

Exploring Connectivity

Entanglements



About the module

- Examining material evidence for cultural contacts between the Bronze Age civilisations of East Mediterranean
 - Aegean, Cyprus, Levant & Egypt
- Assessing theoretical approaches to interpret the range & nature of contacts



Qatna, amber lion's head

Topics

- Connected Worlds
- World Systems theory in third millennium BC
- Exotics & the politics of distance in EBA Cyclades
- Commodities or gifts between Egypt & Aegean
- Hybridity and Mycenaean Shaft Graves
- Technologies of Enchantment & International style
- Biography of object & Amenhotep III's Aegean embassy
- Commodity Trade: LBA pottery
- Copper production in Bronze Age Cyprus
- Ports of trade: Ugarit & Enkomi

Assignments Level 5

- **2000-word illustrated site report (30%) 16th November**
 - Write a 2000-word report highlighting the site's importance for connectivity, trade and exchange during the Bronze Age:
 - Knossos, Dhaskalio Kavos, Mari, Ebla, Ugarit, Enkomi, Troy, Byblos, Mycenae
- **2000-word Wiki: (30%) 30th November**
 - Write a 2000-word document presenting on of the following topics. This paper should be suitable to be posted online as a Wiki entry, and should be accompanied by at least four images
 - EBA connectivity in either the southern Aegean or south-west Asia; LBA copper trade; potter trade; links between the Aegean & Egypt
- **10-minute oral presentation (20%) 25th November**
 - Choose a Bronze Age object (3rd-2nd millennium BC) from the East Mediterranean that demonstrates connectivity between cultures

Assignments Level 6

- **1000-word article review (20%) 16th November**
 - Review of article that considers connectivity in the East Mediterranean during the Bronze Age (3rd-2nd millennium BCE). Your critical review should summarise the content highlighting key arguments and supporting data and you should provide a reasoned discussion of its usefulness for examining interconnections in the ancient world.
- **3000-word Wiki: (30%) 30th November**
 - Write a 2000-word document presenting on of the following topics. This paper should be suitable to be posted online as a Wiki entry, and should be accompanied by at least four images
 - EBA interconnections in the East Mediterranean and south-west Asia Bronze Age metals trade, Keftiu, Shaft Graves, Contacts between Egypt and the Aegean in the late 18th Dynasty, Mycenaean pottery, Bronze Age ports of trade
- **10-minute oral presentation (20%) 27th November**
 - Choose a Bronze Age object (3rd-2nd millennium BC) from the East Mediterranean that demonstrates connectivity between cultures.

Exploring Connectivity: Archaeological Evidence

- Items that have physically survived & can be demonstrated to have moved in antiquity
- Many traded commodities will not survive
 - Grain, textiles, liquids transported in perishable containers etc
 - People
- Textual data
- Iconographic evidence



Canaanite Jar, Ulu Burun

Globalisation

- Interregional connectivity & expanding trade networks
 - Impetus is demand for raw materials & increasingly luxuries
- Bronze Age: ever expanding, overlapping transregional trade networks in Eurasia, southwest Asia, north Africa
 - Complex relationship between contact, technological development, social & cultural change



Tripartite Model of Globalisation

- (Bernbeck 2015) – based on ANT
- **Nodes:** major trading centres
 - Towns, ports, palaces
- **Connectors:** technologies of communication linking nodes
 - Transport routes & systems (including transport technologies)
 - Bureaucratic tools
- **Interstitial spaces:** economic background
 - Rural hinterland
 - Mines
 - Clay beds
 - Timber

