Connectivities in Prehistoric and Classical West/Central Mediterranean

Abstract:

The prehistoric and classical Mediterranean world were alive with small-scale interconnections, but archaeological investigations often focus on macro themes relating to large-scale societies (Greek, Phoenician or Roman) who divided up the Mediterranean between them. Often neglected in studies of the ancient Mediterranean are the micro connections that formed within and between the different local communities, and between communities and foreign colonizers. Studies of these various social and economic interconnections can provide a more nuanced perspective on the complex interactions that took place in the prehistoric and classical past. Moreover, connectivity is often used only to describe maritime contact between islands and landmasses. While it is important to understand contact by sea, the mountainous landscapes of many of the Mediterranean areas, cut by rivers or broken by plains, also provide possibilities for connections and are fruitful geographies for investigation. In this session, we gather case studies from across the western Mediterranean, including examples from Sardinia, mainland Italy, Sicily, the Balearic Islands, and the Iberian Peninsula. By juxtaposing diverse case studies from prehistoric through classical periods, we aim to facilitate comparison across this understudied area of the Mediterranean and break down the prehistoric-historic divide that often hampers research in this area.

Co-organizers: Linda Gosner (Clark University) and Jeremy Hayne (independent archaeologist)

Keywords: connectivity, interaction, Mediterranean archaeology, Classical archaeology, prehistoric archaeology

Discussants: Peter van Dommelen (Brown University) and Miguel Ángel Cau Ontiveros (University of Barcelona)

Presenters:

1. Anthony Russell, University of Glasgow, "Globalisation in the Bronze Age?: In search of a Metaphor of Connectivity in the Central Mediterranean"

   The world in which native Sicilians and Sardinians exist in the second half of the 2nd millennium BC is an increasingly connected one. As we move beyond static, binary, and often uni-directional frameworks for assessing social and material change (e.g. 'acculturation'), beyond the entrenched categories of 'Mycenaeans' or 'Cypriotes' vs 'natives', there is an opportunity to explore new analytical avenues to describe or explain the socio-cultural shifts that occur on these two islands. In this presentation I will propose that certain aspects of modern globalisation studies - recently applied to debates concerning Romanisation, Hellenisation, or Iron Age Orientalisation - may also work as an acceptable metaphor for the cross-cultural consumption of goods and ideas that we encounter as the Bronze Age winds to a close. Even without the hyper-connectivity or an existing single cultural framework that later periods can claim, examining modern globalisation 'in action'

can inform us about material changes and social reconstructions at the beginning of the Mediterranean connectivity story.

2. Jeremy Hayne, Independent Researcher, "The missing link? Sardinia, Corsica and Italy; their connections in the Late Bronze and early Iron Age"

The late Bronze and early Iron Age were periods of population movement and change and recent scholarship has highlighted the multi-directional interactions and networks involving the various communities across the whole of the west Mediterranean, as opposed to more static core-periphery models. In Sardinia, for example, this has emphasised the binary relationships between Phoenicians and the local Nuragic communities. With a greater awareness of local networks and connections the regional differences in the island have become more apparent that has come under scrutiny is between Sardinia and central Italy, where scholars have convincingly argued for the active role of Sardinia in these exchanges. However, despite being part of the route between the two locations the role of Corsica remains less well understood. How far did it play a part in the exchanges and how far can 'network thinking' help explain the dynamics of the interactions in this area of the Mediterranean? This paper focuses on the exchanges between north Sardinia and the Italian peninsula, specifically examining the role that Corsica may have played in them, examining the local connectivities at the start of the 1st Millennium BC.

