

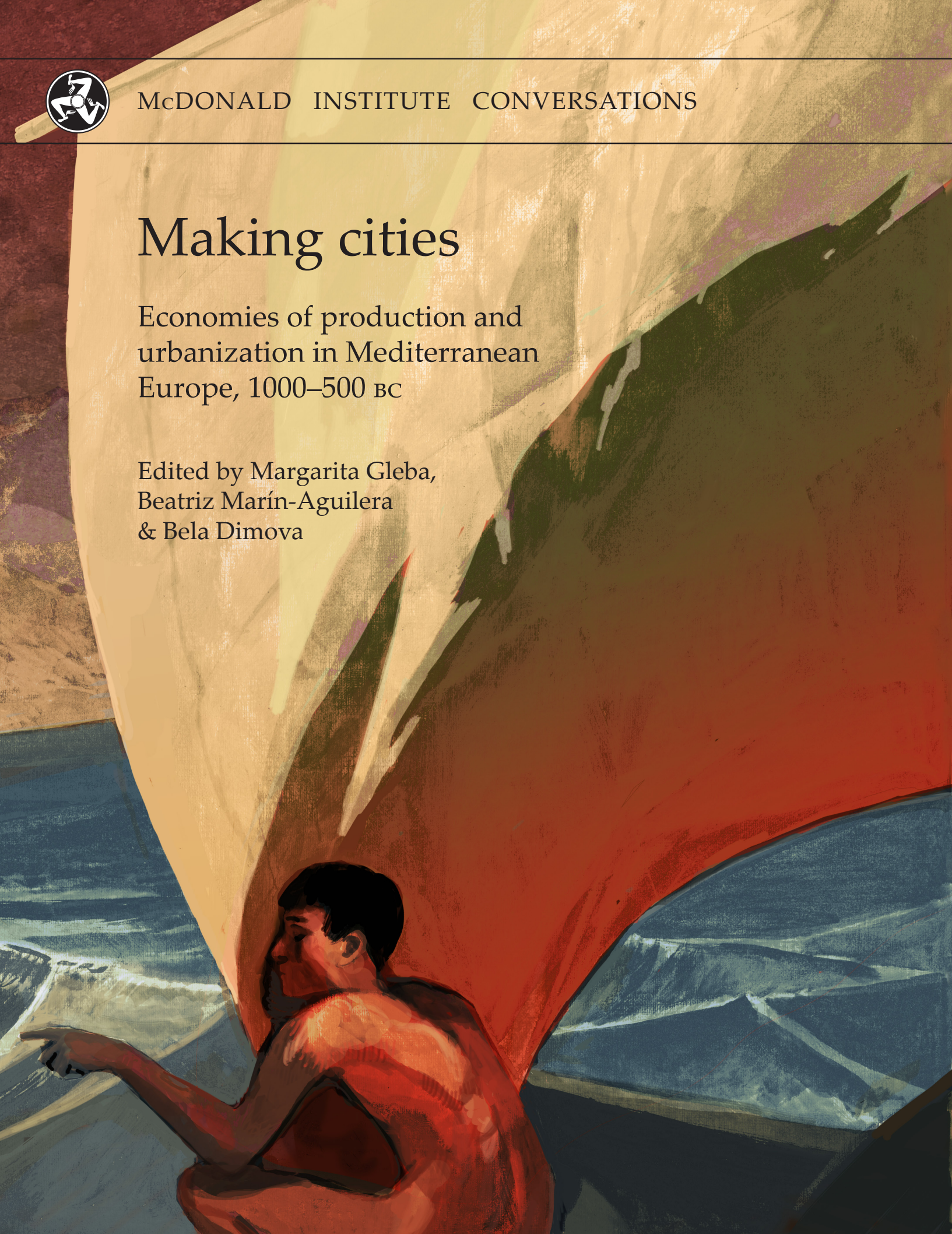


McDONALD INSTITUTE CONVERSATIONS

Making cities

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

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



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with contributions from

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Chapter 1

Making cities: economies of production and urbanization in Mediterranean Europe, 1000–500 BC

