

**The Diminishing Collective:
Inequality and Social Complexity in later
Central Mediterranean Prehistory**

By

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- 2010 **C. Vella**. The lithic assemblage of the promontory site at Ras il-Pellegrin. *Traces in Time* 1: 1-24.
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Invited Publication Contributions and Popular Articles

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At the outset, a heart-felt thanks to my doctoral committee is necessary. I chose to conduct my doctoral degree at Brown University because of the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World but even beyond that I chose this institution because of you, John. I have long admired the long lineage of scholars that emerged from under your tutelage. Your never-ending correction of grammar and syntax was a bearable plight because you presented me with a universal truth: self-improvement will never end. Peter, your arrival at Brown University was an unexpected bonus that aided me tremendously. I have found your work to be challenging and our conversations to be delightful. You encouraged me to make this study more amenable to my interests and I can only say that I am thankful.

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My time at Brown University was in no small part inspired by three separate moments. The first moment was an aberration: an anonymous professor in my *alma mater* who went out of his way to obstruct my undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. At every turn, this individual observed that I could never hack it in higher education. The second moment was in my first year as an undergraduate when Nathaniel Cutajar the Deputy Superintendent of Cultural Heritage took a chance on me and took me to work at Tad-Doni, a medieval site. You never tried to force your love of all things medieval because you are a shining example of an impressive breadth of multi-chronological knowledge. I have willingly spent my earliest years in the field with you working weekends and public holidays because I knew that in under fifteen minutes I could have a conversation that compared caliphates to roman imperial networks. You and Tony encouraged me to leave the safe confines of my home and my fieldwork. The final moment occurred in a small apartment in Manfredonia (Puglia) when Maurizio Moscoloni, Giulia Recchia, and Alberto Cazzella forcibly objected to my desire to give up my MA studies in light of the first moment. I was at a moment of dejection and all three of you pushed me to complete my postgraduate degree, while only knowing me for under a week! All three of you deserve more than I can say in written form. Maurizio I will always make time to visit you in Rome and talk about auctions (while avoiding to completing our research on Maltese lithics). You are a warm and gentle person who never sought any attention despite your great knowledge. Giulia, your affection was only second to your intellectual contribution to this study. Finally, *Professore* Cazzella your quietness belies your great effect on Italian prehistory and I am thankful for all the times you listened to my ideas (then wistfully deconstructed them).

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Chapter 1: The Diminishing Collective: Inequality and Social Complexity in later Central Mediterranean Prehistory

Creating an Alternative Ontology: Inequality and the Collective Spirit

“... But perhaps someone ... may still maintain that supreme power is the best of all things, because the possessors of it are able to perform the greatest number of noble actions ... But that the unequal should be given to equals and the unlike to those who are like, is contrary to nature, and nothing which is contrary to nature is good ...” Aristotle in *Politics* (Accessed 2016)

Inequality is a word that tires us. It reminds us of all that is bad in our own present settings. It is also a word that refers to a very real social condition. We see it all around us in the mistreatment of humans and animals alike, in the abject suffering of marginalized populations, and in the downright discounting of underrepresented groups and their histories. We see so much inequality around us that a study on its deep history is undesirable to some and will be viewed as overly pessimistic to others. Yet in studying this crucial human condition one cannot help but wonder about the origins of inequality, despite that several scholars espouse views that inequality only emerged in hierarchical societies (Carneiro 2012; Bowles and Smith 2010; Flannery 1972). Such intellectual work promotes a long-held view that greater class division resulted in more unfair social settings. For example, when we think of the Roman world, we assume inequality. When we think of expanding empires, we imagine slavish conditions for some. Such

assumptions perpetuate an erroneous understanding of inequality. We look at our own unfair social settings and move backwards in time to social systems that somewhat match our own. By doing so we omit a very long strand of humanity's history that was also impacted by inequality. Unequal standing between individuals can be subtle but still effective. Inequality can take the form of a recognizable dialect that leads listeners to presume that a speaker hails from a different social class. Inequality can also take the form of required taxation by even those struggling financially.

Experiences such as these remind us of other elements found in human societies, like obligation, cooperation, trust, and collaboration (Feinman 2013; Golden and Scherer 2013; Carballo 2012; Locke 2011; West *et al.* 2007; Uslander 2000), that are all required actions from us within our respective societies and communities. After all, we form part of something much larger than ourselves, and it can often feel like we have little control over our lives. The quote above by Aristotle gives a grim view on the inevitability of inequality. Why would he describe inequality in such a manner? Certainly, his interpretation of inequality was based on its ubiquity in human lives. One could even go further by suggesting that his take on inequality suggests that no one could ever overturn such unfair conditions and it is an ever-present condition among humans. Despite such an opinion, we still hope to reduce such unfair treatments among our fellow community members; but the disappointing truth is that there are no human societies without an even slightest degree of inequality. Then, this dissertation tries to shed light into inequality by focusing on the collective spirit, which I argue falsely created an impression of a functioning community and hid the adjoining inequality to maintain individual cooperation.

This false sense of collectivity owes much to the term of a "false consciousness", inspired in some form by Marx and Engles (McCarney 1980), which argues that the proletariat is misled to accept subjugation and exploitation by those holding on to the reins of power (Augoustinos 1999; Rosen 1996; Eyerman 1981). However, this dissertation finds itself in slight disagreement with this principle. For the prehistoric Central Mediterranean world, I argue that the subjugation and exploitation of individuals was directed through an exploitation of the collective spirit that in turn affected communities (which in this study is imagined as the aggregation of individuals), their behavior, and adaptations. The collective spirit is also different from collective behavior or action, which refer to the behavior of individuals that are bonded together through their experiences and historical place (Saitta 2007: 5), particularly since it was a fleeting ephemeral state. It required collaboration and cooperation between individuals that could extend as wide as communities or be as restricted as familial units. Yet this collective spirit was a false projection of the social settings of the time. Indeed, I argue throughout this dissertation that inequality in pre-hierarchical societies exploited the collective spirit to project a false sense of collectivity to its peers, which encouraged them to maintain their productivity and acceptance of the dominant social discourse. Therefore, strategies that promoted a sense of a collective spirit included acts of perceived collaboration, such as the building of monuments. It also included the creation of long-running burial customs that emphasized social stability and persevered over time.

Herein lies one of the main contributions of this dissertation: pre-hierarchical societies were not devoid of inequality. Quite the opposite. Social settings were mired by inequality for the prehistoric inhabitants of the Central Mediterranean. They struggled to

gain control of trade routes or to even be part of distributive networks. They sometimes embarked on prolonged period of monumentality that stressed a dominant social discourse. Such societies were controlled through the manipulation of the collective spirit. At a time when things like the mass media and its far-reaching effects did not exist, the conditioning of community members required an alternative transformation to their collective spirit. There were at least two options through which this transformation could have occurred in prehistory. First, those seeking to hold on to power could have ended the collective spirit and unabashedly promoted themselves as leaders and part of a distinct class. Second, those seeking to hold on to power could have promoted a false sense of collectivity among their peers while ensuring their continued control and social gains. In this dissertation I argue that Central Mediterranean communities variably experienced the second option up to the early 1st millennium BC. Inequality was hidden behind the image of false collectivity. Aspects found in the daily life of prehistoric communities - like distributive networks, object production and consumption, burials and their customs, and monuments and their maintenance - all acted diversely in promoting and maintaining one single condition: not everyone held the same status or regard among their peers.

At this juncture I echo once again the Aristotelian reaction to inequality. The mere attempt to represent social conditions as equal further accentuates the actual inequality found in societies. The variable attempts to control the collective spirit was exploitative but presented in a positive light in the prehistoric Central Mediterranean. As will become apparent in the next chapters, I doubt that individuals holding on to power were immediately seeking to subjugate their contemporaries, at least not until the 1st

millennium BC and the earliest state formation. Nevertheless, an interest in controlling the dominant social discourse of a society was always liable to have manipulative effects on the wider community. The impressive side of this prehistoric inequality lay in the ability of these powerful individuals to maintain a sense of a functioning collective, while most social strategies always provided them with an opportunity to distinguish themselves. Their control was not tantamount to the massive accruals of wealth seen in those holding power in the contemporary world. Instead, inequality was subtle, yet effective, between the 4th and 1st millennia BC.

Once again a reader of this dissertation might rightly wonder why all of this matters for us in the 21st century. Surely our current age of globalization has little in common with its prehistoric antecedents. The purpose of this dissertation is not meant to supply immediate answers regarding the inequality that surrounds us and how to best remove it. I leave that task to others better suited in affecting change in our world. However, archaeology can offer us an insight into the history of our predecessors (Herrero 2013; Wilk 1985). It allows us to distance ourselves from our own conditions and better observe the embedded nature of inequality in human societies. Archaeology can lead us to rethink the paradigms through which we imagine such unfair conditions. This re-thinking of inequality is especially important right now as archaeologists and anthropologists are once again keen on tackling this human condition, in some instances even utilizing outdated paradigms (Flannery and Marcus 2012). Yet despite this blossoming interest, by far the most typical archaeological engagement with inequality emphasizes the unequal statuses of individuals and the relative differences in their lives. Such approaches tackle inequality at its most basic setting, the difference between

individuals and their respective wealth. Rather, this dissertation wishes to illustrate the multiple paths of inequality. This study matters, because it highlights the ubiquity of inequality (albeit its highly variable forms and processes). By doing so it creates an alternative ontology for the study of the prehistoric Mediterranean, which is in continued need of long-term narratives to better frame its diachronic history.

Debating Prehistoric Inequality: The What, How, and Why for this Dissertation

The introduction above presents the reader with a preliminary sense of this dissertation's main focus, primarily that inequality and its presence can be found in variable forms in human societies. However, this section does not out rightly state the intents of the writer, which impinge significantly on the paradigms, tone, and approaches found in this study. The general scope of this dissertation attempted to create an alternative study of inequality in pre-hierarchical societies, particularly by focusing on communities in the 4th- and 1st- millennia BC Central Mediterranean. To my mind, inequality is a universal human condition that we have dealt with in remarkably different ways. Our species struggles with inequality because it is woven well within our social fabric and is often difficult to tease apart. Rather, inequality within our societies provides benefits to certain individuals, particularly those who are able to present a sense of collectivity to their fellow community members. In essence, a limited number of individuals gain the most from their societies by keeping other individuals as productive and cooperative beings. This understanding of inequality surely finds some objection from other scholars. In particular, some might argue that the general tone of this

dissertation is too pessimistic and focused on the negative aspects of inequality. This leads me to the “how” of this study.

This research is geared by two personal beliefs. First, archaeology has to speak to the present and future, otherwise we are studying the past for the sake of a presumed scholarly pursuit. Our field has long attempted to speak through the past on aspects of human life that can still be found in our present existence. Inequality is certainly one of the foremost conditions that has a long history in our species. However, studying past inequality does not mean that we can immediately connect it to the present. Instead, understanding inequality in the past allows us to better comprehend its deep and often hidden nature in human societies. Second, the tone and paradigms used in this dissertation can be interpreted by its readers as Marxist, despite that the term is only explicitly used in a handful of instances below. Simply put, the paradigms used throughout are inspired by broad Marxist thinking. In fact, my use of a false sense of collectivity emerges from work on false consciousness, as already stated above. However, I would also point out that Marxism is hardly a rigid mode of thought. Rather, there are great divides between post-World War II approaches to Soviet World War I idealism to the fundamental principles laid out by Marx and Engels in the late 19th century. In turn, none of the above nodes of Marxism hold a particular sway in this study. Rather, common Marxist elements can be found in this dissertation. In particular, I would stress that this study on inequality does not follow the routine neutrality found in many archaeological studies. Instead, it felt vital to illustrate to the reader the manipulative and exploitative facets that can be found in human history. Inequality was and is significant. It needs to be described for what it is: a problematic part of human lives.

Finally, after elucidating the “what” and “how” in this dissertation, I should return momentarily to the “why”. The need for this study is simple. We increasingly need our research to be geared towards answering issues in our own present and future. Despite that need for answer and better insights, we also need to avail ourselves from ambiguous modernistic stances that can be often found in the social sciences. For instance, many scholars continue to utilize terms like “chiefs” and “tribes” with little consideration for their problematic origins and somewhat unethical application from contemporary to past societies. This research instead focuses on inequality and its development because our study of the past needs to inform us better of how such a condition has remained such a key part of our species and its history.

The Central Mediterranean place in Long-Term Narratives

The chronological focus of this study is strictly diachronic and focused in two ways. First, the period spanning the 4th to 1st millennia BC has typically been sub-divided by conventional archaeological chronologies of the Copper Age/Late Neolithic/Eneolithic, Bronze Age (sub-divided between the Early, Middle, Late, Final periods), and the Iron Age (further subdivided according to cultural units). These arbitrary subdivisions have been routinely adopted by archaeologists in the Central Mediterranean, as well as in other neighboring regions and their own archaeological traditions. This chronological focus has also now led to disjointed archaeological contributions, such as the complete omission of the 3rd millennium BC in two recent diachronic manuals (Bietti Sestieri 2010; Pessina and Tiné 2009).

Second, since one of the driving purposes of this dissertation is to illustrate to its readers the multiplicity of forms of social inequality in pre-hierarchical societies, then a diachronic focus can better contextualize these occurrences within the broader history of the region. When attempting to understand inequality across the entire Central Mediterranean region, one of the biggest potential pitfalls of such a study lies in the lack of proper contextualization of actions and processes that led to the creation or dissolution of inequality in certain historical moments. Such selective focuses are noted across the entire Mediterranean basin. Indeed, some prehistoric cultures have achieved an almost mythical importance in academia, as illustrated through the overly isolationist contributions offered by scholars working in these places (cf. Contu 2008a, 2008b; Malone and Stoddart 2004; Tusa 1997c).

In light of such past biases, this study tries to stitch together a wide region characterized in prehistory by multiple cultural developments, divergent social evolutions of some island communities, and large-scale systems of inter-connectivity. Nevertheless, there are inevitably some lacunae in this study that are worth pointing out. First, the geographic range in this dissertation is not complete. That would simply be a fool's errand. Second, gaps in a long-term narrative are also affected by the state of the field at large. For the Central Mediterranean, there is a considerable gap in the role of the Maghrebian coastline within the history of this region. Third, even in the case of a regional analysis there is an inconsistent academic coverage that leaves some areas and some chronological spans unexplored. This is the situation for much of Corsica's later prehistory and protohistory, the central Italian Adriatic and Tyrrhenian coastline, the later

prehistory of Basilicata and Calabria, and the connections between Eastern Europe and the Central Mediterranean.

Despite such gaps and academic biases, the Central Mediterranean prehistoric world has played a significant role in academia. This region has long been touted as the division between the Western and Eastern Mediterranean, acting as a conduit for the distribution of technologies, ideas, and peoples. Peninsular Italy has been further accentuated by the immediate presence of the Mediterranean's largest islands (Sicily and Sardinia, respectively), along with a plethora of islands and archipelagoes situated around the mainland. Indeed, these islands brought the Central Mediterranean world into the midst of debates on island archaeology and the nature of islander communities when situated in cultural isolation (Cherry and Leppard 2014; Evans 1977; 1973). Aside from these debates on the nature of islands in the human realm, the considerable emphasis on monumental cultures in islands like Malta, Sardinia, Corsica, and Pantelleria has further bred the expectation of island peculiarity. Yet such views omit the history of several other islands found in this region and within the wider Mediterranean basin. In fact, some of these islands did not experience divergent developments. They sometimes found themselves in the midst of broad systems of interaction and at other times they turned into peripheral spaces. Similarly, long-term histories of peninsular Italy have stressed the colonial settlements of the Greeks and the Phoenicians in southern Italy and Sicily (Hodos 2010; Tusa 2005; Coldstream 2004; Boardman 1980), the formation of the Etruscan culture and, by extension, the roots of the eventual Roman Empire (Carandini 2014; Cornell 1995; Pallottino 1991; 1981). In contrast, the history of other indigenous Central Mediterranean peoples has experienced limited study.

A diachronic study of the Central Mediterranean region then allows us to highlight some of the major achievements of its prehistoric inhabitants within its wider world. In fact, the inter-connectivity of this region in prehistory linked the Mediterranean basin to temperate Europe, as well as the Maghrebian coastline. Despite the lack of states until the mid-1st millennium BC, the Central Mediterranean experienced multiple forms of localized monumentalities and also appropriated extraneous forms of constructed monuments and customs in some instances. Finally, the history of this region oscillated widely from large cultural blocs to localized cultural units, but nevertheless was always connected in some form to the remainder of the Central Mediterranean.

Recurrent Terms

There are a number of recurrent terms that are used routinely in this study, which are best defined at this juncture. In particular, the title of this dissertation provides a number of these terms that are outlined below. Perhaps the term requiring immediate clarification is the “Central Mediterranean”. In this study, the Central Mediterranean refers to a multi-ecological space that encompasses modern-day Italy, Sardinia, Corsica, Sicily, and all adjoining islands. One of the advantages of studying this entire region is the staggering variety of ecological niches and spaces that can be found in proximity to the Italian mainland. There also needs to be another clarification regarding the nature of the Central Mediterranean, particularly its marked differences in physical conditions over space.

The term “social evolution” is also often cited throughout this work and is understood as a global process undertaken diversely by different communities and not characterized by any regular and predictable tempo. Indeed, the evolution of Central Mediterranean societies was an irregular and highly contextual transformation that was affected by an interplay between human actions, their place within the wider history of the region, and the ecological niches that they inhabited.

This variability in social evolution overlaps with the term “social complexity”, which is a much-repeated term in the social sciences (Verhoeven 2010; MacSweeney 2009; Chapman 2008; Wynne-Jones and Kohring 2008; Urry 2005; Fuentes 2004; Chapman 2003; Byrnes 1998). In turn, this term has a rather indiscriminate use among archaeologists and anthropologists (Sawyer 2005: 3). Perhaps the least useful way that social complexity is used in the archaeological literature refers to the expectation that two different societies provide us with a difference in their respective complexity when compared to each other. In contrast, such a like-for-like comparison does not find support among those scholars who are seeking to better represent all strands of human history. I agree with this view. If we keep distinguishing societies by their supposed level of complexity, then we run the risk of essentializing our task as archaeologists as one based on arbitrary distinctions of complex versus non-complex societies. Instead, throughout this dissertation I understand social complexity as an intangible structure composed of multiple parts that interact with each other in irregular and complex manners (Sawyer 2005: 3, Chapman 2003). Therefore, social complexity here is not seen as a uniform paradigm through which we separate communities as either complex or non-complex. It

can refer to both hierarchical and heterarchical social systems that are distinguishable by their vertical or horizontal complexity, respectively.

At the core of social complexity, and also the primary theoretical interest of this dissertation, is inequality. I consider inequality to be a variable but constantly active condition found within our species (Ames 2012; Price and Feinman 2010; Drennan *et al.* 2010; Feinman 2005; Paynter and McGuire 1991; McGuire 1983). In a definitional sense, inequality occurs when certain individuals attempt to control and regulate the dominant social discourse. Such inequality could include a myriad of elements and processes such as the controlled distribution of goods and resources, labor control, ideological manipulation, and systems of social obligation. In our current social settings, we are accustomed to think of inequality as sub-divided across gender, racial, and economic lines. However, for the prehistoric Central Mediterranean I refer to a more intangible social inequality based on a mutual contradiction. The mutually contradictory nature of prehistoric inequality were such that pre-hierarchical social settings communities across the Central Mediterranean had strategies meant to benefit some individuals while they projected a sense of a collective among their peers. This projection allowed individuals with power to dominate others without the requirement of an institutionalized hierarchical social system.

Amidst this social inequality, the “collective” spirit is a key component in this study. It is not placed at the fore to reduce the importance of community as a unit of study and composed of imagined and physical attributes. Rather, the “collective” in this dissertation refers to a state of mind that exhibited the willing relationships between individuals or groups of individuals. Like inequality, the collective was an active

condition and an axiomatic opposite of the former. The higher the state of inequality, then the less collective behavior could be noted in the archaeological record. However, such an imagined inversely proportional relationship also runs the risk of being overly naïve. In particular, even at moments of intensifying inequality, the collective spirit could be maintained as an artificial exhibition of a collaborating society. In fact, as I have already argued above, it is ludicrous to me to assume that social inequality was explicitly stated and understood in prehistoric societies. If such a relationship always existed, then societies would have had a hard time keeping its members motivated and productive. Instead, what if a false sense of collectivity was created despite an unfair social setting? Then the continued acceptance of the dominant social discourse kept individuals in control of their respective societies. In fact, an overarching argument in this dissertation suggests that inequality was matched by an instability surrounding humans' existence. There were variable fluctuations in the extents and conditions of the collective spirit within these convoluted attempts to falsely project a functioning collective across Central Mediterranean later prehistory. The following chapters seek to provide overlapping views into the manifestation of inequality and the varying state of the collective spirit between the 4th and 1st millennia BC.

A Roadmap to this Dissertation: Exploring Inequality and Social Complexity between the 4th and 1st millennia BC in the Central Mediterranean

In the first part of this dissertation, **Chapters 2 and 3** highlight some of the many evolutionary assumptions found in archaeology and the theoretical foundations. These

chapters seek to move forward from paradigms espoused by neo-evolutionists by outlining a new theoretical paradigm for understanding inequality in pre-hierarchical societies, which have typically been simply earmarked as “egalitarian”. Instead, these chapters present a foundational argument found in this study: all human societies deal with inequality in some form or another. **Chapters 2 and 3** argue that there are a number of evolutionary assumptions that continue to play a role in contemporary archaeological and anthropological literature. The only way to divest ourselves of such biases is to abandon these problematic paradigms. To better frame this research’s investigation of inequality in the prehistoric Central Mediterranean, I propose five avenues through which we can gain an overlapping long-term view. These five avenues include the Central Mediterranean space (**Chapter 4**), distribution networks (**Chapter 5**), ideological uses of certain material culture (**Chapter 6**), burial customs (**Chapter 7**), and monumentality (**Chapter 8**).

The need for an alternative ontology of pre-hierarchical study is applied to the Central Mediterranean region and is introduced in **Chapter 4**. This part of the Mediterranean offers a number of benefits for long-term study, which **Chapter 4** outlines as an intersection between time and space. In particular, the diverse ecological nature of this region requires us to properly gauge the varied conditions found in the Central Mediterranean that range from small arid islands to major fluvial regions to the grand mountain ranges of the Alps and Apennines in mainland Italy. This great ecological variability inevitably means that humans adapted and overcame some significant limitations. However, this chapter does not espouse an environmental determinism, quite

the opposite. By intersecting space with time, we can observe humans' capacity for exploiting their surroundings.

Chapter 5 and **6** deal with artifacts through two diverse approaches. **Chapter 5**, discusses broad systems of interaction as an insight into the movement of raw materials, artifacts, peoples, ideas and shared pan-regional behaviors. In **Chapter 5** objects like obsidian, copper, bronze, amber, glass paste, and ceramics followed changing networks that connected certain preferential communities while marginalizing others. In fact, it seems counterintuitive that we imagine pre-hierarchical trade interests as somewhat dominated by altruism and fair exchange. Instead, a long-term archaeological reading of the Central Mediterranean suggests a more convoluted interaction that benefited some individuals or communities over others. Yet the discussion of objects in this chapter is only a narrow view into artifacts. **Chapter 6** explores the deep set role of some material culture in the lives of humans as ideological promoters. In particular, rather than dealing with objects that experienced wide replication and distribution, this chapter focuses on a selected group of artifacts that were only found in limited and particular archaeological contexts (especially funerary, ritual/cultic, and political). 0

Chapters 7 and **8** dwell on the actions of humans constructing their surrounding world according to their customs and in regulation with the desires of individuals aspiring to control their peers. These two chapters offer two additional insights into the study of inequality in pre-hierarchical societies. First, societies strived for stability. One can imagine their social strategies as geared at projecting a false sense of stability and collectivity. Indeed, **Chapter 7** provides a long-term view of burial customs and rituals found in the Central Mediterranean, which were geared towards easing social tensions

and creating a sense of stability in what must have been emotional moments for the living. Second, the use of monuments in some Central Mediterranean societies requires us to see such long-lasting structures as proclamations of social order. **Chapter 8** examines the social manipulation involved in building significant structures that were often restricted in their access. It leads us to ask a vital question: why do humans continue to cooperate and act as productive members of society when they are treated unfairly?

Finally, the concluding **Chapter 9** connects several strands observed in this dissertation. By emphasizing the varying state of the collective spirit, the evolution of these societies is seen as a fluid and active transformation. Some societies gave up their collective spirit and permitted others to manipulate it. In fact, up to the 1st millennium BC the collective varied in extent from the broad community to an individual family unit. The collective spirit was utilized to impart a sense of a collaborative community, despite the fact that some individuals were controlling interaction networks, burial customs, or even monumentality.

Chapter 2: An Intellectual Evolution and a History of Biases

Introduction: Why Inequality and Social Complexity Once More?

“The American Dream is ... not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.” – James Truslow Adams in *The Epic of America* (1931: 214-215).

This dissertation is a product of a modern concern. As a person hailing from a developing Mediterranean island nation and eventually moving to the United States as an immigrant, it appears to me that inequality is persistently universal but remarkably variable in its forms and processes. At the time of writing this dissertation, inequality has once again become a much repeated term in the United States (Stiglitz 2013; 2012) as this nation faced a strongly contested midterm election followed by an upcoming presidential election. Despite being a contemporary concern for our present and future, inequality can also be seen in our human past. It operated within the inter-woven structures of social complexity and acted as a condition that hides the exploitation of the many for the benefit of the few. In this chapter I argue that the study of social complexity in archaeology is still a useful thematic focus, but it requires a more critical review of past scholarship. This review of past scholarship is critical because such intellectual contributions have influenced considerably more recent attempts at investigating social evolution, complexity, inequality that suffer from contemporary biases directed by a Western European focus.

In studying social complexity among human communities, archaeology is still variably affected by evolutionism and later neo-evolutionary models derived from cultural anthropology (Pauketat 2007 *contra* Carneiro 2003). Neo-evolutionism can still be recognized in some archaeological studies spanning across sub-fields and regional analyses (Flannery and Marcus 2012; Marcus 2008; Johnson and Earle 2000; Earle 2000). From the perspective of neo-evolutionism, socio-economic examinations of archaeological data are typically expressed in manners with which communities develop from a simpler to a more complex condition. However, recent studies on comparative analysis of social complexity indicate that we need fresher methodological approaches that do not simply discriminate certain groups over others based on perceived social complexity (Drennan *et al.* 2010; Gledhill 1988; Feinman 2012a; Trigger 2003). Nevertheless, social complexity in human societies remains one of the grander challenges in the field of archaeology and anthropology, which led Kintigh *et al.* (2014) to argue that archaeology has created diverse and alternative perspectives to the study of human social complexity.

Expectations of social evolution, which arose from social contract theorists and later Social Darwinism, have left a lasting impact in archaeology. During the Enlightenment period, social contract theorists debated the inherent nature of humans with or without an authoritative form of control (Ritchie 1891; Rousseau [1762] 1968). That debate was followed in the 19th century by the earliest proposals of human social evolution, in which societies were seen as evolving across set historical trajectories. Eventually, the growing popularity of evolutionism, particularly in North America, led to a renewed interest in the evolutionary developments that all societies were presumed to

undertake. Originally developed by cultural anthropologists, archaeologists have remained tied to their terminologies (Pauketat 2007) and gradualist evolutionary expectations (Service 1975; Service 1971; Sahlins 1970; Fried 1967) created by the so-called neo-evolutionism (cf. Carneiro 2003: 276-284). In the field of archaeology, evolutionary thinking has played a role in perpetuating a series of expectations that include ranking through funerary and domestic goods, proportional growth of social complexity over time, and the ability of selective pressure to affect human communities. In contrast, the state of the field after neo-evolutionism in archaeology appears less clear, which requires me to outline in Chapter 3 the theoretical framework utilized in this dissertation.

The Social Contract and Selection Pressures: Evolutionary Expectations

We all understand a broad term such as “evolution”. Yet if we shift our attention to the meaning of social evolution, abandoning the linear cliché of memes showing primates gradually turning into an anatomically modern human hunched over a computer, I feel that it becomes more difficult to come up with a convincing narrative of what social evolution means and looks like across human history. In part, this issue can be faulted as a pervasive sense of evolutionary expectations; we all can conjure a meaning or image associated with evolution, but it typically relies on a stereotypical view. For instance, can we truly expect societies to evolve in predictable fashions? The simple answer is no. Nevertheless, evolutionary assumptions persist. It is even surprising to many to find out

that Charles Darwin, typically considered to be the greatest proponent of evolution, never mentioned the word “evolution” in his well-known *The Origin of Species* ([1859] 1993).

Darwin was not a single intellectual contributor to this broad issue. He was part of a contemporary intellectual environment that was preceded and followed by great debates that spanned across academic fields, including the then young field of archaeology (Daniel 1976: 63–65). The acceptance that humans, along with all other biological organisms, evolved over time and space has been a hard-fought and confusing intellectual struggle. That same acceptance of evolution is still not quite finalized, as conservative groups in Western countries (cf. Johnson 2010; Numbers 2006) and other theologically driven countries are not always accepting of the theory of evolution (Hameed 2008). However, prior to scholars like Spencer and Darwin, a series of debates aimed at comprehending not only humanity’s nature at an earlier historical stage but even its contemporary and future directions, debated whether the combination of humans and the struggle for power were culturally or naturally occurring in our species. These views are important to debate in the context of this dissertation, mainly because I wish to elucidate that issues raised by so-called social contract theorists are not just backdrops to the achievements of Darwin’s contemporaries, neo-evolutionists, and us. Rather, social contract theorists provide us with a rich plethora of philosophical discussions on how we should perceive humans and their evolving complexities.

The Nature of Societies, Social Contracts, and Evolution

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Western Europe experienced the rise of the so-called Enlightenment philosophical movement, which represented an important split from earlier reliance on Biblical dogma (Wolf 1998: 23). Individuals such as Hobbes and

Rousseau are often held in common regard because they argued (in different ways) that humans are neither good nor bad but certainly perfectible. To them, humans and their behavior in regard to each other had become exacerbated through power struggles and the creation of authoritative systems.

In *Leviathan* ([1651] 1985), Hobbes outlined that humans had no choice but to establish political societies. In an almost pristine state of nature, life was miserable, brutish and unreasonably short. In his view, Hobbes attempted to consider "... how, and by what covenants is [man] made; what are the rights and just power or authority of a sovereign; and what it is *that preserved and dissolved it ...?*" (Hobbes [1651] 1985: 82, emphasis mine). These supposed difficult origins led Hobbes to propose that humans inevitably lead lives of constant conflict and aggression unless proper social structures are set into place (Malcolm 2012: 13). Without that structure, individuals continue to struggle between themselves as they seek to control others and garner access to material resources (Hobbes [1651] 1985: 224). In striving to acquire these gains, Hobbes' reasoning appears to imply also that any group of individuals who ascend to power are likely to abuse it and cannot be trusted to function equitably in regards to others. These individuals are then inevitably seen as discordant and corrupt (Malcolm 2012: 21). Therefore, Hobbes rather proposed the idea of a single absolute ruler as a fairer political condition (Thomas 2004: 101), mainly because rulers should ideally be committed to maintain a sense of stability across their territories (Hobbes [1651] 1985: 225).

From the Hobbesian perspective, political institutions are understood as emerging from a strive for peace, order, and the necessity of cooperation (Malcolm 2012: 15-16). This point of view highlights the need for effective control as a result of a centralized

reaction for self-preservation. In fact, each individual was seemingly contracted with each other to either not resist a sovereign or to assist him (Malcolm 2012: 16). However, an equally important issue comes out of a human necessity for self-preservation: a sovereign ruler can fail to provide adequate and fair protection to citizens, which encourages the latter to transfer their allegiance to another. Despite Hobbes' rationale, the issue of transferred allegiance remains unclear. After all, Hobbes represented the pessimistic side of the Enlightenment period that was influenced by the result of long-term historical suppression of man's instincts and his own disillusionment with the ongoing English Civil War.

Rousseau, separated from Hobbes by almost a century, provided an opposing yet complementary view of the origins of human organization and political institutions. His works *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (Rousseau [1755] 1999) and *The Social Contract* (Rousseau [1762] 1968), have remained relevant in the broader social sciences (Skyrms 2004). In archaeology, Rousseau has re-emerged because his works debate not only the origins of inequality, but rather, the role of social distinction after the 'state of nature'. While, Rousseau's term the 'state of nature' is not useful by modern anthropological standing (Flannery and Marcus 2012: 19), he argued that the creation of political structure is the fulcrum of humanity's general misery. In contrast to the Hobbesian perspective, he claimed that humans were at their best without the burdens of centralized power and structure (Thomas 2004: 103). To Rousseau, individuals who ascended to higher levels of political control were equal "tyrants" that promised to protect the multitude from external dangers while willfully controlling their own citizens

for personal gain (Rousseau [1755] 1999: 49). This means that the mechanisms that bring to the fore some over others was seen by Rousseau as a corrupting enterprise.

Yet if we could momentarily agree that potent individuals, through subtle or overt means, force themselves into positions of control, then why does the rest of the population accept this social condition? Unlike Hobbes, Rousseau answered this issue by suggesting that a social contract bonds individuals together ([1762] 1968: 60), while having the effect of increasing inequality and power struggles. According to Rousseau, the social contract is a necessary pact once the earlier modes of survival are encumbered by obstacles that require a change or eventually perishing (Rousseau [1762] 1968: 59–60). Rousseau’s reading of political action and mechanisms in humans, however, does not seek to answer the manner in which inequality progresses across time. In particular, if we agree that obstacles require a renewed social contract, then would we also consider the creation of inequality as a constantly resetting condition, or rather, a continued historical accumulation of revised social contracts?

Hobbes and Rousseau, along with a number of other scholars during the Enlightenment era, broadly debated the intersection between human sociality and political organization. Despite their fundamental differences these scholars suggest that the historical development of humans has led to various moments when the unequal treatment of individuals is either a necessary evil or simply an abusive expression of power. They commonly held that political institutions emerged as an artificial construction by imposed human reasoning (Thomas 2004: 103).

In the Counter-Enlightenment period, marked by the French Revolution, the Western European continent witnessed the overturning of a *longue durée* monarchic

ruling system. The earlier impression that reason could effectively advocate for “... universal liberty, equality, and fraternity for all humankind ...” (Wolf 1998: 26–27) became threatened by the fact that not all individuals were similarly taken over by the promise of effective societal change. Indeed, conservative responses were not simply limited to aristocrats but even extended to the lower echelons of French society, who seemed unable to abandon their previous accustomed arrangements (Wolf 1998: 27), even if those concerned were being controlled by others. To many, the break-up of former ideologies of sovereigns and their rule was expected to be replaced by dissolution of hierarchical arrangements. However, while multiple revolutionary actions tore down the previous political establishments, the Counter-Enlightenment period was marked by the unsure state of social order (Wolf 1998: 29).

The 19th century brought an additional scholarly dimension - mainly a formalized theory of evolution and the misapplication of Darwinian concepts into social evolution. For instance, Herbert Spencer suggested that an evolutionary approach could be used to explain scientific and political problems (Pluciennik 2005: 40). He claimed that humans developed, in line with all other organisms (Spencer 1969: 109-110), from a state of simple homogeneity towards a complex differentiated series of entities (Trigger 2006: 145–146). At the root of these evolutionary shifts, and quite unlike Rousseau’s impression of the “social contract”, Spencer proposed that individual initiative and a desire for free enterprise were motivators of cultural evolution across time. This view in 19th-century England became a popular understanding among the burgeoning middle-class expansion that conceivably justified the industrial revolution as a continuation of progress in a broader human history (Trigger 2006: 145). This view of history became

even more biased in a sense because Spencer's dictum of "survival of the fittest" (1969: 196-197) seemingly encouraged historical study to consider some as victors and other as losers, a polarity that eventually transgressed national, ethnic and racial lines (Pluciennik 2005: 40–41).

Spencer's belief that unbridled and unchecked capitalism could best lead to a state of progress is now understood as having at least partly enabled the problematic aspects of "Social Darwinism" (Blute 2010; Hofstadter 1955; Pluciennik 2005: 41). Spencer popularized the term "evolution" as a metaphysical principle that had little to nothing to do with biological evolution. However by evolution, unlike earlier work rooted in Biblical dogma, Spencer meant that all organisms were not created through the acts of a supernatural being, but rather through a series of steps that grew in complexity over time. In his *Progress: Its Law and Causes* (1857), Spencer sought to comprehend structural modifications in societies through cross-comparative models (Pluciennik 2005: 42). Modification was only thought as occurring through change that was forwardly progressive that grew rapidly over time. The process of evolution depended on the size of population that created a need for differentiation and became expressed through social complexity. His stages, recreated later partly by Henry Lewis Morgan and even later by neo-evolutionists, are type taxonomies differentiated through social organization as simple, compound, doubly compound, and trebly compound. These stages revolve largely around the distinction of "headship" (Pluciennik 2005: 43–44), or rather, the presence or lack of a central power authority. These stages were additionally cross-categorized through a second level of consideration, in which Spencer sub-divided societies between militant and industrial in their demeanor. The former manifestation is typically made up

of strongly centralized communities where co-operation is compulsory, while the latter societies are typically based on voluntary co-operation in decentralized economies. His propositions embody, expanded later through racial and ethnic improprieties by others (cf. Kossina 1912), the contemporary vision of a superior Western society (Pluciennik 2001). His final attribute “race” led Spencer to claim that racial origin is not necessarily a surmountable challenge because it is prone to the mixture of races, but in atypical mixing could lead to unstable systems (Pluciennik 2005: 44).

As already mentioned, Spencer’s intellectual contributions grew out of the historical background of 19th-century England. At the time, Spencer and others were committed to promoting the ascension of the growing middle-class. This socio-political background intersects with the contemporary growth of prehistoric archaeology and ethnology (Trigger 2006: 166), which both became handmaidens in affirming the impression that humans progressed over time, presumably to the benefit of all. However, scholars struggled to explain why certain contemporary communities remained at disparate technological levels, particularly when compared to Western society. This difference in contemporary technological proficiency became convoluted with racist considerations of the time, already hinted in Spencer’s work as discussed above. Trigger (2006: 167) suggests that the erosion of the Enlightenment’s belief in intellectual similarity among different groups was being replaced by a growing ethnic divide, stemming from the growing nationalistic separation in Europe itself. Therefore, the sense of a basic human unity espoused by Enlightenment scholars became opposed by a disconcerting belief that some ethnic groups are superior to others; they are the victors of history. Then it could be said that even at the birth of archaeology the idea of “evolution”,

physical or social, was a tainted one. Social evolution became a standard-bearer for racist-honed interpretations of why the West became the superior power in control of its surrounding world by the Modern period (Morris 2010: 14-15). For instance, in his *Essai sur l'Inégalité des Races Humaines* Gobineau exemplified the contemporary racially-charged views of history, by suggesting that the fate of peoples relied largely on their racial composition (Gobineau 1884; Pluciennik 2001: 743; Trigger 2006: 168).

The core values of Darwinism in social evolution has left a strong impact on archaeological and anthropological research (Shennan 2008; Hodgson 2004; Shennan 2002; Hofstadter 1955). It has even led several to claim that social evolution is comparable to biological evolution in the natural world (Hodgson and Knudsen 2010: 37). Rather, the general abstractions made by Darwin, firstly in relation to biological organisms and later in an attempted adaption of evolutionary theory to humans (1871), provide a conceptual framework through which humans and their cultural milieu might have developed over time. However, Darwin's immediate effects on late 19th- and early 20th- centuries archaeological frameworks was not as significant as often assumed. Lewis Henry Morgan and other contemporaries still relied on Herbert Spencer's proposals of societal evolution. Indeed, their arguments were focused on providing a progressionist view of history, in which all societies were assumed to have undergone gradualist and naturally-influenced evolutionary trajectories (Shanks and Tilley 1988: 157–158).

In the works of Morgan, Tylor and even Lubbock, a key evolutionary expectation is seen in the assumption that all societies emerged from ignorance, superstition and irrationality, and were transformed into social systems that are governed by a rational free-market spirit. According to Morgan in *The Ancient Society* (1877), human progress

had to overcome the stages of savagery, barbarism, and civilization. These stages, that continue to hold a certain sway in contemporary archaeological thinking, emerged from the contrast between contemporary Victorian society and the growing knowledge of contemporary “primitive” peoples (Lull and Mico 2011: 145–146). In these early historical analyses, archaeological data played little to no role (Shanks and Tilley 1988: 158), Lubbock’s (1912) prehistoric synthesis being a notable exception. However, these works in the Victorian period played a considerable role in creating the foundation for later neo-evolutionary studies in anthropology, and by extension, archaeology.

One of the greatest issues with progressionist views of history can be argued to be its considerable weakness over-generalizing archaeological data and trends. It assumes that by focusing on a slow gradual evolution leading to the present, nothing novel can be gleamed from the archaeological record (Trigger 2006: 208). After the confirmation of humanity’s deep antiquity, progressionist expectations of evolution tacitly created a “... sense of *impasse* and sterility in evolutionary archaeology [since] it had become too integral a part of anthropology and too dependent on ethnology ...” (Trigger 2006: 209). Rather, the ethnography of surviving “primitive” peoples was thought to supply a general and sufficient baseline to comparable past societies living in similar ecological conditions through certain technological capacities. However, the burgeoning of archaeology, typically encapsulated in the so-called culture-history movement, grew as a response to a growing comprehension of the broad variability of the archaeological record that threatened the simplistic paradigms of earlier evolutionists in anthropology (Trigger 2006: 211).

The Lull and Return of Evolutionism

Around the end of the 19th century, Franz Boas argued that instead of a simple progressionist line of evolution, multiple groups originated separately and underwent numerous moments of cultural convergence and divergences (Pluciennik 2005: 62; Boas 1927; 1920, 1896). By discouraging the idea of a single evolutionary process, Boas picked up on the issue of evolutionary studies that were being connected to a contemporary present comprehension. Boas argued that anthropology was not meant to account for the expectations of progress in the present. Despite its dominating presence in North American anthropology, the Boasian school of thought began to lose ground by the end of WWII, particularly with the rising of White and Steward who brought to the fore neo-evolutionism (Steward 1955; White 1959) partly reminiscent of Morgan's earlier work (Pluciennik 2005: 67, Lull and Mico 2011: 149). Trigger argues that the relative prosperity emerging in the US during the post-WWII period translated into a middle-class optimism that was reminiscent of mid-19th century middle-class prosperity in England. That same prosperity brought about a frame of mind which believed that history was made up of patterns and that technological advancement ensured human betterment (Trigger 2006: 386–387). However, unlike the 19th century evolutionary optimism, one of the biggest differences in the 20th century was the general abandonment of the term “progress” and its expectations (Shanks and Tilley 1988: 163).

In Western Europe, evolutionism did not acquire the same tones as seen in American anthropology. Rather, early 20th century debates were broadly framed in comprehending cultural change through the models of diffusion and human migrations, particularly in the work of Childe and others (Trigger 1998: 109; 1980). Childe's ample

and academic contributions experienced an evolution of their own in several senses. After the mid-1930s Childe often cited his work as aligned to his political beliefs as a Marxist, within the field of archaeology. Unlike anthropologists and sociologists situated in North America, Childe focused primarily on the exploitative and abusive nature of economic means of productions and sociocultural superstructures (Trigger 1998: 112). In *Social Evolution* (1963), one of Childe's last major contributions, he expressed a general discomfort in correlating archaeologically discernible conditions of societal change with stages recognized by sociologists and anthropologists at the time (Pluciennik 2005: 70). To Childe these stages were heuristic tools and not so much models set in stone.

Yet in his earlier *Man Makes Himself* (1936), Childe had already argued that earlier 19th century works had placed too much faith in the idea of progress (Trigger 1980: 104); especially since those intellectuals were influenced by a positivist impression of the improvement for the middle-class, at great cost to the lower classes (Childe 1936: 1-3). Childe proposed that all historical investigations have to become context-specific: that is, we cannot expect a universalistic resolution to render an accurate understanding of past societies (1936: 3-4). While certainly not unique in his views, Childe combined cyclical and linear concepts to interpret the inevitability of change and social evolution (Trigger 1980: 172-174). He suggested that sudden spurts of technological advancements can lead to momentous shifts in historical trajectories, identified as “revolutions” (Flannery 1994; Trigger 1980: 104–106). Therefore, he maintained that the linear motion of history becomes affected by *quasi*-cyclical transformations that influence productive and demographic conditions (Pluciennik 2005: 71). In using the term “revolutions”, which Childe (1950) applied vigorously to innovations such as domestication, urbanism,

and writing, he sought to parallel the equally crucial importance of a transformation in prehistory to a historically-known transformation, such as the Industrial Revolution (1936: 9-10).

In magnifying the importance of prehistoric transformations, Childe sought to underline the differences and parallels in historical progress *vis à vis* organic revolutions (1936: 18). These revolutions were not accidental products of a natural evolutionary system. Rather, these innovations were the result of accumulated experience that arose out of a specific cultural milieu and traditions. The creation of revolutions also stemmed from collective experiences, or a series of shared conditions that permit the inheritance and transferal of knowledge that is distinct from biological instincts (Childe 1936: 33). However, if we have discernible “revolutions”, then why do we have so few of them? While earlier intellectuals, and to a certain extent even later neo-evolutionists, broadly consider the lack of progress as proof of a lower level of social complexity, Childe sought to explain the reasons that led to a lack of cultural change over broad periods of time. As a believer in non-linearity, Childe perceived the struggle between ruling and lower classes as a process that saw the former attempting to quell and prevent technological changes that could threaten their hold on political authority (Trigger 1998: 112–113). Only once the exploitative and economic potential returns were apparent did change occur, especially in societies that were less hindered by rigid top-down control strategies and restrictions.

Still, even by the end of Childe’s career it was clear that neo-evolutionism had grown considerably in North American cultural anthropology as a response to the Boasian premises of anthropology. The work of Service, Sahlins, and Fried, largely

cultural and economic anthropologists, diversely suggested that evolution in societies follows certain discernible stages or levels. Unlike Morgan's emphasis on progress, neo-evolutionism was rooted in the understanding that evolution is not a predictable process and influenced considerably by adaptive processes to ecological variables (Lull and Mico 2011: 149). According to Sahlins, this meant that the previous concern of "General Evolution" was replaced with an emphasis on "Specific Evolution" based on adaptive changes necessary for diverse communities (1970). Underlying these works, neo-evolutionism created an implicit assumption that even on a global level cultural variations were limited (Trigger 1998: 130).

Service built upon these foundations by proposing that the study of social organization has to be focused on understanding the "political" in humans (Pluciennik 2005: 72). Therefore, while adaptations provide the baseline from which all humans have to adapt in order to prosper or perish, only political processes provide a measurable change in societies (Service 1975: 100). To better understand both past and contemporary political organization, neo-evolutionists re-initiated the debate on the role of ethnographic documentation in evolutionary studies. According to Service, "our contemporary ancestors" were necessary because they provided cultural information and information on social systems that could shed light on our collective past (1971: 6-7).

The return and problematic aspects of ethnographic usage in anthropology were ignored by Service (1971: 8) and others as a means to create guidelines for past stages of cultural evolution that were influenced by the contextual historical particularisms of a given place and time. Evolution of human societies seemingly changed through shifts in social organization, which he defines as a structural set-up of component groups of a

society and their arranged configurations. Aside from the social organization, a network of political statuses and rank provide an order of individuals (Service 1971: 11). Between the social organization and political states, neo-evolutionism in Service's understanding decreases the role and pace of change in favor of the transformation of societies from one stage to another slowly and gradually (Trigger 1998: 131). This suggested gradual pace of evolution brings to mind a continuum of change that, while it can be discontinuous, moves along almost taxonomic lines of social organization (Service 1971: 170).

It would be unfair to think of neo-evolutionism as a single mode of inquiry, which is best seen in differences between Morton Fried and Elman Service. In stating that "...equality is a social impossibility!" (1967: 27), Fried argued that ranked societies are inherently more stable than stratified societies (1967: xi) since the latter require a hereditary process and a sufficiently complex political organization to function. In contrast to Service, Fried describes a society as a group of parties that function together through a web of relations that are best visualized as patterned interactions along the lines of social ordering (1967: 8-9). Behavior of individuals is encouraged or repressed through social control that essentially acts to ensure the flow of goods and idea in set directions at the expense of other people. Fried saw behavior and control in humans as influenced by authority and power, which are distinctly separate. In the case of authority, the behavior of some is directed in the absence of threats and through the use of sanctions, while power functioned through threat (of the use of force) as well as sanctions (1967: 13). Power requires legitimacy in the eyes of a given community through means of ideology. Fried argued that legitimacy provides an explanation and justification for the existence of concentrated social power, wielded by some and aiding the flow of social

order (1967: 26). In consequence, political organization emerges from portions of social organization that relate to individuals who manage or seek to control the actions of an entire group (Fried 1967: 21).

Such neo-evolutionary works placed a heavy reliance on the forms of political organization that perhaps could be seen more as contributions to political anthropology than archaeology (Lull and Mico 2001: 148). However, neo-evolutionism effectively simplified the complex mechanism of humanity's long and diverse history to stages that can be identified and compared to pre-conceived models. As a mode of thought, rather than a set disciplinary approach, it would be egregious to "distill" neo-evolutionism to set commonalities, especially since it has not really disappeared from the fields of anthropology and archaeology (cf. Carneiro 2003; 2012). The convergence between neo-evolutionary cultural anthropology and archaeology is not an easy transition to trace, but it held a particularly important place in the North American four-field approach to anthropology between the 1960s and 70s.

Trigger highlights (1998: 131-133) that archaeological studies, mostly conducted by North American based anthropological archaeologists, like Flannery (1972), Binford 1972, Carneiro (2012; 1970), Dunnell (1981) and others all exemplify different neo-evolutionary approaches to a single question; how did humans evolve from lower levels of social complexity into civilizations? A variety of answers were provided by such scholars and several others to this question. Yet the dependence on stages proposed by cultural anthropologists persevered, and still does presently (Flannery and Marcus 2012), in archaeological investigations.

For instance, Flannery views the evolution of societies as being best understood as a development and additions of institutions (1972: 401). The study of evolution in humans emerges in these studies as an analysis of the understanding of the origins of “civilization” in its broadest sense. By establishing multi-variant and attribute-heavy models, Flannery suggested that the specific linkages can best mend the disconnection between ecological factors and cultural mechanisms (1972: 423-424). In this view, functional rationalizations of the human reactions to evolving complexity are also seemingly complementary to an evolutionary explanation of generalized societal modelling. Carneiro’s circumscription theory (1970) perhaps falls under that same metaphysical assumption. By arguing that early states can only develop in ecological zones where intensification of agricultural production could be sustained, the opposing marginal regions are seen as less productive zones such as mountains, deserts, and seas (Carneiro 1970; Trigger 1998: 132). Then as population growth in productive zones led to previously unparalleled densities, people became compelled to submit to an equal surge in political subjugation that led to the creation of an early state.

In echoing White’s proposition that “... culture is viewed as the extra-somatic means of adaptation for the human organism ...” (1959: 8), Binford and many of his successors believed that human culture is an adaptive series of systems that are reactionary to a natural background (Binford 1962; Trigger 1998: 133). Therefore, all evolutionary transformations can be best seen as responses to alterations and contextually particular conditions with which humans were faced over time. According to Binford, the products of these adaptations are identified in the archaeological record as material differences, in which technologies reflect the human adjustments to evolutionary changes

(1962: 219). Therefore, while late 19th-century evolutionary thought seemed disillusioned with the idea of “progress”, the kernel of neo-evolutionary understanding appears to rely on cultural materialism to explain the constant human ability to innovate in reaction to change (Harris 2001; Trigger 1998: 134).

Neo-evolutionists became increasingly more interested in debating the “political” that is equally paralleled by the multiplicity of approaches and definitions lent to such a term. Nevertheless, the interest in politics arises from a generally common conception of its processes that grow out of consensus or need (Lull and Mico 2011: 162). In creating a generalized scheme of evolution, societies such as chiefdoms were seen as preceding hierarchized state societies and brought to fruition through the growing political agency of (typically male) leaders, which gender-focused reactions have rightly criticized (Spencer-Wood 1999). The role of governmental authority was also assumed to be as largely that of a service (i.e. a need) to a wider society, another stage in a series of successful solutions that evolved over time to adapt in light of inevitable change. However, these generalizations are too broad in their cross-comparative modelling purposes. If the ultimate stage of cultural evolution is thought to be the formation and establishment of states, then what should we make of societies that are not considered as “first states”? Should we unequivocally assume that they were less complex than other contemporaries?

Neo-evolution is a risky intellectual mode of thought to uphold because it implicitly permits the assumption that success makes some communities, and their history, better than others. Also, the heavy dependence on stages reduces the pace of change to a burdensome gradual rhythm to which humans must adapt to become more

complex. This is a difficult implicit baggage to discard because it promotes Western ideologies and civilizations to a higher level than others, seemingly because they were best adapted to change. These ethnocentric assumptions blind us to the poly-cultural nature of humans. Similarly, we cannot think that contemporary Western culture is the apex of cultural evolution when some might even claim that it is downplaying the abusive role that those in power manage to sustain over the remainder of their populations. The intellectual burden of neo-evolutionism is especially that it is deceptively easy to explain and rationalize, but it is also impossible to prove globally despite the best attempts to do so. This strain of thought, unconscious to many, intersects uncomfortably with modernity (Hernando 2013; Olivier 2013; Smith 2003: 21; Thomas 2004). I think that it is important to point out that neo-evolutionism stands as a testament to contemporary impressions of Western superiority and the general prosperity experienced in the post-WWII period. It is equally relegating earlier moments in history as somewhat inferior, in a technological or political sense, and placing the impression that non-state manifestations are simply transitional stages waiting that final moment of a culminating social complexity.

Moving on from Typologies

The reasons why scholars study our human evolution are probably equally both personal and academic; we interpret the past through our own conscious and unconscious lenses. The generalizations made by neo-evolutionism are still relevant in academia; it is a mode of thought that is also undergoing its own evolutionary transformation, albeit, slowly (Chapman 1996: 35-36). When contemplating what comes after neo-evolutionism,

we are faced with a plethora of uncertainties. I argue that we only need one certainty to move forward: we cannot maintain a generalizing mode of historic comprehension where a chiefdom society in Europe is presumed to be comparable according to certain set parameters to one in North America. These terms, models, and presumed related processes have gone a long way to reduce the local particularistic conditions to a series of attributes that can be expected and identified in numerous global settings (Pauketat 2007: 206; Seibert 2008: 2045). This issue requires us to consider recent attempts in studying the evolution of social complexity.

The manner in which archaeology appropriated the neo-evolutionary models of cultural anthropologists was a well-intentioned attempt to identify attributes globally in common among human societies, as already argued in the previous section. Yet it ran the risk of avoiding long-term historical trajectories that did not necessarily follow the general paths of evolutionary adaptations identified by neo-evolutionists. For example, despite Renfrew's (1973) suggestion that Malta's Late Neolithic megalithic "temples" were a by-product of a redistributive chiefdom society, this proposal has now been largely discounted because the typical vestiges of a chiefdom are not present in the archaeological record. If we cannot always identify "chiefs", their material culture, houses, settlements, territories, burials, and other socio-cultural aspects, does that mean that we are looking at a lower level of human culture? Pauketat (2007: 3) describes the identifiable idea of "chiefdom" as a delusion that is hindering the understanding of past social organization due to the cumbersome (and in constant need of validation) use of ethnologically derived terms.

It surely surprises no one that neo-evolutionism has percolated deeply into most sub-fields of archaeology. It is nearly impossible to distinguish mutually contradictory and often opposing conceptual intellectual viewpoints within a reduced historical purview of the archaeological comprehension of evolution. In European countries, such as Italy, neo-evolutionary paradigms for explaining social change and evolution remain unilinear and progressionist (Pessina and Tiné 2009; Guidi 2000).

In contrast, contemporary North American anthropological archaeology is diverse in its approaches to the study of societal change and evolution. For instance, Social Darwinism has increased in its stature even within archaeology, despite the several misgivings arising from earlier political exploitations of concepts such as racial superiority (Hodgson 2004: 428). Rather, Darwinian archaeology is now understood as "... attempting to explain patterns of cultural stability and change..." (Shennan 2002: 15). This explanatory mode is presently illustrated through the use of evolutionary psychology, behavioral ecology and dual-inheritance theory (ibid.). Evolutionary psychology has mostly been limited to cognitive explanations, that also emerged during the 1990s in the underpinnings of "*The Archaeology of the Mind*" (Renfrew and Zubrow 1994) and other evolutionary examinations of cognitive adaptations (cf. Malone and Stoddart 1998; Mithen 1996). On the other hand, behavioral ecology has intersected with archaeological investigations more so in North America than any other part of the world (see Boone and Smith 1998; Bird and O'Connell 2006; Broughton and O'Connell 1999; Cronk 1991; Schiffer 1975 for several examples). Behavioral ecology examines the subsistence means of certain peoples and creates predictions on the likely outcome of such strategies, in which culture is only seen as a product of cost-benefit optimization

processes within ecological and material constraints (Shennan 2008; Shennan 2002: 16). Dual-inheritance theory continues where behavioral ecology appears to be mostly weak; by adding the role of culture in addition to the genetic framework. Therefore, dual-inheritance theory accepts that the considerable variability found in human behavior cannot be simply connected to reproductive success and selection. Rather, culture acts as a second inheritance mechanism through which information and tradition is handed down through generations (Richerson and Boyd 2005; Shennan 2002: 16-17). The purpose of this latest conceptualization of Darwin's evolutionary study is unlike neo-evolutionism, especially in its reductionist comprehensive view of history and the general abandonment of strict arbitrary taxonomic distinctions made by the former.

In reaction to earlier neo-evolutionism, more recent attempts at understanding social complexity have embraced the broad cultural variation in our species (Chapman 2003: 44). This variation is assumed to be too wide to generalize about, which has also generated a renewed interest in historical materialism. Historical materialism became popular through Marx's own writings in the 19th century. In particular, Marx thought that historical materialism could be a useful methodological tool that seeks to understand the causes of developments and changes in human society. These causes are acted upon collectively and reflected through economic activity in reaction to the necessities of life. The collective action of individuals is identified through what Marx called the production relations, or rather, the involuntary activities in which all community members have to participate. All of these relations function within a permanent establishment of culture: the economic structure. This is also influenced by the forces of production, which refer to the numerous technological means of production in relation to human labor that can be

organized. The synergistic contributions of the production relations and forces of production produce a number of modes of production that are historically situated and diverse.

Chapman (2003: 59) suggests that Marxist perspectives of history stress the production and reproduction of life as the basis of all historical and social analysis. The emphasis on understanding change was seen in the early formulations by Marx and Engels ([1884] 2004) who argued that internal processes influenced the contradictory forces of production and relations of production. In contrast, the environment was seen as playing a marginal role in social change and evolution. At this point it is worth noting that Marx's own interpretation and proposal of historical materialism are not only piecemeal and unfocused in their conception, but they are even at odds with recent considerations of history through a Marxist lens. Althusser bemoaned that Marxism in the 1970s was undergoing a crisis in the different strategies and often contradictory practices applied that in turn brought to the fore new doubts on the validity of Marx's own ideas (1978: 215). Indeed, the contribution of Marxist thought to evolution and social complexity cannot discount the fact that Marx himself relied heavily on *The Ancient Society* by Lewis Henry Morgan (Morgan 1877; Terray 1972: 23). This reliance led to the sub-division of a global view of social evolution as going through stages based on technological development (Maurer 2006: 18): Primitive Communism, Asiatic Mode of Production, Ancient Mode of Production, Feudalism, (Early and Late) Capitalism, and (Early and Late) Socialism. In light of the previous description on early evolutionism, Marx's own proposals concerning social evolution are not adequate for any contemporary studies.

By consciously steering clear from a deep and confusing treatment of Marxist-inspired scholarly debates in archaeology better discussed elsewhere (Maurer 2006; Levine 2004; Trigger 1993), we might momentarily recognize the effects that Marxism has had after neo-evolutionism. In particular, the role of power and ideology (Bernbeck and McGuire 2011) has become considerably more apparent in publications (Chapman 2003: 61-62) that have little or nothing to do with Marxism itself (Douglas Price and Feinman 2010; Chapman 2008; De Marrais *et al.* 1996; Earle 1993). These attribute-based studies have also been paralleled by a movement away from focusing too strongly on administration types and classification, and rather, to exploring distinct attributes of leaders within their respective societies. Yet in debating these leaders and economic control (Chapman 2003: 44), the study of social complexity has now been superseded by an interest in examining ideology, power, and economic control individually or in combination.

A cursory view of studies on social complexity and evolution tends to indicate an implicit assumption of arbitrary binary opposites, such as simple to complex evolution or ideological versus economic control. In shifting our attention and scope of study from understanding social evolution as a progressionist history to a comprehension of complexity across time and space, an evolving long-term trajectory in human history can be identified in terms of the evolution of interconnectedness and levels of inequality (Chapman 2008: 16). Rather, inequality is not akin to hierarchy, and arguably a society does not need to be hierarchically constituted to have signs of considerable inequality. New forms of understanding this inequality should rely less on expecting vertical

hierarchical development while emphasizing the need for better comprehension and expectation of heterarchical horizontal variations (Drennan *et al.* 2010: 45).

In the above selective view of general trends in the state of field after neo-evolutionism, scholarship cannot be considered to provide a definitive examination of the breadth of disparate views raised by the issue of studying human social evolution. The shift away from neo-evolution is not a complete one and neither should it be expected to be complete. The prolonged interest in evolutionism during the 20th century has created a sufficiently varied number of approaches to debating social evolution. The issues stemming from rigid subjective typologies of social systems have given way to a more limitless view of social evolution as a history of social complexity. Interest in social complexity allows the earlier interest in administration systems (Fried 1967) to recede in favor of understanding societies as complex configurations of multiple human agents that are actively engaged in a series of overlapping and inter-locking relationships (Wynne-Jones and Kohring 2008; Sawyer 2005). These relationships can be thought of as being made up of numerous degrees of institutionalized social inequality (Bender 2000: 201). The study of our past inequality is not simply a retroactive search for our roots and origins. Rather, I believe that it can provide us with a better comprehension of how societies, who have not reached the levels of state societies, functioned and dealt with inequality.

Conclusion: A Considerable Intellectual Baggage

The study of social evolution is by no means an analogy-free intellectual setting. Indeed, there are a number of factors that yield an important effect on the study of our human history. In the case of this dissertation, the juxtaposition of Anglo-American, Italian, French, and Spanish scholarship is an uneasy one and difficult to maneuver. To some extent, these academic spheres have different preferential approaches, among which neo-evolutionism in some form still exists in Italian and French scholarship.

Efforts made by intellectuals in the Enlightenment Period, such as Hobbes and Rousseau, still have a profound effect on our contemporary views on our own and past societies. Indeed, the benefit of these works was their ability to elucidate the apparent disagreements in the nature of human societies. Are we better off alone or together? Were the structures of society disadvantageous or stimulants of power struggles? Even by simply focusing on Hobbes and Rousseau, amongst the most polarized observations of human society, we can see an indisputable variability. There is no one sure way of tackling such a broad topic, but at least we should respect the variability of human histories and their societal settings.

The ascent of neo-evolutionism, countered by the waning of cultural relativism in North America, brought a renewed effort to outline unifying trends in our social evolution. The emphasis on comprehending the different stages of social development seen among ethnographic and archaeological examples was a significant task. However, the broad focus of these approaches also means that its frameworks assumed a certain homogeneity in the development of human societies. There are even other problematic aspects left over by neo-evolutionist paradigms. Primarily, its focus on hierarchical evolution continues to perpetuate the idea, especially among those with a limited

understanding of social theory, of increased social complexity over time as indicated through the proportional expansion of rank and social classes. Further, this distinction between less and more complex societies affirming the 19th century belief of evolutionists, like Lewis Henry Morgan who influenced Karl Marx and the ensuing Marxism, that industrialized nations and their fates were connected to an earlier success. Second, neo-evolutionism also perpetuated the impression that complex societies have more inequality, while less complex societies reached levels of almost non-existent inequalities. Such an assumption leads us to overlook subtle differences between past and present individuals that could be tied to age, accomplishments, or even sex. It seems hardly likely that anyone could still claim that any two given societies are exactly the same. Similarly, we cannot reduce their social inequalities to a spectrum of "less" and "more".

The way forward remains unclear for scholars working in this field. On the one hand, neo-evolutionism is seen as a *passe* paradigm. Yet it is quite evident that the labeling of archaeological settings as "chiefdoms" or "tribes" remains a feature in the archaeological literature. There is no single way to expose the evolution of societies that does not require a breakdown of attributes and elements deemed as significant. In Chapter 3 I outline my proposal to studying inequality among pre-hierarchical societies in the prehistoric Central Mediterranean. At the core of this proposal lies a twofold expectation on the nature of social inequality in prehistoric societies. First, societies were dominated by an ideological superstructure that depicted contemporary societies as cooperative and well-functioning collectives while inequality expanded in the communities. Second, the prehistory of the Central Mediterranean between the 4th and 1st

millennia BC experienced six avenues through which the collective spirit became increasingly diminished across time.

Chapter 3: An Archaeology of Inequality and Social Complexity

Introduction: An Archaeology of Inequality and Social Complexity

In this dissertation *An Archaeology of Inequality and Social Complexity* is tied together through a number of elements that functioned in the prehistoric past either in unison or as antagonizing mechanisms within the superstructure of social complexity as can be identified in the developments and transformations of inequality over time. This chapter proposes that there is a renewed need for better epistemological questioning of what structuring principles make up a socially complex group prior to the origins of state-level societies. In the case of a Central Mediterranean account of inequality, I argue that a socially complex community was influenced and affected by factors that included collectivity, community, ideology, economy, cooperation, power, and resistance. These seven structuring principles were surrounded by an ever-looming instability. This precarious and untenable nature of human effort towards evolving and development requires us to suggest commonalities that could lead to a change in the overall social complexity as well as the make-up of inequality in these communities.

To better frame a long-term overview of the Central Mediterranean world between the 4th and 1st millennia BC, I propose that inequality could impact and emerge in prehistoric communities through five “avenues”. The idea of an avenue does not

denote a pre-determined predictable trajectory, but rather, accounts for the variable nature of inequality in the Central Mediterranean world.

An Epistemology of a Socially Complex Group

While during the Enlightenment period debates largely revolved around humanity's good or evil nature *vis à vis* social organization, the later interest in evolutionism created a debate on how humans developed over time. That perceived development was also up for contention. The 20th century debates surrounding evolutionism shifted the earlier philosophical interest in debating the nature of humans within societies to a cultural anthropological interest in examining our social evolution as a stage-like trajectory from “simple” to “complex” political organizations, which I have already discussed in Chapter 2. However, I have left one aspect unanswered: if we should agree that evolutionary concepts such as “chiefdoms” or “states” are difficult to accept, then can we shift our investigations by focusing on attributes that make up the socio-political structure of complex communities? This is a useful possibility because it allows archaeologists to create a multi-attribute view of prehistoric societies that is not based on retrospective view of history but also seeks to uncover the origins of later state societies. In this regard, I propose the following seven structuring principles (the collective spirit, community, ideology, economy, cooperation, power, resistance) as over-arching and multi-variable existential conditions (McGuire 1983: 92) that I foresee as having functioned in unison or in antagonistic tension between them.

The Collective Spirit

If we recall momentarily Fried's "... equality is a social impossibility! ..." (1967: 27) stance, it brings up a crucial framing question; how can people function as an entity if their standing to each other is fundamentally unequal? Archaeologists have typically relied on the concept of communities and that is a good starting point. However, I would suggest that "being" a community is only a secondary step to a broader, less tangible, sense of a collective. The collective spirit can be defined as a transient state of mind controlled by a combined group of individuals on behalf of a broader community, through specific forms of behavior and actions that diminish individualism (contrast Hernando 2013 to Locke 2011). The collective spirit manifests itself through the connection of physical cultural products and the metaphysical embodiment of a number of individuals functioning as a group. This collective spirit could also be manipulated and exploited as a means to project a false sense of collectivity, allowing individuals in power to keep their fellow community members cooperative.

Community

The collective spirit and associated actions of amassed individuals are located within the fold of a community. In contrast to a collective, in this dissertation I argue that a community is more stable and reliant on the trans-generational survival of a given group of people, while a collective is a fleeting *raison d'être* that is up for change and also prone to manipulation. In response, a community has a physical signature identified by anthropologists typically as the "... territorial unit of human organization that links culture and society ..." (Knapp 2003: 566). It would be wrong to argue that archaeologists agree on the premise and boundaries of a community, especially since

communities have also been split off as “natural” or “imagined” by a number of scholars (van Dommelen *et al.* 2005: 55; Knapp 2003: 567; Isbell 2000; Anderson 1982).

Conceivably, a community could be seen as not simply a physical entity but more a communal set of repeated actions (van Dommelen *et al.* 2005: 56) or another aspect of the *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990). In speaking of a community, it is understood in this dissertation as the basis of collective behavior. In turn, this behavior can, and is entirely expected to, change over a given time as the reflective effect on the community brings about changes to the social organization and ideological pursuits. That effect will also transpire in tumultuous shifts in the social complexity, becoming evident through inequality and community strategies that provide an assurance of the enforcement of that inequality.

The mutuality of a collective and a community is an unpredictable expression of the cooperative actions undertaken or not by individuals. That cooperative stance is not necessarily a given. It needs to be properly and constantly transmitted to community members through the assurance of ideology. Rousseau and others questioned the typical expectation that humans cooperate unflinchingly with others that they are associated with through kinship or other associations. However, I would ask whether rational self-interest can ever trump cooperation. The stag hunt scenario puts this issue in context. Rousseau (1999) described how a hunting party on the lookout for a deer share a common pursuit: bringing down a sufficiently large prey to feed a number of them. However, what if a hare were to suddenly jump in the path of one individual? Does that individual break off from the communal pursuit to capture an immediately available potential source of food? This hypothetical scenario by Rousseau has become known as the “stag hunt” or the

“trust dilemma” and likened to the “prisoner’s dilemma” in which an inherent conflict is seen as rising between the individual’s own rational interest and potential mutual benefit through cooperation (Skyrms 2004: 3). These settings bring to the archaeological stage of investigations an interesting potentiality; should we assume that humans either cooperate or become conflicted?

Ideology

In this dissertation ideology plays a pivotal role in motivating and ensuring social cooperation. In utilizing the term “ideology”, scholars interpret it as a transmitter of social order (Eagleton 1991: 2; Wolf and Silverman 2001: 378-379), especially at times of increasing political strife or general conditions conducive to societal stress. Rather, in my opinion, Althusser offers the best definition of ideology as the “... system of ideas and representations [that] dominate the mind of a man or a social group ...” (1994: 120). However, that imaginary form of ideology also strives to counter the effects of resistance by reconstituting a contradictory sense of unity (Eagleton 1991: 222; Shanks and Tilley 1988: 181). In contrast, Gramsci envisioned ideology as a domination discourse, encapsulated by “hegemony” (Routledge 2013: 37).

To Gramsci ideological domination is a persistent force that, on behalf of domineering individuals or groups, suppresses an alternate ideology and promotes an explanation of reality. An additional attribute to hegemony according to Gramsci is domination by consent (Bernbeck and McGuire 2011: 4; Smith 2004). Yet, despite potential oppositions to ideology being enforced within a wider society, a general sense of acceptance normalizes the process of ideological domination. However, Gramsci’s view of ideological domination, formulated in reaction to capitalistic societies, does not

adequately answer the recognition of the individual of this ideology. Althusser argues that despite our best abilities to recognize ideology and its associated apparatuses, ideology recruits individuals to become subjects in variable manners (1994: 130-131). Ideology is a discourse (Eagleton 1991: 223) that affects all material production in which individuals do not consciously conceive of the actions of ideology. Nevertheless, individuals will typically act within pre-set constraints and transmitted information controlled through ideology.

Economy

The economy is the productive action of ideological effects, since it is the place where control and resource allocation require the productivity and consent of community members. However, in speaking of the “economy” we need to discard, or at least sideline, numerous modern pre-conceptions. The prehistoric economy is by no means comparable to modern capitalist systems. This difference has already emerged strongly in debates surrounding the work of Polanyi and others (Hirth 1996: 207) who sought to decrease the reliance on economic production espoused by Adam Smith while promoting the idea of non-rational (substantivist) decision-making as driving production and exchange. These ideas have already been broadly debated by others, but Polanyi’s focus on “*The Great Transformation*” (1957) highlighted the great differences that one can expect between pre-market and market economy societies. In dealing with pre-state societies in Central Mediterranean later prehistory, one can easily assume that we are dealing solidly with pre-market societies, but then what is the “economy” supposed to encompass and yield upon examination?

Perhaps the definition of economy could be temporarily simplified as the combination of human reaction and adaption to natural ecological surroundings with the added cultural influences that become evidence through processes of production, distribution, and consumption (Feinman 2008). Meillassoux described economic production as ‘... the cultivation of soil, self-subsistence, the use of very short-term production techniques and of human energy as the main source of power ...’ (1964: 89, cited in Terray 1972: 97). Production spans across the social medium through an arbitrary separation of activities meant for subsistence and nonagricultural production. Yet production is difficult to simply encapsulate in a description since at various moments of human history economic production of nonagricultural tasks could encompass craft specialization (Helms 1993), monumental construction, surplus strategies (Cazzella 2009), and other labor commitments (Feinman 2008: 1116-1117). Production brings up another concern that ties to collective behavior and ideological domination: the mode of production. The forces that dominate the flow of production activities are a potential avenue through which inequality becomes a means of exhibiting disparities in social order. Indeed, Terray claimed that the modes of production are a “... three-part system: [made up of] an economic base, a juridico-political superstructure, and an ideological superstructure...” (1972: 97). The production process leads to the exchange and distribution of materials across communities.

While earlier ethnographic accounts (cf. Malinowski 1961) largely confirmed Polanyi’s impression that pre-market societies operate in non-rational ways, the general consensus in contemporary archaeology is that exchange and distribution are considerably variable (Feinman 2008: 1118). Further, economic productions are not

simply redistributive or reciprocal; they are conducted in numerous overlapping multi-scalar networks that are motivated by different intents. By this I mean that we cannot assume that the exchange of bulk commodities, largely produced in domestic small-scale contexts, is akin to the exchange of craft production (ibid.). Exchange and distribution has also been argued to reflect a code of sharing, established within any given society, that is stipulated according to relations of production (Terray 1972: 121) in favor of reflecting the social standing of individuals or groups. Then distribution through repetitive and expected patterns of exchange lead to consumption. Consumption cannot be understood as a final place in which artifacts become deposited over their use-life. Rather, consumption patterns reflect a general habitual practice, also described as the *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990), that is situated in the body and daily practice of individuals.

Cooperation

Already alluded to above, I believe that at the foundation of ideological control and economic processes lies the expected cooperation of individuals within their wider community. Archaeology has not dwelt sufficiently on the issue of cooperation sufficiently, besides the interest in ascribing agency to individuals (Dobres and Robb 2005; Dobres and Robb 2000) and communities (Gardner 2007). However, if we are interested in comprehending the epistemology of socially complex communities, should we not be questioning how cooperating for the “greater good” is beneficial to all? In this dissertation, I argue that cooperation is not a natural given but can be an instinctual reaction if the metaphysical means of control are efficient and acceptable to multitudes of individuals (Bowles and Gintis 2011: 2). Unchecked and unquestioned cooperation exists among a few species, for example superorganisms like ants (Hölldobler and Wilson

2008), where despite the lack of reproductive possibilities organisms cooperate under the direction of one single organism (Brosnan 2011: 12). The conditions for humans are different, but still, a behavior can be considered as cooperative only if it produces a benefit to another individual through an evolutionary process (West *et al.* 2007: 661, Fuentes 2004: 716). Dawkins' *The Selfish Gene* (1976) provided a one-track consideration of the manner in which human nature presumably was largely geared towards egoistical individual rewarding. However, later research is increasingly proving that humans, as well as our primate cousins, function through multiple behaviors that are necessary to ascertain cooperation (Fuentes 2004: 711). Humans illustrate their social complexity in the set-up of social coordination that in turn acts as an assurance of cooperation (Fuentes 2004: 715).

Cooperation cannot be imagined as a simple transaction with immediate return benefits. Surely, while cooperation relies on an eventual return or at least a perceived benefit return, humans and other organisms typically experience a considerable delay in benefits. This delay requires complex abilities to not simply keep track of benefits due but also to properly gauge adequate reactions once benefits are not received at a timely pace. Indeed, some argue that cooperation follows Darwin's theory of individualistic emphasis (Axelrod and Hamilton 1981: 1390), which can also be argued as being made up of "... strong reciprocators [that] are conditional cooperators, behaving altruistically as long as others are doing so as well, and altruistic punishers, applying sanctions to those who behave unfairly according to the prevalent norms of cooperation ..." (Gintis 2012: 173). The most successful examples of cooperation tend to be slightly generous to one party, where behavior and reciprocity is sustained until deemed beneficial, and easily

substituted by defections. However, momentary and temporary lapses of cooperation is argued to be tied to the issue of delayed benefits (Clutton-Brock 2009: 51), which requires a certain aptitude in keeping track of dues. While most instances of cooperation tend to occur in settings of kin relatedness (Axelrod and Hamilton 1981: 1391), cooperative behavior can be made up of asymmetrical relations. Due to an inequity in power and status, individuals participating in cooperative behavior can create a difference in the value of benefits provided and exchanged (Clutton-Brock 2009: 53-54).

In establishing the epistemological attributes of a socially complex society, I find that it is easy to ask oneself: why do humans cooperate even in situations of considerable inequality? Why not simply act *against* the general cooperative interests of a group, which as I have described above does not necessarily turn out to be equally beneficial to all individuals. Gintis suggests that three reasons could explain why cooperation tends to trump, if not marginalize, uncooperative individuals (2012: 174-175, Bowles and Gintis 2011: 3). First, humans have devised several ways to protect altruistic members from exploitation by creating practices that seemingly limit hierarchy and inequality. Second, humans have established limitless ways in establishing sociality as a norm and create a focus on common projects that become binding cooperative action. Third, humans are group organisms. We become more competitive and capable at acquiring resources through group cooperative action than as single individuals. Of these three suggestions, I find the first one to be perhaps the most historically questionable since humans are inducted into cooperation through an ideological domination by consent that I believe arises through discourses of power.

Power

Power is an unstable force, it requires tending to and it can be challenged (Arnold 1996: 8), but even more importantly it requires efficient transmitters that illustrate the order of things and policies. A typical archaeological definition of power might be that "... [it] is to be seen in the difference between people or groups different amounts and qualities of goods available for consumption, or by the deliberate and stylized use of unusual, imported, or costly things to set off otherwise similar activities ... from those of less powerful people..." (Joyce and Wilkie 2008: 1485). Power can be thought of as either an inert capacity that all individuals can subconsciously or consciously relate to, or it is a motivator of relationships that can cause collective action (ibid.). In attaining power individuals expend a considerable deal of energy on establishing mobilization efforts. However, these individuals are in no way ever situated in unchallenged positions. Rather, relations of power are in flux and in constant need of rebuilding. It should also be added that power is regionally unequal in development and manifestation (Smith 2004: 221), an aspect often assumed to be made up of almost singular forms of power within any given culture. The impression of power relations as constantly in flux applies to a broader view of social complexity since "... the very creation of cultural messages depends on who is sending the message and for what end ..." (Wolf and Silverman 2001: 378). In the case of power, its culture message is a relational one (Joyce and Wilkie 2008: 1484-1485) that Foucault has even argued typically becomes seen as a struggle when instances of power become immediate to an individual (1982: 780). The immediacy necessary for power to become apparent to individuals is an interesting idea that perhaps has not garnered sufficient attention in archaeology (Feinman 2002: 389).

