

European Islands between Isolated and Interconnected Life Worlds. Interdisciplinary Long-Term Perspectives Conference

Veranstalter: Frerich Schön / Laura Dierksmeier / Annika Condit / Valerie Palmowski / Anna Kouremenos, Sonderforschungsbereich (SFB) 1070, Universität Tübingen

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MARTIN BARTELHEIM (Tübingen), speaker of Sonderforschungsbereich (SFB) 1070, welcomed historians, archaeologists, geographers and literary scientists to Tübingen to discuss the dichotomy of isolation and interconnectivity of European islands from the Neolithic era up to modern times. LAURA DIERKSMEIER (Tübingen) began by introducing the 12th century map of the Mediterranean by Muhammad al-Idrisi that was selected as the poster image for the conference. With south oriented at the top, it allowed the conference participants to see the well-known Mediterranean and its islands with fresh perspectives. FRERICH SCHÖN (Tübingen) introduced the work group which organized the conference, demonstrating how a focus on island developments (short and long-term), movements (of people, things, and ideas), and evaluations (emic and etic Perspectives) encompassed relevant topics including: colonisation, architecture, hybrid identities, exile, social mobility, knowledge, disease, crisis, and migration.

Prehistoric Archaeologist HELEN DAWSON (Berlin) and Geographer JONATHAN PUGH (Newcastle) held their presentation in the form of an interdisciplinary conversation on the relevance of island studies to past, present and future societal issues. The speakers showed that not only geological processes have shaped the earth throughout history, but also humans have impacted every time period. Both disciplines, thus, can offer explanations to questions of human interactions with islands, their physical and cultural boundaries and connections. Pugh and Dawson argued that islands and islanders should not be

seen as passive victims in processes of development, but as generative and active agents. In addition, the speakers argued that outsiders often perceive of islanders as „resilient“ but islanders should be more included in such debates.

SIETZE NORDER (Amsterdam/Lisboa) explored how global changes in the Anthropocene manifest on islands. He showed how human-environment interactions evolved over time on five archipelagos in the Atlantic Ocean (Azores, Canary Islands, Cap Verde, Gulf of Guinea). The settlement of these islands by humans resulted in the introduction of numerous plants and caused the extinction of several birds. Furthermore, Norder highlighted the role of the Atlantic Ocean islands as microcosms and catalysts of global change. For example, the islands were steppingstones in the conquest of the Americas and the subsequent biological and cultural exchanges. Finally, Norder argued that each proposed onset of the Anthropocene evokes a particular narrative about local contributions to global change.

DUNJA BROZOVIĆ RONČEVIĆ (Zadar) analysed Croatian islands from the perspective of an ethno-linguist, demonstrating wide-ranging geographical and linguistic influences. Language, argues Brozović Rončević, is an innovative approach to see how islanders define themselves, their identity and the island way of life. She noted three main aspects: first, the wind is noted as characteristic because of its smell and strength. Second, time is characterized by the waiting for a boat that connects an island with the mainland. Third, the dialect which can distinguish one village from the other. In the Croatian islanders' perspective, they talk about „the island“ when they refer to their island, not specifying it more, making it the centre of their world and creating a form of isolation.

Based on numerous excavations, ALEXANDER SMITH (New York) and MARGALIDA COLL (Mallorca) discussed the similarities and differences between the Balearic Islands of Mallorca and Menorca in the Late Iron Age, comparing their funerary practises. Mallorca shows more of a variety of grave types and localities, which appears to contrast the consistency of artificial cave systems used for buri-

als in Menorca. Also, the grave goods differ in some respects, pointing to isolation between the cultures to a certain degree, while other objects found on both islands show a degree of connectivity between the two as well as to Ibiza and the Mediterranean more generally. This leads to the question of whether a sense of connectivity between the islands may have been the central reason for their differences, as they may have wanted to create their own unique identity to differentiate themselves from one another.

Presenting the results of recent field work at the settlement of *Maa-Palaeokastro* on Cyprus, KYLE JAZWA (Durham) focused on responses on islands to the crisis at the end of the Late Bronze Age. Several aspects of construction during the site's initial settlement event in comparison to other settlements from the same time period suggest that Maa had been built with long-term stability in mind, while sacrificing some robustness of the architecture for greater speed and efficiency. This response is reflective of the settlers' perceptions of island settings as attractive, yet vulnerable places during periods of crisis. Similar qualities, however, are not found at contemporaneous settlements elsewhere due to unique geographic, historical, and other factors.

