

Preface

The present volume presents the results of the project “Modelling Archaeological Landscapes. Bridging Past and Present in Two Mediterranean Islands”, organized by the University of Heidelberg and the University of Catania in 2018 and funded by DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst/German Academic Exchange Foundation). The project’s main goal was to bring several stakeholders together and engage them into a dialogue about current and future strategies for a sustainable cultural management of archaeological sites and their natural environment. The papers and discussions revolved around the great potential of landscapes as a tool for promoting cultural heritage both at a scientific and at a social level. The importance of landscape lies, indeed, not only in its purely scientific significance as an analytical category but primarily in its capacity to provide a juncture between past and present as well as between archaeology and society.

The point of departure for this initiative has been the long cooperation and shared interests between the *Institut für Klassische Archäologie* of the University of Heidelberg, and the *Centro di Archeologia Cretese* of the University of Catania, both engaged in two long-term projects in southern Crete. The Heidelberg Institute of Classical Archaeology has been conducting an interdisciplinary field project in Koumasa since 2012 under the direction of Diamantis Panagiotopoulos, whereas the *Missione* of the *Centro di Archeologia Cretese* in Phaistos has been working under the direction of Pietro Militello on the site since 2013 within the wider project *Il Palazzo e la Città*, directed by Filippo Carinci. In the past years, both missions used their best efforts to fulfil the core of their scientific commitment, i.e. excavation, study, and publication. As directors of these missions, we have, however, realized that this devoted work is not enough to ensure a sustainable future for our archaeological projects. For achieving this goal, it is imperative to develop new strategies for making our sites—as well as our scientific work relating to them—appealing to a broader audience. In Koumasa, first innovative strategies have been initiated to unfold the potential of the ‘archaeological landscape’ as an interface between science and society, whereas in Phaistos a special emphasis was given on an efficient communication of the results of our investigations to the public. A multidisciplinary approach to communication and management has



Fig. 1 Moments at the end of conferences at Kapetaniana (Thalori Hotel) and Scicli (circolo V. Brancati)



Fig. 2 Excursion to the roman tombs in Matala (Crete)

Fig. 3 Excursion to the rock-cut dwellings of Chiafura (Scicli, Sicily)

also been fostered by the *Dipartimento di Scienze Umanistiche* of Catania, which set up a PhD course in Cultural Heritage (*Scienze per il patrimonio e la produzione culturale*). Therefore, the present project was also an attempt to strengthen relationships and synergies between the two institutions and make them more efficient.

The means to reach this goal was the organization of two workshops in Crete and Sicily, two similar Mediterranean regions, the heritage sites of which present similar problems and challenges. The circle of participant included not only specialists and representatives from different national and local institutions but also PhD students of archaeology from Greece, Germany and Italy. The choice of two marginal sites without an academic background as venues of the workshops, the village of Kapetaniana, in southern Crete, with its splendid location in the iconic landscape of the Asterousia mountains, and the breathtaking baroque town of Scicli, in southern Sicily, was intended for stressing the social and economic role of cultural heritage for local development and for enabling a more active participation of local communities in our initiative. We thought that two international meetings on this subject would enhance not only our work but also the work of our colleagues who are active in similar areas and facing similar problems. The first workshop at Kapetaniana was entitled “Archaeological Landscapes: towards a Multisensorial Perception of Space and Time”. It was dedicated to the exploration of new ways of promoting and perceiving past and present landscapes as an inseparable whole. The second workshop at Scicli, on “Archaeological Landscape and Minor Cultural Heritage. Reconstructing the Past as a Living Entity” focused on strategies of enhancement of the rich patrimony of small, scattered, and sometimes humble monuments on Sicily such as rock cut tombs or dwellings.

Since topics and discussions between the two meetings unavoidably overlapped, we decided to merge selected papers of both workshops into a single publication. The collective volume was foreseen to appear in 2020. However, due to the pandemic crisis, the publication of the proceedings took longer time than originally envisaged. Moreover, the closure of libraries hindered some speakers to deliver their contributions. We certainly regret this delay, yet we are happy that despite these difficulties, the present articles provide a fairly good impression of the themes and the lively discussion of both meetings.

Thanks are due to many people and institutions for their support: the archaeological services in Crete and Sicily (*Ephoreia Archaeoteton Herakleiou* and *Soprintendenza BBCCAA di Ragusa* with its former director, Calogero Rizzuto); the *Parco Archeologico di Camarina e Cava d'Ispica* with its former director Giovanni Di Stefano); Markos and Popi Skordalakis in Kapetaniana for their hospitality; and Franco Causarano and the *Associazione Vitaliano Brancati* in Scicli for providing a venue for the Sicilian workshop and for its warm welcome to the guests. We are also indebted to the organizing staff of the workshops, Marianna Figuera and Paola Santospagnuolo, as well as to Andreas Neumann for the photographs of the Kapetaniana workshop. Finally, we owe sincere thanks to Michele Mitrovich for Eng-

lish language polishing and to *FORUM ANTIKE – Freundeskreis zur Förderung der Klassischen Archäologie und des Antikenmuseums der Universität Heidelberg* for the financial support that ensured the completion of the present volume.

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