3. Lela Urquhart, Georgia State University, "Measuring the Impact of Ancient Colonization in Central-West Sicily"

Studies of ancient colonization in the Mediterranean have principally been concerned with assessing the "impact" of colonization: did the colonization processes of groups like the Greeks and Phoenicians make a significant impact on local native societies among whom they settled, and if so, in what ways? Important as such questions are, they have sometimes overlooked a more basic step: how do we actually measure the "impact of colonization" in the first place? This paper offers a response to that question through the case-study of ancient central-western Sicily. It argues that a good way to examine colonial-indigenous interaction is to isolate an aspect of culture that can be a) observed cross-culturally and temporally; b) measured using material correlates; and c) has interpretive salience. For ancient Sicily, religion best fits those criteria. Applying religious correlates to the archaeological record of Sicily between 900-400 BCE reveals important changes. First, colonization catalyzed shifts in the structure and scale of indigenous religion. Second, in terms of "impact," Greek colonization influenced local religious expression more than Phoenician colonization, particularly after 550 BCE. Third, the perception of this "impact," however, was due to religious modifications made by all groups-- indigenous and colonial-- to fit changing sociopolitical circumstances.

4. Jessica Nowlin, University of Texas at San Antonio, "An inland response to 'Orientalization': funerary ritual and local practice in central Italy"

Greater trade and connectivity has often been associated with changes in cultural practice. This is particularly the case for the Orientalizing period for which the traditional view holds

that objects, ideas and practices from the eastern Mediterranean exerted tremendous influence on local Italian communities during the 8th and 7th centuries BCE. This paper articulates the subtle differences between the presence of imported objects, changes in material culture, and alterations in cultural practice for two inland sites within the Apennine region of the Abruzzo. It examines funerary assemblages from the necropoleis of Fossa and Campovalano through mutliscale bootstrap resampling of grave goods. The results show that although both communities experience increased connectivity during this period, the number of imported objects does not necessitate a change in funerary ritual. The frequent presence of imported bucchero at Fossa shows strong ties with Etruria, but the local Iron Age funerary tradition was maintained. At Campovalano, although the number of imported objects is low, local ceramics and metal wares were employed within a new funerary practice of banqueting. Through this examination of local responses within the Italian interior, it further demonstrates importance of contextualizing the impact of greater foreign contact with an understanding of practice.

5. Jake Deppen, University of Washington, "Connected through things: connectivity in Iron Age Mallorca"

   This presentation examines connectivity in the Late Iron Age on the island of Mallorca. While most case studies of connectivity in the western Mediterranean involve the movement of people and/or the construction of new settlements by non-local people, there is little evidence that this occurred in Mallorca. However, there is still abundant evidence that indigenous Iron Age Mallorcans were increasingly connected to the broader Mediterranean and that non-local goods were being consumed throughout the island. Mallorca, then, seems to have been a place where connectivity and consumption of non-local goods were negotiated on decidedly local terms. This presentation will outline what we know about the consumption of non-local goods in Mallorca during the Iron Age while also examining how the absence of non-local individuals impacts how we think about studies of connectivity and contact between groups.

6. Catalina Mas Florit and Miguel Angel Cau Ontiveros, University of Barcelona/Brown University, "Inland Connectivity in Late Antique Mallorca"

   The Balearic Islands lie in a strategic position within the Western part of the Mediterranean and played an important role in the trade routes crossing the *Mare Nostrum*. Therefore, connectivity of the island by sea has always been considered. However, inland connectivity has not been addressed in detail probably due to the lack of information on communication routes. The paper explores the inland connectivity of sites in the late antique landscape based in a combination of spatial analysis and field survey. Possible communication routes have been simulated using GIS by Least Cost Path Analysis. The archaeological and survey data of late antique sites in the Eastern part of the island have been examined in order to understand the location of the sites and its connectivity within the landscape. The results show that--even in a landscape where the knowledge of its communication routes is limited-- a detailed study of the landscape and of the distribution of the sites, complemented with spatial technologies can help to advance an interpretative framework for inland connectivity in late antique Mallorca, an aspect relatively poorly explored so far.

