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Francesco Iacono. *The Archaeology of Late Bronze Age Interaction and Mobility at the Gates of Europe: People, Things, and Networks around the Southern Adriatic Sea* (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2019, 286pp., 68 b/w illustr., 12 tables, hbk, ISBN 978-1-3500-3614-7)

The interest in the archaeology of Mediterranean connectivity, intercultural contacts, and mobility during the Late Bronze Age (LBA) has constantly been increasing, resulting in numerous international research projects and publications (e.g. van Dommelen & Knapp, 2010; Aubet & Sureda, 2013; Babbi et al., 2015). This came out of a paradigm shift in social sciences, and subsequently also in archaeology, towards the study of intercultural encounters. The latter has been triggered by current political and economic developments, which have caused forced as well as voluntary migration and sparked heated debates on the renegotiation of borders and boundaries. Francesco Iacono belongs to a growing number of archaeologists who intend to contribute to the assessment of present-day migrations with analyses of the socio-cultural implications of past encounters.

Most scholars who have studied ancient Mediterranean connections concentrated on the Final Bronze Age (FBA) and the Early Iron Age (EIA), due to the abundance of the material record compared to the earlier stages; with a few exceptions, less attention has been paid to the Middle Bronze Age (MBA). Furthermore, the geographical focus of most studies was on the sea-routes between East and West, connecting the Aegean, Egypt, and the Levant with the shores of Sicily, Sardinia, and Iberia. Within this network, people from centralized political entities of the eastern Mediterranean interacted with people living in small-scale, politically decentralized societies. Nonetheless, those sea-routes inevitably went past the gates to the Adriatic basin. Apulia is therefore a key area for the understanding of the dynamics of connectivity and mobility as well as for research on the effects of intercultural communication on individual communities in the Mediterranean Bronze Age.

According to Iacono, it seems that the first contacts of Aegean sailors with Adriatic communities in the MBA were merely accidental and seafarers would rather have bypassed them on their way westwards (p. 200). It seems that this is exactly what has happened in archaeological research: apart from routine references to sites with abundant finds of Aegean-style pottery, such as the settlement of Scoglio del Tonno (Taranto), the southern Adriatic has been circumvented and largely remains *terra incognita* in Anglophone scholarship.

Meanwhile, several extremely interesting sites in Apulia have been excavated, studied, and interpreted by Italian archaeologists. Iacono fills a lamentable gap in Mediterranean archaeology with his comprehensive monograph on the Apulian Bronze Age, featuring results of investigations at Roca, Coppa Nevigata, Otranto, and Torre Santa Sabina, amongst others. He presents a perspective from the *longue durée*, informing the reader on regional developments, interaction networks, and cultural changes from the Early Bronze Age (EBA) onwards. The focus is however on the MBA and LBA, which comprises two stages according to the conventional Italian chronology, the Recent Bronze Age (RBA) and the Final Bronze Age (FBA). Iacono analyses the archaeological record of each period at three levels: the individual community, the small-scale network, and the wider Mediterranean context. This micro-regional, diachronic approach constitutes an ideal complement to the prevailing focus on large-scale connectivity in later periods (FBA–EIA), since it enables the study of the emergence of cultural and social relations in Apulia and beyond.

In the Introduction to the book, Iacono postulates his intentions to establish a theoretical and methodological framework that could be applied in the archaeology of any situation of interaction and mobility (p. 2). Chapter 1 outlines his approach, and this conveniently opens numerous fields for future discussions. Iacono's thoughtful theoretical models based on Marxism and, to a lesser extent, post-colonialism, contain important insights and are mostly consistent in themselves. Initially, he reminds us that the Mediterranean, with its high connectivity and bustling exchange networks, has often been regarded as the birthplace of capitalism and as the embryo of today's globalized world. According to Iacono, the rising scepticism towards capitalism has led to a negative view of connectivity, and archaeologists, following the political trend, have started to concentrate on local trajectories and diversity rather than on a 'set of homogenizing features' (p. 5). He states that discussions of political power in ancient societies which highlight the hypothetical activities of supposed 'elites' and expose theories of social change are not compatible with a thorough analysis of social differentiation (p. 6). As Iacono explains, this is due to the exclusive focus on the powerful (elites, nobles, etc.), instead of developing a more comprehensive analysis of social realities that would necessarily include the whole of society, and, I assume, the existence of class conflict according to his strictly Marxist viewpoint.

