

Session title: MATERIAL CONNECTIONS: MOBILITY, MATERIALITY AND MEDITERRANEAN IDENTITIES

Organizers: A. Bernard Knapp and Peter van Dommelen, Department of Archaeology, University of Glasgow, Scotland

Discussant: Mike Rowlands, Department of Anthropology, University College London, England

Time: Saturday morning

Room:

Session abstract:

Mediterranean archaeology traditionally has focused on excavating major sites, isolating cultural 'firsts' and describing fine artworks. Papers presented in this symposium seek to counteract those trends, engaging with the interrelated issues of colonialism, material culture and identity on a comparative basis. Contributors to the session will explore how 'things' mediate the experience of both ancient and modern Mediterranean peoples, and how these relations are shaped and informed by long-term collective memories of movement, colonisation or localisation. Working on different island and coastal regions, these thematically-linked papers examine how Mediterranean identities were impacted by the mediation of materialised 'memory-scapes' that form long-term dialogic spaces, where the modern and the ancient constantly inform and predict each other. This diachronic perspective can provide fresh insights into how new senses of place are created and new identities forged. The areas to be examined, comparatively and interactively, are Sardinia, Corsica, Crete, Cyprus and the Balearic islands, as well as their nearest mainland shores (Italy, Greece, Spain, France, northwest Africa). Each case study investigates specific objects or material culture categories that played a critical role in facilitating contacts or creating distance between two or more social groups. By confronting unexplored ideas and crossing traditional boundaries in a conceptually distinctive manner, these papers offer new insights into issues of materiality and identity in the ancient and modern Mediterranean. In discussing and analysing concepts like migration, materiality, identity and connectivity, we aim to breathe new life into current theoretical and methodological approaches, and to facilitate new dialogues and understandings of trans-regional and trans-cultural practices.

Paper abstracts:

Introduction: Mobility, Materiality and Mediterranean Identities

A. Bernard Knapp and Peter van Dommelen, Department of Archaeology, University of Glasgow, Scotland

THE ROLE OF *THINGS* IN IDENTITY PRODUCTION: COLONIAL ENTANGLEMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

Alison Kohn, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago, USA

Across the social sciences today, there is a growing concern with theorizing material culture in social life. Such lively debate around materiality lends exciting new possibilities for the archaeological interpretation of the past. In this panel alone, we see a wide-ranging series of archaeological interpretations that are made more robust by utilizing theoretical models that, in particular, are able to shed light on the role of material culture in identity production, in the context of colonial entanglements within the ancient Mediterranean. In this paper, I seek to contextualize the symposium by discussing a range of theoretical paradigms that focus on identity production and material culture, and by synthesizing a diverse array of approaches. As an ethnographer and archaeologist, I conclude with my own viewpoints, exemplified with material from southern France, on the opportunities presented and the challenges faced today in interpreting the past.

FROM COLONIZATION TO HABITATION: EARLY CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS IN THE BALEARIC BRONZE AGE

Damià Ramis, Institut Mediterrani, University of the Balearic Islands, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

This paper focuses on the earliest human colonisation of the Balearic islands during the 3rd millennium BC, including interactions with the environment. Local developments in material culture are analysed in the attempt to understand better the progressive development of the first indigenous Balearic culture during the second millennium BC. Although the Balearics are not oceanic islands, and an intense relationship with source regions may be assumed, and a linear historical trajectory can be understood for the late 3rd and 2nd millennia cal BC. Although cultural manifestations are quite similar throughout the archipelago during this period, diverse elements on each island — Mallorca, Menorca, Ibiza — are considered, in particular with respect to the process of identity formation. The evidence emphasizes the persistence of most cultural traits in the Balearics during this period and constitutes a Mediterranean example of long-term insular settlement, development and change. The early record indicates a colonization stage, while the so-called habitation phase can be seen later with the development of the first indigenous Balearic culture.

CONTACTS, MOVEMENTS AND IDENTITIES IN IRON AGE EAST IBERIA

Jaime Vives-Ferrándiz, Museo de Prehistoria, Valencia, Spain

This paper examines the relationship between movements of people and material culture along the southeast coast of Iberia during the early Iron Age (8th-5th centuries BC). The focus falls on questions of connectivity in the context of a Phoenician

commercial diaspora, because indigenous sites — e.g. Peña Negra, Saladares, Caramoro II — are likely to have played an important role in shaping the entire setting. I suggest that asymmetrical power relationships between Phoenicians and indigenous people were not a feature of this situation, and that there was no dramatic split between these two social groups. The creation and maintenance of social distances as well as social groups are examined by concentrating on production, exchange and consumption. Smelting remains and amphorae represent the materialization of local networks of exchanges, and nodal points of transactions, but they also form ways of increasing power in these societies. Finally, daily cooking practices from two inland settlements (Peña Negra, Saladares), which show convergences between the indigenous and Phoenician *habitus*, shed more light on cultural encounters.

MIMESIS/MIMICRY: COLONIALISM AND IMITATION IN ROMAN BAETICA

Alicia Jiménez, Instituto de Historia, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, Spain

The ancient Greeks used the term *mimesis* to refer to the ability to simulate the appearance of something or somebody. This concept was especially important in the context of Greek theatre to understand the philosophical relation between play and reality. According to Aristotle, every instance of imitation produced learning. The concept of *mimesis* reappeared implicitly in modern scientific literature, in particular in evolutionist theories envisioning the imitation or emulation of superior cultures (i.e. Greek or Roman), as one way leading native cultures to ‘civilization’. Homi Bhabha renewed the notion of *mimesis/mimicry* from a postcolonial viewpoint, analysing the subversive aspects of imitation, now understood as one way to reformulate the image of the colonizer by local populations. In this paper I explore different questions related to the complex interplay between *copy* and *model* in colonial contexts like Roman Baetica. How shall we interpret examples of appropriating foreign traits in colonial contexts? Why were some traits chosen and other dismissed? Was there a conscious desire to imitate the coloniser’s culture by local populations? What were the consequences of the *mimesis* processes for the constructing the identity of these communities?

