



Multi-scalar Lenses on the Mediterranean in the First Millennium BC

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Abstract

In the current era of global approaches in archaeology and, more broadly, in the social and historical sciences, questions on the benefits, modes, and challenges of addressing multiple analytical scales are becoming central. The Mediterranean basin is a prime region to explore these questions because of its long-standing field research history and rich cultural geography. The first millennium BC of this region is a particularly interesting period for these aims because of its remarkable variability in the polities and societies that developed there, and an acceleration of change that saw the growth of imperial states extending their hegemonic political and economic control from east to west and west to east until the Roman state eventually exerted a pan-Mediterranean hegemony. In this paper, I survey recent and current research of this period in the Mediterranean, and the various ways in which it has addressed multi-scalar analysis and the tension of local and global inherent in the latter. I will suggest that the key benefit for such an analysis is developing a comparative perspective to our research questions, which has been thus far constrained by Graeco-Roman scholarly traditions.

Keywords Mediterranean · First millennium BC · Global-local tension · Multiple scales · Interdependence · Colonial connections

Introduction

Approaching research questions through multiple scales of enquiry has been central to many, if not most, disciplinary subfields of archaeology since the post-World-War-two era (e.g., Nevett et al. 2017; Thompson et al. 2021 Trombley et al. 2023; Wang et al. 2022; Wienhold 2013), undoubtedly spear-headed by Anglophone processualism (Lyman 2007): no scholar nowadays would doubt that this is standard

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methodology. Yet, the intellectual turn toward the global, which in the social and historical sciences has taken a myriad number of directions and developments, most critically analyzed by modern historians (Trivellato 2024), has led to what many have called ‘global archaeology’: this has, in turn, raised questions on the problem of scale. In archaeology, one generally refers to three distinct meanings of ‘global’: it either refers to the analytical scale, or to world archaeology and related efforts to move the field away from Eurocentric/Westerncentric scholarly practices and strategies (Funari and Carvalho 2014; Willems 2009). Global archaeology is often used to refer to this potential global scope. In a third much narrower sense, global refers to uses of archaeology to investigate changes brought in by modern globalization (cf. Smith and Burke 2021). In this paper, I am interested in the first, scale-driven, definition of ‘global,’ which I employ from now onwards, and the impact of this upon how we address scales of analysis, and therefore ultimately the advantages of these for comparative scholarship. Because of this intellectual turn toward the global, the adoption of multiple scales is becoming a significant object of discussion for a number of reasons; one of these is the question of whether and the extent to which the global (sometimes and especially when intended as planetary) scale can be useful analytically vis-à-vis multi-scalar investigations, whichever the research problem, or indeed be achieved given the fragmentation and quality of archaeological data.

This immediately raises the question of the very definition of global scale, which does not necessarily entail the planet. In fact, in some broader regions or continents and/or disciplinary sub-fields, archaeologists often use ‘global’ vis-à-vis their regional focus of enquiry and subfield. This is no truer than for the Mediterranean basin where centuries of archaeological investigations and scholarship on its antiquity have generated an immense quantity of different—and not only archaeological—types of documentation (Schnapp 1996), and continue to do so especially for neglected areas or periods (Fenwick 2020). It is therefore not perhaps coincidental that one of the earliest paradigm-turning studies that reframed the relationship between global, regional, and local scales in terms of connectivity concerned the Mediterranean in a long-term perspective from the Late Bronze Age to the Middle Ages (Horden and Purcell 2000); this was followed by a study that treated earlier millennia at the same Mediterranean-wide scale (Broodbank 2013). As we shall see, since these two studies, others have also approached the Mediterranean basin as an object for global enquiry through a specific interpretive lens, that of globalization theory (Hodos 2020 over a much narrower chronological span; Gosner and Haynes 2024). In this context, the first millennium BC of the Mediterranean basin (Fig. 1) represents a challenging millennium for addressing the question of multi-scalar analysis for a variety of reasons, not least because this is a relatively long millennium, not simply in terms of chronology, but also because of the richness and variety of its cultural geography (Abulafia 2011) and documentation (Cohen and Armstrong 2022 for Italy). This millennium crosses two archaeological sub-fields, late prehistory and classical archaeology (Broodbank 2014; Knodell 2021, pp. 7–13, 248–256 on “the disciplinary baggage of early Greece”; Kotsonas 2016; López-Ruiz 2021, pp. 2–9; cf. Murray 2018, p. 46; Purcell 2014a); it straddles two cognate, yet distinct disciplines, Archaeology and Classics, each of which has tackled the concept of global in significantly different ways, and across other archaeological subfields, namely the

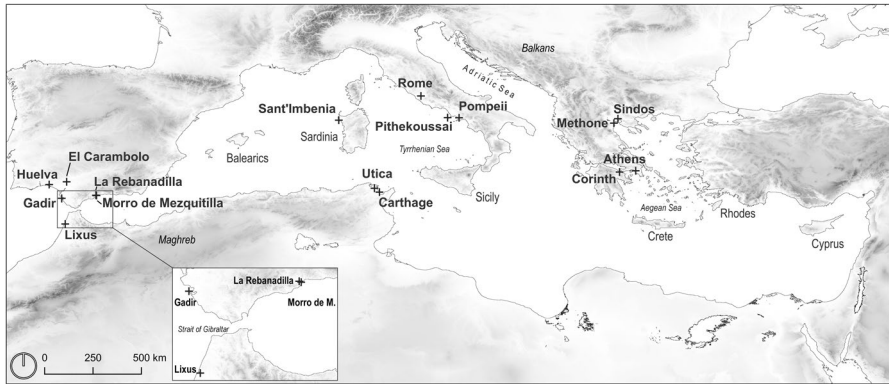


Fig. 1 Map of the Mediterranean basin with sites and regions mentioned in the text.

so-called Near Eastern Archaeology and Egyptology (Hall and Osborne 2022). This makes the Mediterranean basin a particularly interesting case for tackling the problem of multi-scalar analysis, as attested by the plethora of recent studies growing over the last 20 years or so, which I review below.

The question of how we define the basin as a study region in its own right and trace its edges has been addressed by the above cited studies that acknowledge the dynamism and fluidity of those edges (Purcell 2003; cf. Terpstra 2019). Yet, we also must concede that, however fluid, these edges are historiographical, rather than geographical, as exemplified by the limits of Mediterranean Africa (Shaw 2001). This is, in fact, a long-standing problem best approached across multiple analytical scales (see below on Mediterranean Africa). We also need to acknowledge that the temporal limits herein set are arbitrary and cross disciplinary boundaries, as just noted: processes that were set in motion at the beginning of the first millennium did not emerge out of a void; nor did the dynamics of the end of the millennium terminate then. In other words, the temporal limits of the millennium are porous, as has been highlighted especially for its beginning (Broodbank 2013, pp. 21–23, 2014). Recent broader regional studies of the east and of the central-west Mediterranean, in fact, incorporate the last centuries of the 2nd millennium, known as the Late Bronze Age, the limits of which depend on absolute regional chronologies (cf. Iacono et al. 2022; see below); in doing so, they aim to demonstrate that the centuries straddling the 2nd and 1st millennia were not a radical break, largely characterized as societal collapse in the east, but a phase of transition (Cline 2024, pp. 80–110; Gosner and Haynes 2024; Knodell 2021) or, in the specific case of the Aegean, crisis and recovery (Murray 2017). Mediterranean-wide, we see in these centuries the “acceleration towards the Middle Sea” (Broodbank 2013, pp. 600–645).

Yet, the decision to set these limits is not only driven by purely pragmatic reasons in respect to the present paper’s focus on the entire millennium in question. More importantly, I wish to highlight this millennium as one of momentous transformations: these entailed pathways, by no means linear or coeval, toward the formation of heterogeneous and politically autonomous polities, from city-states and non-urban

states to imperial states, small and large. This formation went hand in hand with a progressive intensification of Mediterranean-wide human mobility, which commenced remarkably early, as our most recent data show, and connectivity driven by exchange and economic redistribution. Determined by a variety of socio-economic, cultural—not just political—factors, this political heterogeneity is remarkable in its own right and makes the first millennium BC distinctive vis-à-vis the previous millennium. Furthermore, what makes the Mediterranean especially fit for multi-scalar and—I will argue—comparative investigation is that out of this distinctive political fragmentation and the factionalism and fragility of power structures that it generated, different hegemonic states emerged across the basin. These are Carthage (De Vincenzo 2013; Rawlings 2017; Taylor 2023), Syracuse (Harris 2020; de Lisle 2021), Rome in the central-west (Helm 2021; Padilla Peralta and Bernard 2022; Roselaar 2019), Athens (Low 2018) and the long-lived Persian empire (Brosius 2021; Degen and Rollinger 2022) before Alexander's expansion in the east of the basin, exercising political and/or economic control on others until Rome's expansion integrated the basin at the end of the millennium (Maschek 2024; Santangelo 2024).