Bela Dimova, Margarita Gleba & Beatriz Marín-Aguilera

This book considers the emergence of urbanization in Mediterranean Europe, from the Aegean to south Iberia, during the first millennium BC. The period c. 1000–500 BC was the time when large and complex settlements appeared over a wide geographical region, from the Aegean basin to Iberia, as well as north of the Alps. This period also saw the foundation of Phoenician and Greek settlements across the Mediterranean, connecting communities that eventually shared and promoted similar lifestyles. As settlements became larger and more connected, consumption practices changed, requiring new and different structures of production and supply in order to sustain them. The title of the volume, therefore, refers to both: ‘The making of the cities’ and the ‘cities that make.’¹

The study of urbanization – a long-term concern of archaeologists, historians, sociologists and economists – was re-established as a key topic for understanding the ancient Mediterranean by several volumes from the 1990s and early 2000s (Cunliffe & Keay 1995; Damgaard Andersen *et al.* 1997; Osborne & Cunliffe 2005; Riva 2010). They emphasized the theoretical and methodological difficulties in defining what a city is, and examined how, in conditions of increasing connectivity, different regions followed individual trajectories towards urbanism. However, they mostly focused on the Aegean and Italy, neglecting the western Mediterranean region and central Europe.

In the interim, fieldwork has expanded our evidence for understanding ancient urbanism in Mediterranean Europe and methodological advances have revealed previously neglected but fundamental sectors of the economy, such as textile production. Research in Germany, the northern Balkans and France has also revolutionized our understanding of urbanism and Mediterranean links in temperate Europe, pre-dating the earliest towns north of the Alps to the sixth century BC (see Stoddart 2017; Fernández-Götz

2018 and in this volume, with references). Similarly, new research projects in south Italy, Sardinia, France and Spain have shifted our understanding of colonial cities and networks by turning our eyes upon local agency and contexts (see Meo; Roppa & Madrigali; Gailledrat; Sanmartí *et al.*; Vives-Ferrándiz in this volume). The combined analysis of urbanism and Mediterranean webs of connectivity provides avenues of enquiry that are explored in this volume through 28 case studies from Greece, Italy, France, Germany and Spain. Hence, this book brings to the debate recently excavated sites and regions that are unfamiliar to wider (especially Anglophone) scholarship because of language barriers and traditional disciplinary divisions, alongside fresh reappraisals of well-known Mediterranean cities and areas. Some of the chapters focus on specific types of material culture (*pithoi* – see Perkins; transport *amphorae* – see Roppa & Madrigali) as proxies for productive activities, or trajectories of specific sites (Argilos, Zagora, Eretria, Athens, Corinth, Padova, Perugia, Rome, Muro Leccese, Sant Jaume) and regions (the Thermaic Gulf, Crete, Etruria, western Sicily, Extremadura, the Hallstatt cultural region, southern France, Iberia), whilst others concentrate on a range of economic and social activities leading to urban development (gift economy; knowledge transfer; craft specialization).

The volume focuses in particular on the economy of early towns: what was distinctive about urban lifeways across the Mediterranean? How did different economic activities interact with each other, and how did they transform power hierarchies? How was urbanism sustained by economic structures and social relations? What are the similarities, differences and connections between and within regions? Studying the usage of farmland, labour resources, craft specialization and the rise and/or consolidation of elites, this volume undertakes a comparative approach to the

study of the emergence of urban lifestyles. As such, it is the first comprehensive treatment of urbanization in Mediterranean Europe, and the variety of urban life, economy and local dynamics in different Mediterranean settings discussed in the chapters open new archaeological debates and prompt us to reconsider ancient urbanism as a whole.

