Ralph Araque Gonzalez. *Intercultural Communications and Iconography in the Western Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age* (Freiburg Archaeological Studies 9. Rahden, Nordrhein-Westfalen: Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2018, 397pp., 214 figs., 20 tables, hbk, ISBN 978-3-89646-797-3)

Western Mediterranean prehistoric societies, particularly between the Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age, and their contacts and interaction with the rest of the world, have been historically understudied compared to other European regions with stronger research traditions, such as the Atlantic or the eastern Mediterranean. In recent decades, the existence of trans-Mediterranean contacts has been a key debate in attempts at understanding and characterizing western Mediterranean Late Bronze Age (LBA hereafter) societies and the emergence of wide interaction networks preceding the colonial phenomenon of the Early Iron Age (EIA) in the first millennium BC. Archaeological concepts like 'precolonial' have been widely debated (Celestino et al., 2008) and are still a useful approach to this particular context, where seafarers and independent traders from the eastern Mediterranean participated in seasonal or permanent enterprises reaching diverse local populations (Artzy, 2007). According to this model, the situation in the western Mediterranean during the LBA was changing, and independently functioning groups began appearing in large-scale, combined organisational units. The Sardinian (Nuragic), Sicilian, Balearic, and south Iberian regions were progressively incorporated into the 'Phoenician' trading system alongside several other socioeconomic developments.

In this comprehensive, well-structured, and richly illustrated book, Ralph Araque Gonzalez aims to investigate the historical context outlined above and draw conclusions about western Mediterranean prehistoric societies (*c.* 1200–525 BC) and their transformations by analysing their material culture, particularly their iconography. Four main regions (Sardinia, south-western Iberia, Corsica, and Sicily) are extensively considered in Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6, which discuss specific topics, such as 'The Archaeological Record' (chronology, sources, and peculiarities), 'Iconography' (the corpus of pictorial media), and 'Society' (including existing information about archaeological debates on social forms of organisation). It is important to note that the author places the visual media discussed in the context of other sources (i. e. settlements, monumental buildings, conflicts, centralisation dynamics, or foreign contacts and interactions) that come together to create a broad-based and innovative approach. The iconographic elements are mainly anthropomorphic and zoomorphic representations in the form of metal figurines (Nuragic *bronzetti*) or depictions on media such as ceramic vessels or stone stelae. Within these intercultural relationships, it is necessary to understand the generalisation of a common iconography of distant Cypriot-Canaanite inspiration, which is represented in those materials. Furthermore, the author explores, through building a systematic record and categorisation of the sources, the connection between those intensive intercultural contacts and power relations, and consequently changes in visual expression.

The book's seven chapters offer an in-depth archaeological analysis of this phenomenon. First, in Chapter 1 ('Approaches to Image Media, Intercultural Communications, and Anarchic Societies'), the author exposes critically most of the theoretical concepts and theories that are developed at

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length throughout the book. He starts by criticizing the Western capitalist narrative and looking for alternatives to imperialist concepts, while also deconstructing selected approaches to visual media, intercultural communication, and forms of social organisation (Sherratt & Sherratt, 1991) in order to build a new theoretical framework. However, it seems that the discussion is not properly balanced with methodology in this chapter, and many of the deconstructed considerations are not adequately replaced by alternatives. Admittedly, tackling so many complex topics and theories, including visual media, iconography and religion, politics, violence, colonisation, elites, ethnicity, culture, world-systems theory, migration, hierarchy, or complexity, is daunting, and the author manages to proceed in a structured way. Chapter 2, 'The Mediterranean Situation', summarizes the current scholarly consensus on the interpretation of intercultural contacts and shared iconography between the western and eastern Mediterranean and Atlantic Europe from 1300 to 525 BC, paying special attention to the various chronological stages. It also explores the roles developed by different agents, such as 'seafarers', the 'Phoenicians', or the 'Sea Peoples'.

Throughout the geographically-focused Chapters 3–6, two key concepts in Mediterranean and European LBA/EIA scholarship (Kristiansen & Larsson, 2005) are challenged: 'elites' and 'centralisation'. The author's approach is based on an anarchist perspective (Feyerabend, 1975; Scott, 2012), and grows from deconstructing the prevalent colonial narratives in Mediterranean archaeology. In this perspective, anarchic forms of social organisation are characterized by leadership (a social or communal one), but free of governance, legality, or socioeconomic inequalities. In Araque's study, some evidence of anarchic social organisation in south-western Iberian and Sicilian societies in the LBA is put forward, as it is for Sardinia and Corsica in the EIA. Corsica emerges as a key example to support the author's approach, its societies seemingly more isolated from external contact and developments when compared with regions like Sardinia. The abandonment of polycentric, organized territories and the emergence of smaller, autonomous, fortified settlements are cited in support of this argument. This might demonstrate that the Corsicans refused not only external personal contact but also integration into larger, centralized, state-like forms of organisation in order to build a small-scale, organized society without elites. In this perspective, the anarchic formula represents high societal complexity combined with low political complexity. The case for Corsica seems, however, to be inadequately made. Archaeologically speaking, it can be compared with many other cases in Mediterranean prehistory, such as the post-Argaric phase (LBA) in south-eastern Iberia (Lull et al., 2013) or the Talayotic (EIA) in the Balearic islands (Lull et al., 2005), where a heterarchical social organisation has been suggested.

