

KERSTIN HÖGHAMMAR, BRITA ALROTH & ADAM LINDHAGEN (ed.) *Ancient ports: the geography of connections* (Boreas: Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Civilizations 34) 2016. 346 pages, numerous b&w illustrations. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis; 978-91-554-9609-8 hardback SEK 305.

This volume presents the proceedings of a conference held in 2010 at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University. As common with such volumes, we have had to wait six years for the publication, with the result that the contributions, through no fault of the authors, are already dated. That said, the articles represent a significant contribution to the study of networks in the ancient Mediterranean and a short review can hardly do justice to the wealth of scholarship contained therein. Another common drawback with such volumes is the lack of an extended preface or introduction by the editors to place the contributions in their scholarly context, and this is the case here. To some extent, however, the opening paper by Reger provides such an introduction to port networks both in the Mediterranean and in the deserts of Egypt. This is certainly an interesting and thought-provoking study, but is somewhat limited in scope. More could have been said, for example, on the Roman period, and on caravan cities in the Near East and their connections to the Mediterranean.

An excellent paper by Archibald focuses on the integration of ports and inland areas based on the Pistiros inscription from Thrace. Also brought into the discussion are archaeological remains, coins and ceramics. In all, this is a balanced piece though a translation of the inscription would have been valuable, especially as the *editio princeps* is not readily accessible. Coastal and inland connectivity is also the subject of the papers by Bonnier and Höghammar. Bonnier focuses on the Corinthian Gulf, especially Achaia. He argues that inland settlements lay close to accessible routes and that a high level of mobility between the coast and interior is documented in the archaeological record. Höghammar's substantial paper concentrates on Kos and its 'international' connections (though 'international' may not be an appropriate term here). The study is based on a range of evidence, mainly inscriptions and coins. Networks of *proxenoi* (ambassadors) attested epigraphically are used to demonstrate Koan contacts with other states, while coins, both Koan and foreign allow Höghammar to assess contacts further afield. The important Hellenistic theme of *asylia* (asylum) is also addressed in order to situate Kos within the new environment of the Hellenistic world, where *poleis* were juggling their own interests and their relations with kings.

Kokkorou-Alevras, Grigoropoulos, Diamanti and Koutsompou drill more deeply into Koan matters with a paper devoted to the site of Halasarna. Their study, primarily based on ceramics, suggests that local products were traded extensively overseas throughout the classical period and they argue for the importance of the port and its trade in forging the development of the surrounding region

WITCHER 3/1/17 11:14

Comment: Is this an acceptable gloss?

WITCHER 3/1/17 11:16

Comment: Ditto

over the *longue durée*. A wider-ranging paper by Bouras follows, in which she considers harbours in the Aegean more generally, though with a focus on the Roman imperial period. While literary sources might imply the separation and isolation of islands, archaeological evidence indicates networks and hierarchies of harbours within the region. The discussion of the more esoteric geographical sources—above and beyond Strabo and Pausanias—is particularly useful.

The remaining papers shift the focus west to the central Mediterranean. Lindhagen continues the theme of the integration of ports and inland communities with a study of Narona in Dalmatia, stressing the role of its geographical location in the development of the port over time. The emphasis on Narona's importance as a centre of the wine trade is a welcome and important contribution to our knowledge. Lentini, Blackman and Pakkanen offer a study of the Sicilian port of Naxos in the fifth century BC. The precise location of the port was unknown until the recent discovery of a series of shipsheds. It now seems clear that the harbour was within the city walls and close to the *agora*. Thus it served two purposes: a naval base and an important trade node.

With the final three papers, we come to Italy. First, two excellent papers consider the port system of Rome. Boetto's paper considers the river port of Ostia at the mouth of the Tiber and the maritime harbour of Portus on the nearby coast, before moving on to look at the river port within the city of Rome itself. Boetto concentrates on the archaeological evidence and, importantly, she examines the interaction between rivers and canals; it is a pity this paper does not incorporate more of the readily available literary and documentary evidence—this is where an important contribution could be made. Simon Keay's paper on Portus extends its focus to wider Mediterranean connections and, especially, the harbours of Hispalis in Spain and Lepcis Magna in Africa. He addresses some important issues: the capacity of ports, state involvement in port activities, volume of shipping between ports and the economic integration of the Mediterranean. These topics would be ambitious for monograph, let alone a paper, but they do indicate the direction in which future research might head. Again, however, it should be stressed that archaeological evidence alone does not provide the full picture. Finally, Malmberg considers the port of Ravenna on the Adriatic coast as a naval base, commercial centre and regional capital. It was Augustus who first developed Ravenna as a naval base, and its importance grew through to its heyday in the High and Late Empire. Like all ports, geographical location was key, and while Ravenna enjoyed an excellent and commanding coastal location, it also benefitted from good riverine communications with its immediate hinterland and beyond; canals extended these communications. Strabo has important things to say about this region, but his observations are oddly absent here.

Overall, this volume offers a range of important papers on commerce and communication in the classical Mediterranean. The presentation of the volume is impressive and it is particularly well

illustrated—the use of colour plates is very welcome and should be noted by other publishers. While certainly making an important contribution to our knowledge, the volume also shows that future research must better integrate the archaeological and written evidence.

COLIN E.P. ADAMS

Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology, University of Liverpool, UK

(Email: colin.adams@liverpool.ac.uk)