

Session title: EXCHANGE, INTERACTION, CONFLICTS AND TRANSFORMATIONS: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGES IN EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN BETWEEN BRONZE AND IRON AGE

Organizers: Maria Emanuela Alberti, Udine University, Italy
Serena Sabatini, Göteborg University, Sweden

Date: Thursday morning

Time:

Session abstract:

Throughout Bronze and Iron Age, European and Mediterranean prehistoric societies appear involved in complex transcultural systems of exchange networks, which eventually affected local customs and historical developments.

All over the continent archaeological evidences suggest social and economical institutions, cultural expressions and technological skills to stem from multifaceted encounters between local and external influences. Examples of cultural openness and transcultural hybridization can be found for instance in settlement patterns and organization, architectural features, material culture and technology, funerary customs or ritual practices. Papers in this session should examine and discuss with specific case studies and/or from a theoretical point of view the reciprocal relation between local transformations and exchange networks. Particular attention to the following arguments is appreciated:

- * Phenomena of local selection, negotiation, incorporation, transformation or refusal of external inputs
- * Phenomena of hybridization at various levels (e.g. material culture, ritual and social practices, etc.)
- * Long or short term social and economical transformations

The session aims at initiating a debate on those issues and welcomes attention to more general arguments such as mechanisms of centre/periphery relation and colonial/indigenous dynamics, or as the concepts of frontier, border and limit.

Finally it is believed that very useful insights on the issues of the session may be brought by case studies from other areas and periods than Bronze and Iron Age Europe and Mediterranean.

Paper abstracts:

Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean

MINOANS ABROAD AT THE BEGINNING OF THE LATE BRONZE AGE PERIOD? EVIDENCE FROM DODECANESE AND THEIR MAIN HISTORICAL IMPLICATIONS

S. Vitale, University of Pisa, Italy
T.A. Hancock, University of Toronto, Canada.

At the beginning of the Late Bronze Age period (early 17th century B.C.), the presence of Minoan and/or Minoanizing features, including Cretan-type pottery, wall paintings, and architecture, dramatically increases throughout the Aegean area. The widespread occurrence of the aforementioned characteristics has been variously interpreted as evidence for Minoan settlement, governed, or community colonies, thus implying a certain movement of people from the island of Crete abroad. While such a crucial phenomenon has been thoroughly investigated in relation to the Cyclades (Kythira, Keos, Thera, and Phylakopi) and the southwestern Anatolian coast (Miletus), the area of the Dodecanese has been so far relatively neglected.

The aim of the present paper is to reconsider the evidence for the presence of Minoan people in the southeast Aegean, with particular reference to the settlements of the “Serraglio” on Kos and Trianda on Rhodes. In so doing, a careful re-examination of the most important archeological contexts, dating to the earliest Late Bronze Age Period (LBA IA Early to LBA IB), will be proposed. Attention will be devoted to the following crucial points and their historical implications: (a) refining and updating the comparative relative chronologies of Crete and the Dodecanese in the early 17th century B.C.; (b) determining the extent and the meaning of the interaction between the “local tradition” and the new Minoan elements; (c) interpreting the nature of the possible Minoan presence in relation to the well know problem of the so-called Minoan Thalassocracy.

“PERIPHERY VERSUS CORE”: THE INTEGRATION OF SECONDARY STATES INTO THE WORLD SYSTEM OF THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND THE NEAR EAST IN THE LATE BRONZE AGE (1600-1200 BC)

Nikolas Papadimitriou, Museum of Cycladic Art, Athens, Greece
Demetra Kriga, College Year in Athens, Greece

World Systems Theory, originally developed by I. Wallerstein for the study of modern capitalist economies, has proved a useful analytical tool for prehistoric archaeologists, too. Its emphasis on the *longue durée* and the interdependence of socio-economic phenomena and structures has allowed for the synthesis of seemingly unrelated processes into unified macro-historical approaches.

The Late Bronze Age was a period of intense interaction in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East. From Mesopotamia to the Aegean comparable political institutions emerged, which were based on centralized “palatial” economies, administered through sophisticated bureaucracies. Inter-regional exchanges ensured the wide circulation of raw materials (mainly metals) and luxuries but, also, artistic traditions, religious beliefs and ideological constructs.

