

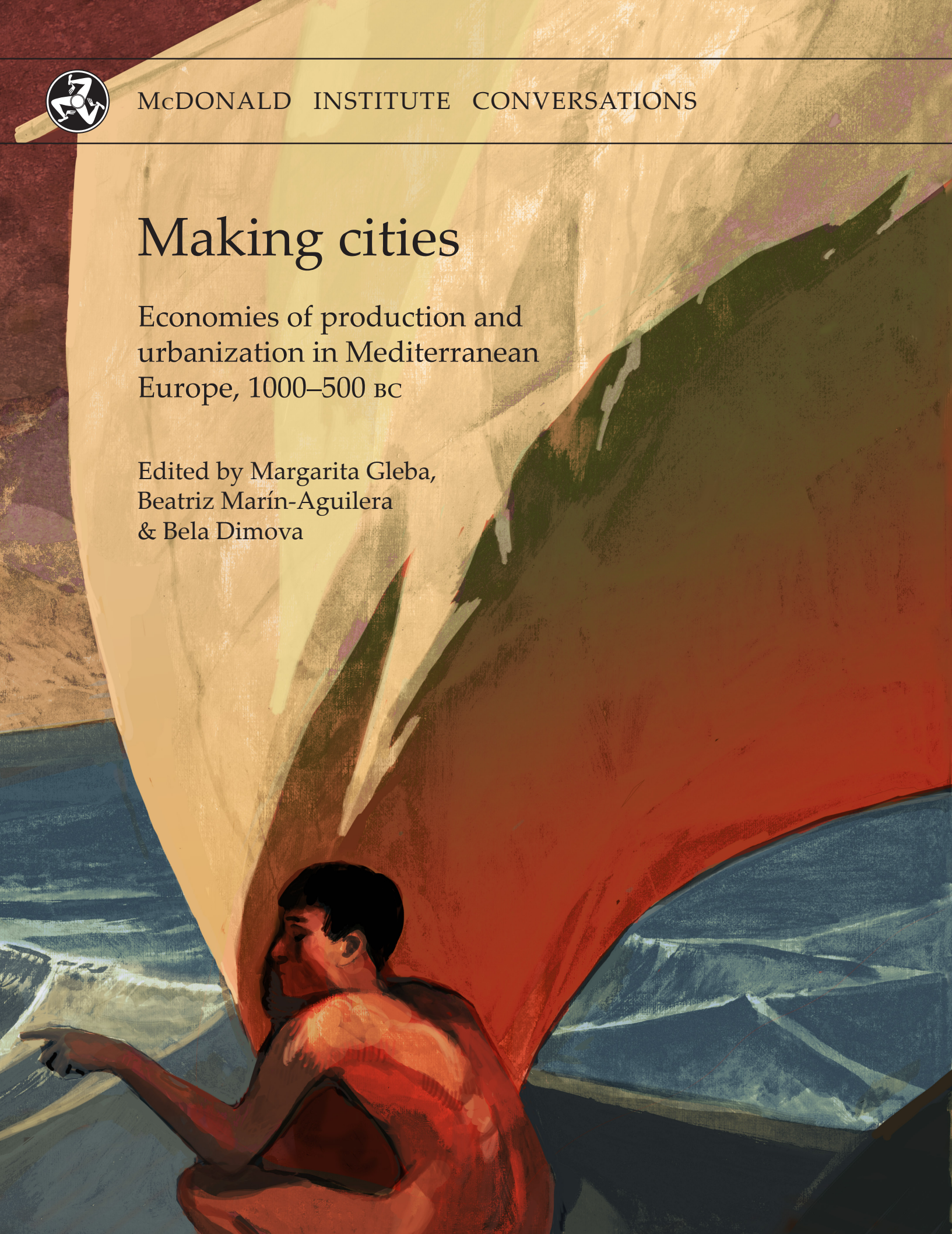


McDONALD INSTITUTE CONVERSATIONS

# Making cities

Economies of production and  
urbanization in Mediterranean  
Europe, 1000–500 BC

Edited by Margarita Gleba,  
Beatriz Marín-Aguilera  
& Bela Dimova





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Edited by Margarita Gleba,  
Beatriz Marín-Aguilera & Bela Dimova

*with contributions from*

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# CONTENTS

Contributors	ix
Figures	xiii
Tables	xvii
<i>Chapter 1</i> Making cities: economies of production and urbanization in Mediterranean Europe, 1000–500 BC	1
BELA DIMOVA, MARGARITA GLEBA & BEATRIZ MARÍN-AGUILERA	
Definitions of urbanism	2
Urbanism and textiles	2
Contributions to this volume	3
Cover illustration	4
<b>Part I Eastern Mediterranean</b>	
<i>Chapter 2</i> Argilos: the booming economy of a silent city	9
JACQUES PERREAULT & ZISIS BONIAS	
<i>Chapter 3</i> Regional economies and productions in the Thermaic Gulf area	21
DESPOINA TSIAFAKI	
Thermaic Gulf economies and production	22
Ancient Therme and its harbour	26
Conclusion	34
<i>Chapter 4</i> Production activities and consumption of textiles in Early Iron Age Eretria	39
KARL REBER	
Eretria in the Early Iron Age	39
Eretria's economic situation	41
The production and consumption of textiles	41
Conclusion	45
<i>Chapter 5</i> Productive economy and society at Zagora	47
LESLEY A. BEAUMONT	
<i>Chapter 6</i> Making Cretan cities: urbanization, demography and economies of production in the Early Iron Age and the Archaic period	57
ANTONIS KOTSONAS	
Urbanization	58
Demography	66
Economies of production	69
Conclusion	71
<i>Chapter 7</i> Production, urbanization, and the rise of Athens in the Archaic period	77
ROBIN OSBORNE	
<i>Chapter 8</i> Making Corinth, 800–500 BC: production and consumption in Archaic Corinth	89
IOULIA TZONOU	
Eighth century, to the end of the Geometric period and the transition into the Early Protocorinthian, 720 BC	95
Seventh century, the Protocorinthian and Transitional period into Early Corinthian, 720–620 BC	97
Sixth century, the Corinthian period, 620–500 BC	98
Conclusion	100

<b>Part II</b>	<b>Central Mediterranean</b>	
<b>Chapter 9</b>	<b>Making cities in Veneto between the tenth and the sixth century BC</b>	<b>107</b>
	GIOVANNA GAMBACURTA	
	Urbanization criteria	107
	Landscape and population	109
	Settlements	110
	Necropoleis	111
	Borders and shrines	112
	Inscriptions	114
	Myths	115
	Conclusion	116
<b>Chapter 10</b>	<b>Attached versus independent craft production in the formation of the early city-state of Padova (northeastern Italy, first millennium BC)</b>	<b>123</b>
	MASSIMO VIDALE & PAOLO MICHELINI	
	Materials and methods	124
	General patterns of industrial location	126
	Methodological issues	128
	The craft industries through time	130
	New craft locations: size and size variations through time	131
	Duration of urban craft workshops	132
	Ceramic, copper and iron processing sites: size versus duration of activities	133
	Discussion	134
	A historical reconstruction	138
	Onset of proto-currency and the issue of remuneration	141
	Conclusion	142
<b>Chapter 11</b>	<b>Resource and ritual: manufacturing and production at Poggio Civitate</b>	<b>147</b>
	ANTHONY TUCK	
<b>Chapter 12</b>	<b>Perugia: the frontier city</b>	<b>161</b>
	LETIZIA CECCARELLI & SIMON STODDART	
	Geology and culture	161
	History of research	163
	The emerging city from the rural landscape	165
	The topographical development of the city	166
	The city and its hinterland	168
	The rural settlements associated with the city	169
	Conclusion	172
<b>Chapter 13</b>	<b>Tarquinia: themes of urbanization on the Civita and the Monterozzi Plateaus</b>	<b>177</b>
	GIOVANNA BAGNASCO GIANNI, MATILDE MARZULLO & CLAUDIA PIAZZI	
	Approaching themes of urbanization at Tarquinia	177
	On the positioning of the protostoric site of Calvario and its road links	178
	The Calvario village on the Monterozzi Plateau and its economic activities during the eighth century BC	180
	The process of urbanization based on the evidence for the fortifications	185
	The limits of Tarquinia before its fortification, a theoretical approach	188
<b>Chapter 14</b>	<b>Prolegomena to the material culture of Vulci during the Orientalizing period in the light of new discoveries</b>	<b>195</b>
	SIMONA CAROSI & CARLO REGOLI	
	New data from Poggio Mengarelli Necropolis	195
	Conclusion	202