If we assume momentarily that power, acting across numerous levels of any given culture, is transcendent of ideological attempts at domination, then can we assume that all individuals were aware of its existence and exploitative role? Perhaps not always. Individuals or groups controlling a broader segment of a population often enact mutually contradictory discourses of power. Power becomes exemplified through materialized ideologically charged “statements” that transmit a sense of community, while also justifying social inequality and differential access to resources (De Marrais *et al.* 1996: 31). Then power can be seen as both a formal and informal process that presents to a wider population the impression of a community but also acting to the benefit of a group that lays claim to controlling their wider community. Since power is a fluid and adaptable human strategy, I would add that it should be identified as an attribute that does not require rigid hierarchies to operate. Power can be a variable mechanism that reacts to the inevitability of change through which inequality becomes the desired outcome by those in control.

Resistance

If then power is a necessity for ensuring the cooperation of community members, resistance should be thought of as an opposing force in ensuring or even discouraging change in favor of domination forces stemming from relations of power. The heterogeneity of power (Feinman 2002: 389) is equally balanced by a series of reactionary forces emerging through resistance. Acting as an antagonizing condition, resistance seeks to counter the illusory effects enacted by those in power (Godelier 1978: 767; Feinman 2012b: 303), who attempt to create an impression of a community. Our own contemporary existence has also created an illusory expectation of power struggles

as being largely limited to those between ambitious individuals. In contrast, Paynter and McGuire suggest that the stereotypical impression of docile acquiescence was rather made up of an interplay between domination and resistance (1991). Interestingly, actions related to resistance do not function on the same broad level of power relations. Resistance acts through patterns of defiance that are typically more exemplified at micro-levels such as the household, neighborhoods, etc. Resistance can also be thought of as “... a wider range of actions than massive, confrontational, political resistance...” (Paynter and McGuire 1991: 12).

Rather than argue in favor or against arbitrary typological social denominations, I argue that archaeologists need to become more concerned with the epistemology of human groups. After all, since all humans are involved in complex group-based conditions and characterized by gradations of inequality, I do not feel confident in attaching terms derived from cultural anthropological models of human societies. Rather, by focusing on attributes I propose that archaeology can overcome assumptions of pre-state societies as being simple or lacking in hierarchy. On the other hand, by keeping in mind that equality among humans is a social impossibility we can begin to look at the archaeological record as the product of constant social negotiation. The seven structuring principles proposed and described above (collective, community, ideology, economy, cooperation, power, and resistance) are not things that we get to “check off” while dealing with the archaeological record. Instead, I argue that these variables represent the tangible and intangible axis of social complexity. That same social complexity, imaginable as a tight-knit woven piece of textile, responds to changes to these attributes through modifications to the inter-connection of social systems.

Finally, these structuring principles are reactive to implicit and explicit assumptions about humans and their organizational process. First, the idea of a community has created an idyllic agency to the relationships between individuals or groups. We cannot assume that a community is made up of willing and content individuals. This means that their sense of a community can shift depending on the collective sentiment. Second, not all humans are willing cooperative agents. Sometimes, the delayed benefits redeemed through cooperation can become so far removed and delayed that its existence or worthiness becomes questionable. Third, struggles in human societies thrive on immediacy. In situations of small populations it can be imagined that inequality and expressions of power had to be less pronounced to reduce friction and maintain a social constancy. In the following section, I expound the attributes outlined above by suggesting that inequality operates through five avenues that seek to curb the inevitable pace of change and instability.

Establishing an Archaeology of Inequality & Social Complexity: Five Potential Avenues to Inequality

In examining the historical background to studies of human social evolution and complexity I gather one common thread; we are still overly concerned with identifying either the final resulting social culmination into state-level societies or absolute origin. This polarizing interest in our collective past means that less works deal with “pre-state” societies on their own merits, rather than on the grounds of what they will become over time. In this work, focusing on the Central Mediterranean 4th and 1st millennia BC, there

ae no state-level societies. There was no perceptible complex hierarchy with established productive roles geared towards creating a surplus. There was nothing that could be comparable to other contemporary systems of literacy. Rather, we have a number of inter-connected ecological zones that underwent three millennia of social development. This social development did not result in uniform state-level societies. It also does not result in uniform states of social complexity, despite a broad web of inter-connection. I find less familiar and common paths of social development and evolution in the Central Mediterranean than others who have chosen to examine long-term historical trajectories through a societal scale of simple versus complex.

In creating an *Archaeology of Inequality and Social Complexity* I suggest that we can follow five avenues, which will be expanded in detail in the coming chapters. The main point throughout this dissertation is that inequality exists in some form in all human societies. More importantly, what differs between human groups is the way and the extent to which strategies in favor of inequality are enacted or resisted. It is not only impossible to predict the ultimate results of these strategies, but even the historical diminishment of the struggles and actions of individuals in the past by seeking the origins of later state societies by "thumbing through" the Central Mediterranean's late prehistory. All the actions undertaken by prehistoric communities should be seen as manifestations of implicit or explicit social negotiations. In addition, the human past has effectively been turned by some into an account of gradual evolutionary developments, where humans and their descendants continued with their lives over broad temporal spans in comparable manners with slow social development and change. Once again, this view diminishes the actions of individuals (Smith 2011: 419), how they operated within their broader group,

and how they responded to change. In trying to maintain a set social order over time, it appears to me that inequality became an extension to social struggles through which those in advantageous power conditions attempt to counteract shifting attitudes towards inequity. To put it crudely, inequality functions as the henchmen for those trying to, or striving to remain in control. Inequality, similar to ideology, I argue does not have history *per se* but it is infinite in existence and in constant development. Therefore, I suggest that inequality in the prehistoric Central Mediterranean can be recognized in the following five avenues:

1. The Central Mediterranean as a particular multi-ecological region (**Chapter 4**)
2. Oscillating and shifting distributive networks (**Chapter 5**)
3. Potent artifacts that express the ideological interests of groups laying claim to power (**Chapter 6**)
4. The diminishing collective and burial customs (**Chapter 7**)
5. An expressed inequality the construction of monumental structures (**Chapter 8**)

To summarily expand the above list of proposed avenues it should be made clear first that the Central Mediterranean, as a geographic and multi-ecological system, provides a contextual backdrop for communities that settled here and evolved over protracted spans of time. Second, inequality is not effective only at a metaphysical level, but it requires a perceptible controlling agency. Therefore, I suggest that by controlling access to knowledge and goods, desired widely across the Central Mediterranean, some succeeded to distinguish themselves through control. Third, inequality is enforced through an

integrated use of ideological and economic control. Unlike the control of access, ideological and economic control I believe form the foundation of social attempts at maintaining a sense of stability in societies that were inherently prone to un-stabilizing factors. Ideology, as the form in which humans choose to represent themselves in an imaginary form (Althusser 1971), compliments the physical process of economic control, in which some members of the community attempt to predominantly direct production of their surrounding community. Fourth, I argue below that the combined effects of all the above avenues for inequality can lead as well to a diminishing sense of a collective. A diminishing collective is the transformation of a previous state of collectivity, bonded through social expectation, a necessity of cooperation (Carballo 2012: 15-16), that is enforced by memory and results in a state in which collectivity experiences an ideological and economic transformation that can be targeted to control a larger portion of a given community. Fifth, the diminishing collective requires a counter in the world surrounding communities, particularly through the dissonance, interplay, and juxtaposition of the natural and modified landscape. It seems logical that discourses of inequality within societies are not simply carried out through metaphysical or controlling processes, but also imparted through the use of the visual and experiential means.

Conclusion: Towards a Central Mediterranean Account of Social Complexity and Inequality

In the previous chapter I posed an innocuous, but also deceptive, question: why social complexity and inequality once more? Certainly, many scholars have already asked

themselves and tackled that same question through their own theoretical paradigms and datasets. Yet all of these individuals came up with different answers to that most deceiving of questions. Even social complexity is a difficult term to approach because it is all about interconnectedness among individuals, groups, communities, etc. It is a multi-scalar mechanism that is perpetuated in what Smith calls the "formidable" and "everyday" (Smith 2011). Social complexity is made up of a diverse series of social structures that function sometimes in unison and other times not. In contrast, inequality arises from the exploitative manipulation of the social structure (Chapman 2003; 2008). That manipulation does not benefit everyone, despite that it be subverted through attempts to suggest a community-wide benefit.

It is no coincidence that this chapter follows the historical background to social evolution and inequality outlined in Chapter 2. Mainly, there is no true “road map” for how we should look and perceive of our social evolution. In no way can we claim that this theoretical stance is better than any other supplied, because we are dealing with a metaphysical issue that spreads between the past and our own contemporary existence. By the latter I mean that we perceive of our past social evolution always through our own contemporary conditions (Joyce and Wilkie 2008: 183). Right now, we are moving towards a global moment when more people are situated in abject poverty than ever before in history. We are experiencing a growing rift between social class inequality in amassed wealth, education, and racial discrimination. All of these issues weigh heavily in the back of our minds as we look through the archaeological record. The difference is if we are willing to recognize those issues and our contemporary concerns or not. Similarly, what Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke, and others claimed stems from their own

historically specific moment that we need to keep in mind. Therefore, by discussing the historical background to earlier metaphysical questions of “*are we better off together or alone?*” it was eventually possible to deal with “*how do we think of humans evolving over time?*” We are still very much debating these questions, as we try to distinguish between the problems and benefits of neo-evolutionism and what should come as the next theoretical standard-bearer. I am only certain of one thing: we have devised multitudes of manners to approach the matter of our social complexity as a species (Smith 2003; MacSweeney 2009; Souvatzi 2007; Wynne-Jones and Kohring 2008).

In this dissertation, I choose to focus on inequality as a central aspect of social complexity. In contrast, all of the past approaches described above assume that inequality is an inevitable product of humans’ social complexity. That is true, but only partly so. Inequality operates at all levels of a given society of any given complexity. It is one of the main true commonalities within our species; we find a variety of ways to impose the will of some over others. This commonality, I would claim, makes inequality a core principle in providing a long-term account of the Central Mediterranean over three millennia. In focusing on inequality, I will consciously avoid utilizing typological denominations set forth by cultural anthropologists and over time appropriated by archaeologists. These terms have now become convoluted and so variably defined (Yoffee 2005, 1993; Pauketat 2007) that I am unsure of their usefulness when we are trying to debate pre-state societies. More importantly, is it perhaps a modern oversimplification to argue that pre-state peoples are operating as either tribal or chiefdom societies? In the coming chapters I hope to argue that the variability of social evolution,

even in a single region of the Mediterranean basin, was so broad that we cannot simplify trends and patterns to ethnographically derived typological denominations.

Channeling Morton Fried's pronouncement, this dissertation argues that inequality is everywhere! From the formidable to the everyday (Smith 2011), inequality was created to benefit some individuals over others as they sought to best control their peers through the manipulation of the contemporary ideological set-up to maintain a beneficial consensus. Echoing Johnson "... I want to know why human social development took the path that it did ..." (2011: 318). In the following Chapter 4, I expand on the background to social complexity and inequality by framing them within a specific geographical region - the Central Mediterranean. This chapter examines two intersecting elements: geographical space and inter-connectivity over time. In this multi-ecological space humans adapted with varying degrees of success to their physical surroundings through varying cultural developments.

Chapter 4: From lands within and beyond the ‘Four Seas’: The Central Mediterranean

Introduction: The Intersection of Space and Time

The Mediterranean basin can be split into innumerable arbitrary segments. Yet most recent broad historical studies tend to exalt the Eastern Mediterranean as the cradle of civilizations and the bringer of history (Morris 2010; Abulafia 2011; Norwich 2006), distinguished from the remainder of the basin (Souvatzi and Hadji 2014: 11). Beyond the spatial expanse of the East, the remainder of the Mediterranean basin has often been referred through multiple labels, such as the Western Mediterranean or even sub-divided between the Central and Western Mediterranean. In this dissertation, the Central Mediterranean (**Figure 1**) refers to a multi-ecological region that encompasses peninsular Italy as far North as the Alps, extending to the large islands of Sardinia, Corsica, and Sicily along with surrounding small islands of the Aeolian, Maltese, Pelagian, Egadi, Ustica, and Pantelleria. From the vertiginous heights of the Alps to the isolation of small islands, the Central Mediterranean embodies the ecological micro-regional fragmentation of the broader Mediterranean (Horden and Purcell 2000; Broodbank 2013: 19). This chapter argues that the human prehistory of the Central Mediterranean has to be interpreted as composed of an overlap between space and time. Across space, the terrestrial and maritime expanse of this region created avenues of movement, while even

acted as potential limitations. On the other hand, time in archaeology is most often utilized to understanding the past as a linear spectrum (Karlsson 2001: 50) against which cultural continuity can be gauged as progress leading to our present (Souvatzi and Hadji 2014: 10). Instead, in this chapter time is interpreted as the comprehension of actions and the contextualization of local particularities within a global framework (Horden 2005: 26).

The boundaries of the Central Mediterranean, as in the case of any other region, were and are not static or rigidly imposed. Therefore, when dealing with the Central Mediterranean, we also have to deal with the cultural extent of inter-connected cultures at any given historical moment. At the same time, wider debates on the validity of the “Mediterranean” as an entity of study have matured over the last decade across a broad range of disciplines, including history (Horden and Purcell 2000) and archaeology (Broodbank 2013; Knapp and Blake 2005). Earlier intellectual conceptions of the Mediterranean were often influenced by nostalgic engagement inspired by Grand Tour travelers within the basin (Black 2003a; 2003b; Hibbert 1969), who as outsiders perceived this world as unchanging or seemingly bound to Mediterranean-wide traditions and culture. Despite the need to remove impressions of an unchanging Mediterranean world, individuals will always have their own personal cognitions of the Mediterranean. Our own experiences, background, and intellectual education cumulatively create our own personal understandings of the “Mediterranean”, even if that might lead some to rebuke the Mediterranean as even existing (Herzfeld 2005; 1984).

The “Mediterranean” and its Study

Yet to many, apply the word “Mediterranean” to any food, temperament, or architecture (Cooke 1999: 290) and one might visualize over-animated conversations or the rich flavor of its artisanal olive oil. However, more probably the “Mediterranean” brings to mind the image of the idyllic blue sea lapping against a coastline and an enclosed expanse of water that feels safer than an ocean. The “Mediterranean” can also bring to mind less optimistic perspectives. To many it has played a secondary role in recent history as the location of imperial and colonial desires and experienced numerous moments of violence and war emerging from the entangled struggles between extra-Mediterranean powers (Sant Cassia and Schäfer 2005: 3). The contemporary “Mediterranean” can even bring to mind the constant mobility of peoples seeking a better economic future or even a safer home, which has turned its northern shores into a hotbed for xenophobes who stress the economic misfortunes of this region (Herzfeld 2014: 131) by blaming incoming refugees. For me, the Mediterranean, as an imagined space, is made up of the far stretching dark blue sea, often churning and seemingly isolating, while for a smaller part of the year provides joy and access to its innumerable bounties.

Such polarizing and conflicting impressions of the Mediterranean, as a comprehended space, are not a recent novelty. Plato’s use of the “Mediterranean” as a metaphor for political chaos (Purcell 2003: 9) was not based on nostalgic sentiments. His metaphorical summation of the Mediterranean, as an immoral and chaotic being, demonstrated the potential negative sentiments raised by some of those peoples that immediately surround this inland sea. In the meantime, this negative view of the

Mediterranean has not raised much debate among scholars studying this region. Rather, debates have focused on defining the epistemological roots for study *in the* Mediterranean, perhaps with limited insight into how the study *of the* Mediterranean can be conducted. To further complicate matters, the study of this region has remained surprisingly bereft of definitions (Morris 2003: 35-36) and quite often comfortable with a certain degree of vagueness (Horden and Purcell 2000: 45; Matvejevic 1999: 11).

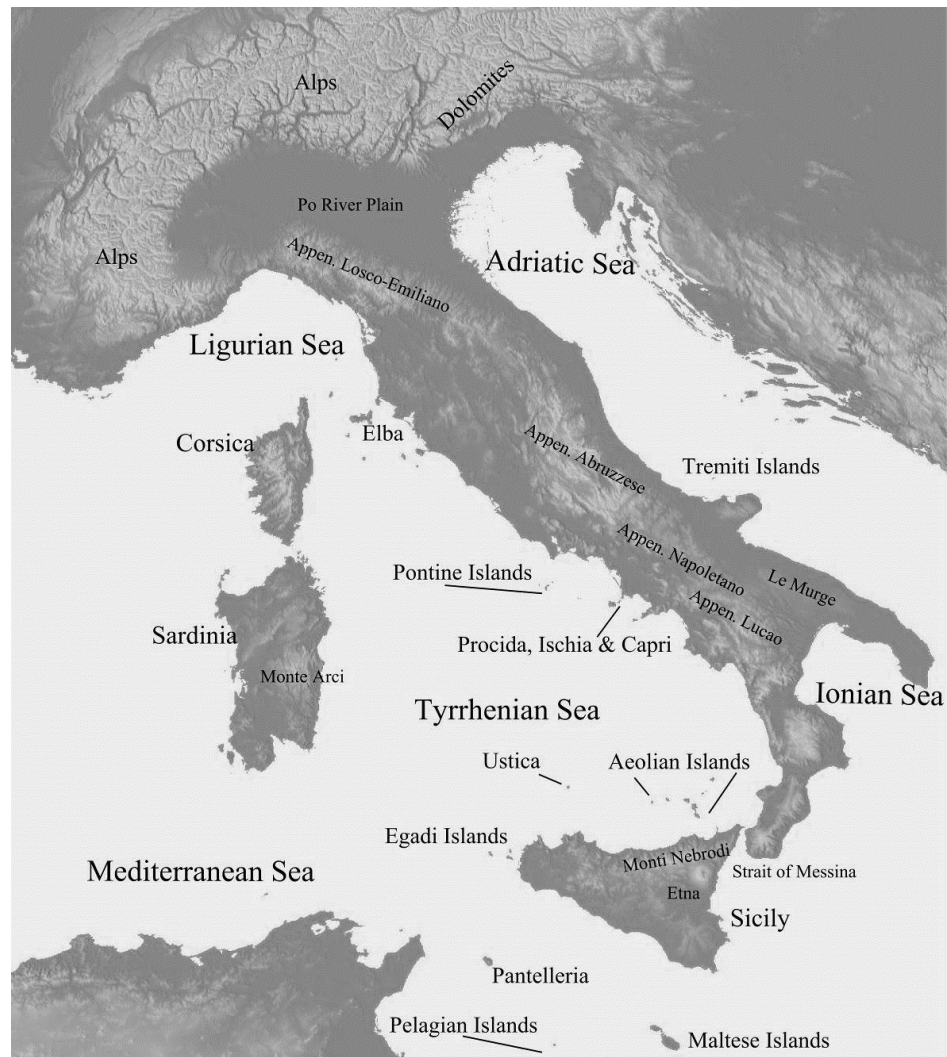


Figure 1: Map of the Central Mediterranean region, as understood in this dissertation, including the Ligurian, Tyrrhenian, Ionian and Adriatic Seas (©Esri 2013 basemap)

The unexpected issues arising from the mere task of definition become particularly obvious when one juxtaposes the three typical considerations of the “Mediterranean” as an analytical unit. First, the Mediterranean as a sea holds a considerable presence as the main definitional axis. After all, the use of the term the “Middle Sea” refers exclusively to the marine component of this region. It suggests an inward looking perspective with less interest in the surrounding European and African continents. Second, the Mediterranean is often described in an ecological sense that includes the sea but extends to general climatic commonalities. For instance, the Mediterranean coastline and islands typically enjoy a moderate climate that influences characteristic vegetation and its growth extents (**Figure 2**) (Knapp and Blake 2005: 6). If one ascribes to this view, then would other Mediterranean-type (classified as Csa by the Köppen system) climatic zones show comparable historical developments? The short answer is no. Most other Mediterranean-like regions in the world are not made up of the same circum-marine properties and certainly experienced differently paced social developments (Broodbank 2013: 62). Third, if one ignores climatic and vegetation extents, the Mediterranean has also been seen as extending beyond circum-marine limits into immediately adjacent areas, dubbed by Braudel (1972: 168) as the “Greater Mediterranean”.



Figure 2: Map of the Mediterranean basin indicating the extent of Mediterranean-type vegetation (©Esri 2013, DeLorme, NAVTEQ basemap; after Broodbank 2013: 56).

After “The Corrupting Sea”

Renewed debate, emerging after the publication of *The Corrupting Sea* (Horden and Purcell 2000), describes the Mediterranean as a region that at an early stage experienced an intense overlapping systems of inter-connectivity sustained across its marine and terrestrial expanse. The conditions of the Mediterranean should not be overstressed in an attempt to aggrandize its uniqueness. Rather, *The Corrupting Sea* and ensuing debates increasingly stress the Mediterranean’s intense patterns of inter-connectivity that crisscross this region in as varied rates or form as the disparate physical units that make up this space. Indeed, an investigation of the combined relationship and influence between physical space and human occupation requires us to treat both elements as significant. As I argue below, the specific physical conditions of any given region play a shaping role in the extent or manner of human occupation.

These diverse conditions provide the base against which humans adapt and develop upon. The physical conditions of the Mediterranean offer a varying degree of

opportunities over which humans developed irregular patterns of inter-connectivity that permitted the mobility of goods, ideas, and people. Inter-connectivity can also be approached through multiple perspectives. Earlier work inspired by Finley (1973) emphasized a limited inter-connectivity. The peoples of the Mediterranean world were thought of as limited in their mobility and restricted to interactions with close-by neighbors (Morris 2003: 38). In contrast, Braudel's view of Mediterranean inter-connectivity involved the predominant bias of routes that preferentially kept some communities within the sphere of communication, while others struggled to maintain a role in broader systems of connection and developed their own historical trajectories. Both of these perspectives offer a certain degree of rigidity and fixedness that human behavior tends to overcome, if not entirely ignore. Rather, inter-connectivity is now seen as more chaotic and irregular than was not formalized in the sense of stable routes (Purcell 2013; Horden and Purcell 2000). Instead, I argue below that inter-connectivity requires us to keep in mind the fluctuating trends of history, in which some are able to expend energy and effort into inter-connectivity (for the transfer of goods, ideas, and peoples) while others are unable or uninterested in participating in such broad systems.

The chaotic and fluid nature of the Mediterranean is still a current imposition on the understanding of its past, present, and future, often narrated by outsiders (Herzfeld 2005) and something that I question as an individual born and raised in the Mediterranean. Therefore, in understanding the Mediterranean, we inevitably need to identify the intents and motives for focusing on this region as an area of study. The consistent academic "fixation" with the Mediterranean (Matvejevic 1999: 10) and its presumed shared attributes are inevitably politicized and exploited even by locals

(Herzfeld 2005; De Pina-Cabral 1989; Herzfeld 1984). The Mediterranean past, studied within the current age of globalization, has now become an avenue to explore and rationalize the current economic failures of this region due a past trend of unpredictability (Herzfeld 2005: 57). According to Herzfeld, this focus on the Mediterranean's past and shared cultural traits has created a number of "Mediterraneanisms" born through imperial interests (2005: 63) that allow the politicization and manipulation of the past to answer for the present (Horden and Purcell 2006: 725). In reaction, Morris (2003: 50-51) argues that Mediterraneanism emerges as an intellectual movement debating the region's applicability as an analytic unit. Instead, in considering the globalization inspired interests in comprehending the shifts and changes over time, Morris (2005) argues that "Mediterraneanization" refers to an ongoing process and not an unchanging state.

Re-Envisioning Mediterranean Space and its Histories

The Mediterranean Sea is the one common denominator that connects the considerable micro-regional fragmentation within an area of 2.5 million km² (Knapp and Blake 2005: 6). Yet the sea alone is not sufficient for humans to survive and early movements across the sea seem connected to explorations for terrestrial spaces to colonize, which goes well past the chronological focus of this dissertation (Broodbank 2010b; Bednarik 2003). However, there is no rational or predictable manner in how humans react to the sea. Some islanders can become increasingly disinterested in the sea and turn to prolonged periods of introverted isolation. Conversely, land-locked imperial seats can mobilize great forces of labor to traverse and politically dominate the sea in short periods of time. In other instances, settlements on a coastal littoral can extend their

economic influence and political control over broad expanses without the need for sustainment through a hinterland. All of these scenarios happened in the past in the Mediterranean and other parts of the world. Therefore, the sea can play a role in formulating "... global histories that are resistant to enclosure and boundedness ..."

(Purcell 2013: 102) because the sea does not end at a coastline. Even in a physical sense, fluvial features often connect the sea to internal parts of lands that are at some distance from any coastline. These fluvial connections can then be seen as pathways for accelerated communication between land and sea.

Maritime histories hold a considerable sway in the study of the Mediterranean. In ideal conditions, the sea can collapse distances and speedily connect far-sprung communities together. However, maritime histories are not the sole predominant mode of human occupation. Rather, maritime histories reflect a process of mobilization (Purcell 2013: 98) that deploy people and ideas to manipulate the marine medium, and in a sense, re-invent the conditions in which they co-exist (Purcell 2013: 85). Similarly, proper maritime histories do not limit themselves to the sea. These type of histories see a seamless enmeshment between the point where the sea meets land and extends inland as far as people are interested or capable of exploiting marine resources. Shaw (2001) has rightly questioned the extent to which the sea should act as a central focus of study and suggested histories of recursivity that refer to the alternations of polarity between maritime and terrestrial deployment. This potential alternation between maritime and terrestrial histories requires us to create parallel united accounts of comparison without diminishing one trajectory over the other. Overall, the Mediterranean in contemporary studies is acclaimed for its resistance to the description of homogeneity, order, and social

control (Purcell 2003: 16). It is an unfixed and fluid entity, which means that it needs to be tackled through multiple viewpoints intent on comprehending the localized differences within a united whole. In the following section, I present a view of the maritime and terrestrial properties of the Central Mediterranean as a sub-region of a broader surrounding entity. These maritime and terrestrial properties will be explained from the perspectives of potentials and limitations both enmeshed in a prolonged human occupation that varies across time.

The Central Mediterranean as an Enmeshed Maritime and Terrestrial Space

"... Next we began to sail up the narrow strait lamenting. For on the one hand lay Scylla, and on the other mighty Charybdis in terrible wise sucked down the salt sea water ... Toward her, then, we looked fearing destruction; but Scylla meanwhile caught from out my hollow ship six of my company, the hardiest of their hands and the chief in might. ... and there she devoured them shrieking in her gates, they stretching forth their hands to me in the dread death-struggle. And the most pitiful thing was this that mine eyes have seen of all my travail in searching out the paths of the sea ..." The Odyssey, Book XII (accessed 2014)

Sailing through the perilous Straits of Messina, Odysseus chose to sacrifice six men rather than lose an entire crew to the monster Scylla. *The Odyssey* as an evocative narrative transmits a sense of dread in relation to the Mediterranean Sea. In Odysseus' world, it was a place of confusion, punishment, ceaseless travel, and ubiquitous fear of unseen forces only exalted by Odysseus' inability to return home on *terra firma*. The land and sea are the two main spaces upon which humans have longed moved and sought to control. The Central Mediterranean is made up of a series of terrestrial landscapes that change significantly over small distances of space and range from the mountainous Alps and Apennines, to deep valleys systems on the Adriatic and Ionian coasts, to the broad river plains of the Po and Tiber, and several islands of varying topography. Across all of these terrestrial variations, the micro-fragmentation of the Mediterranean produces a

fundamental structuring axiom: the Mediterranean Sea acts as a converging point for peoples attempting to connect broad spaces and expedite movement.

Movement across this region can be argued from two points of approach. First, one could claim that interaction between communities relied mostly on set routes. However, this view of routes limits our understanding of a region to an assumption that some groups located themselves along these lines of communication purposely, or vice-versa (an almost chicken-egg conundrum). Second, recent approaches suggest that the micro-fragmentation of the Mediterranean allows for multiple levels of mobility and communication. These multiple modes of communication and movement range between a larger bulk of short-distance impetuous-type movements, along with limited purposeful long-distance communications. Furthermore, it would be inaccurate to assume a set web of inter-connections. Morris' proposal of "Mediterraneanization", as a reflection of our own globalization conditions, is interesting because it brings to the fore the interpretation of historical analysis as an *exposé* of a division between "winners" and "losers".

Rather than creating a history of victors, which arguably is what most studies of history do (Croce [1938] 2000), it might be worth proposing that not all communities are able to act as core participants within a broader system of communication and movements. Therefore, the understanding of the Central Mediterranean as a traversed space needs to account for the shifting of movement across which led communities to find themselves on the margins of transformed interaction networks. The more interesting aspect of the latter is when we can question whether "outliers" are consciously participating in conditions of insularity, or whether their environmental conditions play a substantial role in systems of movement and communication.

The necessity for human adaptation to the particularly environmental conditions of the Central Mediterranean is not bereft of anthropogenic effects, as seen in the recent debates surrounding the Anthropocene (Steffen *et al.* 2007; Steffen *et al.* 2011; Zalasiewicz *et al.* 2011). Despite that all humans have to adapt to their surroundings, the Mediterranean's deep human history is one of ecological fragility and unpredictability. The Central Mediterranean has a similar varied ecological potential, which becomes strained at identifiable moments in relation to intense human occupation and exploitation. For instance, long-term soil erosion has led to the widespread construction of dry-wall terraces, a typical scene in contemporary Mediterranean landscapes (**Figure 3**).



Figure 3: A frequent scene of the Central Mediterranean world. Dry-wall terracing act as containers of soil and moisture. In this case, a lush green system of vine fields in Pantelleria is aided during the summer months by water conduits.

Despite the considerable distance that makes up this study's geographical focus, the Central Mediterranean includes multiple ecological zones with variable properties. Space is subjectively collapsed or elongated through human cognition and experience across these environmental conditions. The human experience of a given place and time (Skeates 2010a) is not necessarily uniform or based on distance between points A and B leading for short distances becoming larger in human imagination. After all, the measurement of distance is a contemporary Western notion based on quantitative

reasoning. Rather, lines of sight and sound are the primordial connectors between human groups that link multiple ecological zones and act as nodes in a chain of movement. This movement additionally relies on climatic conditions, especially over sea where only a limited set of months are sufficiently stable for travel. Similarly, mountain ranges become difficult to survive during the winter months, leading for some communities to move during the harsher months to lower elevations, while also reducing the seasonal ability to inter-communicate between sides of mountain ranges. Within the enmeshed maritime and terrestrial spaces, the Central Mediterranean expresses its inter-connectivity through communication, mobility, and movement.

A Maritime Space between Four Seas

The Mediterranean Sea is a combinative entity of smaller seas that coalesce, mix, and move as the world's largest inland sea. The beginnings of this sea has a geological tectonic origin stemming from the collision of the African and Eurasian plates closing the Tethys Sea. Around 170 mya, the collision of these tectonic plates created an instance of mountain building, known as the Alpine Orogeny, and closed the eastern limits of the Tethys Sea. The tectonic uplift from the collision of the African and Eurasian plates created the great Mediterranean mountains chains: the Pyrenees, Alps, Appennines, Hellenides, and Balkan Mountains and transformed the northern coasts of the Mediterranean (Blondel *et al.* 2010: 3-4). During the end of the Miocene epoch, the Mediterranean basin experienced an extended period of cyclical desiccation between 5.96-5.33 mya, known as the Messenian salinity crisis. The Mediterranean was split into a Western and Eastern Mediterranean by the uncovering of a submerged land bridge connecting peninsular Italy to the Maghreb, which created a crucial crossing location for

animals between north and south. The eventual refilling of the Mediterranean from the Atlantic Ocean through the Straits of Gibraltar at 5.33 mya led to the re-flooding of the basin and the end of the Central Mediterranean land bridge. This flooding also cut off access through land bridges for animals attempting to return to the mainland. Large mammals and other fauna became increasingly isolated leading to their evolutionary adaptation as dwarf animal species. For instance, in islands such as Malta, Sardinia, Cyprus, Cyclades, and Crete certain types of dwarf elephants and hippos date to the Pleistocene and sometimes later (**Figure 4**). In Cyprus, humans seem to have played a role in the extinction of dwarf hippos in the early Pre-Pottery Neolithic colonization of the island (Knapp 2010; Simmons 1999). However, in the Central Mediterranean the role of humans in the extinction of dwarf fauna remains unclear, especially since early colonization deposits are often elusive in islands.

The abovementioned geological processes are chronologically well beyond the scope of a study of the 4th and 1st millennia BC later prehistory of the Central Mediterranean, but their effects played a role in the manner of human development across these spaces. The underwater tectonic activity has produced two noteworthy occurrences in the Central Mediterranean. First, a submarine ridge from Sicily to the North African coastline, located at a depth of circa 365 m, divides the Mediterranean in half (Blondel *et al.* 2010: 9). In the western half of the Mediterranean, the Alboran and Tyrrhenian basins are identified as geologically distinct. The eastern half of the Mediterranean is separated between the Ionian and Levantine basins. The Central Mediterranean straddles these two geological systems and is characterized by tectonic processes, particularly along the Apennines Mountain chain. Second, the Italian peninsula, created by the

collision of the African and Eurasian plates, led to the rise of the Alpine and Apennine mountain chains. The meeting of these tectonic plates was paralleled by a counter movement in which the Tyrrhenian basin was pulled apart while the western Adriatic coastline collided into its eastern counterpart. This tectonic activity has played a role in pushing island archipelagoes out of the water, such as in the case of the Aeolian Islands, Maltese Islands, Ischia, Pontine Islands, Pantelleria, and Pelagian Islands.



Figure 4: A reconstruction of Pleistocene dwarf fauna in the Maltese Islands from one of the earliest studies of this evolutionary process in the Mediterranean (after Leith Adams 1870).

The surface currents of this Central Mediterranean space are also a by-product of the underlying tectonic activity. On a supra-regional level surface currents move in a

clockwise direction from the Straits of Gibraltar east towards the Levantine coast. The high evaporation rate of the Mediterranean Sea, influenced by its *quasi* land-locked morphology, means that currents stemming from the Atlantic Ocean have a lower salinity than the remainder of the Mediterranean but still higher than the Atlantic Ocean itself (Milot 1999: 426). However, as the surface currents move east, the growing rate of evaporation increases water salinity. In turn, this higher salinity sinks off the Levantine coast and circulates west in an ever-ending system of sea water replenishment. While the general surface currents move in a clockwise movement, the presence of islands breaks down the general pattern of the Mediterranean Sea currents into a number of localized unstable sea current systems (Milot 1999: 423) that characterize the Ligurian, Tyrrhenian, Ionian, and Adriatic seas, which are four of the recognized nine inferior seas of the Mediterranean (**Figure 5**) (Blondel *et al.* 2010: 8).

The western extents of the Tyrrhenian meet the Algerian current in the Channel of Sardinia (Milot 1999: 426) and follow the northern coast of Sicily. Due to seasonal variations, the Tyrrhenian surface currents, typically consisting of a counter-clockwise moving system, can be effected by cyclonic eddies (Milot 1999: 428). The Tyrrhenian Sea meets the Ionian counterpart at two points: the Channel of Sicily and the Straits of Messina. In the case of the Channel of Sicily, sea currents move in a south-easterly direction around Cape Bon and direct themselves towards Pantelleria, the Maltese Islands, and the Pelagian Islands. This predominant current is countered during the cold winter months by bouts of *Gregale*, a gale force north-easterly wind that lasts days and pushes away from the northern shores of the Mediterranean towards the Maghrebian coast. To the north, the Straits of Messina are renowned for their difficult conditions and

strong currents, as mentioned above in an excerpt from *The Odyssey*. The narrowness of this strait acts as a funnel that pushes away from the Aeolian Islands towards the Calabrian coast (Matvejevic 1999: 25). The northern extent of the Tyrrhenian Sea is the Corsica Channel, a narrow stretch between Corsica, Ebla, and the Italian mainland. This northern extent also acts as the border between the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Ligurian-Provençal Sea. The latter extends west from the Gulf of Genoa along the southern French coastline to the west of Corsica. The Ligurian-Provençal Sea moves anti-clockwise away from the Central Mediterranean and ending in the Gulf of Lyons. During the winter months, strong northerly winds, referred to as the *Mistral*, descend into the Gulf of Lyons through the Rhône Valley bringing freezing temperatures on land and sea. The cold air arriving from the *Mistral* creates a variable cyclonic eddy that moves cold and heavy seas towards Corsica and Sardinia.

On the edges of the Central Mediterranean, the Ionian Sea extends east towards Sicily and as far south as the Cyrenaica coastline, while it meets the Adriatic Sea at the Straits of Otranto. The Ionian Sea currents move away from the Malta-Sicily channel and towards the Tripolitania along the Libyan coastline. These areas are especially affected by the *Scirocco* and *Gregale* winds, which is further complicated by the limited coast-to-coast inter-visibility of the southern Central Mediterranean. The northern extent of the Ionian Sea moves in an anti-clockwise movement towards the Bay of Taranto from the direction of the Aegean. This northerly wind also moves through the Strait of Otranto, the shortest distance (ca. 72 km) between the Italian Apulian and Albanian coasts (Braudel 1972: 125). Beyond this strait, the Adriatic Sea is the northernmost basin in the entire Mediterranean (Cushman-Roisin *et al.* 2001: 241). The predominant sea current moves in

an anti-clockwise direction, hugging the Albanian-Croatian coastline, meeting the Po river confluence and returning south along the Italian coastline. Like all other seas of the Mediterranean, the Adriatic Sea is affected by seasonal variability, but the runoff from the considerable Po River tends to oscillate. Indeed, the Adriatic Sea depends considerably on the Po River and its northern extent experiences multiple parallel processes that vary according to annual riverine discharge, its resulting plume, southerly winds, and the ability to form dense water that then replenishes the Ionian Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean (Cushman-Roisin *et al.* 2001: 242-243).

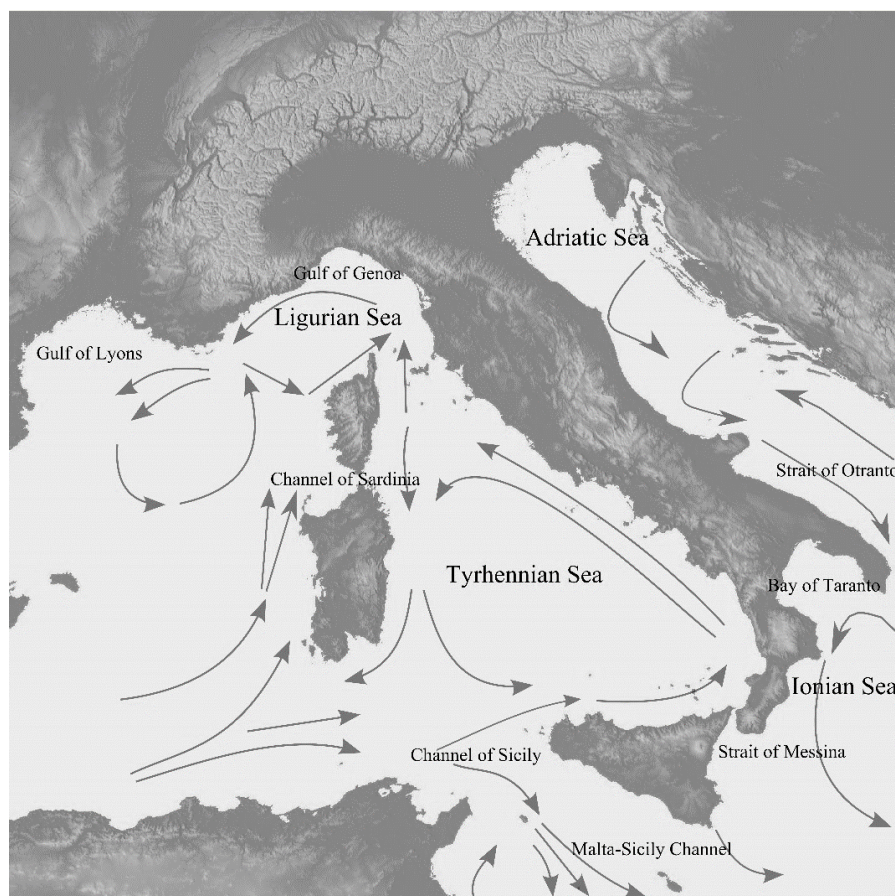


Figure 5: The surface currents affecting the Central Mediterranean and topography mentioned in text (©Esri 2013 basemap, after Broodbank 2013: 8-9).

The interior seas of the Mediterranean physically meet the coastline at the (often narrow) littoral zone. Beyond this point of contact, the effects of the seas reduce exponentially across distance. However, rivers offer a secondary avenue for the extension of the sea inland. The rivers of the Central Mediterranean are heavily influenced by seasonality and the routine desiccation of even the largest freshwater systems. In contrast, smaller islands have fluctuating seasonal streams, which have a low-volume hydrological output, while most of the Central Mediterranean rivers are comparatively short with the longest being the Po River at 640 km. The rivers ending at the Tyrrhenian Sea are typically longer and carry greater amounts of water, such as the Arno River flowing through the hills of Tuscany, the Tiber River slithering through the plains of Lazio, and the Volturno River fed from the Apennine Abruzzo mountains that exits immediately north of the Bay of Naples. Rivers leading to the Ionian Sea moved through the rugged landscape of the Lucanian Apennines towering above the Bay of Taranto. The climatic conditions of the Basilicata and Calabria region around the Ionian Sea yields rainfall averages around 1,000 mm, with the western slopes of Monte Sirino getting up to 2,000 mm of rainfall (McNeill 1992: 31). The five rivers of Bradano, Basento, Cavone, Agri and Sinni fluctuate in their water volume across seasons and permit their wider and plain-level segments to act as natural avenues for communication and transport in an otherwise difficult landscape (McNeill 1992: 32).

Rivers connecting with the Adriatic Sea are more limited in volume and largely located in the Gulf of Venice area. The Po and Adage River are, respectively, the first and second longest rivers in the Central Mediterranean and are both fed from the higher Alps. Their effects in the Gulf of Venice, already described above, have a broader effect

on the Adriatic Sea's biota and wider Eastern Mediterranean replenishment. Yet, in a human sense the Po River plain is dominated by riverine conditions, unparalleled in the Central Mediterranean, and over time experiences localized adaptations. Surrounding the Monte Gargano region, the northern Biferno and southern Ofanto rivers border the Tavoliere plain in northern Puglia. The seasonal fluctuations of these rivers additionally influence smaller, but more volatile, freshwater systems that are innumerable in this region. For instance, the Tavoliere plain is also crossed by the Torrente Candelaro and Cervaro, which in low-rainfall months turn into shallow marshes and lagoons. During episodes of high-rainfall, these systems flood extensive segments of the surrounding banks, replenish nutrients, and increase soil humidity for the drier months. Sardinia's two main rivers, the Tirso and Flumendosa Rivers, are important freshwater systems for a semi-arid landscape. The Tirso River flows from the slopes of Punta Pianedda, crossing the islands from east to west and entering the sea at the Gulf of Oristano. Located on the southern edge of Sardinia, the Flumendosa River emerges from the Gennargentu Massif and discharges into the Tyrrhenian Sea. The rivers of Belice, Platani, Salso and Alcantara are the main freshwater systems of Sicily. The island is drained through the central Monti Nebrodi and Sicani, discharging primarily through the southern coast of Sicily with the exception of the Alcantara River at the north-west.

A number of wetlands and coastal lagoons provide a smaller and limited freshwater source in the Central Mediterranean. Some freshwater lakes can be found in Northern Italy that are left over from earlier glacial retreat, particularly in higher altitudes previously covered by Pleistocene glaciations (Blondel *et al.* 2010: 127-128). In the Po River area, the convergence point of the Alps and the Apennines includes a series of

lakes, such as the Laghi Maggiore, Como, Lugano, and Garda in the upper Lombardy region. Throughout the rolling hills of Tuscany and Umbria, a number of smaller lake systems can be found along with the larger example of Lago Trasimone. Further south, volcanic activity in the Etruria and northern Lazio region led to the development of several lakes forming within collapsed volcanoes (*caldera*) (Blondel *et al.* 2010: 127), such as Laghi di Bolsena, Bracciano, and Vico. Finally, the larger islands of Sicily and Sardinia have a number of significant lakes created through various geological processes, such as Laghi Pozzillo, Lentini, and Nicito in Sicily and Laghi Baratz, Liscia, Sale ‘e Porcu in Sardinia. Pantelleria is the only smaller island in this region with a considerable lake, Lago di Venere (**Figure 6**), which is a collapsed *caldera* fed by underground thermal springs. However, the presence of salt and potassium in this lake make the water unsafe for human consumption, which is unfortunate in an island that suffers considerably from aridity. Even in places where potable water can be found, the presence of freshwater is not always an advantage. The river plains surrounding the Po, Tiber and other rivers leads to malaria and a stagnant stench, such as at the Pontine Marshes (Braudel 1972: 63).



Figure 6: A panoramic view of Lago di Venere (Pantelleria) facing north. The terraced fields on the left were originally a lava flow coming down into the-then collapsed *caldera*.

Despite, the great variety of water spaces found in the Central Mediterranean, not all water can be safely consumed, tamed, or accessed. In the words of Giovanni Pascoli "...perennial water, best and worst, now death now life..."(my translation, Ebani 1997: 443;). Indeed, Braudel argued that marshes, and their perennial expanse, can represent death despite their potential fertility (1972: 63) as implied by Pascoli's poem. I would even extend this concern more broadly, since not all water is safe to consume or to move across. Islands are entirely surrounded by seawater, but often also lack perennial water sources. Their vicinity to the sea does not lead islanders to become fully maritime, sometimes they shy away from utilizing the sea as a space for inter-connectivity. They can indeed become the very fringes of a known world, devoid of a single conception and its role culturally constructed (Mack 2011: 89). Conversely, it would be unfair to think of land-locked communities as outside of maritime links of communication, which requires us to consider the reluctance or acceptance of maritime mediums in historical analysis. After all, the maritime spaces of the Central Mediterranean are never too far. Even from the mountainous region of Basilicata, the sea can be reached in two to three days (McNeill 1992: 32). This close proximity between land and sea necessitates a vision of these spaces as mutually enmeshed, and ultimately, human occupants could have existed in seemingly contradictory uses of these spaces.

A Terrestrial Space bounded by Four Seas

“... [Mount] Aetna dominates more especially the seaboard in the region of the Strait and the territory of Catania, but also that in the region of the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Liparaean Islands. Now although by night a brilliant light shines from the summit, by day it is covered with smoke and haze...” Strabo, *Geography* Book 6 Chp 2 (accessed 2014).

An adequate history of the Mediterranean has to be as land-oriented as it is sea-oriented (Pearson 2006: 356-357; Braudel 1972: 17) since humans have long moved and transitioned between these spaces. In Strabo’s description of the geographic spaces that made up the Roman world, the human traveler across the sea keeps an eye on terrestrial features to comprehend approximate location and, perhaps, to feel safe. In describing the terrestrial spaces of the Central Mediterranean world, we need to distinguish between areas of direct contact with the sea and terrestrial characteristics that are only connected to the sea through human-based interactions. A driving factor among terrestrial spaces is not only the potentialities (or lack of) presented by a given space, but also by its connections with long-distance visibility and part of a mental *axis mundi* (Mack 2011: 116; Broodbank 1993; Helms 1988). Across terrestrial spaces, humans develop and adapt, choosing their own relationships with land and sea.

After all, marine biota are not always optimal or worth the expense of energy. For instance, one kilogram of fish provides only about two-thirds the calories of one kilogram of wheat (Pearson 2006: 360). Indeed, this observation is matched in certain islands like Pantelleria and Malta that have long relied on terrestrial resources with limited exploitation of sea-life. Even in popular culture, the sea is seen as difficult and dangerous with few upsides even in the smallest of islands that enjoy immediate access to the sea. Indeed, not all coastal dwellers relate to the sea in predictable ways (Mack 2011: 74-75;

Matvejevic 1999). However, the outright manner in which Braudel erased the ability to *be* maritime, while routinely being tied to terrestrial spaces and resources, is uncharacteristic of his work.

Nevertheless, the Mediterranean offers several types of terrestrial spaces and resources in an area considerably smaller than continental Europe. Indeed, the Mediterranean basin has four times as many species of plants as Europe, some 25,000 species that are well-adapted to the climate of this region (Squatriti 2014: 28). These organisms have grown accustomed to the numerous natural and human ecological disturbances that require fast re-growth and determent from grazing by herbivores. The current “Mediterranean climate” emerged around 9,000-7,000 years ago during the Middle Holocene. The Alps generate a year-round low pressure system in the Gulf of Genoa, making the eastern Alps and the Adriatic the wettest zones of the Central Mediterranean (Cheyette 2014: 12-13). This system tends to move through the Apennine mountain range and track down to the Ionian coast, which experiences heavy rainfall during the winter season. Islands typically have stable, dry Mediterranean weather, while the much larger Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica can experience lower temperatures and higher rainfall due to the presence of mountain and hill systems. During the winter period, small islands in the Central Mediterranean are prone to sudden flooding and prolonged periods of wind gusts. A recorded instance in Malta of 279 mm of rain in one day exemplifies the unpredictable extremes of Mediterranean weather (Hughes 2005: 5).

Mediterranean biota, of which 3,853 out of 22,500 are considered endemic species, are adapted to this climatic irregularity, and their distribution varies according to rainfall, elevation, exposure and anthropocentric impacts (Hughes 2005: 8-9). If we

utilize elevation as a diagnostic characteristic of distinct vegetative distribution, there are at least three main zones. The forest zone, starting from the sea level up to 650-100 m, is typically made up by pines and evergreen oaks (Hughes 2005). The immediate effects of anthropocentric exploitation and irregular rainfall patterns tend to make most Mediterranean forests sparse due to competition for available moisture. Nowadays, forest cover in the northern shores of the Mediterranean make up 77% of the total (Blondel *et al.* 2010: 119). In contrast, maquis grow on dry hillsides, often damaged by fire and prolonged droughts, and rarely grow above seven meters in height. Their location often coincides with thin soil profiles (Blondel *et al.* 2010: 122), a characteristic of hillsides, valley slopes, and other locations affected by soil erosion. These bushy-type plant species tend to grow faster than any competing vegetation, so much so that they are adapted to germinate first after fires and other damaging events. In the remaining areas, the Mediterranean tends to be made up of garigue, which the Greeks aptly call *phyrghana* (kindling wood). Garigue is mostly found in low-lying spans of land, making them prone to fire and grazing damage. However, many garigue plant species have adapted to these conditions by being particularly unpalatable to grazing animals. Other types of grass-like vegetation can also be identified in higher altitudes or areas that receive less than 300 mm of annual precipitation (Blondel *et al.* 2010: 125).

The limited biota and harsher environmental conditions of mountains tends to make them the first terrestrial space to be described and then moved immediately in the peripheral view of the Mediterranean world. Even Braudel described mountains as “... their [role in] history is to have none, to remain always on the fringe of the great waves of civilization, even the longest and the most persistent ...” (1972: 34). Despite the

contemporary peripheral vision of Mediterranean mountains, their overbearing and shadowing stature make them indisputable watchtowers of the Mediterranean, and perhaps as in the case of Strabo's description, even crucial locators. From the coasts of all four seas in the Central Mediterranean, mountains rise within sight beyond shorelines. They are ever-present reminders of potential *refugia* (McNeill 1992: 2; Braudel 1972: 39) where biota and humans can withdraw to hardy lives that are often limited in external control. However, a view of mountains as blocking in movement and delayed in social development only considers a narrow potential of human communities in these spaces.

The Central Mediterranean region is dominated by two almost intersecting mountains chains: the Alps and Apennines. It can be argued that their physical role operates in at least two ways. First, by alternating between plains and mountains ranges, human movement is funneled through these "gaps" and tends to act as locations for some of the earliest examples of distributed ideas and objects through these spaces (Maggi and Pearce 2005). Second, perceptions of mountainous places tend to assume movement largely occurring in low-lying flat spaces. Rather, mountains should be understood as inter-connected within and across themselves. In the case of the north-south Apennine axis, there is evidence of communications between the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic coastlines that occur through physical movements. In the mountainous islands of Sardinia and Corsica, their ranges and elevations are quite varied. The northern and eastern Sardinian seaboard is composed of a highland-type mountainous region of granite, schist, basalt, and other volcanic rock types. The mountains of Punta La Marmora (1,834 m), Monte Limbara (1,362 m), Monte Albo (1,057m), Monti Sulcis (1,116 m), and Linas (1,236 m) are separated by wide alluvial valleys that connect the remote inland to the coastlines,

such as the Campidano, Cagliari, and Nurra plains. The Monte Arci (812 m), an isolated massif in the Campidano plain, is best known for its obsidian outcrops (Tykot 2001; Tykot 1999) that became widely distributed in northern-central Italy during the Neolithic, as will be discussed in Chapter 5. Corsica, on the other hand, known as a “mountain in the sea” (Mouillot *et al.* 2008: 224) largely lacks plains, and its largest mountains (ex: Monte Cinto, 2,710 m) are located in the north-eastern tip. Typical of Mediterranean soils, Corsica’s soils are geologically young, poor and superficial, which are worsened by the steep incline and runoff (Mouillot *et al.* 2008: 225) similar to conditions in peninsular Basilicata. Sicily, the largest island of the Mediterranean, is largely hilly (62% of its surface) but has considerable agricultural potential (Benedetto and Giordano 2008: 117). The mountainous regions of Sicily (24% of its surface) are distributed mostly in the northern extents of the islands, particularly the Peloritani (Montagna Grande, 1,374 m), Nebrodi (Monte Soro, 1,847 m), Madonie (Pizzo Carbonaro, 1,979 m), and Trabia Mountains, while the central region is dominated by the Sicani Mountains above the Belice valley and river system (Benedetto and Giordano 2008: 119). The southern stretch of Sicily is made up of the elevated Hyblaean Plateau (Monte Lauro, 986 m), characterized by very deep valleys and steep cliff banks, overlooking the Malta-Sicily channel. Yet, Mount Etna (**Figure 7**), the largest active volcano in Europe, looms even more so above the southern Central Mediterranean space at 3,329 m. Finally, the Aeolian Islands and Pantelleria are characterized by scattered extinct volcanoes that contributed in the creation of obsidian and the islands’ roles in obsidian distribution during the Neolithic.

Moving down from mountains the Mediterranean landscape is often characterized by plateaus, hills, and foothills, which arguably still retain an element of the high and overseeing in surrounding spaces (Braudel 1972: 53). Since there are too many plateaus, hills, and foothills to render an even barely adequate description of the Central Mediterranean world, a couple examples should suffice to highlight their purpose and role in connecting peoples. For instance, the Emilia plain, in the area of Bologna, and the Apulian Le Murge plateaus connect coastlines to internal parts of the Central Mediterranean. The water-rich plains are fed from mountains and have a contradictory role in history. The presence of perennial water, in a region largely known for its aridity and seasonality, should make these areas ideal for human occupation. Rather, plains are often homes to marshes and many negative issues stem from such spaces. They are difficult to maintain, overgrown, and most importantly, dangerous due to their high incidence of malaria. These areas, such as the Pontine Marshes, Po, Tavoliere, Lazio marshes, eventually became a core infrastructural project in pre-WWII Fascist Italy that invested heavily in *bonifce* (drying up of marshland) projects. Previously, these areas were difficult to control without adverse effects on communities, which partly explains the sparse occupation of such spaces in prehistory.



Figure 7: Mount Etna seen from the eastern highlands of Sicily.

Several islands and archipelagoes also characterize the Central Mediterranean terrestrial space, as well as in intellectual contributions (Dawson 2014; Cherry 2004). Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica are the largest, second and fourth largest islands, respectively, in the entire Mediterranean basin. Indeed, in this dissertation I refer to these islands as “*quasi*-continents”, while Braudel (1972: 148) describes them as miniature continents, because their significance lies beyond the merits of a crucial landfall in sea travel. Indeed, they are arguably worlds of their own with most of the environmental variety offered by a continent. Within these *quasi*-continents, human occupation was free to develop in multiple contemporary developments. In smaller islands, this variability is absent since the sea and its effects permeate their entire terrestrial space (Pearson 2006: 358), although these conditions do not oblige human occupants to *be* maritime in their outlook. The islands located in the Tyrrhenian Sea are largely volcanic in origin and have better soils than their counterparts. However, they are often also made up of inaccessible coastlines and lacking in natural anchorage bays, such as at Ischia, Capri, Elba and even Pantelleria (although outside the Tyrrhenian Sea). The Maltese Islands and Pelagian Islands are sedimentary hill tops of the now submerged bridge that connected Sicily to North Africa. Unlike other smaller islands, these sedimentary islands suffer from a general lack of fertile soil profiles, but their natural coastline indentations provide them with numerous anchorage bays and access to marine resources. The Adriatic Sea has several islands off the Dalmatian coast but few options on the western Italian coastline, with the notable exception of the Tremiti Islands. These islands in the Adriatic Sea have

not received similar intellectual attention in the past years, which makes their roles and archaeology largely unknown in the Central Mediterranean world.

At the convergence of four seas, the Central Mediterranean is a fragmented terrestrial space with varying potentialities. These potentialities required particular adaptations for both biota and humans alike, after all no human can function under the same conditions on an Apennine mountainside or an island. The topographical fragmentation of the Mediterranean resulted in a web of micro-ecologies in which people, sometimes even separated by great distances, interact (Horden and Purcell 2006: 733). Such a broad interaction leads us to see the adaptive abilities of humans as astonishing and often prone to sudden spurs of growth and opposite contraction. Movement across terrestrial spaces propels some spaces to a larger prominence as conductors for movement, and that is especially aided by waterways. The terrestrial and maritime components of the Mediterranean are seamlessly enmeshed. They create the ultimate potential: to communicate and move across great distances while adapting to a micro-ecological condition. The inter-play between terrestrial and maritime spaces is neither dictated by physical conditions nor overcome through human innovations. Humans react to these two mediums and find a balance in their use, at least for a certain length of time. However, one can rest assured that the momentum of time requires constant balancing, re-adaptations, and re-configurations of the human existence in both terrestrial and maritime spaces.

Time in the Four Seas

Opposed to the generally accepted views and methodologies of history and time in the early 20th century, Croce proposed that the study of the past is the study of the contemporary present (1917: 4), an unusual reaction at the time. This statement reacted against a general impression that our understanding of the ‘now’ is complete and the past is a protracted repetitive sequence (Croce [1938] 2000: 297) leading to the present in which time is uncomplicated (Shanks and Tilley 1988: 118-119). Archaeologists have followed the conventional sense of time since the inception of the field itself (Souvatzi and Hadji 2014: 9; Olsen et al. 2012; Karlsson 2001). The archaeology of cultures is synchronized according to periods, a remnant of the late 19th-century seriation chronologies innovated by Thomsen and Montelius. This chronological view of time, where one cultural attribute is lost and then supplanted by a new one (Olsen *et al.* 2012: 136) after overcoming pragmatic hindrances (Sherratt 1995: 6-7), especially made sense in the Victorian era of scientific positivism. However, the conception of time established over a century ago cannot remain undisputed, especially since archaeology has undergone cycles of self-reflection in reaction to the postmodern movement (Fahlander 2012; McGlade 1999: 139; Knapp 1996). The main weakness of a chronological view of time is that it has been extended beyond the base utility of comparability to a seamless narrative of continuity and transformation. This conventional reliance on chronological based views of time runs the peril of edging out discontinuities as anomalous to the broader development of human culture (Souvatzi and Hadji 2014: 9). Archaeologists are increasingly aware of the problematic nature of time, (Souvatzi and Hadji 2014;

Holdaway and Wandsnider 2008; Bailey 2007; Lucas 2005) and two main stances can now be noted in the archaeological literature: the Braudelian proposal and time perspectivism.

Braudel and the *Annales* school of thought have maintained a visible effect on archaeological literature over the last decades. Braudel's seminal discussion on the Mediterranean and its history was not a mere historical examination; it also laid the foundation for the *longue durée* view of history and comprehension of time (Braudel 1958). Braudel's central premise considered human history as made up of parallel and overlapping multi-temporalities in which social life is carried out (1958: 726) in an almost cyclical manner. However, in this cyclical manifestation of time lies a 'plurality' that can only be observed if our studies encompass broad chronological periods (McGlade 1999: 146; Knapp 1992; Braudel 1958: 727). In essence, a Braudelian perspective on time proposes that the examination of regions should not be simply restricted to short-term studies, but it should also outline long-term spans.

Even in Braudel's view of time, linearity and continuity still played key roles in the comprehension of human existence, although there was a recognized tension between continuity and change (Lucas 2005: 17). Reactions to this view of time stress the non-linear nature in a world devoid of universal truths, making history "...a plurality of time – both continuous and discontinuous, the product of contingent and deterministic forces..." (McGlade 1999: 159). The second stance on the concept of time emerged as "time perspectivism" (Bailey 2008; 2007; 1987). Time perspectivism treats the archaeological record as a palimpsest in which observations made at different temporal scales make discontinuous processes readily apparent (Holdaway and Wandsnider 2008: 1-3). While

the *longue durée* study of history has largely limited itself to centuries or millennia, proponents of time perspectivism suggest that longer spans of time can be examined due to the concept's interest in understanding the aggregate and transformation of activities in their multi-temporal totality (Bailey 2007: 200-203; Shanks and Tilley 1988: 121).

This dissertation is not an examination of events in time. Rather, time is seen as overlapping with space as the two axis along which humans occupied. Bailey (2007: 220) persuasively argues that the past is part of our present, and an archaeologist's role should be in demonstrating that our contemporary surroundings are quite different from the conventional views presented to us. This leads me to propose that the below preliminary overview of Central Mediterranean later prehistory will limit its chronological overview to establish a necessary base of comparability (**Table 1**) (Olsen *et al.* 2012: 145), consciously understood as a present rigid imposition on the past (Shanks and Tilley 1988: 125) to allow comparability with other intellectual contributions utilizing the linear view of time (Bietti Sestieri 2010; Pessina and Tiné 2009).

The End of Cultural Ubiquity by the 4th millennium BC?

In *The Early Mediterranean Village* (2007) Robb ends his examination of the Central Mediterranean at 4,000 BC but ultimately still extends his purview into the mid-4th millennium BC. The problems of chronology are multiple but even more crucial is the fact that human culture and its processes have deep roots in time that extend back and forward without sudden, convenient breaks. Archaeologists are by large concerned with origins (and ends): the origins of technologies, systems, behavior, and engagement. It captures the attention of a wider audience by seeking to pinpoint a moment in history for the beginnings of an element that somehow plays a role in our contemporary present. For

instance, the search for the oldest art still resonates in the contemporary world. Inevitably, this strive to pinpoint the moment of origin suggests that we also deal with identifying the end of previous conditions. That “clinical” approach to archaeology, while popular in media meant for public consumption, is more of an impossibility. The continued existence and development of humans means that even if we talk of 4,000 BC, the conditions leading to that moment have an anteceding development. Hence, linear views of time mask the connection between two moments because it assumes a stacked development leading to the now. However, the Central Mediterranean at 4,000 BC is conditioned by considerably earlier processes of “Neolithization” and the human transformation of maritime and terrestrial spaces.

The Central Mediterranean landscape experienced a remarkable transformation in the 7th and 6th millennia BC, which had long-reaching effects in later prehistory and processes of cultural development. The maritime and terrestrial spaces of the Central Mediterranean underwent a dual acceleration: demographic and cultural. Incrementally, the expansion of Levantine Neolithic modes of living moved through the Mediterranean Basin in a westerly direction at variable rates of movement (Broodbank 2013: 184). Moving through the narrow widths of the Adriatic Sea (**Figure 9**), utilizing the middle islands of Palagruža and the Tremiti Islands (Forenbaher and Kaiser 2011: 106, 108), the “Neolithic package” became available in the Central Mediterranean sphere, along with the cultural, technological, and demographic shifts that it also included (Malone 2003; Robb 1999). This connection between the Aegean and Italy, through the Adriatic Sea, was not the first engagement and most certainly was not the last. However, the continued movement of this Neolithic mode of life was not an assured outcome. It required a

receptive and sufficiently sustainable zone, so as not to be snuffed out at its inception in a new Mediterranean space. In this light, it seems unlikely that the broad and well-hydrated plains of the Apulian Tavoliere were a random first step into the Central Mediterranean world. After all, the Apennines dominate most of the Italian Adriatic Sea, while the Salentine peninsula and its highlands open up at the Tavoliere Plain and provide access into the west-central and southern parts of the Italian peninsula. Early in the 6th millennium BC, the Apulian plains experienced a population boom during this initial stage and played a key role in the terrestrial expansion of the Neolithic. In a secondary spread through maritime movement the Neolithic expansion reached the head of the Adriatic sub-basin on the Croatian Istrian coastline and later the Gulf of Trieste (Broodbank 2013: 191; Bonsall *et al.* 2013).

The spread of the Neolithic lifestyle then moved through Campania, Calabria, and Sicily at a quick pace, while the spread north through the Tyrrhenian coast is still less known. From the Apulian plains to the south-western extent of the Italian peninsula, along with Sicily, a culturally analogous development created one of the earliest *koine* in the Central Mediterranean (Pessina and Tiné 2009: 47) (Pessina and Tiné 2009: 47): the distribution of obsidian (**Figure 10**) (Castagnino Berlinghieri 2011; Robb and Farr 2005; Tykot 2001; Tykot 1996). This understanding of the Neolithic expansion has enjoyed a long academic acceptance in Italian studies; Puglia was the earliest landing point of the Neolithic and a south-westerly expansion eventually enveloped Italy, Sicily, and adjacent islands. However, in Sicily a pre-Stentinello ceramic phase is now being proposed at Grotta del Kronio and Grotta del Uzzo (Pessina and Tiné 2009: 46; Giannitrapani 2000: 64). This recent re-evaluation indicates the patchy nature of the known archaeological

record. Assumptions made regarding the spread and movement of the Neolithic can and should become contested over time. Nevertheless, the Neolithization of the Central Mediterranean landscape reflected a crucial moment in history where humans expanded considerably across space.

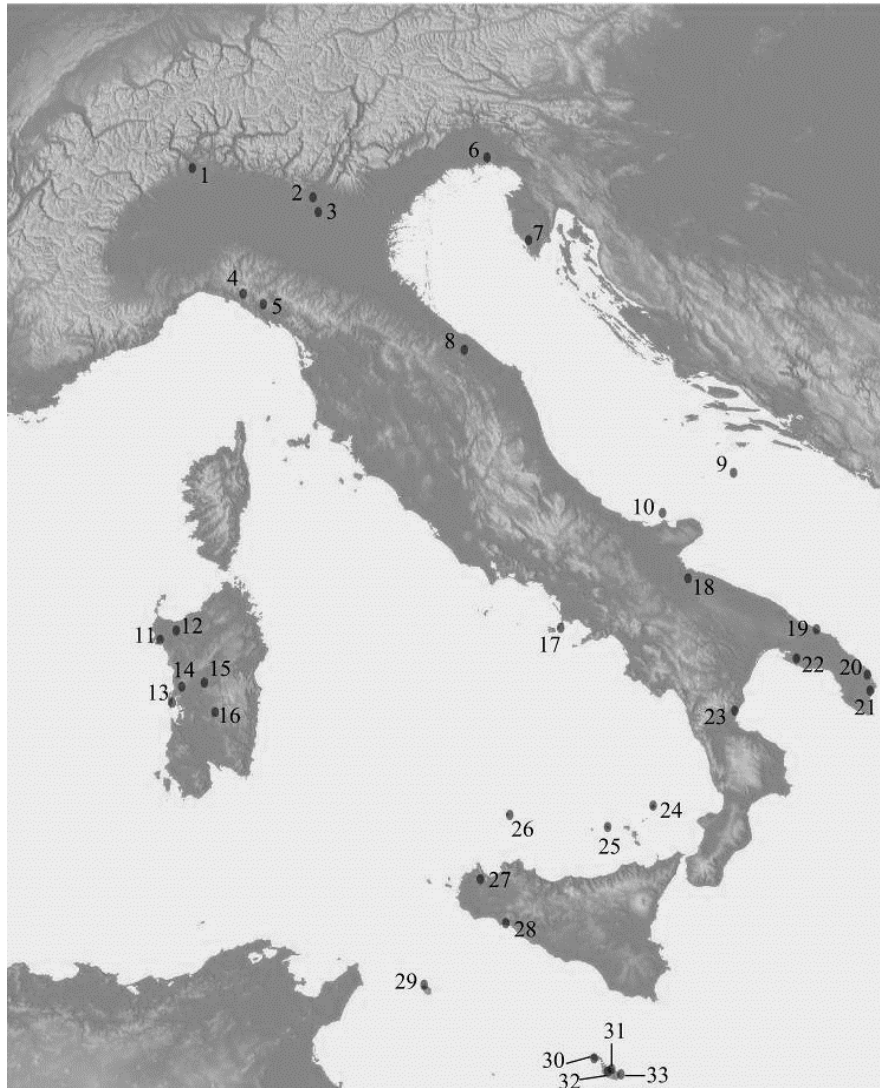


Figure 8: Archaeological sites and small islands mentioned in the following text: 1. Valcamonica, 2. Remedello Sotto, 3. Pila del Brancon, 4. Monte Loreto, 5. Lunigiana, 6. Castellazzo di Doberdò, 7. Moncodonja, 8. Conelle d'Arcevia, 9. Palagruža, 10. Tremiti Islands, 11. Palmavera, 12. Monte d'Accoddi, 13. Tharrows, 14. Mont'e Prama, 15. Su Nuraxi di Barumini, 16. Duos Nuraghes, 17. Palmarola, 18. Coppa Nevigata, 19. Torre Sabina, 20. Porta Badisco, 21. Rocavecchia, 22. Scoglio del Tonno, 23. Broglio di Trebisacce, 24. Stromboli, 25. Capo Graziano, 26. Ustica, 27. Grotta del Uzzo, 28. Grotta del Kronio, 29. Mursia, 30. Ta' Ċenċ, 31. Skorba (©ESRI 2013 basemap).

Dates	Eastern North Italy	Western North Italy	Central Italy	Sardinia	Southern Italy	Aeolian Islands	Sicily	Malta
4000			Final Ripoli			San Cono Piano Notaro		Żebbuġ
3750	VBQ III	Chassey-Lagozza	Final Ripoli	Bonu Ighinu	Spatarella/Macchia Mare/Zinzulusa			Mġarr
3500							San Cono Piano Notaro	
3250				Ozieri		Piano Conte		Ġgantija
3000	Bell Beaker	Bell Beaker			Gaudio, Piano Conte			
2750			Rinaldone, Ortucchio, Conelle				Serraferlichio/Conca D'Oro/Malpasso/Bell Beaker	Tarxien
2500				Abealzu-Filigosa				
2250				Monte Claro	Gaudio, Laterza, Proto-Apennine	Piano Quartara	Naro/La Muculufa/Castelluccio/Bell Beaker	?? Thermi Ware ??
2000	Polada	Polada	Asciano/Montemerano/Scoglietto/Palidoro/Ripatransone	Bonnanaro				
1750			Proto-Apennine		Palma Campania, Proto-Apennine B	Capo Graziano	Castelluccio/Rodo-Tindari-Vallelunga/Moarda	Tarxien Cemetery
1500		Viverone Scamozzina/Monza	Sub-Apennine	Nuragic	Apennine	Milazzese	Thapsos	
1250	Terramare	Canegrate	Proto-Villanovan		Sub-Apennine	Ausonian I	Thapsos/ Pantalica	Borġ in-Nadur
1000	Proto-Villanovan	Proto-Golaseccan			Proto-Villanovan, Calabrian Fossa	Ausonian II	Pantalica/Cassabile/Caltagirone	Borġ in-Nadur/Bahrija

Table 1: A comparative chronology, ranging between the 5th and 1st millennia BC, of the major areas examined in this study.

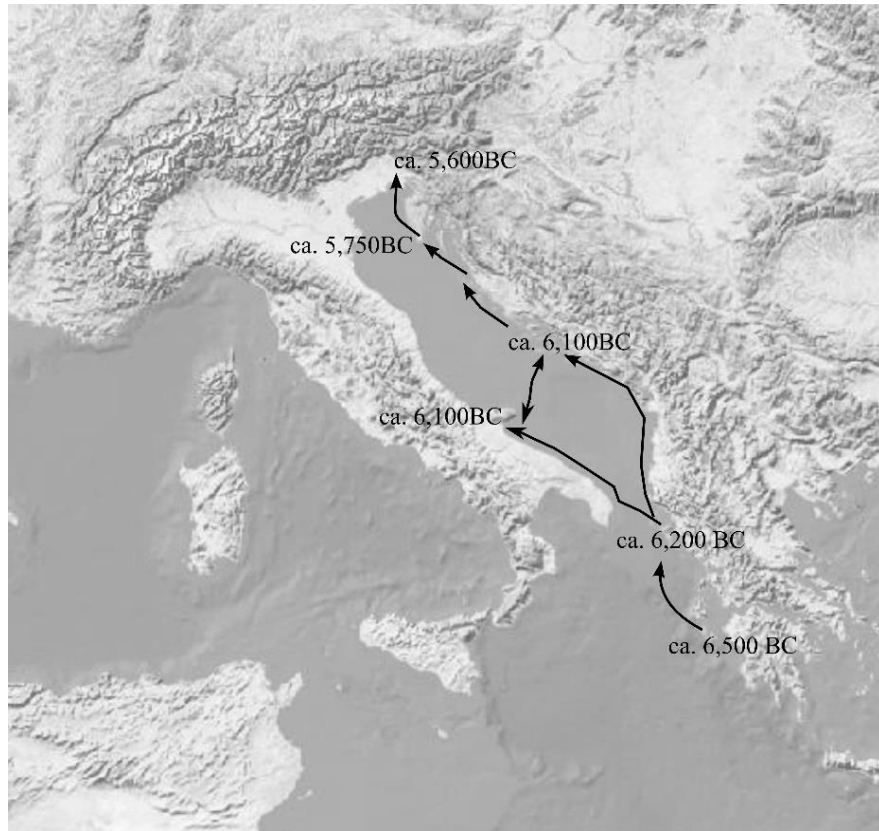


Figure 9: Potential expansion and routes of the Neolithic spread in the Adriatic Sea (©Esri 2013, DeLorme, NAVTEQ basemap, after Bonsall *et al.* 2013: 148; Forenbaheer and Miracle 2005).

Despite this growing evidence of the Early Neolithic in peninsular Italy, it is still presently difficult to pinpoint the origin of human occupation on the Central Mediterranean *quasi*-continents (Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica). The evidence for Paleolithic presence of humans remains plausible, but not entirely proven, although it is certain that a Pre-Neolithic occupation can be supported by the ecological limits of these spaces. Either way, the Neolithization of these large landscapes was not the earliest human presence, and the transition between semi-mobile groups and sedentary Neolithic is poorly understood. During this early moment, all other small islands in the Central Mediterranean appear to be *terra vergine*, unaffected by human occupation. The gradual

Neolithic expansion throughout the Central Mediterranean eventually led to the colonization of the Pelagian Islands, Maltese Islands, Aeolian, Pontine Islands, Elba and the Tremiti Islands. In the case of other islands, like Pantelleria, humans intermittently visited these lands (Tykot 2001; 1996) but never settled permanently, perhaps due to the fragility or hydrological limitations of these islandscapes. Despite the extension of a cultural *koine* extending across the southern Central Mediterranean, not all islands can be considered as equally engaged. They were certainly not equal partners with surrounding continental communities, and their supra-regional role seems only elevated if they have something unique to offer. Lipari was an exceptional example of such an involved island. Due to its obsidian outcrops, Lipari became involved in intense communications with the Calabrian coast and privy to all manner of goods (Castagnino Berlinghieri 2011: 115), playing a role in the creation of the colorful Trichrome pottery.

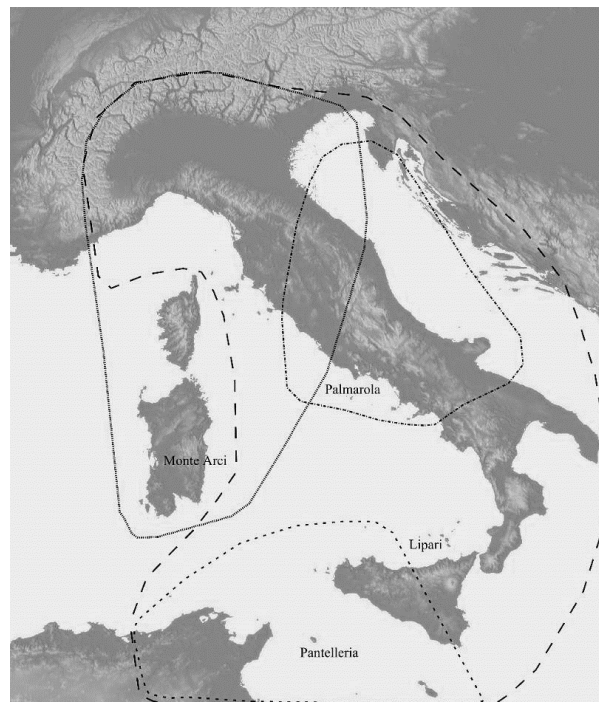


Figure 10: Circulation extent of obsidian from their sources in the Central Mediterranean (©ESRI 2013 basemap, after Robb and Farr 2003: 28; Tykot 1996).

Humans are the ultimate adversary of natural spaces, and unsurprisingly their effects on the Central Mediterranean landscape were apparent through various forms of anthropocentric impositions. The southern half of the Italian peninsula was largely occupied in open plains and sparsely forested areas, which became less present in coastal areas and small islands made up of limited maquis type cover. In contrast, the northern part of the Italian peninsula was characterized by dense deciduous woodlands. Gradually, the necessities for open cultivated land, settlement area, and grazing tracts led to the deforestation of extensive areas of the northern Italian peninsula, a task that required a considerable expense of energy. As a consequence of the introduction of domesticated fauna in the Central Mediterranean, the prevalence of wild game shifted quite rapidly in favor of domesticated bovines and caprines. In the instance of Torre Sabina in the Salentine peninsula, the earliest Neolithic levels are made up of 70% bovines and caprines with a negligible presence of wild animals (Pessina and Tiné 2009: 212). These levels varied across the Central Mediterranean landscape, but wild animals became a minimal resource exploited by humans as the Neolithization of these communities was reflected in their subsistence and land-use. That Neolithic transformation was not ubiquitous and especially marked from the Central Italy to northwards. For instance, in the mountainous Abruzzo region, high-elevation temporary sites were probable hunting stations for deer in the Apennine Mountains. Further north in the Alpine Paduan and Valle dell'Adige regions, communities utilized the dense cover of woodlands for hunting wild animals while exploiting open patches of land for agriculture and stock-raising (Pessina and Tiné 2009: 215-216).

The cultural development and evolution in the Central Mediterranean underwent an initial process of overlapping broad cultural manifestations, followed by a micro-regionalization of connected groups, and eventually returned to broad cultural systems in the mid-5th millennium BC (Pessina and Tiné 2009: 40-41). The mid 5th millennium BC, chronologically referred to as the Middle Neolithic, experienced a secondary moment of broad Neolithic cultural units. The Central Mediterranean was dominated by the Tyrrhenian-Ionian Seas extent of the Diana culture, while the Northern Tyrrhenian-Ligurian Seas were oriented northwards in their association with the French Chassey culture. These two cultural extents suggest three things. First, the Diana culture followed a comparable extent to the first moment of Neolithic spread in the 7th and 6th millennia BC, but the core shifted. The considerable role played by the Aeolian Islands and Sicily appeared to make this *quasi*-continent the core for the highly diagnostic red burnished wares in the mid-5th millennium BC. Second, the Ligurian Sea extended the Central Mediterranean beyond its actual confines. As I have already discussed above, the Central Mediterranean as a space should be expected to stretch beyond its physical confines due to the porosity and fluidity of the Mediterranean at large. The Chassey culture, extended through the Gulf of Lyons (Cortailod in Switzerland and Lagozza in Lombardy) becoming an extension of the western and central European Middle Neolithic in Italian peninsula, lasted over a millennia. Third, after the decline of the Impressed Tyrrhenian Ware in the mid 6th millennium BC, Sardinia and Corsica maintained contact with the Central Mediterranean but began a prolonged process of a diverging cultural evolution. Braudel (1972: 150), in his considerably later purview, described Sardinia as having windows opening outwards, from which it could glimpse the general history of the sea.

Rather, it seems to me that Sardinia and Corsica maintained an interest in the broad occurrences by interacting outwards through the Mediterranean Sea but were also committed internally as a world of their own.

