

Avhandling från Institutionen för historiska studier i Göteborg

Global and local in Late Bronze Age Central Macedonia. Economy, mobility and identity.

With a Norwegian summary

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Abstract

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What impact did expanding Bronze Age networks have on regions located between the great centers in the period 1700-1100 BC? Where the Aegean meets the Balkans, Central Macedonia lies between well-known cultures connected by veins of communication such as the Axios River. In this doctoral dissertation the impact of increased communication is investigated through a new synthesis of artifacts, landscapes and settlement materials from Central Macedonia. The impacts are discussed in a framework of mobility, political economy and identity. In chapter 2 the study is contextualized in the research history of Central Macedonia, while a theoretical and methodological framework is presented in chapter 3 focusing on mobility, political economy and identity. In chapter 4, a sketch of the “Bronze Age World” characterized by stable networks is presented. With a strong resource base and a location within routes of communication, Central Macedonia could have joined these networks. I discuss this along with “mobility attesting” objects in chapter 5, where I also address the travelers. In chapter 6 I look at landscape relations and the formation of political structures within which resources could be mobilized to participate in the Bronze Age. In chapter 7 a contextual analysis of the largest category of mobility attesting objects, decorated pottery, is pursued to address possible users. In chapter 8-12 decoration techniques and motifs are discussed to understand the pottery’s role in formation of identities.

The heterogeneity of the tell assemblages could represent a diversity which defies the old notion of “hermetic” cultures, mobility rooms, or peer polity-like areas where the intraregional relations are given primacy over the inter-regional. Herein lays the significance of Central Macedonia for the understanding of the Bronze Age: giving a glimpse of a prehistoric multi-ethnic region with capable political formations. In this region it is suggested that access to “international” types of decorated pottery were used to connect travelers and locals at tells to dwellers of different communities. At the same time, the use of decorative techniques and motifs were used strategically to separate dwellers of different polities, and at a higher level between ethnic like groups between the Nestos and the Aliakmon.

Keywords: Forging Identities, Mobility, Identity, Economy, Bronze Age World, Central Macedonia, Mycenaean Greece, Balkans, Central Europe, Tell Societies, Travelers, Ethnicity, Networks, Kastanas, Axiochori, Limnotopos, Tsautsitsa, Kilindir, Toumba Thessaloniki, Assiros, GIS, Pottery, Contextual Archaeology, Resources, Power, Trade.