

Archaic and Classical Harbours of the Greek World

The Aegean and Eastern Ionian contexts

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(Background: Cabo de Gata, Spain)

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Introduction

This volume arises from a willingness to cast light on the archaeology and history of ancient harbours, with particular focus on the Greek world during the Archaic and Classical eras. It is spurred by three main concerns: to assign a historical and archaeological value to harbours, to fill the lack of information on this fundamental chronological arc within the development of harbour history, and to compensate for the dearth of specific works by providing readers with a bibliographic and scientific basis on this topic. In particular, since the state of the art on this topic reveals numerous gaps, the main aim of this book is to identify the primary characteristics of harbour areas in the Greek world. Therefore, even if other elements relating to the study of harbours could have resulted in equally interesting and relevant works, they have been deliberately left aside for the time being. The objective of this book is thus to establish a consensus on three fundamental research questions: what locations were the most propitious for the installation of harbours? What kinds of harbour-works were built and for what purpose? What harbour forms were documented?

In this book, I have sought to address these topics by evaluating the available evidence (archaeological, textual and geological) to consider what harbours looked like during the Archaic and Classical periods. In order to have an overview of this theme and to analyse it extensively, I have chosen to adopt a broad focus, with the choice falling on the Aegean and eastern Ionian contexts.¹ The selected scale, which could be defined as a mesoscale,² offered a number of advantages, as for example the possibility to work through assorted records and to gather general considerations from the available data. Furthermore, the results exposed within this volume could easily be transferred and applied to other areas influenced by the 'Greek expansion'. On the other hand, the choice of a wide geographical context entailed some disadvantages, including the fact that local harbours, anchorages, shelters and natural havens can be misrepresented.³ Therefore, to have a clear idea

of the various 'coastsapes' and 'maritime small worlds'⁴ that were involved in the wider system of connectivity, it would be necessary to resort to micro-scale studies.

Chronologically, this volume is focused on the period between the 8th and the 4th century BC, this choice being dictated by two main concerns. Firstly, despite the major advances made in harbour archaeology during the last decades, these centuries have not received a thorough treatise so far. Whilst Phoenician and Near Eastern harbours have been studied by Poidebard, Lauffray and Frost,⁵ Roman ports by the *Portus Project*,⁶ and prime examples of excavations in Hellenistic harbours are known from Alexandria and Amathus,⁷ the chronological arc between the Middle-Geometric period and the end of the Classical era is nearly unknown and not systematically examined, apart from Blackman's contributions.⁸ Secondly, this chronological selection was motivated by the importance of the Archaic and Classical periods within the growth and development of harbour architecture. Indeed, this is the moment when, in the areas considered, the transition from natural proto-harbours, whose protection was mainly assured

examined here has been based on the consideration of two main factors: the presence of harbour-works and their mention as harbours in contemporary written sources. Therefore, the list in the Appendix should not be considered comprehensive, since many other harbours could have been active during these periods, the existence of which can be inferred only from the presence of imported objects (however, where the presence of imported objects was significant to the point that these places are labelled as 'harbours' in archaeological scholarship, it has been decided to include them within the Catalogue).

⁴ On the concept of 'seascape' see Westerdahl 1994. Tartaron (2013: 185-203) suggested interpreting Late Bronze Age Aegean maritime connections using four different 'spheres of interactions': coastsapes, maritime small worlds, regional/intracultural spheres and interregional/intercultural spheres. These concepts could be diachronically transferred to other periods and used as a framework for analysing the seascape. 'Coastsapes' and 'maritime small worlds' are referred, respectively, to the spheres of interaction based on visible distances and seafaring in inland waters, and to the coastal landscapes connected to each other by routes of no more than two days (considering a round-trip).

⁵ Frost, H. 1973, and 1995; Poidebard and Lauffray 1951. See also Carayon 2008; Higuera-Milena Castellano and Sáez Romero 2018; Morhange, Carayon and Marriner 2011.

