

Foreword

The Mediterranean: economy, societies, technologies, humanities

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ABSTRACT

This volume gathers the eighteen interventions of the researchers of the National Research Council of Italy presented at the Blue Planet Economy European Maritime Forum 2021. These include conference papers and extended writings deriving from the transcription of the videos produced specifically for a session dedicated to the Mediterranean.

These contributions touch on seemingly distant themes, such as economy, archaeology, ecological transition, tourism, culture..., organized into four sections: Economics and Green Economy, Strategies and Policies, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, and Borders and Societies. They show that the complexity of the current situation stems from history, different cultures, societies and religions that have shaped the countries bordering the Mediterranean basin. The sea has always been a kind of 'road infrastructure', available for the easy transfer of goods, services, technology, and people.

KEYWORDS: Blue economy, Mediterranean Sea, social sciences, humanities.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This volume gathers the interventions of the researchers of the National Research Council of Italy presented at the Blue Planet Economy European Maritime Forum 2021. These include conference papers and extended writings deriving from the transcription of the videos produced specifically for a session dedicated to the Mediterranean.

There are eighteen contributions whose range touches on seemingly distant themes, such as economy, archaeology, ecological transition, tourism, culture – just to cite a few. This wide span finds its origin in the core itself of the Mediterranean. As Emanuela Reale underlines in her Blue Economy and research in social sciences and humanities, the key point lies in a multidisciplinary approach: any reflection around the Blue Economy must consider not only the work of experimental scientists but also the work of researchers in the human and in the social sciences. This is especially true when the research pivots around the Mediterranean.

Economy, demography and technology are the big issues on which the current geopolitical balance is played. Actually, more than a balance is a strong imbalance that generates inequality, with the forces of the free market that find themselves without efficiency and effectiveness in generating all the wealth of a potential GDP, much higher than the actual GDP today created collectively by the Mediterranean countries. Economists say the Mediterranean could be the engine of economic and social growth of this century, but unfortunately it is not. Geopolitics experts point out that the problem is particularly difficult and complex to solve. It is a matter of fact that the current complexity of this area comes from history, cultures, societies and religions. All of these elements have shaped the countries that overlook this basin in very different ways.

This volume is organized into four sections: Economics and Green Economy, Strategies and Policies, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, and Borders and Societies.

2 ECONOMICS AND GREEN ECONOMY

The papers included in this section show how Italy can play an important role in the Mediterranean, although currently it seems undervalued in economic policies and, above all, in the foreign policies of our country. The importance of the Mediterranean is very evident for Italy when it comes to the economy of the sea. This sector has an incredibly positive impact on the growth and well-being of our country, as the BPE European Maritime Forum 2021 has demonstrated. The examples in this section concern the cases of the nautical industry, the port services, and the marine tourism. In their overview on The shipbuilding industry in Italy, Giampaolo Vitali and Giuseppe Giulio Calabrese show Italian leadership in some market segments, such as luxury yachts. The excellence of the services in the port of Naples is highlighted by the paper of Massimo Clemente, Gaia Daldanise, Eleonora Giovane Di Girasole, Maritime cultural landscape: collaborative governance for resilience and sustainability.

In her The city-port collaboration in low carbon transition: the case of Livorno, Barbara Bonciani points out that the relationship between city and port, when the latter is understood as an exchange infrastructure at the service of the country, must establish a dynamic of coexistence useful to both, especially in the management of the ecological transition. The resulting balance must consider the positive effects (e.g. the economic impact that the port services generate on the host city) and the negative ones (e.g. pollution caused by ships). Finally, in her Transition strategies towards a more sustainable marine tourism Monica Cariola summarises the organisational innovations proposed by the European Bluemed project for the management of marine tourism, a sector that could create more wealth in the less industrialized countries.

3 STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

When common strategies are involved toward cooperation and development, they can activate synergies and coordination between different programmes and funds, as Raffaella Coletti explains in her EU Region-building for Maritime cooperation in the Mediterranean Sea, focusing on EUSAIR, for the Adriatic and Ionian regions and WestMED, dedicated to the Western Mediterranean.