In this paper, I intend to synthesize the current state of multi-scalar research of this millennium in its full chronological extension for the Mediterranean basin, its problems and challenges. In doing so, one of my aims is to demonstrate the enormous potential of the first-millennium-BC Mediterranean for contributing to debates on how to pursue multi-scalar archaeology more generally. I begin by defining and characterizing the terms of my analysis, addressing current trends in studies of global-local dynamics in the Mediterranean, the scholarly cleavage at circa the middle of the millennium, and important research biases afflicting this region's potential contribution. Second, I discuss recent controversies on absolute dates, and the implications of proposed revised sequences for the beginning of the millennium. Third, I address areas where new findings have recently radically shaped our understanding of the Mediterranean. These areas concern: early Phoenician cross-Mediterranean mobility and technological transmission; Mediterranean Africa, our knowledge of which is currently in genuine flux; climatic fluctuations and demographic change, so far explored for Mediterranean Europe; the contact zones between continental and Mediterranean Europe, including the Balkan region, an area still in urgent need of scholarly integration; and finally, Rome and its hinterland, where the accumulation of new archaeological data have seen a new rapprochement between historians and archaeologists. I then examine current multi-scalar studies and approaches to the Mediterranean. Of these approaches, two are especially prominent, namely those driven by network and globalization theory respectively. While both aim to address multiple analytical scales, the former privileges the regional scale and a bottom-up view of change; the latter, by contrast, argues for the value of both bottom-up and top-down perspectives. Taken together, they exemplify the challenges of multi-scalar analysis. A third approach, also emerging from the multifarious turn toward network thinking, focuses on interdependence created through exchange and the cross-Mediterranean circulation of ideas, material culture, and people, which in turn affected socio-economic practices and political transformation locally. Although not explicitly framed in this way, prominent studies of specific types of archaeological evidence circulating across the basin illustrate the potential of this approach in

discerning the relationship between broader patterns of exchange and different kinds of change at the lower end of the scale. I will, in turn, address three sets of such evidence: Greek figured fine ware, mostly Attic Black and Red Figure pottery; textile remains; transport *amphorae* and their content. This ultimately leads me to address two noteworthy instances of interdependence: Orientalization for the first three or so centuries, and Hellenism for the last centuries of the millennium, the so-called Hellenistic period. Traditionally framed as art-historical phenomena reflecting broader patterns of material culture change identified through top-down perspectives, what I would call “-izations,” both terms have come under vehemently critical scrutiny as a result. Yet, they are, in fact, a prime illustration of interdependence in two very different phases of Mediterranean integration and arguably convergence: the earlier phase marking the beginning of long-distance mobility within a fragmented scenario of Mediterranean-wide connectivity; the latter a result of increasingly more extensive forms of economic and political hegemonies by imperial states that culminated with Rome’s supremacy at the end of the millennium. Taken together, these two instances provide us with radically different processes where interdependence was driven by different forms of contact and patterns of exchange.

I finally bring all of this together, arguing that the tension between the local and the global across the millennium, inherent in multi-scalar approaches, is still ripe for investigation. I will furthermore suggest that the Graeco-Roman Mediterranean has often forced a narrow view upon the archaeology of this region, and in so doing, is still an encumbrance to advances in this direction. Ultimately, not only is this narrow view unhelpful; my argument is also that interpretive frameworks, such as globalization theory that have been applied in order to surpass such a narrow view, have not yet delivered on the promised heuristic potential for a number of reasons which I discuss in detail below. I will conclude by highlighting that one of the key benefits of adopting interdependence in multi-scalar analysis is that it offers a more effective methodology not only for exploring the local–global tension but also for comparative analysis at different scales.

Multiple Scales and Global–Local Dynamics

As intimated, the global turn has generated a debate on the meaning of global, not just in archaeology but also across the social and historical sciences. Casting the net wider shows the multiple, often contrasting meanings attributed to global and hence multi-scalar: early modern historians, for instance, are increasingly aware of the challenges of multi-scalar analysis, and the need to historicize the concept of global in order to overcome these challenges (Rotger, Roig-Sanz and Puxan Oliva 2019). As in other disciplines, they, too, conceive of global history in several different ways; this has generated a vigorous debate regarding how we should approach the global vis-à-vis our own research questions (Ammermann et al. 2021; Berend 2023, pp. 289–293; Clossey 2012). In archaeology and specifically for the ancient Mediterranean, we have come to understand the tension between the local and the global as key. Although not couched in these terms, Horden and Purcell’s understanding of Mediterranean overlapping micro-regional ecologies underlies this tension: the

ecological fragmentation of the basin into microregions generated uncertainty and therefore risk for productive economies, pushing for surplus production, diversification and redistribution, and therefore interdependence and mobility across the basin (Horden and Purcell 2000; Purcell 2003; cf. on interdependence below). The result is a distinctive and dynamic global world that was unified by resemblances in differences and the triad of fragmentation, uncertainty and mobility (Broodbank 2013, pp. 20–45). This prompts us to acknowledge that tackling different scales in the Mediterranean is a *conditio sine qua non* for understanding change across social structures, behaviors and practices precisely because this very interdependence and the mobility it engendered affected change either directly or indirectly. Addressing this through multiple scales also involves the need, in some cases, to go beyond the edges of the Mediterranean, which raises the issue of whether the basin provides the global scale of analysis (e.g., Osborne and Hall 2022; Purcell 2016). Beyond the problem of defining the Mediterranean as a unit of analysis mentioned above, the question is whether to consider the Mediterranean of the first millennium BC as a global space and therefore as an object of a multi-scalar global archaeological enquiry. As we shall see below, while recent findings have fully confirmed the fluid edges of the Mediterranean, scholars have recognized that the remarkable diversity and fragmentation of first-millennium-BC polities goes hand in hand with the comparable diversity of the micro-ecologies in which they grew; therefore, the global scale of the region exists in relation to this political and cultural geography (Lichtenberger et al. 2021).

Indeed, to some, global perspectives applied to the Mediterranean are not just a matter of scale, but demand the use of globalization theory to explain what further distinguishes this millennium (Hodos 2006, 2014, 2020; Versluys 2016; van Dommelen 2016); this is the earliest point at which long-distance mobility and the extension of connections that began with the establishment of Phoenician and Greek colonial settlements unified the basin and shrank its size (Mac Sweeney et al. 2024); this set in motion a trajectory toward cross-regional and imperial polities by the latter part of the millennium (Broodbank 2013, pp. 544–549, 644–748).

Most of the above cited studies of this alleged early Mediterranean globalization largely encompass the first half of the first millennium rather than its entirety; I suggest that this not a coincidence. Recent uses and applications of Big-Data analysis going hand in hand with the global turn have driven two trends in research of the first-millennium-BC Mediterranean that may explain this. The first entails the investigation of specific questions across millennia BC and/or beyond the edges of the Mediterranean, where the first millennium is identified as the culmination of the sociocultural practices under examination (Bevan 2014, 2018, 2020; Iacono et al. 2022). The second trend involves multi-scalar analyses of the local-global tension of the Roman Mediterranean of the late first millennium BC, the so-called Hellenistic period, and early first millennium AD, centered on the material turn and human-object entanglement (Allison et al. 2018; Pitts 2021; Pitts and Versluys 2021). These analyses inevitably extend beyond the edges of the basin to encompass the further reaches of the Roman empire and belong to the field of Roman archaeology. Like the studies of the first half of the millennium, they often explicitly embrace globalization theory, which is arguably more effective as explanatory framework for

the Roman imperial period than the early first millennium BC (contra Morley 2015; Pitts and Versluys 2015; Witcher 2016).

These two trends, in fact, expose a critical problem for multi-scalar analysis of the entire first millennium BC, namely the cleavage *circa* down the middle that makes the millennium the remit of two broader scientific sub-fields: these are the Iron Age broadly conceived, on one hand, and Roman and classical archaeology on the other, with their own respective scholarly traditions. As mentioned earlier, this scholarly scenario is complicated by the existence of other sub-fields involved in the study of the first millennium. Yet, this specific disciplinary break remains a significant obstacle to a millennium-long multi-scalar analysis, despite appeals at breaking it down (Broodbank 2014). The problem is compounded by the uneven coverage of available data, which derives partly from discipline-specific datasets, and partly from the uneven preservation of the archaeology. Importantly, as stated elsewhere (Riva and Grau Mira 2022a, p. 2), this unevenness does not necessarily separate the two halves of the millennium. Rather, the century-old tradition of Classicism, what Renfrew once called the Great Tradition (Leidwanger and Knappett 2018a, pp. 5–6; Renfrew 1980) that privileged the excavation of selected sites over others, makes the second half itself difficult to investigate in its own right over large geographical areas, which are necessary to enable the analysis of multiple scales, from global downwards. Even in intensely researched regions such as the Aegean, the paucity of high-quality data that can cover large areas constitutes a serious hindrance to a long-term multi-scalar study. This is exemplified by the tight chronological focus chosen by a most recent study of this region: employing an etic macro-scale framework, this study explores local and regional connections in the Archaic phase for the Aegean (700–500 BC) (Loy 2023). It does so through a Big-Data-driven approach that employs computational Social Network Analysis to map different types of evidence, from pottery to coins, inscriptions, and marble sculpture (Loy 2023, p. 288). Furthermore, the state of preservation of archaeological material is itself a product of scholarly attention toward, and preferential study of, either the classical artifact or ancient text-driven patterns: examples of the former are Loy's (2023) choice of analytical data itself, and the predominant visibility of Roman imperial material in pedestrian surveys, made so partly because of a long-term scholarly investment in Roman imperial ware analysis (Knodell et al. 2023, p. 299) and partly because of the better chances of its preservation and diagnostics (Attema et al. 2020). For the latter, recent Lidar-based investigations of southeastern Italian highlands have exposed the still influential research biases; these biases derive from an excessive reliance on ancient historiography that have so far driven the interpretation of settlement patterns from incomplete datasets in what are still erroneously considered to be marginal landscapes (Fontana 2022).

The above, in other words, shows that data retrieval and management create risks of biased interpretation. Yet, the first millennium BC represents an ideal chronological framework for multi-scalar analysis of the basin for being the period in which the Mediterranean progressively shrank in size, as mentioned above, as connectivity surged, yet maintaining remarkable diversity among different polities within and across regions along with the development of hegemonic states across large areas. It is therefore a prime setting for exploring the local–global tension in a very

changing world, between the Iron Age and the pan-Mediterranean Roman empire. In fact, what all the above cited studies and others that have addressed multiple scales have in common, as I will show, is a focus on interaction and networks driving the geographical extension of connections, which arguably allows them to mitigate the problem of uneven data across multiple scales. This has gone hand in hand with some fundamental changes in perspectives, which have been in turn stimulated by new findings and absolute dating. I turn to these changes and new findings first before addressing current scholarship.

