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THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN IRON AGE

A GLOBALISING WORLD c.1100–600 BCE

The Mediterranean's Iron Age period was one of its most dynamic eras. Stimulated by the movement of individuals and groups on an unprecedented scale, the first half of the first millennium BCE witnesses the development of Mediterranean-wide practices, including related writing systems, common features of urbanism, and shared artistic styles and techniques, alongside the evolution of wide-scale trade. Together, these created an engaged, interlinked and interactive Mediterranean. We can recognise this as the Mediterranean's first truly globalising era. This volume introduces students and scholars to contemporary evidence and theories surrounding the Mediterranean from the eleventh century until the end of the seventh century BCE to enable an integrated understanding of the multicultural and socially complex nature of this incredibly vibrant period.

TAMAR HODOS is Reader in Mediterranean Archaeology at the University of Bristol. She is a world-leading authority on the archaeology of the Mediterranean's Iron Age. She is the author of *Local Responses to Colonisation in the Iron Age Mediterranean* (2006), co-editor of *Material Culture and Social Identities in the Ancient World* (2010), and *The Routledge Handbook of Archaeology and Globalization* (2018).

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PREFACE

This book is about the interconnections between populations and communities living around the Mediterranean during the early first millennium BCE. This is not the first period in which people across the sea were connected with one another, exchanging goods, ideas, values, customs, practices and technologies. The difference is the scale to which these exchanges occurred at this time. A connected Mediterranean was evident during the second millennium BCE through, for example, the exchange of copper and metalworking techniques, sailing technology, and convergence in some forms and styles of ceramics and other media. The rapid decline in archaeological visibility of such exchanges, and their corresponding political systems, from the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BCE mark the end of this connected phase. The geographical, material and ideological scope witnessed in the resurgence of contact, communication and exchange from the eleventh and tenth century onwards eclipsed the previous interactions. The long-term impact was the creation of what may be regarded as a globally connected Mediterranean.[1]

Recognising this as an era of globalisation is important for our understanding of both the past and the present. Study of the ancient Mediterranean has often been divided into regional studies, and sometimes separated by archaeological sub-disciplines, each of which has its own origin of development. As a result, scholarly silos have emerged, rendering it challenging to discuss a Mediterranean archaeology, even though cross-cultural interaction is a feature of every period of the Mediterranean past.

Furthermore, our interpretations of the forms and natures of interactions between past cultural groups in the Mediterranean have evolved, particularly over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In the case of the early first millennium BCE Mediterranean, our understandings of the settlement of populations in foreign locales and the emergence of far-reaching trade have swung from colonialist perspectives of imitating indigenes to postmodern recognition of local agency and the development of hybrid practices. Yet one critique of the latter has been rejection of evidence that gave rise to the former. An interpretative framework such as globalisation encompasses both the widespread use of shared goods and practices and a resurgence of localised identity through considered adaptation of new and traditional things and ways

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in reaction to increasing connectivities. Therefore, the adoption of globalisation as a way of thinking about the past enables us to rehabilitate previously polarised and seemingly contradicting interpretations into a shared narrative and to reconsider them in a new light. The result is an understanding of the intensely complex and multiple modes of cultural interaction and impact around the ancient Mediterranean during the early first millennium BCE in ways we have not been able to recognise previously.

This perspective is drawn from continued complex connectivity across the Mediterranean. The movement of goods and people across the Mediterranean today forces the countries of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East to engage with one another in a variety of political, economic and social arenas. Knowledge and understanding of both the similarities and differences between the interacting communities are what enable modern political entities to interact with one another socially, economically and, increasingly, environmentally. This is the essence of modern globalisation. The benefit of comparing and contrasting the past with the present is that the long-term trajectory provided by study of the past enables us to assess the outcomes of previous actions in comparison with today's circumstances. While exploring this lies beyond the scope of the present study, this work lays the foundation for such a consideration.

