

CONNECTIVITY IN THE IRON AGE

HALL (J.M.), OSBORNE (J.F.) (edd.) *The Connected Iron Age. Interregional Networks in the Eastern Mediterranean, 900–600 BCE*. Pp. x + 263, fig., ills, maps. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2022. Cased, US\$45. ISBN: 978-0-226-81904-4.
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The papers in this volume originated in a conference held at the Frank Institute for the Humanities of the University of Chicago in January 2018, organised by the editors. The subject of ancient Mediterranean connectivity has met renewed scholarly interest, particularly boosted by the landmark publications of P. Horden and N. Purcell (2000) and C. Broodbank (2013), both works frequently discussed in the volume. Interregional connectivity has come to be generally recognised as an essential aspect of the Iron Age Mediterranean. Yet, as Hall and Osborne point out in the introduction (Chapter 1), the nature and interpretation of these connections are a subject of ongoing study. The proliferation of scholarly approaches and the general lack of *passerpartout* narratives are shrewdly turned into an interpretative advantage in this book. The major aim here is neither to construct a compelling narrative nor to advocate for a particular model or approach. Rather, it is to turn what is usually regarded as troublesome discordance into a polyphonic Iron Age Eastern Mediterranean.

The book brings together eleven contributions by leading scholars concerned with cultural and economic connectivity in the Eastern Mediterranean of the early first millennium BCE. Some chapters introduce less-considered agents of connectivity or understudied microregions, others focus on groups of objects and material connections across the Mediterranean, and all engage, to a lesser or greater extent, with theoretical considerations. The papers are nicely linked by the themes introduced in Chapter 1: the failure of any overarching narrative to accommodate this complex phenomenon; the research potential in examining microecologies; the significance of small-scale connectivities and local trade; the ways in which geographical areas less regarded for connectivity can give substantial nuance. Additionally, the papers come into dialogue with the juxtaposition of top-down and bottom-up approaches, emic and etic perspectives, and through shared concerns such as the dangers in ethnicising material culture and the methodological difficulties arising from the nature of the data available.

Chapter 2 is a polemical response to scholarly Phoenico-scepticism that tends to treat Phoenicians as a cultural construct and does not recognise them as a distinct collective group. The study of Phoenicians as active agents of connectivity appears promising in unravelling the tangled Orientalising phenomenon. C. López-Ruiz argues that Phoenicians are behind the commercialisation and wide distribution of an ‘Oriental’ material culture kit. The suggested heuristic use of Oriental and its derivatives may be further debated, but the chapter successfully illustrates the importance of Phoenician studies in overcoming unilateral and biased Hellenocentric readings of the phenomenon. Chapter 3 challenges another bias, that of ‘centre’ over ‘periphery’, and illustrates the importance of survey archaeology and the small-scale in the study of Mediterranean connectivities. C. Kearns investigates consumption patterns through ceramic vessels in Iron Age Cyprus, shifting the focus to the countryside east of Amanthus. Comparing evidence from rural survey projects and excavations, she sees a productive and diverse countryside dynamically integrated into broader politico-economic systems. We read that this rural landscape was not deprived of connectivities, but it chose to trade and consume differently – and more locally – than the nearby city.

Chapters 4 and 5 revisit the concept of style in archaeology through a practice-focused lens, unlike earlier art- and cultural-historical traditions. M.H. Feldman directly addresses the taboo of stylistic analysis and argues that there is no need to abandon it completely. Her study of decorated metal bowls, known in scholarship as 'Phoenician', exemplifies how a socially informed and practice-based understanding of style can reveal connectivities from the bottom-up, uncovering an array of new places and agents. Style, we are told, is not a ready indicator of a singular identity group, but, instead, entails a range of social groups and activities. The analysis of the stylistic and technological patterning of the metal bowls signals both connectivity and fragmentation. These two characteristics, according to Feldman, are defining of what she calls 'Mediterraneanism'. In Chapter 5 S.P. Morris applies a practice-based approach to style, this time incorporating the concept of temporality. She investigates long-lasting shared practices primarily on early Crete and between 'Greeks, Phoenicians, and Others'. She discusses various sources, from evidence of transliteration to hybrid burial monuments and mixed cult practices. The results transcend traditional ethnic- and elite-centred discussions, especially because of Morris's focus on the role of mobile warriors and her consideration of the unexplored region of the North Aegean.