The Beginning of the 1st Millennium BC: Controversies and Potential Implications

As is always the case, new findings inevitably affect and change our perspectives. This is no truer than for the first-millennium-BC Mediterranean over the last 25 years or so as new absolute dates have dilated the temporal boundaries of the beginning of the so-called Iron Age, and new archaeological data have disclosed much earlier long-distance connections than previously thought.

The beginning of the millennium is being reconfigured for some key regions of the basin by recent and new series of absolute dates of archaeological contexts, some of which bear good-quality stratified deposits. Studies cross-dating materials in relation to the introduction of iron technology through the means of scientific dating at sites from central Europe to the central and western Mediterranean suggest a revision of the beginning of the Iron Age to *circa* 1000–950 BC, that is the very beginning of the millennium (van der Plicht and Nijboer 2017/2018 summarizing recent bibliography). This pushes for a higher chronology for the beginning of the Iron Age by *circa* 100–150 years, although for the Iron Age of regions such as Italy or indeed the Mediterranean as a whole there is no consensus yet on this (cf. Bruins et al. 2011 and Appendix in Gonz  les de Canales et al. 2017 on disagreements; van der Plicht and Nijboer 2017/2018, p. 99; Nijboer 2021, p. 321).

A lack of consensus also exists for the east of the basin where important advances have concerned three distinct regions, to which I turn. Firstly, iron-smelting at the site of Tell Hammeh (Jordan) indicates that the earliest evidence of iron technology in Southwest Asia dates to 930/910 cal. BC: this constitutes an important and accepted *terminus post quem* for well-established processes of iron production (Veldhuijzen and Rehren 2007). Second, thanks to a well-stratified sequence that includes Aegean-provenanced ceramics, and a radiocarbon dating system at the southern Levantine site of Megiddo, archaeologists there have attempted to synchronize this region's dating sequence with those available from the Aegean (Fantalkin et al. 2020). However, due to the paucity of radiocarbon dates for the Aegean, the absolute dates for the relative ceramic-based chronology of the beginning of the Iron Age for this region, namely the transition between the sub-Mycenaean and the early Protogeometric phase, are still a matter of contention. A study of radiocarbon dates from Lefkandi, Kalapodi, and Corinth, all Aegean sites with good stratigraphic sequences, has proposed to date such a transition to the second half of the eleventh century BC (Toffolo et al. 2013), which

Fantalkin et al. (2020) have accepted for synchronization with the Levant. However, these dates have been recently disputed by a study of radiocarbon dates from long stratigraphic sequences at the northern Aegean tell mound site of Sindos that suggests raising this transition by over a century (Gimatzidis and Weninger 2020; Gimatzidis 2024, pp. 9–10). This study combines these dates, interpreted using the method of Gaussian Monte Carlo Wiggle Matching, with the cross-dating of the ceramic material from these sequences, both locally made and imported, with material at other Aegean sites. This ceramic material includes pottery with Euboean and Corinthian Geometric decoration, a decorative style through which we trace the earliest circulation of Aegean pottery throughout the Mediterranean (Kourou 2020). This enables Gimatzidis and Weninger (2020, pp. 22–23) to argue for a correspondence between their revised higher chronology and similarly revised chronologies both for the central and west discussed above, and for regions further east than the Aegean. Importantly, this correspondence is plausible because Gimatzidis and Weninger (2020, p. 12) included, in their study, samples from the Late Geometric period (760–700 BC) that predated the so-called Hallstatt radiocarbon calibration plateau (Reimer et al. 2020). As is well known, this is a flat area of the calibration curve which is too wide to provide a reliable distribution of dates. Following this study, a set of new radiocarbon dates, including Late Geometric period samples that are coeval to the pre-Hallstatt-plateau Late Geometric samples from Sindos, has been published from a stratified deposit at the settlement of Zagora, on the island of Andros, part of the Cyclades archipelago in the Aegean Sea: the proposed revised chronology for this settlement conforms with the higher Aegean chronology proposed by Gimatzidis and Weninger (Alagich et al. 2024).

The implications of these revised absolute dates, which are yet to be agreed upon by scholars (cf. Arrington 2021, pp. 21–22), are momentous: they indicate a much earlier date for the beginning of long-distance mobility and Mediterranean-wide connections (Gimatzidis and Weninger 2020, p. 25) and bring to the fore the role of Phoenician agents in spearheading that mobility (van der Plicht and Nijboer 2017/2018, p. 105). Some of the radiocarbon dates that have been used in these revisions, in fact, come from sites in the central and west Mediterranean with Phoenician occupation, from Utica and Carthage (Tunisia), to Huelva, La Rebanadilla and El Carambolo in southwestern Spain (López Castro et al. 2016 for a summary of Iberian dates). Especially notable are the finds from Huelva and Utica: these finds show remarkable similarities in their diverse provenance and attest to the settling of Phoenician groups at the turn of the millennium, between the 10th and the ninth century, respectively, in the western and central regions of the basin. This is slightly earlier than the establishment of Carthage itself, located on the modern Tunisian coast not far from Utica, and long assumed to mark Phoenician movement westwards (Aubet 2017; Gonzáles de Canales et al. 2017; Nijboer 2021, pp. 323–324). Importantly, questions about Carthage's earliest phases have been now settled through a series of radiocarbon dates (van der Plicht et al. 2009). At the same time, new dating of Gadir (Cádiz) and Morro de Mezquitillia, two Phoenician settlements in southwestern Spain, suggests their establishment to be coeval to that of Carthage,

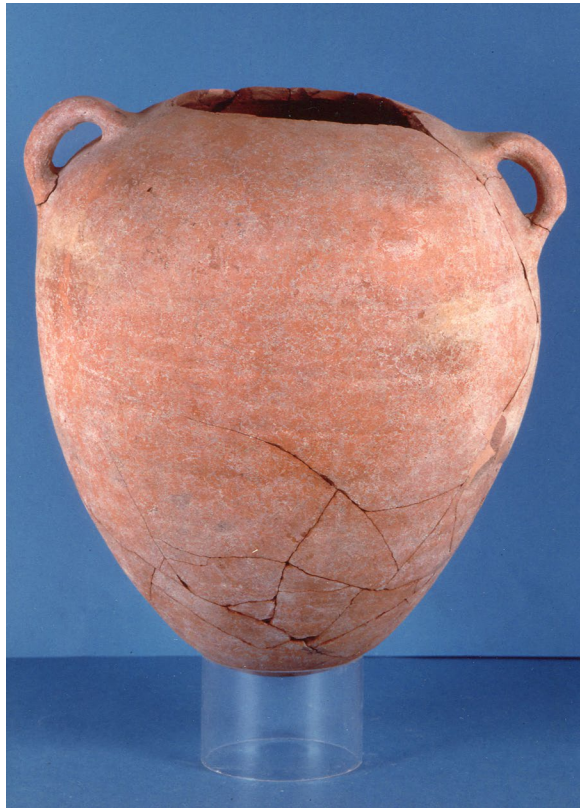
with significant similarities between the ceramic finds of Morro and Carthage (Aubert 2017, pp. 258–260).

New Findings: Mobility, Demography, and Climatic Fluctuations

The material from all these sites is not only evidence of early long-distance and already well-connected contacts; it also and importantly reveals that such contacts entailed sustained interaction leading to rapid innovation in craftsmanship and material technology within the local communities reached by these contacts, putting craftsmen at the forefront of that interaction (Nijboer 2021). Exemplary of this innovation are the locally made ceramic vessels imitating Phoenician shapes, as at Utica (López Castro et al. 2016, 80–81; Nijboer 2021, fig. 21.5), and at another key site connected to early Phoenician Mediterranean-wide mobility on the northwest coast of Sardinia: this is the Nuragic village of Sant’Imbenia bearing prominent amounts of imported Phoenician material dated to well before the establishment of colonial settlements on the island (Rendeli et al. 2017). Among locally made material is a type of transport *amphora* known as Sant’Imbenia-type *amphora* that imitated Levantine types (Fig. 2) and has been found elsewhere at Sardinian sites and beyond, from Carthage to Spain (Roppa 2012, 2019, pp. 525–526).

All this evidence of earlier Phoenician contacts to the west has prompted scholars to begin to systematize further such evidence along the southwestern Mediterranean, and particularly in Morocco. There, several sites with older excavation records from the modern colonial era have seen the restart of field projects at the turn of the 21st century (Mederos Martín 2019). The combination of these older records with new findings has revealed the existence of a capillary network of Phoenician settlements from the second half of the seventh century along river valleys, and along and off the coast stretching beyond the Strait of Gibraltar, and an earlier date—the beginning of the eighth century—for the establishment of Lixus, one of the largest Phoenician settlements in Morocco (Vives-Ferrándiz Sanchez et al. 2010). What has been missing until very recently for the whole of Mediterranean Africa beyond Egypt, however, is a broader, longer-term synthesis of our current knowledge that can aid our understanding of the first millennium and of indigenous societies in it. A first interpretive synthesis is now published along with the series of radiocarbon dates that were at its basis (Broodbank and Lucarini 2019; Lucarini et al. 2020; see now Mattingly 2023). Its authors raise the issue of our current poor understanding of the two millennia preceding the first millennium, especially in the western Maghreb regions; this is due, in some cases, to sociocultural practices such as pastoralism and dynamics that defy archaeological signatures on the ground (Broodbank and Lucarini 2019, pp. 226–238; Mattingly 2023, pp. 13–15). Despite this state of the field which is in genuine flux and will change our knowledge of this broader region considerably in due course, two aspects are clear. First, second-millennium-BC long-distance maritime mobility, which in Mediterranean Africa takes a specific configuration, is essential for us to understand the early external long-distance contacts of the first millennium in this region. Second, the dynamics of these contacts cannot

Fig. 2 Sant’Imbenia-type amphora from Sant’Imbenia, Sardinia (after Bafico et al. 1997, p. 46).



be properly understood without knowledge of the other side of the interaction, namely the extremely diverse indigenous societies of Mediterranean Africa (Broodbank and Lucarini 2019, pp. 235–243), which we are now finally beginning to have in a synthetic form for the first millennium BC as a whole (Mattingly 2023).