<i>Chapter 15</i>	Defining space, making the city: urbanism in Archaic Rome	205
	JEFFREY A. BECKER	
	Making civic space – the <i>Forum Romanum</i> and its environs	206
	Monumentality	210
	Peri-urban evidence	211
	Discussion	214
<i>Chapter 16</i>	Commodities, the instability of the gift, and the codification of cultural encounters in Archaic southern Etruria	219
	CORINNA RIVA	
	Agricultural surplus and a new funerary ideology	220
	Oversize vessels and fixing the gift	221
	Codification in the encounter	222
	Conclusion	226
<i>Chapter 17</i>	The Etruscan <i>pithos</i> revolution	231
	PHIL PERKINS	
	The <i>pithos</i> as artefact	232
	Making <i>pithoi</i>	236
	Using <i>pithoi</i>	240
	Socio-economic agency of <i>pithoi</i>	243
	<i>Pithoi</i> , economic development, and inequality	245
	<i>Pithoi</i> , economic growth and cities	248
	Conclusion	250
<i>Chapter 18</i>	Birth and transformation of a Messapian settlement from the Iron Age to the Classical period: Muro Leccese	259
	FRANCESCO MEO	
	The Iron Age village	259
	The Archaic and Classical settlement	266
	The Hellenistic period and the end of the town	276
<i>Chapter 19</i>	Indigenous urbanism in Iron Age western Sicily	281
	MICHAEL J. KOLB & WILLIAM M. BALCO	
	Settlement layout	282
	Demographic changes	286
	Production, consumption and exchange	288
	Ritual and cultic activity	290
	Conclusion	291
<b>Part III</b>	<b>Western Mediterranean</b>	
<i>Chapter 20</i>	Colonial production and urbanization in Iron Age to early Punic Sardinia (eighth–fifth century BC)	299
	ANDREA ROPPA & EMANUELE MADRIGALI	
	Colonial production and <i>amphora</i> distribution in Iron Age Sardinia	299
	Case studies: Nora and S’Urachi	301
	Discussion	305
	Colonial economies and urbanization	309
<i>Chapter 21</i>	Entanglements and the elusive transfer of technological know-how, 1000–700 BC: elite prerogatives and migratory swallows in the western Mediterranean	313
	ALBERT J. NIJBOER	
	Movement of peoples and goods	314
	Iron	316
	The alphabet	319
	Early monumental architecture	321
	Discussion and epilogue	323



<i>Chapter 22</i>	Making cities, producing textiles: the Late Hallstatt <i>Fürstensitze</i>	329
	MANUEL FERNÁNDEZ-GÖTZ & KARINA GRÖMER	
	Monumentality, production and consumption: the settlement evidence	330
	Textile use and display in funerary contexts	336
	Conclusion	340
<i>Chapter 23</i>	From household to cities: habitats and societies in southern France during the Early Iron Age	345
	ÉRIC GAILLED RAT	
	A question of time	346
	A contrasted image	347
	From one Mediterranean to another	348
	The evanescent settlement	349
	The emergence of the fortified group settlement	351
	The <i>oppida</i> of the sixth–fifth centuries BC	354
	The house in the context of the group settlement	358
	Craftspeople, crafts and workshops	361
	Conclusion	363
<i>Chapter 24</i>	Urbanization and early state formation: elite control over manufacture in Iberia (seventh to third century BC)	367
	JOAN SANMARTÍ, DAVID ASENSIO & RAFEL JORNET	
	The historical process	367
	Craft in its social context	369
	Conclusion	380
<i>Chapter 25</i>	Productive power during the Early Iron Age (c. 650–575 BC) at the Sant Jaume Complex (Alcanar, Catalonia, Spain)	385
	LAURA ÁLVAREZ, MARIONA ARNÓ, JORGE A. BOTERO, LAIA FONT, DAVID GARCIA I RUBERT, MARTA MATEU, MARGARITA RODÉS, MARIA TORTRAS, CARME SAORIN & ANA SERRANO	
	The Sant Jaume Complex	385
	Production in the Sant Jaume Complex chiefdom	388
	Conclusion	392
<i>Chapter 26</i>	Not all that glitters is gold: urbanism and craftspeople in non-class or non-state run societies	395
	MARISA RUIZ-GÁLVEZ	
	Craftspeople and workshops in Iberia	395
	Workshops in Iberia	398
	The Iberians as a House Society	400
	Conclusion	404
<i>Chapter 27</i>	Urbanization and social change in southeast Iberia during the Early Iron Age	409
	JAIME VIVES-FERRÁNDIZ SÁNCHEZ	
	Iberian urbanization: connectivity and dispersed territories	409
	Local economies into broader networks	411
	Agricultural intensification	412
	Urbanization, institutions and political authority	415
	Conclusion	420
<i>Chapter 28</i>	‘Building palaces in Spain’: rural economy and cities in post-Orientalizing Extremadura	425
	JAVIER JIMÉNEZ ÁVILA	
	Cancho Roano as a phenomenon	429
	The ‘post-Orientalizing’ world	432
	Post-Orientalizing economies	432
	Countryside and cities	438
	Final remarks	440
<b>Part IV</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	
<i>Chapter 29</i>	Craft and the urban community: industriousness and socio-economic development	447
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## Figures

1.1	<i>Map indicating the volume coverage.</i>	4
2.1	<i>Argilos, aerial view.</i>	10
2.2	<i>Argilos, general plan.</i>	10
2.3	<i>Small furnace in building E.</i>	11
2.4	<i>View of building L.</i>	12
2.5	<i>Plan of Koutloudis area with buildings H, L, P, and Q.</i>	13
2.6	<i>Building L, press-bed in room 4.</i>	13
2.7	<i>Building Q, room 1.</i>	14
2.8	<i>Building L, room 11, crushed amphorae.</i>	16
2.9	<i>Dividing wall between L7–L8 with remains of clay over the lower courses of stone.</i>	17
2.10	<i>Building L, facades of L2–L3.</i>	18
3.1	<i>Thermaic Gulf region.</i>	22
3.2	<i>Iron sword, grave offering, Nea Philadelphia cemetery, late sixth century BC.</i>	24
3.3	<i>Miniature iron wagon, grave offering, Sindos cemetery, late sixth century BC.</i>	25
3.4	<i>Methone. Pottery kilns in Building A at Sector B.</i>	26
3.5	<i>Ancient settlement at Karabournaki, aerial view.</i>	27
3.6	<i>Ancient settlement at Karabournaki, storeroom with pithoi.</i>	28
3.7	<i>‘Eggshell’ type vases made at the pottery workshop at Karabournaki.</i>	29
3.8	<i>Karabournaki settlement metal workshop.</i>	30
3.9	<i>Weaving tools from the Karabournaki settlement.</i>	31
3.10	<i>Loom weight with stamp depicting a satyr, Karabournaki settlement.</i>	32
3.11	<i>Karabournaki: distribution of textile production tools within the excavated area.</i>	33
4.1	<i>Map of Geometric Eretria.</i>	40
4.2	<i>Plan of the Sanctuary of Apollo in the eighth century BC.</i>	40
4.3	<i>Spindle whorl with dedication, from the Sanctuary of Apollo.</i>	42
4.4	<i>Cruche à haut col C41 (tankard) from the Aire sacrificielle.</i>	42
4.5	<i>Cruche à haut col C37 (tankard) from the Aire sacrificielle.</i>	43
4.6	<i>Fragment of linen from Grave 10 in the Heroon Necropolis.</i>	44
4.7	<i>Close-ups of wool weft-faced textiles from the Heroon Necropolis.</i>	45
5.1	<i>View of Zagora promontory from the northeast.</i>	48
5.2	<i>Plan of Zagora.</i>	49
5.3	<i>Aerial view of Trench 11, partially excavated.</i>	52
6.1	<i>Map of Crete showing sites mentioned in the text.</i>	58
6.2	<i>Plan of Karphi.</i>	59
6.3	<i>Plan of the Knossos valley.</i>	62
6.4	<i>Plan of Prinias.</i>	64
6.5	<i>Plan of Azoria.</i>	65
6.6	<i>Knossos North Cemetery: maximum and minimum number of cremation urns over time.</i>	68
6.7	<i>Knossos North Cemetery: number of cremation urns per year.</i>	68
6.8	<i>Fortetsa Cemetery: number of burials over time.</i>	68
6.9	<i>Fortetsa Cemetery: number of burials per year.</i>	68
6.10	<i>Reconstruction of the pottery workshop at Mandra di Gipari, near Prinias.</i>	70
7.1	<i>Attica, 1050–900 BC.</i>	80
7.2	<i>Attica, 900–800 BC.</i>	80
7.3	<i>Attica, 800–700 BC.</i>	81
7.4	<i>Attica, 700–600 BC.</i>	81
7.5	<i>Attica, 600–500 BC.</i>	85
8.1	<i>Map of the northeast Peloponnese showing sites mentioned in the text.</i>	90
8.2	<i>Corinth: Geometric Period multiphase plan (900–720 BC).</i>	91
8.3	<i>Corinth: Protocorinthian to Transitional Period multiphase plan (720–620 BC).</i>	91
8.4	<i>Corinth: Corinthian Period multiphase plan (620–500 BC).</i>	92
8.5	<i>Corinth: fifth century BC multiphase plan.</i>	93