World Systems approaches to the period have focused, so far, on the systemic role of the most powerful – economically and militarily – “core” political formations of the region (the Egyptian and Hittite empires, Babylonia and Assyria). Our paper examines how smaller “peripheral” states in the Levant, Cyprus and the Aegean managed to

integrate into that system. It is argued that such “secondary” polities developed rather late and were largely dependent on maritime trade networks. This dependence imposed strategies of *economic specialization* in commodities favoured by the affluent elites of coastal urban centres, while at the same time necessitating the introduction of new forms of sumptuous behaviour that would further support the consumption of such commodities.

WESTERNIZING AEGEAN OF LH III C

Francesco Iacono, Institute of Archaeology, UCL, London, UK

The twilight of Mycenaean Palaces and the subsequent post-palatial era have been always topics arousing an outstanding interest in the academic community as well as among the general public.

In the spectrum of hypotheses proposed in order to explain this puzzling transitory phase exogenous factors have periodically re-emerged as something which cannot be ruled out completely.

These exogenous elements, or more specifically their material traces, are the principal data that I will discuss in this paper. They are by no means new; indeed they were recognised long ago as well as extensively treated by various authors in the last decades.

What is really new here is the will to openly challenge one of the more long lasting underlying assumptions in Mediterranean archaeology, namely that of directionality of cultural influence, from east to west, from the “civilized” to the “uncivilized”. Can cultural influence travel the other way round?

My point here is that it is possible and I will try to show in this paper how, after the dissolution of mainland states, the contraction occurring in the sphere of cultural influence in the Mycenaean “core” left room for a variety of “peripheral” elements to be accepted and become largely influential in Greece.

IRON, COLONIALISM AND THE DARK AGE OF ANCIENT GREECE

Maria Kostoglou, University of Manchester, UK

The scope of this paper is twofold. Firstly, it aims to propose a new framework for understanding colonialism and socio-cultural transformations by discussing change through the prism of monumental (thus historic) versus the social (thus archaeological) point of view. Secondly, it applies the previous framework in a solid archaeological case study and re-evaluates the impact of Greek colonisation on the indigenous cultures of Thrace. Particular emphasis is given in understanding technological change in view of long term socio-cultural changes from Iron Age to Classical times.

THE RICH ATHENIAN LADY, ca. 850 BC

Isabella Martelli, IULM University of Milan, Italy

This Athenian Lady's grave offering remains astonishing owing to its complexity and outstanding wealth. The archeological literature has concentrated on an object called "chest and lid with five model granaries". However, as research makes headway, the object might receive a different interpretation. A fabric pottery called Fine Handmade Incised Ware is attested in this grave offering, but also in some others from Attica and Euboea. These grave offerings might arouse a series of questions: why are these women so rich? Is it because they have acquired particular weaving skills leading them to a privileged status within the community? Which is the place (and therefore the women) exporting its know-how? Likewise, these grave offerings show imported objects from Cyprus and the East. We know that Cypriot wool was sent to the Mycenaean kingdoms, and that exchange relationships continued throughout the Dark Ages: as L. E. Smithson puts it, "The Dark Ages were in fact a hive of activity".

TRADE MUST GO ON: HISTORY OF THE BRONZE AGE AEGEAN SOCIETIES THROUGH THE LENSES OF THE REGIONAL TRADE SYSTEM

Maria Emanuela Alberti, University of Udine, Italy

The Aegean area has always been at the "interface" between Eastern and Western Mediterranean and Central Europe. During the Bronze Age, it was the filter between urban and palatial Near East and less complexes, generally tribal, European societies. This is the key of the historical developments of the BA Aegean, as we can reconstruct them.

At various levels, we can sketch out the history of the global Aegean area - and of its various parts - in the framework of a "core"- "periphery"- "margin" system, the main and general "core" being Near Eastern civilizations (A. Sherratt -S. Sherratt 1991; A. Sherratt 1993 and 1994; Harding 2000). Minor "cores" can be individuated through time in various Aegean areas or societies. The overall picture sees the Aegean starting at the "margin" of the Levant in the EBA to enter the "core", though in a liminal position, during the LBA (with its own "periphery" and "margin" in the Balkans and central Mediterranean). Crete plays a pivot-role in the process.

These dynamics arise from the interaction between internal factors and developments and external inputs and influences. Trade systems - both at "international" and local level - are essential in this view, and can be considered the key for the interpretation and reconstruction. Trade networks have strongly influenced social and economic developments in various periods and areas, and constituted the backbone of the growing Aegean economies. They had to go on, and they did, even after the "collapse" of the palaces ca. 1200 B.C.E.

