

Men, Goods and Ideas Travelling over the Sea: Cilicia at the Crossroad of Eastern Mediterranean Trade Network

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Thanks to its specific geographic position, at the crossroads of the most important sea and land routes, in a necessary point of transition and interconnection between Syria, Cyprus and Egypt, Cilicia has always played a distinctive role within the context of cultural and commercial exchanges in the Mediterranean area. In particular, during its romanization, that gradually took place and was subsequently intensified with the constitution of the province, the commercial relations with various areas of the empire and in particular with the Eastern Mediterranean, which were substantially and constantly maintained until the first Byzantine age, were of fundamental importance. This area of Anatolia has recently become object of a renewed interest on behalf of Turkish and international universities and research institutions. These research projects are providing new insights on significant sites as Kelenderis and Elaiussa Sebaste that can be considered case-studies for the analysis of the development of historical, archaeological and paleo-environmental knowledge of southeastern Anatolia almost until the 7th century AD.

They also offer a unique opportunity for the application of innovative technologies and models taking into account the overall potential of the area – not only from the point of view of its archaeological heritage, but also from that of its natural environment – in order to establish a homogeneous relationship between people, nature and monuments.

Aim of this panel is the assessment of the present knowledge on production exchanges, trade and transport in the Mediterranean, analyzing and discussing new diachronic evidence of the network of Cilicia's relations. In addition it outlines an exhaustive picture of the changes and transformation involving the region and its urban centers throughout centuries as a result of large-scale economic and social processes. The definition of the maritime, fluvial and land-routes that connected the coastal settlements of Cilicia to the interior and to other regions of the Mediterranean basin is discussed and clarified through the integrated use of underwater research, archaeological and geophysical investigations about the harbors' basins, study of the production facilities, analysis of material culture and numismatic evidence. The following papers provide a great amount of information and offer diverse perspectives on the role played by the region - both as a production center and a market place – but also as a strategical node – within the network of the ancient Mediterranean trade-routes. They further implement data concerning Roman and Byzantine port basins, creating standard samples for comparative use by other research programs underway in Cilicia and in eastern and southern Turkey.