

BUILDING BRIDGES. AN INTRODUCTION

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*I ponti gli piacevano, uniscono separazioni,
come una stretta di mano unisce due persone.
I ponti cuciono strappi, annullano vuoti,
avvicinano lontananze.*

Mauro Corona, *La casa dei sette ponti*, Milano, 2012¹

This volume marks the first in a new monographic series, *Bridges*, whose aim is to publish the results of the bilateral projects the National Research Council of Italy undertakes with various foreign scientific institutions. The series can be further organized into differing sub-sections, related to the countries involved.

The present publication – the first volume in the *Bridges: Italy Montenegro series* – gives an account of the numerous joint-research projects that since 2015 the CNR has conducted with Montenegrin institutions belonging to the Ministry of Sciences and Ministry of Culture of Montenegro. The main topics are related to cultural heritage studies dealing with matters both physical and intangible, with particular reference to the more innovative methodologies and technologies. Already in an advanced stage of preparation is the second volume in this series. Edited by Carla Sfameni, it concerns the history of the Italian involvement in the archaeology of Montenegro from the 19th century to the present day.

The history of the CNR participation in Montenegro is very recent. In 2013, a first scientific agreement was signed by the former CNR President, Professor Luigi Nicolais,

¹ 'He liked bridges, they unify separate entities, as a handshake joins two persons. Bridges sew up torn holes, fill in empty gaps, and bring far-off things nearer'.

with Professor Sanja Vlahović, then Minister of Science of Montenegro and actually Ambassador of Montenegro in Rome. The agreement, realized thanks to the passionate activity of the then Ambassador of Italy at Podgorica, Vincenzo Del Monaco, anticipated that even more formal and high-level agreements would be signed by the two countries in the following years.

Following the 2013 first agreement, the first call for a joint proposal was opened immediately in 2014: as is the CNR tradition, this envisaged a very simple but effective scheme, in which Italian and foreign research groups cooperated on a common program, with reciprocal visits and exchanges. In this way, the participants have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of each other and so to evaluate the chances of developing common scientific projects in the future.

That is what exactly happened with the first bilateral project, dealing in cultural heritage studies. Entitled ‘Mediterranean Cultural Heritage: Italy and Montenegro – Perceptions and Perspectives’, it was carried out in 2015-2016 by the Historical Institute of the University of Montenegro (HIM-UoM) and the former Institute for Ancient Mediterranean Studies of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR-ISMA; today subsumed into the newly created Institute for Heritage Sciences – CNR-ISPC).

In June 2015, the CNR-ISMA team visited Montenegro for the first time, to demonstrate to the researchers of the Historical Institute how the CNR Institutes deal with cultural heritage studies. Under the guidance of their Montenegrin colleagues, they had also the great opportunity to visit the most important archaeological and historical sites of Montenegro, intending to identify sites for future possible joint researches. In the same year, the Montenegrin team visited Rome and the Institute, in a further exchange of research methodologies and approaches.

At the end of the second year, a closing workshop was held at the Rectorate of the University of Montenegro in Podgorica, where the two teams presented the results of the first two years of activities, proposing then some perspectives for the future (Fig. 1). The present publication is the account of this workshop, showing the communal effort made by the two groups to communicate and to find a common path. Even if both the HIM-UoM and the CNR-ISMA may be considered as humanistic institutions, they, we could say, were chronologically distanced, because they were concerned with different historical periods and used different research methodologies. The Italian team is more familiar with Bronze Age to Late Antiquity archaeology, using often new technologies applied to cultural heritage. The Montenegrin team similarly is more expert in medieval and modern history, using often archival researches as the core of their scientific activities. But in a few years, the desire to communicate and collaborate has produced a new and virtual scientific ‘bridge’ over the



Fig. 1 The participants at the workshop held in the Rectorate of the Montenegro University in Podgorica, on the occasion of the first bilateral project between the Historical Institute of the University of Montenegro (HIM-UoM) and the former Institute for Ancient Mediterranean Studies of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR-ISMA) (23rd September 2016).

Adriatic Sea, ensuring an increase of traffic in exchanges, projects and publications and so creating common ground where all the respective competencies have value.

The present volume mirrors this initial phase of our collaboration, the phase of ‘getting to know each other’, in which the different researchers set out their stalls in their clear efforts to find shared interests for collaboration. The papers are very different; they are here organized, more or less, following a chronological and thematic sequence.

But there is one element characterizing all the contributions, namely the cross-cultural approach that emerges in every, albeit so different, piece of research. From Antiquity to Contemporaneity, there is a focus on the similarities and contrasts attendant on the meeting and exchanges between practitioners of different material culture and cultures. Many of the published results promote the creation of new and more fluid concepts of identity, ones constantly in the process of transformation.