In short, a more critical analysis of production and power relations combined with social, political, and economic discussion is required. Furthermore, the importance of island contexts, described in the book, and their relationship with insular geographies are key elements, especially when analysing factors like isolation or connectivity; island communities generally share a strong identification with their island, apparently generated by geographical conditions (Rainbird, 2007). These problems are considered in some of the book's chapters, but they could have been better developed and integrated into the general discussion, as they can be a determining factor in an island's social organisation.

The author further considers societies as self-governing and/or anarchically

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organised. Concepts like individual and local independence, voluntary community, mutual help, network organisation, local decision-making, legitimate authority, and resistance to centralisation are central traits to be identified. Accordingly, the author deems the 'local autonomy' of LBA communities to be the most tangible element of anarchic organisation. Anarchism may be helpful in explaining decentralised networks that allow for complex relationships within a group without fostering the emergence of centralised political authority.

Araque demonstrates how the integrative study of iconography and material culture allows conclusions to be drawn about social forms of organisation and their transformation. This is a positive example of how we can benefit from conducting studies of the same phenomenon from different perspectives, where intercultural communication, a topic of continued interest, has a rich and solid source base. I agree with the author's belief that the LBA societies of Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, and western Iberia were heterarchical, although the anarchic model fits some regions better than others. As Araque himself recognizes, some of the features that define the anarchic model, such as individual or local autonomy, community decision-making, and the exercise of power without coercion, are difficult to demonstrate in the archaeological record. Be that as it may, the author understands how to present a complex situation in an understandable way, as illustrated by his chapter (2) on interpretation.

In my opinion, the weakest aspects of this book are the absence of a chapter on the Balearic archipelago and, more generally, the anecdotic integration of other types of data that are currently challenging Mediterranean mobility studies, like genetic or lead and stable isotope studies. Considering that the geographical scope of the study covers the western Mediterranean as an entity, it is hard to understand the omission of its central part; there is interesting data to consider there (Calvo et al., 2011; Sureda et al., 2017).

The reassessment of Mediterranean connections, with special attention paid to the LBA and EIA, is timely for several reasons. We are currently seeing a boom in the study of mobility in archaeology thanks, primarily, to the extensive application of stable isotope and aDNA analyses in combination with other approaches. Some researchers (Kristiansen, 2014) have suggested that a 'Third Science Revolution' in archaeology is underway, with network and interaction studies focusing on artefacts and material mobility leading archaeological research in the years to come. In the book under review, I would have liked greater prominence given to these approaches in combination with other data in the western Mediterranean; this is my personal opinion, which reflects my own interests. This does not change my positive reception of this book, which I sincerely recommend to anybody interested in the analysis of connectivity and interaction from an archaeological and iconographic perspective.

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Barry Cunliffe and John T. Koch. *Exploring Celtic Origins: New Ways Forward in Archaeology, Linguistics, and Genetics* (Celtic Studies Publications 22. Oxford & Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2019, ix and 214pp., several illustrations and tables, hbk, ISBN: 978-1-78925-088-6)

The work under review includes seven essays edited by Barry Cunliffe and John T. Koch that address the debated issue of the origins of the Celts. They belong to the Celtic Studies Publications series dedicated to renewing the vision of the Atlantic Celts, a collaboration between the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies at Aberystwyth and the School of Archaeology, University of Oxford.

Cunliffe outlines his thesis on the origins of the Celts, stating that 'the Atlantic *lingua franca* developing in the fifth and fourth millennia was Proto-Celtic and that the vector for its extension into middle Europe was the Beaker phenomenon. It was during the Beaker period that the mature Celtic language developed' (p. 9, see also pp. 182–83). This thesis, aired in *Facing the Ocean* (2001), assumes that Italic and Celtic would ultimately come from Anatolia via the Balkans around 6500–5500 BC, in association with Impressed Ware decorated with cardial shells (p. 7ff), but Impressed Ware should be considered a 'substrate' of Iberian and

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