INSULARITY, CONNECTIVITY AND ELITE IDENTITY IN LATE BRONZE AGE SARDINIA

Anthony Russell, Department of Archaeology, University of Glasgow, Scotland

This paper investigates the role cultural encounters played in the development of an elite identity on Sardinia during the Late Bronze Age (LBA) (ca. 13th–9th centuries BC). Sardinian archaeologists tend to favour frameworks that either stress the importance of extra-insular contacts in the sociopolitical development of Nuragic settlements, or claim that the increasing hierarchic complexes of the LBA are best understood as an independent Sardinian phenomenon. The material record, however, indicates that the leaders of Nuragic polities both appropriated traditional,

indigenous materials and acquired foreign exotica in order to legitimise and distinguish their social positions. The significance of both local and foreign goods would have changed continuously within the framework of emerging social identities, as local materials became more exclusive, and foreign exotica became entangled within the materiality of Sardinian society.

ENTANGLED IDENTITIES ON IRON AGE SARDINIA

Jeremy Hayne, Department of Archaeology, University of Glasgow, Scotland

This paper examines regional differentiation in Sardinia during the Iron Age and early historical periods (900-400BC) as demonstrated through the island's material culture. Whilst traditional views of Iron Age Sardinia have focused on issues of resistance and isolation to create a distinctive island-wide identity, attention to regional differences reveals divergent developments and relationships with the outside world. In northern Sardinia, in particular, material evidence from sites such as Nurdole and Sant'Imbenia suggests gradual and regional hybridisation processes and practices involving various social groups that resulted in differences not just across but also within the island itself. Issues of mobility are explored by examining the contacts between Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks and Etruscans, all of whom frequented the waters of the Tyrrhenian Sea at this time. Traditional ideas of isolation and resistance may be confronted with wider, overlapping movements and identities of people in the Mediterranean. The resulting entanglements and ever-shifting regional and intra-regional movements inform this study and allow the changing nature of identities to be investigated with respect to colonial and trading encounters.

CONNECTIVITY AND SHIFTING IDENTITIES IN THE NORTH TYRRHENIAN SEA

Corinna Riva, Institute of Archaeology, University College London, England

This paper examines the extent of connectivity in and around the north Tyrrhenian Sea. That area saw intensive movement by Carthaginians, Greeks, Etruscans, Sardinian and other Italic peoples during the Iron Age (7th-5th centuries BC), all interacting in diverse situations and socio-cultural circumstances. Investigating the shifting nature of identities in terms of people's materiality and mobility, and with respect to dynamic colonial encounters, particular attention is paid to the acquisition and use of Etruscan imports outside Etruria, with special reference to the southern coast of France. Taking into account studies that emphasise the ways in which objects that travel far are recontextualised and given new meanings according to local value systems, I look at the ways in which imported Etruscan objects were incorporated into existing or new practices and traditions, namely wine-drinking, thus actively transforming the identities of the people – both indigenous and colonising — who imported these objects.

PREHISTORIC SOCIAL IDENTITIES IN THE CRETAN LANDSCAPE

Marina Gkiasta, Department of Archaeology, Leiden University, Netherlands

This paper explores the variability of social identities in Bronze Age Crete through the medium of materiality and by assessing the role of landscape in constructing and perpetuating social identity. Reconstructions of large social systems often impose present ideology on the ways that prehistoric society is structured and evolves; they lack the fine-tuning of the multiple levels in which humans perceive themselves in their — by default — multi-scalar societies. In order to understand how people perceive themselves in relation to ‘others’ we need to define a theoretical and methodological framework of studying the construction, expression and perpetuation of social identities at the personal and community level. The mountainous landscape of the island of Crete has played a major role in connecting, but also in isolating people. Communities, their connections and their interdependent relationship with the specific landscape are key themes in this study, which will focus on basic, principle frameworks of social life and their signatures in material objects and the landscape. Research themes include:

- variability of social identities and their material expressions
- ideology and social practice.

Observing these themes in the present and a psychoanalytical perspective on social identity are used to provide crucial aids in analysing past people.

NEGOTIATING ISLAND INTERACTIONS: CYPRUS, THE AEGEAN AND THE LEVANT IN THE LATE BRONZE-EARLY IRON AGES

Sarah Janes, Department of Archaeology, University of Glasgow

This paper assesses the complex and extensive mortuary remains of Cyprus as they relate to issues of identity, insularity and connectivity on the island during the Late Bronze-Early Iron Ages (ca. 1450-750BC). I propose to reconsider how material culture was actively involved in the multiple social and spatial dynamics — maritime interactions, migrations and colonial encounters — that occurred with the collapse of larger, regional palatial polities at the end of the Late Bronze Age, and the subsequent emergence of smaller, local, hybridised polities involving native Cypriotes and incoming peoples from the Aegean and Levant. In contrast to the Hellenisation perspective that has characterised most traditional work on negotiating island identities during these periods, this paper offers a more nuanced interpretation of the role material culture played in facilitating and mediating socio-cultural interaction between Cyprus, the Aegean and the Levant.