Aim of the paper is the reconstruction of the role of trade systems in the historical developments of the BA Aegean, and, at the same time, to reconstruct the history of the Aegean through the archaeological evidence of trade. Some case studies, spanning from EBA to LBA will be taken into consideration, in order to underline the various levels of interpretation, the general phenomena, common features, local initiatives and specific solutions.

Central Mediterranean

MYTHICAL VOYAGES: LEADERSHIP, KNOWLEDGE AND TRANSFORMATION IN MEDITERRANEAN EUROPE

Philippe Della Casa, University of Zurich, Department of Prehistory, Switzerland

Journeys to the limits of the known world and narratives on fabulous people, places, and things form a common ancestral background in European, and in particular Mediterranean mythology. Odysseus and the Argonauts are just the most famous of the actors known from epic tradition. On the other hand, alien objects found in distant places have for a long time triggered archaeological discussion about tradition, trade, and cultural transformation. The paper investigates, with a focus on Late Copper Age burials in the Adriatic and the central Mediterranean, possible connections between the rise of local elites, distance, esoteric knowledge, cultural transformation, and the emergence of mythological patterns.

MALTA, SICILY AND SOUTHERN ITALY DURING THE BRONZE AGE: THE MEANING OF A CHANGING RELATIONSHIP

Alberto Cazzella, Rome University "La Sapienza", Italy
Giulia Recchia, University of Foggia, Italy

The elements connecting Malta and Sicily during the Bronze Age are well known, but the specific features of those links are still to understand: Bernabò Brea's hypothesis of Maltese "colonies" seems to be difficult to accept in a literal meaning. As regards southern Italy, a few elements connecting it to Malta were recognized some years ago, but the meaning of this phenomenon remains unexplored. Authors aim at taking into consideration the role played by the interaction between Malta, Sicily and southern Italy during the Bronze Age, its causes and its transformations, examining more generally the changes occurred in the economic and social context in those areas.

EXTERNAL ROLE IN THE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION OF NURAGIC SOCIETY? A CASE STUDY FROM SARRALA, EASTERN SARDINIA, BETWEEN THE MIDDLE BRONZE AND THE IRON AGES

Luca Lai, University of South Florida, USA

The role of external contacts in the social history of the Nuragic culture of Sardinia has long been an issue. In this paper, the main theories formulated on the subject are measured against evidence from Sarrala, in Eastern Sardinia. Here, despite poor stratigraphic evidence, a preliminary survey and mapping, with the contribution of oral knowledge for destroyed sites, and the presence and distribution of materials of non-

local origin allowed the assessment of spheres of interaction and their role, if any, in the progressive nucleation documented between the Middle Bronze and the Iron Ages. An outline of organizational evolution could be drawn, which is articulated into first signs of presence, evidence of fission and filling of the landscape with approximately 25 sites, beginning of enlargement and possibly competition, and finally progressive concentration of building activity at only five sites.

The fact that non-local stone is used only at the most complex sites, and that at one of them Mycenaean sherds and ox-hide ingot fragments were retrieved, are discussed as a contribution to the debate on the relevance of external vs. internal dynamics. The conclusion is that a significant role of extra-insular groups seems unsubstantiated until the last phase (FBA-EIA).

Europe

“CENTRING” LATE BRONZE AGE EUROPEAN NETWORKS

Serena Sabatini, University of Göteborg, Sweden

North-south exchanges throughout prehistoric Europe occurred along different routes, with various intensities and supported by a variety of necessities. During the Late Bronze Age one of the axis along which these contacts took place appear stretching between the Italian Peninsula in the south and the south-western Baltic region in the north. We know of evidence of foreign objects belonging to “foreign” traditions entering local funerary contexts. However, we also have evidences of more complex forms of exchanges. Not only objects, but specific rituals appear locally incorporated and transformed shaping at the same time “minor” networks within the larger continental ones. In other words, some very sophisticated dynamics take place and confirm not only the existence of intercultural interactions, but of selective processes of negotiation, incorporation and refusal of external material and ritual culture. An accurate analysis of these phenomena leads to question the traditional definition of centre-periphery and claim a more multifaceted approach to the study of European communities. Different case studies will be considered to discuss these issues.