8.6	<i>Corinth: multiphase plan up to 400 BC.</i>	93
8.7	<i>Corinth: Forum, all periods.</i>	94
8.8	<i>South Stoa, Tavern of Aphrodite Foundry.</i>	99
8.9	<i>Late Corinthian kraters from the sixth-century BC floor.</i>	101
8.10	<i>The Arachne aryballos, Late Early Corinthian or Middle Corinthian (600 BC).</i>	102
9.1	<i>Maps of Veneto.</i>	108
9.2	<i>Maps of cities with different orientations: a) Oderzo; b) Padova.</i>	110
9.3	<i>Este, clay andirons with ram's heads.</i>	112
9.4	<i>Padova, funerary stone monuments: a) Camin; b) Albignasego.</i>	112
9.5	<i>Padova, via Tadi, boundary stone with Venetic inscription on two sides.</i>	114
9.6	<i>Padova, via C. Battisti, boundary stone with Venetic inscription on four sides.</i>	114
9.7	<i>Padova, via Tiepolo–via San Massimo 1991, Grave 159, bronze figured belt-hook.</i>	115
9.8	<i>Este, Casa di Ricovero, Grave 23/1993 or Nerka's grave.</i>	116
9.9	<i>Isola Vicentina, stele with Venetic inscription.</i>	117
10.1	<i>Location of Padova and the study area in northeastern Italy.</i>	124
10.2	<i>Padova, general cumulative map of the craft locations, c. 825–50 BC.</i>	125
10.3	<i>Padova, location of the craft areas and workshops in the early urban core.</i>	127
10.4	<i>Padova, the extra-urban location of craft industries in Roman times.</i>	129
10.5	<i>New manufacturing areas per different craft.</i>	131
10.6	<i>Maximum total area occupied by craft production sites.</i>	132
10.7	<i>New craft areas activated in each period.</i>	132
10.8	<i>Frequency distribution of dimensional class of craft areas per period.</i>	132
10.9	<i>Padova, Questura, site 2, northeast sector.</i>	133
10.10	<i>Workshop size and duration of activity.</i>	134
10.11	<i>Padova, Questura, site 2. Ceramic tuyère.</i>	136
10.12	<i>Padova, Questura, site 2. Cluster of fine feasting pottery.</i>	137
10.13	<i>Padova, Questura, site 2. Antler combs from the metallurgical workshop.</i>	137
10.14	<i>Sherds of Attic pottery from workshop areas in Padova.</i>	138
10.15	<i>Padova, Piazza Castello, site 3: vertical kiln and modular perforated grid.</i>	139
10.16	<i>Part of an elite grave's furnishings from Padova, end of the eighth century BC.</i>	140
10.17	<i>Vessels from the cemetery of Piovego, Padova, fifth century BC.</i>	141
11.1	<i>Map of central Italy.</i>	148
11.2	<i>Early Phase Orientalizing Complex Building 4 (c. 725–675 BC) reconstruction.</i>	148
11.3	<i>Orientalizing Complex (c. 675–600 BC) reconstruction.</i>	149
11.4	<i>Archaic Phase Structure (c. 600–530 BC) reconstruction.</i>	149
11.5	<i>Orientalizing Complex roofing elements.</i>	150
11.6	<i>Partially worked and complete bone, antler and ivory.</i>	150
11.7	<i>Unfired cover tiles with human footprints.</i>	151
11.8	<i>Distribution of variable sized spindle whorls.</i>	152
11.9	<i>Carbonized seeds from Orientalizing Complex Building 2/Workshop.</i>	153
11.10	<i>Fragment of statuette from Orientalizing Complex Building 2/Workshop.</i>	153
11.11	<i>Frieze plaque depicting banqueting scene, Archaic Phase Structure.</i>	155
11.12	<i>Elements of a banquet service from the Orientalizing Complex.</i>	155
11.13	<i>Compote with incised khi.</i>	156
11.14	<i>Map of Poggio Civitate and surrounding traces of settlements or other human activity.</i>	157
12.1	<i>Location of Perugia.</i>	162
12.2	<i>The immediate environs of Perugia with key sites.</i>	162
12.3	<i>The geological context of Perugia.</i>	163
12.4	<i>Plan of the city of Perugia.</i>	166
12.5	<i>Hierarchical relationship of Perugia to its territory.</i>	169
12.6	<i>Civitella d'Arna survey area.</i>	171
12.7	<i>Montelabate survey area.</i>	172
13.1	<i>Positioning of the structures of the Calvario.</i>	179
13.2	<i>Tarquinia and its territory around the middle of the eighth century BC.</i>	180

13.3	<i>Plan of the Villanovan village on the Monterozzi Plateau.</i>	181
13.4	<i>Plans of some of the Villanovan huts.</i>	183
13.5	<i>Finds from the huts.</i>	184
13.6	<i>Walls, gateways and roads of ancient Tarquinia.</i>	185
13.7	<i>Tarquinia, Bocchoris Tomb, lid.</i>	189
14.1	<i>Location of the excavation area at Vulci.</i>	196
14.2	<i>Aerial photograph of the excavation (2016–2018).</i>	197
14.3	<i>General plan of the excavation (2016–2018).</i>	197
14.4	<i>Textile fragment from the ‘Tomb of the Golden Scarab’.</i>	198
14.5	<i>Detail of the grave goods from Tomb 35 during excavation.</i>	199
14.6	<i>Tomb 29 during excavation.</i>	200
14.7	<i>Tomb 29: detail of the traces of cloth on the lid of the sheet bronze stamnos.</i>	201
14.8	<i>Tomb 72: a textile with colour pattern of small red and white checks.</i>	202
15.1	<i>Plan of Rome’s territory in the Archaic period.</i>	206
15.2	<i>Area of the Volcanal and the Comitium in the seventh and sixth centuries BC.</i>	207
15.3	<i>Reconstructed plan of Rome within the so-called ‘Servian Wall’.</i>	208
15.4	<i>Sketch plan of the area of the Forum Boarium and Velabrum in the seventh century BC.</i>	210
15.5	<i>Phase 1 of the so-called ‘Auditorium site’ villa.</i>	212
15.6	<i>Phase 2 of the so-called ‘Auditorium site’ villa.</i>	212
15.7	<i>The Republican ‘Villa delle Grotte’ at Grottarossa.</i>	213
16.1	<i>White-on-red pithos with lid, Cerveteri.</i>	223
16.2	<i>Figurative decoration of the Gobbi krater.</i>	224
16.3	<i>Black-figure amphora, Vulci, side A.</i>	226
16.4	<i>Black-figure amphora, Vulci, side B.</i>	226
17.1	<i>Pithos types 1–6.</i>	233
17.2	<i>Distribution map of Etruscan pithoi within the study area in Etruria.</i>	240
17.3	<i>Comparison between the altitude of pithos find spots and the range of altitude.</i>	241
17.4	<i>Map of sample area.</i>	242
17.5	<i>Distribution of architectural terracottas, pithoi, amphorae, and tiles.</i>	249
18.1	<i>Muro Leccese and the other Iron Age settlements in the Salento peninsula.</i>	260
18.2	<i>Muro Leccese, find spots of Early Iron Age and Archaic ceramics and structures.</i>	261
18.3	<i>Muro Leccese, Cunella district, traces of two huts.</i>	262
18.4	<i>Muro Leccese, DTM with location of the Iron Age ceramics and structures.</i>	263
18.5	<i>Vases and decorative motifs characteristic of matt-painted ware from Muro Leccese.</i>	264
18.6	<i>Vases imported from Greece and Greek apoikiai.</i>	265
18.7	<i>The Messapian era road network in the Salento peninsula.</i>	267
18.8	<i>Muro Leccese, Palombara district.</i>	268
18.9	<i>Muro Leccese, Palombara district. Vases.</i>	270
18.10	<i>Muro Leccese, Cunella district. Plan of the residential building.</i>	272
18.11	<i>Diorama of the place of worship in the archaeological area of Cunella.</i>	273
18.12	<i>Muro Leccese, Masseria Cunella district. Tombs 1 and 2.</i>	274
18.13	<i>Muro Leccese, fourth century BC walls.</i>	275
19.1	<i>Map of Sicily, showing the Bronze Age sites mentioned in the text.</i>	282
19.2	<i>The defensive wall at Bronze Age site of Mursia, Pantelleria.</i>	283
19.3	<i>The Late Bronze Age excavations at Mokarta.</i>	283
19.4	<i>Monte Bonifato, showing its steep approaches.</i>	284
19.5	<i>Map of western Sicily showing the Iron Age sites mentioned in the text.</i>	284
19.6	<i>The urban layout of Eryx.</i>	285
19.7	<i>The urban layout of Segesta.</i>	286
19.8	<i>The orthogonal grid and Iron Age/Classical/Hellenistic finds of Salemi.</i>	287
19.9	<i>The archaeological sites of Salemi territory.</i>	287
19.10	<i>The temple of Segesta, facing west.</i>	291
20.1	<i>Map of Sardinia showing sites mentioned in the text.</i>	300
20.2	<i>Plan of Nora and the Punic quarter under the forum.</i>	301