Reconstruction of Ulu Burun ship

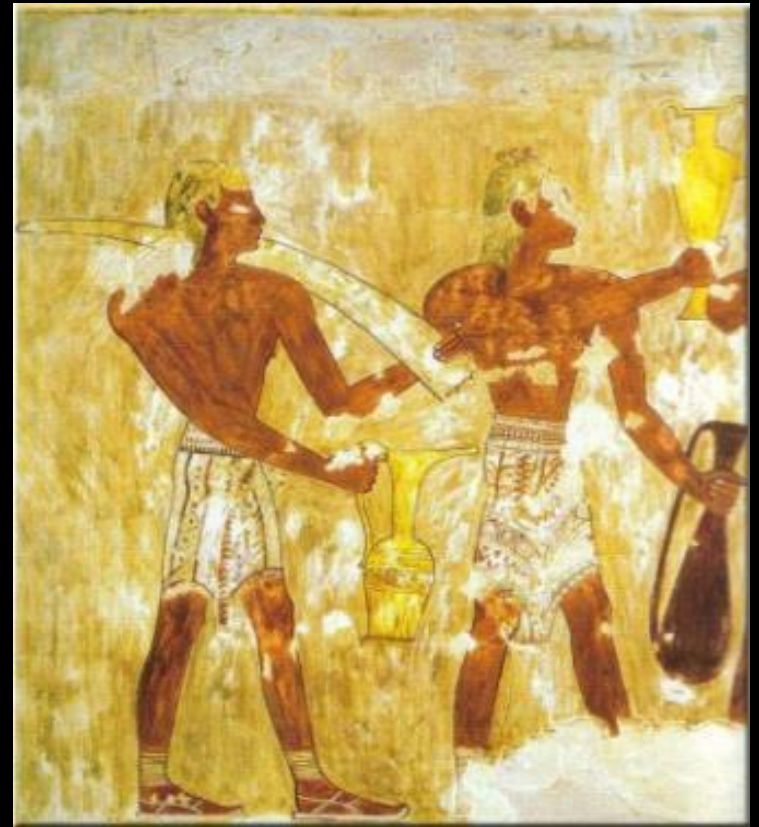


Modes of Exchange

- How & why did goods & people move around the Mediterranean?
- Different modes of exchange
 - Gift exchange
 - Commodity trade/mercantile exchange
 - Sailor trade
 - Consuming the exotic
- What is the social impact of the movement of goods & people?

Mauss (1925) *The Gift*

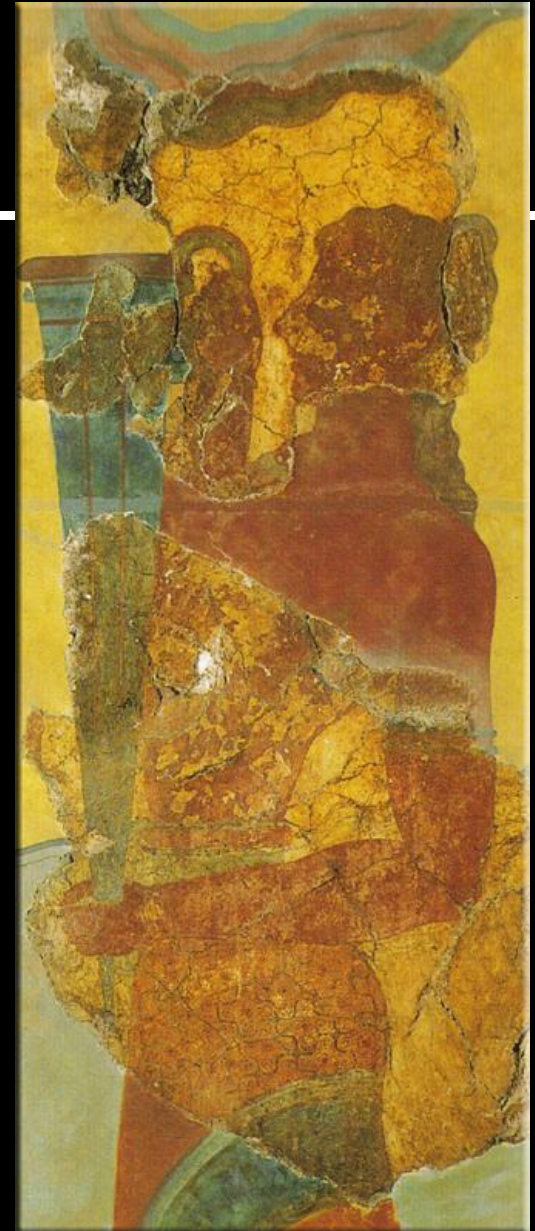
- Exchange within archaic societies
- Gift giving is of particular importance
 - Social as well as economic
- Between whole groups via chiefs
 - Goods, wealth, property
 - Courtesies, entertainment, ritual
 - Women
 - Military assistance