One of the many gaps to be filled in Mediterranean African field research is the capture of more radiocarbon dates and more data from intensive survey projects to understand patterns of ancient demography better (Broodbank and Lucarini 2019, p. 248). This will bring the region closer to the European Mediterranean; here, significant advances precisely on the basis of these and other data, as well as refined methods for extrapolating data from calibrated radiocarbon dates, have drawn such patterns from the early Holocene vis-à-vis climatic fluctuation, environmental change, and human intervention on different ecologies. Such advances, aimed at understanding the relationship between land use, population dynamics, and environmental change, have been done both for the wider (European and Middle Eastern) Mediterranean up until the Roman imperial period (Roberts et al. 2019a) and other single regions (Roberts et al. 2019b), and for the central Mediterranean up until the first centuries of the first millennium (Palmisano et al.

2021; Parkinson et al. 2021), and now for Italy in the period of Roman expansion toward the end of the millennium (Bernard et al. 2023a; Trentacoste and Lodwick 2023). In all cases, the first centuries of the millennium represent a watershed beyond regional variation vis-à-vis earlier millennia, which are characterized by cycles of demographic growth and decline. This is not only seen in demographic growth and intensification in land use going hand in hand with other dynamics, from long-distance mobility, as discussed, and phenomena of socio-political complexity such as urbanization (Palmisano et al. 2021, pp. 411–412; *contra* Parkinson et al. 2021, pp. 355–358, but rebuffed by Palmisano et al. 2021, p. 419 on demographic growth). It is also importantly seen in the lesser impact of climatic shifts on population trends, indicating the success of advances in ancient productive technologies and of strategies of production and redistribution aimed at managing environmental stress and drought (Palmisano et al. 2021, p. 413; but cf. Parkinson et al. 2021, p. 360).

These findings not only confirm the narrative of an ecologically and productive interdependent first-millennium-BC Mediterranean. They also provide precious new instruments for multi-scalar analysis and for exploring in-depth the nature of human–environment relationships at smaller scales (Roberts et al. 2019a, pp. 934–5). The overall conclusions of these two main studies from the central Mediterranean on demography and the impact of environmental change are similar despite their different methodological choices (Palmisano et al. 2021, pp. 417–419). Parkinson et al. (2021) cover more ground both geographically, from the central Mediterranean to continental Europe, and chronologically. More cautiously, Palmisano et al. (2021) restrict themselves to the Italian peninsula and to the first two centuries of the first millennium, noting the unreliability of radiocarbon dates after these centuries due to the Hallstatt radiocarbon calibration plateau mentioned earlier. The lesson of these two papers for multi-scalar analysis is twofold. First, they highlight the difficulties in extending the analytical scale from the regional scale when using these data. Second, the paucity of radiocarbon samples for the later centuries of the millennium where scholars employ chrono-typologies and other dating methods limits the scope of such studies; it also inevitably leads to an exploratory approach to data interpretation (Palmisano et al. 2021, p. 386; Parkinson et al. 2021, p. 362), and the crucial need of going down the analytical scale to enhance or dispel proposed interpretations.

Yet, this exploratory approach may be desirable more generally now that scholarship has enhanced the fluidity of the edges of the Mediterranean: if this is becoming clear for Mediterranean Africa, as just outlined, the northern, European edges from the middle of the millennium are also expanding, so to speak, thanks to new findings and the systematization of the available evidence between these edges and Continental Europe. Research has significantly moved in this respect onto two related fronts: firstly, on the first-millennium-BC societies of Central Europe, and secondly on the exchange networks that brought them closer to the Mediterranean. Our knowledge of these societies and their sociocultural and political landscape has increased enormously over the last 20 years, from the area immediately north of the Alps where the Heuneburg has long driven the Late Hallstatt model of the so-called princely centers, the *Fürstensitze*, to both eastern and western Europe. Latest research shows

a just as complex capillary network of contacts and exchange routes across central Europe as we find in the Mediterranean, driving, and being driven by social and political change at the local level (Zamboni et al. 2020). On the second front, beyond regional studies of Mediterranean imports at the local level from the early first millennium (e.g., Guilaine and Verger 2008; Verger 2008), better knowledge of transport *amphorae* produced across the Mediterranean basin from the middle of the first millennium and moving west and north into Europe has recently enabled the first systematic studies of the movement of this material and the temporal and spatial dynamics of the multi-pronged long-distance routes that it followed (Sacchetti 2012, 2016). These studies come to enrich our evidence of commodity exchange and its impact between the Mediterranean and central Europe over multiple scales, which up until recently had notably focused on inland and coastal communities of southern France only (Dietler 2005; Gailledrat 2015).

To the east of these northern reaches of the Central Mediterranean, the eastern Adriatic and Balkan region stands as an area still in urgent need of integration as has been achieved for the western areas just outlined or indeed for prehistory (e.g., Molloy 2016). Data from this region are becoming abundant across the first millennium BC and increasingly published in English enabling their dissemination (e.g., Armit et al. 2016; Popa and Stoddart 2014a; Saccoccio and Vecchi 2022). However, we are still lacking a solid body of scholarship that treats the region across multiple scales. Research exists for single classes of material investigated from the site to the broader Balkan region and/or beyond (Barbaric 2016; Mise 2015; Tonc 2017) and for tracing contact networks within and beyond these regional boundaries (Armit et al. 2016; Potrebica 2016; Tonc 2022). However, much scholarship on connections is still largely concerned with questions on ethnic identities rather than broader questions, which multi-scalar analysis often stimulates. This is because of a scholarly tradition still strongly anchored to culture history (Potrebica and Pravidur 2022), a reliance on ancient authors in archaeological interpretation (Popa and Stoddart 2014b), and a dominance of certain types of contexts over others (Tonc 2022, 127). Yet, the Balkan region remains highly promising to the current and future state of research in the broader Mediterranean because of the cultural diversity of its ancient societies and its ecological and geographical fragmentation from the jagged coastline to inland mountainous areas (e.g., Potrebica 2016, p. 109).

All of the above is not only dilating the northern edges, prompting again the question of what the global scale entails for the Mediterranean's cultural geography; it has also notably moved us away from core-periphery perspectives that placed the buoyant Mediterranean basin at the center of all these exchange routes into Central Europe and deemed it to be the catalyst of change for the European so-called periphery (Riva 2020; Stoddart 2022, p. 20).

The final key innovation that is beginning to facilitate multi-scalar analysis over the extension of the entire millennium concerns the archaeology of Rome. The last 15 or so years have seen a significant rapprochement between historians and archaeologists of early and Republican Rome (e.g., Bradley 2022; Smith and Lulof 2017). Although not new *per se*, this rapprochement has taken new directions because of the enormous accumulation of new archaeological data for the city, its hinterland and wider regional context. From field projects' final publications (e.g., Mogetta

2020) to large databases, these data have provided a remarkably rich archaeological narrative for first-millennium-BC Rome and its regional context, which has encouraged important new syntheses (e.g., Attema et al. 2022; Bernard 2018; Bernard et al. 2023b; D'Alessio et al. 2020; Damiani and Parisi Presicce 2019; Cifani 2008; Fulminante 2014; Hopkins 2016; Samuels et al. 2022; Smith 2020; the scientific literature here is immense). These syntheses demonstrate the impact of these vast quantities of data upon the way we read ancient textual sources: if re-interpreting these sources vis-à-vis the archaeology has been a long-standing objective in the study of Rome, the need to recalibrate one type of source against the other has now become more pressing than ever before. This is not just because of the quantities of the data themselves; it is also because of their diverse nature that has expanded under the advances of archaeological sciences (cf. Scheidel 2018a), from geomorphology (Brock et al. 2021; Marra et al. 2022) to palaeobotany (Gavériaux et al. 2024) and archaeozoology (Trentacoste et al. 2021; Trentacoste and Lodwick 2023). We are now able to harness a remarkable array of data for understanding Rome's growth, from the early phases of its urbanization to its and its neighbors' socio-political dynamics that led to its expansion. Importantly, these data have enabled us to integrate the growth of Rome's hegemony within this wider context, effectively stimulating multi-scalar analysis beginning with the central Mediterranean. We no longer, in other words, espouse a vision, once pushed by historians without a rich archaeology to work from, of Rome's expansion independent of broader dynamics and widening interaction (Colivicchi and McCallum 2024). If scholars recognized this in central Tyrrhenian Italy for some time (e.g., Smith 2006, 2019; Della Fina 2009, 2010), framing this growth in a broader central Mediterranean context through new interpretive syntheses is an extremely recent and significant scholarly advance (Cifani 2021; Padilla Peralta and Bernard 2022; Terrenato 2019). Ultimately, 'unbinding' Rome both in its established temporal perimeters and disciplinary geography as is currently being pursued (Hopkins 2022, 2024) can only positively stimulate the erosion of the disciplinary break mentioned earlier. It can also promote comparative multi-scalar investigations of supra-regional hegemonic states; this has recently been attempted for Rome itself in the Central Mediterranean (Terrenato 2019, pp. 73–108) but not yet done on a global Mediterranean-wide scale systematically (cf. Prag 2013, pp. 346–347; Scheidel 2021).

Multi-scalar Approaches: From Networks to Globalization and Interdependence

It should be clear by now that network thinking has dominated the field of Mediterranean archaeology over the last twenty or so years as it has done across archaeology more generally (Brughmans 2013; Brughmans et al. 2016; Knappett 2011, 2013, 2016; Larson 2013; Leidwanger and Knappett 2018b to name a few). Importantly, network thinking encompasses a multiplicity of approaches and perspectives (Peeples 2019), from those that seek to explore and explain interregional interaction and connectivity (Broodbank 2013; Knapp et al. 2021; Malkin 2003, 2011, 2021) in what has been named 'the mobility turn' (Leidwanger and Knappett 2018a,

p. 1), to more theoretical and methodological approaches that model interaction explicitly through specific methods such as Actor Network Theory and/or Social Network Analysis (e.g., Knappett 2011; Mills 2017). I thus use network thinking here as an umbrella term to reflect this multiplicity, out of which I single out below one of the two main approaches to multi-scalar analysis of the first-millennium-BC Mediterranean.