4,000 BC was a convenient chronological moment, especially since the cultural ubiquity of the mid 5th millennium was almost over. The Diana, Chassey, *Vasi a Bocca Quadrata* (VBQ) and Ripoli cultures receded in their spatial extents, bringing their cultural unity to an end (Malone 2003: 300). At 4,000 BC, the general northern-southern division of the 5th millennium BC cultural blocs were transformed into a fractal myriad of localized cultures. Forays into the Alps began a metallurgical extraction at some copper outcrops, such as at Monte Loreto in Liguria (Reckin 2013: 349; Maggi and Pearce 2005: 72), and eventually transformed the technological capabilities of these peoples as well as created a shift in distributive networks. Yet' copper and silver extraction in Sardinia begins around the same time but remains within the confines of the island (Roberts 2009: 466), perhaps suggestive of the increasingly insular outlook of this quasi-continent. Once again, the Central Mediterranean world became an embodiment of its micro-regional nature.

An Efflorescence of "Weird"

The end of the 5th millennium BC was a moment of grand-scale changes, well beyond the shores and lands of the Central Mediterranean (Robb 2007: 287). Across a great extent of the Mediterranean and European continent, the post-Neolithic is a problematic chronological moment, and is perhaps best reflected in the disparate period's labelling as the Late Neolithic, Final Neolithic, Copper Age, or even Eneolithic. The arrival of the domesticated horse, metallurgical innovations, and northerly re-direction of

broad exchange systems in the form of Bell Beakers created a pervasive sense of change. Yet the 4th millennium BC resulted in transformations of social relations, exhibition, and prestige items. This moment in history was equally important for the establishment of particular island adaptations where communities were never detached or completely separated from the broader momentum of history but instead stood on the sidelines of history.

A plurality of cultures can be identified during the 4th-millennium BC Central Mediterranean. The preceding Diana culture in Southern Italy developed into San Cono Piano Notaro in Sicily, Spatarella in Campania/Calabria, Macchia a Mare and Zinzulusa in Puglia, Rinaldone in Lazio and Lower Tuscany, Ortucchio in the Central Apennines, Connelle in Adriatic Central Italy, VBQ III in Lombardy and northeastern Italy. This return to regionally diverse style betrayed the general settlement patterns and density of peninsular Italy. At the Tavoliere plain, there was an apparent decline in settlements by 4,000 BC. This plain, which had acted as the core for the Neolithization process and earlier covered in a dense web of ditch villages, is now seemingly empty. However, by stressing continuity across time, we run the ample risk of not recognizing discontinuities. Puglisi (1959) proposed a pastoralism hypothesis where earlier Neolithic systems of sedentary agriculture moved towards transhumance pastoralism in mountain ranges and adjoining regions. Testing of this hypothesis eventually proved difficult in light of the general absence of settlement density during this period. Nevertheless, Puglisi's hypothesis brings to the fore the problematic nature of this historical moment.

Puglisi's proposal of a broad agricultural disengagement was an erroneous one based on the expectation of cultural continuity. Rather, innovations in this period played

a central role in technological advancements that had considerable effects into later occupation. The wealth of rock carvings at Valcamonica, in eastern Lombardy, provided an insight into one particular innovation of the 4th millennium BC. The crowded Cemmo tableau shows a number of individuals surrounded by herds of animals and an animal-driven plough. Robb (2007: 302-303) interprets this carving as a later Bronze Age product, while Italian scholarship (Cardarelli 1992) tends to consider this carving as contemporaneous with evidence of plough furrowing found underneath 4th millennium BC ceremonial sites in nearby northern Italy. Research in the upland regions of the Apennines was increasingly indicating that a movement of peoples shifted towards higher elevations, such as at Conelle D'Arcevia in Le Marche. This shift to higher elevation was possibly aided by new agricultural techniques, but also paralleled by other transformations.

The islands of the Central Mediterranean began to experience diverse fates, intimately tied to their role and participation in broad-scale systems of interaction. For Lipari, the 4th millennium BC was the closest the island would ever be to regionally indispensable. The obsidian sources located on this island and its position at the opening of the Straits of Messina centralized this place in the southern Central Mediterranean world. As far north as the Gulf of Lyons, obsidian quantities reached the peak during the 4th millennium BC, as further examined in Chapter 5, while the communities in this island archipelago capitalized from their current role and population expanded considerably in the form of several settlements and preparation workshops. Gains from the obsidian distribution eventually declined and Lipari reset from a place of significance (Dawson 2014: 232) to an island on the sidelines of history, while outside of the intense

sphere of interaction other islands were firmly engaged in internal evolutions of “weird”. I use “weird” in an objectionable sense, to disengage from typical interpretations that elevate the isolation of islands so as to express their cultural ability to create a world completely unlike any other, even when there is an awareness of their neighbors.

The main suspects in this cultural deviation rests solidly on the Maltese Islands, Sardinia and Corsica. Without exaggerating the trajectory of human history on these islands, their cultural development illustrates the regional diversity of the 4th millennium BC. Indeed, their cultural uniqueness did not imply their complete isolation from the surrounding world, an idea often replicated in the archaeological literature (Malone and Stoddart 2004; Webster 1996; Evans 1977; Evans 1973). The Maltese Islands continued to intermittently interact and procure raw materials from nearby Sicily, at least sufficiently enough to maintain a presence of imported flint (Vella 2011; 2009), ochre, and greenstone (Malone *et al.* 2009; Leighton and Dixon 1992). A process of megalithic construction, extending from the mid-4th till the mid-3rd millennium BC (**Figure 11**), led to the clustering of structures (typically referred to as “temples”) across the entire Maltese archipelago, marshalling a prolonged period of ideological intensity through rituals in monumental settings. In Sardinia, the Ozieri period pre-dated the diffused construction of *nuraghi* (turreted fortified structures). At Monte D’Accoddi, located in the north-western area near Porte Torres, an elevated ramp structure was constructed around 4,000 BC (**Figure 12**). Until this point the archaeology of Sardinia appeared comparable to mainland Italy, but Monte D’Accoddi represented a disjuncture unparalleled in the Central Mediterranean (Melis 2011; 2009; Contu 2000). Over two distinct phases (Contu 2000: 39-42), this ramp was aggrandized and led to an elevated

rectangular platform. In its second re-elaboration, a structure situated on top of the platform was covered in blood-red ochre (M. G. Melis 2011) and was also used abundantly in underground funerary burials known as *domus de janas* in Sardinia. Eventually the use of this monument started to taper off by the 3rd millennium BC, but only after the construction of a structure limiting access at the bottom of the monumental ramp and the construction of a settlement to the immediate east (Melis 2011).



Figure 11: A facade view of Ta' Hagra one of over thirty Late Neolithic "temple" megalithic structures found in the Maltese Islands.



Figure 12: The elevated ritual ramp structure at Monte d'Accoddi (image taken by Giandaniele Castangia).

These instances of cultural deviation were not based on continuity or discontinuity. They were the result of transforming social relations that varied across space and time. Despite these instances of “weird”, after 4,000 BC the Central Mediterranean maintained broad systems of interaction resulting in the transmission of ideas. Let us return momentarily to Sardinia. At Monte d’Accoddi, two elements found at this monumental structure have a broad presence in the Central Mediterranean: red ochre and *menhir* statuary. The rising presence of collective burials across the Central Mediterranean was often accompanied by the deposition of red ochre over the bodies of the deceased, perhaps part of rituals. Rituals also played a role in social memory above ground in the multiple types of *menhir* statuary found through most of northern Italy, Corsica, Sardinia and continental Europe (Robb 2009; Costa 2008). This distribution of statues will be further discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, but it should be pointed out that once again their extent followed a preferential region connecting the northern extent of the Central Mediterranean to the world beyond the Four Seas.

The Three-Age system served its purpose as a chronological convenience while also risking to undermine the archaeological record of those peoples seen as technologically delayed. 4,000 BC was not a metal-bearing age for the Central Mediterranean and 3,500 BC was not much better, except for the few communities dabbling with copper ores by then. Cazzella (1994: 12-13) rightly argues that the “Copper Age” for all intents and purposes was nothing more than a convenience label, bereft of metallurgical technology. It barely even qualified as a metal age, but it made up for this lack as a period of abundant socio-cultural transformations. The earlier processes developed in unpredictable avenues creating a sense of broad interactions without any

cultural unities. Islands rarely managed to garner sufficient "pull" in their relations to the surrounding world, and not even having obsidian outcrops can always propel them as significant players as in the case of Pantelleria and Palmarola. Thinking of the ending Neolithic as proof of depopulation and receding intensity was a problematic view of this moment in Central Mediterranean history. Movements, adaptations to new conditions, and socio-cultural experimentation were the norm within this part of the Mediterranean basin.

Of Warriors and Drunkards

By the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC, the Central Mediterranean did not show signs of aggression or rampant hierarchy. Leaving a cultural overview to such a generic claim would greatly distort the growing signs of ideological changes, especially in the forms of “warriors” and the communal act of feasting, both of which are typically considered as part of later societies. The use of the term “warriors” requires a slight caveat here. The 3rd millennium BC social shifts, especially in peninsular Italy, strongly emphasized the role of weaponry among contemporaries (as seen in the widespread burials, further discussed in Chapter 7). However, despite the nomenclature used, we still lack clear signs of widespread warfare that warrants a certain doubt to be cast on the idea of “warriors” in 3rd-millennium BC Central Mediterranean.

The farming ways of the previous millennia did not vanish during the 3rd millennium BC, but they were clearly not idealized. Weaponry, made from flint and rarely copper, became not simply objects of prestige, they were also worthy of depiction. The larger-than-life *menhir* statuary illustrated more than mere abstract anthropomorphic figures. Some of them included daggers and were mostly concentrated in northern Italy,

such as at the Lunigiana, Trentino-Alto Adige, and Valcamonica areas (**Figure 13**) (Robb 2009: 164). Daggers and their representation were a much-repeated social display and perhaps a declaration of a new social order. In cemeteries like Remedello Sotto, daggers and other weaponry were always deposited with adult males.

Among the incredible discovery of Ötzi's mummified remains in the Alps, his portable assemblage included prominent items of weaponry: a bow, several arrows, daggers and an axe (Skeates 2014: 143) that were also illustrative of the growing range of weaponry used at this time, as well as the broad inter-connectivity exemplified by the stylistic commonalities of his assemblage. Even flint arrowheads, which according to the Three-Age system would be scarce by then, reached an even higher level of refinement and workmanship, exhibiting not simply their functional uses but also transmitting a sense of display to others (Skeates 2003: 139). The archaeological attention to warrior-type imagery was a given without providing a sufficient proof of the growing role of war and violence. Instead, imagery of weaponry (in the form of above-ground depictions) and deposition of weaponry (in the form of well-conserved weapons in burials) connected a broad number of peoples in the growing role of exhibition. The demarcation of natural space into human space became apparent in the placement of statuary, burials, and ritual contexts, all of which were part of a human need to demarcate space without being highly visible (Skeates 2003: 158). This need for display connected northern Italy beyond the Alps and affected even the southern cultures of Laterza and Gaudio in peninsular Italy.

Insularity was not the prerogative of islands and was not an un-shifting natural imposition on human occupants. Humans overcame insularity, created by the marine circumscription and the isolation imposed, by limited travel outside of the summer

months. Until the 3rd millennium BC, Sicily and its surrounding islands had largely maintained a close cultural connection to their continental counterparts. At the apex of obsidian distribution, distributed from the Aeolian Islands and Sicily, these islands seemingly acted as the center of cultural transmission in the form of the pervasive Diana culture. On the other hand, the San Cono Piano Notaro culture of the 3rd millennium BC exemplified the marginal role of the southern Central Mediterranean region. Sicily became increasingly culturally split, as seen in the contemporaneity of the late 3rd millennium BC San Ippolito, Partanna, Noro, and Malpasso ceramic styles (Leighton 1999: 91). The contraction of demographic occupation in the Aeolian Islands indicated the declining role of obsidian and of the islands themselves. However, a declining role in regional interactions did not necessarily result in demographic collapse or outright abandonment.

Overall, the 3rd millennium BC in the Central Mediterranean was a period of exhibition and display, be it through warrior images or impressive monumental megalithic structures. This growing display created other avenues for exhibition, especially of prestige goods. From the middle to the end of the 3rd millennium BC, parts of the Central Mediterranean became involved in the exchange and reproduction of Bell Beakers (Guilaine 2009; Robb 2009; Barfield 1987) and extended across Iberia, southern France, and Central Europe (**Figure 14**) (Broodbank 2010b; Guilaine 2004). Bell Beakers were a problematic issue since early culture-historical approaches assumed a diffusion of “warrior” people from Central Europe. Later approaches dealt with a different perspective, mainly if by Bell Beakers we should mean a type of ceramic assemblage or whether it is an actual “culture”. Towards the second half of the 3rd millennium BC, the

Bell Beakers entered the Central Mediterranean as a ceramic style spanning peninsular Italy, Sardinia, and western Sicily. The arrival of Bell Beaker ceramic styles in Sicily was an important occurrence because only the western extent of the island, home to the San Ippolito culture, was involved in the distribution extents of these ceramic assemblages. This leads us to ask: if only western Sicily was involved in Bell Beaker exchanges, then how did these ceramics arrive? Recent re-evaluations of the question suggest that maritime routes between Iberia and southern Sardinia could have led to a maritime distribution of the Bell Beakers within the Tyrrhenian Sea (Giannitrapani and Ianni 2011: 447), while the Adriatic Sea was not involved in this exchange network and became focused with Aegean-Balkan interactions (Cazzella *et al.* 2011: 162; Guilaine 2009: 135).

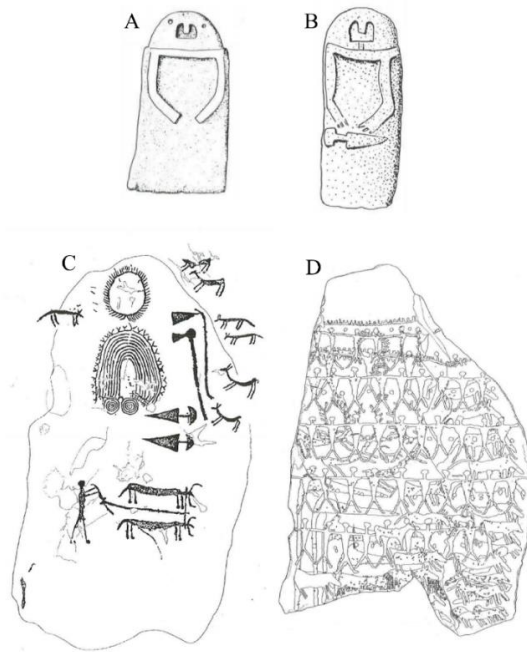


Figure 13: 4th millennium BC Stelae from Northern Italy and Alpine region: A & B. Pontevecchio, Lunigiana (after Costa 2008). C. Bagnolo 2, Valcamonica (after Anati 1994: 125), D. Cemmo 3, Valcamonica (after Anati 1994: 60).

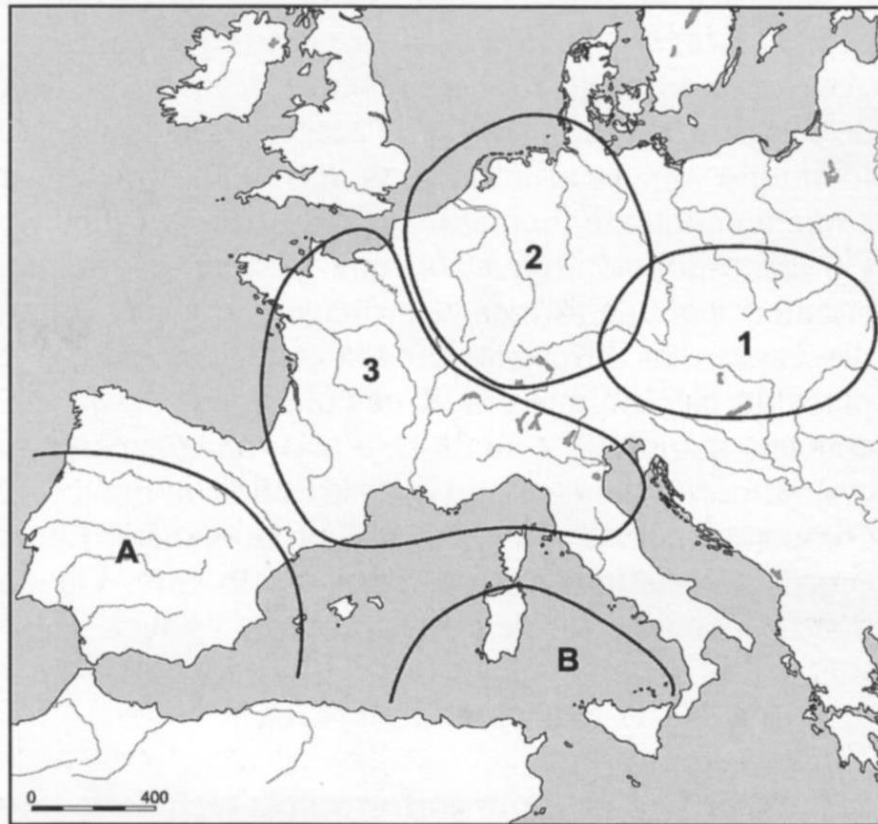


Figure 14: Extents of regional Bell Beaker ceramic production across Europe and the Mediterranean (after Guilaine 2004: 241, Fig. 4)

An Arms Race with no War?

Around the end of the 3rd millennium BC, the Aegean-Balkan interactions in the Adriatic Sea intensified considerably for the second time since the spread of the Neolithic. Yet these interactions across the Adriatic Sea are difficult to gauge for a number of reasons. First, the chronological ambiguity regarding overlap between the Central Mediterranean-Aegean-Eastern Mediterranean makes it difficult to properly understand the movement of goods, peoples, and ideas. Second, the Baltic coast of the Adriatic Sea is still ramping up its intellectual contributions in the Anglophone world, not in the sense of archaeological research but more in the way of cross-regional comparison

beyond the eastern shores of the Adriatic Sea. Third, the movement and exchange of goods created a new *koine*, which is difficult to distinguish between local innovation inspired by broad interactions or over-zealous ceramic typological assessments by archaeologists. To explain this ambiguity, let us return momentarily to the Maltese Islands at the end of the megalithic culture, around 2,400 BC. Proponents of catastrophe or collapse theories have long suggested that this culture expired and was then followed by a 400 year break (compare Recchia and Cazzella 2011; Trump 2002). One opposing hypothesis, based on recognized stratigraphic continuity at Tas-Silġ, suggests that a complete abandonment of the megalithic culture ideological systems were paralleled by a limited demographic presence, as seen at Tas-Silġ. This continuity is seen in the arrival of so-called Thermi Ware at the end of the Tarxien Period and was followed by a local hybridization identified as Gray Ware, straddling between the end of the Late Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age (Recchia and Cazzella 2011; Recchia 2004).

By the end of the 3rd millennium BC a renewed interaction can be identified between the Central Mediterranean and the Aegean-Balkan worlds. Influences and movement of goods in the Tyrrhenian Sea did not end; they simply never reached the same intensity as the Adriatic Sea counterpart. Indeed, the western part of the Central Mediterranean had to await the movements in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas to eventually percolate into the Tyrrhenian Sea around the mid-2nd millennium BC. At the end of the 3rd millennium BC, interactions between the western and eastern extents of the Adriatic Sea intensified, especially overlapping around the Early Helladic II-III, the Maltese Thermi Ware, and Sicilian Capo Graziano (Bernabò Brea 1976: 35). The connection and chronology between these cultures still proves difficult to properly correlate (Bietti

Sestieri 2010: 83) or even less to explain the mechanisms leading to stylistic points of convergence (Recchia and Cazzella 2011; Recchia 2010b; Whitehouse and Renfrew 1974). Even less known, the *Caput Adriae* (northernmost end of the Adriatic Basin) experienced limited correlation between Balkan and Italian academia identified through Cetina ceramics (Recchia 2010b), with few notable exceptions (Borgna and Càssola Guida 2009). At the *Caput Adriae*, the physical meeting point of the Balkans and the Italian peninsula, interactions and movement up the Adriatic Sea connected peoples across both coastlines. In the Friuli area, cairn tumuli and well-fortified hilltops progressively moved northwards around the Adriatic coastline, entering Italy at the *Caput Adriae*. Well-fortified settlements, such as Monkodonja in Croatian Istria and Castellazzo di Doberdò (Borgna and Càssola Guida 2009: 94), became visible landmarks across a previously scarcely populated terrestrial space and connecting maritime movement to land.

Well-fortified settlements were often deemed an archetypal aspect of Bronze Age societies, including those in the Central Mediterranean (Cazzella and Recchia 2013; Cazzella 1991; Cazzella 1994b). However, the 2nd millennium BC did not seem to lead to intense war and conflict between these societies. Instead, grand statements of defensibility spread across diverse parts of the Central Mediterranean at differing speeds, initially through the Italian Adriatic border into Southern Italy, Sicily, and eventually its surrounding islands. Meanwhile, the central and southern Italian communities around the Tyrrhenian Sea experimented with fortifications later than most. It would seem natural to connect this grandiose expression of war to the preceding warrior imagery. However, to borrow an expression from Skeates (2005: 159), these monuments should probably be

better understood as exercises in mass advertising and acted as visual statements of social order, part of an acceleration of demographics and urban centralization (Attema *et al.* 2010; Cazzella 1994b; Cazzella 1991). In Puglia, connections to the Aegean in the 19th century BC were countered by a growing number of highly fortified settlements (Iacono 2016: 128), including Broglio di Trebisacce, Scoglio del Tonno, Rocavecchia, and Coppa Nevigata, which were located on either coastlines or within immediate reach of waterways leading to the sea. The internal organization of these settlements was a comparative let-down in contrast to the large-scale construction of turrets, double-doors, and considerable wall width. Their internal paucity continues across the Proto-Apenine, Apenine, and Sub-Apenine periods, but the walls continued to be maintained, re-built, and gateways shifted across time. Comparably, the interaction with the Aegean also experienced a transformation in time. The coastal sites, located closest to the Straits of Otranto, appear to be the earliest point of interaction with the Mycenaean Greece after the mid 2nd millennium BC, although the process of fortification had begun earlier in time. The rate of interaction with the Mycenaean world was a disputable one (Recchia 2010b; Radina and Recchia 2004; Bietti Sestieri 1988). While Central Mediterranean researchers tend to consider Mycenaean ceramics as forms of interaction with the Aegean, researchers in the Eastern Mediterranean consider the amounts of recognizable Mycenaean ceramics to be too low to be indicative of an intense communication.

Nevertheless, by the mid 2nd millennium BC the interactions with the East created two recognizable trends. First, the communities in the Salentine peninsula, the heels of Italy, appeared to have a closer interaction with the Mycenaeans, which fluctuated across time and were probably due to political conditions in the Aegean itself. Second, the

seafaring from the East, moving across eastern Sicily, the Aeolian Islands, and the Bay of Naples (Bietti Sestieri 1980: 31), towards the West began to utilize land left unoccupied, especially small off-coast islands. Places like Vivara (Buchner *et al.* 1978), Ustica, and Stromboli (Levi *et al.* 2011) experienced either a return of communities or an entirely new population. The role of these islands will require further explanation in Chapter 5, but the recovery of Mycenaean artifacts was taken as a sign of their role as a neutral space for seafaring peoples to stop, rest, and perhaps traded their wares (Sherratt 1993: 30-31).

Even before the seafaring from the East began to pass through the Straits of Messina (Bietti Sestieri 1980: 13-14), the northern half of the Central Mediterranean continued to interact, beyond the Alps with Central European communities. In the northern Central Mediterranean, the 2nd millennium BC was a period of considerable demographic build-up, as seen in the establishment and prolonged occupation of over fifty settlements in the Lago di Garda southern shoreline alone (R. De Marinis 2009). The distribution of these settlements, of which 78% are on the shores of the lake and 22% on hill slopes, was indicative of a locational bias towards damp locations and requiring adaptations to a fluctuating climatic condition. A secondary extension of these “pile dwellings” eventually moved into Italy’s largest fluvial system, the Po River with the *Terramare* settlement systems (Vanzetti 2013; Cardarelli 1992). These *Terramare* sites resulted from a process of rapid demographic rise that lasted two centuries between 1,400-1,200 BC, brought about by a combination of environmental deterioration and population migrations (R. De Marinis 2009). The northern area of the Central Mediterranean belied its nodal connection between Europe and the Mediterranean in the

general lack of metal artifacts found in the *Terramare* culture and settlements. Rather, through the Paduan Plains these communities found themselves at the crossroads of metal circulation from the Alps and Etruria, Baltic amber, Aegean/Eastern Mediterranean beads, and diffused metal artifacts made in the Pescheria style (Bietti Sestieri 2010: 77; Sherratt 1993: 31).

In the meantime, Sardinia boasts over 7,000 *nuraghi* sites at a density of 0.27 per km² that experienced a prolonged history providing another view of Italian proto-urbanism in the Late Bronze Age-Early Iron Age (LBA-EIA) transition (Vanzetti *et al.* 2013). At the danger of oversimplifying a complex and long-term process, the *nuraghi* culture across Sardinia experienced an increasing complexity during the LBA that was characterized by the construction of larger central tower structures, surrounded by fortification walls, and densely packed hut structures. These central structures have debatable roles in their contemporary society, but most archaeologists agree that these structures required communal labor during the building stage and were possibly meant to oversee/claim some territory. However, the evolution of such structures and their surrounding settlements was not entirely a uni-linear development. Indeed, in some instances certain sites were abandoned or heavily modified at a later stage diminishing our comprehension of their real antiquity. However, interestingly enough later settlements associated with the LBA-EIA transition appear to have been retained in later periods by Punic and Roman colonizers who utilized such well-established settlements as a means to control an already fragmented landscape.

Across this cursive preliminary view of the Central Mediterranean, Sardinia and Corsica have largely remained on the wayside within the general networks of

interactions. By the 2nd millennium BC, the chronological beginning of the Early Bronze Age, settlements grew around the *nuraghi*. Settlements differed greatly in size and layout, as can be seen in comparing the considerable Palmavera and Su Nuraxi di Barumini in contrast to Duos Nuraghes and other similar small settlements. By the end of the 2nd millennium BC (LBA-EIA transition), the complexity of *nuraghi* culture included the construction of wider central complexes over earlier domestic structures and the placement of civico-ritual huts in the immediate vicinity of the *nuraghi*.

At the beginning of the 1st millennium BC, the northern *Terramare* and southern Apennine cultures had largely contracted and their development suddenly stunted. The *nuraghi* and the collective megalithic *Tombe dei Giganti* in Sardinia and Corsica were less relevant. Sicily, the Aeolian Islands, Pantelleria, and Malta continued their own social development of fortified settlements. Pantelleria added a local funerary innovation, known as *sesi* (**Figure 15**), made up of dense clusters of turreted structures with several small entrances leading to a small chamber through narrow corbelled corridors (Cattani and Tusa 2012; Tusa 1999; Tusa 1997b). These monuments were eventually abandoned along with the main settlement of Mursia, an island-wide contraction until the movement of Phoenician colonists up the Maghrebian coast considerably later. In contrast, the widespread funerary dolmen monuments from the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC were abandoned (Recchia 2007; Striccoli 1989; Whitehouse 1967), a fading but lasting presence in the natural landscape across peninsular Italy, eastern Sicily, and the Maltese Islands (**Figure 16**).



Figure 15: The *Seso Grande* in Pantelleria, located close to the Bronze Age village of Mursia, is a turreted-type structure with several entrances going around the structure. Several other *sesi* can be found immediately in this northern part of Pantelleria.

Distribution of metal objects became increasingly apparent across most of the Central Mediterranean and larger weaponry revealed the inspiration of sword types from Central Europe, with the exception of marginalized islands like Malta and Pantelleria. These two islands appear connected to this broader world but lack in conserved metals, well until the mid-2nd millennium BC. The array of cultures and peoples present by the end of the 2nd millennium BC were equally paralleled by certain things in common with each other. For instance, the ritual deposition in water (caves or riverine beds) of bent weaponry and other metal objects seems to be a widespread phenomenon across peninsular Italy (**Figure 17**) (Bietti Sestieri et al. 2013; Harding 2011; Borgna 2009b).

This Central Mediterranean world in 1,000 BC was on the verge of becoming part of the historic world. That shift between “prehistory” and “history” was a convoluted

development because it brought about the convergence of exogenous societies that increasingly settled in the Central Mediterranean, as its role in the wider Mediterranean basin is once again affected (but not solely driven) by incoming Eastern Mediterranean peoples. The arrival of such communities has affected the study of the Central Mediterranean in two perceptible ways. First, the “inferior” social development of the Central Mediterranean when compared to its Eastern counterparts was interpreted by earlier scholars as proof of the need for exogenous processes to bring the former into the “civilized” world (Pallottino 1985; 1980; Boardman 1980). Second, the arrival of Eastern peoples can be over-exaggerated as if it was the only (or only worth identifying) movement of people and migrations, which I have attempted to address above and will address in greater detail in Chapter 5. 1,000 BC is the ultimate convenient chronological moment; to many it begins a countdown that leads to the Etruscans and the Romans, which are a core part of Classical studies. However, I would like to slowly draw to an end the later prehistory of the Central Mediterranean at Mont’e Prama in Sardinia after the 9th and 8th centuries BC (Tronchetti and van Dommelen 2005). The colossal figures of boxers and warriors kept the growing colonial settlement of Tharros within their sights. These figures were only a small part of the continuity of prehistoric cultures, like the Villanovans in Central Italy (Bietti Sestieri 2012; Bartoloni 2000; Bartoloni 1989), who connected “prehistoric” cultures well past 1,000 BC, and hence, in this dissertation I intend to also “trespass” into the 1st millennium BC.



Figure 16: One of several dolmens at the Ta' Ċenċ cliffs facing the Malta-Sicily Channel.

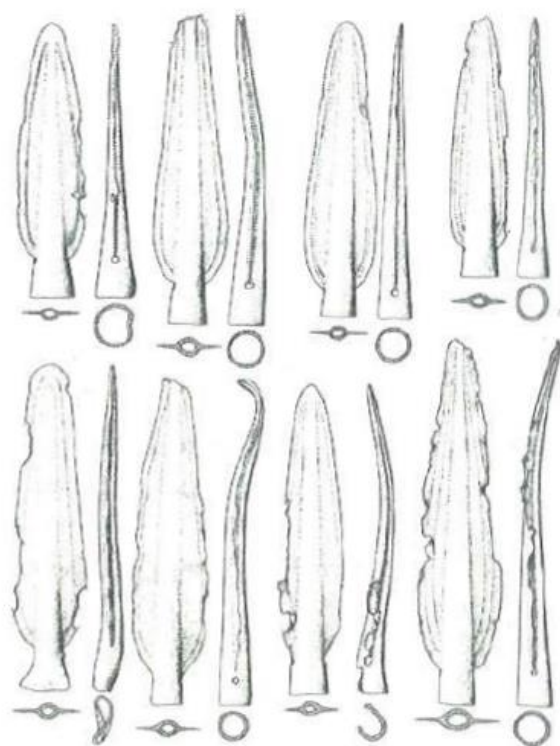


Figure 17: Bent or broken spearheads ritually deposited in water at Pila del Brancòn (after Bietti Sestieri 2010: 58).

Conclusion: Space, Time, and the Central Mediterranean

Multiple peoples and nations currently live in, or share a border with, the Central Mediterranean. Their use of the Mediterranean yield effects that are destructive and sometimes have irreversible repercussions on the natural environment. This modern human occupation of their surrounding world is now demarcated by nation-state boundaries, requiring permission to cross invisible lines or otherwise incur the punitive actions of a legislative body. These boundaries have greatly changed the capability for movement and migrations of humans. The northward voyages across the Mediterranean Sea undertaken by those seeking to leave behind their unstable (if not dangerous) homes in the Middle East, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, etc. are met by a growing animosity among populations in the Central Mediterranean.

An archaeology of the Central Mediterranean for the sake of cataloguing the deep past of this region is something that present communities cannot afford to squander. Our past has to inform our present conditions and illustrate processes or occurrences which have had prolonged effects in time. The Mediterranean as a unit of study has moved greatly from earlier approaches focusing on antiquaries and ancient peoples in idyllic settings. Nostalgia of a supposed more quaint past is incorrect and assumes that all Mediterranean peoples and societies operate on generally equable levels. Rather, the Mediterranean is a multi-ecological region connected together like a large puzzle. The gaps, or rather the maritime spaces, in this puzzle are not even a single sea. Indentations, currents, winds, and general morphologies of the Mediterranean coastline are formed by a combination of seas falling under one general banner: the Mediterranean. Therefore, this

chapter described this world as an enmeshed maritime and terrestrial space. People moved, move, and will continue to move across these spaces, even overcoming our physical limitations.

In the Central Mediterranean, the Four Seas acted as points of convergence, through which humans moved, colonized, and interacted. These seas offered prevailing physical conditions and directionality, which humans exploited or otherwise circumvented. The preliminary view of the Central Mediterranean prehistory above indicates that at various points the ability of prehistoric communities were able to maintain prolonged interactions across great distances. Those broad interactions were not always continuous, and systems of interactions shifted towards areas that become keener or more apt at controlling nodes of communications. Islands, like Lipari, acted as purveyors of desirable raw materials, while Malta experimented with ideological intensification and monumental constructions. There is no single commonality to uses of terrestrial and maritime spaces. For instance, Pantelleria remained largely unoccupied until the 2nd millennium BC despite the extraction and distribution of its obsidian since the 6th millennium BC. The interactions and inter-connectivity of the Central Mediterranean world do not simply converge around the Four Seas. Land-locked communities in the northern Central Mediterranean and in the shadow of the Alps used the deep valleys to extend their reach into Central Europe while continuing to interact with the Mediterranean through the Ligurian and Adriatic Seas.

This chapter used the concepts of space and time as mitigating factors for unpacking human existence and experience in the Central Mediterranean. Their uses of spaces and time varied considerably in patterns of continuity and discontinuity as

historical trajectories were re-adapted continuously in unpredictable manners. Indeed, some of the same elements that share a cross-regional commonality often had an underlying differential value. Obsidian, Bell Beakers, and metals moved across the Central Mediterranean, variably in time, and were received in their final destination according to the cultural norms of the given place. Statue *menhirs* and dolmens represent an imposition by humans on the natural landscape, a statement at one time, which does not necessarily signify the same thing across this world or over time. Monumentality in islands are spurred by prolonged cultural development but are also discontinued in light of cultural transformations, without directly inspiring any of the later peninsular attempts at monumentality. All of these elements should suggest to us that in its unity, as part of the Mediterranean basin, small systems of a larger whole compensate for the movement of time and the unpredictability of their surrounding world. In the following chapter, I explore the roles of exotica and interaction in the Central Mediterranean world, particularly in light of the social uses of exchanges. These exchange systems were prone to shifts and transformations, which made their presence a temporary one and their potential benefits to a society inherently unstable.

Chapter 5: In Pursuit of Commodities: Exotica and Broad Interactions

Introduction: Movement, Interaction and Commodities

Peoples at considerable distances from each other have long participated in varying systems of interaction within and beyond the Central Mediterranean. Over the 4th and 3rd millennia BC, commodities like obsidian and greenstone traveled from their respective sources over distances up to 1,800 km and 1,000 km, respectively (Bernabò Brea *et al.* 2006). In this chapter, the movement and procurement of exotica, loosely defined here as non-native objects deposited in a foreign setting, is interpreted as an unequal pursuit on the macroscale. Not all peoples or communities of the Central Mediterranean were able to participate equally in systems of interaction. Instead, the pursuit of commodities as desired objects was predicated on availability, control, knowledge, desirability, and reception.

Several objects and raw materials moved in the prehistoric Mediterranean basin across staggering distances, and archaeologists have long held the movement of exotica in high regard. To some extent this archaeological interest is based on our species' desire for commodities, manifested in the human penchant for interacting beyond their immediate surroundings. That interaction ties back to Chapter 4; all of these objects were moving through many of the maritime and terrestrial spaces of the Central Mediterranean

that were tied together through mental maps and accrued knowledge (Haviland 2000; Helms 1993; 1988).

In dealing with prehistoric distributive networks, reaching the destination, interacting with others, and acquiring objects of desire are at the forefront of archaeological examination, but there is still a tendency to favor characterization as a primary concern due to its successful applications (Williams-Thorpe 1995). In contrast, the early crucial works by Malinowski (1961) and Mauss (1967) have helped anthropologists underline the central role played by social actions (Earle 2010; Brumfield and Earle 1987), the value of the interaction itself, and the ideological superstructure presiding over these objects. Furthermore, the unpredictable voyage and the knowledge required to arrive in a foreign place among other factors all added a certain “weight” to the activities surrounding these interactions. Perhaps, it would be best to think of these prehistoric distributive networks as a perfect example of the flexibility present in human adaptations. For instance, when faced with declining pan-regional systems of interactions, alternatives were created. These alternatives in some instances also led to a shift in the perceived value of a commodity, while also culturally realigning the individuals involved in such interactions.

The need to create alternative exotica emerged from the inability of some certain communities to fully participate in distribution networks and acquire commodities. In certain instances, intervening factors were met by localized imitation of exotica - a reminder that not all individuals and communities were able to participate in pan-regional systems of interaction and trade. For example, between the Middle to Late Bronze Age,

southern Italian communities in Puglia began a localized imitation of Mycenaean ceramics because they were unable to procure imported Aegean ceramic fineware.

Overall, exotica and their interaction networks are a crucial aid to archaeological interpretation. In the later prehistory of the Central Mediterranean, commodities were entwined in the lives of communities, were more than just objects, and acquired a life of their own. At its core, the importance of exotica in prehistoric Central Mediterranean communities lay in two elements: limited availability and unpredictable supply. The debunked myth of “*Homo economicus*”, a rational consumer and profit seeking producer, leads us to consider pre-capitalistic trade and interaction as irrational and unpredictable, driven more by social exigencies than economic worth. These interactions networks were also biased in their directions, driven by an unequal participation and a constant weight of demand. Even though normative archaeological accounts tend to discuss such interactions as “exchange” or “trade”, these interactions were to my mind driven by interest and potential gain. The procurement and production of commodities was even an avenue for the use of specialized knowledge and marginalization of some individuals over others. In this sense, the actual acquisition of objects was only part of a wider social exploitation by some individuals being able to participate in such interactions. The desirability of exotica led to inevitable competition and exhibition within communities that either seemed to utilize these interactions to consolidate their collective spirit or, more probably, to provide an avenue for social distinction without the burden of vertical hierarchy.

Homo economicus, Irrationality and the Never-Ending Pursuit

In my visual periphery at my writing in my office is a small *Maiolica* vase made in Caltagirone, Sicily. It is a typical souvenir from this renowned Sicilian town but it is not worth much in a monetary sense. As it stands, it is a ten-dollar item that has moved over 14,000 km! This well-travelled object cannot be equated to any prehistoric setting since contemporary transportation methods are widely different. However, my connection with this small *Maiolica* vase is based on emotion, aesthetic, and memory, which surpasses its market value. Trivial as it might be, this human-object relationship is not an unusual example of materiality (Knapp and van Dommelen 2010), or rather, the deep irrational attachment or desirability of commodities as they play a central role in human lives.

Homo economicus is a straw man argument based on the debunked assumption of humans as rational beings focused on procuring, acquiring, producing and at the end, profiting. The pursuit for commodities, or accrued wealth balanced by minimal labor-input, can be seen in the ideas of 18th- and 19th- centuries economists in their justifications of capitalist economies. These arguments were broadly connected to the contemporary anthropological expectations of “primitive” societies and their failures to become modern, a matter already described in Chapter 2. Since then, work on economic anthropology has remedied these earlier assumptions. Cross-comparative ethnographic research by Malinowski (1961), Mauss (1967), Sahlins (1972), and Godelier (1978), among others, presented an alternative view of pre-capitalist economies. Their

ethnographic work described societies dominated by gift-giving and reciprocity, aggrandizing the object and its receiver across a use-life.

Objects are able to dwell in our periphery, never too far from ourselves but close enough to habitually condition our own actions and social intentions (Bourdieu 1990; 1977). Arguably, these objects and their materiality are perhaps even inseparable from our humanity (Hegel 1979) and are always shifting in meaning, function, and value during their use-lives (Appadurai 1986). In turn, objects in their broadest sense, exotica and mundane alike, are connected together forming an underlying unconscious order (Miller 2010: 53) as part of our *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977). Objects are binding forces to human labor but also spur technological developments. Overall, humans transform, in a mix of conscious and unconscious behavior, the *terra vergine* of nature into a humanized world. Then, casting aside the positivist ideal of a *Homo economicus* (the minimalist ideal laborer), the human prehistoric participation in production and broad interaction was irrational and driven by desirability that was gauged through subjective valuing. In reaction to that understood value, there is a never-ending pursuit for objects that can be traced across our global history, making them commodities that shifted in their value and desirability over time.

The Never-Ending Pursuit over Four Millennia

All of the chronological periods examined in this dissertation have their own examples of exotica, hailing from disparate parts of the Central Mediterranean or even beyond. Their study are often tied by scholars through terms like “*koine*”, “international spirit” or “international style” that attempt to herald a broad connection based on a marker (often well-identifiable exotica).

The procurement, acquisition, and production of objects were a culmination of collective social actions. Without a combined interest in these objects, then their distribution would have been short-ranged at best. Instead, the role of individuals and their communities was closely tied to a pursuit of objects, mainly because they were not just objects without additional meaning or desirability. The primary social aspect that made exotica important in prehistory was that they were commodities. These commodities expanded from their basic use into an entirely contextualized significance. Across time, desirable commodities faded in and out of humans' interests as they became overturned by innovations and varying in the distributive intensity. It was truly a never-ending pursuit for human societies who sought exotica for their own benefits and potential gains.

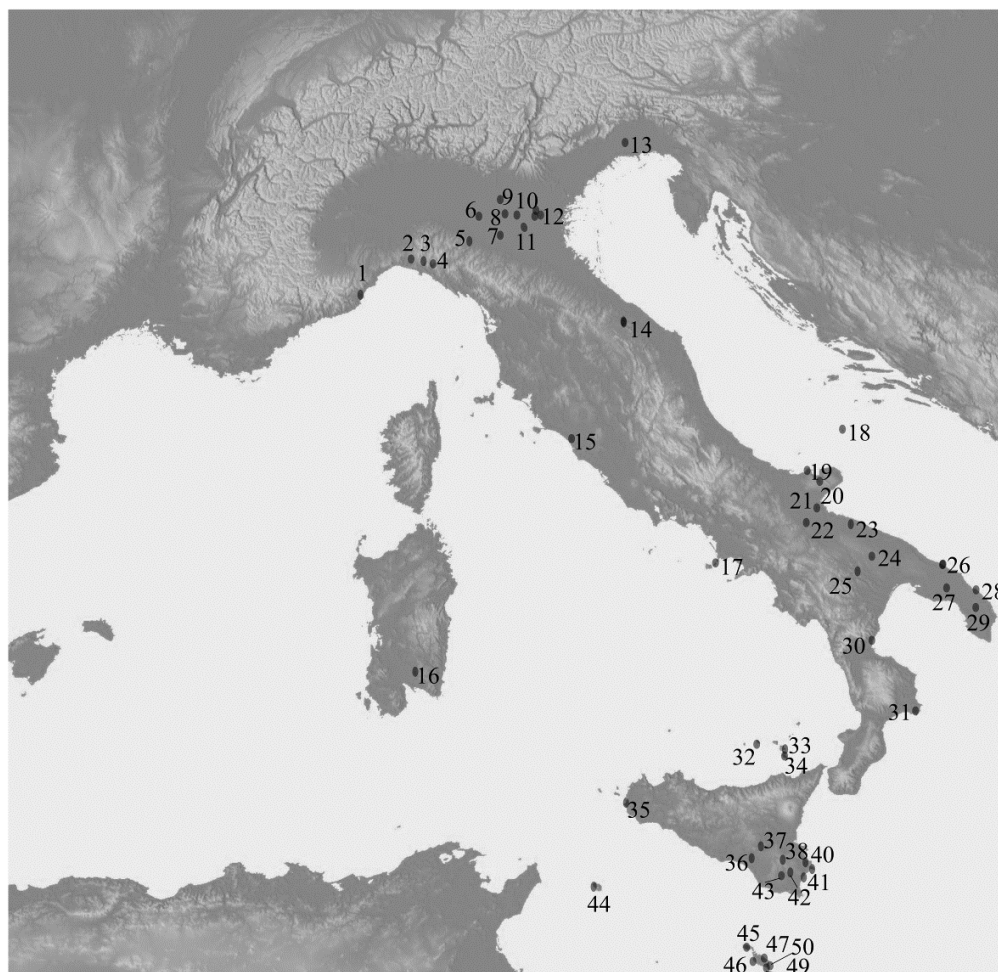


Figure 18: Archaeological sites and small islands mentioned in **Chapter 5**: 1. Arene Candide, 2. Valle Lagorara, 3. Libiola, 4. Monte Loreto, 5. Botteghino, 6. Castellaro del Vhò, 7. Fondo Paviani, 8. Mariconda di Melara, 9. Peschiera, 10. Forno del Vallo a Beneceto, 11. Montagnana –Borgo San Zeno, 12. Frattesina, Nardo, Fondo Zanotto, 13. Sammardenchia, 14. Conelle de Arcevia, 15. Costel del Marano, 16. Pranu, 17. Vivara, 18. Palagruža, 19. Torre Mileto, 20. Monte Gargano, 21. Coppa Nevigata, 22. Toppo Daguzzo, 23. Trinitapoli, 24. Chiancudda, 25. Casal Sabini, 26. Torre Santa Sabina, 27. Grotta del Pipistrello Solitario., 28. Roca Vecchia, 29. Surbo, 30. Broglio di Trebisacce, 31. Capo Piccolo, 32. Filicudi, 33. Lipari (Castellaro Vecchio, Lipari Acropolis), 34. Vulcano, 35. Motya, 36. Monte Dessucri, 37. Caltagirone, 38. Pantalica, 39. Thapsos, 40. Cannatello, 41. Ognina, 42. Castelluccio, 43. Grotta Lazzaro, 44. Mursia, 45. Xagħra Circle, 46. Għar Mirdum, 47. Hal Saflieni, 48. Tarxien, 49. Tas-Silġ, 50. Borg in-Nadur (© ESRI 2013 basemap).

Coveted Stones, Limited Availability

Between the 5th and 1st millennia BC there were clear shifts and re-alignments in distributive networks, which were in some parts affected by technological innovations and the exogenous fates/development of nearby regions. The technological innovations experienced over the timespan under study seem somewhat obvious. Indeed, archaeologists tend to assume a shift from stone- to metal-based technology, but there was not a uniform, fluid transition in the region under study.

As far back as the 7th millennium BC, the main raw materials that crisscrossed this region were those used for lithic production. Obsidian, the prime example of successful archaeological characterization (Bigazzi *et al.* 2005; Tykot 2001; Tykot 1999; Tykot 1996; Williams-Thorpe 1995), was broadly found across this region in varying quantities, influenced by the differential reach of the four obsidian sources (Lipari, Pantelleria, Palmarola, and Monte Arci). In part, the colonization of islands across the Central Mediterranean was connected to the assessment of the potential of these new spaces during this period (Dawson 2014; Phoca-Cosmetatou 2011; Patton 1996). However, few of these newly colonized islands were as geared as Lipari towards the extraction and distribution of obsidian. The other three obsidian sources remained largely marginal during the Early Neolithic, only picking up pace first in Palmarola and then Monte Arci. The case of Pantelleria was particular because this island did not have a permanent settlement prior to the 2nd millennium BC at Mursia (Cattani *et al.* 2012). Yet by the 6th millennium BC Pantellerian obsidian can be found on the Maghrebian coastline (Le Bourdonnec *et al.* 2013), Sicily, and the Maltese Islands (Vella 2008; Trump 2002; 1966). In contrast, beside the expected intense connection between Lipari and Calabria

(Ammerman 1985; 1979), the distribution of Liparian obsidian was characterized by an earlier intensity in the Tyrrhenian basin and then at a secondary moment expanded through the Adriatic Sea.

The reason for this initial intensity in the Tyrrhenian Sea can seem somewhat obvious to us. Prior to the 5th millennium BC, the Central Mediterranean experienced the colonization of minor islands, the establishment of a sedentary lifestyle and the intangible, transformed relationship between humans and their surroundings. The actual processes that brought about an inversely proportional relationship between distributed obsidian and distance from outcrop were socially influenced (Robb and Farr 2005). In the Alpine-Paduan region obsidian was almost absent, while in the Abruzzo area obsidian during the 7th and 6th millennia BC made up only around 8% of entire site lithic assemblages (Pessina and Radi 2006: 436-437). More surprising was the fact that Palmarolan obsidian was initially more present in Central Italy than Lipari, which by this point already had ample evidence of obsidian production sites, such as Castellaro Vecchio (Castagnino Berlinghieri 2011; Bernabò Brea and Cavalier 1956: 16).

However, by focusing on sites and their assemblage ratios we risk missing the wider trend in this distribution: the spread of obsidian was fundamentally driven by the developing maritime connections of the time. As of the 5th and 4th millennia BC Middle Neolithic, the prevailing Lipari obsidian distribution in the Tyrrhenian seaways expanded towards the Ionian coast of southern Italy, which was not a coincidence, since it overlapped with the Trichrome and Serra d'Alto phases in Lipari (Pessina and Radi 2006: 445-446) and was indicative of a burgeoning cultural development. Then by the second half of the 5th millennium BC at Calo Colombo and other Abruzzo sites, we can identify

the developing connection to the Aeolian Islands from the Adriatic Sea, overturning the expected quantitative decrease when travelling across land from the Tyrrhenian Sea.

The northern extents of Italy were situated in the marginal limits of obsidian movement in different ways. The Ligurian Gulf, connected to the Tyrrhenian seaways and movement, was quickly integrated into Lipari's circulation sphere and then supplanted by the Sardinian Monte Arci obsidian. At the *Caput Adriae*, in the Friuli-Venezia region, obsidian remained relatively limited until the Adriatic seaways opened up. The expansion of the VBQ (*Vasi a Bocca Quadrata*) culture in 4th millennium BC northern Italy was able to marshal enough obsidian from Sardinia, Palmarola, and Lipari to create an archaeological trace of a diverse social valuing of these exotica, but not enough to suggest an effective connection to the obsidian sources (i.e. still relying on distribution from willing neighboring regions).

Limited availability led different communities to appreciate certain objects as prestige items. The modest remains of Sammardenchia, in north-eastern Italy, were architecturally and culturally typical of the Early to Late Neolithic of peninsular Italy, highlighted the multiple overlaps of interaction systems from diverse directions. The site's connection to obsidian did not appear to include any considerable quantities of Sardinian or Palmarolan obsidian. Instead, this northern part of Italy experienced an overlap of two distribution networks: obsidian and greenstone.

Greenstone is a wide-encompassing term that can include jade, serpentine, and other rocks of a greenish color. At Sammardenchia over 291 examples, largely from Early Neolithic contexts, were procured from the west, probably hailing from the general Alpine-Paduan-Provençal area. This site acted as a hub for the production and

distribution of axes meant for wood-working and tree-felling (D'Amico 1998: 177-178), and was connected with the broader expansion of land cultivation at that time. These axes, procured from north-western Italian sources, had a distribution of up to 1,500 km away into Germany, northern France, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and even Scotland (D'Amico 2005: 243; 1998: 179). High-altitude investigations at Monte Viso, located on the Alpine border between Italy and France, have identified numerous greenstone outcrops that were being quarried and prepared for extraction between the mid 7th and 5th millennia BC (Pétrequin *et al.* 2006: 16). Yet greenstone axes from this source were found at the 5th-millennium BC tumulus of Saint-Michel (Brittany) and the 4th-millennium BC site at Lake Chalain, extending the continued exploitation and circulation of these objects past the conventional Neolithic chronology in the Rhône Valley (de Bouard and Fedele 1993: 19).

In the southern Italian region, around the end of the 4th millennium BC, a localized sphere of greenstone production emerged at the ophiolite outcrops in the Calabrian-Lucanian Apennines, extending from the Sila to the Sinni river in Basilicata (Leighton and Dixon 1992: 182). However, these outcrops were not exploited on the same level of exploitation as the Alps, especially due to their scattered geographical distribution. On the other hand, some ophiolites potentially hailed from the Sicilian Peloritani range. But perhaps this southernmost extension of greenstone production and distribution was relative to a much broader obsidian circulation? Obsidian moved across greater distances, overlapping between the four different sources, while maintaining a general sense of a maximum extent based on factors that are largely unknown to us. Over this complex circulation system, the southern circulation system can be explained as an

extension of the cultural desirability of these sturdy and aesthetically-pleasing raw materials but never quite reaching the same intensity or production output of its northern counterparts. A final overlap between obsidian and greenstone was that they were largely moving in opposite directions (Leighton and Dixon 1992: 186), with obsidian moving from the southern islands across peninsular Italy and greenstone arrived from the north in limited quantities to these same islands.

The overlap of these systems brings to the fore the ability of communities to both be in a core of interaction while still lying on the margins of broader catchment areas. Islands were the prime suspects of this duality. By the end of the 4th millennium BC in the southern limits of the Central Mediterranean, Liparian obsidian was past its peak of circulation and production in the overlapping cultures of Spatarella in southern Italy, San Cono Piano Notaro and Conzo in Sicily, and the Zebbug and transitional Mgarr in Malta (Cazzella *et al.* 2011: 158). Nevertheless, a changing inter-connectivity can be identified in the close inspiration of painted and incised ceramic assemblages across these spaces, the propensity of underground communal burials (Cazzella 2000), and the continued movement of exotica.

In the case of the Maltese Islands, this was also the moment that the archipelago began a millennium-long construction of ritual megalithic monuments. Often cited as a by-product of isolation (Bonanno *et al.* 1990; Evans 1977; 1973) or even an extended period of inward-facing religious fervor controlled by a priestly caste (Malone and Stoddart 2004), the Maltese Islands nevertheless maintained some connection on the periphery of the Central Mediterranean world. Flint, red ochre, and greenstone continued to arrive on these islands shores. However, within a broad circulation system one can also

expect localized re-adaptations. In Malta during the 3rd millennium BC, greenstone was no longer primarily exhibited as a stone tool. Instead, it became a social statement (**Figure 19**). Miniaturized greenstone pendants, in the general shape of an axe, appeared to be part of individuals' personal possessions and buried with the deceased in Malta's monumental underground hypogea at Hal Saflieni and Xagħra Circle (Skeates 2002; 1995). Hanging around the neck of some individuals, these exotica were commentaries of the social connections of potent individuals to the outside world, a world beyond the shadow of their surrounding megalithic monuments.

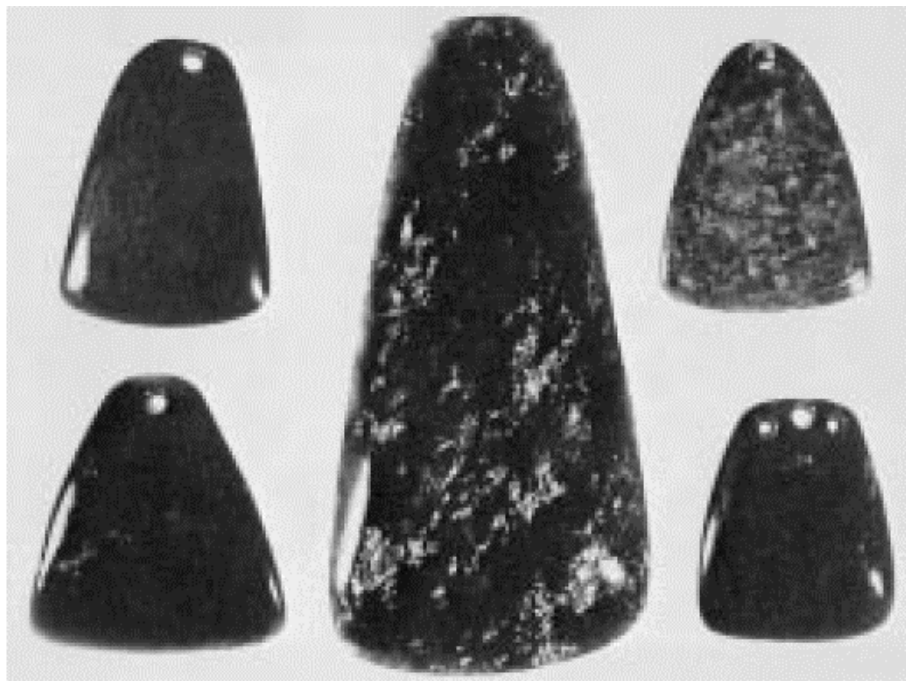


Figure 19: A selection of greenstone pendants recovered from the Hal Saflieni hypogeum measuring between 1.5 and 9 cm (after Skeates 2002: 19).

Metal trumps Stone?

Despite the dependence of diffusionism in the *ex oriente lux* model, the Central Mediterranean is still thought to have undertaken metalworking through accrued knowledge seemingly gained from the east (Dolfini 2013: 21). Still, others consider the beginnings of metalworking in the Central Mediterranean as occurring over a protracted length of time (Cazzella 1994a). Nevertheless, the Central Mediterranean, as in other regions, did not simply turn a new leaf and abandon its technological reliance on stone tools. Instead, connections with other lands brought into peninsular Italy an alternative technological assemblage that encouraged a shift in value and desirability. This transformed connectivity also pushed the surrounding islands to position themselves as either innovators or else find themselves unable to fully participate in broader levels of interaction. Aside from a growing number of instances that illustrate an earlier curiosity in copper and its uses, such as at Arene Candide (Liguria) (Maggi and Campana 2008: 65) or poorly dated copper axes from Northern Italy dated broadly to 4,500-3,600 BC (Dolfini 2013: 25-26), (Dolfini 2013: 23-24) the production and working of copper took off the mid 4th millennium BC in the Ligurian-Alpine region (Pearce 2007: 53).

In the meantime, in tracing the origins of metallurgy a broader question remains: are we dealing with a Central Mediterranean localized innovation (emerging semi-independently in multiple places) or diffusion from outside lands? The inter-connectivity of the Mediterranean situated the region at hand and its peoples in a constant movement of people, ideas, technologies, and even objects. Since the beginning of the Neolithic, there were clear instances of localized innovation spurred by the availability of raw materials and re-adaptation of broader knowledge circulating in the Mediterranean. This

trend continued into the 4th millennium. For instance, the differentiated addition of chemicals to metalwork across the Central Mediterranean or the variable lithic reduction processes utilized are suggestive of knowledge and are passed down through experimentation, as well as through broader systems of interaction. The growing value and appreciation of metallurgy is now envisaged as a multi-step process of technological development (Dolfini 2013: 44; Roberts 2009: 466) that began to supersede the waning circulation of obsidian and greenstone in the Central Mediterranean. By the 4th millennium BC, Lipari and Monte Arci obsidian distribution became restricted within their immediate range. The decline of obsidian distribution was not just a change in exchange networks; it re-oriented the predominant direction of flow and reset the role of some communities. In the wider Aeolian Islands, this was a moment of clear contraction (Dawson 2014: 232). Settlements were abandoned and some of the archipelago's islands seem unoccupied. In parallel, obsidian lost its broad desirability and earlier value, after which obsidian sources proportionally lost their pivotal role in distributive networks.

Even in moments of shifting networks, the porous borders of the Central Mediterranean facilitated broader transformations, such as in the connections beyond the Alps. In the Venezia area, west Italian greenstone axes became supplanted by serpentine and basalts probably moving from Hohe Tauern (Austria) and Slovenia into the Central Mediterranean (Bernardini *et al.* 2011: 280-281; D'Amico 1998: 82). Metallurgical technology moved from the Carpathian basin into northern Italy and then eventually dispersed into central Italy and Sardinia. At Monte Loreto and Libiola entire production sequences were identified in the 4th and 3rd millennia BC (Maggi and Pearce 2005). This production and extraction of copper in Liguria reached a considerable intensity, as seen in

surface mining (dating to 3,645-3,355 BC) at site ML6 on Monte Loreto extending over 2000 m² (Maggi and Campana 2008: 69) with a number of shaft mines ranging in depth between 20-30 m and dated to 2,870-2,480 BC (Maggi and Campana 2008: 66).

The beginnings of metallurgical production in Liguria were not a case of increasing production intensification followed by broad distribution. Rather, there was little distribution outside of the metal-bearing regions of the Central Mediterranean. This was not created by a lack of available copper, which some argue was more than sufficient (Pearce 2007: 51). Instead, a combination of social processes or the limited preservation of metal objects in the archaeological record (because they are prone to recycling) suggest a limited distribution during the 4th and 3rd millennia BC. Despite the decline of obsidian, stone tool technology remained pervasive from central Italy to the southern edges of the region and was transformed to supply a growing demand for weaponry. Just ten kilometers away from Monte Loreto, a jasper quarry in Valle Lagorara (with two activities dated to 3,960-3,670 BC and 2,200-1,700 BC) was established for the production of prized arrowheads and daggers (**Figure 20**). At Valle Lagorara, the extraction activity extended over 1,000 m³ in which over 2,000 years of use was estimated to have produced upwards of one million projectile points and about 2,000 tons of extracted jasper (Maggi and Campana 2008: 70; Bernabò Brea *et al.* 2006: 85).

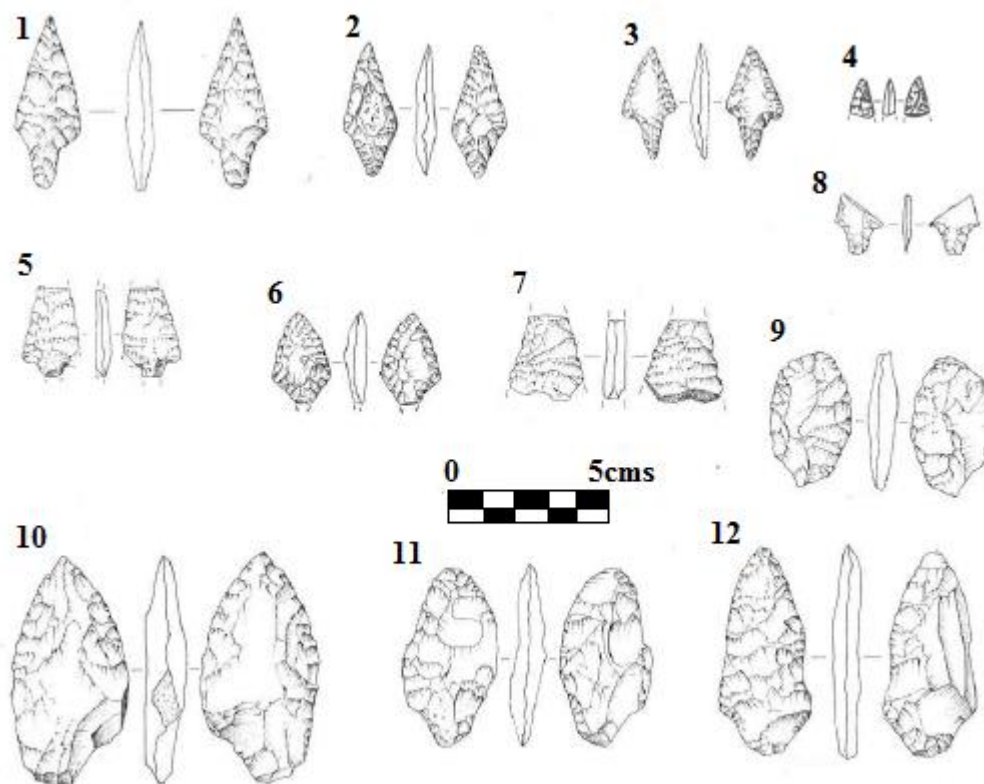


Figure 20: Examples of bifacial jasper tools recovered at Valle Lagorara: 1-3. Arrowheads, 4-5. Fragmentary Arrowhead, 6. Arrowhead, 7-8. Fragmentary Arrowhead, 9-12. Bifacial Pre-form (after Campana and Negrino 2002: 175).

Socially these stone tools held a crucial role in the matrix of northern-central Italian communities and were manufactured by specialized stone tool workers (Lo Vetro 2007: 256; Mottes 2002: 95). Their value and production intensity contradicted the general understanding of metalworking innovations meant for increasing warfare (Dolfini 2011) and growing warrior ideologies across the 4th and 3rd millennia BC. In the Le Marche site of Conelle de Arcevia (Cazzella 2004; Moscoloni 1990) the discovery of entire production sequences for projectile points is interpreted as evidence for a broad distribution system, which at the time were connected to the Balkans and central Italy throughout the Adriatic basin. This predominance of lithic weaponry was not just a causal

product of the growing interest in warrior ideology, it was also catering to a limited metal production and distribution while providing a raw material alternative. These stone tools continued to bear the brunt of use across the Central Mediterranean, while early copper axes were used according to particular conditions. In some instances the use of metal daggers played a role in ritual sacrifice, such as in the burying of a sacrificed horse in a pit at Maccarese (Dolfini 2011: 1047). Clearly, the value of flint and metal weaponry was a multi-layered value system seemingly predicated on conservation and exhibition. In the north-central Italian peninsula these objects, mostly in still usable condition, were deposited along adult males (Lemorini 2012: 39).

The pursuit of metal was in no way an equal prospect by the end of the 4th millennium BC. It was strongly rooted in and predominantly organized by the northern limits of the Central Mediterranean. The southern Adriatic communities were still unable to exploit their location as a lynchpin between the Italian peninsula and the Aegean-Balkans. This was the historical moment that led Puglisi (1959) to propose a break, or perhaps in more eloquent terms, a lull compared to the earlier density of Tavoliere Neolithic occupation. This stark difference within one single region requires us to dispute the premise of egalitarian social standings because it also assumes a uniform “canvas” where different regions and their communities are somehow operating on the same social standing. The reality could not be any more different. After the establishment of metallurgical technology in northern Italy and eventually Sardinia, a considerable segment of the Central Mediterranean was not participating in metallurgical production or was unable to play a significant role in metal distribution. This lag in metal distribution led to a divide where northern and southern communities were still connected but not

experiencing a mutual flow of exchange, as was the case during the obsidian-greenstone Neolithic system. Indeed, the entire southern part of the Central Mediterranean shifted its focus towards other avenues of interaction: the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic seaways.

The southern limits of the Central Mediterranean lacked the considerable metal-rich ores of the north, but it did not stand idly on the margins of technological innovation and distribution systems. Instead, the seaways of the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic Seas appeared occupied with limited overlap. The post-obsidian networks, previously leaning heavily towards Lipari obsidian, appear in a moment of apparent cultural multi-diversity. The earlier Neolithic singularity was replaced by localized cultural developments, largely focused on either interacting within the broader Tyrrhenian major islands or else intensifying the connections with the Aegean-Balkan world in the east. This unique moment of division was perhaps best exemplified in Sicily, which experienced a multi-regional cultural division after the broad Diana cultural system (at the peak of obsidian production). In the west-central part of Sicily, the southernmost extension of the enigmatic Bell Beaker culture developed in association with other Tyrrhenian basin communities. Emerging over 800 years of development, the movement of this cultural package remains a well-debated topic across north-central Europe (Vander Linden 2013; Brodie 1997), Iberia (Salanova 2014), Mediterranean France (Lemerrier 2014) and Tyrrhenian Italy (Leonini 2014; Giannitrapani and Ianni 2011; Borgna 2009a; Guilaine 2009). The distribution of the Bell Beaker ceramic assemblage, style, and technological transmission was perhaps the earliest movement largely limited to the western extent of the Central Mediterranean (Nicoletti and Tusa 2012: 105). Within the limits of Sicily, the Bell Beaker ceramics (**Figure 21**) formed part of a complex cultural overlay of the Naro-

Partanna (westernmost Sicily), Malpasso and Sant'Ippolito (central to eastern Sicily) and Capo Graziano (Aeolian Islands) cultures between the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC (**Figure 22**). Even across the area of Bell Beaker stylistic diffusion, there were differences possibly tied to group identities and preferences. In fact, in the north-western limits of Sicily communities utilized the *pointillé* technique for ceramic decoration, while in the south-west exogenous ceramic styles and morphologies soon integrated within the local assemblage (Nicoletti and Tusa 2012: 105-106).

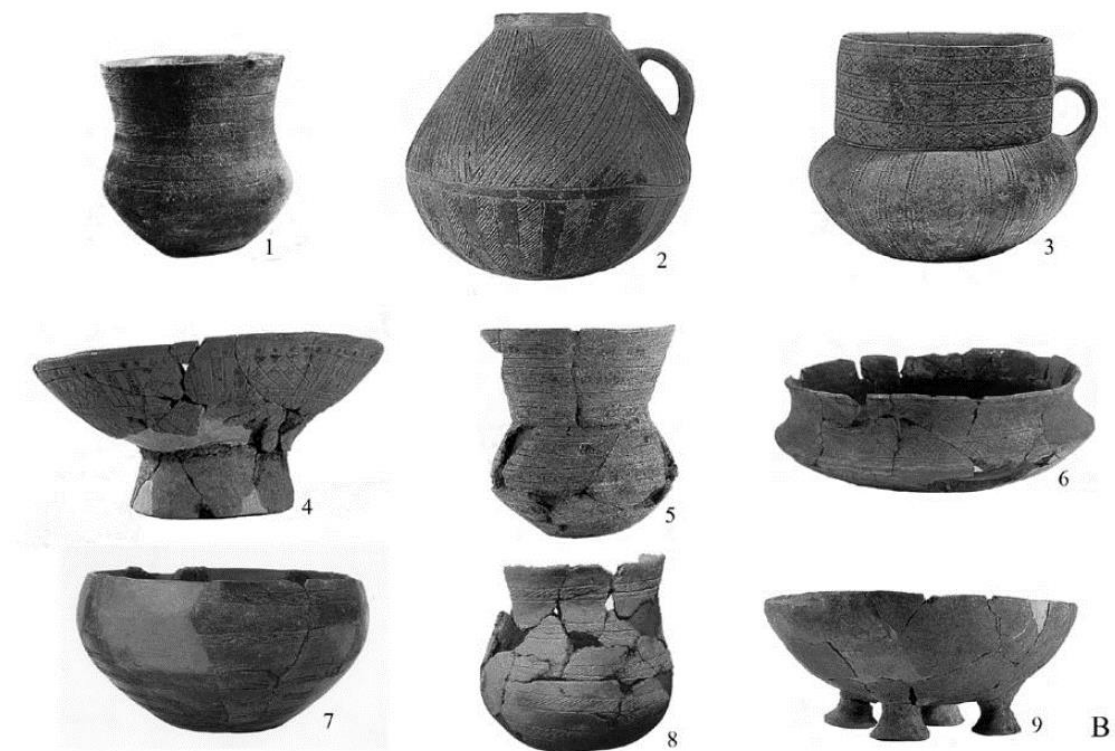


Figure 21: Bell beakers from western Sicily: 1. Villafradi, 2. Moarda, 3. Unknown, 4-9. Marcita (after Tusa 1997).



Figure 22: Highlighted areas indicate the main zones of Bell Beaker concentration in western Sicily (adapted from Giannitrapani and Ianni 2011: 480, NASA basemap taken from http://visibleearth.nasa.gov/view_rec.php?id=2631).

Imported Bell Beaker assemblages moved through the Tyrrhenian seaways, exploiting the marine and riverine mediums as conduits. The north-central network of metal circulation did not extend broadly towards the southern parts of the region under study. However, the prolonged and aesthetic value awarded to Bell Beaker assemblages moved well south from beyond the Alps in sufficient quantities to connect the two largest islands of the entire Mediterranean basin: Sardinia and Sicily. Visually unconnected to each other and with limited vital landfalls in between, these *quasi*-continents engaged enough to permit the movement of ideas and especially, to meet a growing demand for

the social exhibition of exotica. Indeed, the earliest Bell Beaker elements arrived from south-eastern Sardinia, eventually extending to the edge of the Belice and Imera Rivers in central Sicily (Nicoletti and Tusa 2012: 110-111; Giannitrapani and Ianni 2011). Beyond these riverine limits, Sicily was culturally inclined towards the Aegean-Balkans, countered by an expanding Capo Graziano culture occupation of the Aeolian Islands (Dawson 2014: 232-234; Cazzella 1999; Bernabò Brea 1988; Bernabò Brea and Cavalier 1956: 43).

The cultural distinction between west (Naro-Partanna culture) and east (Sant'Ippolito and Capo Graziano cultures) did not imply a cultural division between communities that lived within reachable distance from each other. However, the limited overlap of Bell Beaker and Capo Graziano wares (both always found in marginal quantities outside of their origin) was emblematic of a 3rd millennium BC Central Mediterranean that became increasingly bonded to localized social developments and influenced by predominant directions of exchange systems and networks (Copat *et al.* 2010: 48-49). Indeed, the overlap between distant and distinct cultural groups continued throughout this period and was probably based on the receptivity of different communities to exotica, ideas, and technologies. Despite the limited distribution of Bell Beaker elements across parts of peninsular Italy, such as Puglia, Basilicata, and Calabria, imported or localized Bell Beakers ceramics were considerably limited. However, the construction of dolmens - funerary structures whose distribution spans Europe, Mediterranean France and the Central Mediterranean - was well-represented across the Apulian Salentine peninsula, southern Italy, eastern Sicily, and even the Maltese Islands (Chapter 7). This ability for communities to remain outside of certain distribution

networks, while receptive to other cultural transmissions (Copat *et al.* 2010: 48), requires us to consider the movement of exotica as a multi-layered system. Communities were not just marginal or core participants within these distribution networks. The growing social competition and warrior ideologies of the 3rd millennium BC encouraged the social negotiation of receptivity. Eventually, ideas or technologies adapted from other regions become vital components of social messaging within and between groups that were open or closed to the absorption of foreign elements.

The decorative and technological elements identified as part of the Bell Beaker culture experienced a limited distribution in the Central Mediterranean, as did metals from northern Italy well into the 3rd millennium BC. On the other hand, connections to the Eastern Mediterranean were concentrated across the Adriatic basin and extended as far south as the Maltese Islands. The lack of metals beyond central Italy was such that in Puglia only two hoards dated between the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC are known, at Canne and Torre del Moschetto (Recchia 2010a: 106). Perhaps in reaction to the lacking availability/distribution of metal, the expansion of interaction across the Adriatic Sea became apparent after 2,500 BC with the distribution of another ceramic assemblage that was absorbed into local production: the Cetina/Thermi ware.

A common denominator across these regions was the embossed, thickened-rim bowl (*scodella a bordo ingrossato con decorazione interna*) that first reached the southern Italian Adriatic coastline. It was then probably connected further south to the island of Lefkada, eventually moved north towards the *Caput Adriae*, and finally after 2,300 BC extended into Campania and further south (Recchia 2010b: 103). In the secondary extension of this network, a variety of exotica can be found scattered across

this region and as far south as the Maltese Islands (**Figure 23**). Among this distribution, the so-called bossed bone plaques (*ossi a globuli*), largely made from ovicaprine long bones, were spread across great distances in Casal Sabini, Grotta del Pipistrello Solitario (Puglia) (Skeates 2010c: 77), Grotta Lazzaro, Castelluccio (**Figure 24**), Ognina (Sicily) (Bernabò Brea 1976), and Tarxien (Malta) (Cazzella 2002; Cazzella and Recchia 2012). If we momentarily keep aside the issue of provenance, the stylistic affinities of these objects found across such a wide span of the Central Mediterranean bring to mind a contemporary desire for distant exotica and their insertion in local cultures as an example of the connection of some to a broader world.

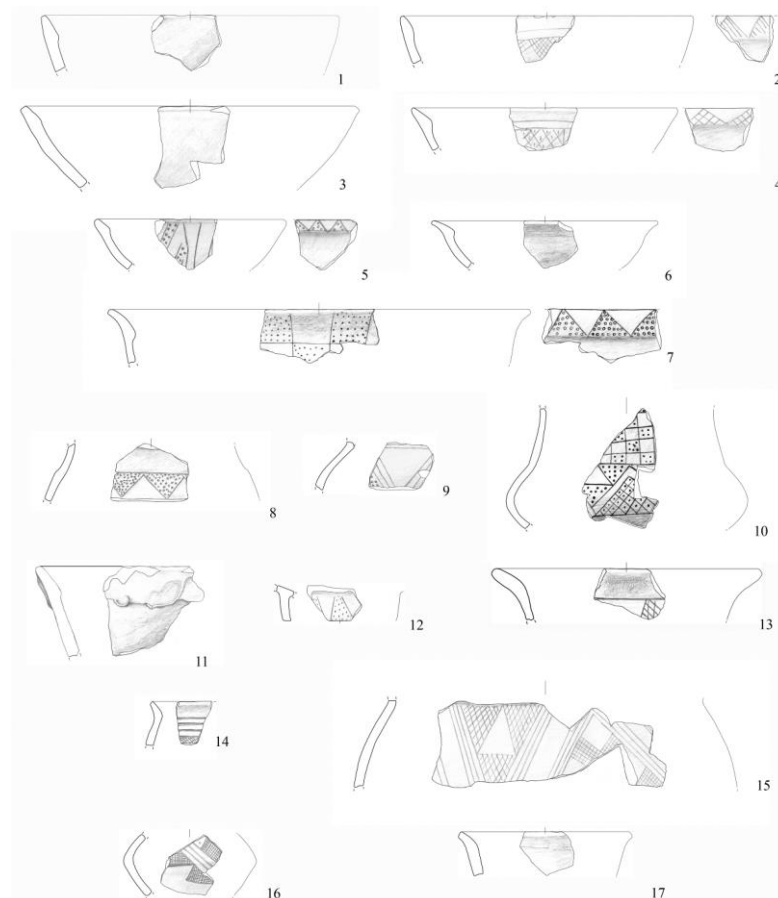


Figure 23: Thermi ware (1-13) and Tarxien Cemetery ware (14-17) recovered at Tas-Silġ in Tarxien Cemetery phase deposits (after Copat *et al.* 2012: 50).

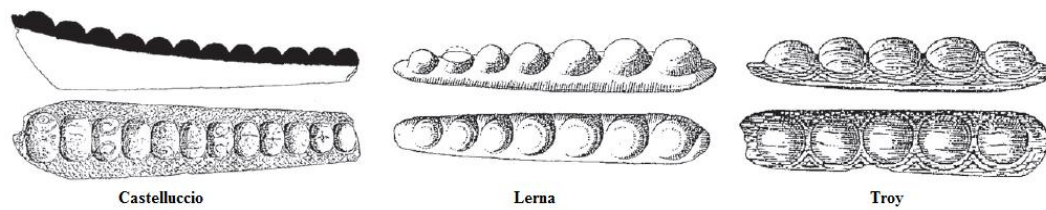


Figure 24: *Ossi a globuli* (bossed bone plaques) found at Castelluccio and eastern examples show stylistic affinities (after Cazzella *et al.* 2007: 246).

The presence or absence of exotica was not quite the lasting legacy of these innovations following the decline of earlier networks. Rather, the emergence of multiple overlapping networks of interactions brought a renewed sense of inter-connectivity for the benefit of some to the Central Mediterranean. Communities increasingly discriminated the elements, styles, or technologies that they adapted to their surroundings (Skeates 2010c: 79). The pursuit of commodities blossomed from a drive for exotica to an avenue for inherent distinction. In the case of the smaller islands, the access to exotica was limited and probably only available through mediators. Not coincidentally, this was the historical moment when cultural deviation became especially attenuated, as seen in the Maltese Islands. Other islands, such as at Palagruža, become connected participants in these broad networks, perhaps merely as crucial landfalls (Dawson 2014: 226-227; Cazzella 2009: 297). The continued lasting legacy of this historical moment is the surfacing of a north-south dichotomy in distributed objects, raw materials and ideas that matures over the 2nd millennium BC. The limited availability of metals was not a blow to the southern limits of the Central Mediterranean, but it did necessitate an alternative. At times, the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic Seas seem separated in their distributive networks, but there was still considerable overlap between networks of interaction.