I largely agree with the author up to this point, but the subsequent application of a rigorous Marxist analysis (pp. 13–27) to decentralized, small-scale, non-capitalist societies, to whom Iacono attributes 'state-preventing strategies' (p. 212) is, to my mind, not appropriate and anachronistic. He first introduces concepts such as the 'Mode, Means, and Relations of Interaction' that would provide a society with opportunities to accumulate capital, as complementary to the Means of Production (pp. 19–23). The subsequent application of historical materialism leads to some ostensibly odd interpretations as we read that Apulian

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EBA–RBA societies lacked the 'accumulated capital' to 'invest' in longboats as a Means of Interaction, or that, due to a variable range of food production strategies including hunting and foraging, there was 'no opportunity to create agricultural surplus' (p. 109). This approach contradicts notions of individual agency and postulates an economic determinism regarding societies as entities driven by the want for capital accumulation (pp. 25–27). However, prehistoric communities most probably followed entirely different economic and organizational principles (cf. Clastres, 1989; Angelbeck, 2017).

Iacono employs network analysis to achieve a broader perspective by using an open social model (p. 12 & 27–33). The individual site is the basic unit of his analysis, designed to check connections between sites in the small-scale Apulian network. Sites that show a high degree of centrality (p. 31) often appear to have also played an important role in the wider Mediterranean network, since they frequently yielded Aegean-type pottery and other imports. This approach is consequently applied, delivering interesting results for the multi-scalar emergence of interactions and networks over some 700 years (MBA–FBA) in Apulia. A 'kinship mode of production' is anticipated, mainly because there are no indicators of social stratification (p. 38).

The material basis of the network analysis consists of decoration styles on handmade *impasto* pottery. It is correct that identical or very similar motifs might indicate contact between, or movement of, potters that hints at contacts between the sites where their pots are found. Unnecessarily, however, it is claimed that *impasto* pottery would have been made by women and the distribution of motifs would thus represent exogamous, male-centred political marriage connections (pp. 32–33). This assumption is based on a misinterpretation of ethnographic texts (e.g. Murdock & Provost, 1973) that underwent substantial criticism (e.g. Röder, 2006). On the other hand, as Iacono admits (p. 33), the pottery network analysis works perfectly without this notion and it can be ignored for the rest of the book—except for a bewildering map that equates 'wives' with exchange goods between communities (p. 110, fig. 3.21).

Chapter 2 provides background information in the form of basic geographical and nautical facts about the Adriatic and an overview of recent research on exchange networks and Aegean-type pottery in the central Mediterranean. Iacono justifiably criticizes approaches that detach consumption from production, as is common practice in modern capitalism (p. 54). The chapter continues with an overview of early Mediterranean connectivity, concluding that interaction intensified significantly in the Chalcolithic period, with the 'Cetina culture' in the eastern Adriatic. Iacono expresses his controversial view that sailing ships were unavailable in the Adriatic before the FBA. In his discussion of the use of longboats in Mediterranean societies, he oddly associates them with a male-centred warrior ideology in the Chalcolithic presumed from the presence of various arrowheads and two finds of gold daggers (pp. 64–66). I find it extremely disappointing to find such a mainstream masculinist interpretation (cf. Brück & Fontijn, 2013; Kienlin, 2015) in this book, given its well-informed, often progressive theoretical background. Be that as it may, in Chapter 6, Iacono makes it unmistakably clear that there is no pre-eminent 'warrior class' in the entire record of the southern Italian LBA (p. 205). This is an important observation, which helps dismantle the outdated political construct of the ubiquitous male warrior chief that still haunts Bronze Age research.