The first paper, by Lucia Alberti, deals with the search for identity of ancient human groups and what possibilities we have as researchers of detecting ancient identities through material culture analysis. Focused on southern Aegean cultural relations during the mid-2nd millennium BC, the paper is actually introduced by a short account of the first travels and archaeological researches of Sir Arthur Evans at the end of the 19th century. Evans's name and celebrity is indissolubly linked with the 'discovery' of the palace at Knossos, but before his activities in Crete, he visited, lived and conducted excavations in the Balkans, traversing also Montenegro and visiting the Roman town of Doclea. More specifically, the paper describes in some detail the case-study of the detected changes in the Knossos material culture of the mid-15th century BC, with specific reference to the so-called 'warrior graves', and the question of mainlanders controlling Knossos then.

The second paper, by Sergio Ribichini, concerns the myths related to Kadmos and his travels in Illyria, the territory more or less covering present Albania and Montenegro. After a precise examination of the Greek myths, the paper goes through the Illyrian names, places and landscapes, all connected with the prince Kadmos and his descendants, illustrating the different versions of the Kadmos and Harmonia myth – something very well known in Illyrian history. Recent studies have brought to light new data on the 'greekness' of the Adriatic area and the places connected with Kadmos, giving particular emphasis on his death and burial place as understood in the 5th century BC. The paper testifies how the mythical data can help reconstruct, on one hand, the Greek perception of the Balkans and, on the other, the Illyrian perception of a Greek myth. The Greeks through the hero's narrative could justify their colonialist movement into the Adriatic, and the Illyrians, at the same time, could glorify their origins by connecting themselves to such a magnificent ancestor.

The paper by Carla Sfameni is an updated account of the Roman archaeological remains in Montenegro. After the Romanization process involving the creation of provinces and *municipia*, in Late Antiquity Roman Dalmatia was divided into two provinces, Dalmatia and Praevalitana, to which latter territory modern Montenegro belongs. Recent studies suggest that during the Roman period Montenegro was a territory with a high level of cross-cultural exchanges, even if, unfortunately, the knowledge of its archaeological remains is still partial. Three main Roman cities are known up to now: Doclea in inner Montenegro, Risan on the coast, and Municipium S on the borders with Serbia. Doclea is presented in detail with its imposing ancient walls and the main monuments: the *forum*, a *basilica*, temples, *thermae*, a *domus* and the later remains of three medieval churches. The evidence coming from the Montenegrin countryside still remains very poor, even if traces of Roman villas, scattered mosaics and tombs have been found especially on the coast between Budva and Bar.

Olga Pelcer-Vujačić explores the difficult topic of perceived identity in the Roman settlements of south-eastern Dalmatia, analysing how the Roman conquest produced changes in the indigenous identities and in the civic elites. Through a detailed analysis of the epigraphic evidence, the paper underlines the different nuances of the Romanization as evidenced by names and careers. From the Docleates tribal aristocracy, who used Latin for their inscriptions but had not yet fully Romanized their names, to local family names in which the Roman elements are slowly being insinuated. If some settlements present a predominance of specific names, as the name *Flavii* in Doclea, others, as Municipium S, testify to no strict ethnic division, with mixed marriages, and Illyrian names present in Roman families and *vice versa*. Yet others, as Risinium (Risan) on the coast, have a high percentage of families coming in from the Italian peninsula. The analysis offers new insights for the reconstruction of individual and group dynamics between immigrant and indigenous persons in the Roman and Late Antiquity periods.

Tatjana Koprivica presents traces of religion and cultic activities detectable at Doclea, the second town of Roman Dalmatia. The author reconstructs a very rich religious framework, collecting both epigraphic evidence and archaeological remains, some of them not anymore extant and recovered from archival sources. Thanks to textual references and sculptural fragments at Doclea, it is possible to prove the lengthy existence of the Imperial Cult, one of the well-conceived methods of the Romans in promoting political propaganda. Other important deities worshipped at Doclea were the Capitoline Triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, and other divinities such as Roma, Diana, Neptune, and Mercury. Other traces testify to the town's cosmopolitan character: an altar, now lost, mentions the Greek deity Ananke, and a Jewish tomb from one of the Late Antiquity cemeteries of Doclea constitutes one of the few Jewish monuments preserved within the Balkan peninsula.