20.3	<i>Main amphora types discussed.</i>	302
20.4	<i>Dating profiles of amphora types.</i>	303
20.5	<i>Plan of nuraghe S'Urachi and cross-section of the ditch in area E.</i>	304
20.6	<i>Dating profile of the amphora types from the case study at nuraghe S'Urachi.</i>	305
20.7	<i>Dating profiles of Phoenician amphora types.</i>	306
21.1	<i>Early iron and the distribution of Huelva-Achziv type fibulae on the Iberian Peninsula.</i>	317
21.2	<i>Three copper alloy bowls dated to the decades around 800 BC.</i>	319
21.3	<i>The Phoenician, Euboean, Etruscan and Latin alphabetic letters.</i>	320
21.4	<i>Early monumental architecture in Italy and Spain.</i>	322
21.5	<i>Provenance of ceramics from the ninth century BC, pre-Carthage Utica (Tunis).</i>	324
22.1	<i>Fürstensitze north of the Alps and selected sites in Mediterranean Europe.</i>	330
22.2	<i>The Heuneburg agglomeration during the mudbrick wall phase.</i>	331
22.3	<i>Indicative lifespans of selected Fürstensitze sites.</i>	331
22.4	<i>Aerial view of the gatehouse of the Heuneburg lower town during the excavation.</i>	332
22.5	<i>Large ditch at the south foot of wall 3 at Mont Lassois.</i>	333
22.6	<i>Reconstructed monumental building in the Heuneburg Open-Air Museum.</i>	334
22.7	<i>Fired clay loom weight and spindle whorls from the Heuneburg.</i>	335
22.8	<i>Comparison between grave textiles and other textiles.</i>	337
22.9	<i>Tablet-woven band, reproduced after a textile from Hochdorf.</i>	338
22.10	<i>Functions of textiles in graves.</i>	339
23.1	<i>Map of the south of France showing the main settlements of the Early Iron Age.</i>	346
23.2	<i>Mailhac (Aude).</i>	350
23.3	<i>Examples of apsidal floorplans of wattle-and-daub (a) or cob houses (b–d).</i>	352
23.4	<i>Examples of rectangular floorplans of houses with one or more rooms.</i>	353
23.5	<i>Pech Maho (Sigean, Aude).</i>	355
23.6	<i>Examples of functional combinations of apsidal and rectangular floorplans.</i>	356
23.7	<i>Early examples of urban planning combining blocks of houses with a system of streets.</i>	357
23.8	<i>a–c) Examples of rectangular floorplans; d–e) houses of La Liquière.</i>	359
23.9	<i>Montlaurès (Narbonne, Aude).</i>	360
24.1	<i>Map of northern Iberia showing the sites mentioned in the text.</i>	368
24.2	<i>Pottery workshop of Hortes de Cal Pons.</i>	371
24.3	<i>Bases of Iberian amphorae.</i>	372
24.4	<i>Les Guàrdies (El Vendrell).</i>	373
24.5	<i>Castellet de Banyoles.</i>	375
24.6	<i>Mas Castellar de Pontós.</i>	376
24.7	<i>Coll del Moro de Gandesa.</i>	378
24.8	<i>Sant Antoni de Calaceit.</i>	379
24.9	<i>Els Estincells.</i>	380
25.1	<i>General location of the area under study.</i>	386
25.2	<i>View of Sant Jaume.</i>	387
25.3	<i>Plan of Sant Jaume.</i>	387
25.4	<i>Aerial view of La Moleta del Remei.</i>	389
25.5	<i>Aerial view of La Ferradura.</i>	389
26.1	<i>Tumulus 'A' at Setefilla.</i>	396
26.2	<i>Sample of matrices and tools from the so-called goldsmith's graves at Cabezo Lucero.</i>	397
26.3	<i>Iberian tombs with grave goods connected with weighing metal.</i>	398
26.4	<i>Spatial distribution of tools in rooms of Iberian oppida.</i>	400
26.5	<i>Iberian funerary pillars crowned by heraldic beasts.</i>	402
26.6	<i>Enthroned Iberian ladies: a) Cerro de los Santos; b) Baza.</i>	403
26.7	<i>Reconstructions: a) La Bastida de les Alcusses; b) El Castellet de Banyoles.</i>	403
26.8	<i>Bronze horseman from La Bastida de Les Alcusses and reconstruction as a sceptre.</i>	404
27.1	<i>Map of the study area showing the main sites mentioned in the text.</i>	410
27.2	<i>Metallurgical workshop at La Fonteta.</i>	412
27.3	<i>Plan of Alt de Benimaquia and local amphorae.</i>	413

27.4	<i>Plan of El Oral.</i>	414
27.5	<i>The territory of El Puig d'Alcoi and the secondary rural settlements.</i>	416
27.6	<i>Different furnaces for iron metalwork from La Cervera.</i>	416
27.7	<i>Plans of walled settlements: a) Covalta; b) Puig d'Alcoi; c) La Bastida de les Alcusses.</i>	417
27.8	<i>Aerial view of the storerooms at La Bastida de les Alcusses.</i>	418
27.9	<i>Plan of Block 5 at La Bastida de les Alcusses.</i>	419
27.10	<i>Weapons ritually 'killed' in the West Gate, La Bastida de les Alcusses.</i>	419
28.1	<i>Cancho Roano: a) general plan; b–c) reconstructions of the external rooms.</i>	426
28.2	<i>Map of sites considered as post-Orientalizing palatial complexes.</i>	427
28.3	<i>La Mata.</i>	428
28.4	<i>Post-Orientalizing settlements: a,d) El Chaparral; b) La Carbonera; c) Los Caños.</i>	431
28.5	<i>Millstones and amphorae from post-Orientalizing sites in Middle Guadiana.</i>	433
28.6	<i>Storage building at the Orientalizing site of El Palomar, Oliva de Mérida.</i>	434
28.7	<i>Greek pottery from Cancho Roano, late fifth century BC.</i>	436
28.8	<i>Antique (sixth-century BC) goods in post-Orientalizing contexts.</i>	437
28.9	<i>The Orientalizing site of Medellín.</i>	439
28.10	<i>Ancient toponymy in southwestern Iberia.</i>	440

## Tables

7.1	<i>Sites in Attica, late eleventh to seventh century BC.</i>	78
8.1	<i>Dates: abbreviations and chronology.</i>	90
9.1	<i>List of criteria for defining cities.</i>	108
9.2	<i>Inventory of houses and buildings with their shape, dimensions and chronology.</i>	111
10.1	<i>Variations through time of principal type of craft occupation.</i>	128
10.2	<i>Variations through time of the maximum area of all craft occupations.</i>	129
10.3	<i>Padova, average duration in years of the main craft occupations for each period.</i>	129
10.4	<i>Padova, the development of craft industries as monitored in 29 craft workshops.</i>	130
10.5	<i>Positive correlation between size and duration of activity of craft workshops.</i>	134
10.6	<i>The composition of funerary vessels in the earliest graves from Padova.</i>	140
14.1	<i>Types of tombs excavated at Poggio Mengarelli, Vulci (2016–2018).</i>	196
17.1	<i>Type 1.</i>	234
17.2	<i>Type 2.</i>	234
17.3	<i>Type 3.</i>	235
17.4	<i>Type 3A.</i>	235
17.5	<i>Type 3B.</i>	235
17.6	<i>Type 3C.</i>	236
17.7	<i>Type 4.</i>	236
17.8	<i>Type 5.</i>	237
17.9	<i>Type 6.</i>	237
17.10	<i>Chaîne opératoire of Etruscan pithos manufacture.</i>	238
21.1	<i>Number of iron artefacts per phase at Torre Galli (c. 950–850 BC).</i>	318





