

Conference

Islands in Dialogue 2018

Keynote lecture

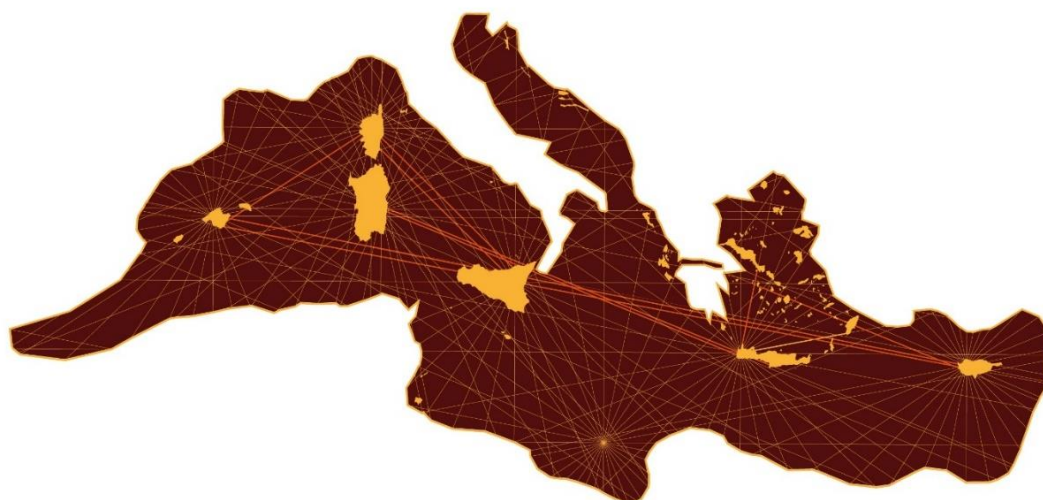
14th November 2018, 5:30pm

Biblioteca 'A. Graf', Palazzo del Rettorato (Università degli Studi di Torino)

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Island "Netscapes": Navigating Issues of Insularity



ABSTRACT

The success story of island archaeology is far from linear. While its credentials as an academic sub-discipline were still being heatedly debated in the 1990s, today few would question its reputation as an established subject, with dedicated journals and conferences. Its popularity soared in the 1970-80s, with island biogeography and its systemic approach; it declined in the 1990s, when the idea of islands as “laboratories” was set aside by post-processual archaeologists, only to rise again in the last two decades (which correspond to my own career as an island archaeologist so far), with field surveys and GIS-based spatial analysis, and - more recently - network analysis. As each new trend tackled perceived previous shortcomings, where do we stand today and what have we learnt about the past from the islands we study? Navigating across this sea of theory and method presents considerable challenges but studying islands is clearly rewarding, both in their own right and as a key to understanding broader issues. Whether niche-construction or place-making is of concern, islands have much to offer, to biogeographers and phenomenologists alike. To me, islands are ideal case studies for exploring both quantitative and qualitative aspects of space: as well-defined spaces they provide useful units of study, that are not necessarily isolated, rather their inhabitants are often by necessity connected to the outside world. These island “netscapes” expand and contract as islanders establish (or not) links with other communities, with considerable effect on their understanding of their own place in space and time, and ultimately on their insular identities. Island netscapes have multiple spatial, cultural, and temporal dimensions, all of which we need to consider if we are to understand the changing nature of insularity.

All interested are welcome to attend!

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