Imitators and a Rush for Metals

The limited distribution of metals into the southern Central Mediterranean was not an insurmountable obstacle. If anything, it appears to have paved the way for an intensification of contacts across both sides of the Adriatic Sea. However, it is unfair for me to provide the impression of a suppressed distribution of metals from the north, but the industrial scale of Monte Loreto and other ore outcrops clearly did not, or were not able to, satiate the desire for metal (whether weaponry or not). Instead, a region spanning Molise, Abruzzo, and especially Puglia began to dot the Adriatic coastal zones with expanding settlements and their monumental defensive structures by the 18th century BC. Even prior to this point, the growth of the Apennine culture, which spanned central and southern Italy, brought to the region a second cultural monolith (after the Neolithic Impressed Ware culture) that was equally diverse in both the spaces occupied and the systems of interaction. The southern extent of Italy then turned its earlier disadvantage into an opportunity to act as the initial mediator between the Central and the Eastern Mediterranean (Bernabò Brea and Cavalier 1956: 91-92).

This resumed connection to the Aegean-Balkans build upon the earlier expansion of warrior ideology with an increasing availability of weaponry in peninsular Italy. This apparent interest in war was contradicted by a lack of evidence of war events or violent conflicts. For evidence suggestive of violent confrontations, we have to wait until the final centuries of the 2nd millennium BC. Despite this absence, there was an uncertain sense of war, perhaps due to the nature of the archaeological data or the expensive nature of violent conflicts for contemporary societies. Instead, there was rather a more immediate effect of the ideological statements of war: landscape appropriation and the

desire to control. This turn towards controlling space was seen in communities increasingly situating themselves in spaces that can further connect them to others outside the Central Mediterranean.

The preceding interactions between communities on both sides of the Adriatic Sea gave a leg-up to renewed contacts with the east (Bietti Sestieri 1988: 32). The expansion of coastal settlements seems tied to this renewed interest in interaction beyond the Central Mediterranean. Coastal communities did not have a uniform role across southern peninsular Italy. Nevertheless, the placement of these larger than average settlements was typically understood as connected to an interest in mediating connections between the northern limits of Italy and the Aegean. Cazzella (2009: 293) goes even further by suggesting that there was not a hierarchical ranking between settlements. This lack of intensive landscape control seems to a certain extent like putting the cart before the horse, with the formation of early urban settlements without a proportional growth in establishing political-military power outwards. The resurgence of southern coastal sites, like Torre Sabina, Torre Mileto, Coppa Nevigata, Roca Vecchia, and Broglio di Trebisacce, was typically an *ex novo* occupation with long periods of abandonment between the previous occupation and the 2nd millennium BC.

Founding coastal settlements facing the Adriatic Sea was not the only product of renewed interaction in southern Italy. While Neolithic interaction was characterized by diagnostic raw materials, by the 18th century BC the balance seemed to tip more in favor of knowledge transmission and technological advances. Indeed, from the earliest Proto-Apennine occupation of Coppa Nevigata, production activities appeared focused on the extraction of purple dye from murex (Blake 2014b: 216; Cazzella 1996: 1545-1548) and

the production of olive oil (Recchia 2009: 220). Despite the fact that the chronological origin of these two activities is uncertain, the connection between Italy and the Aegean-Balkans was perhaps an avenue for the transmission of ideas. The use of large, defensive fortifications in these south Italian settlements was another element potentially inspired by the east and its tradition of fortified settlements (Cazzella 2009: 298). A critical view of diffusion-driven processes could alternatively suggest that these well-defended settlements were imperative in an expanding social competitive setting without the threat of all-out war among communities. The political reach of community members was then internalized as intra-settlement conflict was not a priority. In the case of 2nd millennium BC southern Italy, communities relied on internal differentiated statuses, perhaps based on ancestry and lineage (Cazzella 2009: 301).

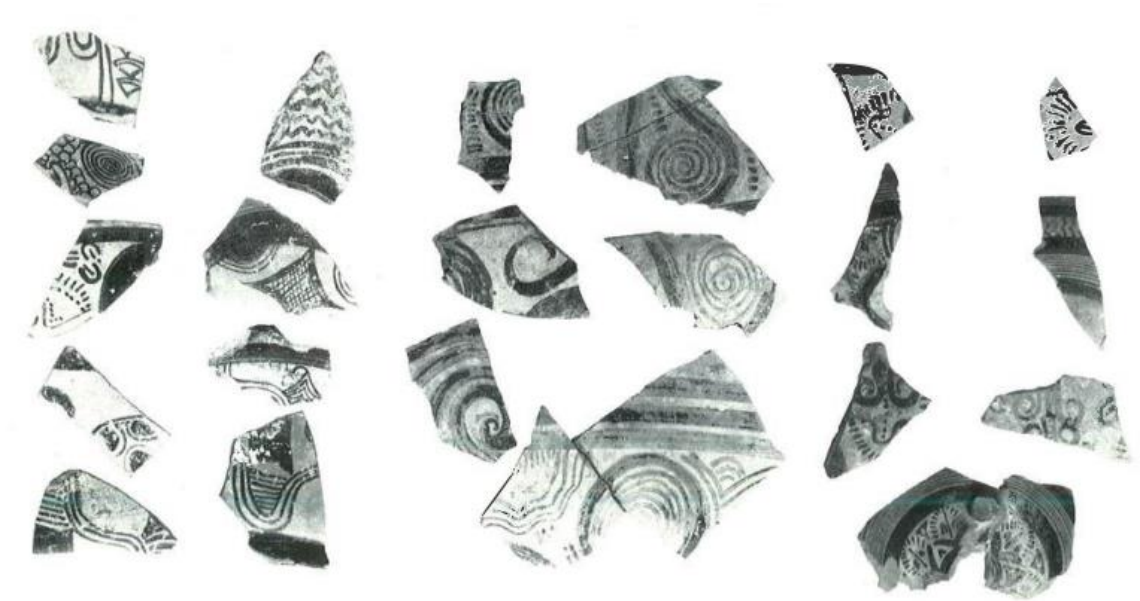


Figure 25: Imported Late Helladic ceramics found at Scoglio del Tonno (after Holloway 1981: 90).

Initial interactions, dated to the Late Helladic I-II/IIIA, between the Aegean and the Central Mediterranean were limited to the southern Adriatic and Ionian coastlines. In a second expansion, there was a focused movement into the Tyrrhenian Sea through the use of sparsely populated offshore islands, such as Vivara and Vulcano. During Late Helladic IIIA, the Gulf of Taranto had the highest concentration of imported Aegean wares (**Figure 25**) as well as other exotica, including Baltic amber and glass paste from the north of Italy (Bellintani *et al.* 2006; Bietti Sestieri 1988: 33). A steady percolation between the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian seaways brought the explorative travels of eastern seafarers to an unanticipated conclusion; only the southernmost limits of the Adriatic Sea and the gulf of Taranto continued to experience notable interaction with the Aegean. Instead, fortified settlements on the northern Adriatic shoreline seemed to lose contact with foreign peoples. Instead, these settlements focused on maintaining their connection between the coastline and hinterland communities in the uplands. Despite continued interaction with the Aegean, the southernmost settlements of Roca Vecchia, Scoglio del Tonno, Broglio di Trebisacce and others began to imitate Aegean-inspired painted ceramics between the 2nd half of 15th and 14th centuries BC (**Figure 26**) (Bietti Sestieri 2013: 639; Recchia+ 2010: 109; Bietti Sestieri 1988). Still, it takes until the 13th and 12th centuries BC for north-central settlements to begin their own imitation of Aegean painted ceramics in the largest settlements like Coppa Nevigata (Blake 2014b: 214). While the bulk of archaeological emphasis was placed on ceramics, they formed only a part of the transferal of exotica across this region, which extended to other rarer exotica like elephant and hippopotamus ivory (Guglielmino *et al.* 2011).

The marginalization of northern Adriatic coastal settlements from the Aegean, was probably a reaction based on the apparent lack of metals available in these areas. After all, most travel and interaction conducted by eastern seafarers was concentrated in the Eastern Mediterranean (van Wijngaarden 2002) and not within the area under study in this dissertation. Still, the Central Mediterranean offered some relatively untapped metal resources for the intrepid traveler. Past the early exploratory phase, the concentration of eastern seafarers into the Ionian and Tyrrhenian Seas indicated the understanding of outsiders of the potential gain present in areas like northern Puglia. Terms like “reciprocity” and “exchange” provide us with a half-truth that is worth revising in the archaeological literature. The intents of humans were not simply based on the transference of exotica of equitable value; it was further driven by economic forces that encouraged the acquisition of commodities. It could be suggested that the northern Adriatic communities had outgrown their purpose and did not offer sufficient enticement to the traveling seafarers. The marginalization of such communities was not the end of their participation in interaction networks. Instead, if there was a sufficient local appreciation and demand, then new solutions were sought. The imitation of Aegean painted wares was a core part of these created solutions, as seen at the tumulus of S. Sabina and its ceramic assemblage made up completely of Aegean-inspired local wares (Radina and Recchia 2004: 1560).

The westernmost edge of the Central Mediterranean-Aegean interaction was split once again into two spheres: a Tyrrhenian Sea area of significant interaction and a southern margin mostly outside of the interaction core. The swelling distribution from the Adriatic and Ionian Seas into the Tyrrhenian Sea followed the focused concentration on

the southernmost parts of peninsular Italy. While one could argue that Aegean wares and commercial interests beyond the Gulf of Taranto were organized by native communities (Holloway 1981: 94), it was more likely that trading posts were purposely located on offshore islands and archipelagoes (Bietti Sestieri 2010: 127). In providing a more conscious agency to distribution networks and their participants, the selection of small islands, often empty or abandoned in earlier periods, brought places like Lipari, Filicudi, and Vivara into the fore of movement within the Tyrrhenian Sea. These places acted as "neutral" spaces, close enough to the mainland and prevailing currents, but not large enough to permit extensive habitation. The identity of the navigators, organizers, and community members in these settlements was a difficult issue that comes up once again in 1st millennium BC interactions, especially in areas of known colonization by foreign communities (La Torre 2012). In the 2nd millennium BC, the issue was not any easier to answer.

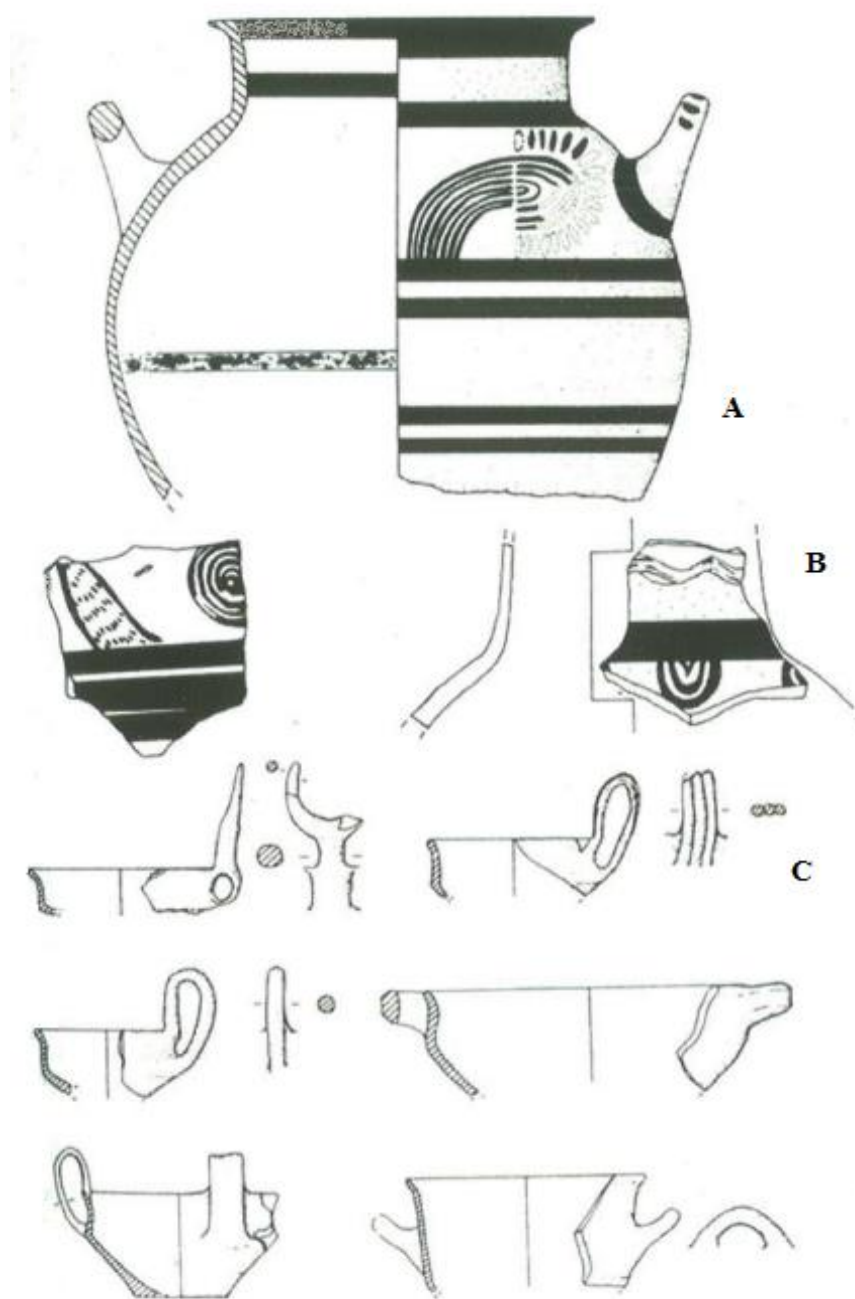


Figure 26: Ceramics recovered from Final Bronze Age deposits at Broglio di Trebisacce: a) Italo-Mycenaean ceramics b) wheel-turned Italo-Mycenaean ceramics, c) wheel-turned Grey ware (after Bietti Sestieri 2010: 147).

Retrospective views, often based on Classical texts, over-indulge Homeric legends and the impression of wandering Aegean navigators seeking riches unimagined. Instead, foreign navigators were interpreted as interested in the potential gains from the Central Mediterranean by exploiting earlier networks and receptive, able locals. Even in the case of small offshore islands, which came to life at the moment of strongest Aegean presence of exotica, the identity of their inhabitants was surely mixed. At Capo Piccolo, a site on the western Ionic coastline, Aegean imports were mixed with Sicilian influences and appeared best connected with the Tyrrhenian rather than the Adriatic and Ionian regions. The situation in places connected to this southern exchange network was fluid and irregular. Compared to other parts of the Central Mediterranean, this southernmost part of Italy was occupied by the incoming flow of eastern seafarers. However, compared to the remainder of the Mediterranean basin, this interaction cannot be exaggerated and should at best be seen as on the margins in the contemporary Aegean-centric world. The southern margin of the Central Mediterranean (comprised of Pantelleria, most of Sicily, and the Maltese Islands) experienced a fluctuating rate of interaction with the Aegean.

The smaller islands surrounding Sicily retained an elusive role in their participation in expanding broader interaction of the 2nd millennium BC. For the Maltese Islands, the aftermath of the Temple Period is still up for debate, as already described above, but the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC sees the realignment of the archipelago with Sicily's cultural developments, especially the Capo Graziano culture (Bernabò Brea 1976). In these islands, the earlier megalithic monuments experienced a shift in their ideological purpose. At Tarxien, the ritual use of the 3rd millennium BC megalithic monument was later turned into a cremation cemetery, while at Tas-Silġ

multiple occupational uses can be seen in the 2nd millennium BC. The lack of metal also continued well into the 2nd millennium BC. Few, simple metal artifacts, largely ribbed daggers and axes, were found at funerary locations like Tarxien and the mid-2nd millennium BC contexts of Ghar Mirdum (Tanasi 2014: 302-303). These were well-worn objects with little utilitarian use and indicative of connections to the outside world. Within a broader view of interactions, these metal objects are a quantitative disappointment to us. It seems that the Maltese Islands, thought of by culture-historical archaeologists as a pilgrim route to the megalithic monuments (Ugolini 1934), remained an isolated place punctuated by interaction with neighboring places and limited by the gaps of a surrounding sea.

This view of a historical moment, so singularly different, was an exaggerated reduction of conventional accounts (Pace 2004; Bonanno *et al.* 1990) provided from the post-Temple Period. Instead, I choose an alternative impression of these islands, an interpretation based on the capacity of island communities to transform (sometimes rapidly) their ideological attachments by balancing their internal cultural processes through interaction with the outside world. The 2nd millennium BC was a period for the southern margin of the Central Mediterranean that was not only oriented towards Sicily, and in turn, with the world lying to the north. Instead, the Maltese Islands and Pantelleria offered glimpses of a resuming interaction with the Maghrebian coastline. At the Tarxien cremation cemetery, shards and fragments of decorated ostrich eggshells were found during excavations. In Mursia (Pantelleria), limited Maghrebian exotica suggested an interaction in the Strait of Sicily that was not only oriented to the north. The generally held impressions of a southernmost part of the Central Mediterranean outside of the

Mycenaean distribution networks was perhaps a narrow interpretation. Instead, perhaps our own archaeological focus with connecting the Central Mediterranean to the East was based on a wrong premise. Aegean imports were few after the 18th century BC (Cazzella and Recchia 2012: 86), with a Late Minoan IIIB kylix cup fragment at Borg in-Nadur (Malta) (Evans 1971: 17) and a variety of Mycenaean ceramics in Pantelleria. Yet the prospect of Maghrebian interaction extended the reach of the Central Mediterranean beyond the physical confines assumed by most.

The role of Sicily, the largest island of the Mediterranean, was tempered once again by a complex multi-regional interaction after the 18th century BC. The movement of seafarers into the Tyrrhenian brought about an expansion of the Aeolian Islands' role and the prolonged development of the Capo Graziano culture (Bietti Sestieri 1980: 38), including ceramics from the earlier Middle Helladic and Early Mycenaean (Late Helladic I-II) periods (Bernabò Brea and Cavalier 1956: 48). The interaction with the Mycenaean world reached Sicily slightly slower than in the case of offshore islands, which were targeted for their immediate access to the seaways. Around the 15th century BC, settlements like Thapsos (Bernabò Brea 1976: 99) and Cannetello became discernible centers of trade with the Aegean networks. The role of these settlements as a potential mercantile point of interest also included the arrival of Maltese Borg in-Nadur ceramics in sufficient quantities to be present in wealthy burials of Thapsos (Tanasi and Vella 2015; Tanasi 2010; 2008). These sites on the southeastern coastline of Sicily balanced the relative absence of Aegean materials in the Maltese Islands and other areas by providing evidence of continued interaction and the appreciation of non-Aegean derived exotica from Sicily. The location of sites like Thapsos played an uncertain causal relationship

with a developing settlement shift in the highlands of Sicily (examined further in Chapter 6). The construction of rectilinear settlements and the range of exotica found in the Thapsos necropolis became replicated in the emerging hinterland centers of Pantalica, Caltagirone, and Monte Dessucri (Bietti Sestieri 2013b: 663; Bietti Sestieri 1980: 42). These sites benefited its inhabitants by providing them with wide visual territorial control over the deep valleys of inland Sicily that controlled movement to and from the coastline.

Control was a persistent, yet diverse, strategy employed across the Central Mediterranean. The 13th century BC was a crucial moment for the northern Po River communities, known as the Terramare culture. Growing rapidly and eventually contracting in just two hundred years, the Terramare culture was an entirely local adaption and is not replicated elsewhere (Cardarelli 1992). A view from the Aegean-centric southern parts of the Central Mediterranean could interpret the Terramare communities as being outside of the interaction networks with the east. Instead, these communities were situated at a controlling juncture of the entire region and were located in the widest plain beyond the mountainous ridge of the Apennines and connected past the Alps to Danubian and Central European communities. Nevertheless, limited Aegean ceramics were not proof of an inability to participate in networks flowing across the Adriatic, Ionian, and Tyrrhenian seaways: quite the opposite. The Terramare culture controlled significant land-routes that crossed the inland regions of peninsular Italy, which experienced a blossoming of naturally defensible settlements across the entire Apennine mountain range and connected the entire region. The closest cultural development for the Terramare culture lied further north, as seen with the overlapping of

cultural styles and traditions with Urnfield cultures in Central Europe (Vanzetti 2010). In turn, the connection to the southern edges of the Central Mediterranean was focused and probably selected on the basis of key participants in the broader interaction systems. At sites like Peschiera- Imboccatura del Mincio, Castellaro del Vhò, and Forno del Gallo a Beneceto, the production and distribution role of some key Terramare sites was apparent (Bernabò Brea *et al.* 2006: 93). Indeed, the site of Peschiera provided the type-name for an entire bronzework industry that can be found across the Central Mediterranean and in limited quantities outside of it (Pearce 2007: 99). The movement and distribution of Peschiera bronzework was especially focused and connected to major settlements in the south, such as at Scoglio del Tonno. A range of bronzework attributed to the Peschiera style included violin-bow fibulae, two-part razors, median-winged axes, tanged and flange-hilted knives, “Peschiera daggers”, and more (Bietti Sestieri 2010). These forms were stylistically linked to similar bronzework found north of the Alps, which was sometimes explained with the unlikely scenario that Terramare settlements can also be found across the Alpine range. It seems more plausible to consider the Terramare culture as controlling land-routes moving through the Paduan plain, while connected to the north beyond the Alps and to southern Italy. The ability to produce highly valued bronzework, distributed among limited communities (Bietti Sestieri 2013: 640), also allows us to identify a Thapsos-Pertosa type sword (Bianco Peroni 1970: 22) in the Uluburun shipwreck (Bietti Sestieri 2010: 166; Lo Schiavo 2006: 1320), and Peschiera-style bronze exotica in Mycenae and other parts of the Aegean (Cultraro 2005).

In addition, hoards made up of large varieties of metal objects were found across Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica by the late 2nd millennium BC. For instance, a hoard at

Surbo (Lecce area) included a Mycenaean sword fragment, shaft-hole hammers, single-bladed axes, a gouge/chisel and a median-winged axe (Bietti Sestieri 2010: 151). At Coste del Marano (Rome area) a hoard of 147 metal objects was buried in a pottery vessel, which included three beaten bronze cups with bossed decorations (Bietti Sestieri 2010: 172). The sheer variety of whole and fragmentary metal objects in the 13th century BC is sometimes interpreted as a sign of the period's relative wealth of metal at the peak of interaction between the Central Mediterranean and the Aegean world (Giardino 2004: 347). Alternatively, the hoarding of metal objects can also be interpreted as a reflection of earlier concerns for metal availability, be it ritual or production-based (Maggiuli 2009: 213-214; Giardino 2004), and the nascent metallurgical industry expanding through most of the Central Mediterranean, especially in Tyrrhenian regions. Perhaps the largest metal hoard found in the southernmost part of the region under study, was recovered at the acropolis site of Lipari from the floor of an Ausonian II phase hut. The hoard was cached in a *dolium* vessel lowered into a pre-cut pit and filled to the brim with a variety of bronze objects, weighing up to 75 kg in total (Lo Schiavo 2006: 1328; Giardino 2004: 350). This hoard was mostly made up of fragmentary or discarded objects including weaponry, utensils, ornaments, and other bronze discards such as a number of ox-hide ingot fragments (Lo Schiavo 2006: 1328). More generally, these hoards often included a considerable quantity of metal objects from earlier periods, sometimes still usable but perhaps more valued for the raw material itself.

These accumulations of hidden metals did not fall under a single period or purpose, but were connected to the broader historical connection to the east. The interaction between the Central Mediterranean and the Aegean never reached the same

intensity as the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean. Instead, as the rush for metals reached its apex between the 13th and 11th centuries BC, the Post-Palatial changes in the Aegean began to affect the Central Mediterranean. This tumultuous transformation in the Aegean overlapped with the growth of hoards, even in regions not closely connected to the Aegean. At the *Caput Adriae*, late Final Bronze Age hoards also included much earlier Middle Bronze Age objects (Borgna 2009b: 291). The Aegean Post-Palatial fallout in the northern Adriatic was countered by a gap in discovered hoards, perhaps until the emergence of the fortified coastal “emporium” of Frattesina. In the meantime, the flow of exotica into the final moments of the 2nd millennium BC at the Sicilian centers of Thapsos, Cannatello, and Syracuse (as well as Sardinia) (Lo Schiavo 2013: 681) have an unclear connection to Cyprus (Borgna 2009b: 292-293). Sardinia and Corsica spend most of the 2nd millennium BC developing the Nuragic culture, and its emblematic multi-turreted *nuraghi* (Lo Schiavo 2013: 675; Vanzetti *et al.* 2013) remained connected to the broader networks of interaction within the Tyrrhenian Sea. However, the end of the 2nd millennium BC brought to the Nuragic culture an unparalleled monumental complexity that was equaled by visualization of power and order through the *bronzetti* figurines in the early centuries of the 1st millennium BC (**Figure 27**) (Lo Schiavo 2013: 683; Lilliu 2008; 1981).

The Sardinian connection to the distribution networks of bronze, perhaps fueled by eastern seafarers (Lo Schiavo 2006), was initially distant and confined within the developments of the Nuragic culture. Already supplied with metal ores, even silver, early attempts at metallurgical production were still awaiting proper region-wide recognition as a semi-independent inception. Throughout the 2nd millennium BC, Sardinia’s dense

human occupation of its landscape was a visual imposition of the human impact over the natural landscape. Nuraghi, of varying complexity, imparted a sense of social order discernible to contemporary communities and still echoed even in their present ruinous state.

The role of exotica within this *quasi*-continent were not as elevated as in the case of peninsular Italy where social competition empowered some communities over others who were marginalized. Instead, the use of objects in the Nuragic culture was a reflection of social competition revolving around the central powers of the turreted monuments and the expansion of a class keen on representing themselves through ideal characteristics. Their use and ideological expressions will be further discussed in Chapter 6, but these objects featured in two ways within the present discussion on commodification of exotica and their place within broad systems of interaction. First, the depiction of individuals was displayed through an idealized sense of contemporary expectations. The end of the 2nd millennium BC in Nuragic settlements brought about the addition of civic-ritual huts that was interpreted as a shared connection between the nuraghi and the power of certain individuals within their own communities. The *bronzetti* likely depicted individuals of worth and their context of recovery was also symptomatic of this connection. Second, after the 9th century BC the recovery of these *bronzetti* figurines had often been found at either nuragic sites or, more commonly, at ritual water sanctuaries (*pozze sacre*) (Lo Schiavo 2013: 682). The connection of a great variety of anthropomorphic figures (Lilliu 1981) including wrestlers, boxers, archers, and adorned warriors to water was another example of a Central Mediterranean-wide relationship (Pearce 2007) that emerged in

moments of broad-scale interactions with locally particular innovations or transformations.



Figure 27: An archer *bronzetto* figurine from Nuragic Sardinia found at Sardara (after Lilliu 2008: 144).

Sardinia's connection to the broader Central Mediterranean world experienced its height between the 14th and 12th centuries BC, the Nuragic III period. Across the entire region, a decline in interactions with the Eastern world actually overlapped with the highest moment of metal distribution and reminds us of the potential shifts in external historical trajectories. The inverse relationship between foreign interests and the culmination of metal distribution was an opportunity for some communities and a problem for others. The never-ending pursuit for exotica was answered with a transformative reaction that overlapped with the end of the 2nd millennium BC. Connections to the Eastern Mediterranean seem supplanted by irregular transmissions

between main centers of interaction in Sicily, the Aeolian Islands and the Tyrrhenian Sea up to Sardinia (Lo Schiavo 2013: 681; Lo Schiavo 2006: 1328-1329), proposed by some to be organized by the ongoing trade interests of Cypriot seafarers (Bernabò Brea *et al.* 2006: 92).

The considerable metal ores present in Sardinia and Central Italy brought the northern edge of the Tyrrhenian Sea into the fore of social development (Bietti Sestieri 1988: 26) with the counter contraction of settlements in the southern parts of peninsular Italy. Even Sardinian *bronzetti* figurines can be found in Central Italy, particularly in the area later known as historic Etruria (Lo Schiavo and Milletti 2013). Yet for the moment, connections between peoples in the Central Mediterranean were seen in cultural processes of social messaging, such as in the unhindered desirability of weaponry and the ritual connection to water. The desirability of weaponry had a long-standing tradition at this point, and burials of adult males across the Central Mediterranean often included swords, javelins, and daggers (Bietti Sestieri *et al.* 2013; Harding 2011; Bietti Sestieri 2010; 2006). In contrast, the ritual connection between metal weaponry and water was more rooted to the social transformations of the end of the 2nd millennium BC and lasted well into the 1st millennium BC of the region (Nicolis 2013: 702; Perra 2006; Peroni 2006).

By the 10th century BC, the Central Mediterranean region was on the verge of distinct peoples developing their known historical identities, ethnic divisions, and expanding urbanism (Blake 2014b; Pacciarelli 2000). Weaponry remained a crucial aspect of the ideological constructs of communities at this time (Bietti Sestieri 2006: 505). The central Italian area, especially from the Tiber River to the Circeo, found itself

straddling two major cultural divisions. In the north, the expansion of the Villanovan culture (Bietti Sestieri 2012; Camporeale 2004; Bartoloni 2000; 1989) from the Tyrrhenian to the Adriatic Seas was characterized by cremation burials and the progressive centralization of hill-top defended settlements. To the south, the long-standing tradition of collective inhumation burials persisted with a slowing down of the earlier proto-urbanism experienced, especially on the Adriatic and Ionian Sea coastlines. Nestled between these two distinct major traditions, the peoples of the Lazio region began to borrow traditions from both north and south and found itself in the midst of an aggressive expansion between the two regions, as seen in the Villanovan expansion into Campania around the 9th and 8th centuries BC (Gastaldi 2006). This process lasted well into the later Etruscan culture. In the north, Villanovan cremation burials rarely include whole swords, although ornate helmets were often used to cap burials within ceramic vessels. The northern edge of Lazio was especially influenced by northern burial traditions, and cremation burials tended to be accompanied by miniaturized kits of real-life objects, including miniaturized knives and double shields. (Bietti Sestieri 2006: 509). Some particular pairings of weaponry with adult males also lent an insight into the horizontal heterarchy of contemporary groups. For instance, lances and javelins were more common than swords, but the latter were found in association with prestige objects such as scepters, shin guards, and shields that were reserved for individuals of considerable worth/wealth (Bietti Sestieri 2006: 507).

Despite not being exotica in the strictest sense, these weapons arose from a long tradition of cultural transmissions and interactions across this entire region and beyond. Indeed, by the 9th century BC the Italic sword with a raised handle edge in a T-shape was

derived from earlier southern Italian inspirations of Late Mycenaean examples, known as the Cuma-type sword (**Figure 28b-c**) (Bianco Peroni 1970: 87). Further north in the Etruria region and the southern extensions of the Villanovan culture, the Pontecagnano type sword (**Figure 28a**) (Bianco Peroni 1970: 85, 87) was parallel to the Italic sword and extends through Central Mediterranean interactions into Puglia, Basilicata, and Campania (Bietti Sestieri 2006: 511). The 9th-century BC Central Mediterranean was a hub for a network of expanding discernible communities across peninsular Italy as well as Sardinia, Corsica, and Sicily (Nijboer 2010). Their roles in interaction networks underlined the usefulness of preceding participation in broad interactions, which almost appeared to play a role in attracting later arrivals from outside the Central Mediterranean. Around the end of this dissertation's purview, the 9th century BC brought about initial forays from Euboean and Phoenician seafarers expanding from the Maghrebian coast into western Sicily (Negbi 1992). This renewed external presence within the Central Mediterranean exploited the location of Sicily and its surrounding islands as an initial point of colonization within this region (Falsone 1988). Over a protracted period of time, Sicily was dotted with Greek settlements on its eastern shoreline and Phoenician settlements largely located around the north-western edge. The eventual establishment of colonial settlements across Sardinia, Corsica, and other smaller islands in the Tyrrhenian Sea continued to increase the demand for trade in this region, perhaps to the detriment of other parts of the wider region that found themselves re-oriented especially towards Central Italy.

Ultimately, the beginning of the 1st millennium BC was leading to the direct predecessors of historic Italic peoples (Bietti Sestieri 2010: 356), along with the mix of

extensive colonization by foreign peoples in the Central Mediterranean. The high value ascribed to imported exotica and technologies, earlier seen in Mycenaean goods, was not regularized across time. Shifts in trading opportunities and receptive communities allowed a view of a pursuit for commodities that was never-ending but also never guaranteed. Placement of production sites or trading centers, such as Frattesina, Thapsos, or Scoglio del Tonno, conferred advantages that were only temporary and eventually phased out or required a localized re-adaptation to broader transformations across the region. That capacity for change was supplanted by localized shifts in value and participation abilities of different communities, which for small island archipelagoes saw them as either important nodes adjacent to active routes or more often as outside them. The overall reactions to exotica and the attached systems of interaction, I believe, were driven by demand and led to a subsequent creation of central and marginal places in a macro-scale view of the Central Mediterranean

Inequality in Interactions and the Weight of Demand

In thinking of these prehistoric distributive networks, we must abandon (implicit or explicit) assumptions of regularized interactions, supplanting them with varying availability, able producers, or even receptive participants. All of these elements played a key role in what I earlier dubbed as a never-ending pursuit, especially since humans identify themselves, their social worth, and their want for objects. However, one intangible aspect that already transpires from my narrative above is the importance of moving ideas, technologies, and innovations. These intangible elements moved through

the Central Mediterranean in often biased directions with lasting effects on those who were active players in networks of interaction.



Figure 28: Ponte Cagnano (A), Cuma (B and C), and Late Ponte Cagnano (D and E) type swords found in Italy (after Bianco Peroni 1970).

Participation in broad interactions was certainly not a compulsory avenue, but it was a path often chosen by the communities of this region. A primary question behind this need to participate arises: were broad interactions driven by altruism or is there proof of inequality behind such motives? In the above narrative, there was an assured sense of inequality in the Central Mediterranean over four millennia of broad-scale interactions.

The shifts and transformations in distribution networks were not able to incorporate the entire span of the region being examined, but rather, networks were constantly reacting to a developing world. That constant reaction brought able communities to the fore, while pushing others either to participate on the margins or else recede to smaller scales of interaction. The transformations in interaction networks were also affected by a human strive to acquire objects. After all, as I have already alluded to above, objects help define us in a mutual flow of value that prehistorically was further inflamed by limited availability. Even in the long-term view of sought commodities, there was a sense of initial innovation followed by the placement of irregular networks leading to the marginalization of some and causing a localized reaction. All in all, there was a certain *weight* added to human conditions by the perpetual presence of demand, something with which we still struggle in our own contemporary lives.

Exotica and broad distribution networks were limited in their breadth and duration. In this light, there are four aspects that require further discussion. First, the unpredictability of exotica was the central element of its unparalleled value. Second, the movement of an object was unstable and prone to shifts influenced by the physical location of raw material sources or production centers but ultimately governed by social processes. Third, with demand there was also a proportional expansion of resource location and control to support group interests. Fourth, the establishment of interaction networks meant that central places directed the movement of goods and even intangible transmissions while groups on the margin had to negotiate a social compromise in reaction to established networks.

There were important differences between the 3rd millennium BC interactions between the Aegean-Balkans and the Central Mediterranean in comparison to the 2nd millennium BC movement of presumed eastern seafarers into the region, both of which highlighted the reactions to unpredictability through social processes. The stylistic affinities between western Aegean ceramic styles, often dubbed in the Central Mediterranean as Thermi or Cetina ware, were indicative of a broad level of interaction between multiple agents. These interactions created an appreciation for objects connected through stylistic familiarity across the Adriatic basin, eastern Sicily, Aeolian Islands, and the Maltese Islands. The timing of these events overlapped with the increased extraction of copper in northern Italy and a continued limited distribution across peninsular Italy. The connections on both sides of the Adriatic Sea played a social purpose at a time when metal, Bell Beakers, and other exotica were dominating the Tyrrhenian seaway. However, the rising popularity of a Cetina (Borgna and Càssola Guida 2009) or Thermi (Cazzella *et al.* 2011; Cazzella 1999) ware-type assemblage was an indirect transmission from a world beyond the Central Mediterranean. It was absorbed and integrated within the cultural sphere of the southern Central Mediterranean as localized objects of prestige and display.

The later 2nd millennium BC interactions across the Adriatic Sea exploited the earlier nodes of interaction, but they seemed focused on procuring metals and finding favorable locations for interaction. Unlike the earlier indirect interaction and absorption of eastern motifs/styles, the 2nd millennium BC interactions expanded through the Central Mediterranean and marginalized areas that did not pique the interests of seafaring individuals. In contrast, Scoglio del Tonno, Broglio di Trebisacce, Roca Vecchia, and

other sites further south experienced an increase in their interactions with the Aegean as the Tyrrhenian Sea appeared to become a focus of primary interest.

In addition, the influential effect of location in dominating the direction of networks seems like a moot point; willing communities surrounding outcrops were liable to become key players at some point. This view, reliant on a sort of ecological determinism, is both right and wrong (Wolf 1998). Our own cultural and social processes establish whether communities are willing to use an area along with its resources. The obsidian distribution in the Central Mediterranean reflected this duality. Exploration of island archipelagoes around the 7th and 6th millennia BC in this region provided a base knowledge of opportunities and resources available in the region. Obsidian is ideal in considering the role of location because all sources are located on islands off the Italian peninsula (Tykot 2001; Tykot 1996). Sardinia was a more complex scenario due to its large size and varied ecological potential. Obsidian from Monte Arci begins to be distributed well into the 5th millennium BC, unlike Lipari and Pantelleria. On the other hand, Palmarola is a less habitable small place with its steep access from the sea and difficulty in reaching obsidian outcrops. Like Sardinia, Palmarolan obsidian distribution swells over the 5th millennium BC, although it was concentrated in the central and north-eastern Italian peninsula.

The remaining two obsidian sources, Lipari and Pantelleria, experienced an earlier broad distribution, as already described above. Pantellerian obsidian extended the Central Mediterranean reach to the Maghrebian coast, an under-studied connection between these two regions. The island of Pantelleria played its role as an intermediary between the northern and southern Mediterranean in two other discernible moments: the ambiguous

3rd millennium BC connection between Pantelleria, the Maltese Islands, and the Maghreb, and the 9th-century BC movement of the Phoenicians across the Maghrebian coastline and into the Central Mediterranean. However, Pantelleria played a subdued role in all of these moments, extending even into the obsidian distribution earlier. This connection to the Maghreb and well into the Central Mediterranean was never regularized, and between the 5th and 4th millennia BC obsidian quantities seem to decline. The reasons behind the lack of permanent settlement elude us but was perhaps driven by the hydrological limitations of this island. Yet, the 2nd millennium BC settlement of Mursia survived for over 500 years, so then why not during the Neolithic?

The location of islands and their environmental potential cannot be seen as the single crucial factor behind island colonization and their role in broad networks of interaction. Rather, human decision-making and understanding, which comprehend the local and broad scale potentialities of a given place, propelled an island like Lipari to a central role in the southern parts of the Central Mediterranean in separate moments. Yet the closeness of this island archipelago to the predominant Tyrrhenian Sea currents allowed these islanders between the 6th and 4th millennia BC to supply a rapid demand through its neighboring Calabrian and north-eastern Sicilian coastlines (Robb and Farr 2005: 37), as well as through the prevailing sea currents moving towards central Italy. The gains to be had from obsidian surely formed a central role in the establishment of permanent settlements in the Aeolian Islands, particularly on Lipari (Bernabò Brea *et al.* 2006: 82). At Castellaro Vecchio (Castagnino Berlinghieri 2011; 2003) and Diana (Bernabò Brea *et al.* 2006: 82; Bernabò Brea and Cavalier 1956: 28-29), the repetitive nature of obsidian production is identified in the lithic assemblage as being mostly made

up of obsidian blanks and debitage. The role of the Aeolian Islands was not constant, as can be seen in the difference between the 6th and 4th millennia BC obsidian distribution and the 2nd-millennium BC role in Aegean networks lay in the island's role as a maritime facilitator and not a controlling producer.

Therefore, in the waning 2nd millennium BC, the ability of Lipari inhabitants to maintain an active role in interaction networks was in part based on its locational advantage. In addition, the inhabitants of Lipari and the Aeolian Islands also undertook socially-driven processes to ensure their own role beyond mere mediators. In the Milazzese phase, ceramics meant for distribution appear branded with repeated markings (**Figure 29**) (Holloway 1981: 70; Bernabò Brea and Cavalier 1956: 91). The act of branding (Bevan 2010), found in various guises across the entire Mediterranean basin, was an effective statement of production and was probably meant to act as a record of its origin. Even without perceptible branding, most of the exotica described in this chapter surely held stories and transferred information regarding their properties, which are now lost to us. However, the centralizing role of certain communities often acted on gaps in demand and capitalized on access to raw materials. For instance, Frattesina, emerged during the broader changes of the 13th century BC in the Terramare culture (Bernabò Brea *et al.* 2006: 95; Bietti Sestieri 1990), and was a settlement extending up to 20 ha along one of the main tributaries of the Po (Nicolis 2013: 692). The decline of the Terramare culture did not just leave a sudden break (Blake 2014b: 118), but instead it created opportunities for continued interaction in those communities previously on the edges of interaction (Blake 2014b: 124). Indeed, Frattesina has yielded evidence of considerable economic production including metalworking (bronze, copper, and gold), antler by-

products, and ceramics. The metal, probably hailing from Trentino sources is also found along with Baltic amber, found in numerous stages of preparation for further distribution into the south. Such finished amber ends up largely in tomb contexts like Trinitapoli and Lipari (P. Tunzi Sisto 2006; Radina and Recchia 2004). This settlement was so well connected as a center that it even recieved ivory, ostrich egg shells, and Aegean ceramics. This site and its surrounding cemeteries, such as Narde and Fondo Zanotto (Pearce 2007: 103), included an impressive array of weaponry and imported goods from both north and south (Harding 2011: 197). Frattesina increased its capacity as a middleman producer, along with a number of other similar production sites found across this region, such as Mariconda di Melara, Fondo Paviani, and Montagnana-Borgo S. Zeno, across the Alpine region (Blake 2014b: 132; Bietti Sestieri 1997: 765) and even in Switzerland (Bellintani *et al.* 2006: 1516), with its production of glass faience by extending its distribution through central Italy, reaching the Aeolian Islands (**Figure 30**) (Bellintani *et al.* 2006: 1497).

Centralizing interactions across a region of such considerable breadth, multiple cultural developments, and ecological variability (Bietti Sestieri 2013: 634) could only be a temporary occurence. Raw materials, distributive networks, and receptivity were all disparately scattered across any given region making connectivity an artificial extension of contemporary human interests. The constant tempo of time required sometimes rapid adaptations that most communities were not able to maintain indefinitely. Therefore, the long-term history of demand required routine transformations and the focus of interaction was never static. Nevertheless, certain communities were unable to act as core participants on the margins of broad systems of interactions. These communities, often

erroneously interpreted as languishing or isolated, were not just sideline audiences. They focused on their own developments and social evolution, often elevating the act of voyage and knowledge to a higher level along with the acquired object itself.

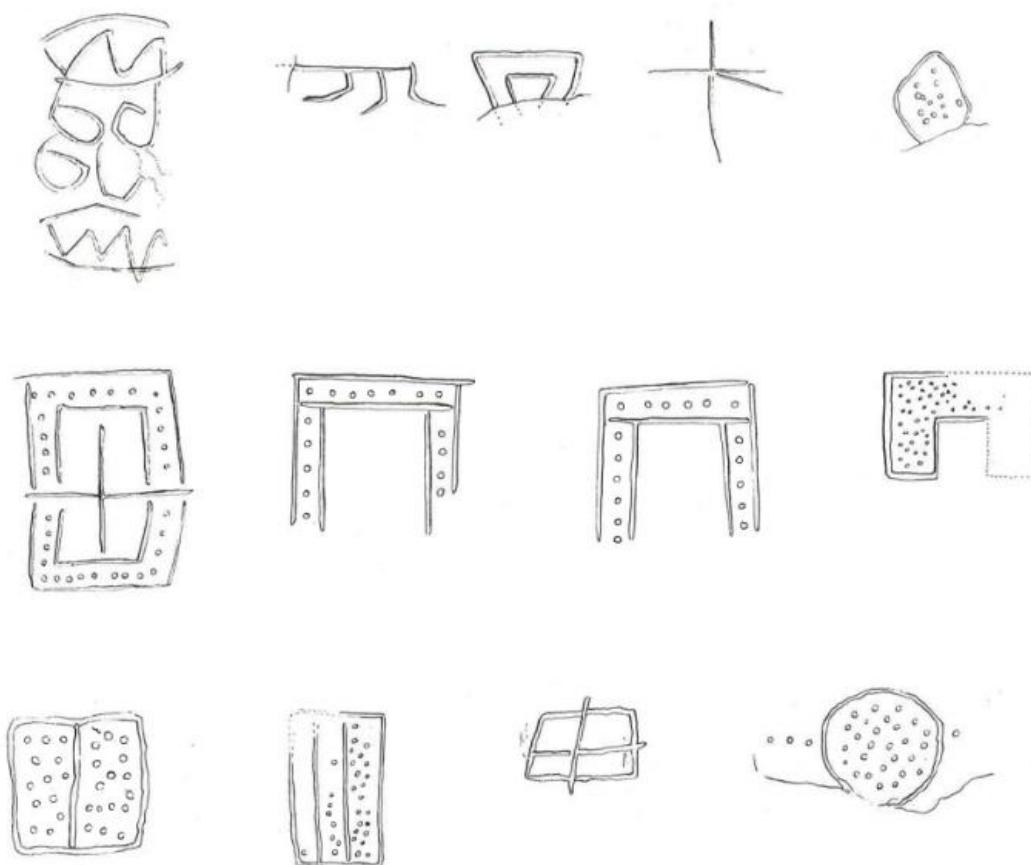


Figure 29: A variety of marks found repeated in Milazzese period ceramics at the Lipari Acropolis (after Bernabò Brea and Cavalier 1968: 252-256).

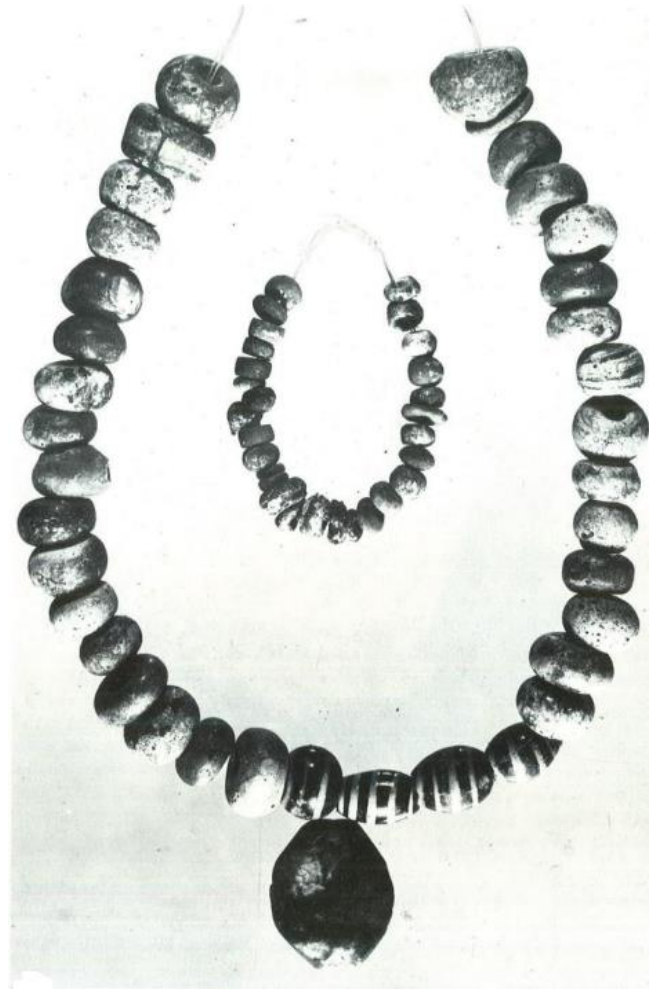


Figure 30: Glass faience beads found in the Lipari necropolis (after Holloway 1981: 76).

Conclusion: Exotic Objects as Commodities in the Unstable Collective

In this chapter, objects took a background role as driving forces of social processes. The importance of exotica to earlier archaeological studies lied in their alien origin. However, these objects also allow us to garner a sense of the connective abilities that communities held in prehistory, fueled by an innate human need to distinguish themselves and show off their ability to acquire valued objects. In this chapter, exotica

were not identified as an object for exchange where different parties were invested in mutual acquisition. Instead, the account above presented a less idealistic impression of prehistoric actions. Desired objects experienced discernible shifts in their value, connected to the labor, and energy expended into their production.

Unpredictability, surely a consistent part of human history, becomes only accentuated in light of continued demand when seen across multiple millennia. In the previous section, I refer to this constant push as the “weight of demand” mainly because it seems too innocent to consider the pursuit for objects as a matter of exchange. For instance, the hoarding of metal across the 2nd millennium BC, the establishment of focused partners in distribution networks, and even the localized imitation of limited Aegean ceramics in Puglia were all symptomatic of the constant role played by interaction in prehistoric societies.

Our social uses of exotica are also based on available opportunity, a matter which in the western world we often take for granted. In contrast, the weight of demand did not end or conveniently break across our created chronological markers. I have argued above that there were persistent transformations in the way the Central Mediterranean world operated that differed on regional or local scales. In the broader view of this world, the trajectory of history seems to alternate core areas, places where production was augmented to make up for a growing regional appreciation. However, a community’s role as a central participant was only temporary. Their role ended and eventually became replaced by a re-alignment of interaction networks.

Despite the broader view of a shifting and transforming historical trajectory, there is a globalizing sense to the narrative above. We have perhaps limited ourselves in

archaeology by seeking to understand the role of one given locale across time, as important and crucial as such research turns out to be for our comprehensive understanding. However, we often seek to elevate the importance of a given place in a specific moment in history. Rather, the narrative above seeks to impart the sense of shifting cores and key communities. Some, especially in the case of certain islands and isolated places, had little to offer in terms of commodities, and their place in history pushed them to the margin. It is ironic, though, that these places were often involved in under-rated and poorly understood interaction cycles. Islands like Malta, Pantelleria, Sardinia, and Corsica focused internally to create their own world, unparalleled outside in their monumental efflorescence, a matter further explored in Chapter 8.

The distributive networks for exotica were incompatible to the capitalist-inspired view of a *Homo economicus*. In the Central Mediterranean, objects in demand were sometimes controlled, while at other times they seemed broadly distributed. Sites connected to the Eastern Mediterranean trade began to imitate imported wares. This imitation of foreign materials may be connected to the arrival of foreign craftsmen (Bietti Sestieri 1988: 30), but was surely connected to communities outside the focused interaction and their growing interest in these innovative objects (Guglielmino *et al.* 2011: 173). The human propensity for interaction, in long or short distances, was motivated by our irrational connection to objects and expectations.

Objects play a fascinating role in a world only assured of its unpredictability and the inevitability of change. They act as personal possessions while displaying social statements. These objects were never timeless. Their role as commodities dictated that their value changes, and this created a never-ending pursuit. As soon as exotica

established their value and were met by a broad demand, they became subdued by another object. The constant shift in exotica was representative of human existence, its unpredictable surroundings, and the need for continued social negotiation. In Chapter 6, the current focus on interaction networks and moving exotica switches to a detailed contextual view of some objects created purposely in small quantities, their ideological properties, and their connection to distinguishing some individuals over others.

Chapter 6: Worldly Possessions and Ideological Objects

Introduction: Moving to Significant Objects

“... we are mingled with the things of the world in such a way that we are *ontologically indivisible* ...”
(Webmoor and Witmore 2008: 59)

In the previous chapter, the deliberate use of the term “object” accounted for the distribution and commodification of exotica. These exotica formed part of wide spatial distributions. Yet the persistent lengths through which communities went to procure or even emulate exotica was equally matched by a fluctuation in their use-value as seen in Chapter 5. Thus, the terms “exotica” or “objects” were utilized to purposely express an inanimate nature of items and their contemporary values. The never-ending desire to obtain, possess, and display objects was emphasized as a wide series of human actions. The obtained objects in the preceding chapters were part of a human-centered desire to control the nonhuman domain. Inevitably, this focus made objects appear mute, as if they only speak up on behalf of the human when they are needed to promulgate the connection between individuals. In contrast, this chapter moves to a select number of portable objects that were deemed as ideologically significant. These objects were only found in limited contexts, denoting their contemporary significance, and were utilized to display social distinction for individuals seeking to control others.

The objects described in this chapter were separated from widely produced and reproduced exotica because they were utilized by humans to image themselves within a

wider world. The human translation of their surrounding world and its ideological understanding is a constant process of negotiation reflected in a wide array of created objects. In trying to condense the immense array of artifacts produced by humans, in this chapter I have chosen to limit my attention to four types of material culture. First, the act of translation from what our mind sees, understands, feels, and senses have led humans to recreate that world in object form. Second, the world surrounding humans was made up of an overlap between the “natural” and the “built”, which across human history were constantly changing and shifting. Third, material culture offered an infinite ability to depict the human body, focusing on certain bodily elements or gestures. Fourth, created objects in the form of humans were not an act of representing individuals, but rather, an attempt to represent idealized figures and their being.

This chapter begins proposing a baseline for the consideration of significant objects and their place in prehistoric human lives. These forms of material culture form part of a nonhuman-human existence that remains tenuous in its studies, particularly as the material culture turn continues to prove a fruitful academic endeavor.

An Object and its Ideological Role: A proposal for a Human-Nonhuman Existence

“... as soon as we stop taking nonhumans as objects, as soon as we allow them to enter the collective in the form of new entities with uncertain boundaries, entities that hesitate, quake and induce perplexity, it is not hard to see that we can grant them the designation of actors ...” (Latour 2004: 76)

Material culture extends to everything made or manipulated by human hands. Most archaeologists will probably agree that the relationship between an artifact and a human is primarily founded in the latter’s productive and creative abilities. However, the downfall of material culture is that they can be anything and everything, which makes

them particularly difficult to encompass through theoretical paradigms. The quote above by Latour further affirms the ambiguity that surrounds material culture, particularly as its study extends beyond archaeology to include sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and even technological studies. Yet this quote also highlights a complicated view into material culture; one that sees objects as living agents who react to humans, their actions, and desires. In addition, material culture studies are now also confronting the growing corpus of thing theory studies, which have furthered the intellectual focus on objects past their immediate use-life (Bennett 2004; Brown 2001). These recent approaches to material culture have emerged for a number of reasons, perhaps more importantly due to the concern that objects were being studied for anthropocentric purposes (Bennett 2010: 99; Domanska 2006: 338). Rather than wade through the proliferation of material culture approaches, I suggest here that there are two salient aspects worth exploring: objects play an intricate role in imaging human desires and some objects are more significant than others because they promote the contemporary social order.

Material culture is a core part of archaeological studies because it permits us to study the past through the examination of any remains left behind by humans (Olsen *et al.* 2012; Olsen 2010; 2003). The so-called “material culture turn” has problematized this use of objects as proxies for humans since it is subjectively geared towards understanding ourselves (Hodder 2012: 2). Arguments against excessive anthropocentrism hold more than a grain of truth to them because we run the risk of fetishizing artifacts and limiting their being to that of human proxies. In contrast, Bruno Latour’s work on Actor Network Theory (ANT) has found a broad appeal in archaeological studies (Shanks 2007; Witmore 2007; Martin 2005) due to his insistence that people can only become “*human*”

by living and functioning with objects (Olsen 2010: 136 ; Latour 2005). Therefore, Latour and several other proponents argue that material culture has much to say about humans and their societies because they overlap in their relations, collaboration, and coexistence (Olsen 2010: 138-9). We find ourselves webbed unsurprisingly together to material culture because they offer us a chance to better illustrate our beliefs and memorialize our place (Olsen *et al.* 2012; Webmoor and Witmore 2008; Latour 2000: 10).

In addition, I propose that some material culture actually matters more than others. This is not because such objects are “important”, but more so because humans have always valued some objects differently than others and imbued them with additional meaning, even if their importance is understated (Miller 1998: 13). This chapter describes a number of portable and non-portable objects of particular interest on purpose, as already outlined above. These selected objects played an active role in promoting the contemporary social order and visualizing the place of humans and nonhumans alike within the wider world. Since Latour (2000) has argued that humans and objects were inseparable for most of history (Olsen 2003: 95) then we can further claim that this entangled relationship means that objects were used to reflect human conditions and concerns (Latour 2004: 68). In this inseparable inter-mingling (Hodder 2012), we are all so connected together that ideas would not be adequately illustrated without material culture (Olsen 2010: 140).

Even objects described in Chapter 5 played multiple roles within their contemporary settings. Indeed, across all parts of our human history objects were produced, desired, and traded, but they were best used to stress the intents and ambitions

of humans. There is no doubt that social inequality is a selfish behavior, an attempt for some individuals to control others. Their attempts at control also extended into the realm of objects but these forms of material culture also needed to represent the interests of such ambitious individuals. Therefore, the forms of material culture selected in this chapter embodied the political ambitions of humans, and due to that ambition they were caught in a tussle for possession. In seeking possession, control, and self-imaging over *things*, humans represented their aspirations and visualized their surrounding world in comprehensible forms to their contemporaries (Ingold 2012: 3; 2011: 24).

The scope of the select material culture below is not meant to re-open or expand the debates surrounding material culture. Instead, this detailed view into portable objects, found only in limited contexts, is supposed to highlight the diverse roles held by material culture in Central Mediterranean prehistory. As the collective spirit underwent a number of transformations between the 4th and 1st millennia BC, certain objects were utilized to not simply represent the social settings of the time, but to also underline the ability of some individuals to retain certain material culture for themselves. These objects were not meant for distribution, which even in the case of exotica in Chapter 5 was limited. Yet these forms of material culture were further limited in their distribution and part of the ideological superstructure of the time. I argue below that these objects were used diversely to tie humans to their wider world, to image the built world, and to represent idealized figures.

Using Objects to situate the Human in the World

In their past co-existence, the actions of humans in their world emerged in the production of material culture from a mix of mental realities and representations (Ingold 2012: 21; Godelier 1986). In this setting, material culture was utilized to translate the contemporary world as seen by individuals through their own cultural paradigms. Therefore, the two examples below, dealing with northern Italian rock-art and Maltese celestial depictions, are visualizations of the natural world that mattered to prehistoric communities.

These objects were also created in social settings of unfettered display. Despite this open display, the objects described below straddled a line between the visible and invisible, perhaps a reason in itself for their elevated significance (Fontijn 2007). These were forms of material culture that presented the contemporary focus of the collective and also played a part in the replication of order over time through sustained memory (Skeates 2010c; Van Dyke 2004; Lillios 2003). They were also located in sites only accessed by some individuals, acting as an avenue through which a social order, often benefitting some more than others, was idealized.

Representing the Human in Valcamonica and Valtellina

The history of Valcamonica-Valtellina representations was an unusual one, especially in light of its prolonged duration in comparison to the rest of the Central Mediterranean. In these valleys the routine alteration and transformation of earlier locales that were memorialized by portable stelae, menhir, and carvings on exposed bedrock played a performative role in the association of death to places of gathering (Frachetti and Chippindale 2001: 117). The four broad phases of use identified between the end of the Neolithic and the Iron Age (Keates 2000; Anati 1994) were characterized by diagnostic

stylistic affinities. In particular, the earliest depictions around the 5th and 4th millennia BC appear tied to agricultural land divisions and formed part of a visual atlas tied to the claim of land possession. In contrast, along with the broader transformations of the 4th and 3rd millennia BC, the integration of foreign elements, like stelae and menhirs, was utilized to represent an array of individuals, their association to others, the sun, and their worldly possessions (such as daggers, axes, adornments). By the 2nd millennium BC the centrality of the sun became instead substituted with a growing visualization of weapons, ploughing scenes, and so-called *oranti* figures. The final fourth style, dated to the end of the Bronze Age and continuing into the Iron Age 1st millennium BC, is eponymously called the “warrior figures” period due to the striking repertoire of hunting, ritual duels, buildings, and weapons, as well as musical instruments, agricultural scenes, and non-anthropomorphic symbols (Fossati 2001: 98).

The Po River Plain, has long been a significant ecological location in Northern Italy. It is also one of the largest plain and river systems in the Central Mediterranean. In Chapter 4, the history of this area was emphasized due to its location between the Alps and Apennine Mountain ranges and because it acted as a communicator between the European continent and the Tyrrhenian-Adriatic basins. The elevated western extent (closer to the Tyrrhenian Sea) played a major role in the production and dispersal of copper by the 4th millennium BC (Maggi and Campana 2008; Maggi and Pearce 2005; Pearce 1998). However, there were only a few settlements found in this area. This lack of archaeological signature gives us a sense of a dispersed occupation of the pre-Alpine foothills by semi-mobile pastoralists. In contrast, the nearby contemporary Remedello culture was characterized by extensive occupation and formalized necropolis grounds

along with a widely diffused metallurgical style (**Figure 32**). In these valleys, over 300,000 carvings, stelae, and menhirs that range in date across the 5th and 1st millennia BC have been documented by archaeological studies since the early 20th century (Anati 1994).

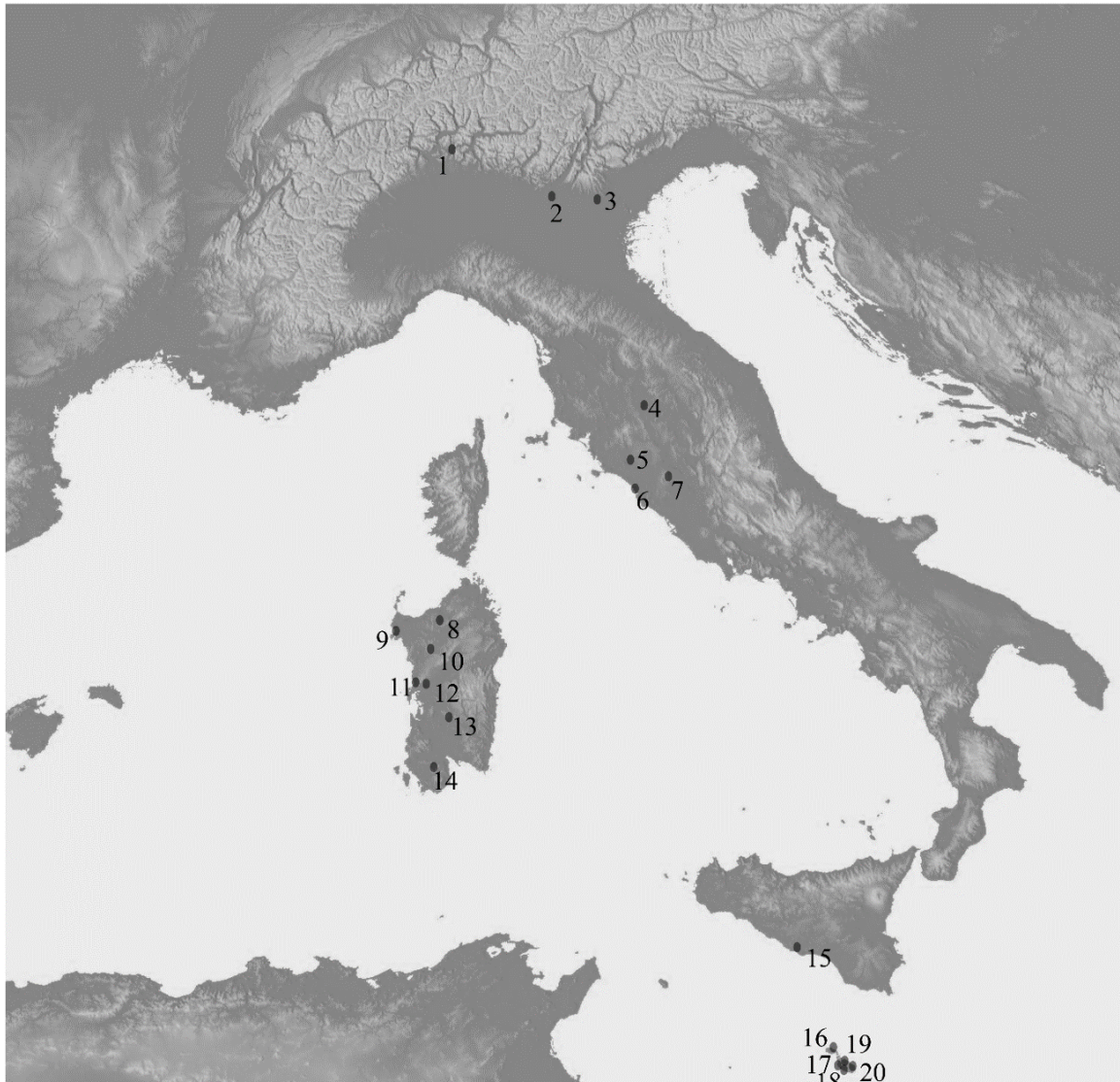


Figure 31: Archaeological sites mentioned in **Chapter 6**: 1. Valcamonica/Valtellina & Anvoia, 2. Remedello, 3. Olmo di Nogara, 4. Chiusi, 5. Sorgenti della Nova, 6. Tarquinia, 7. Veii, 8. Monte d'Accoddi, 9. Palmavera, 10. Santu Antine, 11. Cuccuru s'Arrius, 12. S'Uraki, 13. Su Nuraxi di Barumini, 14. Monti Arcosu/Uta, 15. Piano Vento, 16. Xaghra Circle, 17. Ta' Hagrat, 18. Zebbug, 19. Tal-Qadi, 20. Tarxien & Tas-Silg (© ESRI 2013 basemap).

Human representation on stone formed part of a tradition spanning across Central Europe and the northern Italian region. Overlapping with the increasing extraction of copper and the arrival of Bell Beaker elements in the Mediterranean basin, there were four distinct stelae traditions peninsular Italy in Valcamonica-Valtellina, Saint-Martin, Lunigiana, and Castelluccio dei Sauri (**Figure 33**) (Harris and Hofmann 2014; Robb 2009; Robb 2008: 344). These stelae traditions emerged in a wider setting of broad connections to southern Europe that led to the mix of local and foreign elements. This stylistic medium offered their makers an ability to reduce the human body and surrounding world into comprehensible, standardized tabular representations (Robb 2008: 340). Within the steep cliffs of Valcamonica-Valtellina, deep set valley floors, wooded spans, and sights of the looming Alp Mountains rock-art was purposely situated. Humans returned to celebrate and memorialize their lives in specific parts of the Valcamonica-Valtellina landscape to which they associated themselves, be it through possession or the metaphysical significance of small ceremonial places. In particular, this focus on small intimate groups dispersed throughout these valleys was replicated through diverse actions within the broader 3rd-millennium BC Central Mediterranean's emphasis towards collectivity limited to family groups.

The ceremonial site of Anvòia offers us a rare opportunity to better comprehend the contextual use of such small places in Valcamonica. There has long been an impression that these dispersed rock-art sites perhaps formed part of seasonal ceremonial sites, route markers, or even territorial claims. Yet, until the excavations at Anvòia, these interpretations were simply proposal. Anvòia was embellished and utilized between 2,600-2,400 cal.BC (Fedele and Fossati 2012: 192) as several generations juxtaposed a

linear alignment of stelae with an associated cairn (**Figure 34**). This cairn was made of select stones brought into Anvòia from elsewhere along with disarticulated bones that were previously left open to the elements, covered in ochre, and finally burnt on-site (Fedele and Fossati 2012: 192). In light of this evidence, the excavators of Anvòia propose that the connection between the establishment of a ceremonial site and the manipulation of the dead reflected a localized re-adaptation of some foreign monolithic elements. The reburial of the dead added even more credence to the interpreted temporality and seasonality of ceremonies conducted in places like Anvòia in Valcamonica-Valtellina (Frachetti and Chippindale 2001). In the case of the monolithic stelae alignment (**Figure 35**), the connection to time can be seen in their alignment to the sunrise and sunset. This interest in tying the alignment to time can also be surmised from the contemporary forest clearing that provided a visual viewshed of the surrounding environs while also opening this site to the sky (Fedele 2008: 72).



Figure 32: An aerial view of northern Italy indicating the Valcamonica (1) and Valtellina (2) valleys , as well as the contemporary Remedello Sotto necropolis (3).

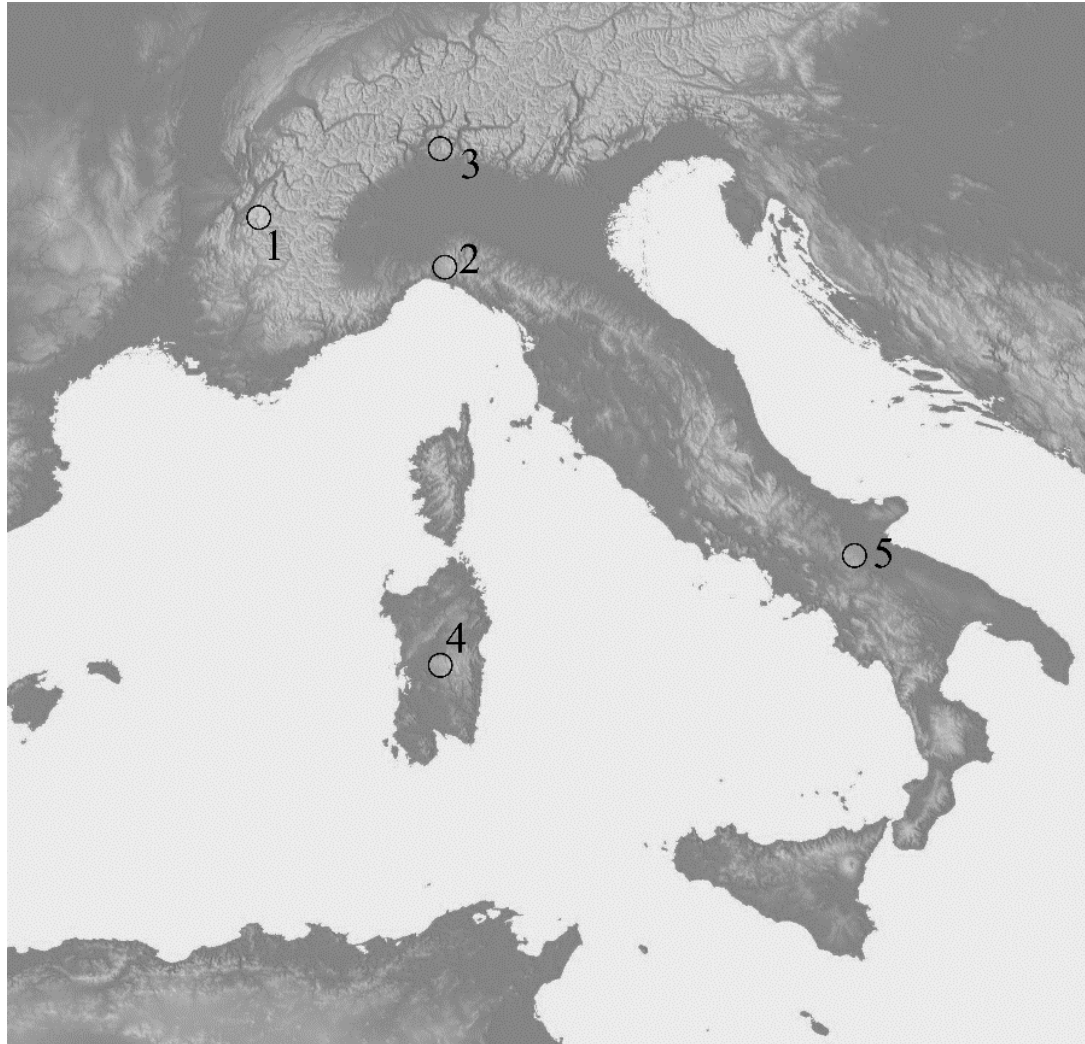


Figure 33: A map showing the distribution of stelae traditions in the Central Mediterranean, including 1) Aosta, 2) Lunigiana, 3)Valcamonica-Valtellina, 4) Sardinia, and 5) Castelluccio dei Sauri (© ESRI 2013 basemap).

The discovery of a close-by cairn, along with a stelae alignment oriented to the sunrise-sunset of each day, is a significant combination of material culture: the combination of humans and the natural world. In conjunction, these elements tied the cyclical nature of time with the nonhuman representation and memorialization of

deceased humans (Fedele and Fossati 2012: 195). The person's individuality became substituted by a schematization of bodily features. An importance was placed in the reification of places like Anvòia within the relationship between humans and objects. In the meantime, the intimacy and size of this place was geared towards hosting lineage or household-level groups away from their domestic spaces and other groups, offered them a place they could call their own within a wider world (Fedele 2008: 74).

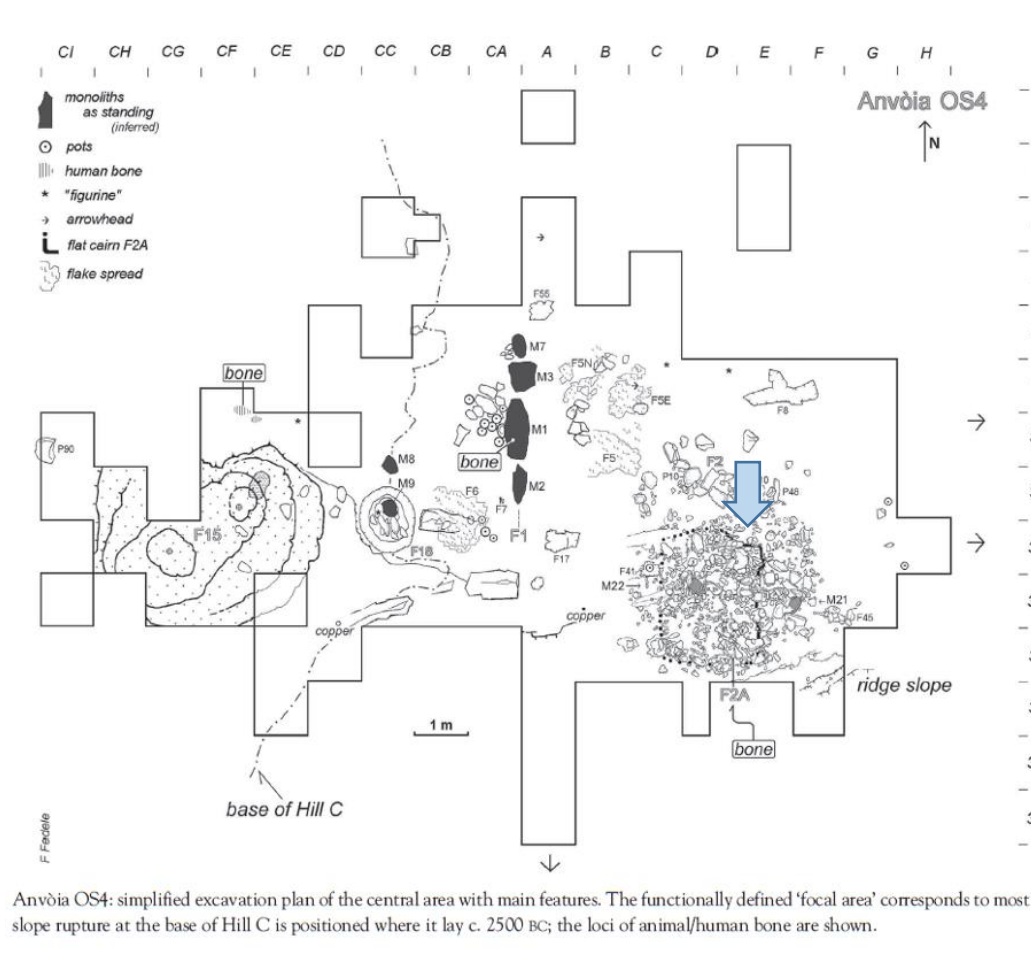


Figure 34: A site plan of Anvòia with the stela alignment (center) and associated cairn (blue arrow) (after Fedele 2008: 62).

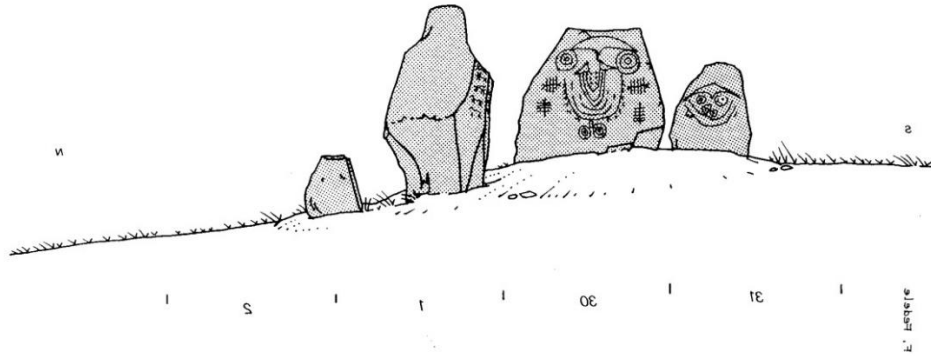


Figure 35: A profile view of the still-standing Anvòia stela alignment (Fedele 1998: 142).

The Earth, Sea, and Sky in Malta's Late Neolithic Ritual Intensity

Across the 4th and 3rd millennia BC, Malta found its continued state of peripheral participation in broad systems of interactions accentuated even further by a prolonged period of megalithic construction. These cultic structures, that were limited in their access, were also accompanied by an array of material culture that have only been found within their confines. The shuttering off of these internal spaces and their material cultues is interpreted as an example of controlled knowledge (Evans 1996).

The Maltese world during this period was then dominated by the labor necessities and commitments tied to monumental complexes, countered by restricted knowledge and inability to fully participate within these structures that they built. Staggered doorways and other visual obstructions ensured the exclusion (temporary or not) of gathered community members outside (Evans 1996). Instead, their given labor and material expenses were absorbed by those individuals tied to the monuments. However, despite the negative effect on the collective spirit, cooperation within these

societies remained intact. I propose that an alternative suggestion would see this presumed cooperation in a different lens. The domination offered by these monuments, countered by a contracted communication to the outside world (Malone and Stoddart 2004), made these monuments places tied to the creation and cosmological understanding of a much larger world.

Significant objects, created within the contemporary shared ideological beliefs, were used to visualize the cosmology of the wider world within these monumental structures. The material elements of this world were infinite in their forms and perception, but they are broadly delimited by the sky, sea, and soil (Grima 2008; 2007). In Late Neolithic Malta, the growing control expressed by the transformation of a landscape, which was previously dotted by dispersed settlements situated in the limited fertile locales of the islands, became exemplified by the building and maintenance of ritual megalithic monuments (Clark 2004; Pace 2004). Within these monuments, the creation of significant objects emerged as an effective ideological apparatus. It codified the multiple connections between the broader community and worthy individuals, the internalization of world-views *vis à vis* the outside world, and the material elements in light of their comprehended role in local society. The creation of such material culture followed a tenuous axiom: they had ideological motivations to represent the expected social order but lacked a broad distribution. In this setting, the objects created represented humans, nonhuman animals, and the natural world (Malone 2008; Vella Gregory 2005; Żammit and Singer 1924).

Instead, only a few recovered examples of unreplicated material culture fall outside the representation of humans and nonhuman animals. These were items that

perhaps reduced the surrounding world into discernible symbols. Certain material culture kept within the megalithic complex's precincts, like the Tal-Qadi stone slab and Tarxien boat graffiti, formed part of a world imagery that did not adhere to an artistic lexicon (seen in the repetitive nature of human figural representations). Instead, these two artifacts were both recovered from within megalithic buildings connecting them to the conscious placement of the megalithic monuments that hosted them, often situated above fertile plains and anchorage bays (Skeates 2010a: 163-164; Grima 2004).

The Tal-Qadi stone slab, found within the Late Neolithic megalithic complex, is in part a typical limestone artifact (**Figure 36**) that was crudely carved with linear alignments that seem accompanied by a moon along with a number of stars depicted (Skeates 2010a: 187). The Tal-Qadi monumental edifice was situated on the extensive plain of Burmarrad, which was still a protected anchorage bay during the Late Neolithic (Marriner *et al.* 2012: 61). In their representation, celestial bodies held a dual importance they could be either crucial navigational tools in orienteering seaborne voyages or they could connect earthly beings to something much greater. In its present state, this portable object provides us with little interpretational surety. Are we over-extending ourselves in suggesting potential meanings to such material culture? I would argue not.