The vast scientific literature exemplifies the epistemic dominance of network thinking today. A strong symptom of this dominance is its force to cut through the disciplinary break, mentioned above, at the middle of the millennium. Arguably this was put in motion over 20 years ago by a study (Horden and Purcell 2000) which did cut through this break over a much longer term and put connectivity on the epistemic map of the ancient Mediterranean. This network-focused paradigm shift emerged alongside the development of post-colonial approaches which have been notably influential for the first millennium and, more importantly, in the development of multi-scalar approaches to it. Concurrently, the shift forced us to reframe Classico-centric older paradigms toward specific research themes.

The inception of the application of post-colonial theories for the first-millennium-BC Mediterranean (van Dommelen 1997) and the Roman world at large (Webster and Cooper 1996) dates back to the late 1990s. Both are research areas in which acculturation paradigms, from Hellenization to Romanization, which were by then realized to be inadequate, had informed our interpretations of cultural and social change. For the Mediterranean, post-colonial theories and the related development of new interpretive approaches radically reconfigured our understanding of colonial interaction across the basin by placing long overdue emphasis upon indigenous societies that came into contact with outside new settlers, whether Greek, Phoenician or other, thus providing the local context of enquiry. These approaches raised the bar of our critical interpretations of mobility, whether leading to colonial interaction or not; they removed us more and more from the Classical tradition, which was inherently colonialist and Orientalist in outlook (De Angelis 2016, pp. 17–18). This led to the ultimate integration of colonial interaction with the whole gamut of contact zones and contexts of mobility and their consequences, which required a multi-scalar approach, and to the reframing of phenomena such as Orientalization (see below). Notably and not coincidentally, the first attempt at developing post-colonial approaches came from the margins of that tradition, namely Phoenician archaeology and Sardinia (López-Ruiz 2021, pp. 44–61; van Dommelen 1997).

The reconfiguration of research themes that went hand in hand with rethinking cultural contact helped us move even further away from Classical-focused paradigms. In that respect, network-driven studies have been key in this reconfiguration and provide a prime example of the contribution of formal network analysis to multi-scalar approaches. Two such themes, urbanization and exchange, illustrate this well. Not long ago, scholars reframed the former away from *polis*-centric, if not Athenocentric, and/or evolutionistic viewpoints; in doing so, they tried to combine a perspective on emerging cities as nodes and therefore supra-regional networks with a more localized understanding of them, both within and outside the Greek, *polis*-centered world (Osborne and Cunliffe 2005; Riva 2010; Vlassopoulos 2007) with varied outcomes (Riva 2015). This led to a shift of focus toward non-urban political

entities and states altogether (Fontana 2022; Morgan 2003). For later phases of the first millennium BC, network thinking has also affected the interpretation of urban political and social institutions, especially across the Greek world (Beck 2020; Constantakopoulou 2017; Mack 2015; Taylor and Vlassopoulos 2015), but less so for the Roman world (Padilla Peralta 2020).

Only more recently, however, have scholars applied different types of formal network analysis to specific aspects of early urbanism with the twofold aim of addressing it at multiple scales while moving away from older conceptual evolutionary frameworks and/or Graeco-Roman-driven perspectives. Thus, through the theorization of ‘community’ and its twins ‘cohesion’ and ‘diversification’ aided by a specific type of network theory, the Davis model, Donnellan (2019) examines the micro-scale dynamics of a well-known south Italian urban settlement, Pontecagnano, vis-à-vis the larger scale of the state within which it grew, its growing power and its effects on local settlement patterns. In this instance, adopting an explicitly multi-scalar approach through network theory enables Donnellan to move away from stale evolutionary frameworks of pre-, proto-urban and urban, which have been long-standing in the study of Italian pre-Roman urbanism. She instead provides a richer scenario of multiple levels of socio-political transformations that can be applied elsewhere (Fulminante 2021). A similarly multi-scalar approach to urbanism via specific types of formal network analysis distinguishes recent studies on one of the prime regions for the study of urbanism, namely central Tyrrhenian Italy. One of the longest-standing and key questions of this region pertains to the growth of Rome as a city-state vis-à-vis that of its neighbors, and its trajectory toward an imperial state at circa the middle of the millennium. Fulminante (2023, n.d.) tries to answer this question through an analysis of smaller and larger-scale fluvial and terrestrial transportation networks in this region, comparing and contrasting Rome and its Latin neighbors and the Etruscan cities to the north (cf. Prignano et al. 2019). The twin application of assemblage theory and actor network theory facilitates this multi-scalarity in this broader region in the spatial analysis of the transportation infrastructure that is typically the object of larger-scale analysis (Fulminante 2023, pp. 41–44). These studies provide important insight into the extent to which Latium, Rome’s region that was less extensive and better connected than southern Etruria, its neighbor to the north, enabled its transport infrastructure to promote and accelerate the growth of Rome’s power over its immediate Latin neighboring cities. Though shying away from integrating this insight into several others derived from the study of other kinds of evidence, these studies are explicitly consistent with recent perspectives on Rome’s growing regional dominance (Fulminante 2023, p. 129); they are therefore representative of the rapprochement among historians and archaeologists of Rome noted above. While not strictly a study on urbanization and, in fact, straddling one thousand years between the middle of the second and first millennia BC, Knodell (2021) is yet another instance of the application of network and spatial modeling on the early phases of urbanization: through a multi-scalar analysis across the Aegean, this study traces the socio-political transformations that led Bronze Age palatial societies toward the formation of Greek urban states, the *poleis*.

A multi-scalar approach, combining a network perspective with localized realities, also characterizes current scholarship on exchange. However, research

questions on this theme are still heavily indebted to Graeco-Roman frameworks for the understanding of ancient economic systems (Bresson 2010; Harris, Lewis and Woolmer 2017; Kowalzig 2018; Morris et al. 2007; von Reden 2022a). This is particularly the case for the enormous influence of Greek history for this understanding, which has an enduring tradition of debate since the 19th century and very much alive to this day (von Reden 2022b). It is, by contrast, not always the case for early Rome where other explanatory frameworks, notably from anthropological theory, have been recently successfully employed (Viglietti 2022). It is also the case that archaeological network approaches to exchange often devote less attention to those local contexts than is instead found in scholarship on urbanization noted above (Bevan 2014; Pratt 2015). An important exception is a brave study on visualizing, through social network graphs, seventh- and sixth-century-BC shipwrecks, notoriously difficult sites for tracing links at multiple scales (Greene 2018). Network thinking, in other words, on these very questions has not always led to multi-scalar approaches as originally advocated for by earlier scholarship (Broodbank et al. 2014, pp. 117–118; Horden and Purcell 2000; Purcell 2014b).

In fact, and notably for this recent network-centered scholarship, studies addressing localized realities most forcefully are largely those investigating colonial–indigenous interaction, rather than those specifically devoted to global, Mediterranean-wide patterns. In other words, it is not only multi-scalar analysis that has primarily driven network perspectives in the first-millennium-BC Mediterranean but also post-colonial investigations focusing upon the active agency of indigenous (either colonized or not) communities (Hodos 2006). A welcome consequence of this trend is that scholarly concerns belonging to the Classical tradition such as those around the movement and exchange of Greek painted fine ware across the Mediterranean have also radically shifted approach, as I explain below. Hence, colonial–indigenous interaction represents the other most prominent research theme addressed by network-driven studies whether in text-driven ancient history (cf. Leidwanger and Knappett 2018a, pp. 8–9 on network methods’ common ground for history and archaeology; Kowalzig 2018; Malkin 2003, 2011, 2021) or archaeology. The outcome of this is not simply the use of multiple analytical scales that network approaches enable (Donnellan 2020a; Knappett 2011, pp. 9–10). More importantly, these approaches have enhanced our understanding of this interaction by forcing us to move beyond the dichotomy and essentializing categorization of colonial and indigenous. Donnellan (2016, 2023) exemplifies this well: through the application of a quantitative formal network analysis to burial assemblages at the site of *Pithekoussai*, one of the earliest Greek colonial settlements west of the Aegean on the island of Ischia (Gulf of Naples, Italy), the “materiality of interaction” is examined from the micro-scale context (cf. Donnellan 2020b) to the mesoscale processes of mobility. The aim of this analysis is to problematize the early colonial process more thoroughly than has been done so far. Importantly, this aim goes hand in hand with current studies that are sharpening our thinking on the dynamic discourse of ethnic identities in colonial contexts (Zuchtriegel 2022), and others that are similarly moving beyond ethnic identities by employing alternative theoretical frameworks. One of these frameworks entails the analytical concept of community, borrowed from sociology: this provides comparable heuristic purchase for multi-scalar analyses of interaction and could be

integrated with Social Network Analysis of the archaeological evidence (Hoernes 2022; Steidl 2020a, 2020b, pp. 43). These recent studies provide a distinct contrast to earlier network approaches toward long-term ethnogenesis (Blake 2014).

In this post-colonial epistemic setting, the use of globalization theory for understanding the connectivity of the Mediterranean at multiple scales has taken hold (Hodos 2006, 2010, 2014, 2020; Hodos and López-Ruiz 2024; Nowlin 2024). Scholars embracing this interpretive lens stress its ability to integrate global and local scales: hence, the frequent usage of ‘glocal’ to characterize this integration (Hodos 2010, pp. 81–83; Kistler 2012; van Dommelen 2016). This lens has been equally strongly applied to understand the Roman world (Pitts and Versluys 2015; Versluys 2014). Yet, arguably, it is in the latter where it works to its full heuristic potential, as suggested below.