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## Chapter 16

# Commodities, the instability of the gift, and the codification of cultural encounters in Archaic southern Etruria

Corinna Riva

Tyrrhenian southern Etruria between the seventh and sixth centuries BC is often characterized as a growing urban society in a phase of transition between a prestige, elite-centred and a commercial economy, which consequently led to deep social change and a more complex social fabric (Perkins 2012, 422–3; Torelli 2016). While scholars recognize variations from city to city in the modes, timing and consequences of this transition, this picture for Archaic Etruria has crystallized and gone unchallenged for two interrelated reasons: firstly, the data available undoubtedly indicate growing mobility and trade in the region, from the establishment of *emporia* or trading posts where mixed trading communities thrived, to the movement of goods, largely detected through the distribution of Etruscan and non-Etruscan fine and coarse ware within and beyond the region (Gori 2006; Gran-Aymerich 2013), as well as a burgeoning productive economy visible in the ceramic record and in the growth of rural sites in the cities' hinterland (Rendeli 1993; Cifani 2015; also see Perkins in this volume). Indeed, this scenario of growing connectivity is common to the broader central Mediterranean region, and has been long recognized by scholarship (e.g. Gras 1985; 1993; 2010; Capdetrey & Zurbach 2012). However, and this is the second reason, much of the evidence in Etruria is of a specific nature and somewhat inadequate to understand this transition in depth: the monumental or simply non-domestic context and fine ware are often the evidence of choice for analysis; archival documentation, especially of older excavations, is often poor and limited to tomb contexts, as strikingly noted for Vulci where not so long ago the contextual information for imported Archaic Attic fineware was limited to fifty tomb groups over thousands of excavated other tombs (Reusser 2002, 148–9; 2004, 148); and aside from rare exceptions (Perkins 1999; cf. Neri 2014 for the Tyrrhenian region

as a whole), transport, storage containers and other coarseware are still awaiting systematic examination across sites within Etruria, while the application of scientific methods to these containers or other vessels is limited despite the widely acknowledged benefit of scientific analysis to archaeological problems (e.g. Villing & Mommsen 2017). Our knowledge on the rural economy, furthermore, is largely landscape-based: while archaeological surveys have given us some key insights, the number of excavated farm sites is minimal and certainly insufficient to understand the workings of and changes in local production across the region and beyond the Albegna River valley, the only valley that has received serious scholarly attention in this respect (Perkins 1999; Zifferero *et al.* 2010). We are ultimately unable to adequately assess the changes in local production in relation to the impact it had upon social relations.

That relations changed in southern Etruscan society is apparent particularly from the epigraphic evidence (Maras 2009; Torelli 2016, 31–2), and while we await results from more studies that gather and systematically analyse other archaeological – organic and inorganic – material to reconstruct the Archaic economy in detail as the PROCON project has done (Gleba & Laurito 2017; Gleba *et al.* forthcoming), I would like to devote this chapter to problematizing the current picture of urban growth in the (economic) transition in Archaic southern Etruria. Building on a previous article (Riva 2017), I wish to explore further the relationship between gift and commodity and therefore value (*sensu* Graeber) in order to contribute to our understanding of changing social relations and exchange. By value I mean the relationship between the values of objects and the 'social value' or worldviews of groups whose social production and reproduction is linked to material production; hence, objects' values are not simply created in exchange, but are also

conditioned by that social value that gives meaning to social relations (Graeber 2001). My suggestion, based on the acknowledgement that there is no such thing as a pure gift or commercial economy (Bourdieu 1977, 171–2; Appadurai 1986, 11–13; Munn 1986; Graeber 2001), is that the sixth century BC in Etruria is characterized by an acute oscillation between gift and commodity, itself a result of growing agricultural exploitation and the reconfiguration of social relations, rather than solely burgeoning trade. Neo-Maussian anthropology has repeatedly emphasized the instability of the gift, that is, the constant potential fluctuation of the status of objects between gift and commodity as they are used by social actors in exchange, whether with other fellow humans, the dead or the deity (Keane 1994; Miyazaki 2010, 251–4); where the nature of the exchange is ambiguous or uncertain, social action is geared towards drawing clear distinctions between the two (Gregory 2015, xxxix).

I have previously argued (Riva 2017) that, as this fluctuation was enhanced by cross-cultural exchange at the *emporia*, commensal sociality, whether in funerary, religious or domestic contexts, underwent codification, visible in the material culture of drinking. Codification, in turn, crystallized cultural difference: one has to be aware of cultural difference in order to understand cultural codes, particularly in multicultural spaces such as emporic sanctuaries. Commensality offers the most appropriate occasions for displaying that awareness, which was socially exclusive and thus a marker of social distinction. Furthermore, commensality was closely intertwined with agricultural production and surplus exploitation: the latter provided at once the means of ritualized drinking and of social power that was communicated in cultic and funerary ritual. This is seen primarily, but not exclusively, in the merging of a rural deity, *Fufluns*, into the Greek Dionysos, whose cult was itself socially restricted after being introduced in Etruria and the Tyrrhenian region more broadly (Cristofani & Martelli 1978; Baglione 1998, 88; Maras 2000, 132–3; Cerchiai & Cuzzo 2016). This is also the moment, as we shall see, when violence expands from the ‘cultural other’ to the ‘social other’: figurative evidence shows a shift from the depiction of violence in cross-cultural encounters to the depiction of hospitality and its norms, knowledge of which established and maintained barriers against the social other. This shift, itself related to the oscillation of different regimes of value, had to do with symbolic violence; whether that corresponded with physical violence we can only surmise due to the lack of bio-archaeological data (cf. Perego 2016 for a study on the potential of these data), but these social changes have to be understood within the growth of Etruscan cities and their economies.

My argument and the structure of this chapter revolve around three sets of evidence in order to defend my proposition: first, the funerary deposition of locally produced transport *amphorae*, a phenomenon seen largely at Vulci and its hinterland, which indicates an evolving funerary ideology in relation to the production and movement of agricultural surplus. Secondly, the production and use of large and oversize drinking and libation cups that points to the ritualization of these vessels and the oscillation of their gift and commodity status, which is related to novel forms of cult, including that of Dionysos, promoted by transcultural emporic worship. Thirdly, the iconographic evidence of mythological narratives that stress knowledge of cultural difference and norms, and the violence ensuing from transgressing these norms.

### Agricultural surplus and a new funerary ideology

The impact of the production and exploitation of agricultural surplus upon changing social relations is visible in the funerary deposition of Etruscan transport *amphorae*, a custom that, as far as we can tell from the published evidence, is mostly restricted to Vulci and its hinterland, with some examples coming from Cerveteri, Chiusi and Orvieto (Nardi & Pandolfini 1985, 61; Rizzo 1990). Unpublished and newly excavated examples at Vulci confirm this pattern (Regoli pers. comm.), and the concentration of tomb groups with these *amphorae* to one of the main urban cemeteries, the Osteria necropolis (on the latest finds: Carosi & Regoli 2013 and in this volume), is notable. In the published tomb groups, particularly those from Vulci and its hinterland, the *amphorae* are associated with a banqueting set normally composed of low-handled cups, mostly *kylikes*, and mostly of Ionian type (in a couple of cases, a *bucchero* version), high-handled cups, *kantharoi* more often than *kyathoi*, although they are sometimes deposited together, *bucchero* chalices, *olpai* and *oinochoai* of various ceramic type and ware (Etrusco-Corinthian, *bucchero* and Corinthian), oil containers (Corinthian and Etrusco-Corinthian), and rarely *lekythoi*, *impasto ollae* and plates (Rizzo 1990, 93–157). It is difficult to ascertain whether this is a regular set of contextual associations given that many of these tomb groups were looted, but it is likely. Indeed, there is a notable exception at the Osteria necropolis: this is a slightly later tomb group (date: 520–510 BC), a small chamber tomb within a Vulcentean *cassone*-type tomb, Tomb 47, currently unpublished, the Tomba del Guerriero, so called for the amount of weaponry which is unmatched in other contemporary *cassone* tombs. The tomb holds a typically Vulcentean, if somewhat exceedingly rich, banqueting set with Attic imported

fineware, frequent in tomb groups from the middle of the sixth century, and oversize drinking cups, to which I will return, but, untypically for that date, a locally produced transport *amphora* (Hoffmann 2004, 42, 106–7, Kat. I/133; Bundrick 2015, 316–18).

The custom of depositing storage/transport containers for agricultural produce in tombs is not new: from the first decade of the seventh to the first half of the sixth century BC, imported transport *amphorae* were deposited in tombs, mostly, from the published record, at Vulci and Cerveteri, with two examples coming from Veii (Rizzo 1990, 22–3); some of these *amphorae* were inscribed (Cordano 2007). This custom is suggestive of the ability, of the social group to whom the deceased belonged, to import new foodstuffs that was integrated with the adoption and ostentation of new eating and drinking practices at the tomb, which I have previously interpreted as new body technologies (Riva 2010, 146–50). Seventh-century BC lavish tomb groups also feature *impasto* storage jars of various types, from the heavily decorated *pithoi* at Cerveteri (Serra Ridgway 2010), to the rather plain ones and the very large *ollae* decorated with vertical ribs and painted decoration found at Vulci and elsewhere (Medori 2012; Regoli 2014, 75). The difference between these storage containers, however, and the transport *amphorae* that were purposely shaped and manufactured for exchange and redistribution, is notable. Considering the inscriptions that some examples of both types of containers bear helps us further elucidate this difference. Examples of the former come from the coastal hilltop settlement of La Castellina del Marangone, north of Cerveteri, where a homogeneous group of *ollae* and *pithoi* of 670–640 BC date was found in a specific sector of the *acropolis* of the settlement; many of these containers were inscribed after being fired, leading to the hypothesis that the inscriptions were functional to the containers' content, particularly because the jars were stocked in a storage room probably associated with a space destined for wine consumption such as a banqueting room (Gran-Aymerich & Hadas-Lebel 2011, 893–904). By contrast, the few, so-called 'speaking' inscriptions of Etruscan transport *amphorae* deposited in tombs, which are dated from the end of the seventh century BC, mostly display the linguistic formula *mi* + gentilial name that indicates ownership, which we also find emphasized by the Attic inscriptions on the imported transport *amphorae* (Cordano 2007, 27), except for one, from Montalto di Castro near Vulci, which displays the word *mulu*, reference to gift giving (Bagnasco Gianni 1996, 215–18). These inscriptions, in other words, turned a vessel that, by virtue of its shape and function, was an object for redistribution and exchange, into a personal possession or gift.

