

Editors' Preface

This project began in early 2016, when some of the postgraduate students – fellows and PhD students– of the Department of Antiquity and Middle Ages Studies of the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB) decided to resume an old task and follow in the footsteps of some of our colleagues and predecessors at the same University, both in 2010, when the first predoctoral workshop was organised (*I Jornadas Predoctorales en Estudios de la Antigüedad y la Edad Media. Estudiar el pasado: aspectos metodológicos de la investigación en Ciencias de la Antigüedad y de la Edad Media*, 27th-29th October 2010) and in 2014, when a second workshop was planned (*II Jornadas Predoctorales en Estudios de la Antigüedad y la Edad Media. Κτῆμα ἐς αἰεὶ: el texto como herramienta común para estudiar el pasado*, 19th-21st November 2014). Based on these precedents, we determined to organise a new international conference for graduate students. As a result, the third incarnation of the workshop, entitled *III Jornadas Predoctorales en Estudios de la Antigüedad y la Edad Media. Culturas en contacto: conflicto, asimilación e intercambio* was held at UAB on 23rd, 24th and 25th November 2016.

The aim of this conference was, in first place, to create a forum for discussion and the exchange of knowledge for junior researchers interested in diverse areas of research connected to the Study of Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Ancient and Medieval History, Classical and Medieval Archaeology, Classical Philology (Latin and Ancient Greek) and Near Eastern Studies. We intended to offer young researchers an opportunity to share their experiences and to raise public awareness about their research topics. Thus, just as in its previous iterations, for this specific workshop a topic was proposed that would allow researchers from various disciplines to participate: this year's topic addressed contacts between cultures and communities as a subject in studying the past. In doing so, our aim was to achieve a meeting point where Classical Philology, History and Archaeology could come together.

The chosen title for this edition of the workshop has its roots in the name of the PhD program in which all the members of the organising committee are enrolled, *Cultures in Contact in the Mediterranean*, which offers doctoral training to researchers interested in the areas of Egyptology and Middle Eastern studies, Classical Philology, Ancient and Medieval History and Classical and Medieval Archaeology, backed by the Department of Antiquity and Middle Ages of the UAB. The students of this programme come from a variety of backgrounds and their researches encompass a wide range of topics – as is the case for the various members of the organising committee – which, in our opinion, is very rewarding, as it promotes idea-sharing and enriching discussion, as well as team-building and cooperation among students from diverse fields of knowledge. This results in our driving forward common initiatives such as the third iteration of the PhD congress and its proceedings, which are presented here. Accordingly, from the very beginning we agreed to use the general and common framework of the cultures in contact as the main topic for our workshop, to allow young researchers from various spheres of study – who nonetheless work on the same general subject matter – to take part in it.

From there, we decided to focus our congress on contact and interaction between cultures in different periods and from an interdisciplinary approach. This sprang from the understanding that cultural exchange and conflict are complex issues that can be comprehended only as on-going processes in which many parties play major roles and which continue over the centuries, so that a beginning and end cannot be established with precise dates. Therefore, it was essential to avoid the limitations imposed by traditional periodization and the currently predominant academic compartmentalization. It is for that reason that we opted for non-diachronic chronological criteria when organising the workshop. Instead, the program was divided into broad thematic categories, which explored specific features of inter-cultural relationships, such as conquest, acculturation and trade. The strands must be seen as a general framework, inclusive rather than exclusive with regard to the assignment of the proposals. All these thematic areas shaped social relationships and allow us to appreciate continuities and changes over the centuries. We strongly believe that this structure gave the participants the chance to appreciate how different communities approached contact with other cultures, as well as the opportunity to compare the various approaches that the communities put into practice under analogous circumstances, throughout Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

We were convinced that the contributions of each participant, following the aforementioned criteria, yielded significant input. In addition, their methodologies and their case-studies will provide new points of view for approaches to cultural contacts throughout history. We, in our role as the current members of the organising committee, aimed to revive the essence of the previous workshops and to contribute to the conceptual and methodological renewal of the intervening years. At present, the old praxis of approaching the past from a unique discipline is obsolete and interdisciplinary work gathering together the efforts of philologists, historians and archaeologists is clearly required.

The initiative has been considered a success, both by the participants and by the faculty members of the Department of Antiquity and Middle Ages Studies, and the outstanding quality of the submitted papers has convinced us to publish the proceedings of the event. Being the result of a miscellaneous workshop, the volume is characterised by the diverse nature of its content. It consists of nineteen papers written in Spanish, English and Italian, which address different aspects of contact between cultures in a broad chronology that covers a timespan from Classical Greece to the Late Middle Ages. Despite their thematic and methodological diversity, all the contributions are linked together by their authors' interest in studying how relationships between different societies have manifested themselves throughout history in various incarnations, from trade and cultural exchange to war and genocide. The participation of authors from various disciplines within the Humanities has resulted in a collection of short papers that tackle the issue of cultural contact from divergent but also complementary angles and points of view.

Following the structure of the original event, this volume has been divided into five sections, which bear the titles of the main thematic strands of the workshop. The first part, entitled '*Acculturation and cultural exchanges*', consists of the contributions that deal with different types of cultural exchanges between civilizations during Ancient and Medieval History. Here are found the works of David Serrano Lozano (Ancient History), María Cristina de la Escosura Balbás (Ancient History) and Sandra Pérez Herranz (Medieval History). The second section, entitled '*Contact between religions*', contains the papers that approach Ancient and Medieval religious interactions. The authors who compose this strand are Stefano Acerbo (Ancient Greek Philology), Carles Soler Gozalbo (Medieval History), Enrique Torija Rodríguez (Medieval History) and Sergi Gómez Ortíz (Latin Philology). The third chapter, '*War, colonization and migration movements*', is devoted to armed conflicts between different societies and their consequences, such as the colonisation of conquered territories. Here, readers will be able to find the works of Gabriel Sanz Casanovas (Ancient History) and Niccolò Zambarbieri (Classical Philology). The fourth part, '*Linguistics and Literature*', gathers together the studies that focus on contacts based on literature and different languages: the papers of Alba María Delgado Muñoz (Ancient Greek Philology), Fabian D. Zuk (Medieval History), Alberto Escalante Varona (Spanish Philology), Carlos Prieto Espinosa (Latin Philology) and Ignasi Vidiella Puñet (Ancient Greek Philology). Last but not least, comes the section devoted to '*Economy and urbanism*', which approaches the history of contact between cultures from an economic perspective. This strand includes the contributions presented by Simone Ciambelli (Ancient History), Pere Roura i Martínez (Medieval Archaeology), Lluís Arroyo Amores (Medieval History) and Esteban López García (Medieval History). We believe the papers presented by the attendees to be enriching contributions to their respective fields of study, though they still are at the beginning of their respective careers as researchers.

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