⁶ <<http://www.portusproject.org>>, viewed 19 September 2018. See also Keay 2012. On the Roman port of Tarraco, see also the recent PhD dissertation by Terrado Ortuño 2018.

⁷ Alexandria: Robinson and Wilson 2010. Amathus: Empereur and Verlinden 1987.

⁸ Blackman 1982a and 1982b. After the issuing of these papers, Blackman's research moved on to an analysis of Mediterranean shipsheds. His studies, together with other scholars' contributions, culminated in a monographic volume: Blackman and Rankov 2013. On the Greek military harbours, see Salzano 2014. Recently, on the Greek harbour of Empúries, on the Spanish coast of Catalonia, see Castanyer I Masoliver *et al.* 2016.

¹ A complete list of the harbours examined can be found in the Appendix within and it will also be available online at <www.ancientgreekharbours.com>, viewed 18 September 2018 (see also Mauro 2016). The Appendix and the online database (which will be regularly updated) are indebted to the catalogues collected by Graauw, de 2017; Lehmann-Hartleben 1923; the Navis II project and Theodoulou 2015. Each harbour/anchorage included in the database has been assigned a number; thus, in this volume, numbers found following the toponyms of the harbour should be considered as references to the entries in Appendix 1.

² As it is between a micro-scale (which would have implied studying a single *polis* or a single historical region) and a macro-scale (which would have also affected the so-called 'areas of expansion').

³ In particular, the selection of the harbours and anchorages

by the configuration of the coast, to purpose-built harbours occurred. However, as it will be underlined, despite the increasing number of infrastructures, this process was not homogeneous, nor did it involved all the harbour basins at the same time, since many of them endured as rudimentary and simple landing or mooring areas.⁹

With regard to the structure, this volume is composed of two main parts: the first one (consisting of Chapters 1 and 2) presents a general discussion of the state of the art (Chapter 1) and of the development of harbours until approximately 800 BC (Chapter 2); the second one (composed of Chapters 3, 4 and 5) is entirely centred on the Archaic and Classical harbours of the Greek world, and it contains a broad selection of the current evidence, each chapter dealing with a specific research question. In the conclusion, I have outlined the developments in Archaic and Classical harbours in the Aegean and eastern Ionian seas in light of the evidence and considerations presented earlier.¹⁰

If compared to previous studies, this work differs for its attempt to integrate historical and archaeological evidence with geographical and geological data. As

stated above, the coexistence of natural and modified-natural harbours made it necessary to adopt a different approach. Thus, all the data presented should be read by considering that, even when not affected by the construction of infrastructures, harbour areas are in any case anthropogenic landscapes, where the interaction between men and nature can have left readable traces. Obviously, these material traces are not always easily recognisable (in other words, they not always correspond to the construction of permanent harbour-works). However, the comparison between different kinds of data (e.g., literary sources, *in-situ* pottery remnants, religious buildings strategically located along the shores) provides interesting starting points from which it is possible to assume that a particular area was exploited for harbour purposes. Starting from these indicators, I have sought to decode harbour areas, sometime regardless of (or, at least, not strictly depending on) the presence of harbour-works. In this way, I hope to have built a bridge in understanding Archaic and Classical harbours of the Greek world as the consequence of the system of relationships established in the Eastern Mediterranean following the ‘collapse’ of Bronze Age civilizations, and as the antecedents of the monumental infrastructures found in Hellenistic harbours.

⁹ Blackman 2008: 639-645.

¹⁰ The question addressed allowed one to deal with harbours and anchorages as a whole, regardless of their size, importance or role within the trade processes. For this reason, this volume considers a wide range of maritime places, whether they were major ports (e.g., Piraeus, Lechaion) or simple anchorages along significant sea-routes (e.g., Artemisium). Furthermore, it is necessary to underline that in this book the expression ‘Greek harbours’, whenever it will appear, should be read generically in the sense of ‘harbours of the Greek world’.