Reconstructing Prehistoric Communities Mobility in Apulia

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Abstract

The R.P.C.M. Apulia project (Reconstructing Prehistoric Communities Mobility in Apulia) is currently carried out at the universities of M′unster, Germany, and Bologna, Italy, with the help of the Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per le province di Barletta-Andria-Trani e Foggia. The main intent is to comprehend how prehistoric communities moved in a defined territory in the region of Apulia and how they were able to exploit the landscape during the Copper Age and its transitional aspects (i.e. final Neolithic and early Bronze Age). The area we chose lies in the north of Apulia and is especially suited to enhance our knowledge of a region that played an important role as a bridge between the eastern Mediterranean Sea and the inner Peninsular areas during pre- and protohistoric times.

The methodology used concerns investigation of the landscape's surface, calculating the maximum rate of charge in value of slopes, i.e. elevation, and then estimating the least-cost distance and cost back link in order to obtain the least-cost path value. Therefore, the data acquired is used to determine a projection of the path covered by the people to reach other sites according to elevation. This predictive modelling is also used to generate cross-references with Roman roads and transhumance routes to establish if there was a correspondence of use between them and the prehistoric routes.

The second step of our research will focus on the mobility of artifacts and the role played by communities in the area. In order to do that we will use the Social Network Analysis and apply it to finds and site positions. Regarding finds, we will analyze styles, techniques and elemental compositions to achieve insights into possible correspondences between artifacts coming from different sites and thus to comprehend how many sites kept in touch, drawing a network with the respective ties.

As far as the communities' role is concerned, we will create a network in which the ties will show how many sites were close to a route (both terrestrial and acquatic), thus playing a main role, or in a middle position route (intermediary role) or faraway from the route (isolated role). Moreover, this analysis aims to clarify settlement choice, hence the following rise of sites on the territory, in an area that shows a high concentration of finds, but is still marked by a rather blurred history of study.

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