Populations situated around the Mediterranean littoral not only interacted directly with one another across the sea but also served as communication conduits between inland cultures and other Mediterranean communities. Chapter 1, therefore, begins with a brief definition of the physical concept of the Mediterranean, in which the sea and its boundaries are characterised by shared geographical and environmental features. It outlines the concept of the Mediterranean as a complex of connected social networks, drawing particularly upon the ideas of Braudel, Horden and Purcell, and Broodbank, for whom the Mediterranean integrates dispersed peoples dwelling on spatially fragmented shores.[2]

Scholarship of the Mediterranean has been divided between disciplines and was often subject to nationalistic ideals that informed interpretation. Part of the first chapter therefore traces briefly the histories of Mediterranean scholarship in Classical and Near Eastern archaeology, as well as regional disciplines. For Europeans of the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth centuries, scholarly focus on the Greeks emphasised their art and epigraphy, which inspired and sustained antiquarian interest; excavations were guided by the works of Homer and subsequent ancient authors as early field archaeologists sought to justify the texts. Study of the Phoenicians remained largely in the sphere of Near Eastern scholarship, for which the Bible alone served as the leading text, reinforced by other historical records, such as Greek and Latin texts, as well as Egyptian and Assyrian dynastic inscriptions. Early interest in Phoenician activity in the

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central and western Mediterranean developed only in the late nineteenth century and focused on corroborating literary records of Punic achievements. Studies of other ancient peoples of the Mediterranean shore were often tied to nationalistic perspectives. For example, the early excavations of sites such as Vulci, in which lies the genesis of Etruscan studies, exemplify the extent to which the Papal states worked to promote their historical and ideological connections to neighbouring regions in order to secure regional stability and maintain power. In contrast, exploration of North Africa became a pursuit by European colonial powers at the end of the nineteenth century.

Since this book focuses on the social interactions and engagements between the various populations of the Mediterranean, the first chapter also examines frameworks of interpretation that have been applied to Mediterranean-wide studies. It begins with Braudel's *longue durée,* as one of the first studies to regard the Mediterranean as a cultural landscape with spheres of interaction and engagement.[3] Horden and Purcell,[4] and Broodbank[5] update Braudel in scope and depth in their respective, substantial studies, using the notion of connectivity to provide coherence to Mediterranean-wide study. The former emphasises microregional interaction and argues for a unified Mediterranean, but based on fragmentation and multiplicity of ecotypes. The latter focuses on the co-existence of economic and political competitions and interdependencies with expressions of commonly recognised values, beliefs and practices.

Braudel's scholarship is viewed by some as a precursor to World Systems Theory,[6] which divides the world into cores and peripheries for labour market analysis. The model was originally developed as a means of studying the rise of capitalism, but its framework has been applied to other systems that operate on a kind of global level, including the Mediterranean.[7] The balance between cores and peripheries has been regarded more recently not so much as opposite, exclusive spaces,[8] but rather as spheres for interaction and engagement, to give context to study of the social meanings of material appropriation, especially in colonial contexts.[9] It is here that the colonialist perspective is introduced into the narrative, both historically and as a means of interpretation. The influence of postcolonial studies such as Said's *Orientalism*[10] and Bernal's *Black Athena* series[11] opens an exploration of how study of the Greeks and Phoenicians, as Mediterranean-wide cultures, has developed under postmodern perspectives.

The chapter culminates with discussion of several contemporary conceptual frameworks, including globalisation and its application to the Mediterranean, especially connectivity and Mediterraneanisation. As the balance to shared global practices, emphasis on local articulation is highlighted through the role of agency and expression of group social identities. The role of hybridisation in intercultural engagements and the middle ground framework come to the fore.

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Chapter 2 explores the material and social characteristics of the period we regard as the Iron Age in relation to its broader temporal application in a Graeco-Phoenician Mediterranean-wide framework. The term Iron Age is not a fixed chronological indicator, nor is it a statement of specific material practice – the use of iron – since iron use is known from previous periods. Rather, generally speaking, the Iron Age marks a break from Bronze Age traditions. For those population groups who moved widely across the Mediterranean, i.e. the Greeks and Phoenicians, these changes resulted from the widespread upheavals evident in the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BCE. Since the Greeks and Phoenicians traversed and settled around the entire Mediterranean basin, Iron Age as a collective temporal description has a certain Mediterranean-wide applicability, but it is not one that has been uniformly applied. Iron Age, therefore, is a notion of development from Bronze Age patterns, somewhat irrespective of absolute dates.