Definitions of urbanism

Our idea of what cities are and why they matter is strongly shaped by modern experience, by images of the Greco-Roman world as urban, and a historiographical tradition that sees the appearance of cities as a fundamental step in evolutionary history. The evolutionary model, which considers towns a mark of civilization, underpins many archaeological definitions of a city, such as the classic checklist compiled by Gordon Childe (1950). In the earlier twentieth century, such checklists helped to place a society somewhere along an evolutionary chart from ‘barbarism’ to ‘civilization’ (for an overview of the development of theoretical models in studies of urbanization, see Fulminante 2010, 7–34).

More elaborate checklists have been produced recently, and they are helpful for comparing different sites (see most recent overview in Smith 2016). For example, the Copenhagen Polis Centre in the 1990s developed criteria for city-states, based on earlier work by Max Weber (1921). But they, too, suffer from the problems of the former approach: each checklist definition is designed with a specific aim or model city in mind. Often, ancient settlements are evaluated by modern criteria or arbitrary measures of ‘civilization’ or ‘urban-ness’. By measuring ancient cities against modern ones, or settlements in temperate Europe against Mediterranean ones, we risk subscribing to an evolutionist framework, which predetermines the kind of narratives we can construct. As Jaime Vives-Ferrándiz Sánchez notes in this volume, ‘Diversity in the urban forms is the norm and there is not any standard model for the creation of a new settlement.’

An alternative approach emphasizes not what a city is, based on a list of formal criteria, but what a city does: investigating what role a settlement plays in relation to other settlements in its regional context and within an ensemble of social interactions and economic processes (see Smith 2016, 154–6). Such functional definitions are more fluid, and allow us to focus on processes and to appreciate different forms of urbanism.

The contributions in this volume take the latter approach by describing what cities did (or made). The authors’ choices echo both scholarly traditions

in different countries and branches of Mediterranean archaeology – the authors of the chapters come from 11 different countries – as well as individual approaches, which range from purely archaeological (Perreault & Bonias, Beaumont, Vidale and Michelini, Ceccarelli & Stoddart), to historical (Becker), to Levi-Strauss and post-Mausian anthropological theory (Riva, Ruiz-Gálvez). The resulting volume reflects the diverse landscape, in which studies of Mediterranean urbanism take place: diverse in theoretical approaches, methods and degree of connectivity with sister disciplines, and sometimes even contradictory (cf. Sanmartí *et al. versus* Álvarez *et al.* on San Jaume).

It also reflects the fact that most of the contributors are excavators who have the privileged position of being close to their data and present here synthetic overviews of their latest discoveries, which have often been reported in local languages and local publications in their respective countries. Furthermore, archaeologists working on Greece, Italy, Spain and temperate Europe seldom come together, making their meeting and juxtaposition of the case studies particularly valuable.

In this respect, the terminology used also varies, with terms such as *polis*, *emporion* and *oppidum* or *synoecism* and nucleation used, depending on the geographical setting, theoretical approach or academic tradition. For example, Early Iron Age walled hilltop settlements are called *oppida* in the French and Spanish bibliography (Gailledrat and Vives-Ferrándiz in this volume), while in English and German literature the term refers to certain Late Iron Age settlements (Fichtl 2005; Moore 2017). Chronological differences aside, the meaning of each term has been debated for a long time and is unlikely to be resolved here, but their parallel use in this volume will hopefully create a dialogue between the different groups of scholars to discuss the same broad phenomenon – urbanism.

Another variable is the chronology: although the volume aims to focus on the period between 1000–500 BC, inevitably, in some regions (Spain in particular) and sites (Padova, Perugia), the developments that begin in the early first millennium BC continue well into its second half. The time period in the title is, for us, the start of the phenomenon of urbanism, since in many of the case study sites, it continues to this day.

