

Reviews

New Book Chronicle

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This quarter, NBC investigates recent books on Mediterranean archaeology and explores the metaphors and other framing devices deployed to characterise the relationships between Mediterranean societies and their environments. We start with a geographical tour before considering more general contributions on the relationships between prehistoric and historic societies and the Mediterranean—both as physical environment and conceptual space.

Crete, Cyprus, Cilicia and Corinthia

KONSTANTINOS CHALIKIAS. *Living on the margin: Chryssi Island and the settlement patterns of the Ierapetra area (Crete)* (British Archaeological Reports international series 2549). vii+154 pages, numerous b&w illustrations. 2013. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-4073-1169-2 paperback £30.

MICHAEL K. TOUMAZOU, P. NICK KARDULIAS & DEREK B. COUNTS (ed.). *Crossroads and boundaries: the archaeology of past and present in the Malloura valley, Cyprus* (Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research 65). xxiii+376 pages, 223 colour and b&w illustrations, 16 tables. 2011. Boston (MA): American Schools of Oriental Research; 978-0-89757-086-2 hardback £65.

MICHAEL C. HOFF & RHYS F. TOWNSEND (ed.). *Rough Cilicia: new historical and archaeological approaches*. xii+315 pages, numerous b&w illustrations. 2013. Oxford & Oakville (CT): Oxbow; 978-1-84217-518-7 hardback £65.

K. KISSAS & W.-D. NIEMEIER (ed.). *The Corinthia and the northeast Peloponnese: topography and history from prehistoric times until the end of Antiquity* (Athenaia 4). xii+558 pages, 438 colour and b&w illustrations. 2013. Munich: Deutschen Archäologischen Institut Athen; 978-3-7774-2122-3 paperback €85.

To say that islands have been a subject of fascination for Mediterranean archaeologists would be a gross understatement. Such is their scholarly prominence that we could not contemplate our investigation

without some consideration of insularity. We therefore begin with one island off the coast of another: the island of Chryssi lies *c.* 12km south of Crete. This speck of land (*c.* 5km²) and its relationship with the Cretan mainland—specifically the Ierapetra Isthmus which bisects Crete from north to south—forms the focus of *Living on the margin: Chryssi Island and the settlement patterns of the Ierapetra area (Crete)* by KONSTANTINOS CHALIKIAS. The volume reports the results of a survey of the island, spanning the Final Neolithic to Ottoman times, and a broader assessment of other Cretan islands.

Discussion is structured by chronological period and moves freely from the results of the Chryssi survey, to the more fragmentary results from the Ierapetra Isthmus, and to other small islands around the Cretan coast. This has the virtue of approaching these entities as highly integrated, but also requires close attention as the precise geographical focus constantly shifts. In this respect, the illustrative material—reproduced separately—would have been more helpful integrated into the text.

Consideration of the relationship between Chryssi and the Cretan mainland works in two directions. First, a recurrent theme is the loss of archaeological evidence in the Ierapetra area as a result of development and agriculture; Chryssi provides a better preserved landscape through which to study the mainland indirectly. In this context, Chalikias argues the evidence of Bronze Age settlement on Chryssi, and eastern Crete generally, suggests the existence of a now-lost palace at Ierapetra. Conversely, the changing socio-economic organisation of the Ierapetra area (including the Hellenistic/Roman city of Hierapytna) is central to understanding the settlement and exploitation of Chryssi.

The island was intermittently occupied; sometimes trends mirrored those of mainland Crete (e.g. limited Geometric/Classical period settlement), other times, trends contrasted (e.g. limited Early Minoan III–Middle Minoan IA activity on Chryssi compared to the mainland). Settlement on the island expanded significantly in the Neopalatial period and included

a large site of 15–20 houses; their architecture and portable material culture point to a wealthy elite group. Murex shells suggest the manufacture of purple dye for export and the scale of this operation points to mainland palatial authority in the management of production and exchange.