Significantly, most inscribed Etruscan *amphorae* from tombs come from Vulci and its environs, except for one from the Maddaloni necropolis of Calatia in Campania, which may have also come from Vulci (Gras 1985, 359; Pellegrino 2017, 229). Furthermore, all but one inscription are painted, that is, they were placed at the pre-firing stage; only one, from Tomb 132 at the Osteria necropolis, was engraved (Martelli 1982, 287). The inscriptions, in other words, fixed, so to speak, the status of the object at the point of manufacture; yet, they also raise the question for our interpretation about what the object of personal possession and gift was – either the container, its content, or both – and whether, in fact, the inscription put the vessel, rather than the content, out of a commodity regime (Robb 2018 on the relationship between container and content). Whichever the case, whether the content or the container was the subject of these 'speaking' inscriptions, the oscillation between gift and commodity of the Etruscan transport *amphora* is noteworthy, as is the message underlying a new funerary ideology that matched urban growth and denser trade networks in the broader region. Social power was emphasized at the tomb not solely in the advertisement of the production of agricultural surplus, as is the case with the deposition of storage containers, but, more crucially, in the ability to produce and move that surplus near or long distance. That the custom of depositing locally produced transport *amphorae* began at the same time as their earliest export to southern France (Dedet & Py 2006, 130), and had ended by the time large farm installations were established (Riva 2017, 242) with the sole exception, as far as I know, of the aforementioned Tomba del Guerriero and the later Tomb 61 bis, also at Osteria and unpublished (Riccionni 2003, 15), gives support to this interpretation. The example of Panathenaic *amphorae* with ownership inscriptions and evidence of the sale and or gift of the oil from them in the Greek world offers an interesting parallel, which can throw further light upon the fluctuating status of objects in Archaic Etruria since, aside from a few isolated pieces, the presence of these *amphorae* across Etruria – 16 according to Bentz (1998, 226, 228) – is exclusively restricted to Vulci where some examples bear so-called commercial graffiti (Bentz 1998, 92, 111–12, 116–18).

### Oversize vessels and fixing the gift

A second set of material that demonstrates the instability of the gift-commodity status of exchange objects is the distinctly Archaic Etruscan (and Greek) practice of producing and using oversize drinking cups, namely cups whose diameter is equal or above 25 cm. In



Athens, the production of oversize *kylikes* and *phialai*, which is small in proportion to that of other vessels of similar shapes, is also a sixth- and fifth-century BC phenomenon (Tsingarida 2020). Importantly, the distribution of Attic oversize drinking vessels, from *kantharoi*, to cups to *kylikes*, shows a particular preference for these vessels, particularly the cups and the *kantharoi*, in Etruria, especially at Vulci and Tarquinia (Tsingarida 2011, 65–7). In her studies on this Athenian production, Athena Tsingarida (2009; 2011; 2020) sees these vessels as unfit for drinking by humans given that some of them could reach 56 cm in diameter, and links them to cult, particularly the feasts of the *Theoxenia* where their use was reserved to heroes and gods. In Etruscan social settings, she argues, later examples from tomb groups at Foiano and Spina may have to do with the heroization of the deceased (Tsingarida 2014, 67–9; 2020, 259), and perhaps the gods' participation in the funerary banquet: two cups and three *phialai* bearing Etruscan inscriptions of deities and heroes come from tomb contexts, including the renowned cup at Tarquinia signed by Oltos and Euxitheos and dedicated to the *Dioskouroi* (Tsingarida 2009, 196–7; 2020, 264–6).

It seems reasonable to assume, along with Tsingarida (2020), that the practice of dedicating oversize cups to deities was a result of religious interaction at the sanctuaries of Etruscan *emporia* Gravisca and Pyrgi: of the few oversize cups or *phialai* that do not come from tombs – five out of 54, according to Tsingarida's analysis – four come from sanctuaries, and specifically from areas where the epigraphic and archaeological evidence points to Greek worshippers; these are the *sacellum* to Aphrodite at Gravisca and the 'area sud' of Pyrgi (Fiorini 2005; Baglione & Gentili 2013; Tsingarida 2020, 251). Epigraphic evidence at Pyrgi 'area sud' points to cults associated with *Fufluns*, Etruscan Dionysos, which, by the middle of the fifth century BC, was worshipped at urban sanctuaries in Bacchic mysteries (Tsingarida 2020, 263). These emporic sanctuaries, in fact, were not only the religious cross-cultural spaces where new practices were adopted, but also where cultural difference was enhanced, as mentioned earlier, by virtue of the multicultural environment that promoted new reciprocity relations with the deities as well as other members of the trading community (Riva 2017, 248).

That must be only one part of the story, however; another part, which we see in the Etruscan production of *bucchero* drinking cups, may have to do with the oscillation between gift and commodity that these vessels were subjected to as they acquired a commodity status in commercial transactions. *Bucchero kantharoi* and *kyathoi* were also produced as large or oversize vessels for the grave, particularly at Vulci (Belelli

Marchesini 2004, 110–14), and again, with a striking concentration at the Osteria *necropolis* (Rizzo 1990, 97), from the last quarter of the seventh to the first half of the sixth century BC, namely the period that saw the beginning of the overseas export of the *bucchero kantharos*, Rasmussen type 3e (Rasmussen 1979, 104). This suggests that these vessels' transactional value did not diminish, but, on the contrary, reinforced their ritual value in drinking ceremonies (cf. Thomas 1991, 199–200), and that their large shape highlighted this ritual function, which had characterized these vessels since their appearance in earlier Iron Age *impasto* and *bucchero* ceramic production (Rasmussen 1985, 35; Tonglet 2013, 42–3). Significantly, large or oversize *bucchero kantharoi* from Vulcentean tomb groups that contained Etruscan or imported transport *amphorae* were associated with a high number, up to 11 in the case of Tomb 81 from the Osteria *necropolis*, of other *bucchero kantharoi* of regular size (Rizzo 1990, tomb groups with locally produced *amphorae*: XIII, XVII, XVIII; with imported *amphorae*: XIV). The production of *bucchero kyathoi* at Vulci continues beyond the middle of the sixth century BC, even in the version that comes apart (Belelli Marchesini 2004, 114). Indeed, the association between oversize *bucchero* high-handled drinking cups and Etruscan transport *amphorae* is notable at the Tomba del Guerriero where two oversized *bucchero kyathoi* were deposited together with an Etruscan transport *amphora* and an oversize Attic eye-cup (Bundrick 2015, 317).

As mentioned above and argued by Sheramy Bundrick (2015), however, the Tomba del Guerriero is striking for other reasons, but the evidence so far examined demonstrates the entanglement that objects went through in exchange, the instability of their status that this entanglement generated, and the role that ritual had in fixing the gift and pulling out the object and/or its contents from the commodity network. This does not exclude the role of cult, as Tsingarida argued, in the use and function of these oversize vessels: in fact, religion was the very means through which those vessels became gift – dedicated to the gods or the deceased – and their status was stabilized. However, this was by no means the adoption of an Athenian practice; the oversize cups and *phialai* that Athenian potters and painters produced for the Etruscan market may have, in fact, responded to an already established (Etruscan?) practice.