In contrast to the shoreline settlements analysed by Kyle Jazwa, DAVID HILL (Oslo) examined the island of Naxos and its inland response to crisis in the mid-seventh century. Hill argued that people of Naxos relocated vulnerable coastal settlements to the central zone of the island and built a fortified capital at *Kastro Apalirou*. He claims that the island had been passively connected with Late Roman maritime networks due to the lack of a natural harbour, and because of established sailing routes further east. Hill argued that Naxos could give the feeling one was living on the mainland; the island perspective could be garnered only once one left the island.

In her keynote speech, Geographer BEATE RATTER (Hamburg) focused on the question whether islands are „more than land surrounded by water“. She stresses that islands can be perceived as idyllic and magical hideaways with a notion of utopia. But they are more than that: Small islands have been

viewed as important outposts in the colonial period and until today they are important pawns in the game of geopolitical interests. Ratter emphasized throughout her speech that islands can be accessed through two categories: space and place. Place refers to a distinctive location, often characterized by the people living on it, while space refers to something that is socially produced and consumed and is therefore constantly influenced and shaped by external influences. Ratter remarks that islands are both, space and place, and gives ample examples to override this dichotomy.

SERGIOS MENELAOU (Sheffield) argued that islands and the Anatolian coastlands in the East Aegean region were often considered through the lens of boundedness and separateness. However, he maintained that archaeological remains from the third millennium BC, particularly ceramic evidence, demonstrate shifting modes of connectivity between islands, and between islands and the nearby mainland. Menelaou concluded that the Aegean is an excellent research area where the lines between insularity and connectivity are blurred and generalised models of connectivity need to be questioned.

ZEYNEP YELÇE (Istanbul) and ELA BOZOK (Florenz) discussed routes of news through islands in the Mediterranean Sea. Four cases of news networks were discussed, in which news from Ottomans and Venetians travelled from the East, as far as Syria and Egypt, to Venice. In those cases, especially the islands of Corfu, Crete, Cyprus and Rhodes had an important role as transfer points for news on their way to the European Mainland. The speakers pointed out, however, that it is not enough to simply look at the geographical points of news in order to trace back the dynamics of news networks. Also the persons who functioned as news transmitters had an impact on the form of Early Modern island message traffic.

MARTA DÍAZ ZORITA-BONILLA (Tübingen) analysed one of the four ritual caves in Menorca, the *Biniadris Cave*, which was in continuous use for more than 700 years (1250–542 BCE). It shows a clear form of organized space, a variety of funerary practises within the space, as well as a strong use of

symbolism. Bioarchaeological methods employed by Díaz Zorita-Bonilla provide insight into the age of the individuals buried there, the sex distribution, the diseases the individuals had, their diet, specific forms of bodily treatments and the origin of the grave goods (textiles, wood-objects, manufactures and ceramic goods) found in the cave. Díaz Zorita-Bonilla analysis reveals a direct connection with other areas in the Mediterranean and is a prime example to study the *longue durée* of island funerary practices.

FRANCESCA BONZANO (Milano) focused on the Maltese archipelago with special attention on the timespan between the 4th and the 3rd century BC to analyse the architectural culture of the Tas-Silg sanctuary. During the Phoenician as well as the Punic period, the island had been subject to different influences, from Sicily, Egypt, Carthage, as well as pirate and trade networks. Those influences manifest themselves in the temple structure, the coinage, the plant decorations and especially the structural language of the sanctuary. The combination of different influences make the Maltese archipelago, as Bonzano concludes, a place of great dynamism for studying island communities and their religious practices.

MARÍA HERNÁNDEZ-OJEDA (New York) stressed the importance of characterizing the Canary Islands in their proper place, at the crossroads of Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Archaeological findings prove connections to Africa predating the European Conquest. The archipelagos' location and natural environment clearly influenced the history and development of the indigenous peoples' heritage. The cross-cultural framework shaped the identity of Canarian indigenous inhabitants, los Guanches, which is reflected in the so-called monumental reality, where indigenous handcrafted and decorated basalt or obsidian artefacts are overshadowed by an excessive influence of Spanish colonialism.

ERICA ANGLIKER (London) analysed the Cycladic Archipelago as an example on how spaces are globally defined and how boundaries set during Antiquity were fluid. The sanctuary of Artemeis Tauropolos on the island of Ikaria is an example of how cultural elements wandered from Asia Minor to

the Cyclades. Angliker introduced the island of Pholegandros, where a cave cultic site served as a pilgrimage centre for Cycladic and maritime communities, demonstrating a close connection to the Eastern Aegean. Both islands feature enough material evidence on cultic practices to suggest that their boundaries need to be reconsidered and reassigned to either the East Aegean or to the Cyclades. Angliker stressed that the island's interactions with its surroundings and the influences received over time are reflected in historical documents; they suggest the islands should not be grouped according to their geographical delimitations, but rather according to their cultural and religious identities.