Globalization has taken the social and historical sciences by storm (cf. Hodos et al. 2016). Yet, employing it as has been done as an explanatory framework for the Mediterranean basin of the first half of the millennium raises four main interrelated problems. The first entails the risk of over-generalizing and distorting ancient realities in the application of theories conceived to characterize economic modernity (cf. Hodos 2016; De Vito 2019, pp. 356 on connected singularities beyond the local/global divide in history; Purcell 2016, pp. 65–66, 78); hence, some more cautiously speak of ‘proto-global interaction’ (Kistler 2023, p. 231). The second lies in attributing a central role to colonial (Greek and Phoenician) networks in driving change across the basin (Riva and Grau Mira 2022a, 2022b), and the underlying assumption of a certain homogenization of shared practices (Arrington 2021, pp. 105–106, 2023, 259). This problem ultimately derives from an undue appreciation of the multicultural variegated world distinguishing the first-millennium-BC Mediterranean that is only possible through addressing different analytical scales, as exemplarily illustrated at the mesoscale by the case of Sicily (Kistler 2012). Thirdly, though acknowledged as vital (Hodos 2022, p. 29; Hodos and López-Ruiz 2024), the bottom-up perspective is rarely given as much weight as the top-down one (Kistler 2023). This is not simply due to the neglect toward the small scale and its related contexts: as mentioned above, most recent network-driven approaches provide a key methodological tool for overcoming this limitation (Donnellan 2023). Importantly, it is also a fundamental matter of which bottom-up perspective one adopts to investigate interaction across scales: exploring production rather than consumption and trade, which is what drives globalization-driven approaches toward the smaller scale (Hodos 2020, p. 221; Hodos and López-Ruiz 2024, p. 314), helps overcome this problem; so does the attention toward daily practices, into which new types of material culture could be embedded, and which frame and constitute social reproduction at the household level of society (Vives-Ferrándiz Sanchez 2023). Focusing on small-scale regional connections far from network hubs, coastal and urban locations, is an alternative bottom-up perspective most recently proposed (Chapon et al. 2024; Gosner and Haynes 2024). This goes hand in hand with recent multi-scalar studies of regional economic and political transformations that focus on the often neglected complexity and diversity of rural communities (Kearns 2023). With its distinctive variation in the intensity of connections or lack thereof across inland rural areas (Depalmas 2024; Gosner and Nowlin 2023; Usai 2013), Sardinia, one of the

Mediterranean's largest islands, represents a regional scientific laboratory for taking up these recent perspectives. The fourth limitation of globalization as an interpretive lens concerns the emphasis placed upon expressions of local identity over various forms of economic exchange at different scales that are inherent in connectivity and socio-political change. In considering identity as central to our understanding of the local-global tension, globalization-driven perspectives reduce that tension to identity itself, losing sight of political, social and economic change across different scales (Zurbach 2012).

Beyond Colonial Connections: Exchange, Interdependence, and Its Consequences

The state of the field on network- and globalization-driven approaches just examined prompts the question of whether colonial connections can explain everything, from socio-political change, to religion, economy, and exchange. In fact, they do not; hence, for example, Bonnet (2021) embraces an almost exclusively Graeco-Semitic perspective on religious Mediterranean networks. The case of Mediterranean Africa outlined above forces us to acknowledge that the globalizing networks of the Mediterranean as identified by the scholarship examined above are ultimately about colonial interaction; the broader Balkan region similarly points to this reality. Thinking about gaps in that interaction, on the other hand, is as important as thinking about connections. Equally, considering the temporal scale of extant connections not only enriches the narrative of the latter; it also offers the opportunity of detecting some that may be under the radar, and/or are not long-lasting, yet may potentially carry long-term consequences. The case of Sant'Imbenia illustrates this well: the coastal indigenous settlement grew around a Bronze Age *nuraghe*, a Sardinian type of monumental stone tower, before the establishment of Phoenician settlements on the island, to become an important, yet relatively short-lived center of bulk commodity redistribution across the island and beyond (Clemenza et al. 2021).

A parallel avenue to take in multi-scalar analysis for more nuanced interpretations without losing sight of potential networks across the basin has been to focus more closely on interdependence, which requires the joining up of local micro-histories, regional and larger scales, whether global intended as Mediterranean-wide or beyond (Purcell 2016). We address interdependence by investigating circulation, whether of ideas, objects and commodities, people and specialized knowledge, and the changing multifarious social practices, productive strategies, and socio-political transformation that followed across multiple scales (Purcell 2016, pp. 72–74). Hence, while movement entailing exchange, technological transmission and the circulation of commodities are worthy of investigation, their consequences in the social and political worlds in which circulation occurred are especially vital for multi-scalar analysis.

This is, in fact, an alternative approach to the 'global' in modern history (Gänger 2017; Gänger and Osterhammel 2024; Stanziani 2018, pp. 9–12) that is ripe for development in the Mediterranean basin where research has moved in this direction, albeit often implicitly. Shifts in studies on the production, circulation,

and use of Greek decorated fine ware, from Corinthian to Attic Black and Red Figure pottery and regional productions (Schierup and Sabetai 2014), are an exemplary case: from a seemingly Mediterranean-wide, but, in fact, Greekcentric and arguably colonialist perspective on single classes of artifacts, scholars have moved toward one that is truly multi-scalar in its attention to local contexts of use of this pottery, along with associated materials; this is so without losing sight of the Mediterranean-wide movement of this material in the broader context of trade and exchange (Bundrick 2015, 2018/19, 2019; Carpenter et al. 2016; Riva 2017, 2021; Tsingarida 2009, 2011, 2014, 2020; Tsingarida and Viviers 2013). A significant and recent contribution advancing this shift is the application of organic residue analysis for an in-depth understanding, which is still in its infancy, of the local uses of imported Greek material both across the basin and beyond (Coulié et al. 2017; Frère 2018; Frère et al. 2018; Garnier and Dubuis 2019; Rageot et al. 2019). In this trend, the combination of Mediterranean-wide models of connectivity with micro-scale analysis has been recently made an explicit object of concern and attention (Arrington 2021, pp. 2–3, 11–12, 88–94).

Two other strands of research that have interdependence at the center, which I take each in turn, concern studies of textile production and technological transmission, on the one hand, and, on the other, studies of the movement of transport *amphorae* and their content. Unlike ceramics, archaeological textiles have been until recently largely unexplored: only in the last decade have new approaches and investigative techniques been developed. This has gone hand in hand with a growing interest in the Mediterranean-wide transmission of textile-making traditions, which scholars have named ‘textile cultures’ (Gleba 2014, 2017; Gleba and Laurito 2018; Marín-Aguilera and Gleba 2020), and specific productive technologies (Marín-Aguilera et al. 2018). Although not explicitly claimed as an instance of interdependence, the transmission of these textile-making techniques and traditions and the intensification of this kind of production across the Mediterranean basin have been framed within local contexts of urban growth and socio-political change. In these contexts, the complexity of the *chaîne opératoire* required in textile manufacturing and the usage of a material that covered the entire spectrum of social practice and value, from the necessary to the sumptuous, make this area of research especially promising for exploring interdependence as defined above (Dimova et al. 2021; Gleba et al. 2013).

Studies of the movement of transport *amphorae* and the processed agricultural produce and food commodities that they contained, have, by contrast, a well-developed research history for the second half of the millennium. In this phase, the production and movement patterns of this material become so extremely complex and wide-ranging across space that, toward the end of the millennium, these patterns are probably best understood in the context of emerging hegemonic economic systems, most prominently that of Imperial Rome (Bernal-Casasola et al. 2021a; Bernal-Casasola et al. 2021b for a summary on Iberian production of Punic *amphorae*; Lawall and Tzoché 2020). The complexity of these patterns, underlying interdependence, has been recognized for some time, and is exemplified by the fifth-century-BC so-called Punic Amphora Building at Corinth (Greece), which attests to the entangled trade of processed foodstuff, from wine

to salted fish, carried in *amphorae* across the basin (Sáez Romero and Theodoropoulos 2021).

While long suspected, the application of scientific analytical methods for assessing provenance has incontrovertibly demonstrated the existence of far-and-wide production points of specific *amphora* types (e.g., Mise and Quinn 2022; Barone et al. 2011; Sáez Romero and Theodoropoulos 2021): this adds to the complexity of the patterns of circulation of *amphorae* that become noticeable at around the fifth century BC from the Aegean to continental Europe, as mentioned above (Sacchetti 2012, 2016). In fact, only recently has our knowledge advanced significantly to enable us to confirm that the Mediterranean-wide entanglement of *amphora* production is far earlier than previously thought with some notable evidence of continuity from the late Bronze Age (Lawall and Tzoché 2020, p. 118; Pratt and Demesticha 2016; Pratt 2021). We have known for some time, for example, that Phoenician *amphora* types were imitated by Iberian workshops by the sixth century BC (Járrega Domínguez and Ribera i Lacomba 2021, p. 205 with previous bibliography); yet, it is only recently that we have enough data and results from scientific provenance studies to see earlier imitations and therefore processes of technological transmission for the transport of foodstuff in different areas of the Mediterranean. Sardinia, with the Sant’Imbenia-type *amphorae* imitating Levantine-Phoenician types mentioned above, is one. Another is the Etruscan Tyrrhenian region where the site of San Rocchino (northern Tuscany) has yielded, in its earliest layers, fragments of Sant’Imbenia-type *amphorae* together with those from early *amphorae* produced at *Pithekoussai* on the island of Ischia, and fragments of locally produced *amphorae* that may be the antecedent of the later Etruscan production (Bonamici 2006; Botto 2007, pp. 87–89; D’Oriano 2021, p. 325). Although only isolated finds of these Phoenician-shaped *amphorae* exist in Etruria (another is from Pisa: Taccola et al. 2023, p. 959), future studies may identify more fragments and alter our current picture (Tronchetti 2014, p. 273). Yet another area that has come to our attention, thanks to some most recent findings is the northern Aegean with the site of Methone and its *amphorae* dated from the late eighth century BC, some of which were engraved with graffiti (Kotsonas et al. 2017).