With the paper of Dragana Kujović, we face the issue of the museological display of Ottoman ethnographic items. In a philosophical and semantic/semiotic attempt to decode the language employed in museum exhibitions, the author unveils the different ways of reading and interpreting such a display. The various items, in both their physical aspect and their symbolic connotation, are silent contributors to an unwritten text, by which the curator, setting them in some concrete context, may offer to the viewer a multiplicity of possible meanings and readings. Comparing the Homeland museums of Bar and Ulcinj, the same objects assume different meanings when presented in different contexts. The cross and the crescent, usually interpreted as Catholic and Muslim symbols, can be used and interpreted differently, depending on the allusions and comparisons drawn from different realities and narratives.

The paper of Slavko Burzanović introduces the history of the relationships between the Kingdom of Italy and the Principality of Montenegro at the beginning of the 20th century, giving a fresh and interesting account of the commercial activities carried out in the area of Bar by Italian capitalists. The Compagnia di Antivari, financed by Italian banks and factories and by private investors, started a very ambitious project to build the new town of Bar on the southern coast of Montenegro. In a period of less than ten years, the new town was planned and a modern harbour, the quays, berthing channels at Lake Skadar, a railway, new buildings like the Marina Hotel, storehouses and processing facilities for tobacco plants were all established. New radiotelegraphy stations were established both in Bar and in Bari, connecting Montenegro to the European Telegraph Network. However, changes in the political situation prevented the project from being completed: some buildings like the theatre were never realized at all.

Paola Moscati illustrates the more recent trends in archaeological computing, with specific attention to the projects carried out in the Mediterranean and, in particular, in the Adriatic area, where already in the early 1990s there had been realized the first GIS-based project. Many of the achieved and of the yet in progress activities are urban and landscape projects employing extensive use of GIS, remote sensing and 3D reconstruction: examples are the Burnum, the Potenza valley, and the Doclea projects. Recent technological progress, as in the use of sophisticated sonars and robotic underwater archaeology and in innovative data-recording procedures for the reconstruction of ancient architecture, has accelerated considerably. Advances have been accomplished in the processes of classification and recording of archaeological artefacts and in the construction of European digital infrastructures involving both coasts of the Adriatic Sea. The topic of data sharing in science and education is also presented, with specific reference to the open-access policy and the experience of the international journal *Archeologia e Calcolatori*.

Snezana Pejović offers a paper that reconstructs the steps of a digitization project realized by Italian and Montenegrin archivists alongside ICT personnel. The project executed the digitization of a very important archival fond kept in the Kotor Historical Archives, part of the National Archives of Montenegro. The fond contains administrative, diplomatic, political and military documents in different languages, belonging to the period of the Venetian rule in Istria and Dalmatia. Through the implementation and translation of the ICT tools, communication between two archival traditions, the Italian and the Montenegrin, and between different languages and alphabets was successfully carried out. Accordingly, the 30,000 original and very damaged documents can be kept safely untouched in the archive and instead be consulted online in high resolution.

The present book, as said before, is the expression of our first collaboration, aimed at building a common methodological ground. The effort was successful and by 2016, the two teams started a closer and larger collaboration: namely an important project for the re-study and enhancement of the Roman town of Doclea. Located a few kilometres from the capital Podgorica, Doclea is one of the more important ancient settlements for Montenegro, being considered by the local population as a place of cultural identity, linking their history with that of Italy and the ancient Mediterranean. Significantly Doclea, as cited also in this volume, was one of the sites we first visited in 2015, when it was proposed by our Montenegrin colleagues as one possible fruitful place for collaboration. Since then, many projects on Doclea have followed: establishing a Joint Archaeological Laboratory (Archeo-Lab 2017-2018), a Great Relevance Program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy (MAECI, 2018-2020), and a future new bilateral program (2020-2021). Further, at the specific request of the Montenegrin authorities, many other projects and activities have got under way and are in progressing, involving other cultural sites of Montenegro too.

To conclude, I would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy (MAECI), which organization under the Program of Great Relevance is financing this volume. I warmly thank also the society Terna Crna Gora d.o.o., which contributed to the realization of this book, and that constantly follows our activities with great and beneficial interest.



Fig. 2 The Millennium Bridge at Podgorica, Montenegro (photo by Ivan Laković).

With our work, we strongly believe that we are indeed building, year after year, an ever more solid ‘bridge’ across the Adriatic Sea (Fig. 2). A bridge that is not only made of scientific activities and results, but one that is constructed from personal and friendly human connections, so contributing to new links, exchanges, openings and thoughts within our two countries, that gaze at each other from not so very far away.

Un ponte esiste quando le due sponde si amano.
(Antoni Regulski, *Aforismi*)²

² ‘A bridge exists when the two banks love each other’.