People from Keftiu

Gif exchange

- Based on **obligation & self interest**
 - Obligation to give
 - Obligation to receive
 - Obligation to reciprocate
- Gifts are **inalienable**: a part of the giver is sent with the gift
- Gives them a hold over the recipient
 - If the recipient is unable to repay the gift they lose face



Procession fresco, Knossos

Gift Exchange

- Underpinned by need to create alliances & friendships beyond the immediate kinship group
- Accumulate wealth, prestige & repute within one's own community
- Emphasis on the familial relationship between participants:
 - Used to create & mediate social relations
 - Creates an inexorable bond between two gifting partners
 - To make a gift is to give away part of yourself (inalienability)

Mercantile Trade

- Polanyi & the **substantivists**
 - Relativist approach (differences between cultures)
 - Economic rules are based on the social & natural environment
- Mercantile trade is dependent on coinage & developed in 4th century Athens
- Bronze & Early Iron Age trade = reciprocal gift exchange



4th century stater, Aegina

Mercantile Trade

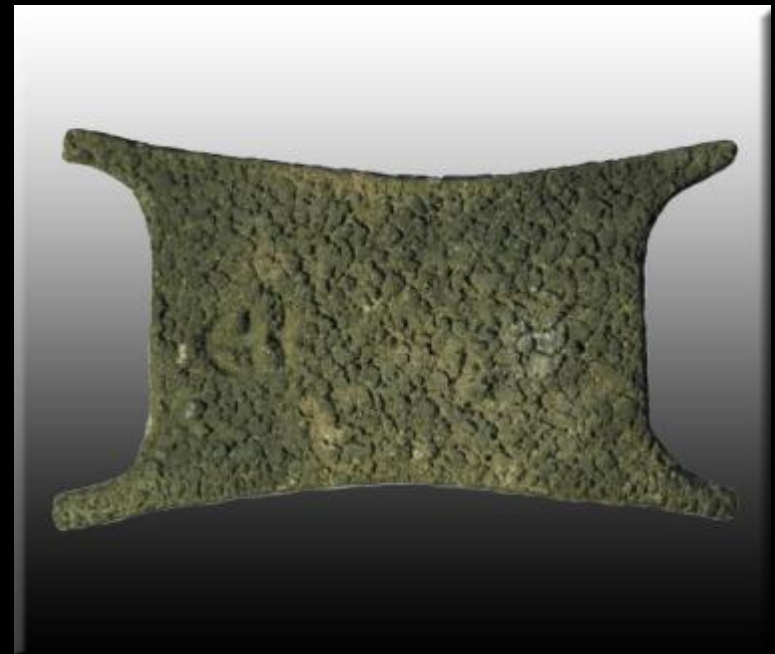
- Emphasises **market value** of exchange items
- It might imply a specific central location (market place) in which transactions take place
- Does mercantile exchange depend upon some form of monetary system to operate?