Urbanism and textiles

One issue that has traditionally received little attention in general discussions of the first millennium BC urbanization, but was central to the economy and culture of ancient European societies, is textile production and

consumption. Largely, this is due to the association of textile work with the female sphere, traditionally neglected by archaeologists (González-Marcén *et al.* 2008; Harlow and Nosch 2014, 3, 11; Marín-Aguilera 2019, 230–31). In line with this, it is easy for scholars living in a post-industrial economy to underestimate the considerable training, knowledge and skill that textile manufacture requires. Weaving apprenticeships, for example, typically last between five and ten years (Cutler 2019, 5–7). Additionally, the poor survival of textiles in archaeological contexts and the limited written sources on the subject conditioned the slow development of textile research in disciplines concerned with this area and period. The latter is especially relevant, when we consider the evidence of the importance of textile production and consumption in the formation of the Bronze Age urban state centres of Mesopotamia (McCorriston 1997; Wattenmaker 1998; Michel & Nosch 2010) and the palatial societies of the Bronze Age Aegean (Killen 2007).

The European Research Council-funded project *Production and Consumption: Textile Economy and Urbanisation in Mediterranean Europe 1000–500 BCE* (PROCON) investigated the role of textile production and consumption in the formation of north Mediterranean urban centres during the first half of the first millennium bc (Gleba *et al.* 2013; Gleba 2015). Textiles were necessary, desirable and valuable commodities as clothing, furnishing, sails, etc. Through their inherent capacity to be made ever finer, more colourful, and patterned, textiles provided a means of asserting exclusivity in order to legitimize power relationships and social asymmetries. Through complex *chaînes opératoires* of production, distribution and accumulation, some textiles gained status from the makers, owners, events and networks, while others facilitated standardized barter transactions (Harris 2017). Many of the contributions in the present volume tackle the subject of textiles and textile production to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the availability of the evidence. PROCON carried out analyses of textiles and textile tools for many of the sites covered in this volume, and the results have either already been published elsewhere (Poggio Civitate – Cutler *et al.* 2020; Cancho Roano, La Mata and El Turuñuelo – Marín-Aguilera 2019, Marín-Aguilera *et al.* 2019; also see Gleba 2017) or they will be synthesized in the companion volume *Dressing Cities: Textile Economies in Mediterranean Europe 1000–500 bc* (Gleba *et al.* forthcoming) with only a summary presented here (e.g. for Argilos, Karabournaki, Corinth, Azoria, Zagora, Vulci). In that volume, we explore in greater detail the different aspects of textile production and consumption, and address the challenges inherent in evaluating the economic and social

role of textiles through the extant archaeological and historical data.

Recent scholarship on the ancient economy appreciates that systems of production and exchange existed in, and moved across, a spectrum over time, including market mechanisms; that social relations and norms shaped economic behaviour in different ways; and that objects, in turn, also shaped social relations and economic possibilities. The emergence of cities can be seen as part of this movement along the spectrum and indeed, Christopher Smith's concluding chapter places textile manufacture at the heart of economic development. Were textiles a driving force behind urbanization? Probably not. But they were without doubt at the heart of the urban economy and were just as significant a factor as many other, such as pottery, metallurgy, etc. The aim of this volume (and the companion one) is to act as a catalyst for integrating textiles in archaeological discourses on the ancient economy and urbanization, overcoming gender bias and excuses of 'invisibility.'

Contributions to this volume

The book is organized geographically (Fig. 1.1).² The first section covers the Aegean, including recent discoveries in northern Greece (Pereault & Bonias on Argilos, Tsiafaki on Karabournaki), the Euboean Gulf (Reber on Eretria), developments in the Cyclades (Beumont on Zagora) and on Crete (Kotsonas), as well as the major centres of Corinth (Tzonou) and Athens (Osborne).

The next section deals with the central Mediterranean. Although urbanization in Italy is primarily associated with Etruria and Latium (Carosi & Regoli on Vulci, Bagnasco Gianni *et al.* on Tarquinia, Ceccarelli & Stoddart on Perugia, Tuck on Poggio Civitate di Murlo and Becker on Rome), major centres of north Italy (Gambacurta on Este and Micheli & Vidale on Padova) and indigenous sites in south Italy (Meo on Muro Leccese) and Sicily (Kolb & Balco) are also included. The following two contributions deal with specific types of material, which are used as proxies for urban economic developments (Riva on *amphorae* in Etruria, Perkins on *pithoi* in Etruria).