Although the text touches on some of the debates around Mediterranean islands, it does not explore these in detail. Nonetheless it very effectively demonstrates the evolving relationships between Chryssi (and other nearby islands) and mainland Crete. In particular, they are contrasted with the Cyclades. The Cretan islands were “more like ‘satellites’ around a common cultural ‘horizon’” whereas the Cyclades were more active in “shaping their [own] culture” (p. 55); it appears that not all islands were equal. Curiously, given its prominence in the book’s title, the concept of marginality never receives clear definition. The emphasis put on connectivity argues against geographical isolation; indeed, Chalikias concludes that the small size of these islands meant they were always dependent on larger (mainland) settlements. Perhaps this marginality relates to the scarcity of freshwater and agricultural land; nonetheless, the richness of other resources (salt, murex shells, juniper berries, wood, sponges) which repeatedly attracted the attention of mainland palaces and cities, surely compensated.

If Chryssi was a ‘marginal’ Mediterranean island, Cyprus (along with Sicily and Malta) has probably been subject to more metaphors of centrality than most. *Crossroads and boundaries: the archaeology of past and present in the Malloura valley, Cyprus* sets out to explore this directly. The editors, TOUMAZOU, KARDULIAS and COUNTS, observe that “[m]any places claim the status of a crossroads, but few have the geographic credentials and chronological longevity to support such an assertion” (p. 1); Cyprus, they argue, is one of those places (though by page 4, we are told the island has “often been viewed as marginal to the evolution of western civilization” and by page 6 Cyprus is a “contested periphery”—a reminder that today’s crossroads may be tomorrow’s cul-de-sac).

The volume reports on the Athienou Archaeological Project (AAP), which has worked since 1990 in the Malloura valley on the edge of the Mesaoria plain of eastern Cyprus. The focus is a rural sanctuary, frequented between the Cypro-Geometric and Roman periods, and the nearby settlement and burial sites spanning from the Aceramic Neolithic to the Ottoman period.

The volume is divided into 6 sections. The first provides chapters on research questions, environment, historical background and previous work. A key focus is the relationship between cores and peripheries and “the process through which smaller, potentially marginal landscapes were incorporated into broader exchange systems both within and outside the island” (p. 159). The relationships also work on multiple scales, between town and hinterland, between city-states, and regionally between Anatolia, the Levant and Egypt. Another theme is cultural ecology or “the relationship between geography and humans” (p. 3).

Section II includes chapters on the field survey and excavation. The sanctuary was discovered and excavated during the mid-nineteenth century and then subsequently forgotten; it was rediscovered in 1991. Despite extensive looting, the AAP has recovered many limestone statues and terracotta figurines. The majority represent male deities: Herakles, Zeus Ammon, Bes, Apollo and Pan. Survey has identified a few lithic processing sites of possible Neolithic date, but no evidence of Bronze Age, Geometric or Archaic activity. One suggestion is that, during these periods, the area was a “semiperipheral interstice” (p. 101), a contested zone between external powers. Founded in the eighth century BC, the sanctuary therefore seems to have stood more or less in isolation until the development of a large village (c. 7ha) during the early Roman period. This settlement then formed the main population centre through to the Late Byzantine period.

Section III presents specialist reports on various categories of material and contributes to the volume’s themes of interaction and integration. Cofer, for example, interprets the numerous limestone statuettes of ‘Cypriot Pan’—which are only known from sanctuary sites around the Pediaios valley—in the context of the agricultural importance of the Mesaoria Plain. A major cereal-producing region, the area was the focus of military and colonial intervention during the second half of the first millennium BC. These encounters brought new demands but also new cultural influences; the resulting “Cypriot Pan dominated a region at the crossroads of Hellenistic armies and loyalties while serving the needs of the local shepherds and farmers” (p. 175).

Section IV focuses on bioarchaeological evidence and Section V showcases specialist studies including GIS analysis, geophysics and soil chemistry. Section VI

considers ethnoarchaeological and conservation work including a chapter by Yerkes on demography and traditional agriculture.