Canaanite weights

Mercantile Trade

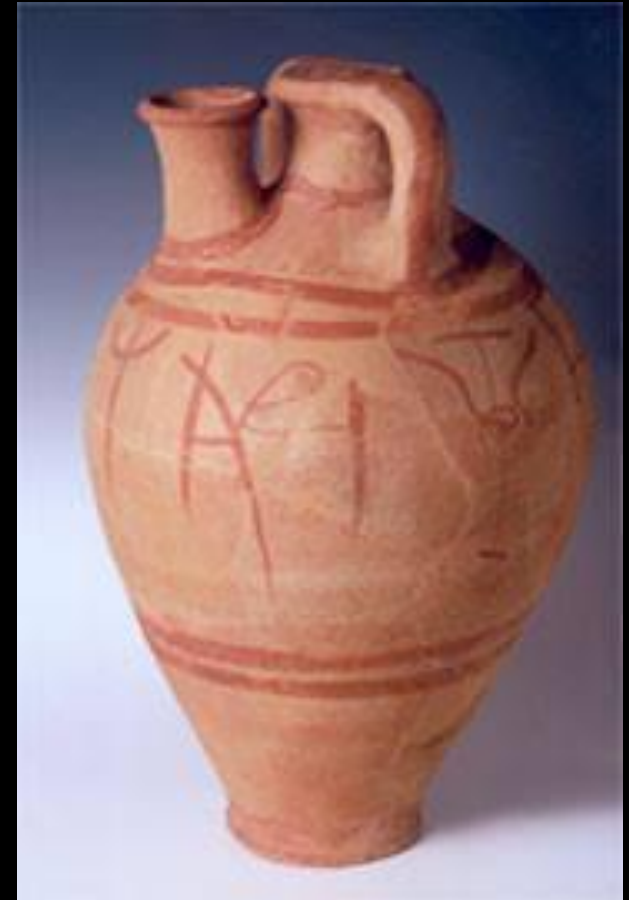
- Can we extrapolate mercantile trade to the Bronze Age?
- Standard systems of weights & measures...
- Metals (especially silver) a pre-monetary system of exchange
- Development of merchant economy in Near East:
 - Contracts
 - Laws
- Commodity trade?



Copper ingot

Commodities

- Marx: produced to be exchanged/consumed:
 - Totally separate from embedded social relations
- Alienable objects of economic & “self-contained value, capable of being owned & circulated as property without reference to the social sources of production” (Strathern 1990, 152)



Transport stirrup jar,
Thebes

Commodities

- Objects of economic value intended for exchange
 - “its **exchangeability**... for some other thing is its socially relevant feature” (Appadurai 1986:13)
 - “**alienable** objects which can be exchanged between individuals without obligation” (Steel 2012: 123)



Mycenaean stirrup jar,
Arediou

Tamkārum

- Private merchants attested from 3rd millennium BC
 - Law codes & letters
- Long distance trade
- Had agents abroad
- Financed commercial enterprises & granted credit
- Taxed & controlled by palace/temple



Donkey caravan, Taurus Mountains

Sailor Trade

- Unregulated trade alongside other types of exchanges
- “Tramping... gave ample opportunity for bargaining, & for making the most of price differences. Every sailor from captain to cabin boy would have his bundle of merchandise on board, & merchants or their representatives would travel with their wares. The round trip, which could last several weeks or months, was a long succession of selling & buying & exchanging, organised within a complicated itinerary. In the course of the voyage the cargo would often have completely altered its nature....[indeed the ships] were more like travelling bazaars. The calls at port were so many opportunities for buying, selling, reselling & exchanging goods, not to mention the other pleasures of going ashore” (Braudel 1972: 107).

Consuming the Exotic

- How are traded goods consumed, viewed, & valued within the recipient society?
- Helms (1988): control over traded goods a strategy for the accumulation of political & ideological power
- Esoteric knowledge of distance places & customs is used in the construction of political ideologies



Ostrich-egg rhyton, Crete

Consuming the Exotic

- “Not only exotic materials but also **intangible knowledge** of distant realms & regions can be politically valuable goods” (Helms 1988: 4)
- “A symbolic relationship develops between the individual who is able to source materials from a mysterious distant realm & the world from which these materials derive; adding to their social capital” (Steel 2013: 127)



Appliqué sphinx, Malia

Cultural Hybridity

- “What is significant about the adoption of alien objects – as of alien ideas – is not the fact that they are adopted, but **the way they are culturally redefined & put to use**” (Kopytoff 1986: 67)
- “Foreign & exotic objects are particularly able to upset existing material relations & create new ones” (Van Wijngaarden 2012, 61),



Rock crystal vase, Mycenae

Cultural Hybridity

- **Middle ground:** a creative space where people of diverse cultural backgrounds come into contact
- More than blending of material culture (mixed styles)
- Construction of new social practices exhibiting a mix of influences



Ivory pyxis lid, Ugarit

Summary

- Cultural contact can be observed through the movement of objects
- In Near East supplemented by textual evidence & representations
- Gift exchange between elites: inalienable things with their own histories
- Commodities in “mercantile” exchange & sailor trade
- Use of the exotic in construction of identities
- Hybridity: merging of materials, objects, ideas & social practices