### Codification in the encounter

The third set of evidence, which I would like to discuss, is iconographic and highlights the socio-cultural context in which the gift-commodity fluctuation so





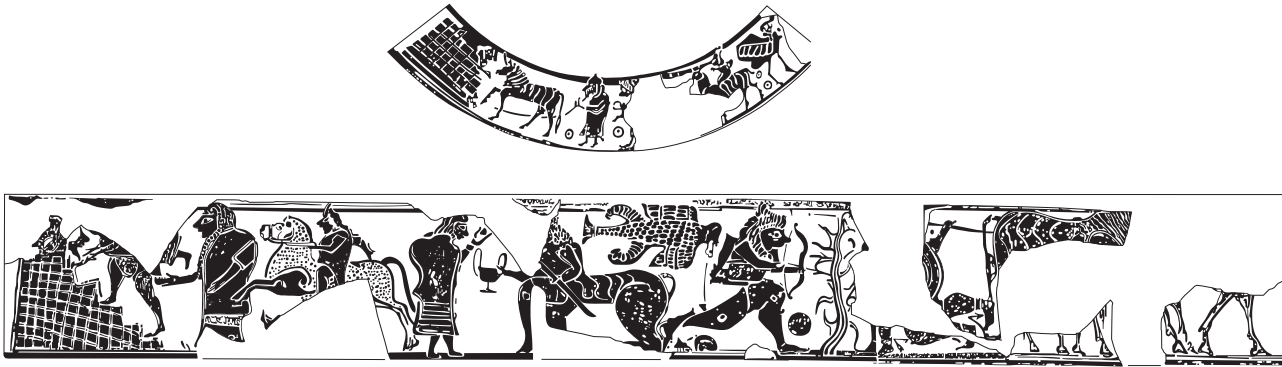
**Figure 16.1.** White-on-red pithos with lid, Cerveteri (courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program).

far examined took place. In this context, as mentioned above, commensal politics emphasized codified behaviour, which in turn promoted the occasions for controlling the status of the gift. This emphasis is seen in a shift in the iconography of cross-cultural encounters, which, in the seventh century BC, is represented largely by reference to violence and danger, primarily, in the surviving evidence, through the depiction of the blinding of Polyphemos by Odysseus and his companions, visible on the renowned Aristonothos krater (Bagnasco Gianni 2007) and the Getty white-on-red pithos (Fig. 16.1) (Micozzi 2005). Reference to this episode, paradigmatic of the violation of hospitality or *xenia* relations, is indirectly found on the two equally renowned Pania pyxides (Cristofani 1971): the fragmented so-called second Pania pyxis displays the escape of Odysseus and his companions from the cyclops'

cave, and, above, on a very poorly preserved middle frieze, unarmed Geryon leading his cattle (Cristofani 1971, pl. XXXV), a reference to Herakles' theft of the cattle that was one of the hero's labours narrated in the *Geryoneis*, the lyric poem composed by Archaic Sicilian poet Stesichorus (Finglass & Davies 2014, 230–98). The better-preserved earlier Pania pyxis displays the same escape scene moving towards a ship, itself directed towards a three-headed monster (Menichetti 1994, 85; d'Agostino 1995, 206). The stealing of Geryon's cattle is arguably another mythical narrative of cultural encounter steeped in violence. However, recent studies of Stesichorus' poem have argued that the poem's portrayal of Geryon is not in distinct opposition to Herakles, but is rather one of a tragic hero modelled on the Homeric epic (Franzen 2009; Fantuzzi 2013; see Finglass & Davies 2014, 34). In whichever way the characterization of Geryon *vis-à-vis* his encounter with Herakles may have been perceived, therefore, it is very unlike the characterization of Polyphemos.

Indeed, Stesichorus' characterization of Geryon as an armed hero with helmet and shield (Noussia-Fantuzzi 2013, 250) recurs in figurative depictions, the earliest ones of which, dating from the mid- to late seventh century BC, are few and mostly from the Aegean (Brize 1988; Moore 2013, 42; Finglass & Davies 2014, 231–3). Later Archaic depictions, on the other hand, are more frequent, and a significant number comes from Etruria, from the early sixth-century ivory pyxis mentioned above, to an isolated unprovenanced late sixth-century BC bronze statuette (Brize 1988, 187, no. 5), and scenes painted on several imported black-figure Attic amphorae, a few hydriae, a couple of cups (Brize 1990, 74–8, 81–4 for the list of material), and two inscribed Chalcidian amphorae (Brize 1988, 188, no. 15–16). In fact, the earliest black-figure Athenian depiction, dated to c. 560–550 BC on a hydria, comes from Cerveteri (Villa Giulia 50683; Brize 1990, 74, no. 2463; Moore 2013, 42).

An even earlier depiction, the Etrusco-Corinthian so-called Gobbi krater from Tomb 1 of Tumulus 1 of the Banditaccia necropolis of Cerveteri and dated to the first decades of the sixth century BC, is a locally produced vessel displaying, among other scenes, Herakles taking aim at Geryon holding the shield in front of his cattle; the composition is comparable to the earliest Greek depiction of Herakles and Geryon on a proto-Corinthian pyxis from Phaleron (Fig. 16.2) (Brize 1988, 188, no. 11). On the krater, moving in the opposite direction and next to Herakles is a centaur holding a *kantharos*, whom Marina Martelli long ago identified as the centaur Pholos; above him a siren is flying towards Herakles (Martelli 1987, 289–91). The Gobbi krater, in fact, points to an evolution in, and



**Figure 16.2.** Figurative decoration of the Gobbi krater (adapted from Martelli 1987).

perhaps a local re-interpretation of, the iconography of the encounter that we see in the course of the sixth century. A figurative narrative that indicated a cultural model, the excessive drinker cyclops, to the viewer-drinker, about the consequences of the lack of (knowledge of) norms in cross-cultural encounters is replaced by one that pivots around precisely the knowledge of those rules of drinking and hospitality across cultural boundaries and hence the practice of *xenia*. This is exemplified by the peaceful meeting between Herakles and Pholos on Mount Pholoe, to which the Gobbi krater refers, that saw the centaur host offering the hero mixed wine from his *pithos*. This is an episode in Herakles' tenth labour, also narrated by Stesichorus, whose popularity is attested by its figurative representations on Attic black- and red-figure and other pottery from Etruria to Sicily post-dating the Gobbi krater (Finglass & Davies 2014, 238–9, 290–3). The mythical episode is not without violence: Pholos is accidentally killed by one of the arrows that the hero used to defend himself from the violence of centaurs who, attracted by the sweet smell of the wine, ran to it (Bremmer 2012, 40–1). However, most depictions of this episode, between the last third of the sixth and the early decades of the fifth century BC, on Attic black-figure vessels, isolated the peaceful encounter from the violence. These vessels included several *amphorae*, a couple of Etruria-provenanced *oinochoai* and one *kyathos* from the Vulcentean hinterland (Canino) (Brommer 1973, 178–82; the *kyathos*: British Museum 1843,1207.4), all probably intended for Etruscan users (Riva 2017, 252). That this depiction may have been the preference of Etruscan viewers is suggested by the fact that, outside this Attic production, the only isolated scene of the encounter pared down to its essential signifiers, Pholos and the *kantharos*, the vessel given to Herakles for drinking that was to become Dionysos' drinking cup *par excellence*, is painted on the earlier Gobbi krater. Furthermore, in associating Herakles

with two other scenes, painted on the main body and shoulder of the krater respectively, that refer to sacrifice, D'Agostino and Cerchiai (1999, 160–1) have highlighted the civilizing role of Tyrrhenian Herakles in the institution and codification of sacrifice, namely a highly ritualized practice like wine drinking itself: emphasis on codification here corresponds well with the themes conjured up by the encounter with Pholos. In fact, we may deem the Gobbi krater as being a junction between seventh- and sixth-century BC iconographies of encounter not only in the choice of myth depicted – the meeting between Pholos and Herakles on the one hand, and the violent theft of Geryon's cattle on the other; it is also a junction *vis-à-vis* the choice of narrative technique by the painter who was experimenting with narrative compositions (Bellelli 2010, 27, footnote 4), which, in turn, may partly explain Pholos' isolated figure.

On the other hand, the later scenes of the Pholos encounter on the aforementioned black-figure Athenian *amphorae* either refer to the encounter itself, showing the host and guest shaking hands (Herman 1987, 52), the opening of the *pithos*, or the feasting which follows a highly standardized composition (Verbanck-Piérard 1982, 147). The earliest feasting scene, on a belly *amphora* from Florence, is mirrored on the other side of the vessel by the feasting of Dionysos (Schauenburg 1971, 46–7, table 33); in this and other such scenes, Herakles is often depicted holding an oversize *kantharos*, reflecting closely the hero's act of drinking from a cup that measures 'as much as three flasks' as described in the *Geryoneis* (the fragment preserved by Athenaeus translated and commented upon by Finglass & Davies 2014, 291–2). A similarly oversized *kantharos* is held by Pholos on the Gobbi krater. Far from alluding to Herakles' proverbial appetite and its comical effect (Finglass & Davies 2014, 291), the representation of Herakles' oversize cup, by these vessels' painters may in fact, have provided

further reference to the ritualization of the *kantharos*, as examined earlier, to the Etruscan viewers of these scenes.<sup>1</sup> Some time ago, Daniel Noël argued that the representation of the two banquets emphasizes the contrast between the established rules of drinking and the lack of those very rules: Pholos drinks wine pure and draws it from a *pithos* rather than a *krater* (Noël 1983, 142–4). But as Nazarena Valenza Mele (1986, 339–40) rightly asserted, Pholos offers Herakles diluted wine, and in so doing, like the good centaur Chiron, follows a culturally specific code of practice, while maintaining the limits of his own world, which he knows he cannot trespass. The scene of Herakles feasting with Pholos does not last in Attic imagery. The opening of the *pithos* is instead more frequent on such imagery later on and in red-figure decoration: it is never a standardized composition as are the feasting images and is often paired with violent centaurs, but after 470 BC no Attic painter depicts Mount Pholoe's centaurs (Verbanck-Piérard 1982, 147–8, no. 16).