All these findings and advances have not yet been integrated into Mediterranean-wide syntheses of transport containers with a single exception that is focused on containers and storage practices more broadly (Bevan 2014). While notable and commendable given the enormous amount of data that spans over 5,000 years well beyond the first millennium BC, this exception raises the arduous challenge, so far unmet, of synthesizing at the global scale while maintaining focus on single contexts in order to enhance the synthesis: the scholarly responses to this synthesis incisively illustrate this challenge and what we lose when we tackle the global scale without going down to multiple smaller scales. This is, in fact, also true for chronologically more constrained studies of *amphorae* spanning the Mediterranean basin and tracing long-distance trade routes (Pratt 2015) where moving down the scale ought to be much more attainable. Yet, this is still missing even for the Aegean and neighboring regions where data have been increasing remarkably over the last ten years or so; here, as remarked by Lawall and Tzoché (2020, p. 130), even comparing the record from different sites is still unfeasible. A move to facilitate comparison in order to

pursue genuine multi-scalar analyses over this material is, in other words, a much-needed objective for exploring interdependence at multiple scales, given the relative richness of regional data across the basin that is now becoming available (e.g., Lawall and Lund 2013).

The -lizations: From Top Down to Bottom Up

The questions raised by studies of Greek decorated fine ware, textiles, and *amphorae* concern exchange and economic systems, a research theme which fits the framework of interdependence well. By contrast, other avenues for exploring interdependence with surprisingly little emphasis on networks have entailed the study of what originally scholars investigated as art-historical phenomena. As such, these other avenues have come under critical scrutiny for the historiographical biases which have colored older perspectives, from Orientalization to Hellenization. While the latter is no longer a valid research avenue because of its Hellenocentric and colonialist undertones underlying a long-debunked acculturation paradigm, as mentioned above, the same cannot be said of the former. Associated with the so-called Orientalizing phase of the broader Mediterranean Iron Age, roughly spanning the late eighth and seventh centuries BC, Orientalization is an umbrella term used to refer to changes in the material and visual culture of the wider Mediterranean basin of this period as growing mobility across the basin led to a growing cross-regional exchange of materials and commodities, ideas, and manufacturing technologies (Arrington 2021, pp. 27–61; Brisart 2011; Gunter 2014; Riva 2010, pp. 39–71; Whitley 2018). In one word, Orientalizing speaks of the very circulation through which one can investigate interdependence in all its facets. Originating in an acculturation paradigm, Orientalizing has itself come under intense fire for those origins since the early years of the 21st century (Nowlin 2021; Riva and Vella 2006). Yet, the vigorous debate that has followed has left us with a lack of consensus on whether, despite its Orientalist, diffusionistic undertones and top-down perspective, Orientalizing terminology serves us well to characterize these two centuries of change and the early entanglement of the material world across different cultural and social contexts (most incisively, Purcell 2006). In fact, this terminology has most recently enjoyed a revival for the exploration of different themes and for the joining up of all those micro-histories, which ultimately should enable a multi-scalar analysis (Arrington 2022; López-Ruiz 2021, pp. 2, on the first global Mediterranean, 63–89; Papalexandrou 2021). A recent large conference proceedings volume on the so-called ‘Orientalizing Cultures’ of Italy placed in its Mediterranean context (Bourdin et al. 2021), however, shows how arduous the task of joining up is on a Mediterranean-wide scale: despite the well-intended aims of the editors, one of which was to move the debate further given the lack of consensus, not all contributors lived up to the challenge.

The second half of the millennium coincides with the so-called Hellenistic period, *circa* from the fourth to first centuries BC, traditionally beginning with the death of Alexander the Great and the geopolitical consequences of his conquest and the power vacuum and shifts that followed in the eastern end of the Mediterranean and beyond. For this period, recent research has moved toward exploring

interdependence born out of the politico-economic connectivity of vast imperial hegemonic states, from the empires emerging with the Graeco-Macedonian conquest of the Achaemenid empire in the east, to Rome's growing hegemony in the west (von Reden 2020b, 2022c). Originally encapsulated by the term *Hellenismus*, coined by J. G. Droysen in the 19th century (Bugh 2006), this period has long been studied through the lens of a cosmopolitan, extremely diverse, shared cultural, material and visual language resulting from the unprecedented connectivity across these imperial states (Stewart 2006, 2014). Later scholarship has approached it from various angles and foci. The term 'Hellenistic,' used to describe and characterize not only this period, but also its artistic production and the visual and material culture (e.g., Boardman 1994; Pollitt 1986), has been shown to be as wanting as Hellenization of earlier centuries, or indeed Orientalization (Chrubasik and King 2017a; Purcell 2013, p. 384). It has been dogged by similar biases (Wallace-Hadrill 2013, pp. 37–8) and the acculturation paradigm (e.g., Rotroff 2006). Because of a significant input by historians in the study of this phase of the millennium (Shipley 2006), our understanding of this period has also suffered from a dominance of text-driven narratives over archaeological reconstruction and understanding of those narratives, and the distinction between two almost separate historical sub-fields, the Hellenistic East and the Roman West (Prag and Quinn 2013; Prag 2013, pp. 321–323).

Much recent scholarship has attempted to address these problems head-on. In doing so, it has highlighted, in places, the need to debunk the term 'Hellenistic' altogether; it has also, however, recognized that we will continue to use it for setting the blurry chronological and sometimes cultural boundaries of this period, noting the increasing cultural convergence of the last few centuries of the millennium (Chrubasik and King 2017b; Prag and Quinn 2013, pp. 12–13; Prag 2013, pp. 320, 345–6). New scholarship also underlines that Hellenistic empires created an increasingly global, yet fragmented, world (Chrubasik and King 2017b; von Reden 2020a); this is exemplified by highly localized forms of adoption and adaptation of Greek institutions (e.g., the *polis*) and material culture by regional elites and rulers across the east Mediterranean, from the Levant to Anatolia (Chrubasik 2017). At the same time, Rome's expansion was in no small part contributor to a growing cultural melting pot, which we can see in the material culture of a Roman city in Italy such as *Pompeii* (Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 2013). Hence, some are still willing to understand the cultural convergence of the Hellenistic period in terms of a 'cultural *koine*' intended as a set of shared cultural practices and political-civic institutions across the basin (Keay 2013, p. 301): this might be termed as imperial cultural macro-traditions co-existing with local ones (von Reden 2020c, pp. 28–29). Others highlight instead the conditions generating such a *koine*, from shifts in regional and supra-regional power structures, besides Rome's expansion, to heightened mobility (Davies 2006, pp. 88–90; Prag 2013, p. 345). Others still focus on local adaptation and transformations (Chrubasik and King 2017b; Yarrow 2013), sometime suggesting the usefulness of those post-colonial concepts that have also been employed for understanding Orientalization, from hybrid practices to local agency (e.g., Mairs 2014; van Dommelen and López-Bertran 2013).

Most importantly, what recent research of the Hellenistic Mediterranean reveals is twofold and crucial for multi-scalar analysis. On the one hand, these are

centuries when interdependence and circulation detectable from different kinds of evidence, material and richly textual, reach a level of unprecedented intensity due to specific historical circumstances. These circumstances include changing geopolitical relations, more frequent and/or larger-scale mobility, and shifting commercial and economic systems, all of which culminated with Rome's Mediterranean-wide expansion at the end of the millennium. On the other, the boundaries of that interdependence dilated significantly to the east where, at a larger global scale, the Mediterranean basin as a macroregion overlapped and interacted with its neighboring macroregion of Western Asia more intensively than ever before (von Reden 2020a, 2022c, 2023). This leads us full circle back to Droysen's original emphasis on the Levant as the point of overlap between east and west and the opportunities for global comparisons for the Mediterranean macroregion (Purcell 2013, p. 385). The last few centuries of the millennium and our attempts at understanding them historically as well as archaeologically, in other words, lead us to consider all the challenges and opportunities for pursuing analysis at a far larger multiplicity of scales.

Not surprisingly, recent scholarship uses globalization theory for understanding the broader Eurasian interdependence of the Hellenistic period; this is particularly so in relation to regions which we have struggled to characterize due to the Greek-centric biases of earlier scholarship, but which hosted strategic crossroads and nodes of circulation between Asia and Europe (Hoo 2018, 2022; Mairs 2014). That this specific development hails from the strong impact of globalization theory on Roman archaeology, rather than the earlier form of interdependence across the Mediterranean, namely, Orientalization, is no surprise either (Versluys 2017). The explanation for this is twofold. On the one hand, the scale of connectivity and integration in the imperial late first millennium BC is unprecedented, and state-imposed tools for that integration, from bureaucracy and fiscal policies to intervention over large-scale infrastructure, make these last few centuries better suited to a globalization paradigm (Monson 2015; Weaverdyck and Fabian 2022). On the other hand, this move deriving from Roman archaeology further indicates the now malleable scholarly boundary between the Roman West and the Hellenistic East: the much larger scale required for the study of these last centuries of the first millennium well complements the multiple scales at which scholars approach the immediately subsequent Roman imperial periods. The conceivable evolution of this scholarly development may be the adoption of theoretical frameworks deriving from the so-called material turn that, as mentioned earlier, are used widely in Roman archaeology such as that of objectscales (Fernández-Götz et al. 2020; Pitts 2019; Pitts and Versluys 2021), but not yet fully deployed for the early Hellenistic period. This might be because only recently has scholarship advanced in focusing attention toward different types of archaeological evidence beyond that which is the concern of ancient art historians and classical archaeologists, from monumental architecture to sculpture (Stewart 2014). From landscape, archaeozoological, and archaeobotanical data to increasing attention to coarse ware analysis and the study of human remains, our knowledge of the material and immaterial world of this period has remarkably advanced (Weaverdyck 2020); this allows for the integration of interpretive approaches driven by the material turn. In turn, this has the potential of enhancing our understanding of that

Eurasian interdependence and forcing us to engage more effectively with the far larger multiplicity of scales at the last centuries of the millennium.