The relationship between material culture and absolute dates between the eleventh and seventh centuries BCE is also examined, particularly the High–Low chronology debate that is centred on the eastern Mediterranean. This focuses primarily on the tenth century BCE and the relationship between individual destruction strata at various sites in ancient Canaan to absolute dates linked to the activities of the Egyptian pharaoh Shishak. This debate has much wider implications, however, for Greek pottery has been found in some of these contexts. Therefore, debates about the dates of contexts and material in the Near East extend to the dating of material in Greece itself at this time and impact upon the dating of Greek activities overseas. New C14 dates from Carthage and Iberia are similarly revising our understanding of Phoenician activities in the wider Mediterranean.

Finally, this chapter assesses literary sources for this period of the Mediterranean to produce an historical (as opposed to a chronological) understanding of the Mediterranean populations of the Iron Age. Drawing largely upon Neo-Assyrian texts, Egyptian records, early Greek sources and later Graeco-Roman authors, this section outlines who the various Mediterranean populations were and considers how they were portrayed by others in written records.

The Mediterranean Iron Age is characterised perhaps most of all by the movement of peoples from their homeland to other areas of the Mediterranean on an unprecedented scale (and which stands in contrast to the Bronze Age, when mostly objects did the travelling). In some instances this has been discussed as migration, especially in the case of Aegean populations to Asia Minor and the eastern Mediterranean, notably Cyprus, at the beginning of the Iron Age. The settlement of Greeks and Phoenicians to other regions of the Mediterranean that began in the ninth and eighth centuries has been characterised as colonisation. Chapter 3 therefore begins with a discussion of

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how migration and colonisation have been defined by archaeology, and how scholarship has characterised the Greek and Phoenician movements in particular, with consideration of the terminologies employed to do so.

The chapter then examines the movement of people around the Mediterranean. The main emphasis is on the foundation of Greek and Phoenician settlements across the Mediterranean from the ninth and eighth centuries, which has been the focus of extensive study for generations. The chapter charts the evidence for the establishment of Phoenician and Greek settlements across the Mediterranean.

Chapter 4 focuses on the material aspects of exchange and the development of what we regard as trade. In the Early Iron Age, most goods found in foreign contexts in the Mediterranean are exclusive objects we have often regarded as of high social value and restricted availability. This section, therefore, focuses on the specific objects that were exchanged within an emerging wider Mediterranean social system. During the eleventh and tenth centuries, these are primarily Levantine and Cypriot metal objects, found in western contexts, and Greek pottery in Near Eastern contexts. The ninth and eighth centuries witness the development of increased trade, in terms of quantity and variety of objects, reaching a zenith during the seventh century: Greek, Cypriot and Levantine artisans were producing goods for one another's consumers. The nature of these interactions are reassessed. The chapter also considers who the traders might have been based upon literary and material evidence, and the means of trade as examined via shipwreck evidence.

The widespread trade of objects led directly to the adoption of the use of material, and the imitation of styles and adaptation of social elements by the consuming communities. The custom of wine-drinking practices among many Mediterranean Iron Age communities serves as a case study. It is widely accepted that communal ritual wine-drinking was a feature among most populations of the Iron Age. During the first half of the first millennium, however, many begin to demonstrate a preference for similar drinking vessels, although the adoption of such elements is not at all uniform. This section therefore examines shared practices of ritual wine-drinking expressed through common material forms alongside regional variability. Other widely exchange commodities are also discussed, including olive oil, grain, textiles, slaves, and precious metals.

Chapter 5 assesses social circumstances surrounding developments in the built environment during the Mediterranean Iron Age. It commences with a discussion of how urbanism and urbanisation have been defined by archaeology, especially Mediterranean archaeology. Traits that are usually called upon in defining urbanism include primary population concentration; craft specialisation; monumental architecture; social stratification; writing; and group membership based upon residence rather than just kinship, amongst

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others. One of the difficulties scholarship has had is the application of all of these traits to a particular settlement at a given time. Some may well have the physical and social characteristics but lack evidence of writing, yet this does not make them seem any less 'urban'. Urbanisation, defined as the active, social processes and dynamics of the construction of urbanism, is a more fruitful concept, since urban development goes along with social development. The significance of social context highlights the mechanisms of Mediterranean engagement.