Susanna Paleari opens a focus on environmental policies in her Blue in the Green. How the European Green Deal will affect Eu seas and the maritime sector. She reminds that cooperation is fundamental, because pollution does not respect administrative borders between countries. The ecological transition imposes a new collective behaviour, which is imperative especially when one lives around a close sea where many different environmental legislations are intertwined.

In the Mediterranean not only transit flows of goods and services, which refer to manufactured products or port activities, or flow of migrating people. There are also flows of technologies, of intangible assets, human resources. This latter aspect is the subject of the contribution of Emanuela Varinetti, Mobility of non-European researchers in the Mediterranean, that explores the relationship between Spain and Italy, and of the contribution of Antonio Zinilli, Italian research network in the Mediterranean area, examining the existing research networks among Mediterranean universities.

4 ARCHAEOLOGY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Mobility of people flows is inherent in the concept itself of the sea, the connecting infrastructure used since the beginning of our civilization. We cannot understand how to manage the current economic and geopolitical complexity of the Mediterranean basin without deepening the cultural and social stratifications of the past. The archaeology of the Mediterranean and of its Cultural Heritage is one of the keys to the future of this area, towards a lasting and constructive balance. Ida Oggiano leads us towards a greater understanding of this stratification with her *The Phoenician Mediterranean: a space for communication, transmission and sharing*. Maja Gori traces Balkan routes even more ancient in her *Adriatic Voyages*. Prehistoric mobility between the sea and the mountains. With their Archeofish project, Darío Bernal-Casasola, Daniele Malfitana, Antonino Mazzaglia and José Juan Díaz explore fishing and commerce in Greek and Roman Sicily. The use of new technologies has allowed great progress in the study of marine archaeology, as shown by Crescenzo Violante in his *Invisible landscapes: a journey beneath the sea in the Bay of Naples, Italy*. Contributions like this confirm the need to integrate technology with human sciences, such as history and sociology, in order to make the most of the opportunities offered by innovations.

5 BORDERS AND SOCIETIES

Even recently, mobility and flows have continued to shape landscape, economy and culture. Focussing on Tunisian workers in Sicily between the Sixties and the Seventies, Michele Colucci identifies the origins of foreign immigration in Italy in the fishing economy. He highlights the specific features of the relations between Sicily and Tunisia in that period, which were very different from the current ones, not only in quantitative terms, but above all in qualitative terms and human respect.

From the range of papers included in this Quaderno IRCrES emerges that societies, economies, cultures, religions around the basin are very different from each other. Nevertheless, “The Mediterranean Sea is our home”, as we are reminded by Carmelo Bennici, Angela Cuttitta, Marilena Di Natale, Tiziana Masullo, Marianna Musco, Vito Pipitone, Stefania Russo, and Donatella Spera. A common “home” in which the search for a shared governance of the sea finds its juridical instrument in major international agreements on marine borders. As Gemma Andreone points out in her *Legal patchwork and national borders in the Mediterranean Sea*,

marine borders are much more difficult to define and enforce than land borders, which are more easily defined by a river or by the ridge of a mountain. Like marine borders, also the boundaries between societies bordering the Mediterranean are difficult to define. As it is true that people are deeply rooted and connected to their homeland, it is also true that people migrate and flow, bringing with themselves their own experiences and narrations. This is another field in which human scientists can effectively contribute, by examining and reconstructing narrations, roots and routes, as Antonella Emina does in her Mediterranean ports and literature. Minds as open as ports, an excursus through the novels of Amin Maalouf.

Finally, the presence of the Mediterranean is immanent in the national identity of the countries around it or under its influence. Songs that speak of sea, ports and ships are historically present in Italian popular music and they help to give a sense of perspective while they contribute to create our cultural identity, as Isabella Maria Zoppi shows in her Musical words for a Mediterranean imaginary: Genoa in singer-songwriters' lyrics.