The centaurs' violence resulting from Pholos' opening of the *pithos* occurs on other painted vessels from Corinthian to Attic, including Tyrrenian *amphorae*, but it is also transferred onto the sculptural decoration of some Archaic Greek sanctuaries, frequently on small-scale friezes of sanctuaries in western Anatolia, most notably at the temple of Athena at Assos (Wescoat 2012), and on the renowned metopes at the Heraion of Foce del Sele, the only example known so far west of the Aegean (Greco 2012). In regards to these metopes, scholars (Masseria & Torelli 1999; Greco 2012, 234) have argued that Herakles' centauromachy depicted there, along with Achilles represented on other Archaic metopes displaying Trojan themes, served the need to display the aristocratic core values that both heroes embodied and that would have been instantly recognizable to the Etruscan elites settled on the other side of the Sele. At the same time, these values were being flagged up in a distinctly religious space, that is to say, the space for the encounter with the gods. In this space, narratological and theological demands drove the choice of images and of their place in the sanctuary's decorative programme beyond artistic conventions and craftsmen's decisions (Osborne 2009). These images thus acted as a medium for that religious encounter. These demands encompassed the values and traditions underlying the cult of Hera, from guest-friendship values to social norms more generally (Greco 2012, 234–5). Within these values and traditions, Herakles' centauromachy must have also alluded to ritual drinking as a religious act, as well as to the transgression of social norms of hospitality. To the sanctuary's visitor at Foce del Sele, however, the centauromachy also signalled knowledge of those

norms across cultural boundaries; to the eyes of those who had that very knowledge, the myth showed the thus preventable, though seemingly inevitable refusal to – and thus decision not to – follow those norms (cf. Osborne 2009, 11). Hence, the presence of the *pithos* below Pholos' belly on one of the metopes – if this is indeed an accurate reconstruction as proposed by Greco 2012 – did not so much signal the wild world of the centaur, but it rather, or also, hinted at that knowledge of sociality and its codes *vis-à-vis* drinking and the possible positive outcome of the exercise of that knowledge during the encounter, so well-illustrated by the feasting of Herakles and Pholos on the Attic *amphorae* that isolated the scenes from the violent aftermath to the Etruscan owners of those *amphorae*.

Given the religious context of these messages communicated by the Pholos' metopes, that knowledge is not, however, simply about the act of drinking as a form of sociality within a social group. It is also about the drinking feast at the sanctuary in honour of the gods, which required and promoted, at the same time, a form of sociality that entailed precisely the encounter with the divinity. For the Greek world, 'the encounter with wine was also an encounter with the gods' (Osborne 2014, 40); an analogous integration between libation, the cultic act that allowed contact with the divinity, and the communal consumption of wine has been noted at the so-called Edificio delle Venti Celle opposite Temple B at the sanctuary of Pyrgi. Here, the ostentation and reiteration of the *phiale*, the vessel for sacred libation *par excellence*, is highlighted by the terracotta architectural decoration of the building that hosted communal banquets (Gentili 2015, 107–9). That the Heraion at Foce del Sele, also a meeting point of culturally diverse communities, fulfilled an emporic function on the river (Greco 2012, 234–5) may in fact explain the tension manifested in Herakles' centauromachy between knowledge of drinking rules and transgression of those rules. This tension appears all the more significant if we compare and contrast the metopes with the similar depiction of Herakles' centauromachy at the Temple of Athena at Assos, where the sanctuary visitor viewed the centauromachy against a scene of a banquet-*symposion* of men in a religious setting, both of which decorated the eastern epistyle blocks of the temple (Wescoat 2012, 151–73). Bonna Daix Wescoat, in the latest study of the site, characterizes the depiction of Pholos as 'a failed symposion' (2012, 158) because of its juxtaposition with the scene of the religious *symposion*: however, we must read it as such only at Assos, a religious setting inside the urban community where the polarity between transgressing the rules of hospitality and those very rules could not have been more explicit, and where wine



was a medium not simply of human sociality but also sociality between humans and gods.

At the emporic sanctuary located on cultural boundaries at Foce del Sele, wine similarly acted as a medium of both types of sociality, but that polarity was not made explicit because – I would like to suggest – the reading of that polarity and tension was only possible to those who had knowledge of the rules of both human and religious drinking rituals, such as the users of the Attic black-figure *amphorae* discussed above. Importantly, that knowledge was not simply culturally specific, but was also restricted to certain social groups. Archaic elite mobility, well attested across Tyrrhenian central Italy (Ampolo 1976–1977), guaranteed access to that knowledge; hence, awareness of cultural difference was ultimately a tool for the expression of social distinction in private as in public contexts of social commensality, while violence, no longer a threat to the forming of new exchange relations with the outside world, was directed to establishing and maintaining social barriers.

## Conclusion

Addressing the contextual meaning of images and objects, from transport *amphorae* to drinking vessels, as I have tried to do here, can help towards building a more nuanced picture of Archaic urbanism in Etruria at a moment of transition. This evidence must be situated within the broader scenario of increasing agricultural production and surplus redistribution that led to changing social relations. Commensal politics provided, here as elsewhere (Dietler & Hayden 2001), the space where social power was played out, where knowledge of cultural codes and difference signalled social distinction and, thus, exclusion. In this space, centaurs, so ubiquitous in Archaic iconography, were not simply communicating specific mythological narratives borrowed from the Greek world, but became the vehicle for symbolic violence, in which the control of the imaginary, from worldviews to the communication with the divine, became as key to the maintenance of social hierarchy as the control



**Figure 16.3.** Black-figure amphora, Vulci, side A (British Museum 1837, 0609.42, © The Trustees of the British Museum).



**Figure 16.4.** Black-figure amphora, Vulci, side B (British Museum 1837, 0609.42, © The Trustees of the British Museum).

of material wealth (Godelier 2015; cf. Cuozzo 2016 on this for funerary contexts in Iron Age Tyrrhenian central Italy). Dionysos, in this respect, emblematically linked these two forms of control: while his worship contributed to the construction of that imaginary (Riva 2017), the integration of the god into the Etruscan pantheon occurred through a rural deity, *Fufluns* (Cristofani & Martelli 1978; Baglione 1998, 88), who belonged to the world of that 'new' material wealth, agricultural surplus that was exported across Etruria and beyond (cf. Perkins in this volume). The Attic black-figure *amphora* from Vulci, now at the British Museum (British Museum 1837, 06-09.42; Figs. 16.3–16.4), too, eloquently flaunted the control of surplus production on the one hand, and of the imaginary in relation to knowledge in exchange on the other, by displaying an image of the hand-shake between Pholos and Herakles (Herman 1987, 52). While the few *amphorae* that carry this image depicted Dionysos or other deities on the other side of the vessel's body, this *amphora* conspicuously showed, on its other side, the olive harvest.

In this chapter, I have used a wide variety of evidence in order to deconstruct the *communis opinio* that urbanism in Tyrrhenian southern Etruria led to a transition from a prestige-driven to a commercial economy. Drawing from post-Maussian anthropological theory, I have focused upon the oscillation of value of objects and their use in different contexts, from tombs to sanctuaries, at a time of social change, which I traced in shifts in burial ritual, religious worship and the iconography of cross-cultural encounters. This change went hand in hand with complex economic transformations: both were integral to the growth of cities in Etruria and the wider central Mediterranean.

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### Notes

- 1 Note the interesting juxtaposition, in the Athenaeus fragment, between the measure of Herakles' drinking and the word *κυψιον* referring to a small vessel (Finglass & Davies 2014, 291). Might have this juxtaposition

been picked up by Etruscan viewers during the oral performance of the Stesichorean poem (cf. Carey 2015, 61–2)?

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## Making cities

Large and complex settlements appeared across the north Mediterranean during the period 1000–500 BC, from the Aegean basin to Iberia, as well as north of the Alps. The region also became considerably more interconnected. Urban life and networks fostered new consumption practices, requiring different economic and social structures to sustain them. This book considers the emergence of cities in Mediterranean Europe, with a focus on the economy. What was distinctive about urban lifeways across the Mediterranean? How did different economic activities interact, and how did they transform power hierarchies? How was urbanism sustained by economic structures, social relations and mobility? The authors bring to the debate recently excavated sites and regions that may be unfamiliar to wider (especially Anglophone) scholarship, alongside fresh reappraisals of well-known cities. The variety of urban life, economy and local dynamics prompts us to reconsider ancient urbanism through a comparative perspective.

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