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Chapters 3, 4, and 5 follow the same methodical structure for each chronological stage: Iacono analyses the connectivity and social relations of Apulian societies by comparing developments within individual communities with patterns derived from the local networks and then places the region within the wider Mediterranean context. He, thus, provides a wealth of comprehensive archaeological information on settlements, burials, economic activities, and social relations.

The network approach demonstrates that sites like Roca and Coppa Nevigata that featured as pivotal nodes in the local networks also became protagonists in the emerging overseas network in the Apennine MBA (Chapter 3). Monumental fortifications often protected coastal sites, which indicates some unrest but also the capacity of communities to collaborate in public works. The first Aegean sailors might have had a limited interest in Apulian resources but cultivated good relations with some of the local people. Iacono provides concise observations on the use of Aegean-style pottery in Italy, from imported closed-shape containers indicating the importance of the products transported in these vessels during the MBA, to locally produced open shapes for drinking and feasting in ritualized communal contexts in the RBA. Furthermore, he presents evidence for the production of purple dye and textiles at southern Italian sites that might have played a decisive role in goods-exchange.

While Aegean contacts intensified during the Subapennine RBA (Chapter 4), the cross-Adriatic contacts with the Balkans operated at a lower level. Iacono convincingly argues for increased North-South connections along the Adriatic shores, suggesting that after the collapse of the 'Terramare culture' in the Po plain at the end of the MBA, people had migrated southwards to Apulia. I was slightly disappointed that despite the mentions of traces for growing violence in eastern Sicily and the Aeolians and Apulia's role in a hypothetic 'Ausonian invasion' (p. 152), these topics are not further discussed.

Eventually, in the Protovillanovian FBA (Chapter 5), it seems that metallurgy, now again influenced from the Balkan as well as from Alpine and Urnfield traditions, had become a proper 'industry' in Apulia, despite the lack of local metal sources. The first scrap metal and possible ritual hoards appeared in this period, one of them containing the largest known set of FBA bronze hammers. Other developments comprise the introduction of new pottery styles, the use of bitumen to impregnate containers for the transport of liquids, and new longhouses that might indicate larger kinship groups. By then, it seems that Aegean immigrants had long been integrated into Apulian society.

Iacono mentions the role of Sardinia and Cyprus in trans-Mediterranean connections during the FBA, but this part remains superficial and does not include some important advances by Sardinian scholars and cites controversial viewpoints without further discussion. The main point of interest is that the network connecting the eastern Mediterranean with the western islands in the FBA did not reach the southern Adriatic, which was more integrated in the Balkan and Urnfield networks. A picture of self-conscious, proactive central Mediterranean communities emerges, detached from former Aegean influences and hegemony.

In Chapter 6, Iacono concludes that throughout the Bronze Age, there are no indicators for institutionalized hierarchies in Apulian communities. He argues that this is a typical outcome if different groups within different societies can access a large surplus through interaction (p. 212). The material record shows the Apulian

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territory's distinctly polycentric structure, individuals are not given special significance in funerary contexts, and interaction did not lead to social stratification. In full agreement with Iacono (p. 213), I believe that this is a case, among many, of the ability of cooperative, decentralised societies to prosper, not least through interactions with people from other cultural backgrounds.

In summary, this monograph is a most valuable contribution to Mediterranean archaeology. It is well written and has a clear structure, figures are mostly of good quality. However, overview illustrations of the decorations of MBA/RBA *impasto* pottery are disappointingly missing. Iacono provides a relevant social analysis of MBA–FBA Apulian communities, including some implications for the present-day Mediterranean and beyond. He also shows the potential of network analysis in micro-regional studies. My main criticisms remain the seemingly forced application of historic materialism and the uncritical mention of outdated masculinist constructs. Fortunately, both issues do not interfere much with the sound presentation of archaeological material and the scientific results which deliver a solid foundation for the inclusion of Apulia in any future investigation of Mediterranean Bronze Age connectivity.

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