



Readers interested in Mediterranean studies have encountered a multitude of visions and orientations over the last fifty years: all of which should be seen as complementary as they are necessary. This is the essence of Mediterranean interaction: complementarity and necessity. The publication “Mediterranean Port Cities. Connectivity in Modern Times” confirms this.

Here is a publication where the work of the editors is very evident in their careful combination of various pieces that reflect the multiple connectivity, a network of connections of all kinds that present the Mediterranean as a unique space of conquests and relationships, a scenario where its cities and ports are what their connections show, connections which are historical, existing and potential. Port cities manifest the purpose of their existence through these connections and, especially, through their connection spaces.

The Introduction of this book is a masterpiece of clarity that invites the reader to delve into the dialectic of the Mediterranean and its intersecting perspectives that converge in an apparently simple relationship: man and the sea. The prospective vision of Mediterranean studies as an area of knowledge initiated by Braudel and continued by Horden and Purcell constitutes a perfect lesson for beginners and future researchers. There is profound analysis and interpretation of the most relevant precedents in research on the Mediterranean, supported by personal analyses of Braudel’s contributions and Horden-Purcell and Abulafia’s work on this topic.

The book is structured around two parts. The first part, entitled “A Mediterranean Tour d’Horizon with the Port City Articles as the Ports of Call”, serves the practical purpose of familiarizing the reader with the state-of-the-art debates concerning the port cities that have crossed the border between a modern city and a world city.” These articles present examples in diverse ways, and scales based on the writers’ particular disciplinary specializations and areas of interest. Thus, historians and urbanists alternate in discussing their case studies.

The relationships presented in the Izmir-Beirut-Alexandria triangle through the various contributions of Alp Yücel Kaya, Eyüp Özveren, and Yasser G. Aref contribute to the understanding of the role of the Eastern Mediterranean in this region. Complementarity and necessity are always abiding principles which the reader will perceive after reading these

three articles.

The vision offered by Tülin Selvi Ünlü in her contribution on Mersin helps to elucidate the true idiosyncrasy of medium-scale cities in the puzzle of the Eastern Mediterranean where ties of blood and religion suggest relationships requiring further studies, on, for instance, the presence of the Maronite communities on the regional coastlines during the Tanzimat period (Simonelli, G.B. Fransisken Kapüsen Rahiplerinin Mersin'deki 150. Yılı: 1855-2005, Latin Katolik Kilisesi, İstanbul, 2005, p.22), as well as the phenomenon of the Maronite villages in North Cyprus, like Kormakitis.

A second part of the book delves into different case studies where connectivity are reflected at small-scale social levels by identifying connections, occasionally virtual, between various elements of certain branches of activity. These agencies would function as catalysts for continuities throughout the Mediterranean. In short, it is a re-interpretation of the connectivity defined by Horden and Purcell and refers to the need for interconnectivity between the parts (micro-regions) in the whole body (Mediterranean).

The book becomes an essential reference for the best understanding of the multiple processes converging on a common scenario: the territorial evolution of the Eastern Mediterranean region, starting in the last throes of the decomposition of the Ottoman empire up to the recent events in the region. These events, not all included, can show a significant restructuring in the relations between city and port, which is more evident in the case of Beirut, in contrast with the apparent lack of effect of these events on societies more controlled by national public powers, as is the case of the existing governances in Egypt.

The complex vision around the Suez Canal is left for another occasion, not as an engineering feat but as a catalyst for social, economic, and territorial changes that survive even today along this territorial corridor.

This is an essential book for understanding the complex connectivity in the Levantine region, where its port cities have played a relevant role from their beginnings and will continue to do so in the future with their diverse identities and dependencies. In the end, it indicates one more sign of the capabilities of an apparent void between coastlines that, in reality, are the essence of this region.

Index of contents

Introduction: The Mediterranean, and the Port Cities in Modern Times

Urban Planning in a Mediterranean Port City: The Contested Nature of Urban Redevelopment in The El Raval Neighborhood in Barcelona

Alexandria: A Glorious Past, Troubled Present and a Promising Future

Beirut—Forever on a Tightrope: The Search for a Fragile Modernity in Travelogues, Memoirs, and Archives

The Character of Mersin as an Eastern Mediterranean Port City

Izmir, the Port City That Will Follow You No Matter Where You Go

Volos in the Network of Mediterranean Cities: Comparative Mapping of the City's Spatial Evolution through the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

Transnational Trajectories: From Chios to London through Alexandria, a Family Story

City, Fathers, and Sons: Life Trajectories of Salonican Sabbatians in the Nineteenth Century

Ex-Changing Houses in Rethymno after the Treaty of Lausanne

BOOK Info

Özveren, E., Yenişehirlioğlu, F., & Ünlü, T. S. (Eds.)

Mediterranean Port Cities: Connectivity in Modern Times

Cities, Heritage and Transformation; Springer Nature; 2023

ISBN: 978-3-031-32325-6; ISBN 978-3-031-32326-3 (eBook)

ISSN: 2731-5363; ISSN 2731-5371 (digital)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-32326-3>

Pag.: 264

Author's Biography

Eyüp Özveren

Middle East Technical University (Retired), Istanbul, Türkiye.

Filiz Yenişehirliođlu

Vehbi Koç Ankara Studies Research Center, Koç University, Ankara, Türkiye.

Tülin Selvi Ünlü

Faculty of Architecture, Çukurova University, Adana, Türkiye.