Other chapters that vividly demonstrate the potential of unexplored microregions for the study of Iron Age connectivity follow. In Chapter 6 S. Sherratt investigates the beginnings of Black Sea and Aegean connectivity. Her critical reading of later literary sources, combined with the sparse material evidence, her excellent knowledge of landscape, sea routes and broader economic context, all achieve a tentative yet stimulating narrative. It features Phrygians and Lydians, the Trojan War, Milesian seafarers, and it considers the suspicious absence of the Phoenicians. Behind the first linkage of the two seas, we are told, hide tumultuous regional politics and the quest for metals. Integrating literary and archaeological evidence certainly has many challenges, but Sherratt's contribution is particularly promising in this respect. In Chapter 7 J.K. Papadopoulos focuses on the North Aegean in the comparative light of the Central and Southern Aegean. He examines patterns emerging from imports and exports as well as evidence for linguistic interaction. Objects include Orientalia and common pottery, with the premise of uncovering both elite and non-elite interactions. We read that the microregion was an active agent of connectivity with links pointing in all directions. One of the paper's strengths lies in examining Troy and Phrygia as part of the Iron Age North Aegean, illustrating the methodological importance and interpretative implications of defining our analytical units.

Chapters 8 and 9 shed new light on Phrygian and Egyptian material cultures as important assets of Mediterranean connectivities. A.C. Gunter's chapter discusses recent archaeological research at Gordion, suggestive of early connections with the Assyrian kingdom via shared elite practices. It then turns to Greek sanctuaries, primarily in the Eastern Aegean, to examine the multiple and changing associations of the otherwise limited repertoire of metal Phrygian(-styled) objects. Unlike earlier flat readings of the Orientalising phenomenon that insulated Phrygian objects in the Aegean to elite exchanges under Midas' reign, this chapter reveals a more dynamic picture. Phrygian material connections were integrated into broader networks and involved various agents and mechanisms that linked the Neo-Assyrian and the Aegean spheres in complex and changing ways. In Chapter 9 B. Muhs examines a limited yet quite telling collection of inscribed Egyptian-styled statues and stone vessels discovered outside Egypt. Although Egyptianising objects are readily associated in scholarship with Phoenician activity in the Early Iron Age, Muhs argues for at least some degree of Egyptian agency. In this respect, the analysis of object biographies is particularly cautious of the binary opposition of style and culture, as well as of uncritical projections of ethnicities. The inclusion in the study of indirect evidence for trading commodities and quotidian goods strengthens

Muhs's suggestion for an interconnected Egypt with strong economic links to the Levant in the Early Iron Age. This reminds us of the importance of microecologies in studying connectivities, even when data may be fragmented and suggestive in nature.

The last two chapters interact productively with the preceding papers in the volume. In Chapter 10 T. Hodos offers a review of theoretical approaches to Iron Age Mediterranean connectivity, from models of colonisation to post-colonial approaches, and argues for the heuristic potential of a globalisation framework that captures both local variability and shared traits. She discusses the sum of contributions in the volume in the light of globalisation. For Hodos, the combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches speak to the heart of the concept. Chapter 11 is a thought-provoking essay that interrogates approaches currently hanging over the field. M. Dietler places the concept of connectivity under an epistemological microscope, expands on concerns discussed in the volume and calls for critical self-reflection, for example on assumptions made of Mediterranean unity and indisputable connectedness. A strong critique of network applications strengthens the thesis for multi-scalar and context-sensitive approaches that do not lose sight of the qualitative aspects of interactions. Dietler's conclusion boldly addresses the political responsibilities that come with the study of the ancient Mediterranean.

The volume successfully demonstrates the complexity and diversity of cultural and economic connectivities in the Eastern Mediterranean during the early first millennium BCE. The contributions cover a wide range of relevant theoretical approaches, discuss different kinds of evidence from various perspectives, and each present a full and helpful bibliography. Some of the editors' remarks and suggestions, such as calling for a more explicit consideration of small-scale and land connectivities or the integration of diverse data, are admittedly more challenging to meet. Yet, the chapters perfectly demonstrate that engaging with these challenges offers new and promising directions. Similarly, discussions of the dangers of projecting ethnicities and other theoretical and methodological riddles are a case in point. As a whole, the book goes a long way in populating the Iron Age Eastern Mediterranean with less well-known actors and places of connectivity while effectively pushing against earlier traditional approaches. Moreover, it demonstrates the significant research benefits in scholarly communication across departmental and disciplinary boundaries.

The book is a valuable and stimulating read for scholars and advanced students interested in Mediterranean interactions. Timely and relevant, it speaks to current scholarly efforts for multi-scalar readings of the Iron Age Mediterranean as well as discussions over the decolonisation of the field. It sets the stage for fresh, complex and nuanced understandings of a much-debated phenomenon.

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MONEY AND THE ANCIENT GREEK ECONOMY

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In this revised version of his doctoral dissertation L. engages with the still on-going Substantivist versus Formalist debates over the nature(s) of the ancient (Greek) economy,