The Tal-Qadi stone slab reflects the deep understanding, or desire to understand, the surrounding elements. Knowledge of primordial elements, like the sun, sea, and sky, must have been a useful avenue for social distinction. Within the restricted confines of the megalithic monuments, communities like those tied to Tal-Qadi found themselves bonded to their world's materiality. Through routine participation in rituals, Maltese prehistoric societies celebrated and recognized a rhythm of time. Natural events,

like the seasonal arrival of migratory birds (**Figure 37**), transmitted the fluidity of their existence. There was a season for all key activities: to plant, harvest, travel across the sea, and prepare for the tougher parts of the year.

Representations of the sky and other natural events were accompanied by depictions of sea-travel towards the end of the Temple Period. However, the premise that islanders are naturally maritime is a questionable assumption that is rather influenced by contemporary cultural paradigms (Mack 2011; Matvejevic 1999). Proof of extensive exploitation of marine resources for subsistence (Richards *et al.* 2001) and the relationship between the Late Neolithic communities and the Mediterranean Sea stand at odds. Were these islanders less than keen on crossing an unpredictable sea? Were they unwilling or incapable of re-connecting themselves to the southern Central Mediterranean? Numerous answers have been offered by archaeologists and some even suggesting a lack of sufficient trees to make sea-worthy vessels. Yet within the latest monumental addition of the Tarxien temples amidst the depiction of nonhuman animal processions and finely carved altars, a series of scratched graffiti were produced over an undefined period of time on two orthostats (**Figure 38**) (Woolner 1957). These carvings of sea-vessels are unparalleled in contemporary Malta with the exception of a small incision on a storage vessel shoulder at nearby Kordin III (**Figure 39**). Therefore, the combination of increased monumental complexity at Tarxien by the end of the Late Neolithic, the nearby safe Grand Harbor, and the finding of these carvings strengthens the connection of these places to the material elements surrounding them.

In these examples of material culture that are often cast aside because of their lack of replication, the impressive variability of different communities tied to a singular

cultural development is recognizable. The Tal-Qadi stone slab and Tarxien graffiti represented the limitless concerns of human in their ability to depict contemporary concerns through such objects. When trying to understand and represent the material elements of the world surrounding ourselves, we create forms of material culture to visualize the human interpretation of recurring events. Sea-vessels returning after many days away from the safe confines of home or the rhythmic changes in the above celestial bodies belie the idea of islanders tied to their megalithic monuments and rituals. Instead, these objects expressed a human concern in seeking to delimitate, if not even control through representation, the natural elements through nonhumans. In this sense, the imagery of worldly things was a form of social exegesis in 4th- and 3rd- millennia BC Malta.



Figure 36: The incised slab found at Tal-Qadi, potentially indicating star alignments and the crescent moon (after Pace 2004: 40).



Figure 37: A Temple Period ceramic shard with a flock of migratory birds found at the Ġgantija megalithic complex (after Pace 2004: 182).

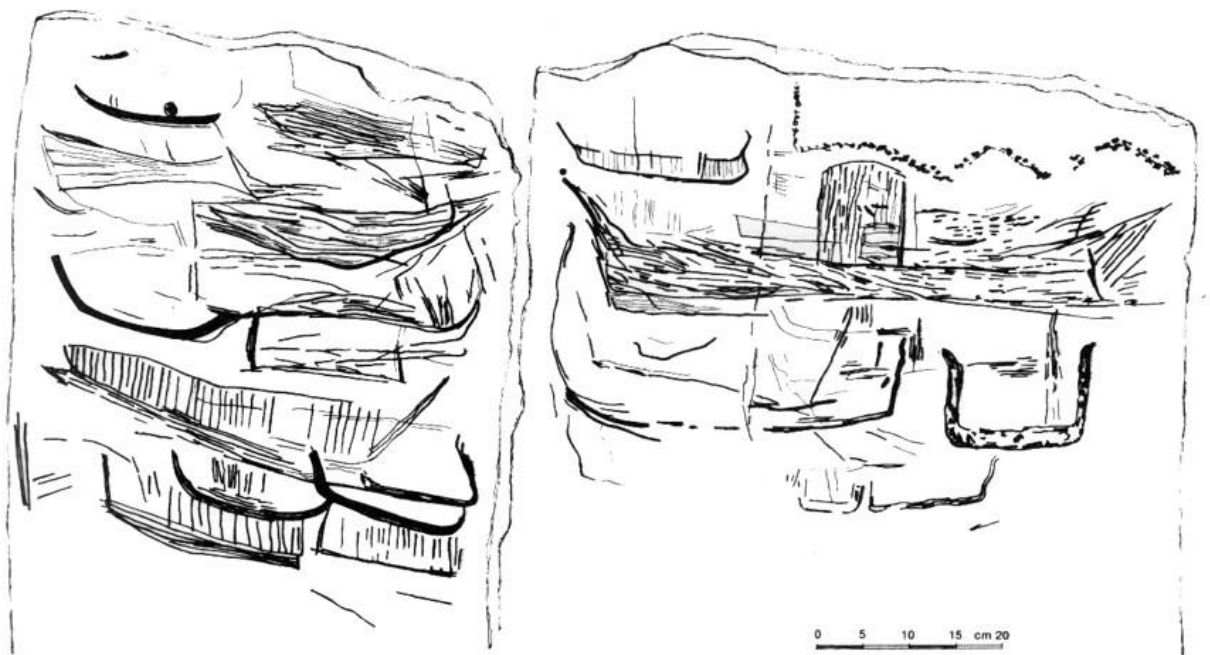


Figure 38: A drawing of the low-relief incisions of sea-vessels at Tarxien located on two orthostats (after Woolner 1957: 60).



Figure 39: Detailed shot of an incised sea-vessel (highlighted in white) on a large ceramic container from Kordin III (photograph by Nicholas C. Vella).

Imaging the Built World

Structures provide humans with a comforting presence and a durable space to inhabit securely. There was a variety of structures built across the time period under study, some of which will again feature in Chapter 8, but few stood as impressive as the Sardinia *nuraghi* and Maltese megalithic complexes. A structure built through the combined energy and desire of individuals is a tangible end-product. Nevertheless, the ideological superstructures surrounding all structures are not straight-forward nor are their meanings consistent. A hut can be a home or an abode, but it could also be created

by ancestors and then maintained by successors who claim the structure and its ideological meanings as being their own. In this setting of multiple uses, the translation of a built world into objects acted as a purposeful reduction of ideological meanings into a replicated form of a built structure and was something that contemporaries would have similarly toiled over and maintained through time. The meanings of the actual built structure became distilled, or perhaps even more symbolically exalted, into the form of a created object imbued with all the symbology of a built structure.

Distilling the Looming Nuraghi into a Potent Mobile Being

Even in their present ruinous state, the Sardinian *nuraghi* remain impressive monuments. They stand tall, constructed out of long-lasting materials, and were often re-elaborated into multi-turreted central structures with parapet walls staggered by towers. In their intense density across Sardinia and even in parts of Corsica (known as *torri*), nuragic settlements are variable and sub-divided into territorial hierarchies (Lo Schiavo 2013; Vanzetti *et al.* 2013; Blake 2011; Bonzani 1992), as seen in the prehistoric case of larger sites like Su Nuraxi di Barumini, Santu Antine or Palmavera. In their variability and continued longevity, *nuraghi* as structures and locales of domination experienced a transition from centralized architectural statements of power to ruins worthy of numerous re-uses or abandonment (Blake 2014a; Stiglitz 2005; Lilliu 2002: 249; Blake 2001). The architectural scale and duration of these monuments was not paralleled by an unchanging state of the *nuraghi*'s ideological power. Rather, the central structures expanded up to the end of the 2nd millennium BC and often covered earlier huts, forcibly imposing their importance on the surrounding settlement. Then, during the early 1st millennium BC, sites like S'Uraki and Santu Antine (Roppa 2012; A. Stiglitz *et al.* 2009; Moravetti 1988)

experienced a significant settlement re-configuration that often crowded the areas previously occupied by the *nuraghi* monuments. Indeed, the Nuragic IV period, circa the 9th century BC, marked a point of no return for these Sardinian societies (Usai 2012). There was no way that the preceding centrality of the *nuraghi* could remain stable. However, its association to power and control were coveted elements transferred into models of *nuraghi* (Blake 1997; Tronchetti 1997).

The Nuragic culture and its development was connected in the wider 2nd- and 1st-millennia BC transformations of Central Mediterranean prehistory. The Nuragic culture developed after the Monte Claro culture, which roughly spanned across the second half of the 3rd millennium BC (Lo Schiavo 2013: 671). The beginnings of the Nuragic culture were characterized by territorial shifts and a broad connectivity of Sardinia and Corsica to the northern Italian region, despite some remaining chronological ambiguities. Nevertheless, the earliest types of *nuraghi*, often referred to as corridor *nuraghi*, proto-*nuraghi*, or even pseudo-*nuraghi* (Webster 1996; Demurtas and Demurtas 1992; Lilliu 1982: 14), were found after the 18th century BC and were largely composed of variable platform constructions with internal corridors. These structures represented the beginning of a prolonged process of settlement aggregation. That process of aggregation was even more apparent by the mid-2nd millennium BC with the combined use of *nuraghi* and *tombe dei giganti* as territorial markers (Blake 2014a; 2002) demarcating Sardinia's landscape and overseeing the rising density of settlements.

In the mid-2nd millennium BC, Sardinian Nuragic communities were so wrapped up with the expanding dominant discourse of central monuments, which were representative of their power and ideological concerns, that there was little recognized

resistance. Even in light of the expanding *nuraghi* covering earlier abodes and ending their domestic purpose, the labor and respect given to these structure seems unaffected. Additionally, the *tombe dei giganti* underlined a proportional reaction to the expansion of *nuraghi*. The burial of the dead was a collective setting and was seemingly unseparated from rank or kin connection. People found themselves and their social selves connected so much to the *nuraghi* that in death they were aggregated in almost nameless monumental burials that were immortalized and memorialized by the structure in which they were deposited, as will be further explored in Chapter 7. Thus, the *nuraghi* represented themselves as a communal identity. The *nuraghi*, as a physical and symbolical structure, became the beating heart of these communities. Even in losing one's home due to an expanding *nuraghi*, there was a gained communal sense of achievement, a prehistoric instance of false consciousness (Femia 1975).

By the end of the 2nd millennium BC, the Sardinian communities in the Nuragic III period achieved an impressive artistic mastery of a range of materials. Aside from the extensive built remains, there was also a perceptible shift in the power discourse of these societies (Araque Gonzalez 2014; Ialongo 2013). Around the turn of the Final Bronze Age-Iron Age in the 1st millennium BC, the *nuraghi* themselves became political symbols (Blake 1997; Tronchetti 1991). They experienced an inverse encroachment. The limited courtyard spaces within the fortified walls were filled with domestic spaces. This could be argued as a proportional reaction against the earlier 2nd millennium BC dominance of the *nuraghi* as political centers and symbolic structures. Yet between the end of the 2nd millennium BC and the visible shifts in the 1st millennium BC, the *nuraghi* were “losing” their earlier dominance. Instead, their transformation from looming visual establishers of

social order are turned into a miniaturized symbol of social order, which can be especially seen in the creation of meeting huts in the largest Nuragic sites.

As the *nuraghi* themselves became less occupied, the construction of meeting huts was a manifestation stemming from an evolving political hegemony. The earlier expansion and rising settlement density became matched by an increase in ritual complexes (Ialongo 2013), mostly in the form of water sanctuaries adjoined by meeting huts, that forced people to congregate in intervals and inevitably find compromises to arising social issues. The so-called meeting huts emerged in this social context and were also often situated in the shadow of the *nuraghi* and situated immediately adjacent to their exterior. In these larger-than-average structures, the primary use of gathering can be detected from the general lack of occupational debris along with the placement of a stone bench running of their interiors.

At Palmavera, located in the Alghero harbor on the north-western edge of Sardinia, the *Capanna delle Riunioni* (Meeting Hut) (**Figure 40**) was discovered opposite the main entrance into the *nuraghi* (Webster 1996: 124; Moravetti 1992). Arising in a moment connected to the declining strength of *nuraghi* as centers of power, the meeting hut represented an initial counter-encroachment towards the high-rising monuments. Since it is estimated that up to forty-three individuals could be seated within this structure, there is a sense of political resolutions becoming open to contestation. In the setting of communal gatherings, the *nuraghi* as an ideological symbol was still relevant and not easily be cast away. After all, these monuments did not seem to be abandoned. Instead, there is a political transformation. The *nuraghi* mattered as a potent symbol and were prone to contestation in the context of community meetings. At Palmavera, the

nuragic attachment to the looming monuments became embedded in a model of a *nuraghi*. This model, a miniaturized version of the *nuraghi* that one could equally see outside of this same hut, transfixes the gaze of gathered participants. It was situated in the center of the hut and was surrounded by scattered ash. Yet this knee-high nuragic model was hardly the only nonhuman object of worth in this hut. Niches meant for the exhibition of *bronzetti* figurines and a carved seat were also found. The carved seat or stool stands at a similar height to the *nuraghi* model and was distinguished from the remaining bench spaces, particularly by being located next to a water tank and situated in front of a deep niche (**Figure 41**).

Together the *nuraghi* model and carved seat provide us with a sense of social distinction, perhaps an inequality marked in the very place where the contemporary dominant discourse was perpetuated. These two created objects should be seen as exhibitors of power. In its miniaturized stature, the *nuraghi* model distilled the symbolic power identified in the monumental *nuraghi* and implicitly maintained the Nuragic social order. Indeed, the visual inter-play between a circular structure, the gathering of a significant number of individuals (hailing from the settlement itself or an aggregation of individuals from surrounding settlements), a central *nuraghi* model, and a stool lend a ready impression of inequality. After all, a key component to power is its consistent need for negotiation (Feinman 2002). Not all who gathered in this hut were equal to each other. Yet their social inequality was even more in sharp contrast with those not allowed in this hut. Perhaps the individual who sat on the well-carved stool represented a commandeering figure, a person committed to maintaining the power ensured from association to the *nuraghi*. In such a hut, the imagined world, specifically through

material culture, was bound to the political conditions of a shifting collective in a historical moment where *nuraghi* were experiencing a shift in their social place and purpose.

Laboring under Direction: Maltese Portable Models in Exclusive Spaces

The Maltese Islands during the Temple Period offer an alternative view in the relation between built monuments and their miniaturized reflection in models. Indeed, the case for Malta between the 4th and 3rd millennia BC shared very little with Sardinia's imaging of the built *nuraghi*. During the Temple Period, these Maltese monuments were used expressly as ritual centers (Malone 2007) and affirmed a balance between above-ground megalithic sites and under-ground funerary monumental hypogea (Grima *et al.* 2009). The territorial purview of these sites dominated the archipelago's landscape while also controlling communities through ideological expression. These monuments offer us an insight into the mutual contradiction of inequality in human societies, already outlined in Chapter 3. In particular, these sites acted as the central nodes of contemporary communities and represented themselves as communal places tied to their collectivity. However, entrance into these monuments was controlled and restricted.

Despite the pervasive setting of controlled knowledge and limited access, these megalithic complexes were built through required labor, a social necessity that tends to feel strange to us in our Westernized settings (cf. Hayden 2011; Locke 2011). This social necessity is best understood if we momentarily think of modern communal projects not built through paid labor for a profitable enterprise. My own upbringing in the Maltese Islands plays an unavoidable role in my understanding of monumental constructions and their required labor. In all villages and towns, scattered across this archipelago, parish

churches are situated in the core of all settlements. Their unparalleled height, construction techniques, lavish internal/external decoration, and all-around expense is impressive, especially when recalling that surrounding houses were dwarfed in comparison. From most streets, even on the periphery of towns, the church stands tall and in contrast to the surrounding human and natural landscape. These parish churches were built through the associative help of the community (through given labor or financial commitment). The construction techniques and plans in the background of such structures required ample planning and consideration. Distances between adequate geological outcrops and favorable location all operated in unison prior to the setting of the very first stone. Once construction begins, labor is extracted from the whole community despite that all individuals still have to produce enough food to subsist. This means that the time and energy given was loosely demanded by those in power.



Figure 40: A view of the Nuragic period Palmavera settlement showing the meeting hut (indicated by arrow) located next to the central *nuraghi*.

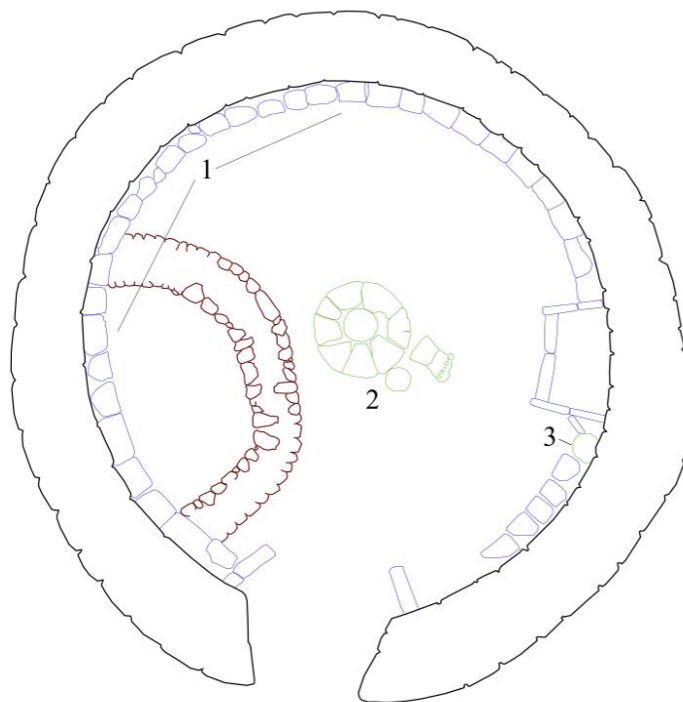


Figure 41: Plan of the Meeting Hut at Palmavera including a stone bench (1), a central hearth and collapsed *nuraghi* model (2), and a stone stool (3) (drawn from Moravetti 1992).



Figure 42: The Ta' Hagrat model found during archaeological excavations within the megalithic complex (after Pace 2004: 152).



Figure 43: A reconstruction of the Tarxien façade model (after Pace 2004: 65).

At Ta' Ħaġrat and Tarxien, two objects represent the unique architectural constructions found in the Maltese Temple Period. The model from Ta' Ħaġrat is a small diminutive representation of the actual built remains standing at 4.5 by 3.7cm (**Figure 42**). Typical interpretations of this object consider it to be an architectural blueprint, a ritual remembrance to the creation of a special place on the Mġarr plain. Yet the somewhat unrealistic depiction of this megalithic monument, in a society well-known for its artistic mastery, should raise some doubts to such normative interpretations. Like most material culture, the human-nonhuman relationship is more illuminating in regards to the actual role of the created object. The Ta' Ħaġrat artifact is un-perforated and therefore not meant to be exhibited on a human body. Instead, it represents the being of a built place and its details highlight the doorway made by a lintel on two orthostats, which in

real-life appear smaller. The complex system of niches, altars, recesses, and hidden passageways found no place in such a model. They were superfluous to the meaning embedded in this form of material culture while also hidden from the sight of those standing outside the Late Neolithic monuments.

In the case of the Tarxien model, standing at 38.4 by 43cm, the remnants of a façade is depicted as a freestanding element (**Figure 43**). The verticality of this imaged façade is taller than the present state of the Late Neolithic ruins. Yet the curved façade funneled the community towards the small single entry into this restricted structure. However, a series of door jams and receding apses hardly allowed groups gathered outside an unhindered view into the happenings that were occurring beyond their sight. The Tarxien model also evokes that sense of hindered visibility. The rising height of the megalithic monuments is highlighted and reminded its possessors the unclear division between those allowed and those disallowed within the actual monuments.

These two objects reflect a diminishing collective in the Late Neolithic of the Maltese Islands, especially because they were ideological expressions of a tenuous social division. The communal labor required to construct the monuments was countered by a restricted access once these places were completed. Within the precincts of Ta' Hagrat, Tarxien, and other megalithic sites, the objects created reflected a fettered distribution. Perhaps these artifacts might be actual architectural models for magnanimous ritual places. However, their individuality suggests a connection between certain humans and these models. These “models” were not primarily meant to adorn the human body or to display the intimate connections between humans and their access within the actual structures. Instead, there was a subtle focus on the object representing its own

monumental host. Beyond sight of the anticipative gatherers outside (Turnbull 2002), these artifacts yielded a sense of the connection between control by some and their uses of society at large to create a seemingly stable world, which seems to change little over time even though continuous changes were being countered by stabilizing processes.

Representing the Human Body through Portable Objects

The act of translation into an artifact extended well beyond the representation of the built and natural world surrounding humans. The human body was another element worthy of transposition into an object because it allowed its memorialization but also its idealization. Indeed, the human body was transformed into perceptible messages through the use of cremation urns or even vague anthropomorphic carvings. The purpose of these objects was not so much to display the human, but rather to display the key human elements that were worth reducing into representations. Such forms of material culture were a reflection of the contemporary cultural values and the entwined role played by the human body within the broader cultural paradigm. In the following examples, the human was represented by a complete reduction of the human form and often connected to funerary memorialization and the idealization of individuals, a matter further explored in Chapter 7.

The Cremated Body in the form of the Etruscan House

In a Central Mediterranean connected world, it is easy to explain developing cultural trends from the view of inter-connectedness. Within the blur of movement and

distribution networks, a broad region like the Central Mediterranean affected and was conversely affected by neighboring communities, as already explored in Chapters 4 and 5. Indeed, the Etruscan culture has long stood as an example of Central Mediterranean inter-connectedness or even an assumed inspiration from the Eastern Mediterranean (Leighton 2005). Instead, the local developments that were rooted in the early 1st millennium BC Villanovan expansion throughout Etruria (Bartoloni 2000; Negroni Catacchio 1998; Bartoloni 1989) and central Italy (Lazio), reached far north and south in the Central Mediterranean (Bietti Sestieri 2012). There is no denying the effects of the southern Central Mediterranean inspiration derived from the Aegean across the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC. Nevertheless, there was a great deal of localized developments occurring across the entirety of the Central Mediterranean region, and the Villanovan expansion from the understudied central Italian peninsula is an example of increasing social development.

The cultural continuity between the early 1st millennium BC (Early Iron Age) and the 9th and 8th centuries BC can be best identified in the expanding aggregation of settlements (Pacciarelli 2000). Some of the best known Etruscan sites, like Veii, Chiusi, and Tarquinia, are rooted in their Early Iron Age dispersed settlements. Increasing urbanism, an expanding Villanovan presence across peninsular Italy, and settlement hierarchy led to the establishment of major urban centers over a protracted length of time. Hilltop settlements established at the turn of the 1st millennium BC, like Sorgenti della Nova (Catacchio Negroni 1995), were often abandoned in favor of those dominating the limited fertile plains in a landscape made up of coastal marshland and rising hilltops.

The cremated body, whose form appears codified and once again meant to best visualize contemporary predominant expectations of idealized individual qualities, became hosted within objects. From the Villanovan to the Etruscan cremation urns, we see a trend shifting from the ascending individualization of warriors to a tie between the individual and his/her house, respectively. The Villanovan culture enacted a distinct mode of burial from the 12th and 10th centuries BC. Cremated individuals were deposited in cinerary urns that were decorated with bands of repeated patterns. These patterns lack any distinguishable anthropomorphic figuration, despite that their geometric nature varied regionally and chronologically. There was also subtle variation between the numerous urns recovered, but their standardized nature suggests an attention was being placed on differences that were probably established across families, groups, or separate communities. The disinterest in emphasizing the sex of the deceased was a purposeful ambiguity. Individuals were not tied to their sexual being but were instead connected to an idealized individual. Indeed, the placement of bronze helmets, often with flayed edges covered by geometric decorations, took the place of an individual. There are also some lesser found Villanovan burials, particularly in the Lazio area, that were not capped by a bronze helmet. Instead, these burials outside of Etruria proper were sometimes also capped by roof tiles (Bietti Sestieri 1992), an element deemed to be a subtle connection to the deceased's household and perhaps even an antecedent to the following Etruscan house urns described below.

There was a shared prolonged use of “warrior” ideologies across the 2nd millennium BC in the Central Mediterranean, temperate European, and Mediterranean basin. The contextual social setting of Villanovan cinerary urns fell comfortably with this

shared idealization of elements connected to war. Perhaps there needs to also be a consideration that beside the possibility of war events being widespread or not, the broad attachment shown towards paraphernalia associated with warriors expressed a sentiment of distinction. In death, the cremated body deposited within these urns was attached to a limited activity since it was unlikely that war was the main occupation of such individuals. There is no prevalent sense of all-out war, although violence cannot be dismissed entirely. The cinerary urn as a significant object enforced that prevalent acceptance of warrior ideologies in the Central Mediterranean, but it did not simply highlight a few individuals. Instead, a considerable amount of people seem to attempt to tie themselves to this social expectation of codified idealized individuals.

The Etruscan house urns emerged from the Villanovan antecedents and maintained a burial tradition despite a developing ideology (**Figure 44**). First, the creation of an object in the image of a built structure did not quite break any new ground in the Central Mediterranean, as already discussed above. By themselves, these structures mean little. In contrast, in light of their uses as ideological markers, they became important social components. Similarly, the reduction of structures into objects is an even more meaningful translation of the human world. In the shift from Villanovan to Etruscan cinerary urns, there was a perceptible movement from an ideological emphasis of individual achievement towards the group association to households. The sense of a collective then shifted between a moment of diminishment during the Villanovan period while it also contracted in the Etruscan culture to the range of familial association. The households depicted in cremation urns, seen in over two hundred examples found across Etruria, connected the deceased to the building of the living (Leighton 2005: 367). The

varying specific decoration placed on the urn walls included other repeated items, such as the use of birds on roof beams, swastikas, and discs.

The meaning of such iconographic repetitions eludes us for obvious reasons, but there is still a certain sense of inter-connectedness beyond the Central Mediterranean and within central Italy itself. In particular, the use of discs were used as possible depictions of solar symbolism, found also in 8th century BC Hallstatt in Central Europe and other neighboring communities. In contrast, the use of birds can be seen again in later Etruscan house tombs dated to the 7th century BC and are often described as part of auguring rituals and observations (Leighton 2005: 375). Without relying heavily on this tenuous continuity, it seems worth pointing out that the creation of built tombs often mimics internal house spaces with roof beams and other architectural elements. Yet the replication of the house in tomb form occurs in tomb structures and taken to an opulent level by established families who could construct lavish burials to their dead. Nevertheless, the Villanovan transformations in cinerary urns exemplifies the codified symbology utilized in representing the human form, which is transformed over time to memorialize the connection between the deceased and their own narrow collective.

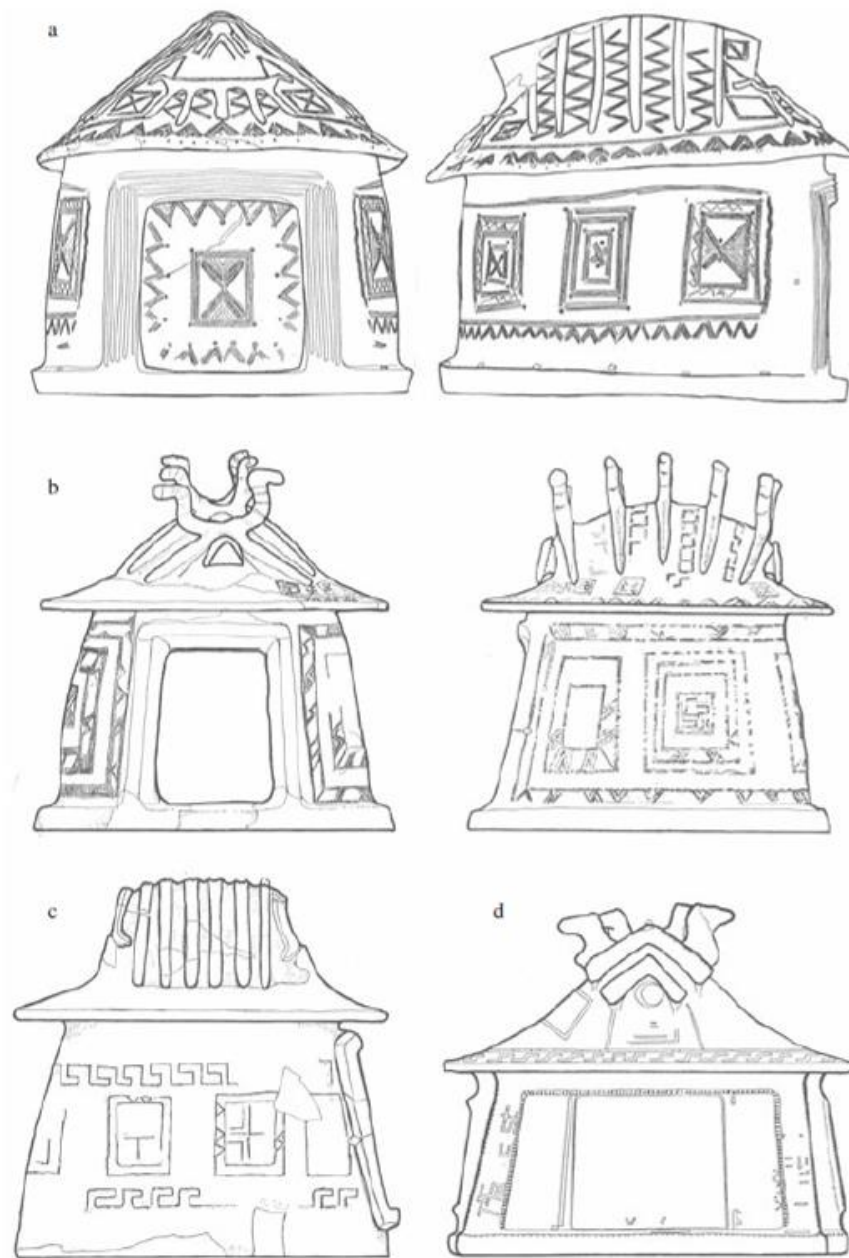


Figure 44: Three examples of Etruscan house cremation urns, including: a-c) Vetulonia and d) Vulci (Leighton 2005: 372).

Tomb Guardians in 5th- and 4th-millennia BC Sicily and Malta

The collective inhumations of the southern Central Mediterranean formed a long-term burial tradition that stretched back into the 5th millennium BC and continued under various forms into the 3rd millennium BC (Cazzella 2000). Burials in the Maltese Żebbuġ and Sicilian San Cono Piano Notaro cultures followed a general trend of excavated tombs accessed through sunken shafts (*tombe a forno*) and can even be found across the entirety of Sicily as well as the southern extent of peninsular Italy. In these burial places, the deposition of individuals seems tied to family groups who continued to return to these sites over an extended period of time. With every re-opening of these tombs (Malone *et al.* 2009: 98, Trump 2002: 44; Leighton 1999: 93-94), the remains of deceased were covered in blood red ochre, placed on their side in a fetal position, and pushed towards the back to make way for new bodies.

The decline of the obsidian “economy” after the 6th and 4th millennia BC became particularly attenuated towards the mid-4th millennium BC, as already discussed in **Chapter 5**. The active role played by the Aeolian Islands experienced a clear contraction and was perhaps pushed out by the growing sense of metal production in the northern Italian peninsula. While the potential causality between the obsidian decline and metal demand is unclear, the expanding social interest in display and exhibition became a clear trend in societal development. Indeed, it is quite easy from an archaeological point of view to create a sense of intense social competition based on the accruelement of valued objects. This is only one potential explanation for a world so thoroughly diverse by the 4th millennium BC. The ending distribution of obsidian is in fact matched by a reduction

in broad networks of distribution and communication that became replaced by a series of inter-connected smaller networks (Robb and Farr 2005).

In Sicily, the sense of cultural regionalism is reflected in the limited extent of ceramic overlap that was firmly concentrated in the southern Central Mediterranean, which does not exclude connection to the Italian peninsula. Settlement patterns in the western extents of Sicily suggest a transformation from the earlier Neolithic agricultural subsistence towards a reliance on pastoralism and developing regional cultural independence. In this setting Sicily and the surrounding archipelagos found themselves at odds with the remainder of the Central Mediterranean, despite general overlaps seen in the manufacture of stone tool weaponry and ostentatious use of Bell Beaker ceramic styles by the 3rd millennium BC. Malta's unprecedented move towards monumentalism found its roots in the protracted contraction of cultural overlap in the Żebbuġ period, which was influenced by Sicilian cultural developments and possibly even island re-colonization.

The burial of the dead exemplified this increasing regionalism between Sicily and the Maltese Islands. Overall, the use of dispersed rock-cut tombs shared a broad regional familiarity. These were small places connected to families and routinely reopened for the deposition of the dead. Outside of these tombs, the shattered broken remnants of ritual meals were discarded in the tomb shafts and remind us of the temporality of these places, an endless cycle between life and death. In these structures and their surrounding rituals, we are faced by a sense of uniformity, a condition which was increasingly becoming endangered in a world that had lost its broad connections and dispersal of ideologies.

Nevertheless, even in diverse objects there was a sense of shared ideologies associated to the world of the dead. At the Xaghra Circle (Gozo) and Żebbuġ (Malta) the rock-cut tombs include two entirely diverse non-humans, probably both situated in the entrance way to each respective tombs. Small and portable, these objects are vaguely anthropomorphic as the facial features are reduced to the mouth, eyes, and nasal cavity. Yet these two figurines are also quite different. The Żebbuġ example (**Figure 45**) is made of smoothened limestone and was covered in blood red ochre, carved in a tabular form, and broken at its distal end. In contrast, the example from the Xaghra Circle is made up of rougher limestone and was shaped in a rounded form. They are both portable, but their purpose did not require any movement - quite the opposite. These *things* were produced for the sole purpose of remaining with the deceased, thus making one wonder whether their role was connected to representing the deceased or else acted as guardians and watched over the slow decay of the dead. Their positioning at the tomb entrance suggests more the latter. These were not objects tied to the possessions or idealized representation of the deceased. Rather, these figurines accompanied the body of the deceased, along with all the other dead, on behalf of the living.



Figure 45: The anthropomorphic stone figurine found in the Żebbuġ burial (Baldacchino and Evans 1954: Plate III).



Figure 46: The so-called “shaman” found at Piano Vento.

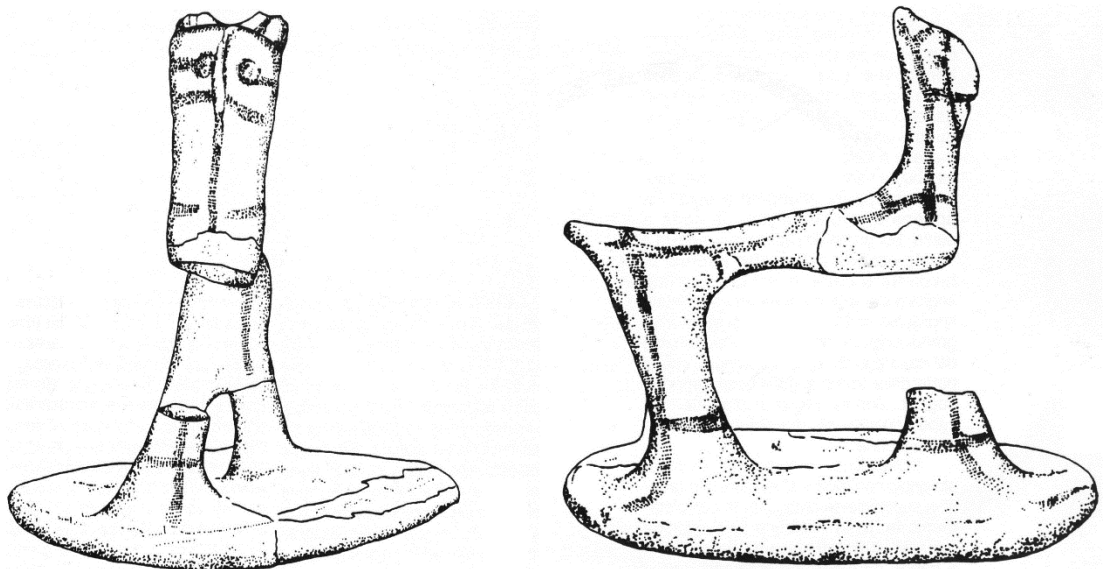


Figure 47: The four-legged “centaur” found at Piano Vento (after Castellana 1995: 147).

At the Sicilian site of Piano Vento there is a contrast with the case of the Maltese Islands, despite the contemporary close cultural connections between Sicily and Malta. Across eleven shafts leading into rock-cut tombs, a number of above-ground ritual deposits are identifiable through their ash-rich content, conspicuous burnt animal bones, and other artifacts (Castellana 1995). In particular, a relatively well-preserved figurine appears to represent an individual with a cape and outstretched arms (Castellana 1995: 76-7, 138-141) (**Figure 46**). This figurine is often interpreted as a ‘priestly’ or ‘shamanic’ figure. However, perhaps the most important aspects of this figurine were its ritual deposition in association to burials and its purposeful shattering. The rituals conducted in honor of the deceased extended to the shattering of significant objects and their deposition in the tomb shafts, perhaps consciously preserving their existence in the depths of the earth. Among these shattered and fragmented objects, interestingly interpreted by the excavators as a ‘centaur’ (Castellana 1995: 75-6) (**Figure 47**) was broken and deposited into two different tomb shafts. Unlike the Maltese Islands’ Żebbuġ period examples, at Piano Vento these unique figurines did not find their way into the tombs. They were broken and deposited outside. Their ideological purpose remains unclear, but their connection to the living in memory of the dead seems somewhat replicated.

The creation of these figurines across Sicily and Malta is irregular and not firmly connected to each other. Instead, there were some general points of contact between sites like Piano Vento, Żebbuġ, and Xaghra Circle. Anthropomorphic objects were not necessarily depictions of actual individuals, although they were probably based on understood ideals in these diverse communities. There was little figurative overlap

even within the Maltese Islands. Rather, the more pressing point made through these forms of material culture was their association to the dead on behalf of the living. They were guardians in the sense that these figurines were not meant to be moved. Their purposeful deposition or shattering on-site implies a potent disjuncture with the world of the living. These objects were important because they represent localized expressions of idealized figures through a common medium, particularly in funerary contexts. The ideological meanings behind these figurines also suggest that the collective spirit was largely limited and celebrated through rituals by small communities dispersed in the Sicilian and Maltese hinterlands.

The Ideal Being and Visual Pronouncements of Order

In the above section, the self-depiction of humans was reduced and formed part of a broader belief-system and cultural paradigm. Yet objects can also become imbued with the idealized depiction of a being. Such depictions are often approached in archaeological thinking as *quasi*-real life. These objects were produced to visualize an important element of a given society. The allure in such interpretations is easy to understand: if a society tends to frequently depict armed warriors then war and these warriors are key elements of the society. However, in such views lies a simplistic assumption: anything represented repeatedly is replicated in real life. Despite that such views are probably not incorrect, there needs to be an adequate questioning of the "realness" of such material culture. In the case of Henry VIII's late painting, the bullish and majestic strength of this monarch was not matched in real life. Instead, it depicted a symbolic idealization of what this

monarchy wanted to idealize for itself and future generations. Surely such desires were not absent in the prehistoric world? In the following examples, an idealization of human attributes provided some portable objects with an added importance while they acted as social participants in settings of inequality.

The Transformed Ideal Being in Figurative Sardinia

Figurine art, referring to portable figurines produced according to contemporary social norms and creativity, occurred in limited instances in the Central Mediterranean outside of Sardinia and the Maltese Islands after 3,500 BC (Robb 2008: 334). Yet this mobile art exemplified in these two very different islands could not be any more diverse, with the Maltese Islands garnering the most recent theoretical considerations (Malone 2008; Vella Gregory 2005). In these two island settings, portable figurines were creative outputs through which objects were utilized to represent almost ideal beings. The role of these artifacts was not meant to provide faithful representations of an individual. Rather, the idealized being represented reflects a culturally-specific ideological by-product. After all, we are surrounded by such instances of idealization of beings. One recalls Hans Holbein's depiction of a potent bull-like Henry VII who was in a state of decreasing health or even question at the quite fair depictions of Christianity associated to individuals hailing from the Near East. The importance of these representations does not lie in their truth or objectivity but rather on their ability to form a visual message understood by contemporary communities. There is also another crucial aspect that we cannot afford to miss: these objects become imbued with properties associated to the idealized being.

In Sardinia, figurines emerged in two distinct chronological moments: the Bonu Ighinu – Ozieri 5th and 4th millennia BC and the Middle to Late Nuragic 15th and 8th centuries BC. The continuity of an artistic legacy is a difficult argument to make in a convincing manner, particularly due to the paucity of data available regarding the Abealzu-Filigosa period in Sardinia. In contrast, from a regional point of view, also outlined by Robb (2008: 334), the artistic expression of islanders in figurative form seems to considerably outlast the Neolithic figurines of the broader Mediterranean basin. In these islands there was some social connection that assigns a special value on the figurative representation of the human and supernatural world, which at first seems inaccessible to us from an interpretational point of view. However, a presence of monumentality and ritual intensity was another tenuous strand that connects such disparate periods in Sardinian prehistory. The evidence is quite apparent for the later Nuragic period.

By the beginning of the 1st millennium BC, the heights of Nuragic society began to be reflected in the artistic production of the time and acted as an enforcer for the social competition accrued over hundreds of years. Figurines, especially in the case of the eponymous *bronzetti*, formed part of a society keen on representing itself. However, those represented are symbolized in rather specific apparel/actions. In contrast, the earlier 5th millennium BC figurines seem rooted to the broader Neolithic interests in the depiction of steatopygous figures (**Figure 48**), often described as "mother goddesses" or fertility deities. Alongside these figurines, carved bulls horns were found in burial hypogea (*domus de jana*) from the Ozieri period and are interpreted as an opposing masculine force to the female figurines (Vella Gregory 2007; Lilliu 1999; Atzeni 1978).

Yet in terms of monumentality, the 5th and 4th-millennia BC Sardinian landscape was somewhat bereft of grandiose architectural creation with the exception of the Monte d'Accoddi altar.

The Bonu Ighinu statuary grows out of a Sardinian island innovation, despite that a contemporary and ongoing connection between Sardinia, Corsica, and the Central Mediterranean is well documented. Obsidian and later the arrival of Bell Beaker assemblages confirm this continued interaction. Still even within connected peoples, islands can revel in tangential cultural development. By and large, Sardinian communities were subsisting in comparable ways to the remainder of the Central Mediterranean. Additionally, the arrival of Bell Beaker artifacts includes the diffusion of menhirs and aniconic iconography. At Monte d'Accoddi, the construction of this monumental altar was unparalleled in the entire Central Mediterranean, but it utilized an effective combination of a local ramped altar along with foreign menhirs. In such a cultural setting, Sardinian communities exhibited an ability, if not even interest, in purposely mixing local and exogenous elements together to their own benefit. Within this setting of exhibitive inter-connectivity, the Bonu Ighinu female figurines formed part of the indigenous cultural elements that were created at a time marked by considerable ritual significance, especially situated in the *domus de janas* rock-cut tombs.



Figure 48: A Bonu Ighinu figurine found in the Cuccurru S'Arrius burials (photograph taken by Clive Vella).

The Bonu Ighinu figurines formed part of a united artistic corpus in light of their attribute commonalities. For instance, the figurine found at Cuccuru s'Arrius shows a seated individual characterized by steatopygia, which is the considerable accumulation of fat in the buttocks. The head of the represented figure is capped by a flattened headdress that crowns the ill-defined facial features that are largely focused on the nose and narrowed eye slits (**Figure 48**). The head's proportions maintained the general stocky rounded curves of this figurine, and it has an unrefined bosom contrasted by a marked

pubic area. The hands are kept to the side of this figurine, but in other cases, the hands are placed on the bosom or the stomach. The general ambiguity of this figurine finds itself contextually situated in tombs or ritual caves, both features of the Bonu Ighinu and Ozieri periods. There is an unexpected iconographic transformation between these two periods, particularly seen in changing representational styles express in figurative things. In the Ozieri period, there appeared to be an abandonment of the volumetric rendition of the human form (Vella Gregory 2007: 30) in favor of an increasing linear schematization. In the Riola Sardo figurine, this transformation appears stark and awkwardly situated between the two types of figurines created in Sardinia 5th and 4th millennia BC. The body, especially the torso and stomach, appears elongated while emphasizing the arm position below the bosom and the pubic area of the individual. Despite that, the object could be turning into a medium of possible conformity as represented difference becomes increasingly muted. The rigid linear representation of the human body in the Ozieri period stresses only the nose ridge and bosom and emphasizes the conformity of schematized body forms, also seen in contemporary ceramic vessels.

Portable figurines became conspicuously absent after the Abealzu-Filigosa period as Sardinian society was at the verge of a crucial social transformation. The emergence of Nuragic society answers the lull seen in earlier settlement patterns and density as well as the overall paucity of archaeological information related to the 3rd millennium BC of Sardinia. Nuragic societies underwent a prolonged process of social evolution that was focused on the fortification and centralization of settlements, particularly seen in the eventual sense of domination offered by some of the larger complex nuragic sites. Yet by the first centuries of the 1st millennium BC, Nuragic Sardinia offered an array of non-

domestic or funerary sites, especially in the water sanctuaries and sacred wells connected to the natural flux of potable water. At these significant places, the *bronzetti* figurines formed a central part of the artistic legacy of these peoples and a reminder of the creative output offered to complex societies bent on expressing their sense of social order. Prior to the mid 2nd millennium BC, the oft-cited idea of militarism or a general state of war-like social condition seemed doubtful. Early *nuraghi* were nothing more than elevated huts tied to the rising concerns of groups to position themselves within the landscape. In contrast, by the 9th century BC the growth and creativity of Nuragic society manifested in numerous ways within the expanding social complexity of these communities.

The thousands of *bronzetti* figurines found in Sardinia, and in considerably smaller quantities outside, make their collective consideration difficult. There is a considerable array of figures including archers, boxers, supernatural beings, armed individuals, nonhuman animals, ships, and even *nuraghi*. The metal production of these portable figures blossomed by the turn after the 9th century BC. Bronze figurines became important objects that can moved in conjunction with humans, or else were situated in purposeful locations. Their capacity to move with humans can be extrapolated from their pervasive presence in all walks of Nuragic life, such as domestic habitation, *nuraghi*, caves, caches, ritual sanctuaries, and (rarely) in tombs (Lilliu 2008: 70). These objects seemingly represented a rich mosaic of prehistoric life in Sardinia in a historical moment affected by loosening social internalization and the increasing presence of Tyrrhenian Sea interaction. In this state of inter-connectivity, these *bronzetti* celebrated and promulgated the Sardinian social order that is often deemed as militaristic, ritualistic, and violent. Yet these artifacts also represented calmer scenes of greeting individuals, preparation of

foodstuffs, adorned sea-vessels, and nonhuman animals. A comparison between the sense of militarism and ritual participation offers a balanced sense of Sardinian society but also the extents to which figural idealization remains the standard of Nuragic art.

In the environs of Monti Arcosu, the Uta hoard was discovered hidden underneath a large stone in 1849. In this hoard six *bronzetti* and eight swords were recovered (**Figure 19**). These swords appear in part to have been ornamental and tied to individuals holding power, as suggested by one of the swords having a pierced stag at its distal end. The *capotribù* (tribal leader) figurine, considered the most important in the hoard, was rested across the swords. Within the space of its cape, three other smaller figurines were situated by the humans depositing this hoard. There is a somber aura to this represented important person adorned by a weapon resting over the right shoulder and a decorated “scepter” in the left hand. The upward gaze of this distinct individual and all the adjoining proprietary elements are interpreted by Lilliu (2008: 118) as proof of achieved power. The *capotribù* is an ideal example of ambiguous object. On the one hand, the size, detail, location of this artifact suggests its understood elevated importance. Yet the held impression that these figurines represent specific individuals suggests a depiction of real-life, while the general similarity of *bronzetti* across Sardinia instead point towards a sought idealization. Thus, the *capotribù* was not necessarily a true person but was instead an understood portrayal of power and distinction. The warriors with their shields and weapons were symbols of Sardinian rule and social order.

Distinct Rank, Tomb 194 and the Lone Leader at Olmo di Nogara

Between the mid-16th and 13th centuries BC, the north Italian Terramare culture experienced a pronounced expansion followed by a baffling rapid transformation and

abandonment of the *palafitte* villages. During this period, a significant necropolis was established at Olmo di Nogara on the bank of the Tartaro River and was associated to a nearby less explored settlement (Bietti Sestieri 2010: 52). To date, this site remains one of the largest burial sites uncovered in the Central Mediterranean. Research at Olmo di Nogara has uncovered 517 burials (456 inhumations and 61 cremations), dated between the mid-16th and 12th centuries BC, scattered across the site in distinct zones implying an associative attachment to family groups (**Figure 50**). The movement into this site was even formalized through a funerary roadway flanked by two parallel palisades that delimited the necropolis on its western side.

Burials here are of a somewhat repetitive form and were seemingly divided between the sexes with an emphasis on age. Buried males were accompanied by a sword or sword and dagger along with headgear or bronze collars (Gastaldi 2006; Bartoloni 2000; Bietti Sestieri 1992), while female burials are characterized by two fibulae with amber clasps, threading needles, combs, and pendants. The burial assemblages were often interpreted as reflective of rank and accrued wealth of different individuals who tended to be adults or seniors. Indeed, there are some artifact combinations that could be inferred as connected to different social statuses achieved by these individuals. There are four main combinations for the male burials: sword and headgear, sword and dagger, sword, dagger and headgear, and just a sword. Among the variety of objects buried at Olmo di Nogara, swords have garnered the most attention in archaeological literature, particularly in light of their stylistic association to Carpathian and eastern Alpine communities. These swords were prized possessions tied to the social ambitions of these individuals and their descendants. They were placed on the chest of the deceased and only found in forty-three

male burials out of 456 inhumations. Based on the distinctions made through the use of associated burial goods, not all of those buried were identified as equal to each other.

However, there needs to also be a sufficient critique of our archaeological assumptions.

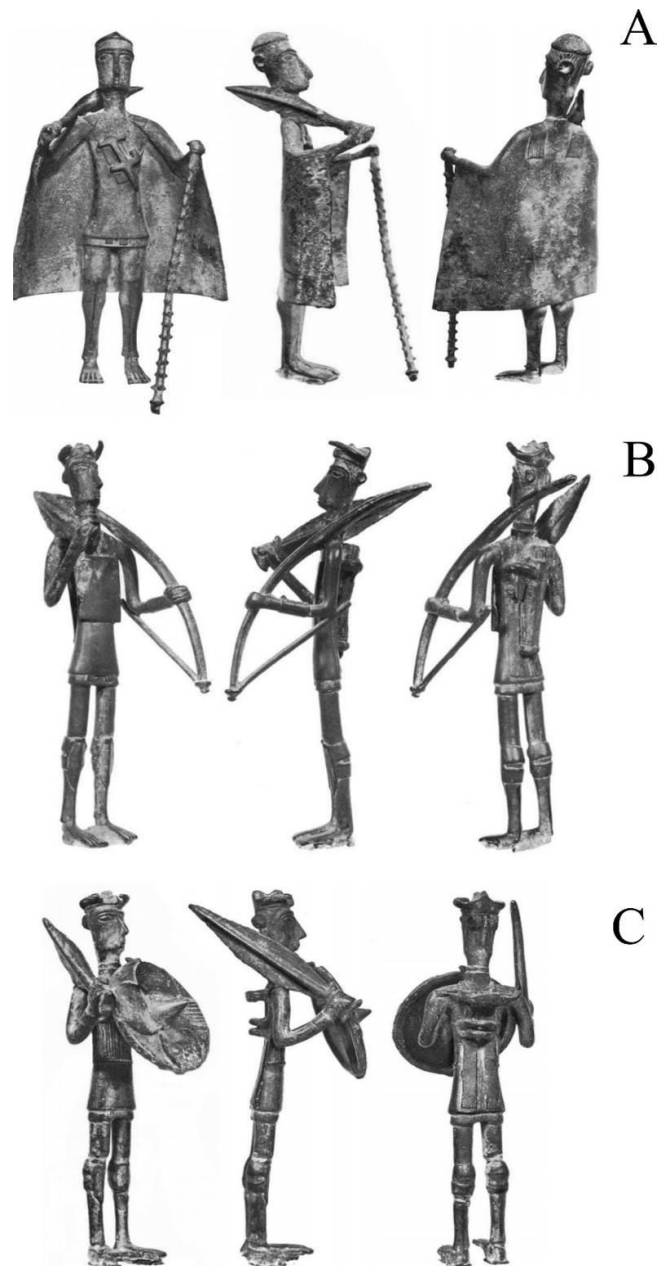


Figure 49: Three *bronzetti* figurines from the Uta hoard including the so-called *Capotribù* (Tribal Head) (A), Warrior with sword and bow (B), and Warrior with sword and shield (C) (after Lilliu 2008: 117, 125, 127).

In particular, it is easy to equate accumulated objects as evidence of wealth and providing insight into the social being of the deceased. However, the actual act of burying a loved one, the placement of the body, and the selection of material culture to accompany the dead lie very much in the world and wishes of the living (Brück and Fontijn 2013). The deposition of artifacts along with humans creates a perceptible rift between their continued use and their disappearance from the living world. Once deposited in a tomb, swords were bound to the dead as their worldly possessions. The deceased would seem unaccomplished and bereft without a sword and its significant life-history (Pearce 2013). Yet an idealized representation was created by the living with a sword or a fibulae. We do not actually know if the deceased was an apt or accomplished fighter. Instead, the combination of individuals and certain objects within burials could be a mark of accomplishment celebrated by the living on behalf of the dead.

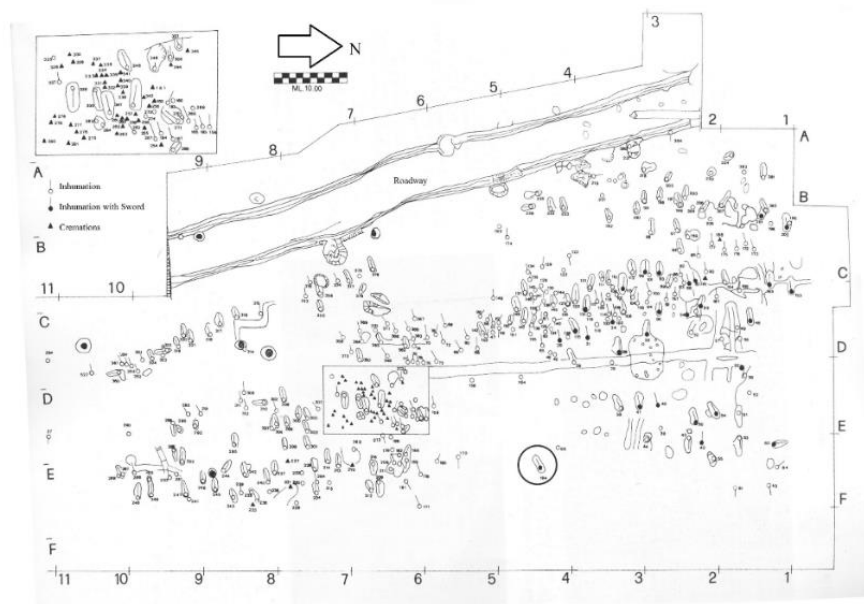


Figure 50: Plan of Area C in Olmo di Nogara with Tomb 194 shown in a black circle (after Salzani 2005: 113).

Yet even at a site like Olmo di Nogara there are signs of short-lived social transformations. Tomb 194, dated to the end of the Middle Bronze Age, is a burial of a mature adult male situated on the eastern border of the Group C cluster (**Figure 50**) (Salzani 2005: 113). This burial stands out in its isolated positioning as well as its unmatched surrounding ditch and an artificial fluvial pebble deposit next to the head and the right leg. His burial assemblage was made up of a vase, headgear, sword, and a dagger, which is one of the few combination of all weaponry in the entire site. The buried individual in Tomb 194 held an unparalleled role in the surrounding community, which is interpreted as a short-lived social power that was discontinued afterwards (Bietti Sestieri 2010: 55). The powers held by this individual, albeit being possibly overturned after his death, seem respected and celebrated. There was little to no encroachment from later burials and his memory appears to be maintained at least ideologically. Even without a continued reliance on such a potent figure, Tomb 194 represents the symbolic connection between objects and humans. The latter's importance is expounded by the combination of material culture placed in the tomb. Even though the human body and deposited artifacts are out of sight, the ideal being is only complete in this combination. In conjunction all of these elements expressed at Olmo di Nogara the necessary distinction achieved by this one individual. This sword also highlighted the connection of this individual and his wealth, particularly when we keep in mind that at this time metal hoards were widely spread across peninsular Italy. In the case of the individual buried in Tomb 194, his social standing was sufficiently distinct to warrant an end to the use-life of the accompanying sword.

Conclusion: The Strive to Possess and Control Ideology

In this chapter the turn to objects has attempted to remove the practical rationalization of objects, or to put in another way, the forced ontological divide between humans and *things*. Yet belongings trespass across all lines of separation that we expect in our modern setting. These *things* have a great capacity to surprise us in their object-histories, which overcome all rational expectations. An example I have experienced personally is the discovery of a late 2nd millennium BC lunate agate with cuneiform inscription found at Tas-Silġ (Malta) (Cazzella *et al.* 2011). The unknown travel itinerary of this artifact, the several hands that held it, and its final deposition in a prehistoric megalithic ritual complex eventually dedicated to Astarte in the 1st millennium BC exalt the importance of this agate. Did anyone who held it understand the text referring to the site of Nippur, a moon god Sin, and five dedicating individuals? Or was the peculiar lunate shape and its materiality such that the object itself was deemed as special?

Material culture revel in their ambiguous relationships to humans. They form unpredictable connections that are tenuous at best. There is ultimately no guarantee that any artifact can maintain a continued stable relationship between humans and nonhumans. As part of an unpredictable world, humans utilize and transform objects often to maintain a sense of stability over time. By dominating these items, crafted by human hands according to their cultural praxis, societies are able to project an ordered world. In this structured social setting, objects emerge in intimate connections to humans. Examples in this chapter were often situated in ritual or burial contexts, part of social processes that were by and large limited in human attendants. After all, artifacts and their

meanings seem even more magnified in intimate places. Rock-art at Valcamonica or swords in Olmo di Nogara become special through their limited association to humans. Yet without these same objects, the archaeological narratives of these societies would lack a considerable actor. In Valcamonica among the dispersed evidence of human settlements without the hundreds of thousands of rock-art, we would assume an “empty” landscape, especially in contrast to the densely populated plains to the east in the Remedello culture.

Then, the role played by material culture in human lives is indisputable but is quite tough to pin down and perhaps reflects our own biases. The role of artifacts in our collective history is murky and full of inconsistent uses and localized innovations. The significant objects selected in this chapter have multiple uses but few clear-cut delimitations. In a region as large as the Central Mediterranean, communities share a common knowledge that is re-absorbed and re-produced in localized settings. In Central Mediterranean islands, the advantages of physical isolation encourage localized cultural adaptation in Malta and Sardinia. For instance, the shared commonalities of underground rock-cut tombs in the 4th millennium BC between Malta and the southern Central Mediterranean were countered by the creation of anthropomorphic figurines. We see the effects of localized cultural developments in these artifacts. Despite the joined and shared connectivity of these communities to a broader world, the relationship between humans and objects was highly contextual.

By focusing on only some significant objects, it appears clear that these prehistoric societies did not categorically separate themselves from nonhumans. Humans utilized these artifacts for their own social gains. The reasons behind such a muddled

existence laid in the actual gains that stem from humans trying to control their surrounding world through nonhumans. The act of translation played multiple roles in human societies, especially with those experiencing a shift in their collective spirits. First, the utility of objects laid in their subjectiveness. As human products, material culture emerged from the subjective human understanding of everything that surrounds them. Second, the production of certain artifacts in societies also became an avenue through which social order was memorialized. In producing thousands of *bronzetti* in Sardinia, Nuragic societies did not simply represent what they deemed was worthy. Instead, they enforced what was deemed as culturally ideal. In their connection to humans, objects confirmed the ideological conditions of any given community. In the case of the things discussed in this chapter, their ability to project the ideological superstructure is crucial. Some objects were so important that they were sought as possessions by humans, even if that possession was never complete. In attempting to gain dominance over others, humans had to also control material culture.

Moving from artifacts, there was a certain inevitability to shift focus towards humans and their cultural developments. There are a number of other ways through which humans found themselves in a state of a diminishing collective. In particular, humans found their collective spirit under threat through the manipulated hegemonic discourses. Individuals or groups became the main controllers of the dominant discourse at the detriment of others. After, the sense of a collective functioning together in a balanced social existence was manipulated by some who understood the benefits they could gain through control. Yet a complicating factor masks this reality. In fact, there was a presented sense of a false community in moments of rising controlled dominant

discourses, as will be discussed in Chapter 7. Dominated groups were falsely led to believe that their existence was a stable cooperative while some managed at the same time to promote a sense of community and gain a controlling foothold.

Chapter 7: The Diminishing Collective over Three Millennia

Introduction: The Collective Spirit under Attack!

The word “collective” is complicated by its many colloquial uses. It can describe actions conducted through combined efforts. It can also bring to mind the need for counter-social action striking against social norms (Herrero 2013; Saitta 2007; Wilk 1985). However, the “collective” in this dissertation arose as an ephemeral setting, often referred to as a spirit that waivered as inequality transformed the community at hand. The often assumed antagonism towards those who benefited from inequality was not explicit in Central Mediterranean prehistory. To those concerned with the seeming sense of a social *status quo*, the lack of major cultural overhauls seem disheartening (Femia 1975). Yet in the past such transformative actions were often subtle in their nature. Indeed, an overarching argument in the preceding chapters is that the persistence of instability was countered by attempts to project an image of a stable functioning collective, despite that these societies hinged on control.

In contrast, this chapter examines the state of the collective spirit through burial traditions and associated rituals. These two processes form a core element in all human lives (Nilsson and Tarlow 2013; Alekshin *et al.* 1983; Ucko 1969): we participate in these actions according to our cultural norms. Even in the past these settings required communities to converge in one place and memorialize their own cultural paradigm.

Despite that the death of a loved one brought together a varying number of relatives, the manner in which the deceased was celebrated occurred according to set cultural norms. Within that repeated use of cultural norms lied the state of collectivity.

Funerary settings were, and are, emotional and stressful events (Tarlow 2012; 1999). We have all experienced the unfortunate passing of relatives, friends, and acquaintances. The sentiments felt and the burial of the deceased individual are transient actions that can last long in our memories. During these events we do not have the ability to step back and question the actions that we undertake in these difficult moments. Instead, we are driven by an already set series of expectations that need to be fulfilled and in turn any disagreements or suspicions are momentarily eased.

Across our global history, all human lives have occurred against a setting of time and place. They were situated in this world within their landscape nodes for as long as they were alive. After death, time was transformed and the deceased remained part of the world of the living but underwent a different life at a varying tempo. On the other hand, rituals by the living provided a temporal rhythm, a regularity to human lives (Swenson 2015; Fogelin 2007). Certain times of the year were met with different rituals. However, death provided an unpredictable opposition that was balanced through required rituals that were protracted and repeated over time. The axiomatic opposition of death and rituals made them mutually balanced to their lives.

There is a certain necessity for both burials and rituals to act as idealized social settings (Chapman 2013). In addition, the main reason as to why humans participated in such events lies in the fact that social engagement is expected by our peers. There is also an expectation for individuals to participate because social tensions are (momentarily)

cast side and the conjunctive sensation of multiple individuals coming together is palpable. Indeed, social dissonance has no place when burying our dead. Their burial is idealized and memorialized, allowing the wider group to present a sense of social cooperation and downplayed ambitions. In turn, the accompanying rituals strengthen the social bond through repeated actions.

The Celebrated Dead and the Rituals of the Living

Archaeological studies dealing with death and rituals abound in our discipline (Chapman 2013; Williams 2003; Gillespie 2001; Byrd and Monahan 1995; Barrett 1990). The surfeit of burials and identified rituals found globally ensure this archaeological attention but do not offer a uniform scholarly approach utilized to interpret such settings. Their earlier study tended to tackle the archaeology of death as a sub-section of religious beliefs. By excluding the potential for gaining an insight into cosmological belief systems and understanding the living through burial contexts (Huffman and Murimbika 2003; Bartel 1982; Ucko 1969), the archaeology of death focused on providing demographic extrapolations and defining cultural extents (Lull 2000). These early intellectual contributions (Brown 1971; Ucko 1969) remain crucial to us for their role in fostering an objective approach to death in the archaeological record, which some earlier studies exploited to promote racially-charged explanations (Arnold 2006). Yet this intellectual connection remains marred by analogical interpretations (Brück and Fontijn 2013).

The archaeological study of rituals followed a parallel intellectual evolution and was continuously exemplified by an ever expanding intellectual interest (Insoll 2011;

Fogelin 2007; Renfrew 2007; Insoll 2004; Renfrew 1994; Bell 1992). The study of rituals is a heavy-hitter in archaeology, mainly because it can be interpreted as the repetitive action of belief systems and social order. Across all sub-disciplines of archaeology (even beyond funerary settings), rituals inevitably show up in abundance, perhaps because they are a deep-rooted part of our lives. However, rituals are not all about religion or beliefs. They can act as social mediators, subtle parts of our cultures that speak to the necessity for repeated action across time. There is a comfort to these repeated actions that are carried out within certain parameters at specific times and act as evidence of social cooperation, bonding, and counter-action to potential arising resistance.

By dealing with funerary traditions and their associated rituals in this chapter, there is an obvious inter-play: a juxtaposition between death and life (Parker Pearson 1993). Even in funerary settings the role of rituals is uncompromising in its importance. Without rituals, the burial of a relative or a community member appears bleak or incomplete. However, the rituals conducted in association to burial contexts are not simply connected to the dead, even if carried out in their immediate proximity. They are instead equally tied to the world of the living and their ongoing concerns.

In this chapter, funerary traditions and their rituals are interpreted as being aimed at maintaining predominant hegemonies. In the preceding chapters, the lives of prehistoric communities in the Central Mediterranean were seen as geared towards countering an inevitable instability. All social actions were reacting against the potential for unwanted change, which could unbalance the *status quo*. In contrast, the celebration and memorialization of the death tied the bond of human sociality in a fine balance. The

deceased were buried in selected places that were carved underground or built aboveground. By burying their dead, communities allowed such emotional events to become an important avenue for social bonding and cooperation. In conjunction, rituals tied to funerary contexts acted as parallel mechanisms for promulgating the contemporary social order.

The Buried and Celebrated Dead in the Prehistoric Central Mediterranean

The development of burials and funerary contexts in the Central Mediterranean followed some general trends that provide us with a long-term view into the social transformations between the 4th and 1st millennia BC. Yet a note of caution is warranted at this juncture. It would be wrong to assume a region-wide compliance to some of the trends presented below. In fact, individual or group level choices often contradicted compliance to broader trends (Cazzella 1998). These localized differences perhaps arose from small-scale cultural distinctions within a wider region. Nevertheless, these differences offer an opposition to the existing expectation of well-defined cultural boundaries in Central Mediterranean prehistory.

The post-Neolithic Central Mediterranean in the 4th millennium BC was overtaken by an expanding cultural pluralism. The earlier cultural blocs of Diana, *Vasi a Bocca Quadrata* III, Ripoli, and Chassey-Lagozza cultures in the Central Mediterranean underwent a region-wide process of localized cultural transformations that was countered by changes in distributive networks as seen in Chapter 5. Along with these changes, burial structures and funerary rituals underwent a formalization (Lilliu 1998: 123) as the

earlier deposition of the deceased in natural cavities and caves declined considerably (Skeates 2010b; Skeates 1994; Whitehouse 1992). Instead, rock-cut tombs became common across most of the Central Mediterranean, despite much inter-variability (Cazzella 2000; Whitehouse 1972).

By the 3rd millennium BC, much of the Italian peninsula was characterized by individual underground tombs located in formal necropolises, while other communities experienced a shift in their earlier collective hypogean underworlds in favor of aboveground structures, such as in Sardinia, Corsica, Malta, Pantelleria, northwestern and southeastern Italy. This shift from underground to aboveground burials was tied to a contemporary social concern in assuaging the effects of a collective spirit that was coming under increasing strain, particularly as tensions arose from the distribution of prestige items and an emphasis on “warrior” ideologies. In aboveground burials, communities had to cooperatively construct funerary edifices - be it dolmen, mound, *allée couverte*, and stela complexes - and routinely deposit their deceased in these places. Further, the location of these places was equally significant. Built funerary structures formed a visible part of the natural-human landscape and were located in areas of worth or sometimes of even contestation. In these aboveground structures, the deposition of the dead was a collective enterprise. The burial of individuals were events that brought together communities to bury their dead and participate in necessary funerary rituals.

Toward the end of the 2nd millennium BC, the aboveground funerary monuments found in the Central Mediterranean were seen as less significant by its contemporaries. Despite the notable exception of Sardinia and an enduring tumuli tradition in Adriatic

central Italy, the burial of the dead returned underground. The formation of large necropolises and individual burials in northern Italy was countered by the deposition of family groups in collective burials in southern Italy. In the case of the former, ties to family lineages were exhibited in the spatial association of single burials across cemeteries. However, the beginning of the 1st millennium BC brought about the cremation of the dead deposited in widely replicated urns and only accompanied by a few select objects. In turn, the Tyrrhenian central Italian coastline and hinterland's growing agglomeration of settlements on the mainland (Pacciarelli 2000). The formation of large settlements by the 8th century BC, like Tarquinia, Vulci, and Caere, were surrounded by large mound burials, part of the Etruscan culture. Outside of these arising urban settlements, the incoming movements of Phoenician groups in Sardinia, western Sicily, and the Maltese Islands had a profound effect on the burial customs along with the established Greek colonies in southern Italy and eastern Sicily.

Hypogean Underworlds and Bloodied Walls in the 4th millennium BC

The cultural pluralism in the Central Mediterranean 4th millennium BC was quite significant. The earlier broad connectivity seen in obsidian and greenstone distribution had largely ended by the mid-4th millennium BC, along with the shift from broad cultural blocs to smaller inter-connected cultural units. In relation to these wider transformations, burial customs experienced a complex shift in social norms. Therefore, the imagined shift to a broadly found 4th-millennium BC underground rock-cut tombs tradition is both right and wrong, particularly since there was a broad distribution of underground rock-cut tombs in the Central Mediterranean. However, this interpretation also ignores the strong localized character of burial customs found in this region in association to underground

rock-cut tombs (Cazzella 1998), as I further argue below. At the least, the general shift towards hypogean underworlds, as of the 4th millennium BC, provided numerous communities with a novel opportunity to bury their dead in houses of their own. This shift to formalized hypogean underworlds was in stark distinction from its immediate predecessors.

Prior to the 4th millennium BC, burials in mainland Italy were largely located in caves or within settlement precincts, suggesting an uneasy relationship between the dead and the living during this time period, marked by considerable variability (Grifoni Cremonesi 1994; Skeates 1994; Whitehouse 1992). In caves, like Grotta Continenza situated in the Abruzzo Apennine mountains, primary inhumations were located in places that were routinely re-used. To the south, at Grotta Scaloria in Puglia, the dead were disarticulated and then episodically buried after being defleshed (Robb *et al.* 2015: 49) (**Figure 51**). At settlements, like Passo di Corvo in Puglia's Tavoliere Plain, single inhumations were kept separate from the other dead. Their deposition in close proximity to domestic settings can be interpreted as a quick social resolution in reaction to the suddenness of death (Cazzella 1998). Instead of prolonging and formalizing the burial of an individual, Neolithic communities at Passo di Corvo resolved these events through the rapid deposition of their dead.

Nevertheless, even during the 4th millennium BC Late Neolithic funerary rituals persisted (Leighton 1999; Cazzella 2000). In Sicily the establishment of proper burial grounds can be seen at Ribera, Roccazzo, and other Conca d'Oro sites that were often composed of thirty to one hundred tombs per site. However, the ideological transformation from earlier funerary rites was not a straightforward progression. In

Roccazzo, several of the earlier tomb phases were made up of single inhumations placed in supine or crouched position. Later burials were instead composed of several individuals who were added to these rock-cut tombs with the placement of earlier skeletal remains towards the back. Therefore, the change in burial rites should rather be understood as a gradual social transformation. Individualized burials were replaced by collective burials that were increasingly accompanied by rituals.

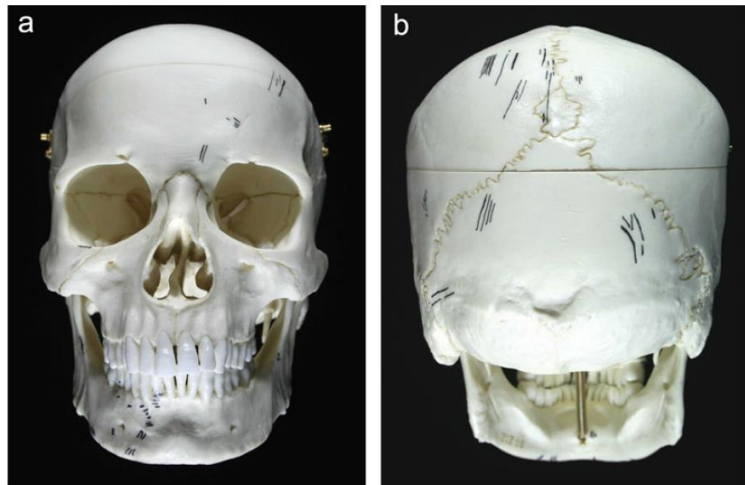


Figure 51: A view of the overall distribution of cut-marks identified on crania at Grotta Scaloria (after Robb *et al.* 2015: 50).

In Chapter 6 the western Sicilian site of Piano Vento and two Maltese Żebbuġ phase sites featured in light of their unique portable objects. The rock-cut tombs at these sites also illustrated an additional point: the contemporary balance found in this region between commonalities (the use of rock-cut tombs) and localized distinctions (the use of different hand-held figurines). These sites also provide useful insights into the state of the collective spirit. At these sites, vertical shafts provided access into a number of side-chambers (**Figure 52**). The Maltese Żebbuġ period sites of Żebbuġ and Xaghra Circle both included two shafts with side-chambers and suggest dispersed burial sites for

distinct families rather than formalized burial sites. In contrast, at Piano Vento eleven tomb shafts reflected a similar prolonged use in connection to a modest settlement. The deposition of the deceased required the re-opening of tomb shafts that were then filled by burnt animal bones and broken pottery (Leighton 1999; Castellana 1995). In most of these instances, the bones of the earlier deceased were pushed towards the back or even relocated to an adjoining sub-chamber that served as an ossuary. On the other hand, the scattered and incomplete skeletal remains at the Xaghra Circle Żebbuġ tombs suggest that earlier buried bodies were perhaps even removed from the tombs (**Figure 53**). The relocation of earlier remains highlights to us that the out-of-sight transformation from body to bones was a noted event. Perhaps, the individual that the living knew was now seen as having moved on to another state (van Gennep 1960) but still doused in red and yellow ochre (Trump 2002: 45; Leighton 1999: 96).

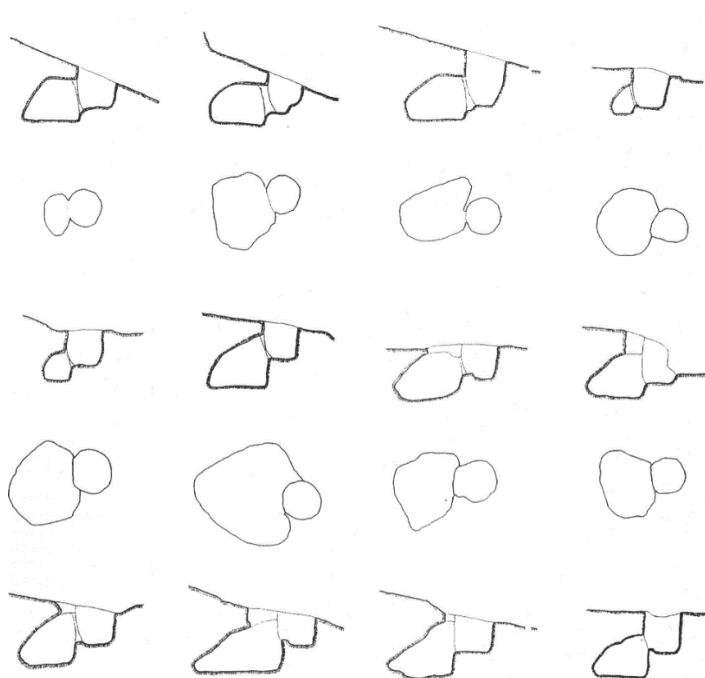


Figure 52: A selection of Piano Vento rock-cut tomb sections and plans (after Castellana 1995: 44).

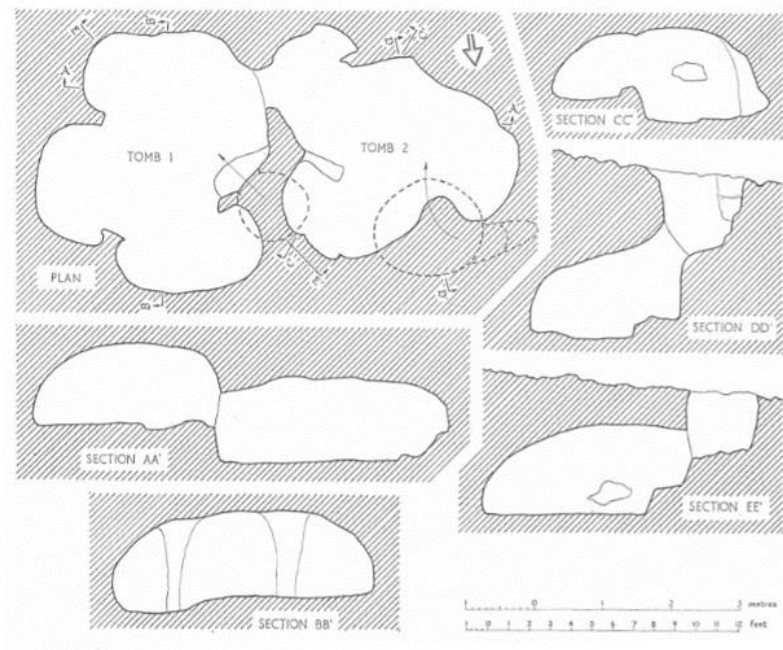


Figure 53: A Żebbuġ phase tomb plan and section (after Evans 1971: Plan 25).

In contrast, Sardinian rock-cut tombs show a marked indigenous character in their hypogean funerary contexts (Contu 1994: 313). Not only so, but the origin of rock-cut tombs in Sardinia actually began earlier than most of the Central Mediterranean during the Bonu Ighinu period around 5,800-3,800 BC cal. at sites like Cùccuru S'Arriu. At this site, over thirty burials were composed of single inhumations that were sometimes accompanied by small figurines depicting over-sized individuals (**Figure 54**), which already featured in Chapter 6. During the following Ozieri period, 3,800-2,900 BC cal., Sardinia's distinct burial traditions continued through the proliferation of the *domus de janas* ("fairy houses" in local folklore). These burials can be further sub-divided geographically by diverse burial traditions within Sardinia itself and across its multiple

ecological zones. However, the most marked distinction can be found in the complete absence of the *domus de janas* in the north-eastern portion of Sardinia, known as the Gallura region.