HANNAH NÜLLEN (Halle) focused on Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* and several early eighth-century Saints' Lives, which serve as ideal sources for analysing island identity. By employing Yuri Lotman's concept of space in artistic texts, she demonstrated that islands were imagined in opposition to the European continent on a topographical, topological and semantic level. Due to their initial portrayal as anti-Christian, uncivilised and peripheral, islands can be conceptualised as the so-called anti-field, which is separated from the mainland by an impenetrable boundary. She showed that the saints depicted in the eighth-century sources are uniquely able to cross this border, leading to a dissolution of the impenetrable boundary as well as the anti-field itself. Consequently, islands were no longer imagined in opposition to the continent but as a part of an all-encompassing Christendom.

KATRIN DAUTEL (Malta) deconstructed insularity and islands metaphorical constructions from a literary perspective, studying exemplars such as Judith Schallansky's *Atlas of Remote Islands*. Against the backdrop of Certeau's theory of the two-fold appropriation of space, she explored the imaginary construction of the island space from two perspectives: appropriation of the island from below by walking, often starting with the arrival from the sea, and from a bird's eye perspective from above on the other. These perspectives, Dautel argued, create two opposite notions of the island and contribute to the establishment of various discourses on the in-

sular, representing different power structures and critical takes on society, confirming as well as subverting established discourses.

In the final discussion, Dierksmeier and Schön summarized overarching topics discussed during the conference, including island visibility, connectivity, space versus place, hubs of information, material culture, religious structures in comparative perspective, cultural and religious identities, the spatial turn, narratives in literature, deep-time, race and gender, landscapes, constructed places, emic and etic perspectives, maritime crises, and the depletion of resources. ANNA KOUREMENOS (Athens) led a discussion on next steps, where participants shared information on future publication projects, teaching tools, conferences, and digital resources (e.g. the Integrated Island Data Bank from the University of Hamburg).

Conference overview:

Opening Words

Martin Bartelheim (Tübingen): Welcome Address

Frerich Schön / Laura Dierksmeier (Tübingen): Introduction

Session 1 – Interdisciplinary Island Studies: Concepts and Approaches

Chair: Anna Kouremenos (Athens)

Helen Dawson (Berlin) / Jonathan Pugh (Newcastle): The Lure of Islands: A Cross-disciplinary Conversation

Sietze Norder (Amsterdam / Lisboa): How Islands Shape the Anthropocene: Legacies of Past Human-environment Interactions

Dunja Brozović Rončević (Zadar): What Does it Mean to be an Islander in Croatia?

Session 2 – Shorelines of Contingency: Developments and Adaptations in Insular Spaces

Chair: Valerie Palmowski (Tübingen)

Alexander J. Smith (New York) / Margalida Coll (Mallorca): Disentangling the Late Talayotic: Understanding Island Identities through Funerary Practices in the Balearic Islands during the Late Iron Age

Kyle Jazwa (Durham): Insular Architecture

and Settlement Planning during a Crisis: The Case of Maa-Palaeokastro (Cyprus)

David Hill (Oslo): Urban relocation and settlement adaption on Naxos from the Early to Middle Byzantine periods

Keynote Lecture

Thomas Scholten (Tübingen): Introduction to the Keynote Lecture

Beate Ratter (Hamburg): More than Land Surrounded by Water? A Geographer's View on Island Spatiality

Session 3 – Insular Roots and Routes: Movement of Knowledge, People, and Practices

Chair: Laura Dierksmeier (Tübingen)

Sergios Menelaou (Sheffield): Shifting Modes of Insularity and Connectivity in the East Aegean during the Third Millennium BC: The View from Pottery Analysis

N. Zeynep Yelçe (Istanbul) / Ela Bozok (Florence): Islands as Transit Posts in the News Networks of Early Sixteenth Century

Francesca Bonzano (Milano): Maltese Islands between Isolation and Interconnections: The Point of View of the Architectural Language

Marta Díaz-Zorita Bonilla (Tübingen): Island Connectivity, Social Identity and Ritual Knowledge Transfer: The Biniadrís Cave (Menorca, Spain)

Session 4 – Blurred Boundaries: Island Perceptions in Emic and Etic Perspectives

Chair: Annika Condit (Tübingen)

María Hernández-Ojeda (New York): African Islands, European Thoughts: A Case Study of the Indigenous Archaeology in the Canarian Archipelago

Erica Angliker (London): Ikaria and Pholegandros: Distinguishing Religious Identity in Archipelagos and Islands

Hanna Nüllen (Halle): Converting the Island: Narratives of Insular Transformation in Early Anglo-Saxon Historio- and Hagiography

Katrin Dautel (Malta): Of Frogs and Birds: Approaches to the Island between Practice and the Imaginary

Concluding Remarks

Laura Dierksmeier / Frerich Schön (Tübingen)

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