7. Bea Marín Aguilera, Cambridge, "Interweaving colonial and local networks: textile production in Early Iron Age Iberia"

The role of textile production and consumption in the formation of Early Iron Age states in Mediterranean Europe has been often neglected in favour of other economic activities such as pottery making and distribution, as well as metallurgy. In the Western Mediterranean, connectivity has been mainly addressed through the study of Phoenician and/or Greek pottery in local settlements and viceversa. However, intensive production and consumption of textiles was at the heart of urbanisation throughout the history of the world. Cloth was used as an ethnic and identity marker, as a tribute, as a trade product, and as an elite way of self-promotion, among many other things. Textile production and consumption are thus a fruitful venue to understand colonial relations in the region, as well as the interactions between both local communities and between them and the colonisers. In this paper, I would like to focus on those interactions exploring several case studies of textile production in Iberia from the 8th-5th century BC.

8. Philip Johnston, New York Public Library, "Phoenicians and Iberians: Connectivity and Overlapping Cultural Processes in the Bay of Cádiz during the Iron Age (815-550 BC)"

This paper seeks to broaden the way in which we understand and describe processes of culture change in the Phoenician colonies, with a case study in Southwestern Spain. Recent models – such as World Systems and Center/Periphery approaches, Globalization and Networks, Postcolonialism and Borderlands – do much to nuance our understanding of connectivity and its results during the Iberian Iron Age, but ultimately fail to explain the totality of social processes at work. Likewise, older perspectives like the much-maligned diffusionism should not be rejected outright, despite deterministic overtones. Eschewing the idea of a unitary model for cultural processes in the Iron Age Mediterranean, this paper weaves together a variety of theoretical strands and empirical evidence in order to provide 'snapshots' of social change in the Bay of Cádiz. This reveals a complex and shifting topography of cultural processes, operating at different social and chronological scales.

9. Linda Gosner, Clark University, "Mining, Movement, and Migration in Roman Iberia"

The Iberian Peninsula was a rich source of metals in antiquity, and indigenous people practiced mining in many areas from at least 4000 BCE. Following Roman conquest of the region in the late 3rd century BCE, the scale of mining increased dramatically to accommodate the growing needs of the Roman Empire from the production of coins to the creation of urban water infrastructure. This growth catalyzed episodes of migration of people and movement of materials in ways that stimulated both regional and empire-wide connectivity. In this paper, I explore these changing patterns of movement--both of people and goods--in and out of major mining districts in southern Iberia. I argue that the migration of Italians into Iberia soon after Roman conquest contributed to the diversification of communities in the countryside, and the development of lasting connections between these areas and other parts of the empire. By contrast, in later centuries, increased movement of people and goods within the peninsula stimulated connectivity regionally, increasing

provincial ties. Understanding connectivity brought about by the demands of mining ultimately sheds light on the relationship between natural resources, the formation of diverse communities, and the creation of empire in Roman Iberia.

10. Catie Steidl, Brown University, "The Business of 'Becoming': Community Formation and Greek Colonization in the Northwestern Mediterranean"

In the early 1st millennium BCE, Greek communities sprang up around the Mediterranean, and the West was no exception. As the story goes, Ionian Greeks arrived in southern France and a legendary marriage to the local chieftan's daughter ensured their acceptance as settlers. From their base at Massalia, they expanded their trading foothold to Emporion on the Catalonian coast, cementing a relationship that was long-attested by the presence of Greek goods on western shores. Whereas rapid 'Hellenization' was the narrative that often followed such colonization, the situation in the West was quite different. Historically-identifiable Greek settlements are sparse, and even at those known sites, the make-up of populations and nature of communities is still being called into question. This paper examines the processes of community formation in southern France and northeastern Spain—how community identities took shape, shifted, or resisted when newcomers and locals came into contact—through the lens of repeated and daily practice in cult and domestic contexts. It examines the role played by local communication and connectivity between settlements, and argues that the lack of overt 'Hellenization' in this region was in part due to a high level of shared social experience with newcomers far from home.