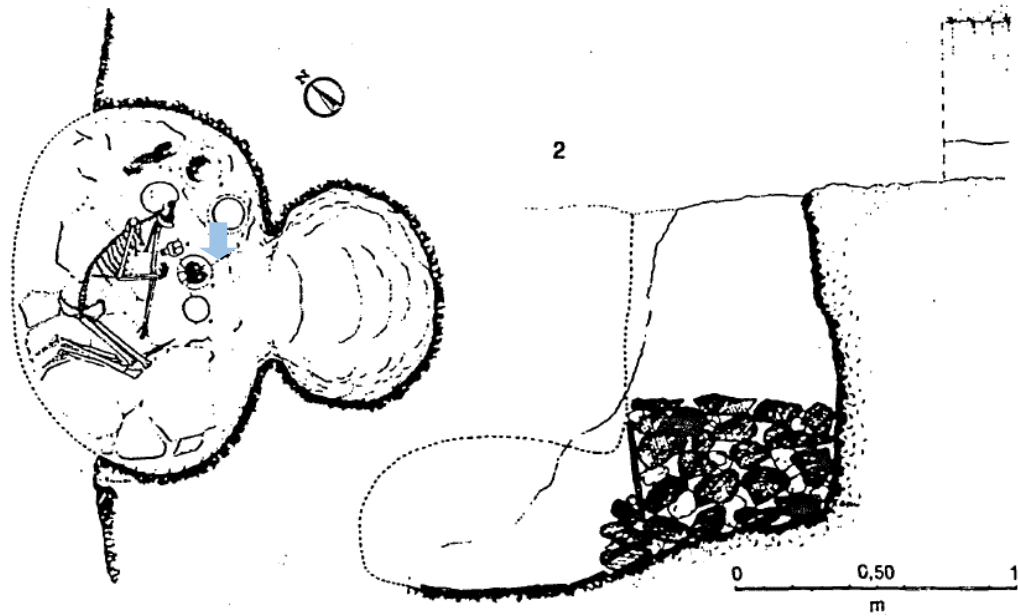


Figure 54: An inhumation found at Cùccuru S'Arriu tombs along with a Bonu Ighinu statue (indicated by a blue arrow) (after Contu 2000: 339).

In part, insularity within islands seems like a counter-intuitive claim, particularly since islands are often interpreted as broadly insular in their cultural adaptations (Dawson 2014; Patton 1996; Evans 1977; 1973). Yet the sheer size of Sardinia, a *quasi*-continent, is such that insularity within itself is a very real possibility. For Sardinia insularity within itself did not mean an isolation from outside. At Gallura we see quite the opposite as this region was well-tied to Corsica but not to the rest of Sardinia. Lilliu (1998) described such unexpected connections as a by-product of “cultural islands” (Eriksen 1993), which refers to places connected to nearby regions but culturally circumscribed.



Figure 55: The mountainous Gallura landscape, view facing north.

The Gallura is a largely mountainous landscape (**Figure 55**) within sight and walking distance from the Strait of Bonifacio. Inevitably, this insularity from the rest of Sardinia had a significant effect on humans living in this region as its burial traditions show an uncanny resemblance to Corsican aboveground burial structures, who never buried their dead in underground hypogea. At Corsican sites like Monte Revincu (Leandri and Gilabert 2012), Tivulaghju (Tramoni *et al.* 2007), and Poghjaredda (de Lanfranchi and Costa 2000) the earliest period of burials in aboveground structures emerged even earlier than Sardinia in the 4th millennium BC (**Figure 56**) (Lilliu 1998: 147).

These understudied funerary contexts were characterized by the placement of single burials within cists and were surrounded by a series of stone circles. In Gallura, burial counterparts of these monuments can be found at Li Muri (Arzachena). At the site of Li Muri, at least four concentric circles included central burials that were originally

placed within cist graves (Guilaine 2011: 38; 2003: 203) (**Figure 57**). This distinct burial tradition within Sardinia deviated from the collective deposition of individuals, as seen across most of the contemporary Central Mediterranean. Rather, in Corsica, Gallura, and in southern France (Guilaine 2003: 206), the deceased were placed in individual cists and memorialized through the erection of stone circles.

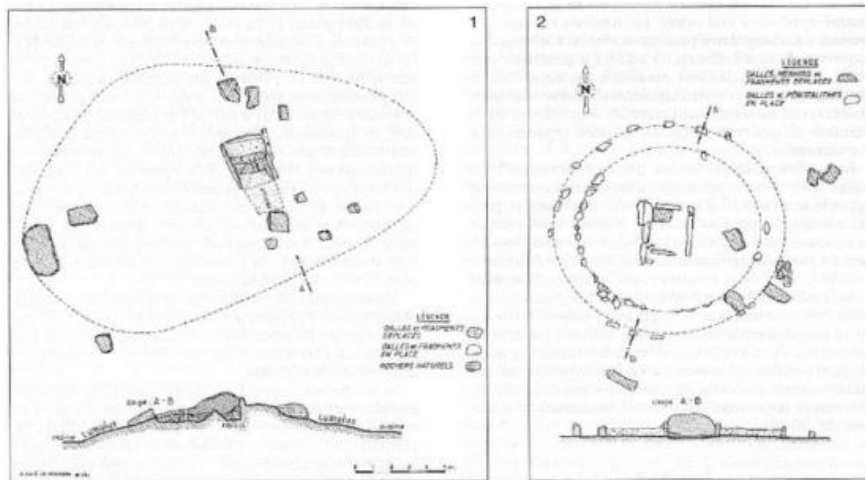


Figure 56: Plans of the Tivulaghju Corsican megalithic circles A (left) and B (right) (after Tramoni *et al.* 2007: 249)



Figure 57: A view of the Li Muri stone circles (taken from http://www.visitarelasardegna.com/Arzachena_parco_archeologico-ENG.htm)

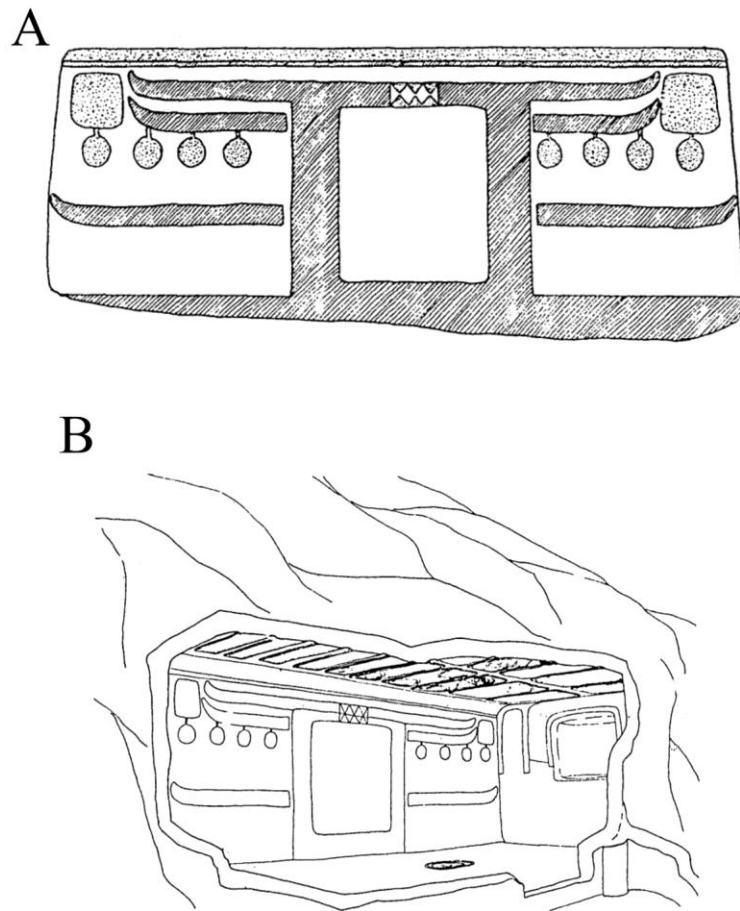


Figure 58: The Sant'Andrea Priu “false door” (A) and the reconstructed tomb of Mandra Antine (B) (after Contu 2000: 350, 353)

In the rest of Sardinia, *domus de janas* can be found clustered in geological areas characterized by either calcareous or sandstone bedrock (Contu 1994: 317). Access into these tombs included either the placement of doorways in vertical rock-faces, vertical shafts, or narrow corridors provided with carved stairs. At Ànghelu Rùiu the latter two types have been found. Situated 9 km from the sea and crossed by the Rio Filibertu, this burial ground is one of fifty-two sites across Sardinia that included a cluster of over seven tombs, while most tombs are found in smaller clusters at 625 sites (Contu 1994: 316). At Ànghelu Rùiu thirty-eight tombs are found in two clusters of seven and thirty-one tombs,

respectively. In particular, the use of red ochre extended to the painting of sculpted bull horns, pillars, and even false doors.

The display of bulls and horns are often connected by scholars to fertility cults in the prehistoric Mediterranean (Tanda 2000), but perhaps, the minor presence of female characteristics (ex: geometric spirals at Montessu-Santadi) was equally important (Contu 2008b: 139-140). “False doors” found in these tombs could either represent the belief in a next life or else suggest an equivalency made between the house lived in and the one in which the deceased was buried. In over seventy examples of house reproductions found in *domus de janas*, Tomb I at Sant’Andrea Priu is the best preserved example. A central room was sculpted in the form of the inside of a hut with two supporting pillars, a tapering roof, and side chambers for burials (**Figure 58**) (Contu 2008b). Aboveground structures were replicated into an underground settings in the Sardinian 4th and 3rd millennia BC. Sardinian communities exhibited an intent to maintain a sense of collectivity (Lilliu 2012: 357) through both required labor and collective burials. The spatial concentrations of the *domus de janas* indicate a familial concern. The living prepared the burial for their dead in set places associated to their dispersed settlement sites. In turn, the deceased were hosted within their own abodes, laying under the gaze of male and female regenerative forces (Lilliu 2012: 357) and left to their own devices until further deaths required the house of the dead to be re-opened.

Standing Stones and Receding Underworlds emerging in the 3rd millennium BC

By the end of the 4th millennium BC, Sardinia was on the verge of expanding tombs aboveground, as was already well-established in Corsica and southern France. Yet hypogean tombs continued to be found across most of central and southern Italy along

with the expansion of rock-cut tombs in Sicily and the Maltese Islands. The diffusion of Bell Beaker ceramics and other European objects in this period brought the placement of stelae and menhirs into this region at a time when warrior ideologies had become particularly accentuated.

These burial structures are found variably across the European continent (Robb 2009: 169) and in four distinct parts of the Central Mediterranean: Corsica and Sardinia, the Lunigiana area in north-western Italy, the Valcamonica and Valtellina valleys in northern Italy, and in the Aosta region of Saint-Martin-De-Corléans on the border of Switzerland and Italy. Aside from these well-defined traditions, a lesser known stela tradition was also found in the Apulian Bovino site and yielded over thirty stela fragments in seemingly cultural isolation at Castelluccio dei Sauri in the Apulian Appennine foothills.

Corsican and Sardinian stelae were erected in association with megalithic ritual places, which was part of a funerary transition already described above. Overall, the *domus de janas* continued to play a significant role in late 4th- and 3rd-millennia BC Sardinia, particularly as re-utilized burial spaces, while megalithic aboveground burial structures experienced an efflorescence. Lilliu (1998: 145-6) aptly described this change as a sign of megalithism slowly extinguishing the light of hypogean spaces and rites in favor of an externalization of ancestral cults. The transformations in Sardinia were made up of a wide array of localized funerary structures that had little in common with each other except for their replication of subterranean spaces in aboveground form. For instance, Tomb II at Pranu Muttedu exemplifies this transition between 3,200-2,800 uncal. BC (Atzeni and Cocco 1989) (**Figure 59**). Situated on a highland plateau, Tomb II

is the best preserved structure amidst other circular tumuli, menhirs, and *domus de janas*. Large sandstone megaliths formed the entrance and parts of the internal burial space that replicated a *domus de janas* entryway followed by an antechamber and a second antechamber (Contu 2008b: 155). This burial chamber was originally covered by a rubble tumulus, which extended up to 11 m at its furthest diameter and included the placement of a menhir at the topmost level. The tomb faced a wide gathering area and appeared to be the central focus of this extended burial site.

This tomb at Pranu Muttetu outlines a number of wider transformations at this time. First, the earlier insularity of Gallura-Corsican burial structures moved through the central highlands of Sardinia and inspired a local tradition that inter-mingled *domus de janas* with aboveground structures. Second, the use of menhirs alignments and large open spaces yield to us a sense of ritual aggregation being encouraged at such sites. Finally, the close relation between underground and aboveground burial structures illustrates a continued funerary function for this site and its communities, despite a considerable change in the burial customs.

Over the 3rd millennium BC, the general paucity of settlement evidence is interpreted in wider Sardinia as a turn to pastoral lifeways (Lilliu 2012; Contu 2008b: 166). In such social settings, large monuments offered benefits to moving pastoral communities such as memorialization and visual communicators. Dolmens in Sardinia and Corsica were situated at higher elevations within the vicinity of valleys and were probably tied to human movements in these landscapes (Cicilloni 2009; 2007). The grandiose dolmen of Sa Coveccada or the clustered dolmens at Luras (**Figure 60**) had little in common with the exception of their physical settings and general construction

techniques (Guilaine 2011: 46). Otherwise, the overall size of these places were tied to local choices and preferences that were perhaps related to the desired effect created by these structures in the wider landscape. Sa Coveccada stands higher (4.75 m) than most Sardinian dolmens (averaging 1.75 – 2 m) and its capping stone weighs 27 tons (Contu 2008b: 162), which is actually smaller than most European mainland counterparts (Guilaine 2003: 263; Joussaume 1988), standing on barren bedrock (**Figure 61**) that is reminiscent of a pastoral landscape.

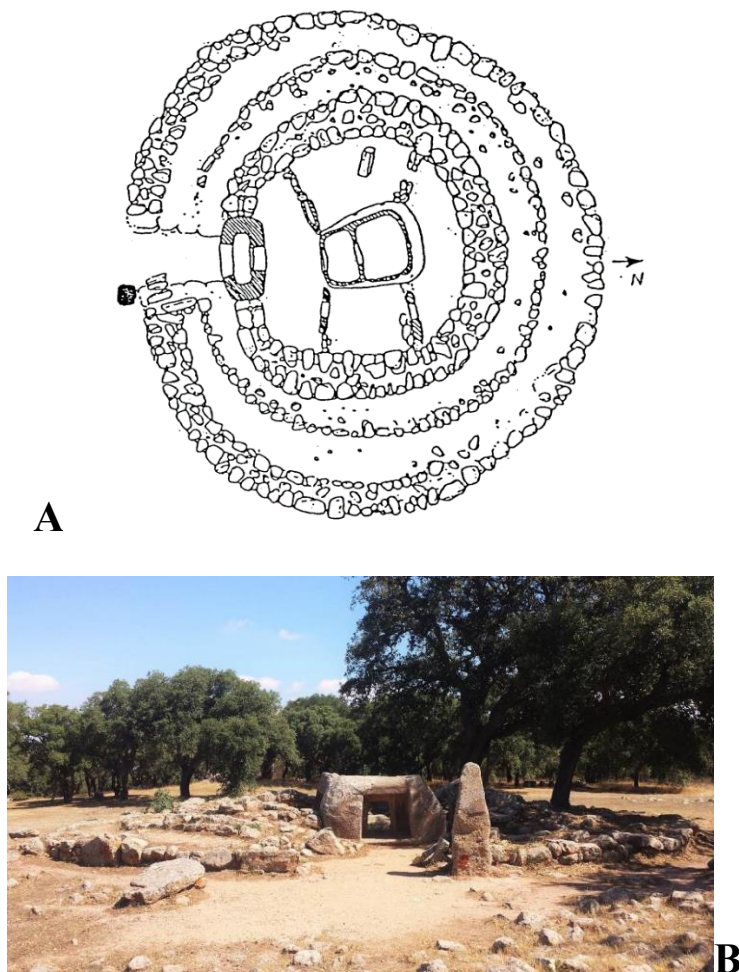


Figure 59: The Pranu Muttedu megalithic tomb shown in plan (A) (after Contu 2000: 357) and a view of the façade (B).

In Corsica and Sardinia, menhirs and stelae were often found in connection or in immediate alignment with other structures. As will be seen in Chapter 8, the monumental ritual altar of Monte d'Accoddi combined both menhirs and stelae to a ritual monumental context. In the later *allée couverte* burials (galley graves), menhirs continued to play a role in Sardinian archaeology as they were re-integrated within the later nuragic culture and its burials.



Figure 60: One of the Luras dolmens seen in profile view.



Figure 61: The Sa Coveccada dolmen (blue arrow) shown in its landscape context facing the south.

The north Italian flourishing of stelae traditions occurred within a condensed 300 km radius yet showed separate artistic traditions in Lunigiana, Valcamonica, and Aosta (Robb 2008: 344; Guilaine 2003: 324). Lunigiana (Anati 1981) and Aosta (Pedrotti 1995) stelae followed some general artistic tendencies with other traditions in the European continent as well as Sardinian stelae found in the central highland Laconi region. These stelae rendered a schematic depiction of the human form along with decorative embellishments, which transformed the human body into a recognizable form. This schematization seen in stelae depictions of the human body was part of a social attempt at reducing difference while highlighting accomplishments and ensuring memorialization (Robb 2008: 343). The Lunigiana stelae were situated in groups or alignments that were seemingly disconnected from funerary remains. Instead, their placement was situated along potential pathways or transit routes (Ambrosi and Mannoni 1972: 248). In contrast,

the Val d'Aosta examples were erected in alignments in front of megalithic burial chambers, a pattern also seen in Swiss Sion. In this northern Italian setting of stelae, Valcamonica stood out for its localized originality with an unclear connection to its Val d'Aosta counterparts (Pedrotti and Steiner 2014: 124).

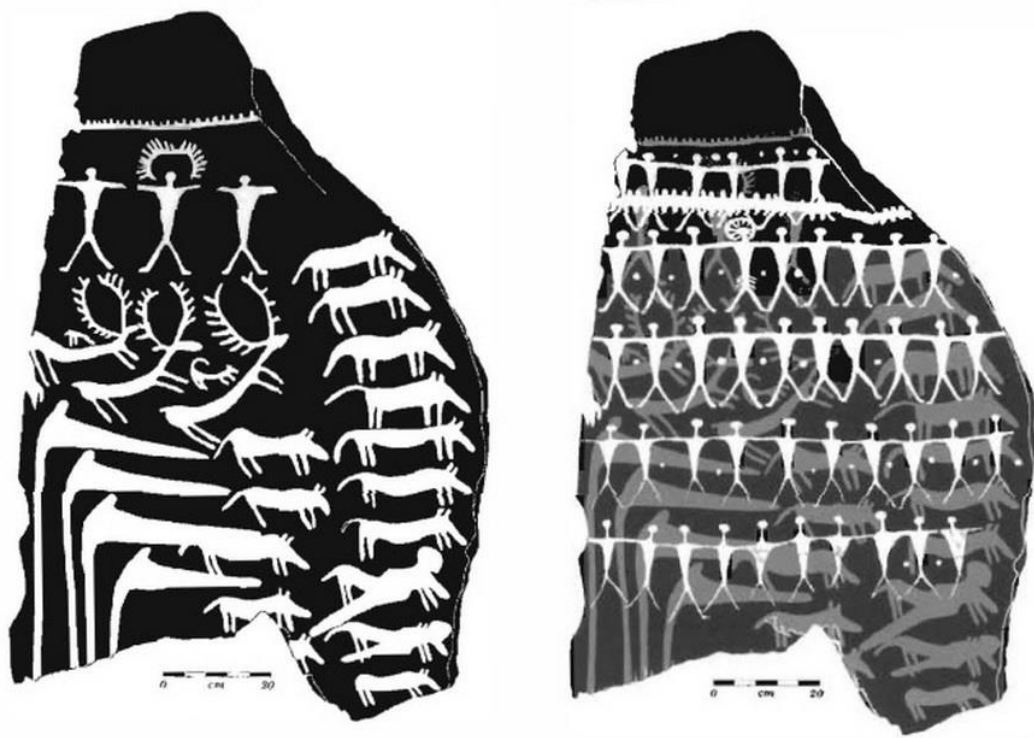


Figure 62: The multi-phased Masso di Cemmo 3 with the early Neolithic figures (left) overlain by the sun-figure surrounded by individuals.

Over 300,000 figures have been discovered since the 1930s within the Valcamonica and Valtellina Alpine valleys (Fossati 2001: 94; Anati 1994). In these valleys, the widely found sandstone and schist made for ideal artistic mediums. Valcamonica and Valtellina experienced a prolonged history of rock-carving, menhirs, and situated stelae that began around the 5th millennium BC, experienced a particular expansion by the 4th and 3rd millennia BC, and continued up to the 12th and 9th centuries

BC. The four artistic styles, outlined by Anati (1994), were made up of discernible differences in their make-up and ideological messaging. The earliest tradition was connected to agricultural land divisions tied to the Neolithic settlement expansion into northern Italy. These valleys then became populated by stelae and menhirs that were placed in association to each other or even in alignments in the 4th and 3rd millennia BC. The artistic tradition for this period included perhaps one of the earliest anthropomorphized divinities and was characterized by an individual crowned by a solar circle, associated with contemporary weapons and surrounded by several registers of individuals (**Figure 62**).

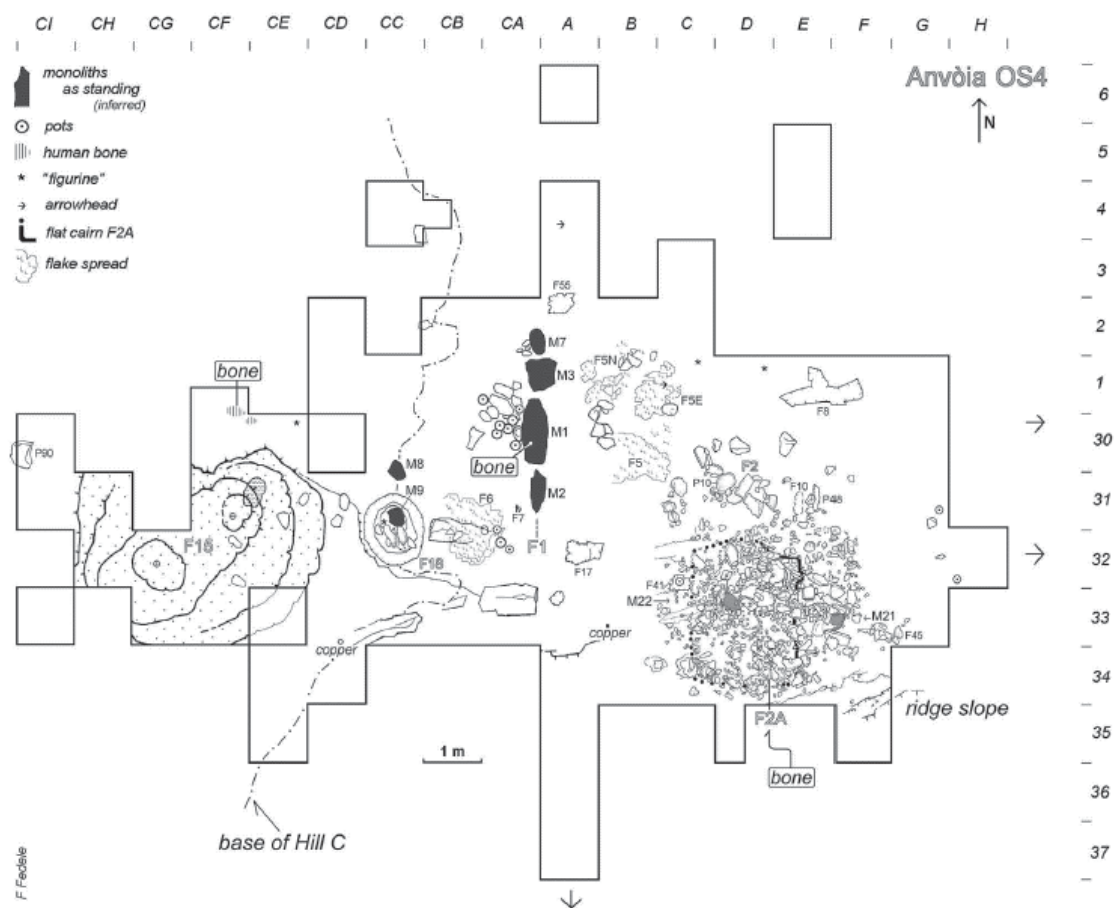


Figure 63: The Anvoia site with a stelae alignment and cairn (after Fedele 2008: 62)



Figure 64: Remedello daggers shown on the Bagnolo I statue-menhir along with a solar disc, which is characteristic of 3rd millennium BC Valcamonica iconography (after Anati 1994: 126)

Yet up until recently these sites were interpreted as dispersed ritual places tied to the seasonal aggregation of family groups in intimate locales. However, the excavations at Anvòia a Ossimo, dated to 2,800-2,400 cal. BC (Fedele 1994: 140), have confirmed the funerary association between stelae alignments and the ritualized secondary deposition of human bones (Fedele and Fossati 2012: 192) (**Figure 63**), as already seen in Chapter 6. These excavations highlight the transient nature of this place as most components that made up Anvòia a Ossimo were brought in episodically, including the stelae, human bones, and selected stones. Within these Alpine valleys we have little proof of any formalized burial structures, which is in sharp contrast with the nearby densely populated Po River plain.

Despite the different funerary traditions, the low-lying Po River plain communities and their western mountainous counterparts held an iconographic connection: the depiction and use of Remedello daggers (**Figure 64**) (Pedrotti 2004). These copper implements had a broad distribution across the contemporary Italian mainland and provide us with a relative correlation between iconographic depictions in disparate parts of Italy and these diagnostic artifacts. The Remedello Sotto site is a sizeable necropolis that was dated to two distinct moments in 3,400-2,500 cal. BC and 2,500-2,200 BC and is now interpreted as the main burial site for a number of nearby settlements. Extending across 5,000 m², Remedello Sotto potentially included up to 300 tombs based on an excavated sample of 119 burials (De Marinis 2013: 305). These Paduan burials found themselves in contrast with most of the Central Mediterranean, which around this time focused on collective burial within structures. Rather, the Remedello Sotto burials were single pit tombs that connected these communities to cross-Alpine *Schnurkeramik* cultures found in Central-Northern Europe. In contrast, to the west of Remedello, the aforementioned Valcamonica and stelae tradition has only rarely been associated to burials (Fedele and Fossati 2012; Fedele 1994), while to the north in the Saint Martin-Val d'Aosta area collective burials were found housed within megalithic burial chambers (Robb 2008: 171). In this state of cultural pluralism, trans-cultural connectivity linked distinct cultural units together. For instance, a number of burials at Remedello Sotto were placed with the upper body in a supine position while the head and bent legs were turned towards the left, a position known *Rückenhocker* and broadly found across the European continent (De Marinis 2013: 310). However, this body positioning

was also found in the southern Italian Gaudio culture (Bailo Modesti and Salerno 1998) as well as in contemporary Carpathian basin burials.

A key difference between this northern Italian community and the remainder of the Central Mediterranean lied in the individualization of burials (De Marinis 2013: 308). In particular, there was a disparity between the number of deceased that had artifacts accompanying them and those that had none at all. Out of the 119 excavated tombs, fifty-nine burials had an accompanying artifact assemblage, which mainly consisted of arrowheads, daggers, or axes (De Marinis 2013: 333). For those individuals with weapons, there appeared to be a distinction made between objects that were valued more and the associated social status of the deceased. Therefore, one hundred and thirty-three arrowheads were found in twenty-nine tombs, while twenty-five daggers hailed from twenty two tombs. These artefactual distinctions provided an insight into the role of objects as markers of an incipient social stratigraphy (Pedrotti 2004: 115) which became especially marked by the end of the 2nd millennium BC across Italy.

In this setting of individualization there were two discernible social statements being made about the state of the Remedello area collective spirit. First, cemeteries were established as separate spaces and utilized by a number of nearby settlements. Second, the localized cultural development of the Paduan Plain leaned towards visualizing the status of individuals. We can only recognize subtle differences in burial assemblages in the archaeological record but to those burying their dead certain grave goods would have marked certain individuals as worthy. In this cultural setting, collectivity was not extinguished. Rather, it became transformed. The Remedello Sotto communities focused on the demarcation of the lived in landscape and separated themselves from their places

of burial and only returned to these places to bury their dead. Their social distinction was not lost in the transition from living to dead. Therefore, only some individuals were accompanied by status markers in their death. Nevertheless, the pressures on their collective spirit were also recognizable as the difference between someone possessing an axe and someone buried with an arrowhead immortalized their distinction, while the need for everyone to converge onto one cemetery promoted a false sense of collectivity.

The well-known burial traditions of northern Italy are contrasted by the lesser known burial traditions in the Tyrrhenian central Italian communities for at least three reasons. First, moving from the north towards the south, the Lazio area flattens down to marshy plains towards Campania and is flanked by the Apennine Mountain ranges and fed by rivers. Second, Neolithic burial traditions continued to influence their 3rd-millennium BC successors. Third, until recently the archaeological study of the Lazio region suffered from an unknown interaction between the Gaudio and Rinaldone cultures, which overlapped somewhere in the southern limits of the Lazio.

Broad surveys in this region now indicate that the meeting point for these two cultures occurred at the Liri River. To the south of the Liri Rivier, the Gaudio culture extended all the way into Campania and Calabria, while the Rinaldone culture spanned through the Tyrrhenian central Italian communities to the north (**Figure 65**) (Carboni 2002: 235). Yet this physical extension remains seen as an arbitrary distinction, particularly since central Italian communities appropriated cultural traditions from both the Rinaldone and Gaudio cultures. Around the 2nd half of the 3rd millennium BC, the burials in the Lazio area exhibited a variability in the funerary contexts utilized and included burials in natural cavities, artificial grottoes, cist-lined pit graves, and less

present tombs with shafts (Carboni 2002: 250). Amidst this burial structure variety, even funerary rituals offered a certain diversity. For instance, at Casale del Dolce the bodies were placed in supine position and were stacked on earlier remains without re-positioning them. On the other hand, some burial sites north of the Tiber Rivers were made up of single inhumations, while the southern Lazio burials were always collective without little disturbance of earlier bodies (Carboni 2002: 254). Despite a general lack of distinction between sex or age, cultural differences indicated overlap and diverse traditions, perhaps matched by fluid population borders. The burials of sacrificed dogs was attested across this entire region, but in the southern extents of Italy dogs were buried at the feet of the deceased. On the other hand, in the Rinaldone cultural extents, dogs were deposited outside of the tomb entrance (Carboni 2002: 256) perhaps as guardians to the dead.

Unlike most of contemporary burial traditions, the Lazio region necropolises experienced rather short use-lives and were never quite formalized like their northern counterparts. Rather, the Lazio region played a dual role. First, its physical location led it to act as important node in the contemporary web of communications (Carboni 2002: 288). Second, it also maintained a cultural fluidity and lacked any well-established geographic extant, a trend that emerged once again in the 1st millennium BC. The Bell Beaker influx that eventually spread across the Tyrrhenian basin also reversed the south to north cultural movement and played a considerable role in influencing the Gaudio culture.

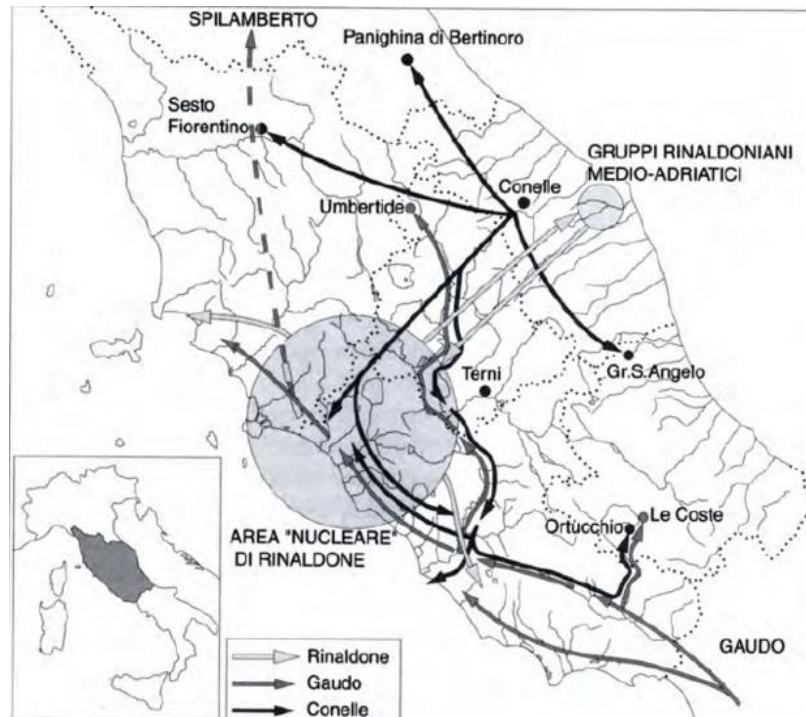


Figure 65: The proposed cultural limits of the Gaudio and Rinaldone cultures (after Carboni 2008: 288)



Figure 66: One of the stelae found at the Apulian Castelluccio dei Sauri site (taken from http://www.comune.castellucciodeisauri.fg.it/cms/cms_art.php?idart=74)

Across the Apennines, the Apulian Adriatic coastline provide us with some tantalizing questions regarding the funerary traditions of this region. The Laterza culture stands in stark contrast to the earlier Neolithic dense population of the Tavoliere plain, which contracted considerably by the 4th and 3rd millennia BC. Around the 3rd millennium BC, funerary sites were the best indicators for continued human occupation in this region. At the necropolis of Laterza, the artificial grottoes were repeatedly utilized with up to 100 individuals in Tomb III. The funerary assemblage was made up of a meager collection of stone tool weaponry and ceramics. However, the continued deposition of individuals leaves us with an incomplete understanding of the potential role between individuals and social status which was represented.

Over thirty stelae were found in the Bovino area at the eastern extremity of the Apulian Apennines, known as the Monti Dauni (**Figure 66**). These stelae were loosely connected in their iconographic medium to the northern traditions found in mainland Italy, Corsica, and Sardinia, but they were seemingly isolated by themselves in southern Italy. The stelae group were located in the Valle di Bovino that tied the Adriatic coastline to the western Campanian plains through the Apennine Mountains (Tunzi Sisto 1989: 113). As in the case of some stelae traditions, no human burials were found during excavations. However, the grouping of these stelae was tied to the surrounding natural and built landscape. Indeed, a dolmen stood in the vicinity of these stelae, which potentially could have stood as special beings that were neither living nor dead but connected to both of these worlds.

The externalization of mortuary contexts was variable across the Central Mediterranean as the 3rd millennium BC remained a world connected but highly localized

in its cultural developments. Perhaps no other cultural developments experienced a more divergent evolution than Temple Period Malta between the mid-4th and 3rd millennia BC. The earlier Żebbuġ rock-cut tombs shared a general familiarity to their Sicilian contemporaries, but the establishment of monumental edifices marked the archipelago's distinct insular social conception. These monuments, which will feature in Chapter 8, are colloquially dubbed as “temples” in light of their ritual and cultic purposes. However, these monuments also acted as centers of the living opposed by centers of the dead (**Figure 67**). In these mortuary complexes, the aboveground megalithic monumentality was replicated underground in the architectonic designs carved out of rock. Yet these mortuary complexes emerged from their rock-cut tomb predecessors. Hal-Saflieni and Xaghra Circle, the two main monumental hypogea, maintained the collective burial of the dead, but the deceased found themselves in an intensely ritual setting. In creating these places, the Maltese prehistoric communities showed a connection to their earlier traditions situating these hypogea in sites previously utilized in the 5th and 4th millennia BC for burials. The monumentalized hypogea reflected another additional transformation: an aboveground ceremonial area that was perhaps tied to routes connecting megalithic structures to these burial sites (Grima *et al.* 2009). These elements of ritual aggregation, collective burials, and performance strike a somewhat comparable resemblance to Sardinia's own focus on utilizing funerary monuments to gather communities together even in death.

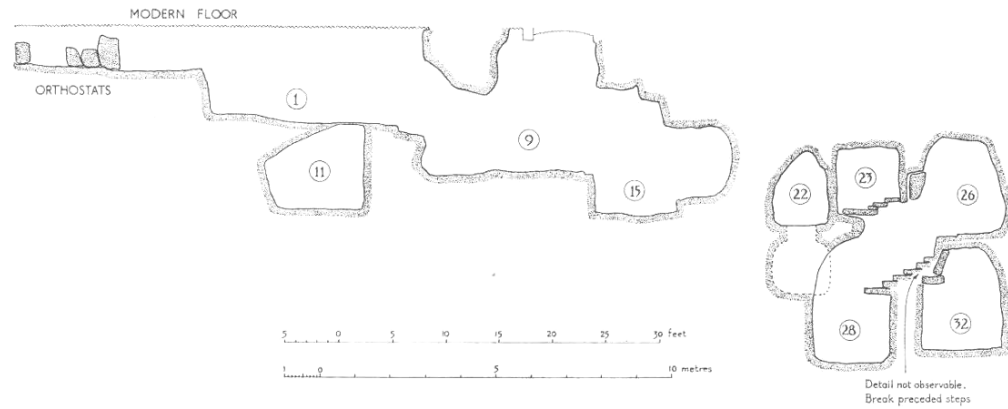


Figure 67: A profile of the hypogeum at Hal-Saflieni (after Evans 1971: plan 14A).

However, the collective nature and architectural feat of Maltese hypogea has caught most attention in archaeological sources at the detriment of alternate interpretations of the data at hand. The impressive labor commitments expended at Hal-Saflieni and Xagħra Circle lead us to assume their central role in contemporary funerary practices, but were they the only burials at the time? The simple answer is no. At Xemxija, earlier Żebbuġ period rock-cut tombs continued to be utilized well into the 3rd millennium BC (Evans 1971: 112). In at least another instance, a rock-cut tomb contemporary and close to the Xagħra Circle was recently found during construction (A. Pace personal communication). The Hal-Saflieni and Xagħra Circle hosted part of the communities who lived in the Maltese Islands and who were perhaps connected to the restricted access experienced in the aboveground monuments. Collective burials did not equate an equal access for all individuals. Access into these underground worlds was mystified, tied to the contemporary emphasis on ritualism in an island world that chose to accentuate its difference and insularity (Robb 2001). The use of red ochre to decorate the Hal-Saflieni roofs and the repetitive recovery of masterful figurines illustrate the great

pains through which a millennia-long intense ritualism projected an ambiguous social order. On the one hand, the deceased were not being placed in single distinction. Instead, they were amassed in selected spaces collectively. Yet the aboveground and underground monuments were built through cooperative labor but access into these structures was controlled. The continued use of some rock-cut tombs beyond these two main hypogea, stripped of all decorative elements and quite simple in their assemblages, presents us with a glimpse of social inequality. Despite the lengths through which Temple Period Malta presented itself as a bonded and cooperative community, not everyone stood in the same social regard.

The funerary customs of the 3rd-millennium BC Central Mediterranean were characterized by a desire to aggregate communities to funerary sites. Across this entire region, the living began to participate in routine rituals associated to the memory of the dead, which was also adjoined by the expanding construction of aboveground sites that were meant to be seen and remembered. This need to remember the dead and their connection to the living suggests that the collective spirit at this time was focused on stressing a long-term stability. There was no place for social tensions at such aggregations, and instead, the social message emphasized at this sites was a false sense of collectivity, which was furthered in the 2nd millennium BC.

A 2nd millennium BC Externalization of Death

The externalization of death in aboveground monuments was found predominantly across the Central Mediterranean by the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC. Megalithism and other construction types displayed the contemporary social transformations by building upon the preceding shifts seen in the collective spirit. The

latter experienced a false imaging, as social competition and power struggles were paralleled by emphasized displays of collective behavior. Burial traditions played a considerable role in promoting this social duality, and by the 2nd millennium BC the Central Mediterranean burials shifted from underground (unseen but known to some) to aboveground (seen and built by many but accessed by only some) burials. In their collectivity, burials played a role in reducing social tensions and maintained a visual presence in the world of the living.

Turning once again to Malta, the end of the Temple Period remains stuck between polarized interpretations that oscillate between suggestions of catastrophic collapse (Malone and Stoddart 2013) or cultural continuity (Recchia and Cazzella 2012). Either way, the end of the 3rd millennium BC and beginning of the 2nd millennium BC, experienced a funerary transformation. The aboveground megalithic monument of Tarxien hosted a cremation cemetery in the southernmost megalithic complex. Cremated individuals were accompanied by an array of artifacts including ostrich eggshell beads, beads made out of glass paste and/or fish vertebrae, miniaturized ceramic containers, stylized ceramic figurines, and some metal implements. While neighboring Sicily had already experienced its fascination with metal tools and weapons, the Maltese Islands only reignited its cultural association to the Central Mediterranean at this point (Tanasi and Vella 2015, Copat *et al.* 2010; Cazzella *et al.* 2007; Brea 1976). More importantly, the funerary tradition at this juncture was at odds with its Temple Period predecessor. However, the fascination with figurative art remained, although it had been widely abandoned at this point in most of the Central Mediterranean (Robb 2008). Indeed, a group of sixteen anthropomorphic figurines were recovered at Tarxien. In these

schematic figures the humantorso was replaced by a flat disc incised with rectilinear and geometric decorations typical of the Tarxien Cemetery ceramics and the head was replaced with a featureless head. However, two exceptions stand at odds with the remaining uniform corpus. The best surviving example is 22 cm long and represented a female figure (**Figure 68**). The chest and arms were incorporated into a flat disc torso with pronounced breasts, while the head was enveloped in a circular headdress. These figurines and some other scant evidence accompanied the dead in their deposition within the earlier megalithic ritual complexes at Skorba and the Xagħra Circle (Trump 2002: 259).

The 2nd millennium BC funerary traditions in the Maltese Islands were variable, despite the small size of this archipelago. Aside from a diverse re-use of earlier megalithic monuments (from funerary to domestic utilizations), the construction of dolmens represented one of the southernmost dolmen traditions that was found across Europe, Iberia (Weiss-Krejci 2010; Chapman 1979) and the Balearics (Gili *et al.* 2006; Waldren 2001), and found irregularly in the Italian mainland, Corsica and Sardinia, and North Africa. Maltese dolmens were a significant connection to the broader Mediterranean basin (particularly the Tyrrhenian basin), but their itineration was local in its adaptation. These dolmens were smaller in size than most of their Mediterranean counterparts (**Figure 69**). Yet their constructions followed a general architectural make-up: a large capstone supported by two or three pillars. Their small size and height suggests that only cremated bodies could fit, which was confirmed through the discovery of Tarxien Cemetery phase sherds at Ta' Hammut (Evans 1971: 194). In addition, the

landscape positions of these dolmens were tied to sweeping valley views (Ta' Ċenċ) or overlooking Malta's limited fertile plains (Wied Filep and Il-Bidni).



Figure 68: A Tarxien Cemetery anthropomorphic figurine found within the precincts of the Tarxien megalithic monument (after Pace 2004: 68)



Figure 69: The Tal-Qadi dolmen incorporated into the earlier Late Neolithic megalithic complex.

Dolmens that date earlier than the rest of the Central Mediterranean were found across Corsica and in part of Sardinia (Cicilloni 2007), as already described in the previous section. Clusters of dolmens were found on higher elevations, such as in the Luras area. These structures have little in common with the impressive monumentality of Sa Coveccada, but their placement within elevated plains and overlooking deep valleys connected them to the contemporary reliance on pastoralist economies (Lilliu 2012; Lo Schiavo *et al.* 2009). However, the construction of dolmens was only one of a number of burial traditions utilized at this time. Aside from dolmens, *alleé couverte* burials expanded beyond the north-eastern Gallura region with the exception of the Sassari area that continued to re-utilize *domus de janas*. The *alleé couverte* structures spread across the central mountain ranges of Sardinia and were rarely found in the low-lying plains.

Within this setting of aboveground funerary structures, the *tombe dei giganti* emerged in the 2nd millennium BC from these constructions. For instance, Li Lolghi began as a *allée couverte* with an overlying tumulus. Then, at a second moment, it had a typical *tomba dei giganti* monumental façade added to the earlier structure (Guilaine 2011: 120; Contu 2008a: 424).

Over 500 *tombe dei giganti* can be found after the mid-2nd millennium BC, with 80% of these tombs found in Sardinia's mountainous ranges (Contu 2008a: 616). The covered corridor, the central component of earlier *allée couverte* burials, became enveloped by a monumental exterior facing a semi-circular exedra with an apsidal back. Constructed over a span of more than 500 years, the *tombe dei giganti* had a complicated development, which is not helped by their continuous re-use throughout the Nuragic culture. For example, the use of a large stelae in these tomb facades appeared tied to earlier stelae traditions found in Sardinia and Corsica (Bittichesu 1998: 128). However, this chronological relationship is unclear to us and part of a broad variability in Sardinian burial traditions. Indeed, there were other sites that combined a variety of earlier architectural components in the Nuragic period, such as the intact soil tumulus at Pascaredda in north-western Sardinia (**Figure 70**) or even the rock-cut *tomba dei giganti* at Su Cuccuru Mannu in the Oristano area (Usai *et al.* 2014) and Campu Lontanu in north-western Sardinia (P. Melis 2014). The *tomba dei giganti* at Pascaredda, in the vicinity of the Monte di Deu and overlooking the Rio San Paolo, included an intact gallery covered by a tumulus. As is the case for Li Lolghi, the façade and semi-circular exedra followed the typical style for the *tombe dei giganti*, but their focus of attention was centered on the entrance. Entry into these tombs was composed of a small entrance

carved into a large vertical stone that resembled a stela. An even stranger hybrid of a *tomba dei giganti* carved out of *tufo* (Melis 2001) was found at Campu Lontanu (Melis 2001) and is comparable to the freestanding *domus de janas* in the Sassari area. Such constructions were clearly distinct from later polyhedral *tombe dei giganti* (Contu 2008a: 654-6), such as at Sa Domu 'e S'Orku (**Figure 71**) found in the Marmilla area on a high elevated plateau in the immediate vicinity of smaller nuragic settlements and at a distance from large Genna Maria Nuragic settlement found to its west (Lilliu 1982: 51). This internal evolution in Sardinia funerary structures continued the earlier variable traditions seen within this island.

The social place of the *tombe dei giganti* was a crucial one within the Nuragic societies of Sardinia (Bagella 2007; Blake 2002; 2001). These tombs were connected to surrounding nuraghi in a variety of ways and shared at least one shared attribute: a varying number of *nuraghi* were found in association to one monumental tomb. Indeed, only a few *tombe dei giganti* were located next to other clusters of tombs, indicating their wide territorial catchment. These tombs brought different communities in proximity to each other, forced them to cooperate, and reduced the chances of social tensions with neighbors. Located on high plateaus, the *tombe dei giganti* were visual fulcrums and memorialized reminders of the need for cooperation within societies that were increasingly interested in fortification and weaponry. Therefore, the entry of the deceased into these tombs had to be collective and was celebrated and memorialized by community members outside of the tombs (Tanda 2003: 98; Blake 2002; 2001). Individuals lost their personal identity and merged into a collective identity, despite the fact that surely not everyone was buried within such monumental edifices.



Figure 70: The façade of the Pascaredda tomba *dei giganti* with intact soil tumuli in the background.



Figure 71: The Se Domu e S'Orku tomba *dei giganti*, an example of a later construction style.

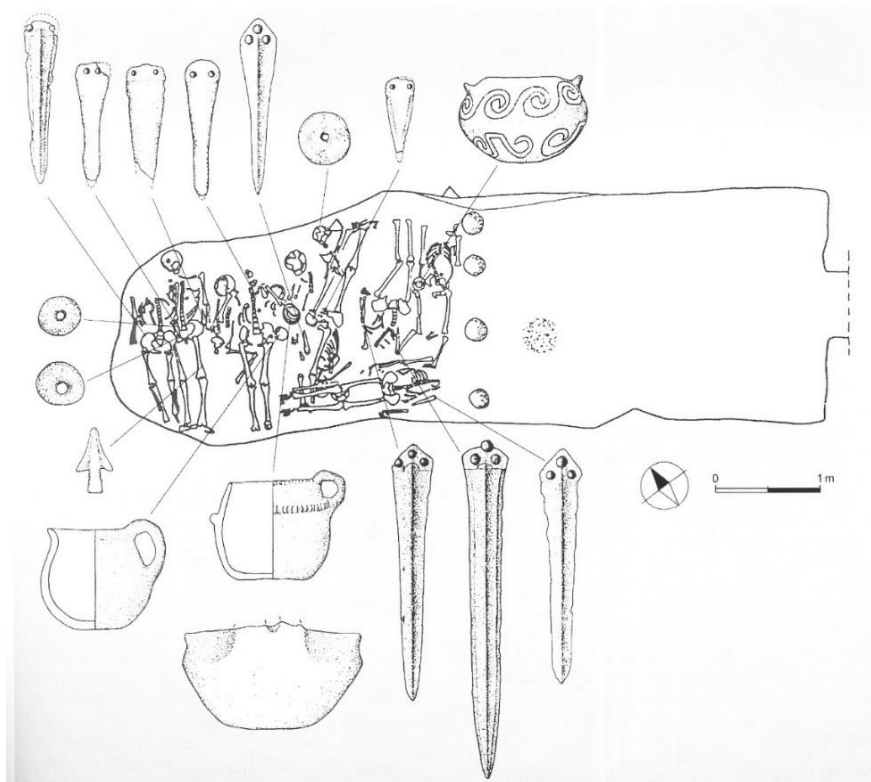


Figure 72: Plan of Tomb 3 from the Toppo Daguzzo rock-cut necropolis.



Figure 73: The Montalbano Dolmen found in the Cisternino area.

The mid-2nd millennium BC early urban acceleration of Apulia (Cazzella 2009; Cazzella 1994b) occurred in parallel to irregular funerary traditions across south-eastern Italy and was best exhibited in the funerary practices of the time (Iacono 2016: 127). Rock-cut tombs, like Toppo Dagguzzo (**Figure 72**) and Trinitapoli, or natural caves, like Grotta Manaccora, are found across the Adriatic coastline along with other scattered monuments on the high plateau of Le Murge and the Salento areas (Striccoli 1989). In particular, Whitehouse (1967) outlined two dolmen groups found in the Apulia area during the 2nd millennium BC situated in the Bari-Taranto and Otranto areas. These dolmen groups were distinguished based on their construction styles, which lends them a distinctive look. The Bari-Taranto dolmens were built in accordance to earlier western Mediterranean examples with a narrowed entrance leading into a funerary gallery that widens towards the back. These monuments tended to be within immediate reach of the coast with the exception of the Cisternino dolmens (**Figure 73**), which were located 15 km within sight of the sea on the Le Murge highlands. On the other hand, the Otranto dolmens were diminutive and mostly made up of a large capstone balanced over pillars. Indeed, the difference between these two groups was so stark that it initially led Evans to suggest a direct connection between Otranto and Maltese dolmens, which has since been struck down due to their chronological incompatibility. Instead, the dolmens in Otranto emerged as a hybrid between the northern dolmens and contemporary rock-cut tombs, which were found in association to the coastal proto-urban settlements of the time.

Along with monumental dolmens and continued hypogean traditions, Apulian funerary traditions included a lesser known and understood construction: *specchie*

(tumuli mounds) (Recchia 2011). A particularly well-preserved example of a large tumulus mound was found at Torre S. Sabina (Onnis 2011). This mound is an oddity in southern Italian archaeology, especially since this mound experienced routine additions of up to twenty-five graves. Such re-uses were unparalleled in Italy, although collective burials were common in Apulian rock-cut hypogea. Instead, the combination of collective burials in a tumulus was another example of trans-Adriatic influence, in this instance possibly hailing from the Albanian coast (Onnis 2011: 497). These mounds have an uncertain chronology, perhaps spanning as far back as the early 2nd millennium BC, but formed part of a trans-Adriatic connection seen in northern-eastern Italy and eastern Europe (Recchia 2011; Borgna 2009b).

In combination, these funerary constructions illustrate a vibrant cultural mix in Apulia during the 2nd millennium BC. Chapters 4 and 5 have already addressed the differences observed between northern and southern Apulian settlements in light of their connections with the Mycenaean world (Radina 2010; Bietti Sestieri 2006; Cazzella 1996). However, the mix of funerary traditions found in this region are reflective of two other intersecting elements. First, the role played by Apulia as a connector between the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic basin cannot be discounted. As already seen in the case of Castelluccio dei Sauri, the Apennine Mountains offered important conduits for terrestrial movement that connected the southern parts of Italy to the Tyrrhenian Sea and southern Europe. Second, the rapid topographic changes between the Tavoliere plains and the Salento plateau were separated by highlands at the foot of the Apennines. Therefore, the intense early urban settlements seen across coastal Apulia were paralleled by mountainous adaptations. These communities were focused on pastoralism and semi-

mobility, despite their vicinity to considerable coastal settlements. The funerary megalithic monuments offered visual markers in a time of growing demographic intensity, tied small groups to their land, and situated their stake in a territory that was quickly becoming dominated by larger coastal settlements.

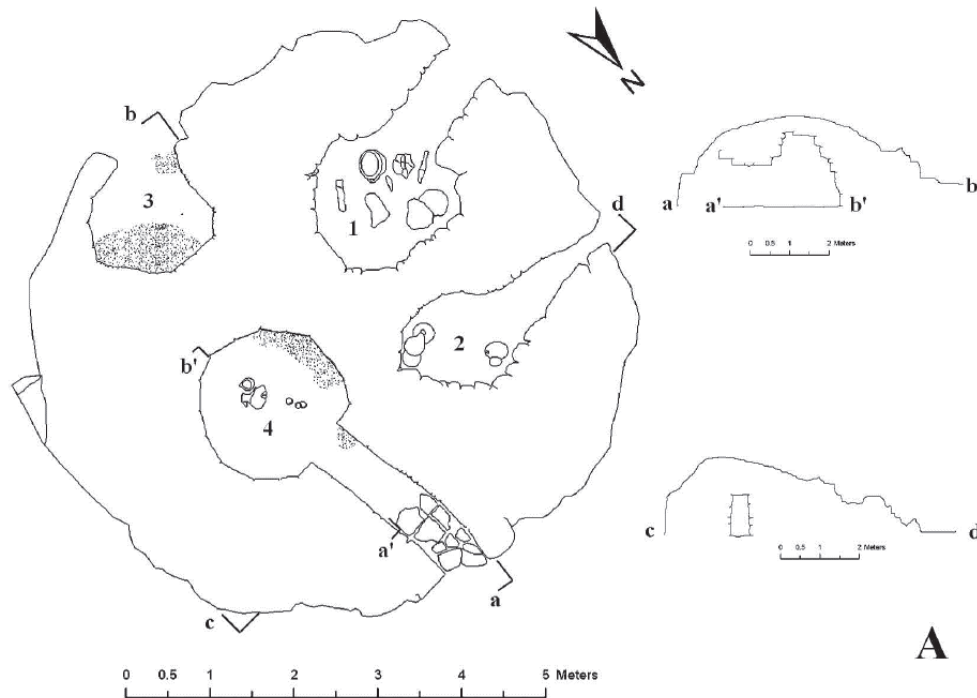


Figure 74: Plan of the *sese rosso* showing the side-corridors used as individual entrances for individual burials (after Nicoletti and Tusa 2012: 831)

On the margins of the Central Mediterranean, the settlement of Mursia was established on Pantelleria around the mid-2nd millennium BC (Cattani *et al.* 2012; Nicoletti 2010). The immediate area surrounding the settlement was a barren volcanic landscape that was hardly suited for intense agricultural purposes (Cattani and Tusa 2012). Instead, the inhabitants of Mursia utilized the uneven landscape that surrounded them for two main purposes: the construction of a colossal fortification wall (described

further in Chapter 8) and their funerary *sesi*. The latter were built turreted structures of variable sizes that ranged from over 8-10 m in height to even half the height in smaller examples. About three to four side entrances distributed unevenly around the *sesi* are found at differing intervals and were composed of a narrow and short *dromos* (circa 1 m) leading into a small circular chamber (**Figure 74**). The deceased were accompanied by a modest assemblage that included obsidian and flint lithics along with ceramic drinking vessels and seashells (Nicoletti and Tusa 2012b). The *sesi* exploited their understated physical settings to the point where their placement in the landscape was only known by those associated to each structure. Families built their *sese* and buried their dead outside of their settlement's confines. Yet Nicoletti and Tusa (2012: 836-7) see a division between two structure clusters located to the north, near one of the few freshwater springs, and to the south of Mursia. On this isolated island, closer to North Africa but influenced by Sicilian ceramics styles, the Mursia inhabitants re-imagined their world according to the physical conditions of their surrounding spaces. The *sesi* blended within the black volcanic landscape to a staggering degree, so these were not monuments simply marking the landscape.

The northern Italian Po River plains continued in a familiar funerary tradition as already seen in the 3rd millennium BC. Indeed, the distinct separation of cemeteries from settlements, the use of larger cemeteries by a number of combined habitations, and individual burials continued to be the norm. However, the cultural acceleration experienced in these plains led to intense settlement patterns with even larger cemeteries. Olmo di Nogara and Bovolone, found in the Verona area, were both large cemeteries composed of single burials (a mix of inhumations and cremations). At Olmo di Nogara, a

total of 517 burials included 456 inhumations and sixty-one cremations that were separated into three clusters. At the north of the site, a contemporary roadway was flanked by wooden palisades, which the excavators refer to as a funerary way or a ritual passage into the cemetery. Cluster C, one of the latest burial clusters at Olmo di Nogara, illustrates two transitions towards the end of the 2nd millennium BC (Bietti Sestieri 2011: 402). First, the placement of a single male individual in Tomb 194 was buried at a distance from nearby graves, which were typically situated in close proximity to each other. This adult male was surrounded by a larger than normal ditch and funerary goods included a vase, a well-used sword, and a dagger. Second, Cluster C experienced a funerary transformation towards the end of the cemetery's use-life. In particular, females continued to be buried as inhumations while males were separated and cremated in another part of this burial cluster. This shift towards cremations became the standard burial type in peninsular Italy, supplanting the long-held tradition of inhumations in the Central Mediterranean.

There was an additional correlation between these transformations in northern Italian burials and contemporary cultural settings: the proliferation of ritualized weaponry deposition in water (Bietti Sestieri *et al.* 2013). Funerary deposits lacked almost entirely weapons by the end of the Bronze Age (Cupitò and Leonardi 2005). On the other hand, at sites like Pila del Brancón (**Figure 75**), weapons in all states of conditions were often deposited in caves at water sources. These weapons were often bent or destroyed and suggest a parallel end of life for these special objects that were perhaps akin to the end of their own human bearers, which were deposited in separate necropolises. The

formalization of cemeteries, their expansion, and internal social differentiation illustrated a significant social development, a characteristic of the Terramare culture.



Figure 75: Sword no.148 is one of the several weapons found at Pila del Brancón destroyed (after Bietti Sestieri 2013: 160).

After the 12th century BC, the contraction of the Terramare cultural nexus interrupted its earlier sharp settlement growth and in most instances led to the abandonment of earlier sites (Vanzetti 2013; De Marinis 2009). In Chapter 4, the post-Terramare cultural developments were explained as being built upon the earlier social conditions with one caveat: the preceding connections between Terramare settlements and the south shifted further to the east. The dominating role of Frattesina created a new settlement aggregation along with adjoining dense cemeteries. In the case of Frattesina, at least two necropolises surrounded the settlement at Le Narde and Fondo Zanotto, both found at about 500-700 m from the occupation center (Cardarelli 1992: 405). Despite the general contraction of the Terramare culture, there was a continuation in the combined

use of inhumations and cremations as the primary burial treatments of the dead as well as the clustering of burials according to kin lineages. In the case of two tombs (Tombs 168 and 227), the funerary assemblage and treatment of the deceased's remains imply an elevated social status. In Tomb 227 the deceased was accompanied by a sword with golden rivets, a gold ring and buttons, a razor, a knife, and pincers.

These individuals were awarded a level of social distinction unmatched in several surrounding, but there are other differences. In particular, the contemporary existence of two cemeteries outside of Frattesina, deemed one of the wealthiest settlement in northern Italy, can be interpreted as a representation of group division (perhaps based on kinship), which were sufficiently articulated to maintain their separation in burying their dead. The funerary traditions of the early 1st millennium BC perpetuated these group differences while also distinguishing marginalized individuals. Indeed, as cremation became a characteristic of Italian mainland burials in the early 1st millennium BC, inhumations were only left for marginalized individuals (Zamboni *et al.* 2015; Saracino *et al.* 2014) often buried in unusual positions. For instance, some burials were placed in prone position in Franzine while other individuals seem interred with intentionally fractured bones in Frattesina Le Narde Tomb 223. These individuals were inhumed purposely without goods and in atypical positions. They were deemed unworthy of a cremation burial, and their standing within their societies was tarnished. Perhaps more importantly, their burial was not idealized by their fellow community members, lending light into the state of the collective spirit in the beginning of the 1st millennium BC.

While Lilliu (1998: 145-6) interestingly remarked that megalithism extinguished the light of hypogean underworlds, the transformations in burial customs between the 3rd

and 2nd millennia BC underline two sweeping changes in my opinion. First, the externalization of death was a social strategy. It marked the landscape, maintaining a connection between the worlds of the living of the dead. Second, the collective spirit experienced rather diverse fates across the wider Central Mediterranean world. Insular island cultures began to stress their localized burial customs through monumentality or rituals that were unreplicated in peninsular Italy. On the other hand, the Italian mainland embarked on localized early urban aggregations that were matched by funerary variability in southeastern Italy (influenced by their trans-Adriatic connections) and funerary uniformity in northeastern Italy (influenced by the Terramare culture connections to the Central European Urnfield culture).

Cremated Bodies and Persevering Island Traditions at the end of Prehistory

The 1st millennium BC in the Central Mediterranean was a moment of significant social overhauls and expanding cultural blocs. During the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC this region had balanced social inequality with a focus on collective behavior. Exclusivity and close attachment to familial bonds indicate to us a collective spirit under attack but not completely diminished. Yet the transforming funerary traditions between the mid-2nd and 1st millennia BC brought about a sense of a collective spirit under pressure. Different social statuses became a mainstay of cremated burials across peninsular Italy. The cremation of the deceased extended from the north-eastern to the Tyrrhenian central Italy and up to the Tiber River. There was a second overlap between the extending limits of cremation burials to the Tyrrhenian Sea: a distinct aggregation of early urban settlements began in the Etruria region, quickly extended to the Adriatic east, and eventually shifted towards the Campanian south. In the midst of expanding cultural units, Central

Mediterranean islands continued to undergo diverse histories that were united by their persevering insular funerary traditions.

Funerary traditions in Sicily were especially representative of this perseverance across the 4th and 1st millennia BC. Indeed, rock-cut tombs remained the main form of Sicilian burials for over 3000 years (Leighton 2015: 190). The shifting importance of coastal settlements, connected to the Aegean during the 2nd millennium BC, became replaced by a growing presence of hinterland sites like Caltagirone, Monte Dessueri, Cassibile, Finocchito, and Pantalica between circa 1,200-1,000 BC (Leighton 2015; 2011). The funerary complexes surrounding the high plateau of Pantalica began to form towards the end of the 1st millennium BC but eventually expanded into various burial zones that could have totaled up to 4,000 tombs over a 600 year time span (**Figure 76**).



Figure 76: A view of the south Pantalica cemetery situated on a steep cliff-side overlooking the surrounding river gorges.

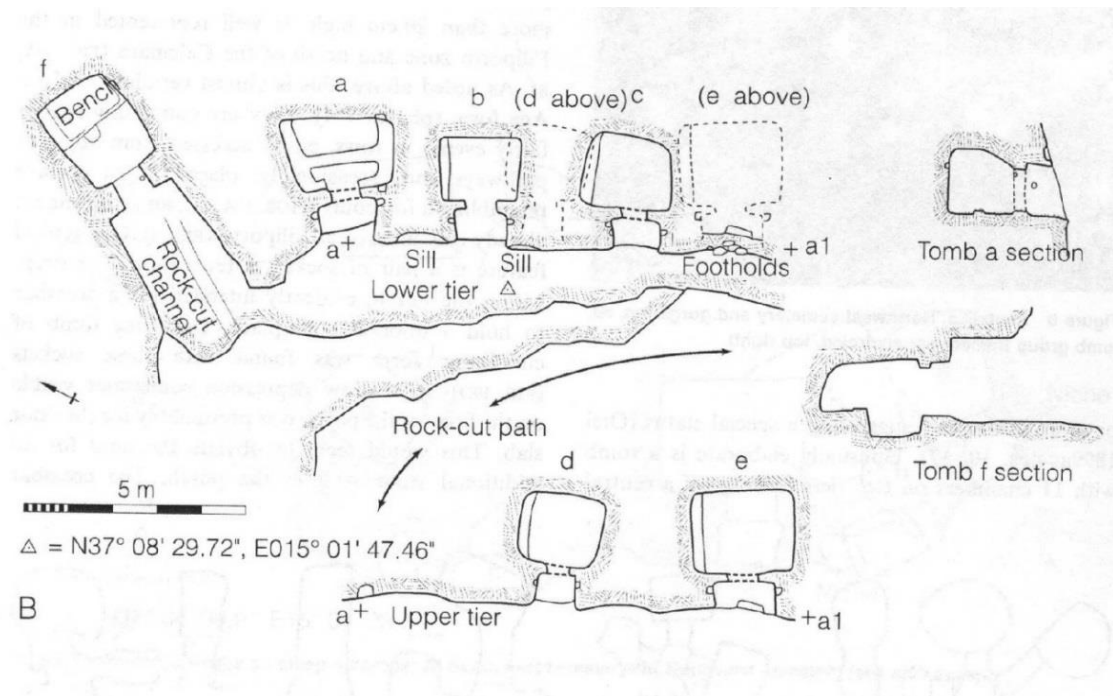


Figure 77: An example of tomb clusters at Pantalica and their subtle difference in size (taken from Leighton 2015: 199).

In contrast, the Pantalica settlement was scattered around a 170 ha limestone promontory overlooking the river gorges of the Calcinara tributary and Anapo River (Leighton 2015; Bernabò Brea 1990). Beneath the plateau, five burial zones were located in dense clusters and situated in varying degrees of accessibility. These burial structures changed minimally over time from curvilinear to rectilinear chambers, perhaps in relation to changing domestic structures that underwent a comparable transformation (Leighton 2015: 194-5). In contrast, to the earlier coastal opulent burials found in Thapsos with their elaborate ceramic forms and architectonic attention, the nature of hinterland burials in the early 1st millennium BC reflected a persevering burial tradition adapted to a difficult terrain. Buried individuals were placed within burial clusters (**Figure 77**), probably on the basis of their relation to other family members, and were accompanied

by few material possessions. Distinction and social rank played a background role in these communities as differences between families can only be suggested by the minimal presence of larger funerary chambers (Leighton 2015: 201). Rather, the monumentality at Pantalica was projected in the sheer amount of tombs placed over commanding views of river bends situated in vertiginous heights, which grew in an organic manner. Over 600 years, even as cremation burials became introduced in the northern Milazzo and Aeolian Islands, the expanding Pantalica burial clusters reflected an island perseverance, which through continued re-use created a monumental sense of scale.

Despite the island insularity seen in funerary practices in Sicily, the 10th century BC connected this large landmass to cultural developments that occurred in the Tyrrhenian Italian mainland. Indeed, the Villanovan culture expanded after the 10th century BC across one-third of mainland Italy (**Figure 78**) (Bietti Sestieri 2012: 249). While the north-eastern settlement of Frattesina played an important role as a trade center and successor to the Terramare cultural system, the Etrurian region of Central Italy experienced an accelerated proto-urbanism (Pacciarelli 2000; Negroni Catacchio 1998; Cardoso 1995). These Villanovan cultural attributes were also soon found on the Adriatic coast and even in Campanian burials at Pontecagnano and other sites in southern Italy (Albore Livadie 2007: 237), which was a rapid cultural expansion that remains unexplained (Bietti Sestieri 2012: 253). Yet Villanovan burials were found on both the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic sides of Central Italy south of the Po River. Single cremations were placed within an urn and covered by either a bowl or a metal helmet, placed in an excavated pit, and accompanied by a few possessions (**Figure 79**). The differences between Frattesina and Villanovan burials were largely concentrated on the use of the

latter's decorated biconical urns that were standardized in their size and decorations. Differences within the Villanovan cultural system appeared forcibly subdued and socially stimulated, perhaps related to the political ambitions of rising individuals and their attempts to dominate their communities. Once again, a bonded collective was imaged through pervasive ritual and funerary customs. Nevertheless, subtle social differences can be recognized in the inclusion of a two-pieced fibula with a straight or curved needle with disc and pearl decorations in only some male burials found across the entire Villanovan cultural sphere (Bietti Sestieri 2012: 273).

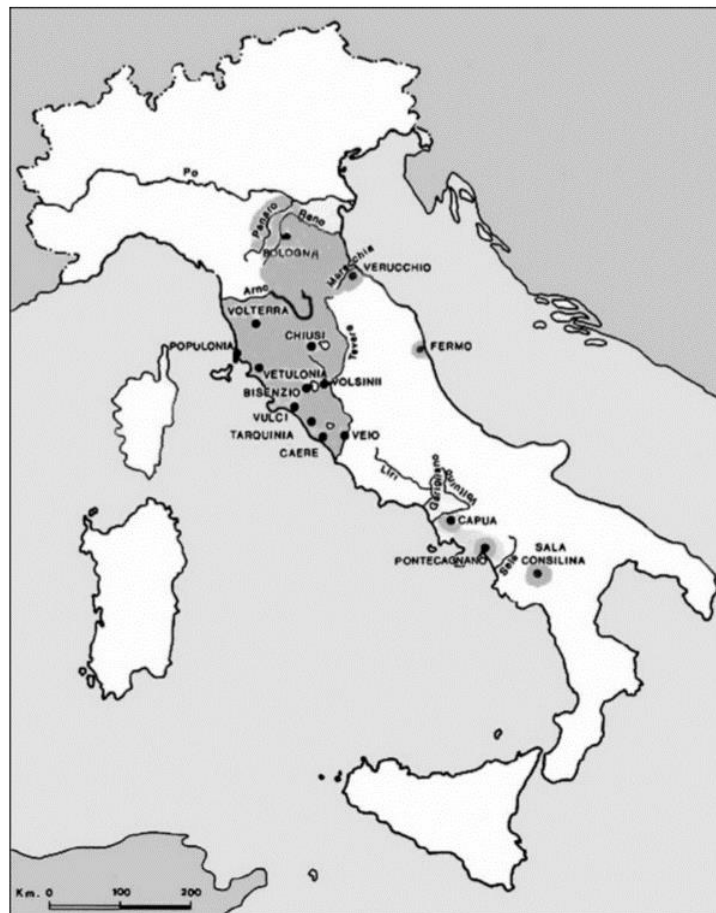


Figure 78: The Villanovan expansion across peninsular Italy (after Bietti Sestieri 2012: 250)

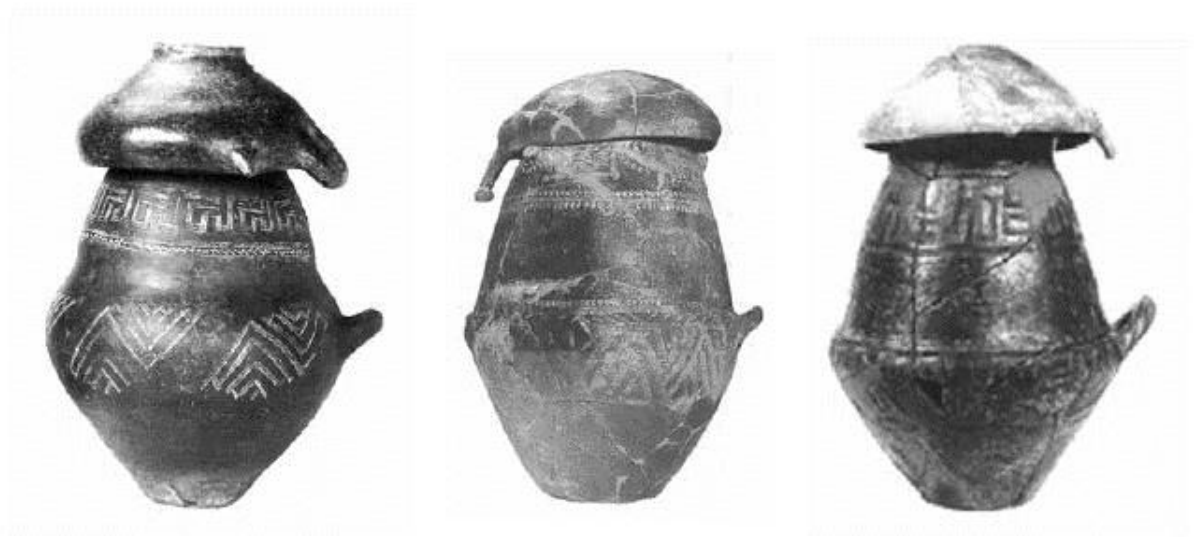


Figure 79: Examples of Villanovan urns utilized for burials of cremated individuals (after Bietti Sestieri 2012: 272)

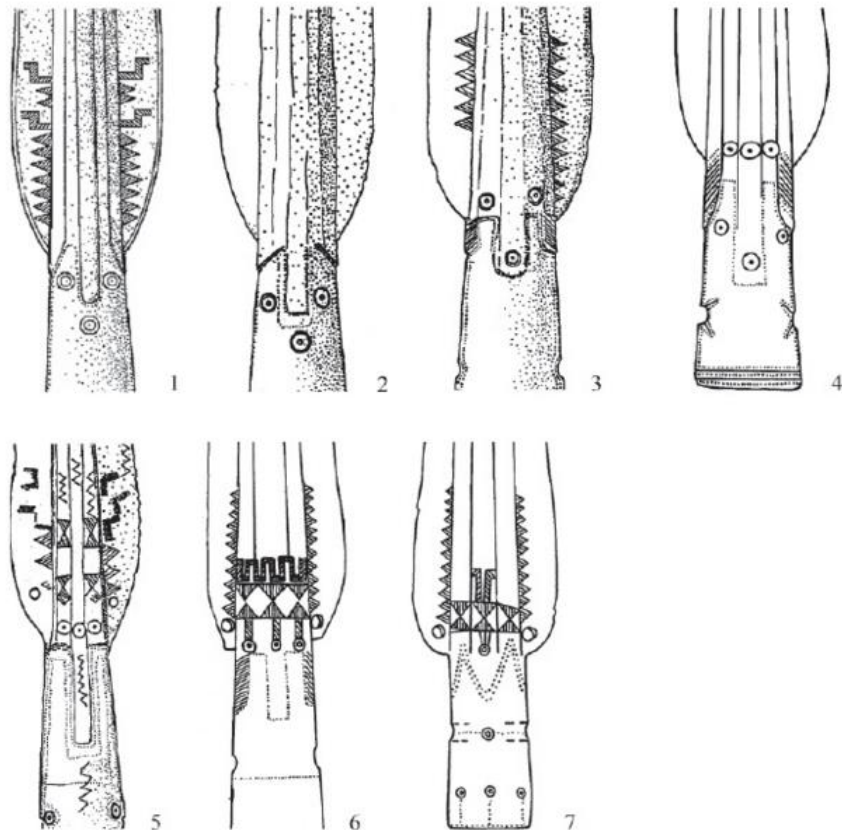


Figure 80: An example of the chronological development of peninsular Italian javelins (after Bietti Sestieri 2006: 516).

The role of objects and cultural paraphernalia played a significant role in promoting a sense of collectivity, while some individuals continued to consolidate their social control and different social ranking. From the 10th and 9th cal. centuries BC, the Lazio region was once again on the border of two cultural borders. In the Etrurian region, the expansion of the Villanovan culture was well-represented through cremation burials (Bietti Sestieri 2011: 410), while south of Lazio pit burials were also found in connection with Villanovan burials, particularly in major Campanian centers like Pontecagnano and Capua. The Lazio culture at the time placed a major emphasis on displaying social status through weaponry, which could only be preserved through inhumation burials. Instead, cremations were more common in northern Lazio cemeteries, on the border with the Villanovan Etrurian communities and illustrated the interplay between cultural contact and localized adaptations. However in burials found further south in Lazio and closer to the Apennine Mountains, such as cemeteries like Acciaierie di Terrini, cremation and inhumation burials were covered by tumuli and delimited by stone circles (Bietti Sestieri 2006: 508). From the fifty burials uncovered, twelve had a funerary assemblage and only eight burials had weaponry. All of these male burials included a javelin, perhaps the weapon of lowest social denomination, while two burials were accompanied with a sword. Inhumations in tumuli burials were increasingly found further inland towards the Apennine Mountains and highlight the spatial differences in funerary customs. The role of the Lazio inland communities in connecting the Tyrrhenian to the Adriatic basin were once again indicated by the presence of tumuli burials in the Abruzzo area.

The differential presence of weaponry and varying burial treatments lend an insight into the expanding social inequality of 1st-millennium BC mainland Italian communities. The quality and size of the weapons, including large javelins and swords, were visual transmitters of a person's recognized social standing. However, these weapons also offered an additional role to their owners: an ability to distinguish oneself from his/her own community on the basis of an esoteric magico-ritual connection. In the 10th and 9th centuries BC, the proliferation of javelins was ubiquitous but separated by two broad cultural spheres. The Villanovan javelin production stood at odds with southern Campanian and Calabrian examples, particularly when one looks at the hilt. Javelins located in the Lazio, Campania, Calabria, and even northern Puglia had stylized anthropomorphic beings depicted at the base of the javelin (**Figure 80**). Two eyes and a mouth were shown in circular form above which the distal end of the javelin was utilized to depict a headdress (Bietti Sestieri 2006: 514). These objects, found across a wide part of the central to southern Italian peninsula, belied the local cultural variabilities by lending an impression of broad cultural overlaps. Instead, the presence of these objects and the funerary treatment of some individuals reflect an articulation of a nascent class identity. Individuals who effectively held onto power utilized magico-ritual belief systems that could partly be extraneous to their own communities. Therefore, the recovery of these javelins suggests an exploitation by those in power to distinguish themselves from their contemporaries. In their connection to a broader world, the possessors of such javelins tapped into a supra-regional belief system that ensured their social roles (cf. Cuzzo 2014).

Sardinia stood partly at odds with mainland Italy and other Central Mediterranean islands. The Nuragic culture experienced its final stretch between the 9th and 8th centuries BC (Usai 2011). Over a millennium worth of cultural development, Nuragic communities existed in a state of insularity countered by some interactions in the Tyrrhenian basin towards the end of the 2nd millennium (Araque Gonzalez 2014: 153). Nevertheless, there was an island perseverance in the prolonged continuation of funerary and cultural traditions even within Sardinia. The prolonged history of the Nuragic culture could only be sustained until it became untenable and required a marked shift. That shift became especially accentuated by the arrival of the Phoenicians and their establishment of Tharros, Othoca, and Neapolis (Usai 2012: 861). Immediately prior to this moment after the 9th century BC, the burgeoning of an elite ideology, a separated class identity, was tied to the growing memorialization of *bronzetti* figurines and sacred wells (Ialongo 2013) and also in a distinct funerary tradition that stood at odds with the earlier collective *tombe dei giganti*.

The role of *tombe dei giganti* had receded by the end of the 2nd millennium BC but did not completely end. Indeed, smaller communities appeared to re-use these monumental structures for limited and selective burials (Lilliu 2002: 249). However, a changing funerary tradition arose in the Gulf of Oristano and Sinis peninsula. Single inhumations were reserved for individuals of higher status while other individuals were perhaps burnt and scattered (Usai 2011: 173). These burials of worth were rare in Sardinia, due in part to their relative simplicity that stood in stark contrast with earlier Nuragic aboveground funerary monuments. Towards the end of the Nuragic culture, inhumations were found in cist-lined (Senorbi and Sardara) or pit burials (Mont'e Prama,

Antas, Su Bardoni). Even though these tombs were minimalist abodes for the dead, the act of burying the dead was an act of distinction within itself. At sites like Su Bardoni, the dead were located in a pit lined by sandstone slabs (**Figure 81**), faced the sea, and were connected to the nearby Nuraghe Muras settlement (Usai 2014a: 55-6; 2014b). At Antas, single burials appeared to idealize the buried and eventually led them to become incorporated into a historic settlement as a reminder of a nuragic past (Bernardini 2011; Ugas and Lucia 1987).