The last section covers the western Mediterranean, including Sardinia (Roppa & Madrigali), southern France (Gailledrat) and Spain, particularly Catalonia (Sanmartí *et al.*), including the important Sant Jaume Complex (Álvarez *et al.*), the Iberian Culture in the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula (Ruiz-Gálvez and Vives-Ferrándiz Sánchez) and Extremadura (Jiménez Ávila). Also included at the beginning of this section is a chapter on early urbanism north of

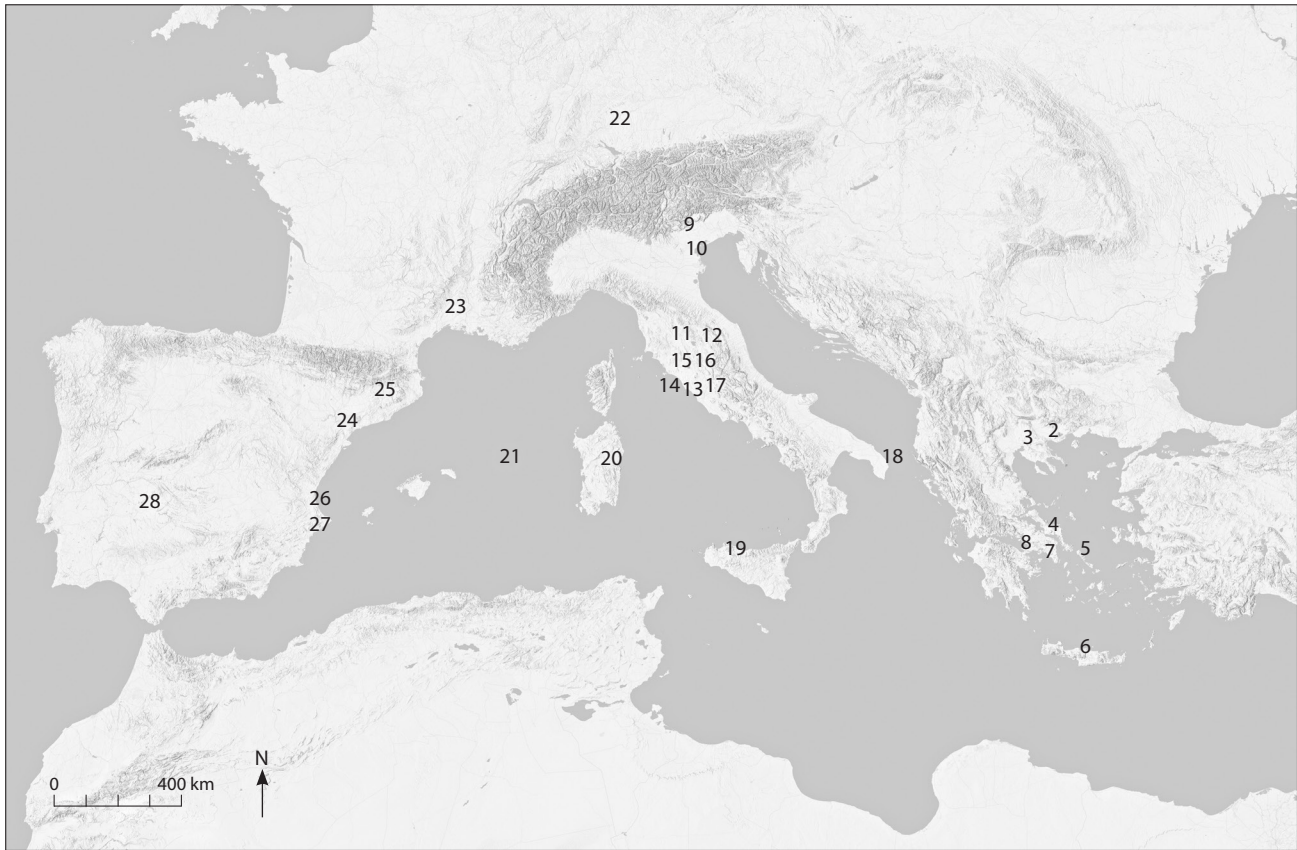


Figure 1.1. Map showing the volume coverage, with numbers corresponding to chapters.

the Alps (Fernández-Götz & Grömer), addressing the connections and contrasts between the central Mediterranean and central Europe, while another (Nijboer) deals with the creation of long-distance networks across the Mediterranean. The concluding chapter (Smith) draws the various threads of the volume together, using the concept of ‘industriousness’ as its guiding principle.

