, *Greek Migrations from the Aegean to the Ionian Coast of Southern Italy, in the 7th cent. BC: Shared Territories, Goods, Rituals, Heroic Memories, in an Aristocratic Perspective.*

R. Da Vela, *The Memory of the Little Things: Mobility and Encounters as Constitutive Elements of Memoryscapes in the Iron Age Apennines.*

P. Antema, F. Ippolito & N. Pollon, *Arberëshë migration in the Sibaritide (Calabria, South Italy): Land-*

scape archaeology, past mobility and present-day community identity.

Iacono and Falchetti-Peixoto tried to address current theories of mobility in the international debate of archeology, debating perceived pitfalls in relation to developments connected to the so-called third science revolution. The alternative approach proposed is grounded in the study of artefacts and their *chaîne opératoire* and emphasises the role of memory and how this can reveal patterns of movement through the landscape. This perspective is illustrated by the means of a case study based on the diffusion of a well-known category of “European” swords.

Denti instead explored the importance of memory in mobility connected to Greek colonisation of the early Archaic Mediterranean. He showed how both craft production and usage of material culture can be mobilised to elicit memories of an ancestral common ground between coloniser and colonised during the 7th century BC. Focusing on the case study of Incoronata (Matera, Italy) and particularly on the sacred and workshop areas excavated by Rennes 2 University’s team, the author analysed the process of negotiation between the hegemonic indigenous elite and the Greeks, mainly craftsmen whose presence was probably seasonal rather than stable. Questioning the motivations that prompted the Greek groups to leave their countries, Denti particularly emphasised the production of *archaika*, i.e. objects and related symbols that recall Bronze Age or Late Geometric repertoire. These were conceived as devices to evoke a common heroic and ancestral past, well stressed by Homeric tradition and nowadays rediscovered by archaeological researches.

Da Vela focused on the spatialisation of processes of memory production and particularly on those relating to the sacred landscape, that is a place where memory is preserved and negotiated by its very nature. The theoretical framework of reference is the one elaborated by J. Assmann, which looks at relationships and sociocultural dynamics that can be developed starting from material and immaterial resources. The point of view offered by the “small things”, bronze votive figurines and miniature pottery which can be easily transported, is favoured and the extra-urban sacred sites of the northern Apennines (linked to the water as a relevant natural element and located near communication routes) are investigated. The role of this peculiar territory as a connective and non-marginal environment has been rightly emphasised, and it is considered part of an integrated network of resources (material and

cultural, defined as ResourceComplex) and more generally within a multiscale system encompassing the entire Mediterranean basin (particularly in relation to the bronze figurines). These small objects have been investigated in their dual perspective as individual and collective material expressions of memory, both deposited in and taken from shrines, thus within a social dialectic between private and public. In particular, the act of depositing in the sanctuary leads to conceiving sacred sites as accessible repositories (memoryscapes) where the accumulation of offerings over the centuries contributes to the formation of a cultural memory according to Assmann’s definition.

Attema and colleagues investigated the role of material evidence in shaping cultural contacts and migrations for millennia, from the Bronze Age until today using the plain of Sybaris in the Northern Calabria of Italy as a case study area. The long-term research project specifically tackled the complex interaction between newcomers and local communities in this region through the lenses of landscape archaeology and ethnography. Indeed, the analysis of mobility, migration, and cultural encounters from the earliest historical arrival until the early-modern Arbëreshë migration has been conducted through both archaeological surveys and excavations at the site of Timpone della Motta as well as by means of ethnographic research at the sites of Civita/Çifti and Frascineto/Frasnita within the framework of the Pollino Archaeological Landscape Project. The authors recognised both memory and place as critical elements for building individual and collective identity. The strong connection with their ancestors and past histories make them consider anything placed within the perceived boundaries of their historical region, including what is below the soil as their own property and therefore, part of their identity. Landscape analysis and interviews to community members also emphasised how this connection is not simply due to genealogical or ethnical claims, but it is rather the result of a long process of stewardship of the region, which they have inhabited and managed for centuries, also in line with art. 1 of the European Landscape Convention.

Altogether these papers offered an updated overview of the wider debate on the complex topic of the intersection between mobility and memory. Our hope is that the multidisciplinary approach as well as the long-term diachronic perspective will also trace the path for future research lines and develop novel narratives that may help to better understand and cope with both past and new phenomena of migration and mobility.