Yet at Mont'e Prama single pit burials were located within an unparalleled potential *heroon* cemetery or dedicatory cultic site (Usai 2015: 86). Located against a slow sloping hill in the Sinis peninsula, over thirty-three burials were placed over the 9th century BC. Above these simple inhumations, larger-than-life statues stood proudly as a testament to the worthiness encapsulated by the deceased and idealized by the living in the form of Nuragic statuary (Lilliu 1997). Statues of archers, boxers, miniaturized nuraghi towers, and even baetyls stand above the dead and overlooked the dense occupation of the Sinis peninsula (**Figure 82**). These tombs and their inhabitants were worthy of celebration, and their final resting place was tied to prevailing movement routes within the Sinis peninsula on the margins of territorial extents (Usai 2014a: 56). Nevertheless, the persistence of island funerary traditions did not occur in complete isolation from extraneous conditions. The Nuragic culture had existed for a prolonged period of time, often seeming intensely inward-facing with limited outside inspiration. In the case of Mont'e Prama, the end of the Nuragic culture prior to the occupation of Phoenician settlers in the Gulf of Oristano was met with innovative cultural additions that were perhaps too late, unable to change rapidly, and bound to end.



Figure 81: The Su Bardoni single inhumation burials (after Usai 2014: 184)



Figure 82: An aerial view of the Mont'e Prama burial alignment during the 2015 excavations (after Usai 2015: 91, TAV.1)

The beginnings of the 1st millennium BC represent the beginning of the end for many of the long-term trends seen above between the 4th and 1st millennia BC. The collective spirit was at this juncture unabashedly under attack as individualization became a stressed characteristic found in most of the examples described. The earlier subtlety in inequality was being replaced by an emphasis on distinguished individuals. These individuals were no longer attempting to stress a sense of collectivity within their societies. Instead, they chose to place themselves in full view of their peers. Their attempts to hold on to power no longer required a false imaging. Yet their self-aggrandizement was soon affected by the arrival of foreign colonizers from the east.

The End of Prehistory? External influence and Central Mediterranean Traditions

Outside influence played an important role in Central Mediterranean history across the 4th and 1st millennia BC. However, the effects of Phoenician and Greek colonizers after the 8th century BC exerted an even stronger mutual influence and transitional traditions (Potrandolfo 1998). Earlier accounts of these early historical interactions described a setting of foreign innovation and native appropriation of extraneous cultural elements (Boardman 1980). Yet the tail end of the Central Mediterranean's prehistory was firmly rooted in earlier traditions, which experienced an undeniable hybridization of foreign and native attributes (Hodos 2010; Shepherd 2005; Coldstream 2004; Shepherd 1995). In relation to the developing funerary traditions of the 1st millennium BC, three instances in this region best illustrate the manner in which native funerary traditions coalesced with foreign elements and continued to express the

distinct social status of some individuals over others at a time when inequality was at its strongest.

The end of the Villanovan and the beginnings of the Etruscan culture was not a straightforward distinction (Negroni Catacchio 1998). Nevertheless, these two cultures were still separate in their geographical location and chronological succession. By the 8th century BC, the aggregation process of larger settlements was proven through the establishment of cemeteries that surrounded these sites, as already described in Chapter 6. The later “princely” tombs at the necropolis of Banditaccia were carved out of volcanic tuff in the image of a house for the dead (**Figure 83**) and were also encountered in house urns utilized for cremation urns at a slightly earlier stage (Leighton 2005). These *tumuli* tombs came with all the entrapments of contemporary wealth: arms, gold, and fineware ceramics. The connection to the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean were without a doubt highly appreciated in the Italian mainland and led to this period to be referred as the “Orientalizing” period. Yet the root for these funerary traditions were tied to the earlier cultural developments of this region. The Villanovan expansion across one-third of mainland Italy, the growing role of Etruria as a metallurgical production center and distributors, and significant urban aggregation matured under the Etruscan aegis. The role played by funerary traditions immortalized the distinct status of individuals, which continued to be tied to their families and homes. Indeed, the collective spirit appeared to extend within the intimacy of kinship and excluded outsiders and ensured their inequality (Cuozzo 2014).



Figure 83: An example of a “princely” tumulus carved out of *tufo* at the Banditaccia necropolis near Care (photograph by Jeffrey Becker).

Apulia’s protohistoric cultural development was in sharp contrast with its 2nd millennium BC predecessor, in part due to a considerable urban contraction. The beginnings of the Daunian people after the 10th century BC was tied to a shift in settlement location and funerary traditions. Sites like Monte Saraceno in the Gargano promontory, situated on higher ground and well-defended (De Juliis 1984: 317), exemplified these transformations (Nava and Fuligni 1994; De Juliis 1984: 317). Individuals were buried in pit tombs, routinely re-opened for further additions, and covered by rubble along with a stela or marker placed on the top, such as at Arpi (De Juliis 1984: 141). These were also the latest prehistoric stela tradition of the Central Mediterranean. These stela represented an indigenous perseverance in Apulia (Nava

1988), despite the ongoing connections with the Aegean world around the 8th and 7th centuries BC (Nava 2015). The strict ties between these small community members were embodied in the collective spirit of the burial tradition. All individuals were deposited in burials that were probably connected to their families without stressing the importance of any particular individual (Nava 2015; Nava and Fuligni 1994). In contrast, the stelae after the 7th century BC provide, in register form, a view into the social conditions of the time and particularly illustrated scenes of hunting wild animals or cultic scenes (**Figure 84**). This stela tradition outlined a broader collective shift from the earlier familial ties in favor of a burgeoning elite status for some.



Figure 84: A later Daunian stela with registers showing ritual scenes and elite lifestyles.

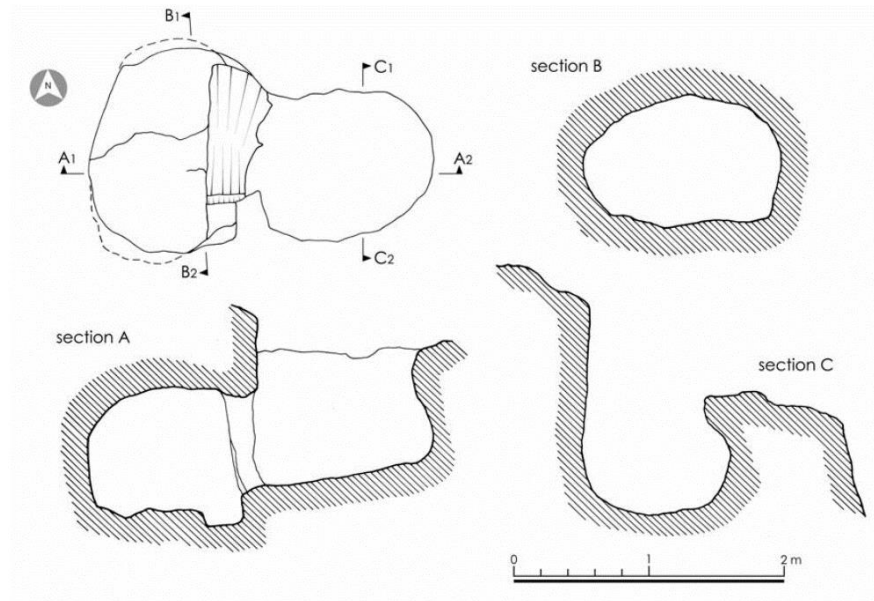


Figure 85: An example of a Phoenician rock-cut tomb found in rural Malta (after Docter *et al.* 2012: 121)



Figure 86: The Egyptian-inspired gold double-figure amulet found at the urban Phoenician necropolis of Ghajn Klieb in Malta (after Bonanno 2005: 64-65).

In the meantime, the Maltese Islands had largely receded into the periphery of the Central Mediterranean world for the majority of the 2nd millennium BC, having re-aligned itself culturally to nearby Sicily. Around the 8th century BC brought about new arrivals: the Phoenicians. Moving across North Africa through the Channel of Sicily, Pantelleria, western Sicily, and Malta, the Phoenicians brought about an alternative impact when compared to the Greek colonial establishments of eastern Sicily. Indeed, the Phoenician strategy often appeared to be a hybridization of foreign and local elements in unison, thus establishing a new cultural paradigm. The case for the Maltese Islands was no different. In fact, earlier Phoenician period burials utilized preceding structures (like silo pits) for burials but increasingly began to turn again towards rock-cut tombs that resembled their predecessors (Sagona 2008; Spanó Giammellaro *et al.* 2008: 153; Żammit 1928) (although even later Punic examples shift to a rectilinear form of the shaft and burial chamber) (**Figure 85**). These burials were distributed in scattered clusters across Malta and were tied in relation to small settlements and rural sites (Docter *et al.* 2012; Spanó Giammellaro *et al.* 2008: 153). However, the arrival of the Phoenicians also increased the strategic importance of the Mdina settlement, which was inhabited since the 2nd millennium BC and slowly expanded during the 1st millennium BC. Outside of the settlement limits among various burial clusters, the sites of Ġħajn Klieb and Tal-Virtu yielded a number of *Aegyptica* artifacts (**Figure 86**) that connected these marginal islands to the North African coastline by the 7th and 6th centuries. The perseverance of an island custom was entwined with the cultural developments of the time. Valuable objects transmitted the importance of certain individuals who were buried among their relatives and outside of their settlements. Yet there was a profound change in this historical

moment. At this point, the islands were intimately entangled with the interests of outsiders and, in a sense, their prehistory had ended. Their entry into history was a final bell toll to their earlier long-term transformations and the collective was diminished beyond return.

Conclusion: In Death to join the Majority

In this chapter, the overarching trends in funerary traditions and changes played a vital role in elucidating the social role of individuals and their depictions by the living members of their communities. These events were emotional and difficult moments (Nilsson Stutz and Tarlow 2013), which could have also acted as instances of uncertainty and social tension. In the death of an individual, his/her social worth became tied to the funerary traditions of the time and the willingness of the living to bury according to customs. Burials, however, had a potent social role in the world of the living. The living buried their dead according to the social place that deceased individuals held when alive. In addition, in death these individuals were also awarded an idealized being. More importantly, the living utilized the burial of an individual to project an image of unity: a sensation of a well-functioning collective.

Amidst all of these interceding effects on burial customs, recognizable but subtle differences in the status of individuals across most of the Central Mediterranean later prehistory were hardly a surprising matter. Through these observable subtle differences we now gain an insight into the broader social transformations of this world in which mainland Italy was connected to the European continent and the Aegean but often

divided in its funerary customs. On the other hand, islanders showed an impressive mix of innovation and perseverance in their funerary traditions.

There were a number of broad trends that illustrated the social developments and transformation in the Central Mediterranean across the 4th and 1st millennia BC. After the establishment of the Neolithic, there was an intensification of localized cultural adaptations, despite continued inter-connectivity across this region. The expansion of rock-cut tomb traditions in most of this region showed not simply the extents of connectivity but also the interest in local communities to adopt a broadly distributed concept in terms of their own cultural needs. In the 4th millennium BC, the collectivity of groups seemed tied to the general small community aggregation experienced in this period. Nevertheless, localized rituals exemplified a formation of distinct cultural ideologies in which communities separated themselves from neighboring regions and manifested the creation of difference.

These underground worlds became less present across the 3rd millennium BC as the contemporary social emphasis seemed to lie in visibility and statements of control in the occupied landscape. The expansion of these structures aboveground became an avenue for funerary monuments. Such monumentality played an active role in the world of the living by not being located out of sight. Instead, these structures were visibly tied to the world of the living; a reminder of the dead. It seems equally purposeful that these structures were both collective in their burial while also playing a significant role in territorial demarcations. Indeed, these monuments were routinely re-utilized, perhaps by more than one settlement, and found themselves overlooking land of agricultural worth or placed in areas of special significance. However, this turn to the monumental was not

pervasive across the Central Mediterranean. Instead, the northern Italian parts of the peninsula began to show a stronger connection with communities in the European continent across the Alps.

These divisions between the northern and southern parts of the Central Mediterranean continued in the 2nd millennium BC, particularly in light of the growing Terramare and Apennine cultures, respectively. In the meantime, islanders emphasized their insular social developments. Burial traditions developed from earlier funerary monuments with a continued collective deposition of the deceased. The tombs for these islanders became a social place for the aggregation of the dead in a collective setting and the easement of social relations between the living. In contrast, the rise of complex urban aggregation in the Terramare and Apennine cultures brought about a broad shift in their collective spirit. Burials in northern Italy stressed the ongoing individualization, despite a continued spatial deposition of individuals in relation to their kin groups. Individuals of worth were treated differently and their contemporary status was recognized by the living and not encroached upon through later burials. On the other hand, southern Italian funerary traditions showed a remarkable flexibility in their traditions spanning across dolmens, mound, and rock-cut hypogea.

By the 1st millennium BC, the continuing perseverance of island traditions became countered by expanding cremation burials in mainland Italy. At this juncture, the growing Villanovan culture and the waning of nuragic Sardinia had one thing in common: an emphasis on individuals. On the other hand, collective behavior in funerary traditions remained the prerogative of small communities, albeit a selectivity of individuals buried cannot be discounted. However, for those increasingly in contact with

the Eastern Mediterranean, a proportional expansion in the formal acceptance of distinct individuals was seen in the funerary record. In the latter communities, the collective spirit had diminished to the level of family units. Outside of the family unit and kinship lines, social distinction and status was a clear concern among the living. There was no longer the need to depict a cooperative collective in the Central Mediterranean. One only has to remember the eventual tophets established in the Central Mediterranean, brought over by Phoenician communities, and utilized for the burial or sacrifice of children (Xella *et al.* 2013). Then, after the 1st millennium BC this region's funerary traditions and customs turned to the explicit display of individuals in power, their self-promotion to those surrounding them, and required no projection of a well-functioning collective for wider acceptance.

Up to the 1st millennium BC, funerary traditions had played a significant role in depicting a stable collective. The dead were received into their final resting place as part of a wider community. Their previous roles as living individuals, with or without social distinction, was subtly presented and idealized by their successors. Therefore, the role of the collective was a false projection for most of the 4th and 1st millennia BC span. There were social distinctions, but it was equally important to depict their own societies as cooperative and accepting of subtle social differences. Despite the use of monumental collective burials to perpetuate this impression of a healthy collective, by the 1st millennium BC the expanding urbanism in the Italian peninsula reached a point of no return. The aggregation of people in an unprecedented scale and the continued rise in productive means was paralleled by a formation of potent individuals. In turn, their role

as controlling agents became reflected in the funerary record.

In Chapter 8 the role of social inequality will be examined in the relationship between monumentality and non-monumentality as seen in the Central Mediterranean. Monumentality was utilized prior to the 1st millennium BC as opportunity to bond wider communities through labor necessities while access into such monuments was often controlled physically or through ideological means. The disparate presence of monumentality in this region requires us to question how communities undertook monumentality and equally utilized their connection to the outside world advantageously and lead us to re-examine our own expectations of monumentality.

Chapter 8: Monumentality as Social Control and Ideological Acceptance

Introduction: Monuments as visual displays of Order and Ideology

Imagine for a moment the construction of a large structure that is more complex and requires more labor than any of its built contemporaries. It is a structure of social and ideological importance that transmits a sense of collective accomplishments and a pronouncement of the wider dominant social discourse. The building of such a structure is a prolonged cooperative process and requires extensive raw materials, labor, and proper mobilization. Aside from these conjoined factors, this monumental structure is socially motivated. Similarly, such a monumental construction can have a number of functional purposes such as defensive, cultic, or even for the burial of the dead. This chapter argues that the permanence of monuments was so effective in period and region under study that their overturn as transmitters of the dominant social discourse required considerable hegemonic shifts. Indeed, with the exception of some particular examples seen below, Central Mediterranean monuments played a balanced role between demanding consent for the dominant social discourse from their human counterparts while effectively representing the interests of potent individuals.

In the case of the Central Mediterranean between the 4th and 1st millennia BC, the region experienced a veritable monumentality despite its presumed pre-hierarchical social settings. This chapter argues that the role of prehistoric monuments in Central Mediterranean societies was built on a mutual contradiction: groups were willing to construct significant edifices because their dominant social narrative deemed it necessary. Their monuments idealized certain key cultural characteristics of their society. However, the labor mobilization, control, and power required to build and accept such structures as representatives of the dominant social discourse was directed by some individuals over others.

Yet the nature and broad presence of monuments, even in our own contemporary settings, makes its definition a complicated matter (Osborne 2014: 3). In a strict terminological sense, a "monument" refers to a memorialization of something. In a built sense, most monuments are characterized by a number of shared attributes. First, size is an undeniable difference between monuments and other structures. Monuments are often distinguished from neighboring structures by their larger construction and considerable embellishments. Second, monuments are connected to the broader collective memory of a community (Rowlands and Tilley 2006) and often become a centralized aspect of the re-memorialization of such communities (Blake 2011; Knapp 2009). Third, as significant constructions, monuments play an ideological role and are often accompanied by repeated rituals conducted within or immediately adjacent to such structures. Fourth, monuments stand as static and durable structures of their societies, steadfast in their presence.

Indeed, the durability of monuments in a structural, memorial, and social sense is an undeniable aspect of all past and present monuments. The construction of monuments played a deep-set social role as seemingly long-lasting stand-fasts in the prehistoric Central Mediterranean. However, this view was contradicted by routine transformations and alterations that were seen in these structures. Nevertheless, changes within these structures were proactive in their intent. They were meant to assuage and potentially reflect wider social transformations while remaining relevant to their human contemporaries. After all, if the adaptability of monuments to their surrounding social settings ceased, then their social role became reduced and less effective. In the span of the 4th and 1st millennia BC, Central Mediterranean populations utilized monumentality as a way to promote the potency and power claims of certain individuals (Blake 2014a; Kolb 2014; Ialongo 2013; Robb 2001). However, this same role was to some extents open to contestation. In this uncertain setting, monuments could only remain relevant if their ideological message and social role was sufficiently potent enough to do so.

In this chapter, monuments are interpreted as promoters of social order that acted as locales of sought consensus. Within pre-hierarchical societies, presumably lacking in rigid and stratified community members, the role of monuments was one that straddled between ideological pronouncements and a laborious form of social control. Ultimately, the physical and metaphysical being of monuments inspired potent reactions from humans. Monuments stood taller than most surrounding structures and were approached through particular routes/pathways. They appeared static but actually underwent a great deal of alterations. Their multi-functionality meant that their purpose was ambiguous and contentious. However, by being large-scale projects for many communities, these

structures played a role in controlling social tensions, as was also seen in the case of burial traditions in Chapter 7.

Tackling monumentality in Central Mediterranean later prehistory requires us to first establish the understood parameters of these structures. These structures were not only built by human hands, but they also affected their human counterparts as promoters of social order. Their place within prehistoric societies was, however, contextually specific and equally varied. The manner in which these monuments were formed and transformed can be distinguished across the Central Mediterranean in their varying approaches to monuments by prehistoric peoples.

The Extraordinary: Monumental Constructions promoting Social Control

In *Political Landscapes*, Smith (2003) argues that monuments offer a binary opposition to non-monumental structures as a separation between the extraordinary and the ordinary. This seems like an appropriate separation at face value. Certainly a key characteristic of any monument is their considerable difference from any other surrounding structure. However, Smith's proposal goes even further. It ties monuments to the political sphere within the human landscape. Monuments are then seen as axiomatically different from anything else constructed by humans due to their role as political players, promoting social order, and enforcing a dominant social discourse. This consideration leads us to ask further questions. Can we speak of monuments as large, excessive, conspicuous structures, or should we expand our definition of monuments to structures that were extraordinary in their own societies? The answer to this question lies in part with previous approaches to monumentality.



Figure 87: A late 18th century illustration by Jean Houel showing locals and foreigners interacting diversely with the prehistoric ruins at the Xaghra Circle (taken from https://web.infinito.it/utenti/m/malta_mega_temples/xaghrasc/houelxsc.html)

Monumental ruins in the Mediterranean basin are still a common sight in the region under study (**Figure 87**). Outside of academia, interpretations of these monuments have often resorted to the fantastical. The explanation of *domus de janas* in Sardinia as fairy houses, Ġgantija in Malta as the house of giants, and the *tombe dei giganti* in Sardinia as the tombs of giants all illustrate the folkloristic interpretations of early modern communities in regards to prehistoric monuments (Blake 1999; Aste 1993; Carrington and Grinsell 1982; Daniel 1980: 78). However, the considerable size of these structures and their relative visibility played a much larger role than the typically smaller prehistoric settlement structures. In this regard, past monuments' roles in modern societies are tied to the assumption that individuals who controlled and built these structures were at the head of their communities. This is an interpretation that to some extent is verified even by archaeological standards. Such monuments were indeed among the most important built structures of their world.

Aside from misguided folkloristic and antiquarian interests in monuments, the archaeological study of these structures has varied. Perhaps, the single most pervasive approach is based on the interpretation of these structures as the center of prehistoric communities (cf. Richards 1996) and the unchecked display of social competition (Kolb 2014; Gatz and Plourde 2011; Fisher 2009). The placement of such sites in relation to domestic settlements often supports that interpretation. However, one needs to slightly clarify this stance. There are monuments in certain societies that were located in marginal zones or in areas of territorial contestation away from settlement areas. The idea of these structures as central places, despite their peripheral physical location, refers moreso to the routine aggregation of humans towards these sites or else it considers monuments as core places in the social lives of their contemporaries. In fact, the way humans conceptualize and imagine their landscape typically utilizes a mix of built and natural features (Bradley 2000; Bradley 1998; Tilley 1994), in which monuments can play an especially significant role. Yet these structures can also be approached from the perspective of labor required to build and maintain them.



Figure 88: A hypothetical reconstruction of the labor required to construct a Late Neolithic Maltese monument (after Torpiano 2004: 359)

The cost of labor required in monumental constructions is rarely emphasized in current studies on monumentality, perhaps due to the narrow focus in such studies. Nevertheless, there was a considerable expenditure in building significant structures, particularly when the social setting at large was composed of agricultural or pastoral lifestyles. It was a significant weight on communities that directed energy and raw material towards large-scale projects, which were not directly tied to the survival of those individuals. In fact, the calculated labor for such constructions was often staggering even by our modern standards. For instance, the chalk mound of Silbury Hill in England required approximately 18 million man-hours. The Maltese megalithic monuments are calculated to have required over 15,529 man-hours (Clark 2004) (**Figure 88**), which does not include the movement of megaliths from up to ten kilometers away and their continued maintenance for over 1,000 years. Perhaps the reason why such emphasis on labor commitments have become less present in archaeological literature lies in the implicit assumption that all monuments require sacrifices by those who built them. We all expect that these structures required considerable investment and labor expenditure (Trigger 1990). However, by relegating labor to a lower rung in our interpretations, we run the risk of erasing the exploitative nature of such constructions. By doing so, we stress their role as considerable ideological transmitters and central social places (Renfrew 1983; 1973) while placing the exploitative nature of these monuments in the background.

The last decades have become dominated by phenomenological views on monumentality that seek to address the experiential and sensory place of structures within

the natural landscape. To no surprise, the experiential approach towards such structures has created a flurry of examples that balance the relationship between modern day immersive observations and landscapes (cf. Wylie 2013; Tilley 1994). Despite some negative responses to this approach (Barrett and Ko 2009), methodological critiques made regarding the subjective nature of these phenomenological approaches ignore the overall pitfalls in such claims. Of course all approaches are subjective to some degree (Hamilton *et al.* 2006). We do not have a direct access to the past of such structures, and can therefore only posit the significance of monuments. Further, the variability of monuments was keenly set against the broader landscape. In fact, the *sesi* of Pantelleria constructed out of irregular black volcanic rock only make sense on this island. If you suddenly situated these monuments on the limestone plateau of the Salentine peninsula, these monuments would appear out of place. The contextual nature of monuments was an intimate association between human choices and landscape potential.

Furthermore, perhaps the most conventional interpretation for prehistoric monuments have focused on the presumed use of such structures as locales for the memorialization of ancestors (Meskell 2008; Acuto 2005; Helms 1998). This interpretation then links the construction of monuments to the usefulness of long-term memory, while also highlighting the fact that the memorialization of ancestors was a social necessity. Ancestors, their origins, achievements, and aggregation within one place, then in turn acted as an opportunity for the living to legitimize their attempts to hold or access power within their societies. Such an understanding of the social purposes of monuments can still be seen in various regions and time-periods, such as the prevailing

interpretations of the Maltese Temple Period (Malone and Stoddard 2004; Bonanno *et al.* 1990) and Nuragic Sardinia (Blake 2014a; Ialongo 2013)

An Alternative Proposal to Monuments

In light of these past and prevailing approaches, monuments in this dissertation are seen through an alternative lens: monuments formed a core part of prehistoric attempts at social stability while promoting a social order that was punctuated by inequality. Throughout this dissertation, I have made a pervasive argument that a characteristic of pre-hierarchical societies in the Central Mediterranean was their struggle against an inevitable instability and potential for change. Therefore, to a significant degree, social strategies enacted by those attempting to control and remain in power required them to create a sense of stability matched by a false image of social cohesion. Perhaps one could even go as far as saying that inequality in the Central Mediterranean was created through the prolonged maintenance of conservative ideologies that were stretched to their outermost limit until the broader hegemonic acceptance reached a turning point and became eventually transformed.

Monuments in prehistory were created, replicated, built, and maintained because they promoted the dominant social discourse. If such structures represented subaltern ontologies, then their construction would have never been so widely distributed and replicated. Indeed, the social place of monuments was intimately bound to the contemporary hegemonic ideals. These structures acted as aides to those seeking to gain power. They were not structures of resistance. Althusser's (1994) work on ideological superstructures can also be connected to monuments, particularly since the metaphysical understanding of ideology was presented to individuals through tangible manifestations.

For instance, even in more contemporary settings one does not simply gaze at a Renaissance basilica. Rather, the basilica embodies all of the above elements in a single comprehensible form. The potency of this transmission is such that even an uneducated individual intuitively understands the core elements represented through such a structure: authority, power, ritual aggregation, prolonged labor commitments, and required respect.

The tenuous nature of power (Feinman 2002), its prolonged durability, and its effects on the dominant social discourse played an additional role in prehistoric monuments. In particular, as monuments stood at the bequest of individuals or groups intent on promoting a setting of social inequality and competition (Kolb 2014; Renfrew 1983), they also strove to gain a broad consensus among their human counterparts. These structures attempted to garner such consensus through a mix of tangible and intangible effects. Aspects like the visual and experiential impact of these structures seems like a readily apparent tangible effect. However, the understanding of their significance was also transmitted through an intangible sensation of architectural uniqueness or even marked opulence. These locales were often embellished in considerable matters, such as the out-of-sight furnishings or desired objects kept behind blocked access points. The attempt of such structures to promulgate control was marked by their central placement in relation to abodes of the living, or in sharp contrast, in their placement within peripheral zones. Prehistoric monuments require us to re-question the idea of monumentality. Were these structures defined by their significant size or ideological importance? Can a monumental structure exist in regions of intense connectivity, or did they emerge primarily in insular societies focused on inward-looking world creation?

At the least, monuments in the Central Mediterranean across the 4th and 1st millennia BC emerged in limited moments across some islands and certain parts of the Italian mainland. The irregular presence of monumentality in this region has been met in the past with limited insights on the presence of unifying common elements found across communities that undertook monumentality. However, monumentality is examined through two lenses as we move further into this chapter. First, the emergence of monuments was historically rooted across the 4th and 1st millennia BC. Second, the disparate presence of monumentality in this region requires us to reconsider the role of significant structures as primary transmitters of social order. Either, with or without monuments, societies represented their dominant social discourse along with variable inequality and require us to consider the exploitative benefits offered by monumentality for those groups seeking power.

Monumentality across the 4th and 1st millennia BC

Overall, there was little to no monumentality, outside of underground funerary structures like the Sardinian *domus de janas*, in the Central Mediterranean between the 5th and 4th millennia BC with the obvious exception of Corsica and Sardinia. These islands were inspired by monumentality found in temperate Europe and coastal southern France, such as dolmens, stelae, and *tumuli*. Yet the lack of monumental structures in the broader region seems disconcerting, particularly in light of the monumental profusion in the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC (Kolb 2014; 2005; Evans 1977). Over the 6th and 5th millennia BC, the majority of the Central Mediterranean was occupied with the deeply transformative effects of the Neolithic lifestyle, characterized by broad inter-connectivity

and close ceramic similarities across the entire region (Pessina and Tiné 2009; Bernabò Brea *et al.* 2006). Furthermore, most islands surrounding peninsular Italy were colonized by established communities (Dawson 2014; Patton 1996).

In the case of Sardinia and Corsica, their island settings encouraged the proliferation of megalithic architecture. These island landscapes became the grounds for the demarcation of special places and sites of communal gathering. By the mid-4th millennium BC, the contraction of large cultural blocs affected other parts of the Central Mediterranean. Areas of previous intense occupation or interaction cores, like Puglia (Malone 2003: 256) and Aeolian Islands (Castagnino Berlinghieri 2011), respectively, experienced a comparable receding. On the other hand, the Maltese Islands deviated from their earlier cultural affinity to nearby Sicily, as seen in the emergence of megalithic cultic complexes scattered across the archipelago (Pace 2004).

For the rest of the Central Mediterranean, monumentality that emerged in the 3rd millennium BC was exemplified by a considerable variety of structures and their functions (Guilaine 2011). The megalithic architecture seen in Malta, Corsica, and Sardinia was not replicated in peninsular Italy. In the meantime, the island monumentality of the 4th millennium BC diminished in the Central Mediterranean islands and led them to re-align themselves culturally to the broader region once more (Cazzella and Recchia 2012; Malone *et al.* 1994).

The 2nd millennium BC built upon the earlier developments in peninsular Italy. Puglia in particular began to experience an urban aggregation after the 18th century BC (Cazzella 1994b) that led to the creation of early urban centers across the Adriatic and Ionian coastlines and the building of colossal fortification systems across this part of Italy

(Recchia 2010a). However, the 2nd millennium BC also brought an efflorescence on minor islands like Ustica and Pantelleria (Tusa 1997c) that had remained largely unoccupied prior to this period. Yet the return to monumentality was best exemplified in the nuragic culture in Sardinia (Lilliu 2006; Lilliu 1982; Contu 1981) that built upon earlier cultural developments while also deviating considerably in its cultural make-up.

By the 1st millennium BC, the prehistoric monumentality of the Central Mediterranean experienced some considerable alterations. Indeed, the urban aggregation of the Puglia region quickly subsided by the end of the 2nd millennium BC while a comparable expansion occurred in the Etrurian region (modern day Tuscany and Umbria), often interpreted as a delayed reaction to metal interests shifting into the Tyrrhenian basin (Bartoloni 2000). For Sicily (Tanasi 2008) and Sardinia (Depalmas and Melis 2010), the expanding role of the Tyrrhenian Sea had different effects. In the case of Sardinia, the nuragic culture exhibited signs of a mutual innovation composed by local and foreign elements in conjunction (Bernardini 2005; Tronchetti 1988 identified at sites like S'Urachi (Stiglitz *et al.* 2009) or Mont'e Prama (Bernardini 2012; Tronchetti and van Dommelen 2005). On the other hand, the expansion of Villanovan proto-urban settlements in the Central Italian mainland was followed by the Etruscan culture (Negroni Catacchio 1998) and its emphasis on distinct elite social groups (Izzet 2007), a trend seen in lesser-known contemporary peninsular Italian communities (cf. De Juliis 1984).

Cultural Pluralism and a limited Monumentality in the 4th millennium BC

If one were to hold a narrow view of monuments, then we could assume that there was little to no prehistoric monumentality in the 4th-millennium BC Central Mediterranean world. However, I have already argued above that monumental structures

are less about their size and more about their social significance. Such constructions reflected the contemporary social status and, in turn, lends us an insight into the state of the collective spirit over this time. The 4th millennium BC setting of cultural pluralism was rooted in the preceding establishment of Neolithic lifestyle across the Central Mediterranean region between the 7th and 5th millennia BC. Prior to the period under study in this dissertation, the movement of the Neolithic lifestyle into the region, developments in the collective spirit over two millennia, and a limited monumentality were all found within the Italian mainland.

The collective spirit prior to the 4th millennium BC was intimately tied to a broader social transformation, the wide-spanning establishment of a Neolithic lifestyle. Population movement and adaptation to an unmanaged landscape required considerable expenditure. The natural landscape stood as a testament to the natural forces of the world. However, a previously unmatched desire to control the surrounding world by humans came with the advent of the Neolithic lifestyles. In the midst of all these changes and population movement, the collective spirit was a restricted one. The family as a social and political unit was the primary concern of all individuals. Their lives and deaths were conducted within the limits of family units. These limitations to the span of the collective spirit can be seen in a number of archaeological settings. As already discussed in Chapter 7, death was seen as an event of deep social unease (Cazzella 1998). Therefore, the deceased were often buried quickly in natural caves, underneath hut floors, or left to the elements and then re-collected after decomposition to be buried within any of the preceding burial types. The resting places for the deceased seem intimate and tied to small family units. Even in the world of the living, the collective spirit was faring with a

comparable setting. Settlements were typically small, and in the case of the densely-populated Tavoliere Plain, the small size of settlements was matched by a dense web of sites situated in close proximity to the other (**Figure 90**).

The movement of the Neolithic lifestyle into the Central Mediterranean world was seemingly both fast and slow in its rate of dispersal. Indeed, all of the Central Mediterranean was largely occupied by agricultural societies within a millennia. People occupied their immediate territories, stripped down the natural tree cover to expand their agricultural potential, and also began to re-route irrigation to their fields. However, amidst all of these transformations, cultural innovation was slow. The success of these communities was such that deep hegemonic transformations were not required to maintain a prolonged *status quo*. Monumentality in this world was scattered and tied to the world of the living.

Monumentality prior to the 4th millennium BC in the Central Mediterranean was made up of ditch enclosures (*fossati trincerati*) and built palisades found in mainland Italy (Cassano and Manfredini 1983; Tinè 1975) and eastern Sicily (**Figure 91**). Previous considerations of these structures focused primarily on their presumed defensive nature. These earthenworks and wooden structures were seen as inevitable components of early agricultural societies. Their assumed control of their nearby landscape for cultivation and the protection of valued livestock presented the concerns of these communities as largely tied to defense. However, these ditch enclosures and palisades were often constructed through significant energy expenditure and resource use. Some estimates of the work required to dig a typical ditch, between two to five meters deep, suggest a communal project that could have taken up to a month if aided by nearby cooperative communities.

Instead, the labor required and the image conjured by these protected settlements is now interpreted as a combination of defensive and ideological intents. These structures provided comfort and assurance to their communities. The seasonal re-building of huts, their potential destruction, and the rapid infilling of these ditches suggest an ephemeral association between humans and their built world. Their impact on the surrounding landscape was not insignificant and the durability of these built structures remained low over time.

For over two millennia, communities in the Central Mediterranean exercised their domination of the natural landscape without the need for grand, durable monuments. Rituals conducted within cave sites shared a prolonged history in this region (Skeates 2010b; 1994; Whitehouse 1992; 1990), although falling immediately outside the chronological focus of this dissertation. In contrast, concerns for defense and protection were limited to areas that experienced intense demographic occupation, such as the Tavoliere and Po plains, with associated proof of counter-strategies geared towards balancing the adverse effect of humans on their natural resources (Tafari *et al.* 2013). In other places, like Sardinia, Corsica, the Maltese Islands, Aeolian Islands, and even Central Italy, communities lived in dispersed settlements. Yet their communication to the outside world was unpredictable and the reception of locals to extraneous elements was unexpected. In this setting, Corsica and Sardinia became entangled with megalithic funerary architecture inspired by southern European influences in the 4th millennium BC. Meanwhile, the remainder of the Central Mediterranean began to experience contractions of its distributive networks, as seen in the depopulation of Aeolian Island settlements and the abandonment of Puglian Tavoliere sites.

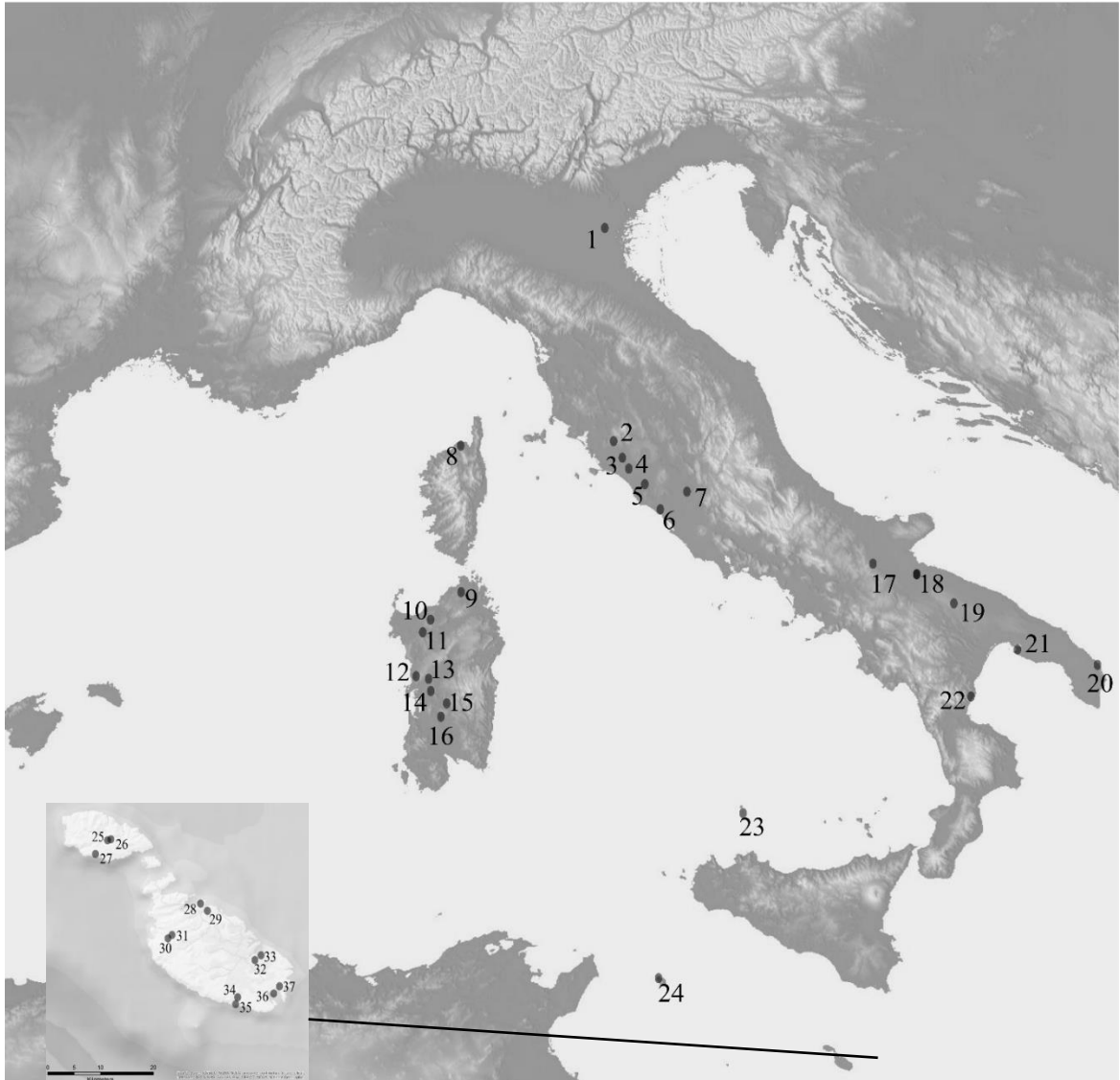


Figure 89: Archaeological sites mentioned in **Chapter 8**: 1. Frattesina, 2. Chiusi, 3. Sorgenti della Nova, 4. Vulci, 5. Tarquinia, 6. Caere, 7. Veii, 8. Monte Revincu, 9. Li Lolghi, 10. Monte d'Accoddi, 11. Nuraghe Santu Antine, 12. Mont'e Prama, 13. Nuraghe Losa, 14. Santa Cristina, 15. Santa Vittoria, 16. Su Nuraxi di Barumini, 17. Castelluccio dei Sauri, 18. Coppa Nevigata, 19. Chiancudda, 20. Rocavecchia, 21. Scoglio del Tonno, 22. Broglio di Trebisacce, 23. Faraglioni, 24. Mursia, 25. Ġgantija, 26. Xagħra Circle, 27. Borġ l-Imramma, 28. Buġibba, 29. Tal-Qadi & Wied Filep, 30. Ta' Ħaġrat, 31. Skorba, 32. Hal-Saflieni, 33. Tarxien, 34. Haġar Qim, 35. Mnajdra, 36. Borġ in-Nadur, 37. Tas-Silġ (© ESRI 2013 basemap).

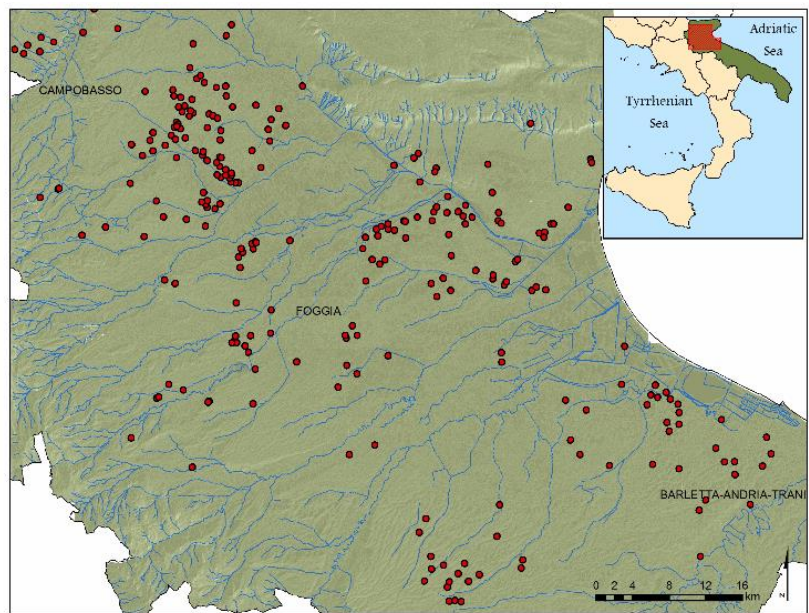


Figure 90: A map showing known Neolithic settlements found in the Tavoliere Plain in Puglia (after Danese *et al.* 2014: 428).

	Small <250m	Intermediate 250-500m	Large >500m
Basic	SB ○ (A134) SB ○ (J191) SBC ○ (J53)	IB ○ (J60) IBC ○ (J43)	LB ○ (A68) LBC ○ (J50)
Basic multiple		IB ⁺ C, (J8) IB ⁺ CN (J40)	
Multiple	SM ○ (A128) SMC ○ (J72) SM ⁺ C ○ (J51) SM ⁺ C ○ (A93)	IMC ○ (G6) IM ⁺ C ○ (A71) IM ⁺ CN ○ (J9) IM ⁺ C ○ (J13/14) IM ⁺ C ○ (J155)	LM ⁺ C ○ (J235) LM ⁺ ○ (J71) LM ⁺ C ○ (J19)
Open	SOCG (J77)	IOC (J73)	
Groups	SMCG (J77)	IMCG (J173)	LG

Figure 91: The wide variety of Neolithic ditched villages found in Puglia (after Hamilton *et al.* 2015: 14).

The island of Corsica features little in current archaeological studies of the Central Mediterranean for unfortunate reasons. Intellectual contributions remain limited to Francophone literature, and its irregular archaeological contributions led to a number of understudied periods. However, in terms of 4th millennium BC monumentality, Corsica cannot avoid being the unexpected cornerstone of the Central Mediterranean. In a practical sense we can identify Corsica as a connector between outlying Sardinia and the northern extents of the Tyrrhenian Sea. The distribution of Monte Arci obsidian from Sardinia moved through Corsica and reached northern Italy and southern France (Tykot 1999; 1996). During this time of connectivity, Corsica was also characterized by monumental funerary structures dated to the 4th millennium BC that were often re-utilized over millennia. Indeed, an array of funerary monumental architecture became the norm in mountainous and rugged Corsica between the mid and late 4th millennium BC. In this landscape punctuated by elevated peaks and broad surrounding views, the construction of tumuli and dolmen structures accentuated the place of humans within these Corsican spaces. Despite the general paucity of settlement information, with the notable exception of Monte Revincu (Leandri and Gilabert 2012) (**Figure 92**), the place of monumentality in these societies was aimed at familial units and memorializing their place within this island.

Corsican communities, connected to the wider region through the movement of obsidian, was inspired by megalithic architecture found in coastal and continental France along with the Western Mediterranean (Guilaine 2011; van Berg 1996; Guilaine 1996). In the Rhône Valley of France, megalithic architecture was one of several burial traditions found across this broad region (Drelon 2014; Chambon 2000) and included tumuli and

collective rock-cut tombs (**Figure 93**). At this point, we should question the reasons that led Corsican communities to garner inspiration from French communities and not their northern Italian counterparts. I have already mentioned that Sardinian obsidian, probably moving through Corsica, can be found across northern Italy and southern France (Pessina and Radi 2006). If Corsican, and by extension Sardinian, communities were connected to the Italian mainland, it appears that a conscious cultural selection was made by these outlying islands. Within megalithic architecture, Corsican communities found a monumental medium best suited to illustrate their social order that marked a landscape that was particularly scattered in its human occupation. Building considerable structures in the 4th millennium BC was then perhaps viewed as an action of human domination over the unmanaged natural landscape.

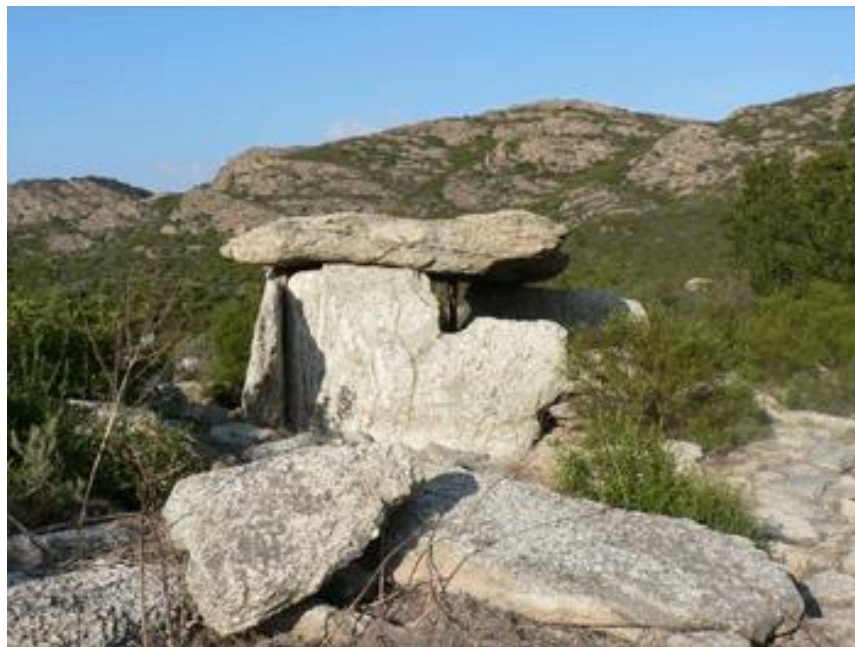


Figure 92: The Monte Revincu dolmen found in mountainous Corsica (taken from <http://tinyurl.com/z2n5xfm>)

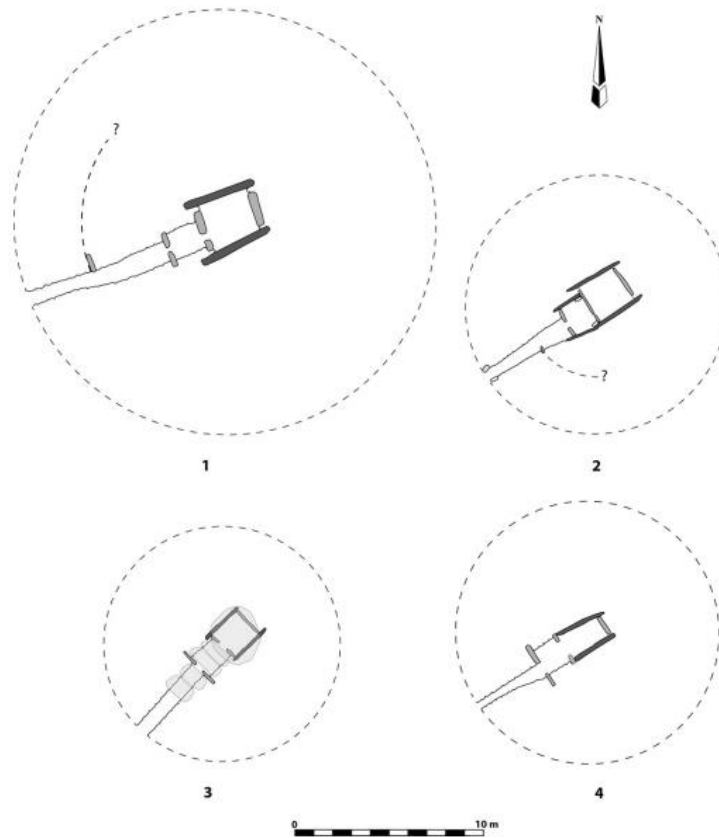


Figure 93: Examples of dolmens found in southern France: 1. Feuilles dolmen, 2. Capucin dolmen, 3. Lamalou dolmen, 4. Grand Juyan de Roubiac I dolmen (after Drelon 2014: 7).

The turn towards the monumental was by no means a region-wide condition for the 4th millennium BC, as seen by the general paucity of megalithic structures in the remainder of the Central Mediterranean. In Chapter 5 I have already outlined in the indisputable connection, in the form of Sardinian Monte Arci obsidian, between Corsica, Sardinia and southern France. However, monuments in 4th-millennium BC Sardinia were initially limited to the singular Monte d'Accoddi stepped construction, the aforementioned Gallura megalithic circles, a number of poorly dated pre-nuragic

megalithic sites like Monte Baranta (Moravetti *et al.* 2013; Moravetti 2000), and the underground funerary *domus de janas*. The former two monumentalities had disparate functionalities and were larger constructions than their underground counterparts. Monte d'Accoddi acted as a site of cultic and ritual purposes and was perhaps tied to the routine aggregation of communities to this place. On the other hand, the sheltered and mountainous Gallura region utilized megalithic architecture for funerary purposes, which was comparable to the contemporary Corsican examples (Guilaine 1996), as already described in Chapter 7.

Monte d'Accoddi was a particular example of monumental creativity in the contemporary Central Mediterranean (Contu 2000) (**Figure 94**). This structure was unparalleled in Sardinia and in modern accounts has often been described by Near Eastern labels such as “ziggurat” or “pyramid” (Melis 2011; Contu 2000). Yet Monte d'Accoddi was a structure of monumental significance, unmatched (perhaps with the exception of the understudied Monte Baranta complex (Moravetti *et al.* 2013; Moravetti 2000) and singular architectural originality. This stepped structure exemplified the contemporary intersection between extraneous and localized conception. Indeed, the main structure was made up a large stepped mound accessed by a gradual causeway. Flanking this ramp on the west was a menhir found standing at over four meters high, a number of other menhirs and stelae situated around the structure (**Figure 95**), and a colossal egg-shaped baetyl at the bottom of the ramp. These innocuous features were inspired by foreign ideas and are also found across the European continent and Corsica (Robb 2009). At Monte d'Accoddi the inter-mingling of foreign and native elements appear at ease with each other. After all, there was no counterpart to this structure in the

entire Central Mediterranean. The ritualized nature of this place was also imparted by the processional scenes often found in contemporary Sardinian ceramics along with evidence of red ochre being utilized to paint the “red hut” situated at the top of the stepped mound (**Figure 96**) (Contu 2000). The importance of this site was both in its unparalleled construction and also because it conveyed the contemporary *ethos* of European inspiration. Although monumentality does not require immediate outside inspiration, or even downright diffusion, the complex weave of prehistoric connectivity brought islands, like Corsica and Sardinia, extraneous influences. Perhaps these influences were seen as social opportunities by their contemporaries. In the 4th-millennium BC Central Mediterranean, the earlier Neolithic *status quo* was becoming increasingly defunct. The Neolithic lifestyle had experienced an inevitable transformation towards a setting of social justification and competition. Dolmens, tumuli, and even stepped structures proclaimed the change of the collective spirit. In the case of some Central Mediterranean islands, the turn to the monumental offered an even starker social proclamation. It emphasized difference from the outside world (Robb 2001) while, in an almost contradictory manner, maintained communication with the broader Central Mediterranean.



Figure 94: A view of the Monte d'Accoddi monument, accessed by a ramp, and flanked by a menhirs (seen on the left).



Figure 95: A small carved stela found behind the Monte d'Accoddi main structure.

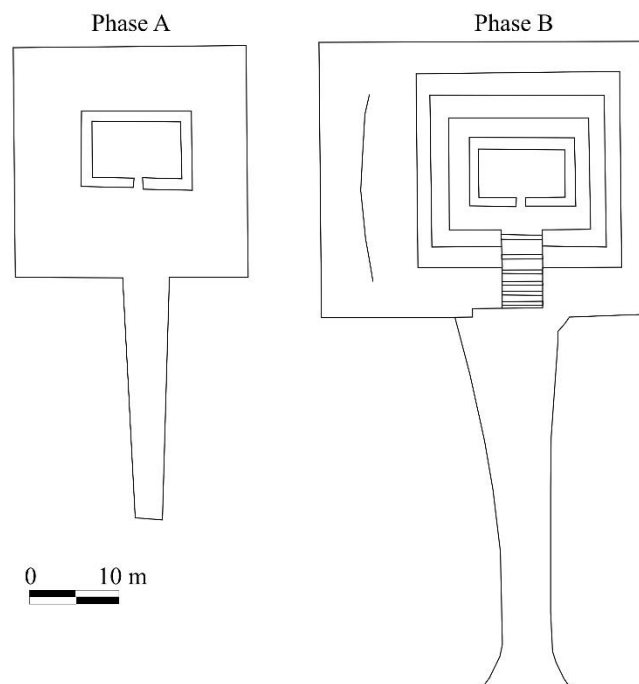


Figure 96: The Monte d'Accoddi monument plan over two phases with the “red hut” addition seen in the Phase B iteration (drawn after Contu 2000: 40).

Of all Central Mediterranean monumentality, the Maltese Temple Period has attracted considerable attention among British and Italian scholars (Recchia and Cazzella 2012; Malone 2007; Cazzella and Moscoloni 2004; Trump 2002). The Maltese Islands were colonized around 5,000 BC. Their lifestyle had much in common with their Sicilian counterparts and was characterized by dispersed settlements and small agricultural communities. However, the connection to the Sicilian world offered much more than an origin. The recovery of Sicilian flint and Liparian and Pantellerian obsidian in Malta as well as red ochre, greenstone, and other raw materials illustrates the interaction enacted by Maltese islanders. Their interaction with Sicily was one of demographic and economic necessity. Yet that interaction began to change around the 4th millennium BC. Obsidian importation declined at a significant rate, which led Trump (1966) to claim evidence of cultural isolation through the Skorba excavations (**Figure 97**). This explanation has held a common appeal as 4th-millennium BC Malta continues to be interpreted by some as a setting of growing isolation matched by a conspicuous cultic monumentality (Malone and Stoddart 2013; 2004). However, these interpretations ignore the Central Mediterranean-wide contraction in obsidian distribution in relation to growing localized cultural units (Robb and Farr 2005), already described in Chapter 4 and 5.

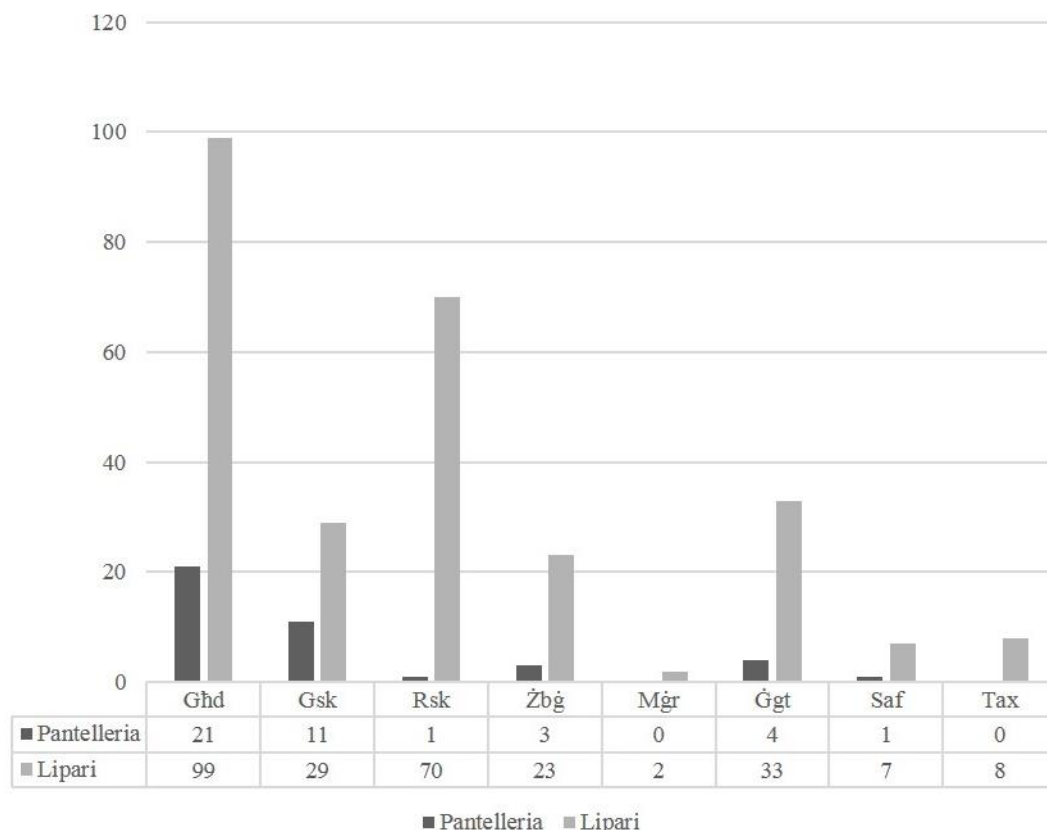


Figure 97: Chart showing obsidian counts from Skorba across multiple periods (Għar Dalam – Ghd, Grey Skorba – GSk, Red Skorba – RSk, Żebbuġ – Żbg, Mġarr – Mgr, Ġgantija – Ġgt, Saflieni – Saf, Tarxien – Tx). The Late Neolithic starts from the Mġarr phase (Mgr) (adapted from Trump 1966: 50).

Perhaps the core of this assumed cultural isolation lies in the underlying understanding of islands in the scholarly sphere. Evans’ extensive research in Malta led him to propose that islands are cultural laboratories often affecting the cultural development of islanders through their physicality (Evans 1973). In particular, he suggested that the human occupation of islands was deeply influenced by isolation and sometimes led to exaggerated displays of monumentality. However, the expectation of island monumentality belies the complex development of these structures over one millennium. There was a quick monumental ramp-up (**Figure 98**). These structures were

built, progressively expanded, and maintained for a millennia (Recchia and Cazzella 2012). Their social function also teetered between cultic sites (Malone 2007), performative spaces (Turnbull 2002), and political spheres. This monumentality was matched by at least two underground hypogea that contrasted with the simple contemporary domestic structures (Malone *et al.* 1988). Most importantly, these structures required ample labor, their internal spaces were restricted to outsiders (**Figure 99**), and their contents were unmatched in domestic contexts (Evans 1996).

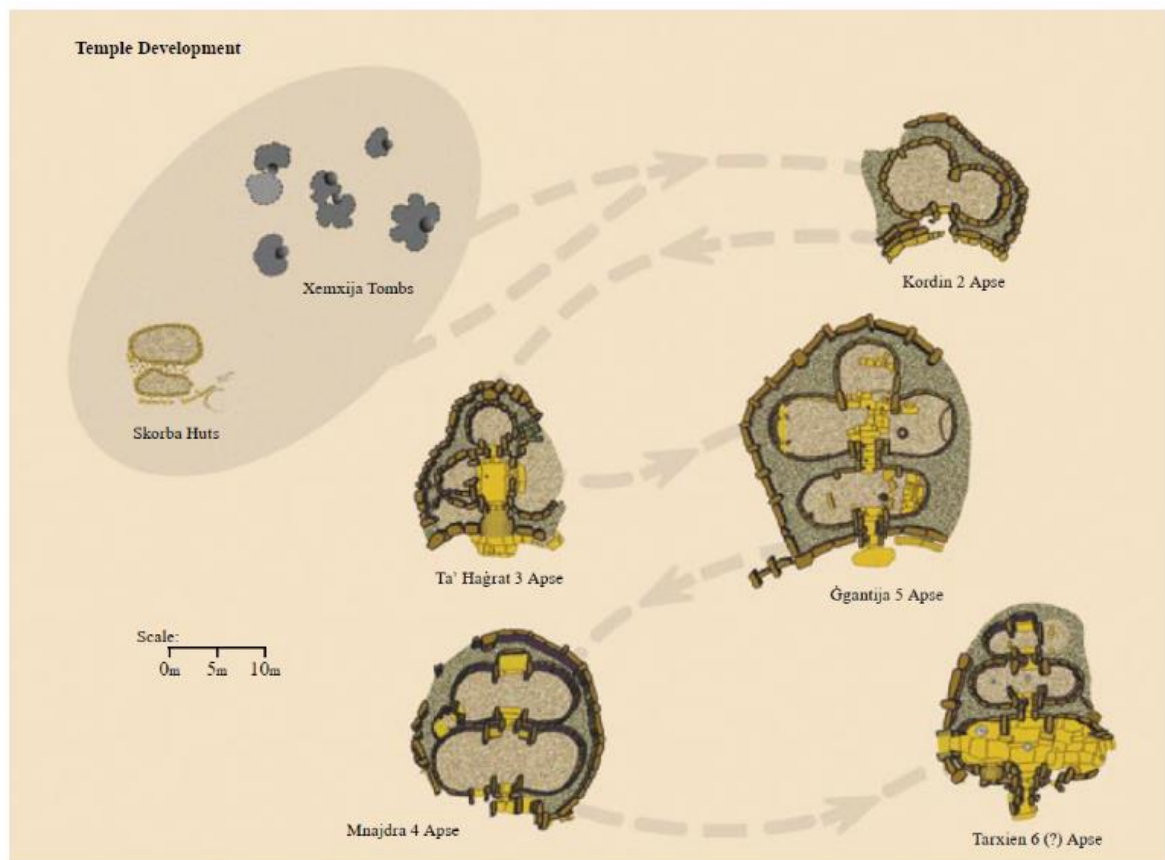


Figure 98: A commonly held interpretation of the evolving megalithic complexes suggests that these structures became increasingly more complex over the Temple Period (after Pace 2004: 29)



Figure 99: V-shaped perforation holes, such as these found in Ġgantija, can often be found situated in doorways and originally used to close these entry ways.



Figure 100: The large curving Mnajdra façade that would have gathered community members and accommodated them on the stone bench.

The construction of these monuments was repetitive but sometimes original. Overall, there was a progressive complexification of these structures, as seen in the development of apsed spaces from three to six apses. In the case of larger monumental sites, like Tarxien, Ġgantija, Haġar Qim, and Mnajdra (**Figure 100**), earlier structures were eventually accompanied by adjoining megalithic structures. The difference between such large sites and smaller monuments (**Figure 101**), like Tal-Qadi, Borġ in-Nadur, Skorba, Ta' Haġrat, Borġ l-Imramma, led Renfrew (1973) to propose a hierarchical division of territories over which these structures would have stood guard. In contrast, the placement of these monuments is now recognized as being tied to overlooking the few scattered fertile plains and significant anchorage bays (Vella 2010; Grima 2008; 2004). Further, the labor requirements of these monuments are now interpreted as requiring cooperative aid by nearby communities while some of these sites might have played an aggregative role for several groups.



Figure 101: The considerably smaller remains of the Skorba monument, seen here from the back and facing the fertile Mġarr plain.

Yet the most imposing aspect of these monuments was the stark contrast between the outside and the inside spaces. Their facades curved in a semi-lunar form that gathered people towards the main entrances (Turnbull 2002), and benches at Mnajdra and Hagar Qim might have offered a respite for groups awaiting the completion of rituals (**Figure 102**). Perforated tethering holes are found in front of or in the immediate vicinity of the main doorways and suggest the presenting of animals. Eventually, these animals were brought into the structures behind doorways and the cacophony of sounds and smells would have signaled the occurrence of rituals to the individuals awaiting outside of the monument.



Figure 102: A closer look of the Mnajdra façade and its stone bench.

Despite the generally held perception that these communities were not hierarchical, and hence supposedly unhindered by considerable power struggles, these monuments reek of ritual and political control. After all, access into these structures was in some ways guarded (at least temporarily). Perhaps more importantly, knowledge of the occurrences behind closed doors was key to those in power. In addition, the artistic imagery and statuary that is considered so characteristic of the Maltese Temple Period (Malone 2008; Vella Gregory 2005; Żammit and Singer 1924) has only been found within these structures and the Hal-Saflieni and Xaghra Circle hypogea. Zoomorphic, anthropomorphic, and schematic depictions are evidence of the beliefs and symbology of these people and also outline internal differences, such as in the limited distribution of animal depictions like as fish (Bugibba), pigs, goats, and sheep (Tarxien), snake (Ġgantija), and bulls (Tarxien, Hal-Saflieni). I argue that the creation of difference, originally suggested by Robb (2001) in terms of the relation between Maltese islanders and other Central Mediterranean communities between the mid 4th and 3rd millennia BC, was perhaps also internalized within the archipelago. Different communities cooperated in constructing these structures, but their attachment to these monuments was emblematic of the intense ideological belief systems that characterized the Maltese Islands in the mid 4th millennium BC.

These disparate monumentalities across the 4th millennium BC emerged from diverse settings but were tied to one common factor: monuments emerged within islands as forms of social exhibitors. These monuments were built to instill a sense of stability, using structures to guard territories and spaces claimed by communities. Such structures began a process of labor obligations that were not balanced by an unrestricted access into

these monuments. Places like Maltese megalithic complex or Sardinia's monuments all led to the aggregation of individuals within one locale that utilized these structures as potent social proclamations on hegemony, obligation, and control.

The Effects of European Connection during the 3rd millennium BC

Up to the mid-3rd millennium BC the Maltese Islands were a cultural anomaly within the wider region. Their cultural development was in stark contrast to the broader Central Mediterranean, which was still largely unburdened by the throbs of monumentality. However, as already outlined above, the narrow understanding of monuments as towering structures of megalithic proportions is bound to omit the broader transformations of the Central Mediterranean. If we think of monumentality as a context-specific structure of considerable significance, then the Central Mediterranean was on the verge of a burgeoning efflorescence.

The monumentality of peninsular Italy in the 3rd millennium BC had a tenuous inspiration from beyond the borders of the Central Mediterranean that were characteristic of this period's broad inter-connectivity into the European continent and the Aegean world. Before I delve into these connections to the world outside of the Central Mediterranean, there is the need for a cautionary disclaimer regarding origins of these monuments. Interpretations based on the process of diffusionism (Childe 1958; Ugolini 1934) have become largely discredited by the broad chronological re-dating after the 1960s. Nevertheless, the Mediterranean basin was a place of broad and sometimes intense connectivity (Horden and Purcell 2006; Morris 2003). Therefore, can we really always expect a localized conception of any cultural development? Clearly, the answer is yes. Cultural developments in 4th millennium BC Corsica and Sardinia were inspired by

exogenous factors, but no such exogenous inspirations can be identified in the case of the Maltese Temple Period. In contrast, the 3rd-millennium BC case of peninsular Italy emerged through both external and internal influences. After all, if the role of monuments was their ability to project the social conditions of any given time, then their creation made sense within their local context.

The 3rd millennium BC in Italian peninsula was characterized renewed broad connections, as already described in Chapter 5. However, it is worth reiterating some of the wider social conditions at this time. First, the interaction with temperate Europe, as seen in the 6th and 4th millennia BC movement of greenstone from Italy into southern and central Europe, was countered by a counter-movement of Bell Beaker assemblages. Second, the ambiguity of Bell Beakers as a cultural assemblage (composed of recognizable ceramic beakers and less recognizable metal and lithic forms) was also paralleled by the expanding construction of dolmens, stelae, and menhirs across the European continent, Iberia, and the Balearic Islands (Ramis 2010), as well as parts of the Tyrrhenian basin. Third, the relative lack of Bell Beaker assemblages and monumental structures in the Adriatic and Ionian basins was substituted by a considerable cultural attachment to the Aegean world. However, the latter connection with the Aegean did not yield any turns towards monumentality. Therefore, the construction of socially significant structures was not a priority in the south-eastern extents of the Central Mediterranean with the exception of north-central Puglia and the Maltese Islands.

In Chapter 7, the burial traditions of the 4th millennium BC were divided between stelae-menhirs in the northern Italian region and rock cut-tombs in central, southern Italy, and Sicily. Despite this setting of widely regional-specific traditions, the use of terrestrial

and maritime corridors for connectivity significantly muddled the neat and distinct impression yielded by a macro-regional view. Indeed, the stelae-menhir traditions of northern Italy spurred at least one southern counterpart at the Castelluccio dei Sauri (Nava 1988). This site is located on the edge of the Monte Dauni, which are at the foothills of the Apennine range that run in a north-south axis with the Italian peninsula. The physicality of these mountainous ranges played a balanced act between creating cultural watersheds, seemingly delimiting the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic basin communities, and also funneling movement of people, ideas, and goods through some valleys that connected the western and eastern extents of the Italian mainland. The stelae-menhirs of Castelluccio dei Sauri are unparalleled in the remainder of Adriatic Puglia, and their codified style was considerably more schematic than their northern Italian counterparts. However, this site was situated at the eastern end of a vital conduit between Campania and Puglia and indicates at least two things. First, the knowledge of stelae-menhirs was widely distributed across the Central Mediterranean despite the general dearth of replication beyond its core area in the north-western parts of peninsular Italy. Second, the appropriation of an extraneous burial tradition was integrated within an entirely localized and distinct cultural setting. As already outlined in Chapter 7, the Castelluccio dei Sauri stelae group appeared tied to a nearby large dolmen and perhaps formed a significant visual connection between cultic and funerary spaces.

The case for the late 3rd-millennium BC Maltese Islands stands on looser ground and contradicts the preferential association of the south-eastern Central Mediterranean to the Aegean. The issues for Malta's 3rd millennium BC were in a great part associated to the presumed end of the Temple Period around 2,500 BC. While the most vocal and

published accounts describe the end of megalithic monumentality and their culture as part of a “ritual failure” accelerated by environmental and societal pressures (Malone and Stoddart 2013), the opposing argument for cultural continuity is (Recchia and Cazzella 2012; Cazzella and Recchia 2012) matched by a complete ideological transformation gives us polar opposite understandings. However, there is an important overlap between the end of the Temple Period and the successive Tarxien Cemetery phase. The finding of local and imported examples of Thermi Ware vessels found at Tas-Silġ in both phases. Thermi Ware refers to a ceramic style found across the Adriatic basin (also known as Cetina Ware in the northern limits of this area), eastern Sicily, and Malta, characterized by beveled beakers and open vessels. These assemblages found at Tas-Silġ led the excavators to suggest an intermediate phase between these two periods characterized by the local production of Thermi Ware.

Yet the end of the 3rd millennium brought about two utilizations of monumentality, after the transitional phase now proposed at Tas-Silġ. First, the Late Neolithic megalithic monuments, which towards the end of their use-life show signs of lacking structural maintenance, experienced variable re-uses. At Tarxien, the southernmost megalithic complex was used to host a large cremation cemetery (Bonanno 1999). On the other hand, the late 3rd millennium BC re-uses of Skorba were interpreted by Trump (1966) as “squatters”. At Tas-Silġ, the adjoining small spaces surrounding the main megalithic complex show varied signs of habitation, cooking, and even kiln firing (Recchia and Cazzella 2012; Cazzella and Recchia 2006). In fact, the interpretation that these occupations were akin to “squatters” minimize the conscious social decision-making of these individuals. Their lack of respect towards the earlier cultic purposes of

these monuments can be seen as an effective hegemonic overturn of the earlier Temple Period obsessions with megalithic cultic complexes, which perhaps formed part of an ideological failure occurring towards the mid-3rd millennium BC.

By the Tarxien Cemetery phase, Maltese prehistoric communities were culturally re-aligned to the eastern Sicilian region (Trump 2004; Bernabò Brea 1988; Bernabò Brea 1976; Evans 1971), as seen from the earlier use of Thermi Ware and later stylistic associations to the Castelluccio culture. However, the Maltese funerary customs also have a certain Tyrrhenian feel. Indeed, the construction of dolmens that characterized the Maltese Islands' turn into the 2nd millennium BC (**Figure 103**) was largely missing in eastern Sicily with some limited exceptions (pers. comm D. Tanasi). Therefore, we are once again faced with an exception to the expectation of circumscribed cultural connections. The Maltese Islands were tied to the south-eastern Central Mediterranean networks and had definite Aegean-centric alignment, but they still turned to monuments found outside of these networks. The appropriation of such foreign elements should not necessarily surprise us, especially if we keep in mind the contemporary state of the collective spirit at this time.



Figure 103: The Wied Filep dolmen, which originally had wide views of the Burmarrad agricultural plain in northern Malta.

The collective spirit of the 3rd millennium BC was affected by broad transformations. Northern Italian networks were experiencing a broad demand for metals, which they were unable/unwilling to distribute across the entire region. However, the affluence of weaponry was emblematic of this period, even if an individual had to turn to lithic examples (Lemorini 2012). Outside of the mainland Italian sphere, the place of islands in these networks is mostly seen as peripheral. However, the arrival of Bell Beakers in Corsica, Sardinia, and western Sicily suggest a more probable focused interaction between receptive groups that inevitably provided a patchy distribution of goods and ideas across the wider Western and Central Mediterranean. In the region under

study, the collective spirit was at a tenuous state. Monumentality, either appropriated from outsiders or locally conceived, began to emphasize the receding limits of collectivity to the extents of family units. Therefore, monuments of this period were meant to visualize the place of individuals and their association to wider social ideals.

The monuments of northern Italy have already found a considerable place in earlier descriptions of Chapters 6 and 7. The importance of the northern limits of the Central Mediterranean lies in the fact that the Ligurian and Po coastlines extended the association of this region well into southern France, Central Europe and Eastern Europe. The cultural attachment to the European continent was especially stark in northern Italy as this region exhibited a long-term association to the Central European region, a pattern that will be once again repeated during the mid 2nd millennium BC. However, for the 3rd millennium BC, the distribution of Bell Beaker assemblages was only one of several cultural overlaps. The distinct but related stelae-menhir traditions of Val d'Aosta, Lunigiana, Valcamonica, and Alto Adige were inspired by broader stelae traditions moving around the European continent and entering the Mediterranean basin perhaps through the southern French and northern Italian coastline (Guilaine 2004). These monuments were figurative, often tied to funerary practices or megalithic burial structures, and depicted armed or well-adorned individuals. The schematization of these figures, often appearing broken down to the bare minimum of human characteristics, lead us to treat these stelae-menhir as idealized beings that dotted the landscape and stressed the attempt at memorialization by communities.

The visual impact and memory tied to these monuments exhibited the contemporary desire to promote the accomplishments and idealized characteristics of the

time. In the 3rd millennium BC the combination of weaponry (metal and stone), the expanding emphasis on burying individuals separately, the construction of megalithic monuments in honor of the dead, and the figurative depiction of highly-estimated social characteristics tied these monuments to Northern Italy as a confluence between European and Central Mediterranean cultural systems. These structures were also countered by the relative simplicity of domestic settlements along the Ligurian coastline and Po River Remedello culture sites. On the other hand, the dearth of domestic settlements in the Alpine Valcamonica and Valtellina region suggests the mixed duality of agricultural and pastoral lifestyles that co-existed in this region. The monumentality of this period was comprised of a fine balance between the built and natural. The influence of individuals aspiring to gain power was transmitted through their memorialization and their ability to appropriate external ideas to their own cultural settings. Central Mediterranean monumentality was at its twilight in the 3rd millennium BC. While some islands had already experienced a prolonged period of large megalithic architecture, peninsular Italy was divided in its cultural reach between the European continent and the Aegean. These overlaps beyond the Central Mediterranean became even further stressed in the 2nd millennium BC.

A Flirting Aegean and an Exploding Italian Mainland in the 2nd millennium BC

The Central Mediterranean interest in the Aegean was perhaps not mutual, as the latter people's interests remained firmly concentrated on the Eastern Mediterranean allure. Cultural inspiration from the Aegean was re-ignited in the 2nd millennium BC after a lull in interaction between these regions occurred towards the end of the 3rd millennium

BC. The broad interaction in the 2nd millennium BC between the south-eastern Central Mediterranean and the Aegean has already featured in Chapter 5 and was described as following preferential points of access established earlier in the 3rd millennium BC. In the case of Italian communities, their connection with the wider Adriatic basin (including well-established interactions between the *Caput Adriae* and the Croatian coastline) became focused in the 2nd millennium BC. The movement of amber from the European continent (P. Tunzi Sisto 2006; Radina and Recchia 2004) moved across the Adriatic side of Italy and reached incoming eastern seafarers in the Ionian area (Cazzella 1996). This area was an important meeting point for focused interaction with the Eastern Mediterranean after the 18th century BC. The interests of seafarers in this region was not matched across the entire Puglian-Basilicata region. Communities situated further up the Adriatic coastline experienced a convoluted Aegean connection indirectly through their southern counterparts.

This limited interaction with the Aegean was nevertheless matched by an explosive settlement aggregation in south-eastern Italy (Cazzella 1994b), the first of its kind and intensity in the Italian mainland. These communities, emboldened by their interaction with the Aegean world and their ability to control those interactions to their own benefits, diverted a considerable rate of their overall labor capabilities towards the construction of colossal fortifications (Scarano 2012; 2010b; Recchia 2010a). The significance of this 2nd-millennium BC aggregation was even more pronounced in contrast to the distinct contraction experienced in the Puglian region after the end of the Neolithic and coincided with the abandonment of the densely populated Tavoliere Plain. The expansion of settlements in this region had a tenuous origin. It is largely interpreted

by scholars as either affected by Aegean settlement models or else the increase of interaction with the Aegean world brought to the Puglian coastline a previously unmatched array of desired objects and raw materials. From a minimalist standpoint, interactions with the Eastern Mediterranean world had at least one profound effect. It placed some communities at the core of contemporary interactions while others found themselves on the outside of these direct contacts.

Nevertheless, the conspicuous drive for consumption did not have a proportional reaction in the scale of monumentality achieved by communities across this region. Even for groups situated outside of the direct Aegean contact, their turn to monumental fortification was ubiquitous. In fact, despite the considerable difference in settlement size seen between coastal settlements (Rocavecchia and Scoglio del Tonno) and highland sites (Chiancudda), all of these inhabitants expended a certain degree of energy towards the construction of perimeter walls (**Figure 104**). Inevitably, the complexity of these fortifications varied according to the site location. In the case of coastal settlements, their earlier walls were often of considerable thickness (ca. five to eight meters), accompanied by multiple towers, and two-tiered gates (**Figure 105**). Highland sites were also surrounded by fortification walls, although diminutive in their size and matching the reduced settlement size. However, the construction of large fortification walls, despite the settlement scale or geographical location, lends an insight into the collective state at this time.



Figure 104: Map showing 2nd millennium fortified settlements across the southern Central Mediterranean (after Cazzella and Recchia 2013: 46).

The purpose of fortification walls seems like a simple extrapolation. These walls added security to the settlements that they surrounded and kept others at bay if necessary. However, the nuances of fortification walls were manifold as structures. Their constructions created potent visual messages that emphasized the place and ambitions of communities over their surrounding landscapes. Fortifications in their primary functionality as defensive structures were an overkill within a technological setting that lacked siege weapons. Instead, these features were built purposely as larger-than-life constructions. They required the mobilization of labor and also its supervision. These

fortifications were routinely maintained and even modified while the internal layout of these settlements remained largely composed of small-sized domestic structures intermingled with productions spaces. However, all of these aspects do not quite account for the reasons behind the rapid monumentalization of the Puglian landscape.



Figure 105: The monumental doorway at Rocavecchia in southern Puglia (after Scarano 2010a: 241).