The editors conclude that Cypriot culture is best understood as a hybrid, selectively receiving, rejecting and reworking the external influences which have borne upon it for millennia. This flexibility permitted a unique blend of innovation and tradition: “the material culture of ancient Cyprus rarely seems insular but always remains unmistakably distinct” (p. 6). To explain this, the editors emphasise ‘negotiation’, or the active role of Cypriots in decisions about how to interact with the world around them (though the arrival of an army presumably constrained the terms of such negotiation), as well as “multiple tiers of interaction” (p. 356), that is, local, regional and Mediterranean scales. As a result, the “the Malloura Valley has been both a crossroad and a boundary region” (p. 355).

If, as the editors hope, the Malloura Valley is a “microcosm of the larger Mediterranean area” (p. 3), is it possible to find similar combinations of centrality and peripherality elsewhere? Just 70km from Cyprus on the southern coast of Turkey lay Cilicia. Historically, the region was divided into Rough (or rugged) Cilicia to the west and Smooth (or flat) Cilicia to the east. Mention Rough Cilicia to an ancient Greek or Roman, and one word would have sprung to mind: pirates! It is therefore no surprise that a number of papers in *Rough Cilicia: new historical and archaeological approaches*, edited by HOFF and TOWNSEND, focus on piracy. Less sensationally, other papers examine urban architecture and rural settlement.

If Cyprus was a cultural crossroads, a day’s sail away, Rough Cilicia presents a different image—an isolated and lawless backwater, a contested periphery between powers in the Aegean, Anatolia, the Levant and Egypt. De Souza’s paper, ‘Who are you calling pirates?’ cuts to the chase, demonstrating the moral and political context of the Greek and Roman sources on which so much of this vision depends. ‘Piracy’ was a categorisation used to justify aggressive imperialism in Cilicia (and elsewhere, including the Cretan city of Hierapytna, opposite Chryssi). Little wonder then that Tomaschitz labels piracy “an obscure phenomenon” (p. 55).

Undaunted, Rauh *et al.* report on the Rough Cilicia Survey Project which set out “to demonstrate the presence of Hellenistic-era pirates along the western

coast” (p. 59). Their chapter reviews the evidence collected. Underwater survey off the coast of the presumed pirate base at Antiochia ad Cragum has recovered a number of artefacts deemed “to bear directly on the question of piracy” (p. 66), including a Lamboglia 2 amphora. The latter could indicate the involvement of pirates in Roman slave trading via the island of Delos but is far from conclusive; likewise, anchors attest the presence of ships, but not necessarily pirate ships. An “equally promising line of investigation” (p. 67) attempts to take Plutarch at his word and to locate the pirate fortifications surrendered to Pompey the Great in 67 BC. The authors rehearse a detailed discussion of masonry styles and the possibilities of re-dating them to the relevant years before finally pronouncing that “[f]ew scholars are likely to accept such a scenario, any more than we ourselves are prepared to advance it” (p. 77)! The recognition that “no smoking gun has emerged to confirm the presence of pirates” is followed by a final observation that “[w]hat the remains of wooden anchors, Italian amphoras, and ashlar-constructed defences . . . do demonstrate, however, is an equivalent, countervailing void in evidence to the contrary” (p. 78). With little or no archaeological evidence in support of the thesis, the authors put the onus on the Doubting Thomases to disprove the pirates’ presence.

Elsewhere in the volume, interesting papers include Winterstein’s investigation of the possible monumental cenotaph for the emperor Trajan at Selinus, Lund’s exploration of the ceramic links between Rough Cilicia and north-western Cyprus, and Varinlioğlu’s survey of Late Antique settlement in the hinterland of Seleucia ad Calycadnum.

Rough Cilicia presents interesting insights but—like many conference proceedings—these do not add up to more than the sum of their parts. A theme which repeatedly arises is that “[t]he rugged terrain . . . offered protection to the inhabitants during times of invasion and played a major role in the acculturation process of the region” (p. vii). This notion that ‘marginal’ peoples (e.g. pirates, or more generally, bandits or pastoralists) live in ‘marginal’ environments derives directly from Greco-Roman thinking. With a couple of exceptions, however, the papers in this volume do not directly tackle this issue.

Next we turn west and head to Corinthia, that region of Greece which includes the narrow isthmus connecting the Peloponnese to the Greek mainland.