The explanations for the appearance of the north Mediterranean cities in the first millennium BC proposed by the authors in this volume are diverse and rarely mutually exclusive: intensification of land use (Osborne), topographical modifications (Becker), increased commercial activity (Perreault & Bonias; Tzonou), religious and political role (Gambacurta; Bagnasco Gianni *et al.*), shift from elite practices of gift-exchange to commerce (Riva), agricultural intensification (Perkins), transmission of know-how (Nijboer), elite competition (Vidale & Michelini), craft specialization (Vidale & Michelini; Ruiz-Gálvez), stimulation by (Phoenician) colonial foundations (Gailledrat; Álvarez *et al.*), demographic growth (Kolb & Balco), etc. We see outward- (Corinth, Tarquinia)

and inward- (Athens, Poggio Civitate) looking cities and sites; egalitarian (Zagora),³ commercially driven (Corinth) and elite dominated (Este, Vulci) cities; cities that ceased to exist in an almost embryonic state (Poggio Civitate, Sant Jaume), and those that continued to thrive to this day (Rome, Athens, Padova). It is our hope that the rich tapestry of evidence that the diverse chapters of this volume compose will re-energize urbanization studies of Mediterranean Europe and beyond, and will encourage more comparative approaches and dialogue across regions of the Mediterranean that were connected in antiquity.

Cover illustration

The economies of production and urbanization of Mediterranean Europe from 1000–500 BC were to a large extent powered by the connectivity of the Mediterranean Sea, which was in turn enabled by the sailing ships (and sails!). Archaeological illustrator Kelvin Wilson (www.kelvinwilson.com) created the cover for this book to reflect this idea. In his own words, ‘it is meant not to convey what an ancient ship precisely

looked like, or how an ancient mariner performed his job, but rather the vibrancy of the world they sailed through. Imagine the energy it took to build, to launch, to load, to ferry, to keep safe, to deliver and to reap the rewards of merchant ships and cargoes. Now, in re-imagining it, you will find some surplus of that kinetic energy surviving the millennia – and settled down as a cover.’

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- 1 The title was originally suggested by Joanne Cutler, whose untimely death prevented her from seeing the volume out. We dedicate it to her memory.
- 2 Despite our best efforts, there are inevitable gaps in this map, in particular the easternmost (what was Ionia in ancient times and is western Turkey today) and westernmost (modern Portugal) extents of Mediterranean Europe. On the former, the work of Anja Slawisch is opening new directions, while the latter has been extensively investigated by Ana Margarida Aruda (e.g. Gomez & Aruda 2018). The largest gap at the moment is the north-central Balkans, although here, too, there have been major developments demonstrating the existence of proto-urban sites that were a major crossroads between Mediterranean, central European and Balkan cultures, as demonstrated by the recent HERA-funded *ENTRANS* project (Armit *et al.* 2016). The Black Sea, as an extension of the Mediterranean is another gap, although the area was part of the wider networks connecting it to the Aegean and even further west. Cyprus is not included in the scope of this volume since in ancient times its urban trajectory was closer to that of the Near or Middle East, a region which witnessed much earlier and very different urbanizing processes than north Mediterranean Europe (e.g. Iacovou 2002; Counts & Iacovou 2013).

- 3 The common assumptions about distributions of wealth, hierarchies of power, specialization and urbanism in the past are starting to be questioned with respect to some past cultures; cf. Green 2020.

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Making cities

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

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