Urban environments existed in the Bronze Age, notably in the eastern Mediterranean. Despite the upheavals by the end of the twelfth century, a number of such traits continued into the eleventh century. The eastern Mediterranean, in particular, demonstrates the survival of characteristics that are identified with urbanism, such as monumental buildings, city walls and communal storage facilities, albeit in new or modified forms from their Bronze Age precursors. Evidence from the Phoenician homeland is compared and contrasted with the development of Phoenician settlements in the Mediterranean, to highlight the regional nature of urbanisation across the Mediterranean. The development of the *tophet* is a case in point: the presence of a *tophet* is associated with other characteristics of urbanisation to an extent that it has been argued it may be regarded as the first expression of the urban character of the settlement, where it served both the civic and territorial communities and was rooted to concepts of citizenship. Yet no examples of a *tophet* have been found in Phoenicia; nearly all of them are from the central and western Mediterranean. Thus, the definitive form of the *tophet* and its consolidation as a collective practice better represent central Mediterranean Phoenician developments, and reflect the evolving nature of Phoenician culture and identity. The chapter then explores urban developments in the Greek world at home and abroad over the same period.

Finally, this chapter examines the impact of the urban nature of Greek and Phoenician settlements in the Mediterranean upon the local populations among whom these foreigners settled. Features we associate with colonial developments were sometimes adopted by local communities, but usually not immediately. As such, it could be argued that the urban developments we see more widely are better regarded as participation in the shared practices of a global Mediterranean, rather than as any sign of emulation.

One of the most dramatic examples of shared practices of the Iron Age is the development of writing. This is the focus of Chapter 6. It is widely accepted that the Phoenician alphabet was the model for the Greek alphabet. In turn, many local populations with whom the Greeks and Phoenicians regularly engaged during the Iron Age also developed alphabetic writing, often based upon Greek or Phoenician letters. This chapter therefore examines the dis-semination of the Phoenician alphabet to the Greeks, assessing when, where

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and how. It also examines the spread of writing to other populations of the Mediterranean during this time.

The location undoubtedly must have been somewhere Greeks and Near Eastern populations had close, regular contact, and several locales have been suggested, including Cyprus, Ischia and North Syria. The earliest evidence currently dates to the late ninth century, at Eretria. A number of local populations acquire written expressions of their languages significantly after the arrival of new, foreign settlers. The development of alphabetic writing, with variations within cultural groups and between cultural groups, represents the participation in global concepts while concurrently articulating local identities.

Chapter 7 reconsiders the evidence amassed in the volume and returns to characteristics outlined by others to make a case for why we can speak of a globalising Mediterranean during the Iron Age. If you have read this far, then you will be aware that there are aspects not addressed in detail in this book, such as the development and use of coinage, or discussion of burial customs, household archaeology, religious practices, or the expression of gender and age identities, topics often of major study in archaeology. As I am making a case for why globalisation provides a valuable model for considering cross-cultural interactions in the Mediterranean Iron Age, and how such contacts influenced those closely and less closely involved, I have focused on a limited number of topics through which to explore together evidence of shared characteristics and divergent practices, choosing those that have most often been the arenas of consideration with regard to the nature of Phoenician and Greek activity across the wider Mediterranean. The adaptation of the idea of coinage, which developed at the end of the seventh century in Lydia and spread rapidly across the Greek world during the sixth century before gaining more widespread use amongst other groups, falls beyond the temporal scope of this volume. Other topics, such as burial customs, household archaeology, religious practices, and gender and age have been used indirectly within the narrative to assess features of social practices that different populations had in common with one another. Full discussion of these and other topics would have made the present work unwieldy.

In sum, Mediterranean scholarship is noted for its geographic diversities, often focused on modern countries and regions, and through detailed analysis of different aspects of the lived past. This volume celebrates this range by drawing these together into a broader picture of the Mediterranean, whose communities were connected and integrated, although to varying degrees, over short and longer distances during the Iron Age. The application of globalisation theory explicitly to understand the Iron Age renders the present study unique to other recent works that have focused on the wider Mediterranean. While fragmentation and microregionality characterise the

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Mediterranean during this period, the variability of connectivity methods and the extent to which different regions were connected or not become more clear when the emphasis is on the balance between shared and divergent practices. Furthermore, putting socio-cultural developments at centre stage, rather than political and economic ones, enables us to understand better what life may have been like for the majority of individuals. This is much like how we, ourselves, experience our daily lives in a globalised world today. The intention is that discussion of the connections between regions within a single narrative while concurrently highlighting their diversities will stimulate further research locally, as well as globally.

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