If Cyprus merits recognition as a crossroads, then we must surely concede similar status to this region. The city of Corinth grew powerful as a result of its control of this strategic neck of land—and paid the price as the target of Rome’s wrath in 146 BC; its re-foundation as a Roman colony recognised the location’s continuing geographical advantages. *The Corinthia and the northeast Peloponnese: topography and history from prehistoric times until the end of Antiquity*, edited by KISSAS and NIEMEIER, presents 56 papers, in English, Greek and German, resulting from a conference organised by the Directorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, the LZ’ Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities and the German Archaeological Institute, Athens. The number of papers, and the diverse projects reported, is astonishing. This wealth of activity is underlined in the introduction by Kissas who outlines the reasons for the establishment in 2004 of an inspectorate devoted solely to the archaeological heritage of Corinthia. He goes on to outline some of the projects facilitated including conservation, excavation, surveys and museums (though one suspects the multi-million euro budgets listed here are, for the immediate future, a thing of the past). Planning and development pressures are of particular concern and it is no coincidence that these include various road and rail construction projects. Kissas flags the discoveries resulting from work on the Corinth-Patras railway as especially important, noting they “literally rewrite the history of Corinth” (p. 7); examples from this particular project include the paper by Sarri on excavations at Derveni.

The papers are divided by geographical region and here we can only sample a couple of contributions pertinent to our broader themes. In this regard, an important paper is Lohmann’s ‘Der Diolkos von Korinth—eine antike Schiffsschlepe?’ (The Diolkos of Corinth—an ancient ship drag?) which assesses the identification of a paved road across the isthmus—first excavated by Verdalis in the 1950s—with references in the ancient texts to the hauling of ships overland between the Saronic and Corinth gulfs. Reviewing the texts, Lohmann observes that they only make mention of the haulage of warships during military operations and consequently he questions whether this route was employed for the regular transshipment of goods as widely believed. Turning to the archaeological evidence he demonstrates that the road’s paving comprises stone blocks recycled from a Classical- or even Hellenistic-period structure and

that the road might therefore have not been surfaced until as late as the Roman period, but without doubt not until long after the warships were crossing the isthmus in the fifth century BC (the latter, he argues, was achieved by the use of oxen and tree trunks and, unlike the road, made use of the shortest route). Koutsoumpa & Nakas also provide a paper on the Diolkos.

On the general theme of connectivity and the strategic location of Corinthia, we might also note contributions by Tartaron & Pullen on ‘The Saronic Harbors Archaeological Research Project’ and by Oikonomidis on ‘*Διακινήσεις, περάσματα και επικοινωνίες στη νεολιθική Κορίνθια*’ (Movements, passages and communications in Neolithic Corinthia), who notes the region to be “a space pierced by openings, natural arteries, passages and outlets that allow constant communication with neighbouring areas and even beyond” (p. 27). Other papers tackle urban monuments, cemeteries, sanctuaries and field surveys. Compared with the other volumes under review, these papers do not place much emphasis on connectivity and the wider Mediterranean context of Corinthia. That’s maybe a little surprising given the area’s inherent strategic significance—ancient and modern—though perhaps less so given the volume’s aim of bringing together and publicising the large number and wide range of projects across the region. The value of this volume lies not in relating Corinthia to the wider world of the past, but rather in promoting it to the wider world of today.

Albania and France

MICHAEL L. GALATY, OLS LAFE, WAYNE E. LEE & ZAMIR TAFILICA (ed.). *Light and shadow: isolation and interaction in the Shala valley of northern Albania* (Monumenta Archaeologica 28). xxvi+272 pages, 18 tables. 2013. Los Angeles (CA): Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press; 978-1-931745-71-0 hardback; \$65.

DAVID AUSTIN, ROSAMOND FAITH, ANDREW FLEMING & DAVID SIDDLE. *Cipières: community and landscape in the Alpes-Maritimes, France*. xvi+333 pages, 223 colour and b&w illustrations. 2013. Oxford: Windgather; 978-1-905119-99-8 paperback £38.

If islands are no longer seen as convenient ‘laboratories’ for the study of cultural development