The construction of these fortifications was tied to the social conditions of the time, as well as relatively widespread outside of Puglia itself (particularly in the Po Plain area and Corsica and Sardinia). In Puglia, community members seem to have participated in the construction of these walls as part of their familial duties. At Coppa Nevigata the excavators have even suggested that families could have been responsible for the construction and maintenance of certain wall segments (Recchia 2007). Their contributions to these walls reified the structures and the individuals who gave their labor

to build such monuments. Indeed, the burial of single individuals underneath these walls might illustrate their importance and association to the defense of their community. However, the defense argument has a further weakness: there were only scattered instances of burning and associated violence. Furthermore, assured instances of widespread fire along the fortification walls accompanied by arrowheads found outside of these walls have only been discovered at Rocavecchia and Coppa Nevigata towards the end of the 2nd millennium BC (**Figure 106**) (Recchia 2010a; Bietti Sestieri 2008). Therefore, for at least a prolonged period, the threat offered by outsiders was not sufficient enough to create a sense of warring communities (although the existence of violence can neither be totally discounted). Instead, these walls offered to these communities a sense of opulence with the added bonus of protection.

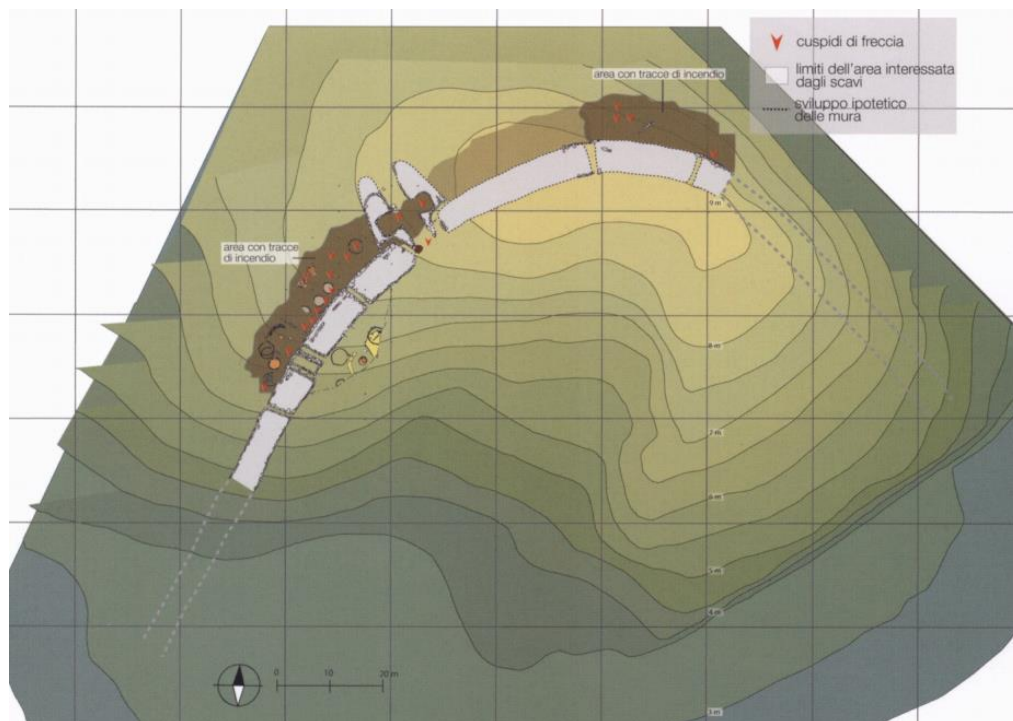


Figure 106: Site plan of Coppa Nevigata showing signs of a widespread fire (shown in brown) accompanied by dropped arrowheads (shown in red) (after Recchia 2010a: TAV VI).

In the northern Adriatic region, the mid 2nd millennium BC experienced the rapid demographic rise of the Terramare culture that lasted over three hundred years before contracting once again. The role of the Terramare settlements in the contemporary interaction networks has already been outlined in Chapter 5. These settlements played a crucial role as communicators between central Europe and the Mediterranean, undertook an extensive metal production, and distributed other desirable objects, such as amber and glass paste. The Terramare settlements were impressive for a number of reasons and monumental. First, the rapid population boom in this region led to the establishment of well over sixty settlements in the Emilia region alone (**Figure 107**) (Cardarelli 1992). Second, these sites exhibited a keen adaptability to the lagoonal and riverine conditions of this area and were often composed of exterior ramparts, wooden palisades, and arranged streets. Third, the earthwork structures and moats excavated around these sites required a considerable labor expense by these communities, which were also preoccupied with their agricultural lifestyle and adjoining hunting. Fourth, the cultural make-up of the Terramare culture, unmatched in the Italian peninsula, found various rapprochements with the Central European Urnfield culture (Vanzetti 2010). Finally, the division between domestic settlements and burial sites was well-defined as the latter were particularly utilized by a number of nearby settlements.

At these necropolises, the grouping of individuals was seemingly divided by group identity and reflected the social status of the deceased. In combination, all of the above factors illustrated the almost explosive expansion of the Terramare world. Their monumentality was rooted in their rapid expansion and then their rapid contraction that

led to their replacement towards the end of the 2nd millennium BC by nearby settlements, like Frattesina. The settlement of Frattesina picked up where the Terramare settlements had left off. Its community managed to control the flow of goods within this region and tied itself seamlessly with wider connections between northern and southern Italy (Bietti Sestieri 1990, Biavati and Verità 1989). Furthermore, while the Puglian landscape was dominated by colossal fortifications, built beyond the defensive needs of the time, the north-eastern Italian urban aggregation was sudden and artificial. It could never sustain itself beyond a certain point, and its decline was a victim of multiple causes. Yet for as long as this Terramare culture existed, its density, role in Central Mediterranean inter-connectivity, and settlement-necropolis layouts was monumental in its breadth, aggregation, and control beyond its immediate surroundings.

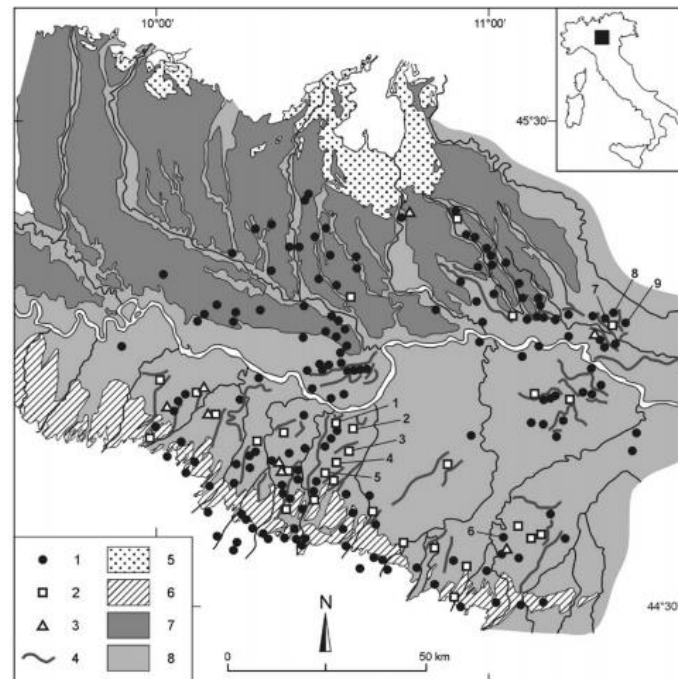


Figure 107: Distribution map of Terramare settlements (black circles) in northern Italy (after Cremaschi *et al.* 2006: 88)

The efflorescence of monumentality on the Italian mainland was variable but almost certainly showed signs of a broader presence. In contrast, the Central Mediterranean islands, some of which had previously experienced unique turns to the monumental, offer a clear contraction of monumentality. Aside from the notable exception of Sardinia, the place of islands in the 2nd-millennium BC Central Mediterranean was tied to their respective roles within the region's broader inter-connectivity. For instance, the re-expansion of human occupation in the Aeolian Islands (Bietti Sestieri 2013b; 1980; Bernabò Brea 1976) as well as smaller off-coast islands like Vivara (Marazzi and Re 1986; Buchner *et al.* 1978) were tied to the encroaching Eastern Mediterranean seafaring interests. This movement into the Tyrrhenian Sea was also countered by a reduction in Aegean interests north of the Ionian-Adriatic confluence, as already discussed in Chapter 5. Instead, the Tyrrhenian Sea after the 15th century BC became an inter-connected space and several islands played a role in this broad movement of objects and people.

Despite this varied inter-connectivity across this region, monumentality did not arise from a lack of or surfeit of interaction with the outside world. In most examples above it seems that monumentality on islands emerged in contexts of internalized world-making. In the case of mainland Italy, the rapid early settlement aggregation occurred in nodal parts of the peninsula. These urban aggregations were located in areas of both agricultural worth as well as situated in relation to predominant movement routes (land and sea). For some small islands their colonization was the first permanent occupation. However, for Pantelleria the arrival of individuals hailing from Sicily brought its cultural

make-up that became quickly adapted to the new island settings and the even smaller island of Ustica.

The case for Pantelleria was especially attenuated. The establishment of Mursia marked the earliest known permanent settlement on this island, despite the fact that obsidian was procured from Pantelleria as early as the 7th millennium BC (Mulazzani *et al.* 2010). Mursia, seemingly the largest settlement of the island, was situated facing the Channel of Sicily but was out of sight of both Sicily and Tunisia. Furthermore, the north-western coast of this island faces the predominant wind and currents, which often make sea travel difficult even to this present day. Out of sight of any neighboring land, the village of Mursia was composed up of the typical vestiges of mid 2nd-millennium BC Sicilian communities, as seen in the ceramic and metallurgical styles (Cattani *et al.* 2012). However, the adaptation to this island space required some alterations to the contemporary Sicilian cultural make-up. Huts were built in an elliptical form and sunken into the bedrock while the internal spaces were occupied by family units, perhaps clustered in separate zones within the settlement of Mursia (**Figure 108**). The southernmost limit of the settlement was cordoned off by a large fortification wall that still stands high. Unlike examples found on the Italian mainland, the Mursia fortification wall lacked towers and a monumental doorway. Instead, this perimeter wall stood at an impressive height and was composed of unworked volcanic stones. The wider landscape surrounding Mursia was a barren, jagged landscape, quite unlike other more favorable parts of the islands. However, within this particular landscape the settlement of Mursia and its fortification wall were accompanied by an external necropolis made up of the unparalleled *sesi*.

These *sesi* were built turreted structures constructed out of roughly worked volcanic stone (Tusa 1997c) that at a distance often resemble a mere pile of rubble. Instead, these structures range considerably in their size and were divided into two clusters to the north and south of Mursia (Nicoletti and Tusa 2012b). The northern *sesi* cluster was located next to the only known spring in the north-western part of semi-arid Pantelleria. The southern structure cluster was larger and more expansive than its northern counterpart. These monuments suggest a pattern seen in the contemporary Central Mediterranean at large: necropolises became grounds for emphasizing kin lineages. The turn to the monumental did not belie this attachment to the familial unit, and in Pantelleria the *sesi* were worthy abodes for the dead. A varying number of side-corridors provided access into separate small chambers in which inhumated individuals were laid to rest and accompanied by meagre funerary assemblages. While the paucity of artifacts can be interpreted as indicative of the peripheral place of this island, I would rather interpret Mursia as a short-term example of insular settings and the creative nature of island communities. The *sesi* in the context of Sicilian archaeology offered an alternative path to the representing the collective. These inhabitants of Mursia choose to memorialize their lineages through the use of a collective monumentality. If we separate these structures from each other they seem nothing more than a pile of rubble. However, the construction of several *sesi* in close relation to each other within the jagged and black barren landscape of the Mursia area and within site of the looming fortification wall gives us a sense of an invisible-visible landscape.



Figure 108: The Mursia settlement and fortification walls in Pantelleria (after Nicoletti 2010: 18).

The occupation of Ustica followed comparable short-term developments. Ustica is located over fifty kilometers to the north-west of the Palermo area in Sicily. Like Pantelleria, this island remained unoccupied until the mid-2nd millennium BC when the settlement of Faraglioni was established on the northern side of Ustica (**Figure 109**) (Holloway and Lukesh 2001; Holloway *et al.* 1995; Holloway 1981). Both of these islands have a volcanic origin, but they are also situated at a certain distance from any neighboring communities. The settlers of Ustica between the 14th and 13th century BC brought a cultural package similar to the northern Sicilian and Aeolian Island communities. Standing to the west of the Aeolian Islands, Ustica led Holloway to question whether the role of this island was comparable to other contemporary small offshore islands that acted as conduits and bases for eastern seafarers moving through the Tyrrhenian basin in the mid-2nd millennium BC. However, the settlement of Faraglioni provided little to no evidence of such connections with the Mycenaean world. This settlement lasted for about a century with over 300 huts accompanied by a large

fortification wall cordoning off this settlement. The interpretation of Faraglioni's fortification walls as being related to defensibility concerns seems exaggerated for this time period, which was presumably devoid of piracy as seen in later historical periods. Instead, the construction of large walls, despite their lack of functional use, might have given a sense of safety to these communities who were willing to isolate themselves in small, fragile, and semi-arid islands. Ultimately, their success was limited to a century and the island was once again abandoned after the 13th century BC. In these small islands the 2nd millennium BC was akin to a short burst of light that eventually led the inhabitants to abandon their well-built settlements and impressive fortification walls. In contrast, the case for Sardinia was completely opposite.

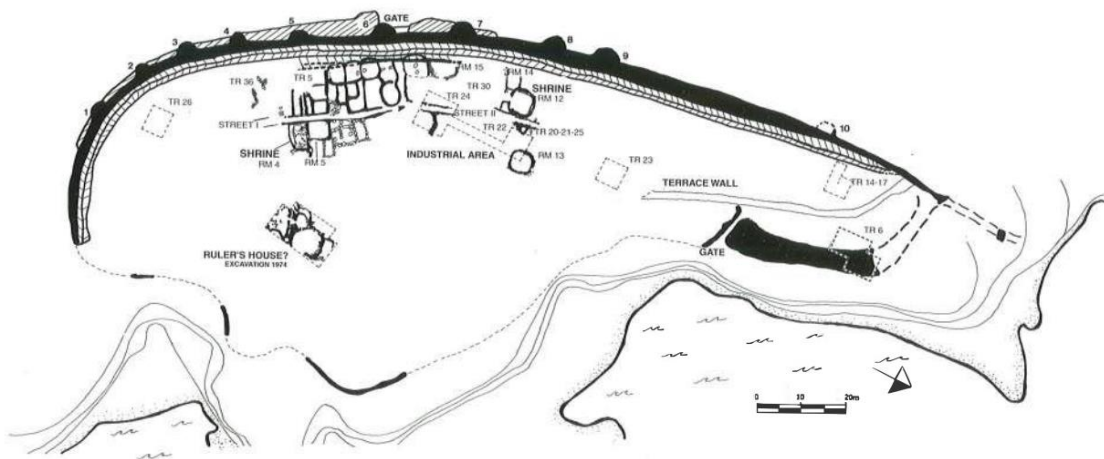


Figure 109: Plan of the Le Faraglioni site at Ustica, located in the northern extent of the island, delimited by a fortification wall (shown in black) that was further extended at a secondary moment (shown in hatched lines) (after Holloway and Lukesh 2001: 14)

The 2nd millennium BC re-ignited the monumental constructions on Sardinia that lasted over a millennium. The beginnings of this Nuragic culture are ambiguous in part due to their limited recovery and relative un-monumental character in contrast to the later

mature periods of this culture. The *proto-nuraghi* structures (**Figure 110**), often identified as the antecedents of the fully formed *nuraghi*, were nothing more than built elevated platforms on top of which a few small structures were constructed while the underneath spaces were perhaps used to house livestock during the night (Demurtas and Demurtas 1992; 1989). All in all, these constructions reflected the broader transformation in Sardinian society between the end of the 3rd to the early 2nd millennium BC into pastoral lifestyles that required protection of livestock and their grazing (Lilliu 2012). If we assume an ideological continuity between the *proto-nuraghi* and the later *nuraghi*, then their common role would have stressed visual control and resource protection in the highly variable Sardinian landscape.



Figure 110: The *proto-nuraghi* surrounded by the later 1st millennium BC water sanctuary at Santa Vittoria.



Figure 111: The meeting hut at the Nuraghe Losa situated immediately in front of the main entrance into the monument.

The visual interests of *nuraghi* were indisputable, but these were hardly their only scope. As the Nuragic culture developed after the mid-2nd millennium BC, its reach across Sardinia was far-ranging. *Nuraghi* were situated in low-lying plains to highland plateaus to rugged mountainous settings. Unlike earlier instances of Sardinia monumentality that tended to limit themselves to a particular area, the Nuragic culture covered this entire island with well over 7,000 *nuraghi*. These *nuraghi* became ideological symbols of this culture promoting a sense of social order, labor requirements, and stressing group identity (Araque Gonzalez 2014; Blake 2014a). By the 15th century BC, some *nuraghi* reached a level of considerable structural complexity as the central turrets became surrounded multiple towers, eventually expanding at the largest sites even further with the addition of parapets and bastions after the 12th century BC. These sites presumably held sway over other surrounding settlements (Vanzetti *et al.* 2013). Their

connection was perhaps loosely tied together, but there is no doubt that sites like Nuraghe Su Nuraxi di Barumini, Palmavera, and Nuraghe Losa (**Figure 111**) were large and impressive monuments in their contemporary settings. Such sites inspired awe and stressed their importance through their verticality while domestic huts surrounded these monuments in tight clusters and sought to be as close as possible to the central structures and their political power.

Sardinia's monumentality extended beyond the *nuraghi* to include the megalithic funerary monuments known as *tombe dei giganti*, which have already been described in Chapter 7. These tomb structures played a significant role in their spatial organization, often situated on the border of territories or placed in elevation with wide visual watersheds (Blake 2002; Bittichesu 1998). Their preferential locations suggest their social and political role as sites of aggregation for various communities. Social stresses would have been eased at such sites as individuals came together to bury their deceased and reduce social tensions among the living. These megalithic tombs also experienced a notable evolution of their façade styles. Indeed, the construction of the *tombe dei giganti* was inspired by the 3rd millennium BC stelae and *allée couverte* (gallery graves). In fact, Li Lolghi began as a gallery grave and a 2nd millennium façade was added, which illustrates to us the transition between these two funerary monuments. The doorways of earlier *tombe dei giganti* resembled augmented stelae that were eventually replaced by more orthogonal construction techniques and formalized doorways. These tombs acted as opposites of the nuragic settlements. The settlements emphasized the centrality of the *nuraghi* that dominated the landscape and required constant maintenance. The *tombe dei giganti* extolled the cooperative nature of Nuragic societies. Individuals were buried in

collective settings, which resulted in losing their individual identities in favor of access to a collective identity. This contradiction depicts Nuragic society as enthralled by monumentality and thoroughly invested in displaying itself as teetering between cooperative collectives and being increasingly concerned with accessing power.

The overall situation in the 2nd- millennium BC Central Mediterranean was a disparate one in terms of monumentality. The Nuragic society in Sardinia, and by extension Corsica, was a millennium long internalization of island socio-cultural developments. Not unlike Malta in the 4th and 3rd millennia BC Temple Period, the nuragic culture was centralized by a growing and dense monumentality that spanned across domestic, cultic, political, and funerary contexts. *Nuraghi* and other accompanying Sardinian monuments reflected a divergent island development that dominated the landscape and make-up of the nuragic culture. In contrast, peninsular Italy found itself once again split into two nodes (north-eastern and south-eastern) characterized by extensive urbanism and broad connectivity beyond the Central Mediterranean. Yet for the Terramare and Puglian societies their turn to the monumental was catalyzed by the unparalleled aggregation of connected settlements. This *quasi*-explosive expansion in the Italian peninsula had a shorter timeline than Sardinia nuragic culture, perhaps because the collective spirit in the former was weakened by too many variables. All together these variables brought the Central Mediterranean to the doorway of an expanding inequality that was no longer hidden by a false sense of collectivity.

Monumentality on the Italian Mainland and the Expanding Inequality of the 1st millennium BC

The Nuragic culture reached its apex by the end of the 2nd millennium BC, but even in its last centuries there was no sense of a declining monumentality. Indeed, by the 8th century BC the Nuragic Sardinia had reached a point that Usai (2011) described as a particular high point that inevitably required either another cultural acceleration or else a cultural overhaul. The monumentality of Sardinia at the later stage of the Nuragic culture experienced at least two broad shifts that were indicative of expanding groups of powerful individuals.

First, as the *nuraghi* as physical structures became less maintained (sometime even showing signs of disrepair and structural damage), the placement of meeting huts in their immediate vicinity seemed like a calculated political move (**Figure 112**). At most of the larger nuragic sites like Nuraghe Losa, Su Nuraxi di Barumini, and Palmavera, these structures were situated in such a way as to block direct access into the *nuraghi*. The political nature of these *capanne delle riunioni* (meeting huts) was undisputable. These meeting huts brought a group of individuals together within a space that was largely composed by benches, niches probably holding *bronzetti*, and model of a *nuraghi* situated in the center of the hut. Indeed, these *nuraghi* models seem to become more common (in stone and metal form) around the 9th and 8th centuries BC as the actual nuragic structures became less maintained (Holloway 2001; Blake 1997). I have already described these nuragic models in Chapter 6 as a distilling of the ideological and political potency of the *nuraghi* into figurative form.



Figure 112: The meeting hut at Su Nuraxi di Barumini (blue arrow) located immediately outside of the main gate leading into the *nuraghi*.

Second, at this moment of Sardinia's prehistory the political transformations at large illustrated the slow shift from the earlier centralization of the *nuraghi* to the expansion of a powerful group (Ialongo 2013). This group of individuals did not overhaul the hegemony of Nuragic Sardinia. Instead, they exploited the prolonged development of this culture by exalting its symbology leading to the promulgation of *nuraghi* models, idealizing individuals depicted in the *bronzetti* figurines, and continuing to inhabit the same settlements. However, this period was also characterized by the construction of water sanctuaries and feasting sites located in areas of significance and probably routinely re-visited during the year. The connections between nuragic settlements and these new ritual sites might at first glance seem like a radical contraposition. Instead, several overlapping elements can be found in these two settings. For instance, the use of meeting huts was also found in these new ritual sites, such as at Santa Vittoria and Santa Cristina (**Figure 113**). These ritual sites seem to have taken up some of the roles played by earlier *tombe dei giganti*, particularly by acting as sites of group aggregation and playing a crucial role in the easement of social tensions. The artifacts found at these sites

and inside the deep impressive ritual wells also included the deposition of large number of *bronzetti* figurines and other artifacts.

However, the cumulative effects of these political transformations in Sardinia leads us back to Usai's proposal that the Nuragic culture was at a crossroads of sorts after the 8th century BC. It was unable to change in a dramatic fashion over a short time span. Yet it also showed signs of a diminished collective in favor of an expanding group of individuals keen on controlling the political and ideological reins of their societies (Ialongo 2013). The evidence for this social shift has already emerged in the earlier discussion on later prehistoric Sardinian burials in Chapter 7. Mainly, the burial of individuals was accompanied by an idealization of their character and attributes, as seen in the particular case of Mont'e Prama. Even in other burial sites, single inhumations were the contemporary norm, which stood at odds with the earlier collective burials of the 2nd millennium BC. In the final moments of the Sardinian Nuragic culture, the collective spirit had become especially strained as these communities felt no need to exalt a group setting. Instead, some of the idealized elements of the Nuragic culture were emphasized to display the potency of individuals and exhibit their place in the "nuragic ideal".

In the previous sections, Tyrrhenian central Italy is conspicuously absent from the Central Mediterranean. This absence was not based on a lack of human activity. Indeed, the archaeology of the Tyrrhenian Italian coastline was very much tied to the prevalence of terrestrial and maritime movement, which had begun to re-intensify towards the end of the 2nd millennium BC. In fact, as the seafaring interaction intensified in the Tyrrhenian basin and the Eastern Mediterranean, the effects of the ending Mycenaean Palatial

societies was met by a stalled settlement aggregation in Puglia and Basilicata. In contrast, central Italian communities were coming quite into their own towards the end of the 2nd millennium BC.



Figure 113: The meeting hut at the water sanctuary of Santa Cristina, located in the immediate vicinity of the well and adjoining structures.

There was clear a demographic reaction by the 12th century BC in central Italy. Sites like Sorgenti della Nova (Catacchio Negroni 1995) were established at this point and overturned earlier 2nd millennium settlement patterns (**Figure 114**). Indeed, up to the 12th century BC settlement in the Etrurian region was seemingly located along transhumant routes, which is also confirmed through the overwhelming presence of livestock in known archaeological sites. In contrast, the establishment of hilltop sites towards the end of the 2nd millennium BC appeared related to a proto-urban aggregation

identified in the expanding settlement size and the hierarchical association of larger sites to smaller settlements (Pacciarelli 2000).

The novelty of this proto-urban transformation was based in its stark contrast to other Central Mediterranean moments of aggregation, already noted above in north-eastern and south-eastern Italy. Etrurian proto-urbanism lacked the grandiose fortification and associated structures of other earlier Italian examples. Instead, the urban characteristics of this development, often dubbed as proto-Villanovan, was focused on the creation of settlement hierarchies and resource control. At Sorgenti della Nova, a settlement located on a protruding *tuffo* hilltop, the site appeared divided between larger huts at its apex, other huts around the bottom of the hilltop, and caves excavated into the volcanic rock. In visual form, this inter-settlement division yielded a sense of a structured social difference. Huts located at the top of this site were larger and lacked production areas which were better represented in structures beneath them that were also used for domestic, production, and animal storage purposes. Therefore, even by simply looking at this site, any contemporary would have experienced a sense of verticality: individuals at the top appeared to have comparably more important roles within their societies. Further, a major site like Sorgenti della Nova was also interested in controlling its immediate territory as seen in the relation between larger sites and surrounding smaller sites (Bietti Sestieri 2010: 233; Pacciarelli 2000: 100; Catacchio Negroni 1995).



A

B

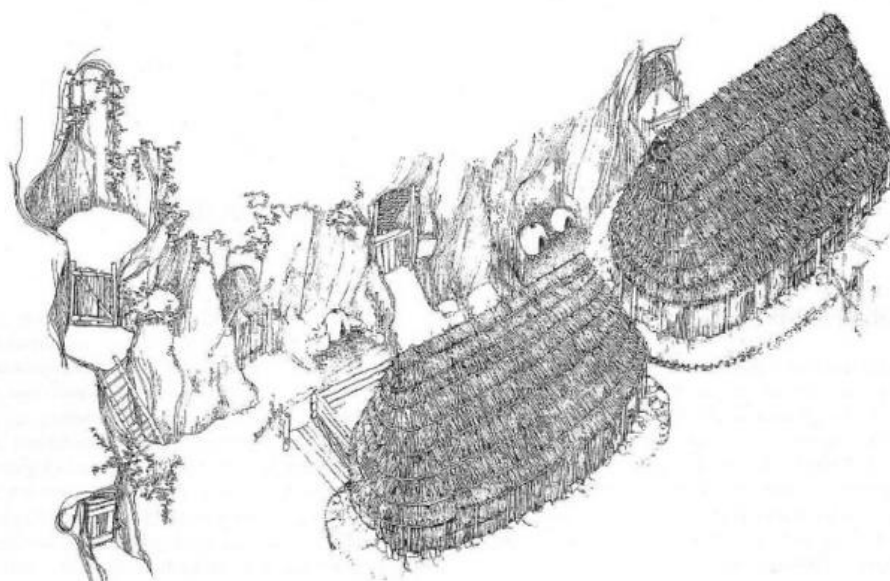


Figure 114: The topographic site plan (A) of Sorgenti della Nova shows two distinct zones of occupation. A number of large elliptical huts are located at the top of the Sorgenti della Nova hill (shown in blue), while a number of smaller structures (B) were built against the hill and included evidence of domestic and production activities along

with livestock rearing (shown in red) (after Negroni Catacchio and Domanico 2001: 338, 343).

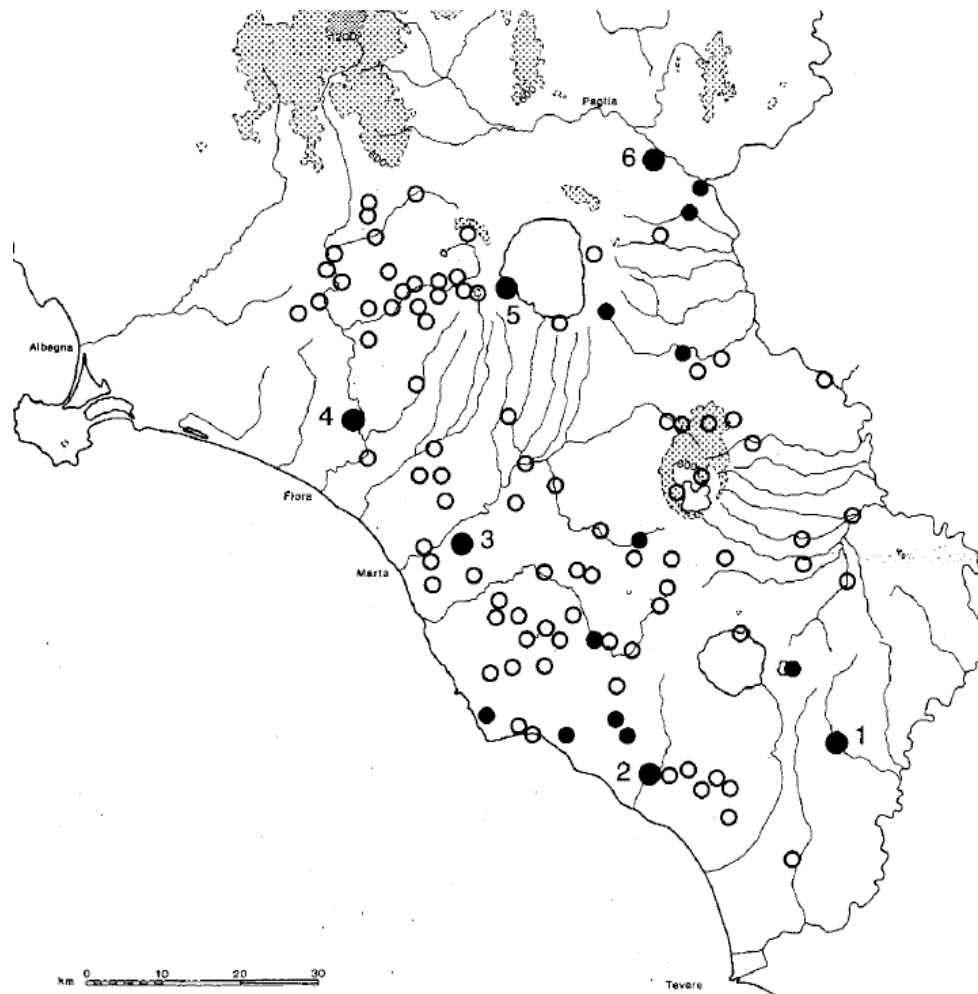


Figure 115: Map of Etruria showing abandoned sites by the early 1st millennium BC (empty circles) and sites with continued occupation between the Bronze and Iron Age (black circles), particularly 1. Veii, 2. Caere, 3. Tarquinia, 4. Vulci, 5. Bisenzio, 6. Orvieto (Pacciarelli 2000: 108).

By 1,000 BC most of these established sites were abandoned, which momentarily stalled the aggregation process of the Etrurian region. However, the presumed movement of people was rapidly countered by the Villanovan expansion that extended over one-third of peninsular Italy within a century (Bietti Sestieri 2012; Bartoloni 2000). This

expansion remains a largely unexplained phenomenon. Its rapid expansion and receptivity by communities outside of Etruria proper (cf. Gastaldi 2006) was a remarkable occurrence that was perhaps aided by the relative weakened state of proto-urbanism in these region. Otherwise, an alternative explanation could posit that by the 9th century BC the Italian peninsular world was willing to accept Villanovan cultural elements as agreeable to their own social settings. After all, Villanovan culture emphasized individuals in their burials as well as their attachment to weaponry and armor. The expansion of the Villanovan culture also brought across Italy a much appreciated metallurgical tradition that could have also aided individuals in power to stress their wealth and access to special objects in relation others. I have already mentioned in Chapter 7 the increasing desirability of javelins in central Italian communities, which extended beyond Etruria into the Lazio and even the Campanian region. These powerful individuals utilized their ability to access fine weaponry in order to stress their ideological knowledge and their connections to far-flung parts of the Italian peninsula.

Yet perhaps the most impressive monumentality of the Villanovan culture has to do with its prolonged duration. After the 9th and 8th centuries BC, the earlier hilltop sites located on naturally defensible locales were replaced by the establishment of low-lying sites with immediate access to agricultural plains and irrigation. Furthermore, a significant number of these settlements eventually became sites known in historic records, such as Tarquinia, Vulci, Caere, and Chiusi (**Figure 115**). At their earliest foundation, these historic cities were made up of an aggregation of several settlements in close-distance to each other that eventually became conjoined into one large settlement.

The collective spirit in late Villanovan/early Etruscan societies had shrunk to the level of families. These various early urban aggregations suggest distinct clustering of groups that were separate from each other for a number of unknown reasons. This connection to the family unit was hardly surprising in the context of the Italian peninsula, particularly as the familial unit became further stressed in the early Roman world (Terrenato 2011; Smith 2006). I have provided in this chapter and in Chapter 7 a myriad of evidence that suggests an overall diminishment of the collective, particularly more attenuated in peninsular Italy as early as the 2nd millennium BC than its surrounding islands.

By the 8th century BC, the prehistoric societies at the threshold of written history were reduced to family-wide collectives. Their eventual aggregation into large urban settlements arguably would only increase their reliance on the family as a cooperative and supportive unit for its members. The cooperation between individuals outside of the family context was to become predominated by hierarchical differences, expanding administrative systems, and an established class of powerful individuals socially situated above its peers. In this last glimpse of the Central Mediterranean later prehistory, one can see this growing social difference in the establishment of Etruscan necropolis after the 7th century BC. From large mounds carved out of the volcanic *tuffo* to surrounding small burial structures cluttering the intermediate spaces between large monuments, the development of social inequality was formalized and the prehistory of this region was at an end.

Disparate Monumentalities and various Facets of Social Inequality

This chapter began by stressing the differences between our pre-conceived idea of monuments and the disparate forms of monumentalities present in the prehistoric world. After the above long-term view of the Central Mediterranean world between the 4th and 1st millennia BC, the reason for this emphasis should be readily apparent. As we examine the uptake or lack of monumentality in the various communities across the multi-ecological spaces of this region, it appears to me that monuments emerged along with some unifying factors. However, they were also often conceived either through localized innovation or by appropriating exogenous cultural elements and re-adapting them according to the norms of a given community.

The uses and intensity of inequality in these disparate monumental settings were varied. However, over this entire region there were at least two broad transformations. First, the post-Neolithic setting was met by little monumentality with the exception of peripheral islands that were actively creating internalized worlds. In this historical moment, the state of the collective emphasized group identities that were characterized by the marking of their surrounding landscapes. Second, in post-3rd- millennium BC mainland Italy there was a growing emphasis on idealized individuals with accompanying prestige objects buried in collective or individual burials. In the case of collective burials, we can interpret this burial custom to signify an attempt to depict a false sense of collectivity. On the other hand, individualized burials were meant to highlight the collective spirit as extending to familial units, as also suggested by the typical distinct clustering of tombs within larger necropolises.

Social inequality was well represented by prehistoric monuments in tangible and intangible forms. In fact, the construction of monuments across the Central Mediterranean world required ample labor mobilization and planning. Maintenance and routine structural additions obligated community members to give up their own time and energy to monumental structures. On the other hand, the intangible social inequality promoted by these monuments was an inter-play of visual, ideological, and limited access. The virtue of several monuments mentioned above was their verticality. They loomed higher than anything else that surrounded them. In addition, most of these Central Mediterranean monuments held a vital role in the contemporary ideological superstructures of the time. Their durability and diachronic existence meant that these structures acted as long-standing handmaidens of the dominant social discourse. Only once a hegemonic shift occurred did the use of these monuments vary considerably, which often led to their abandonment or widespread disuse. Finally, the labor requirements for such constructions required community-wide participation. However, access into most of these monuments was limited once the monument was completed. Architectural elements such as shuttered off entrances and small internal spaces were characteristic of most prehistoric monuments. These structures were not meant to be utilized by all community members, quite the opposite. This limited access stressed the importance of some individuals over others and certainly highlighted a vital contradiction: everyone was expected to aid in construction but not everyone was sufficiently worthy to be allowed access inside these structures.

There are some unifying elements that can be gleaned from a long-term view of monumentality in the Central Mediterranean later prehistory. In particular, peninsular

Italy acted as a conduit for movement of ideas, people, and goods from the European continent and the Eastern Mediterranean. This role as a connector in the Mediterranean basin also meant that extraneous ideas became appropriated by local communities. I use the term “appropriation” in a purposeful manner because it appears to me that the use of foreign elements was not an unconscious action. Instead, the ideas promoted by extraneous monumentality (like menhirs, stelae, megalithic circles, and dolmens) appealed to the social discourses of some communities in the Central Mediterranean. Therefore, in the case of northern Italy we see an intermittent dialogue with the world beyond the Alps. However, the appropriation of such foreign elements required a local receptivity, which perhaps explains why we see irregular distribution of certain monumental constructions. Such was the case of the seemingly isolated stelae tradition at Castelluccio dei Sauri, which overlaps chronologically with northern Italian stelae traditions but was separated by a significant distance. Finally, despite the broad distribution of some monumental structures, there was an emphasized group identity and difference in such construction. Stelae traditions in peninsular Italy were highly distinct in their artistic short-hand and symbology. Dolmenic structures varied in size and construction techniques despite a general recognizable construction morphology. Therefore, despite unifying elements, prehistoric communities re-utilized broadly recognizable forms of monumentality to stress their own identities *vis à vis* others.

In contrast, some monumentality in the Central Mediterranean emerged in tangential and thoroughly un-replicated forms. Monuments in Malta, Sardinia, and Pantelleria exhibited almost complete localized conceivements. The emergence of these monumental constructions were also matched by prolonged temporal spans that often

lasted up to a millennia. Yet these prolonged cultural overtures stood in contrast with monumentality in peninsular Italy, which often exhibited signs of contraction after less timespans. Therefore, this difference between island and mainland monumentality leads us to ask ourselves if the physicality of islands was such that it encouraged localized monuments.

Communities on islands like Malta, Pantelleria, Sardinia, and Corsica utilized their island worlds to stress their own world-making and to truly emphasize their difference from outsiders. This means that the construction of monuments was partly a process of conscious differentiation. The circumscription of their island settings encouraged this social transformation as communities could stabilize their world and limit their interactions to the outside world. However, I do not suggest that monuments only emerged through cultural isolation, as often seen in accounts offered for the Maltese Islands. Instead, I suggest that interaction with the outside world was already marginal to begin with, as seen in the limited roles by some of these islanders in broader systems of interaction in Chapter 5, but the local communities exploited their peripheral roles to create an internalized world-view.

Conclusion: Monumentality for All?

Monuments, at any moment in history, are important but their importance is also contextually specific. Indeed, in this chapter monuments are first seen as tangible promoters of social order that acted as locales of sought consensus by those individuals holding on to power.

Yet their construction, structural complexities, and labor requirements also highlight the physicality of monuments. They are by and large of a considerable size, often staggering even by our own modern standards. Yet these structures also held an unconscious importance to their contemporary humans. They represented the ideological superstructure of any given society. However, their representation of a given ideology was not antagonistic. Despite that we might hope for evidence of hegemonic changes, monuments were constructed because they trumpeted and followed the dominant social discourse of the time. It seems unlikely that community members would risk their social capital by participating in constructing monuments that echo a sentiment of resistance against the dominant discourse of the time. For instance, the prolonged monumentalities of 4th and 3rd millennia BC Malta, Corsica, and Sardinia all emerged from a desire to loudly promote the contemporary dominant social discourse. Then, monumentality reflected the accepted contemporary hegemony. Not only do these structures reflect that hegemonic paradigm, they also strive to remain relevant by routinely re-adapting against the unrelenting tempo of time. From a broad multi-temporal view, monuments were at their most important when their societal place was at its most relevant. Once these structures became less relevant, their decline was varied but often rapid.

The construction of monuments also experienced a variable history in the Central Mediterranean between the 4th and 1st millennia BC that seem rooted in the social settings of the time. In particular, the beginning of monumentality had a relatively inauspicious start after the waning of the Neolithic period in this region. During the establishment of Neolithic lifestyle and colonization of islands between the 6th and 4th millennia BC, monumental structures were a rare occurrence (largely limited to perimeter ditches and

walls). However, the Maltese Islands, Corsica, and Sardinia constructed monumental structures under rather diverse social conditions. In the Maltese Islands, an internalized world-creation was stressed as outside interactions were focused, while Corsica and Sardinia effectively inter-mingled foreign and native elements together to create an unmatched mix of appropriation and innovation.

In the wake of this island-borne monumentality it seems important to ask ourselves why peninsular Italy lagged behind. This is a deceiving question because it also brings us back to some of the assumptions that this dissertation has stressed that we need to overcome. We cannot think of societies that had or lacked monumentality as having or lacking social inequality. In fact, the role of monuments and inequality was not one of direct causality. Instead, these constructions were utilized to visualize a dual sense of these societies. On the one hand, the construction of monuments brought communities together through labor and aggregation. On the other hand, the virtue of monuments was such that they were not open to all but instead representative of the controlling hegemony. In peninsular Italy, the post-Neolithic period brought about deep social effects that divided the northern and southern limits of Italy in their extra-Central Mediterranean connections. However, the disparate connections between northern and southern Italy did not mean that these two regions were not mutually affected. The presence of a stela tradition in the Puglian foothills was such an example of continued inter-connectivity.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that mainland Italians up to the 2nd millennium BC were not willing to invest social capital in building large conspicuous constructions. Instead, some islander communities were more willing to undertake prolonged periods of monumental constructions. Instead, with the exception of the Puglian Apennine and

northern Terramare societies in the 2nd millennium BC and the Villanovan-Etruscan communities in the 1st millennium BC, most peninsular monumentality occurred over considerably shorter timelines. Therefore, monumentality in the Italian mainland had less time over which to develop and become a stable depiction of long-standing dominant social discourses.

However, the issue remains that we still have an impressive array of innovative and localized monumentality arising from island settings. The archaeological interpretations for such a relationship between islands and periodic monumentality remain influenced by Evans' proposal: islanders can become affected by their island isolation to such an extreme that they turn to unexpected cultural developments (Kolb 2015; Cherry and Leppard 2014). This interpretation has two issues. First, Evans was proposing that physicality of islands and the social nature of islander communities can in some instances combine so forcefully that it creates unmatched worlds, often exhibited through monumentality. Second, a more problematic aspect of Evans supposition was that the ecological nature of islands drove islanders to undertake such monumentality. Hence, the creation of cultures heavily focused on monumental constructions was a reaction to the physical settings of islands. It is obvious that nowadays this proposition by Evans has laid the foundation for some of the fundamental disagreements regarding the nature of humans and their relationship to islands.

In this chapter I have refused to emphasize this relationship between humans and their environment partly because I believe in the socio-political decisions and strategies enacted by humans. Some, not all, island communities turned to the monumental and that was by far the key attribute of monumentality on islands. It leads us to ask ourselves

why so many of the islands that make up the Central Mediterranean did not feature in this chapter. Was their refusal to build monuments a result of a lack of creativity or social inequality? Were they just not isolated enough? In these questions lie a number of assumptions that stand out in a number of publications on islands characterized by prehistoric monuments. It is quite common to sense an implicit or explicit connection between monumentality and isolation. We are seemingly perfectly happy to speak of monuments on mainland Italy as found in even the most well-connected communities, while in islands innovative and unreplicated monumentality is seen as a reaction to physical isolation and cultural insularity. There is in this a modernistic bias; an allusion to the peripheral place of islands within the Central Mediterranean is rooted in our own assumption of the nature of islands.

Instead, islanders in this dissertation are understood as conscious social agents that were often keen on exhibiting their cultural difference and identity from outsiders. After all, in Chapter 5 I have already outlined that the “peripheral” status of islands in broad systems of interaction were often temporary. Some individuals even sought an elevated social status by promoting themselves through the control of outside interactions. In this setting, island monumentality arose as a part of an internalized world creation. These structures acted as bonding locales for community members in a labor and ideological sense. The ruling hegemony was promoted through these structures as they also created a sense of stability in worlds that were unpredictable and perhaps even fragile. Therefore, among the surely several reasons for building large monuments in islands, I believe that certain islanders exploited their role in the wider Central Mediterranean world and only embarked on considerable monumentality in moments

when their primary concerns were gaining a societal consensus and creating a stable cultural system.

The multiple nature of monumentalities has brought up a number of explanations in this chapter. However, the single unifying element across all cultures in the long-term 4th and 1st millennia BC in the Central Mediterranean was that monuments acted on behalf of the dominant social discourse. They promoted the social norms of the time and stressed their acceptance by promoting a collective sense, despite that doubts surely existed. Behind this benevolence and sense of collectivity, monuments were locales of exploitation (in both labor and ideological forms). These structures required considerable labor and resource investment, time, and overall respect from community members. While to us it might seem ludicrous to suggest such potency transpiring from a built structure, to me such an assumption only stresses our incapability to tease apart between a false sense of community and an actual collective spirit. In most of the examples above there was without a doubt a restricted or limited access into monuments that were largely built through collaborative labor offered by several individuals over sometimes long periods of times. Despite all the given labor, these buildings were controlled and their power kept in the hands of some individuals. Only in some instances hegemonic shifts tore down the importance held within these structures. Instead, monuments in the prehistoric Central Mediterranean stood as almost conservative forces that constantly promoted the dominant social discourse and only changed to keep up with wider social attempts at retaining a stable world. Obviously, these monuments and their use had a finite life, but social inequality did not end at the end of their lives. Across this prehistoric

world, humans found various avenues through which to control and exploit each other while seeking to promote a sense of a functioning collective.

Chapter 9: Social Inequality in the Prehistoric Central Mediterranean and the Diminishing Collective

The Beginning of the End: A Never-Ending Inequality

As work on this dissertation progressed, I often heard the rallying cry of battling inequality being touted by prominent political leaders. Unfortunately, their rousing speeches and promises are unconvincing because they do not consider the weight of our global history. The idea of a "silver bullet" rapidly eradicating inequality, perhaps one of the most ingrained human notions, is an unrealistic one (although it is of course a commendable thing to reach for). Instead, a thorough reading of our human past shows that inequality had ever changing properties. Humans have always found ways to exploit and manipulate their fellow community members, despite our claims to the contrary. Even now we bemoan our unfair social settings, but nonetheless often remain bonded to our societies through a sense of obligation that leads us to cooperate rather than to face exclusion, marginalization or, worse yet, punishment. I cannot help but note that even in highly efficient small organisms, such as ants, behavior that goes against established social norms is squashed and work resumes, ensuring a rapid return to productivity. In our societies, resistance against the dominant social discourse is not easily silenced, but the prevailing social narrative has a wide array of "checks" to limit the effect of such

reactions. The purpose of those holding power is to manipulate their societies to their own benefit, while weaving a false sense of collectivity through acts of supposed communal character.

Our reactions to unfavorable social conditions, therefore, are not a matter of being unable to extinguish inequality. Rather, social inequality succeeds and changes over time because it can effectively be mitigated with the use of social messages that claim a supportive and collaborative collective. It is this mutual contradiction that bemuses me when I hear contemporary proposals to rid ourselves of inequality. How can we remove such a problem if it is wrapped up so well within the dominant social discourse? It is surely a laudable goal. In our modern existence, the effects of a globalizing economy have deep effects on the lives of almost anyone on this planet. A small fraction of individuals holds the most wealth and, in turn, the political power that governs all of our lives. Their desires for ever-growing profits have influenced society so deeply that most of the rules that we respect are geared towards ensuring their status as protected and their gains as untouchable. In the setting of our current world, the selfish actions of some individuals holding on to power are striking. Why do we not refuse to cooperate if others are exploiting us?

The study of the Central Mediterranean later prehistory between the 4th and 1st millennia BC offers a number of insights into the development of social inequality. To a reader of this dissertation with the impression that non-state level societies were not characterized by inequality, the focus of this research might appear based on false premises; but I have in fact argued the opposite. By creating a false equivalence between lack of hierarchy and lack of inequality, the study of our human past is compromised by

modernistic illusions. These unsupported assumptions are not entirely based on malicious attempts at underplaying inequality in our human past — quite the contrary. Individuals who seek a more positive insight into humanity might be misled to study the past at a moment of “egalitarianism”. Despite this good-natured attempt at scanning the past for more positive historical moments, it is truly a sign of our contemporary social complexity that we should try to interpret past societies (or for that matter even more recent ethnographic cases) as egalitarian. While there are certainly some societies that have stressed their desire to keep inequality at bay, it is also probable that there always remained subtle differences between individuals based on age, sex, gender, or even accomplishments. These are certainly not differences akin to a billionaire being put side-by-side with a low-income individual. Yet even subtle differences can be considerable in the eyes of contemporaries within the context of prehistoric societies that lack rigid hierarchy.

A Retrospective into this Dissertation

Debating Inequality through the Later Prehistoric Central Mediterranean Societies

Chapter 2 focused on outlining general assumptions made by scholars over time. The reason for such an overview was not based on the perfunctory need to outline the work of other scholars. Instead, I stressed some of the basic assumptions that have been created since the Enlightenment. Foundational questions about the nature of human societies were met by stark contrasts, which Hobbes, Rousseau, and others delivered in

spades. The work of these scholars broadly illustrated that our own approaches to the study of societies are rooted in our upbringing, education, and historical settings.

In creating a long-term narrative regarding the nature of inequality in non-hierarchical societies that have often been dubbed as “egalitarian”, it was imperative to stress my own approach in Chapter 3. In part, the approach espoused in this dissertation refuted some of the terminology used to explain the social development of these societies. Therefore, at no point have I used such terms, which I believe are too constrictive to be of use in any archaeological setting. To better frame my epistemological understanding of human societies, Chapter 3 instead focused on describing a web of inter-connected elements: the collective, community, ideology, economy, cooperation, power, and resistance. The manner in which these aspects of human society functioned together was seen as unpredictable and highly contextualized. For instance, power discourses operated through the use of ideological superstructures that ensured a wider societal cooperation at various moments in the Central Mediterranean. However, within the context of prehistoric societies that lack rigid hierarchy the idea of a community in other cases was exploited to control the collective spirit and provided fellow community members with an impression of a cooperative society despite the exploitative conditions. For the purposes of this dissertation and to maintain a manageable framework, this study of inequality in the Central Mediterranean was limited to five avenues through which this region could be better examined in relation to its multiple long-term trends.

Five Avenues into the later Prehistoric Central Mediterranean Social Inequality

The five avenues selected in this study — that is, the Central Mediterranean region, distribution networks, restricted production of significant objects, burial customs,

and monumentality — could easily be expanded into stand-alone studies. Certainly a good number of far-reaching studies have already tackled some of these issues that I examined for the Central Mediterranean between the 4th and the 1st millennia BC. However, this region and period has also suffered from a lack of long-term studies. Typical research into the period between the Neolithic and Iron Age are intellectually characterized by regional specialization and little chronological overlap between the various periods. Exceptions to these observations are limited to useful archaeological manuals that are largely aimed at regional specialists or archaeology students (Bietti Sestieri 2010; Pessina and Tiné 2009; Leighton 1999; Guidi and Piperno 1992). Yet certain periods and parts of the Central Mediterranean world are often omitted from such accounts. In particular, smaller islands such as Pantelleria, Malta (after the Temple Period in the mid-3rd millennium BC), the Adriatic Islands, and the Pelagic Islands are conspicuously absent, especially in contrast to the high volume of work emerging from Sardinia, northern Italy, and south-eastern Italy. Even other parts of the Central Mediterranean, such as Corsica, Adriatic central Italy, Calabria, Basilicata, and parts of Campania, are either understudied, or else work conducted in these regions is quite limited in its intellectual breadth or connection to the wider Central Mediterranean. Inevitably, some of these lacunae are reflected in the present diachronic study. The Pelagic Islands, Adriatic Islands, Tyrrhenian small islands, and south-western Italy were particularly absent because of the lack of research in these areas. The avenues I have chosen have one thing in common: they emphasize the multi-variable forms of inequality. By selecting these five avenues, I believe that an overlapping narrative of this wider region connects together even the far-flung areas of the Central Mediterranean.

In this dissertation I have argued that these five avenues provide a convincing overlap of some long-term trends that had a key effect on the later prehistoric Central Mediterranean. In particular, one could easily focus on broad systems of interactions. Obviously a good number of authors have aptly tackled this topic (Vagnetti *et al.* 2009; Bernabò Brea *et al.* 2006; Robb and Farr 2005; Guilaine 2004; Tykot 1996; Leighton and Dixon 1992), but these interactions only offer an insight into the production and economic conditions of the time. If we simply focused on the broader shifts following the decline in the distribution of obsidian decline and its slow replacement by metals, then we can identify a prevailing sense of shifting production centers and marginalized communities. Instead, by dealing with five intersecting avenues, the above example can be better framed as being accompanied by other wider shifts. For instance, the peripheral nature of the region-wide distribution networks of Sardinia and Malta between the 4th and 3rd millennium BC was also accompanied by innovative and localized monumentality. Yet even in dealing with monumentality it would be erroneous to maintain the oft-cited *prima facie* impression of insular and isolated islands. For instance, the monumentality of 3rd-millennium BC Sardinia was inspired in part by extraneous elements, as seen in the merging of foreign and local elements in burial structures.

The use of these five avenues also emphasizes my understanding of inequality in this region and during this temporal span as not being simply a matter of person-to-person social inequality. Instead, even in our own modern world inequality permeates the entirety of human lives. In our present conditions, inequality can be seen in sexual, gender, racial, economic, and cross-national differentials. Such varied forms of inequality were also present in the prehistoric world. Different cultures had different access to

goods, which often marginalized them in wider systems of interaction. Warrior ideologies stressed the male persona, although not everyone within one community held the same status, as seen in the differences in weaponry buried with the dead.

Yet the biggest surprise I have come to recognize in these avenues is the interplay between tangible and intangible forms of inequality. This interplay often emerged through a mutual contradiction in the prehistoric settings of the Central Mediterranean. Communities embarked on substantial constructions, laden with ideological purposes, but were then kept out of these very structures. The community at large participated through a mix of obligation and expectation, it seems, but was ultimately unable to access the self-same structure that they had helped create. This shuttering of individuals is an example of both a tangible and intangible sense of inequality. Everyone understood their role and expectations, but nevertheless they played their part as cooperative members of their society. In its totality, social inequality was conducted through an interplay of contradictory elements that functioned in unison for some time and eventually found itself replaced by another hegemony.

The Central Mediterranean Space and Time

The Central Mediterranean is a highly fragmented multi-ecological zone that often changes rapidly over small distances. In fact, this is one of the surprising elements that make up this world. In several parts of the region under study, one can be situated in a highland or elevated settings but walk to the sea within a day. Additionally, most islands (such as Pantelleria, the Pelagic Islands, the Maltese Islands, or Ustica) are typically within a day's sea travel from the Italian mainland, and only a few islands are completely out of sight from any neighboring mainland or island. On the other hand, the

Italian mainland is fragmented by the Alpine and Apennine mountain ranges that limit the availability of flat plateaus, but provided them with ample water. Amidst these significant multi-ecological settings, humans moved across certain preferential routes (land and sea) which continued to be routinely utilized due to their convenience and ability to connect communities to each other.

The multi-ecological nature of this region had a significant impact on its human counterparts. Most of the islands in the Central Mediterranean were semi-arid, often lacked perennial water sources, and were liable to environmental fluctuations. Yet for mainland communities located in mountainous areas with more reliable water sources, rapid soil erosion was a considerable concern, as in the case of Basilicata and Calabria. In this physical setting, humans adapted to their surroundings and sometimes even surpassed our expectations of settlement density and sustainability. However, the socio-natural relationship was based on mutual influence: human agency certainly played a considerable role in the social developments discussed in my later chapters. Nonetheless, it is equally important to keep in mind the contextual attributes of the occupied areas. After all, a community that lived on semi-arid volcanic Pantelleria could not develop in the same manner as in the Po River area with its deep soil profiles and readily available irrigation potential.

This chapter also shed light on the current intellectual approaches to the presumed nature of the Mediterranean region. The growing debates after *The Corrupting Sea* (Horden and Purcell 2000) have often discounted the nature of the Mediterranean as a sea, or rather, a physical and traversable space. Current academia has elevated the Mediterranean Sea to the level of a hyper-conductor (Horden and Purcell 2000) over

which humans have long traversed and pursued incredible journeys in often quite modest vessels (Bar-Yosef Mayer *et al.* 2015; Broodbank 2010b). In this regard, I do not dispute the contemporary desire to create Mediterranean histories that foreground the maritime components of this region, yet I severely doubt the extent to which some scholars have gone in underplaying the volatility of the Mediterranean Sea (cf. Malone and Stoddart 2004). By stressing this marine medium as a hyper-conductor that connected far-flung parts of the Mediterranean, we ignore the very real difficulties posed by sea travel. Places like the Straits of Messina have long been renowned as difficult passes, despite their narrow breadth. Furthermore, prevailing winds blow particularly hard in the fall and winter months in various parts of the Central Mediterranean, and even modern-day islands such as Pantelleria can experience a halt to their maritime connections due to long bouts of gale-force winds or high waves.

Inequality in Interactions

Distribution networks in the Mediterranean basin's prehistory have fascinated scholars for their intensity, prolonged duration, and even their far-reaching spans. The models and paradigms used to interpret such networks, however, have often been drawn from work rooted in cross-cultural ethnographic comparison (Sahlins 1972; Polanyi 1957). So the study of interaction systems is also affected by some of the assumptions seen similarly in models utilized for explaining social evolution, as described in Chapters 2 and 3.

Some of these persevering assumptions affect our readings of the distribution networks spanning the Central Mediterranean between the 4th and the 1st millennia BC. In particular, the indiscriminant use of terms like “trade” and “exchange” fuse together two

concepts that prehistorians typically consider to be a like-for-like transferal of goods. Yet one could also argue that perhaps no interaction is equal and fair, despite the involved individual's best wishes to be fair to his/her counterpart. A regional view of interactions in the Central Mediterranean indicates to us that distribution networks were unfair to many of the prehistoric communities within this region. Despite the availability of highly desired raw materials (obsidian until the 4th millennium; metal thereafter), the reach of these objects followed certain preferential routes, particularly those that led to a mutual exchange of other desired objects in the opposite directions. Therefore, for those who had little to offer, like the communities in the Maltese Islands and the obsidian distribution during the 4th millennium BC or in movement of metals to south-east Italy during the early 3rd millennium BC, their role within these broad distribution networks was from a position of unequal standing. Areas with little to offer were marginalized in these distribution networks.

Yet the never-ending desire for humans to own valuable objects means that distribution networks, the valued objects, and the role of communities were often liable to change over time. For instance, the lack of desired objects in communities unable to access them (either in sufficient quantities or due to their inability to themselves distribute something equally desirable) did not spell the end of their role within broad interaction spheres. Northern Puglia in the mid-1st millennium was one such example of a widespread desire for Mycenaean ceramics not reaching this region. However, the reaction to such a lack was contextual. Indeed, a local imitation ware soon arose in the area, outside of direct interaction with eastern seafarers (Iacono 2016; Vagnetti *et al.* 2009; Cazzella 1996).

Distribution networks changed intermittently in their pace, intensity, and overall directions over the Central Mediterranean region. The shift toward metal objects removed the earlier emphasis from obsidian sources, such as Lipari and Pantelleria located in the southern Central Mediterranean, and shifted the “core” of these distribution networks towards northern Italy. Therefore, these interactions were unpredictable. In addition, while interactions and object distribution are often quantified by archaeologists as a means to describe changing patterns, it should also be stressed that such networks were inherently irregular. There was no way that such networks experienced a fluid and consistent flow of goods. Primarily, until the mid 1st millennium BC we see little signs of communities or individuals whose main profession was one of a mercantile purpose. Second, the ebbs and flows of seasons meant that communication between the far-flung parts of the Central Mediterranean experienced some months of reduced mobility. Third, the interest of Central Mediterranean communities in accessing objects and ideas from outside the region created a division in cultural influence between the Tyrrhenian region and the European continent versus the Adriatic and the Aegean-Eastern European regions. Fourth, the lack of assumed interaction between the Central Mediterranean and the Maghreb after the Neolithic is troublesome. This lacuna might have a number of reasons behind it, including the lack of intellectual overlap between academia in North Africa and the northern shores of Mediterranean. Nonetheless, there are signs of such a prehistoric interaction as seen in the communications between the Maghreb, Pantelleria, and the Maltese Islands.

The ultimate outcome was the never-ending human desire to possess objects. These desired objects played a role in elevating the social standing of individuals. Certain

communities struggled to participate in networks that seemed to circumvent them. Other groups reveled in the core of distributive networks but eventually struggled to maintain their earlier roles. In moments of marginalization the overwhelming desire for objects was substituted by alternative desirables, or else, sidelined as cultures became particularly internalized.

There is much about distributive networks and desired objects that is comparable to our own modern-day consumerism. Through objects we indicate to others our economic and social standing that sometimes goes well beyond our actual true social status. Indeed, this desire to elevate oneself beyond his/her actual status illustrates the human desire to always want to better themselves in the eyes of others. Then, even if access to objects is restricted due to a number of reasons, the innate nature of humans led them to create impressive, yet unequal, networks that crisscrossed the Central Mediterranean for millennia.

Unmatched Objects and their Contexts

The emphasis on objects in Chapter 5 was necessary to properly gauge their wide distribution that was variable but focused in its direction. However, that same emphasis on objects also creates a biased view of artifacts. Their consideration as objects is in part a result of their commodification by humans. As part of the variable relationship between humans and objects, humans often stress their social worth by indicating their access to desired objects or participation in interaction networks. This relationship formed a key part of Chapter 5. Yet this human-object relationship is a limited interpretation of these two agents.

In Chapter 6 the emphasis on objects was replaced with a selection of artifacts produced in limited quantities and found only in limited contexts. These objects illustrate the ideological roles played by movable objects. Despite their mobility material culture like the Tal-Qadi stone slab, Bonu Ighinu figurines, or Etruscan house urns were only located in particular contexts, their access often limited to a number of individuals. These objects were not utilized in the same ways as the exotica discussed in Chapter 5. Instead, these significant forms of material culture were limited in their replication and often depicted idealized or supernatural beings. The purpose of these objects was meant to elevate the status of individuals who strived to possess such objects because the artifacts themselves were potent ideological statements. Not everyone was supposed to or able to access such objects.

Inevitably, Chapter 6 only offered a selected insight into this relationship. In light of the overall intents and scopes of this dissertation, the objects that were selected were meant to show four variable relationships: artifacts that situated humans in the larger world, objects that imaged the built world, the human body in object form, and the depiction of ideal beings. Humans utilized the memorializing properties of objects to situate themselves within the wider world. Indeed, it seemed vital to several communities during the 3rd millennium BC to visualize the relationship between humans and their surrounding world through the creation of stelae, rock-art, and other mediums. In contrast, the manifestation of built structures into objects was an ideologically charged translation that was consciously limited in its replication. Models of Sardinian *nuraghi* and Maltese megalithic structures were reduced in size but were nevertheless imbued with some of the same power properties of their built counterparts. The perhaps egoistical

use of objects by humans was purposeful because it allowed them circumvent the routine presentation of a false collective and instead depict their own ambitions. For instance, the use of objects to memorialize the human body was selective. On the other hand, the imaging of ideal beings was meant to project to community members a difference between any one person and a being imbued with all the characteristics that were ideological significant. Then, by possessing these objects, and perhaps even attempting to replicate the characteristics projected by these artifacts, the collective spirit was strained.

The role of these significant objects was self-serving for humans. While they appreciated the potency of certain artifacts, humans sought to control and limit their distribution within their contemporary world, thus elevating their own status. These created artifacts were also visual promoters of their contemporary social settings. They did not entice conflict or tension. Instead, their place in this prehistoric world was to promote the contemporary dominant social discourse in an underhanded manner and add another avenue through which some individuals could control others by also controlling the use of some significant material culture.

Conservative Burial Traditions and Perseverance

The importance of burial contexts, rituals, and beliefs cannot be overstated. Yet we also cannot assume that all buried individuals were part of comparable beliefs systems or funerary traditions. Nevertheless, burials offer us a surfeit of information; burial contexts can provide us with an insight into the place of death within Central Mediterranean pre-hierarchical societies. Death was an emotional event that could be dealt with in two manners by their respective societies. First, the death of an individual could have played a role in further denigrating the social bonds of communities. Second,

the death of an individual could be smoothened by the easing of social tensions through associated rituals or collectives. By far, in the case of the Central Mediterranean the second scenario proved to be a common option. In death, the strains on the collective spirit were avoided until the 1st millennium BC, and instead, burial traditions and customs were purposely meant to impart a sense of a functioning collective.

Furthermore, the role of burials in their respective communities had a number of other social effects. First, the death of an individual was used as a social opportunity. In the Central Mediterranean there was a clear transformation in the reaction of the living to the death of an individual. After the 4th millennium BC, the earlier practice of burials of individuals in caves or in immediate association with domestic structures was overturned. Instead, in the time span under study there was a formalization of burial structures and even the monumentalization of these structures that was tied to the collective memory of the living. Second, burial traditions were conservative in their ideological make-up. By using the term “conservative” I am not referring to a political stance or a sheltered and insular tradition. Rather, conservative burial customs refer to a pushback by humans against their surrounding instability. By promoting a sense of stability and continuity through customs, inequality and power struggles could be better controlled by those seeking to distinguish themselves and remain in power over time. Through the use of long-established cemeteries, returning the dead to join their ancestors, and by conducting themselves according to set rituals, these prehistoric communities inadvertently played a hand in maintaining their social settings.

The region-wide and long-term view of the Central Mediterranean also offers us another insightful observation: there was a considerable difference between mainland and

island burial traditions. This is a statement, however, that requires slight qualification. The difference between mainland and island customs is not an inadvertent way of promoting environmental determinism, a mode of explanation that I rejected in Chapter 4. Instead, the difference between mainland and island customs stressed the interest of certain island communities to internalize their world-views and create prolonged cultural stability. A second cautionary point should stress that while time is relative, and for us in the Western world is linear, there was a difference between millennia-long cultures in islands, like Malta, Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, and other islands that experienced shorter cultural spans.

By describing these prolonged island tradition as perseverant, I willfully attempted to avoid any assumption regarding the isolated nature of islands. Not all islands are alike in their size, ecologies, or physical location. In the case of Corsica and Sardinia during the late 4th and 3rd millennia BC, the construction of dolmens, stelae complexes, and stone circles was inspired by European continental traditions. This connection and inspiration belies the assumption that islands are inherently isolated. Yet this funerary tradition was also undertaken over more than a millennium, bringing to mind the idea of persevering island traditions. In fact, in Sicily, an island even more connected to the Central Mediterranean, rock-cut tombs were a tradition that lasted from the 4th to the mid-1st millennium BC. Therefore, these persistent traditions were not created and inspired by isolated island settings. They were perhaps a result of the more controlled social settings in islands. Their circumscription encouraged a stronger sense of stability in some islands, which were countered by prolonged and conservative burial traditions.

The Italian mainland was affected by European and Eastern Mediterranean connectivity, while also showing some resilient pockets of locally conceived burial practices. Sweeping changes towards the end of the 4th millennium BC were inspired by the broader inter-connectivity of the period. The seemingly split funerary traditions between northern Italy (looking to the European continent) and southern Italy (looking to the Eastern Mediterranean) is apparent even when we keep in mind evidence of split inter-connectivity described in Chapter 5. However, such a view lacks nuance and omits recognition of the obvious cultural overlaps. The Castelluccio dei Sauri stelae tradition could arguably have been a locally conceived development. Yet its chronological overlap with the northern Italian traditions caution us not to completely dismiss the potential of extraneous inspiration. In fact, many of the burial customs found in Tyrrhenian and Adriatic central Italy suggest this region as being a potential frontier zone between northern and southern traditions that experienced a fluid movement of ideas, goods, people, and even cultural inspiration. The looming Alpine and Apennine mountain ranges that split the Italian mainland acted as potent terrestrial conduits, perhaps speeding communication (and by extension moving cultural knowledge) through corridors that connected the east to the west and the north to the south.

Irregular Monumentality and Maintaining Social Order

The ubiquity of burials and their associated traditions was one avenue through which power and inequality could be transmitted to the living. That same stability promoted in burial contexts had its counterpart in monumentality that in its functionality spanned burial, cultic, ritual, and political contexts. Monumentality was not the ultimate display of inequality; it was, rather, one of several paths through which inequality could

be enacted and maintained. Monumentality was also not a ubiquitous form of built structures. It is found in the Central Mediterranean in variable instances and forms of constructions for varying purpose. In this chapter the whole nature of monuments was questioned and its scope widened. The reason for such an alteration to such a familiar term is based on what our contemporary use of it brings to our minds. We imagine colossal constructions built through considerable spending of capital with well-planned designs prior to building. All of this is true. Yet in the case of the prehistoric Mediterranean we have to widen our strict definition of monuments to structures, single or in combination, which held a place of social significance.

The purposes of monuments extended their role as promoters of social order. Chapter 8 argued that monuments promoted social order on behalf of those individuals holding power. Monuments offered its contemporaries a perfect mix of tangible and intangible elements in favor of the dominant social discourse. In fact, when monuments were actively being constructed and used, their single unifying purpose was representing the dominant social discourse. In a comparable way, some of our present-day monuments are also imbued with these same tangible and intangible elements. We understand that our behavior should be structured and our movement in these spaces is pre-determined. The visual potency of monuments was a well-understood example of their tangible strength and played a key role after the 3rd millennium BC across the Central Mediterranean with communities that were keen to mark and demarcate their place in the wider landscape.

To construct such monuments was no simple feat, as can be seen in even our present fascination with some of the prehistoric monuments of the Central Mediterranean.

Modern visitors at these prehistoric sites marvel at the constructions, their complexity, impressive stature, and overall grandiose nature. However, these properties were only created as a result of a great deal of social capital and labor extracted from individuals in order to construct these monuments. We can easily lose sight of these aspects because we only see the monuments in their final state. Yet during their construction, the energy and long spans of time spent building a monument was an example of the scornful nature of inequality. On the other hand, that obligation was a veiled manipulation. Communities felt the need to build a significant structure only because the monument was put to them as a standing testament to their identity and collectivity. Ultimately their association with these monuments was limited and prescribed. Those in power sought the consensus of everyone, but were unwilling to allow unfettered access into these structures and their associated power.

It is not without importance that the largest monuments built, such as dolmens, megalithic circles, and megalithic cultic structures, emerged earliest in Corsica, Sardinia, and Malta during the 4th millennium BC, a time when most other Mediterranean communities were not building such structures. Perhaps the internalization of these island worlds aided the turn to the monumental, but there is little evidence of the surrounding environment inspiring these structures. Instead, I see this turn to the monumental as a social action. These constructions provided these communities a potential for social transformations. In binding their communities through labor and quickly demarcating these landscapes, the earliest monuments stressed the contemporary desire to control, while displaying a false sense of collectivity. Even the Italian mainland was not without its monuments. Rather, monumental constructions in peninsular Italy used a combination

of structures in significant places. The Valcamonica-Valtellina stelae embody this mix between the human and natural. Indeed, the importance of the scattered rock-art, stelae alignments, and other structures displayed the state of the collective. Unlike the islands characterized by monumentality and their conspicuous displays of group-level collectivity, these mainland communities emphasized a more restricted collective spirit, perhaps limited to their familial ties.

The importance of using a wider definition of monuments was particularly obvious in the early 2nd-millennium BC Central Mediterranean. As Sardinia and other minor islands, like Pantelleria, Ustica, and Malta, all experienced instances of monumentality, the Italian mainland experienced three distinct monumentalities of a combinative nature. Indeed, the growth of early urban aggregates in northern and southern Italy around the mid 2nd millennium BC and the late 2nd and early 1st millennia BC in the Adriatic central Italy were impressive for different reasons. These processes of aggregation were not characterized by megalithic structures or single imposing constructions. Rather, early urban aggregation was monumental in its combinative elements. The rapid demographic rise and hierarchical division between settlements created an unparalleled occupation of the Italian landscape. In the case of northern and southern Italian mid-2nd millennium BC early urbanism, these settlements were further formalized by the creation of roads and the construction of large perimeter walls.

A Diminishing Collective over Four Millennia: Pursuing Stability

The Central Mediterranean between the 4th and 1st millennia BC experienced a vast array of sweeping social transformations. Shifting distribution networks, an expanding interest in metallurgy, varying monumentality, and early urbanism are only a few such transformations described in this dissertation. In it, I have argued that the common denominator in this social mosaic was the shifting state of the collective spirit.

This idea of a collective spirit was important to prehistoric communities in the Central Mediterranean, as it is important to us now. It was and is also prone to manipulation by those seeking to control their respective societies because humans strive for sense of collectivity in their communities. In our present settings we emphasize any signs of a healthy collective spirit within our world, which is seemingly dominated by discord and adverse occurrences. The collective comforts us because within it we can expect cooperation and collaboration with our peers. Yet as we think about our own collective spirit, we should also attempt to imagine its remit. Does our collective spirit extend only to ourselves, or does it perhaps include our immediate relatives? Could it include like-minded individuals or circumscribed communities? The state of the collective is important to us because we are a part of it and it is a part of us.

For those individuals in the Central Mediterranean between the 4th and 1st millennia BC, their collective was increasingly in a state of diminishment. By this I do not mean that prior the 4th millennium BC individuals existed in an ideal collective state. Rather, the collective spirit was always under assault due to the conflicting nature of humans bent on a struggle for self-serving interests and collaborative behavior within

some wider group. However, what if the idea of a collective had become hijacked and manipulated by those seeking to control their peers? Such individuals had two options. First, they could openly bend the dominant discourse to their will and attempt to control it with no thought at appeasing their communities. Second, the more likely of these scenarios, such individuals could create social systems that give their community a sense of collectivity, while in reality only benefitting certain individuals.

The collective of Central Mediterranean communities experienced a gradual diminishment through social inequality. In the 4th millennium BC the state of the collective was focused on communities, as they continued to establish themselves and forge a life after the sweeping transformations of the Neolithic. But in the case of Corsica, Sardinia, and Malta, the collectivity turned towards social competition and internalization. Their collective spirit was strained as individuals attempted to display their social potency through mobilization of their peers. On the Italian mainland, the 3rd-millennium BC growing infatuation with weaponry was matched by subtle (but effective) differences between individuals, some of whom were buried with metal weapons, while others were buried with lithic weapons. Their collective spirit showed signs of receding. We can be sure that communities continued to collaborate and cooperate, but their intentions were often geared towards bettering themselves in comparison to other individuals. By the 2nd millennium BC, the collective spirit receded to familial connections. Formalized cemeteries with differing clusters, constructed monuments that stressed territorial ownership, and even expanding early urban aggregations all displayed the faltering state of the collective spirit. Individuals remained bonded to their families and stressed their lineage. They emphasized this restricted collective spirit because the

inequality that was all around them had definitely turned the tables in favor of those who controlled the dominant social discourse. Finally, the turn of the 1st millennium BC brought too many conflicting elements against the collective spirit. The incoming movement of outsiders by the 8th and 7th centuries BC successfully diminished the collective of Central Mediterranean communities who had already begun to display the emergence of a well-defined class, loosely described by many as “elites”. In this dissertation, this expanding class remained largely nameless, although their unchecked self-serving display of wealth and power showed a lack of interest in maintaining the impression of a functioning collective. There was no longer the need to display a false sense of collectivity. The balance between intangible and tangible inequality was struck in favor of the latter. The collective spirit of the prehistoric Central Mediterranean was taking its last breath at the dawn of a new era characterized by state formation, and eventually the birth of the Roman world.

Quo Vadis?: Future Work and Unopened Doors

The long-term view and complex nature of the prehistoric Central Mediterranean means that there are some unopened doors worth exploring in the near future. The diachronic and broad regional view espoused in this dissertation was conscious on my behalf. Such a focusing apparatus was seen as a challenging opportunity to tie together a prehistoric world that has often been limited in its cross-chronological study. There has also been a significant amount of narrowly focused geographical focus on small parts of this region, often seen in Malta, Sardinia, Corsica, Puglia, and Lazio. These academic

limitations were difficult to overcome in this dissertation and to some extent still need further refinement in the future. However, I would argue that the future directions of this work are mainly geographical and theoretical.

Braudel (1972) and later others (Broodbank 2013; 2010a; Morris 2003) usefully highlighted the limitations of any broadly conceived study. There is always some area, culture, or period that has received considerably less scholarly attention than we would wish. This is an unfortunate fact and one that is difficult to overcome without the extensive work of teams and individuals trying to overturn these biases present in the academic world. For the study of the later prehistory of the Central Mediterranean, I would argue that the geographic gaps present in this dissertation and other contemporary works can be overcome with a renewed interest. First, the Maghrebian coastline appears artificially and unnecessarily separated from the Central Mediterranean. In contrast, I would argue that one of the greatest potentials for studying this region lies in the fact that the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean are at their closest in the Channel of Sicily. Nowhere else in the Mediterranean basin do these two shorelines find themselves in such proximity (with the notable exception of the Straits of Gibraltar in the west). In this dissertation I have tried my best to outline the overlap between the southernmost Central Mediterranean and the Maghreb during the 2nd millennium BC, but surely there is more to be said about this connection. Can we really continue to examine Pantelleria and the Pelagic Islands as an extension of Sicily and Italy simply because they form part of the Italian modern state? These are biases rooted in modern-world perceptions of the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean.

Similarly, the place of Corsica and southern France in Central Mediterranean studies suffers greatly due to the linguistic differences. For Corsica the case is even worsened by the paucity of prehistoric studies that properly describe the connectivity of this island, its domestic settlements, and its wider role within the Tyrrhenian and Ligurian Seas. A comparable gap in information can be seen in the study of the *Caput Adriae* and Eastern Europe, which seems to be experiencing an intellectual blossoming. Nevertheless, we remain ignorant on the direct overlaps between the entire two shorelines of the Adriatic, which was inter-connected through terrestrial communications in the north and through maritime connections along all of its coastlines farther south.

In furthering the narrative presented in this dissertation, I also see a number of theoretical deficiencies that need to be better addressed in the future. The place of inequality in pre-hierarchical societies is a crucial addition that should be further expanded. It is distressing to still see early historians and anthropologists equating a certain perceived social complexity with a lack of inequality: we need to refine the nature of inequality in all levels of human societies. This research can further build on the plethora of emerging work that describes itself as interested in exploring inequality in past societies. Yet despite the positive effects of such works growing in number, it seems that a good deal of these contributions offer “inequality” as a catch-all term that sounds interesting and attracts the attention of readers. This dissertation attempted to build on the work done by other scholars (Price and Feinman 2010; Arnold 1995; Paynter and McGuire 1991; McGuire 1983) who are committed to re-exploring human history to better comprehend the complexity of inequality itself. Inequality is not simply the

difference between one individual and another. Rather, studies that explore inequality should seek to identify its fluid nature and ever-changing dynamics.

Finally, working and writing this dissertation illustrated to myself – and I hope in turn to its readers – that our biases have narrowed our focus. We explore Malta or Sardinia because of its impressive monumentalities or 1st-millennium BC Etruria because it represents the roots of the Roman Empire. Yet what has surprised me the most in trying to tease out a long-term narrative is the importance of small islands and archipelagoes. They could weave in and out of history or remain unoccupied well into the 2nd millennium BC. These places could be deeply embedded in broad systems of interactions or entirely focused on creating an internalized world-view. In their variability, I see unexplored islands, like the Pelagic Islands or islands in the Adriatic Sea, as small places that could truly provide us with a better grasp of how ideas, goods, and people moved so widely in the prehistoric world. Similarly, I cannot omit the mountainous spans of the Italian mainland. These bastions have long acted as *refugia* to all manners of wildlife and humans. For people, these spaces also offered a chance at an insular world while also remaining connected to broader networks. I hope that I can tackle these issues in the near future and better fathom the lives of prehistoric communities across the Central Mediterranean.

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