Comparison Alongside Interaction

Orientalization and Hellenism are rarely compared and contrasted with one another as distinct instances of interdependence; yet, as seen, both have elicited comparable theoretical frameworks for understanding the global–local tension. Comparing them, as I have briefly done here, bears two observations. First, to appreciate the nature and patterns of connectivity and integration, we need to consider millennium-long dynamics, through which we can observe intensification and abatement of both, over broad and regional scales (Purcell 2016, pp. 76, 78). Second, the millennium bears a distinctive trajectory of intensification and abatement at different scales that is inherent in the coexistence of a deeply fragmented and variable political landscape and emerging regional, and ultimately cross-regional, imperial polities (Scheidel 2021). This distinctive trajectory makes the Mediterranean basin a unique scientific laboratory for multi-scalar investigation, both spatially and temporally; out of this we can gain insight for the benefit of other areas and regions of archaeological research.

As examined above, scholars have approached multiple analytical scales from different interpretive lenses and paradigms. The globalization paradigm, widely used across the millennium, has yet to prove its heuristic potential for the first half of the millennium due to the limitations noted above, and, most importantly, because of its temporal confines and therefore inability to address the dynamics of abatement and intensification. By contrast, an interdependence-driven perspective, as has been framed above, considers these dynamics across the entire first millennium BC and enables us to sharpen the global–local tension, thanks to a crucial feature that makes it a fertile ground for multi-scalar analysis. This feature entails the very consequences of interdependence, as described above, which varied locally and can thus be examined at the lower end of the scale through different methods; of these, formal network analysis has proven particularly effective, as examined above. Examining these consequences gives us a vital entry into comparative analysis precisely because of their high variability and change across time and space. We gain a clear methodological path to such an analysis if we address this variability through problem-centered themes and research questions such as settlement change and urbanism, state formation, and technological innovation: put another way, themes and questions that we pose are effectively framed by the very consequences of interdependence, at whichever stage or regional variation of intensification or abatement.

The advantages of comparative analysis in archaeology and the social and historical sciences more generally have been noted before, as have the different ways in which we approach such an analysis in the first place (e.g., Neitzel and Earle 2014; Scheidel 2018b). These differences have to do with various parameters, from the chosen analytical scale(s), to the number of case studies (cf. Engels 2021, 330), and the cultural distance between them, which can be intracultural or intercultural (Scheidel 2018b, p. 43; Vasunia 2011, p. 225). At the very least, however, we can agree that the overall aim of comparison, whichever approach one adopts, is to

explain change, and hence address causation, by gaining insight from exploring similarities and differences across the comparison (Scheidel 2009, 2018b, p. 6).

The first-millennium-BC Mediterranean is ideal for intracultural comparisons, which we can pursue through multitudes of case studies that are afforded by increasingly rich datasets and the advances noted in the first part of this paper. Some of the current interpretive paradigms analyzed above, however, limit the heuristic power of comparison because the theoretical underpinning of these paradigms lies in movement, interaction, and/or shared practices: the risk in adopting these paradigms is ultimately conflating the terms of the comparison with interaction itself (Vasunia 2011, p. 225). By contrast, the advantages of adopting an interdependence-driven perspective for comparison is its ability to address large-scale phenomena and processes of interaction across time and space driven by interdependence and then address and compare the consequences of interdependence at smaller scales; these are regional and all the way to a micro-scale level, or whichever scale(s) one wishes to adopt for the questions asked. At these smaller scales, we are likely to find similarities and profound differences; these entail the low visibility or invisibility and absence of large-scale phenomena themselves (cf. Conrad 2016, pp. 185–190; Donnellan 2023, p. 248). By comparing these similarities and differences at the lower end of the scale, we are more likely to explain change not simply by interaction or lack thereof, but by the myriad local processes and contexts of change that can nuance our interpretations without losing sight of wider patterns. The examples, examined above, of different sets of archaeological evidence that bring interdependence to the fore can be leveraged to these objectives. Hence, to take the case of transport *amphorae*, not only can we trace intensification and abatement of agrarian production and redistribution across the entire millennium and across different regional contexts; we can also address questions of economic organization and its political control from regional and smaller-scale trends, which are visible, for instance, in the types of stamps placed on these jars that have notable temporal and spatial variation (Lawall 2005, 2014a, 2014b; Lawall and Tzocher 2020, pp. 125–126). We would furthermore need to consider areas that are outside the circuits of transport *amphorae* of specific types or lack this material altogether at differing temporal and regional scales without interpreting this as evidence of lack of routes of redistribution and exchange of agrarian commodities (Bekker-Nielsen 2013, pp. 16–17, for Cyprus). These differences may themselves be evidence of different kinds of organization of production, and/or different scales of redistribution that can be understood only by comparing them with those that embraced these circuits at these and larger scales.

Interdependence is thus a very malleable methodological tool for comparative analysis in broader regions, such as the Mediterranean, where mobility and connectivity are indeed drivers of convergence and integration at different scales and with different outcomes, but which are also characterized by economic and political fragmentation, as described above. This is very much a desideratum of future research and one where the Mediterranean basin has much to offer to other research areas with comparable characteristics. Comparative investigations beyond perspectives driven by colonial networks are still not pursued fully or fully leveraged to our advantage across the entire millennium: this is in contrast to scholarship on the last

(imperial) centuries from the Hellenistic period onwards. I have suggested that what inhibits this full leverage is the cleavage at the middle of the millennium.

The dilated boundaries of the Mediterranean basin in these last centuries also raise a key issue, which, because of the disciplinary division between the first half of the millennium, namely the broader Iron Age, and the second half, we have not yet addressed: this is about the distinctive agenda for global research that the broader field of Classics, which often includes classical archaeology in several scholarly traditions, promotes (Bromberg 2021). That agenda takes a very narrow view of the ancient Mediterranean and of its archaeology, namely the Graeco-Roman world and/or a Graeco-Roman perspective of cultural regions, from Punic to Etruscan, which scholars have traditionally investigated with the aid of ancient textual sources: hence, the reference to a ‘hyperspecialized study of the ancient Mediterranean’ (Bromberg 2021, p. 12), which no one, however, outside a Classics perspective, would recognize. In fact, the problem, highlighted above, of an excessive focus upon colonial networks and a correspondingly feeble commitment to comparative analysis that goes beyond those networks may arguably be driven by the epistemic place of the Mediterranean in the global turn of the social and historical sciences, where Classical models and traditions still influence our thinking even when the foci of our study are not Greek or Roman. At the current global intellectual turn, we would do well but to take heed from modern historians who propose a ‘world history methodology’: this entails focusing on a specific question and search for evidence everywhere, especially in the less usual places than the long wave of older intellectual paradigms often restrict us to (Clossey 2012, pp. 410–411). The perspective, informed by interdependence, offers such possibilities.

Be that as it may, changes from this state of the field are on their way (Mattingly 2023 as a distinctive example). These are mostly detectable in promising shifts in scholarly concerns that can only be addressed over the very long term, of which a prominent one is climate change and related aspects, from land use to strategies for ecological stress. A notable exception to this overall scenario, including the disciplinary cleavage, is the study of archaeological landscapes: this is not only focused on very long-term change, but is, in fact, at the very center of a distinctly Mediterranean tradition in archaeological method, that of the pedestrian survey (Knodell et al. 2023). Last and not at all least is the very recent rapprochement between ancient history and archaeology for the study of Rome’s engagement with its broader Mediterranean region, a significant change outlined above that will encourage further the breaking of disciplinary boundaries. This will generate a fertile ground for transforming the field akin to the momentous revolution of the so-called Cambridge School, led by Anthony Snodgrass, in the archaeology of the first-millennium-BC Aegean (Cartledge 2016; de Polignac 2016; Shanks 1995, pp. 119–155).

Conclusion

Beyond disciplinary boundaries, we must ask ourselves what the benefits of multi-scalar approaches ultimately are for investigating the Mediterranean basin or any other broader regions. While 21st-century scholarship, as discussed above, has

resolutely understood this region through the interpretive lenses of connectivity, network and globalization, and has thus evaluated the heuristic purchase of multiple scales according to these lenses, the potential of that very heuristic purchase is enhanced, I suggest, if we consider multiple scales as a means of comparative analysis. Current debates in global early modern history are now moving toward privileging comparison over connectivity (Cerutti and Grangaun 2017; Trivellato 2023). This requires embedded perspectives, deep contextualization, and promotes the importance of local place over motion in the understanding of specific research problems, without needing to overlook the local–global tension in interdependence, but seriously acknowledging that the latter created convergence as much as separation and conflict (Berg 2023). There is an intriguing coincidence of these debates with earlier recent calls, in social theory, for rethinking globalization in terms of belonging and commitments to lasting local bonds rather than mobility and connect-edness (Bude and Dürschmidt 2010).

The lesson of the above for encouraging us to push for comparison as well as connection in investigating the first-millennium-BC Mediterranean is valuable: comparative analysis through multiple scales allows us to gain an understanding of the entire gamut of dynamics of transformations over the millennium in much more depth than any focus on shared practices and identities across colonial networks will. Conflict, divergence, exclusion from, or even lack of, connections must be part and parcel of these dynamics along with mobility and connectivity, especially in the context of growing imperial states and pre-imperial hegemonic forms of political and economic control: power must be foregrounded (Donnellan 2023, p. 248). The substantial increment of different kinds of archaeological data at our disposal over the last 25 years or so have not only changed the field significantly, as I have examined; it also hones our ability to address our research questions at multiple temporal and spatial scales like never before. Ultimately, the transformations that characterize the first-millennium-BC Mediterranean, outlined above, are best explained if we can see them both across multiple scales and comparatively. Adopting interdependence, as I have suggested, gives us a methodology for both multi-scalar and comparative analysis, which can in fact be applied to other comparable study regions where interaction and fragmentation are concomitant defining characteristics shaping them through time and space.

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