GROWN FOR 600 YEARS: INTERACTION BETWEEN CENTRE AND PERIPHERY AT A HILLFORT WITH AN OUTER SETTLEMENT IN THE NORTH HARZ MOUNTAIN REGION (LOWER SAXONY). A NEW SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE IN ITS EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

Immo Heske, University of Göttingen, Germany

In the present case study, the working area is the region to the north and east of the Harz mountains in northern Germany. The northern boundary of this region is defined by the northernmost extent of the fertile loess soils, which border on sandy soils in the north. To the west, the boundary is defined by the river Oker, and to the south the Harz mountains near Halle/Saale. The eastern boundary is marked by the rivers Saale and Elbe.

The present case study is concerned with the Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age Transition in the region north of the Harz mountains. The period is traditionally subdivided in different chronological phases which can be dated relatively well by artefacts and pottery from cemeteries and settlements (periods IV, V and VI after Montelius). On typological grounds, it has been defined as an archaeologically distinct group (or “culture”), which is subdivided in different subgroups: the “Saalemündungsgruppe” and the “Hausurnenkultur”. The continuity between these groups is in discussion. Small hillforts in this region are a characteristic settlement pattern. In contrast to the hillforts south of the Harz mountains and in southern Germany, there is no evidence for a hiatus between the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. The Late Bronze Age in the northern Harz mountains is characterised by various cultural influences from the Nordic Bronze Age and the Urnfield Culture. For the Early Iron Age “housedoorurns” and “faceurns” are characteristic. After geophysical prospection begun in 2001, for one of these hillforts an outer settlement with an area over 6,5 ha is proven. Excavations started in 2005. A fragmentary bronze shield “Type Nipperwiese” in the settlement, two hanging vessels in the hoards south of the hillfort and glass beads within one rich decorated object from northern Italy found in the burial ground east of the settlement give a glance of the wider personal contacts at this place.

The lecture brings a spotlight on what interaction starts the rise of a hillfort for over 600 years with a new settlement structure for Middle Europe. It also shows the connections between centre and periphery and the economical transformations in the landscape.

HELLENISTIC INFLUENCES IN THE DACIAN POTTERY. CASE STUDY: BOWLS IN RELIEF DECORATED

Sebastian Matei, The County Museum of Buzau
Catalin Constantin, Digital Domain Bucharest, Romania

The contact of the Dacian culture with the Hellenistic civilization had major consequences among the Dacian communities. Many aspects of the material culture were, therefore, influenced: pottery, glass and metal items crafting, coinage, fortification systems and dwelling building. This paper investigates pottery and in particular the bowls in relief decorated.

Dacian bowls in relief decorated represent one of the ceramic categories, which were imitated by the Dacians after Greek models, alongside amphorae, pythoi, kantharoi, kratera, bowls, mugs, rush lights. These were crafted in a totally original manner, fact that individualizes them as a distinct group, heterogeneous, of the Dacian pottery.

The Dacians borrowed both the crafting technology and ornamentation motifs from the Hellenistic bowls. The new elements brought by the local communities regard the shape, which was more conical, with a much more enlarged mouth, and also their decoration with motifs specific to the Dacian art.

One of the features, which characterize the bowls in relief decorated, is the extraordinary variety of motifs and their associations. The organization in three panels of these decorations followed the Greek models: tape, central decoration and

medallion. As a specific technique we noticed the polishing of undecorated surfaces and the lack of glaze, all pervading on the Hellenistic bowls.

The Dacian bowls in relief decorated may be chronological framed between 150 - 50 BC, and their spreading area occupies South-Eastern Romania and the Northeastern Bulgaria. The analysis deals with 749 items, discovered entire or in fragments in 70 sites.

WHAT HAPPENED IN EUROPE AT 1200 BC?

Anthony Harding, University of Exter, UK

Around 1200 BC major changes occurred in both the Aegean area and in continental Europe. The destruction of sites in Greece, the alleged movements of the “Sea Peoples”, and the arrival of new artefact types have all been connected by some scholars (going back to Wolfgang Kimmig and Jan Bouzek in the 1960s) with events that occurred on a Europe-wide scale, for instance the rise of cremating societies in much of the continent. How are these changes to be explained in today’s archaeological world? Did Europe become a much more open world in the decades in question, with increased mobility and movement of trade goods across frontiers that had hitherto been relatively closed? Do we see the rise of new transcultural exchange networks that brought about major changes to the societies north and south of the Alps and Balkan mountains? These questions can be framed within the debate about core-periphery interactions, or they can be viewed in terms of local development, influenced by technological innovation from outside. A range of considerations concerning material culture need to be brought in to the debate.