Forsaken Relics

Practices and Rituals of Appropriating Abandoned
Artifacts from Antiquity to Modern Times

Edited by
Alessandro Buono, Gianluca Miniaci, and
Anna Anguissola

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Ancient Societies
Volume 4

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Front cover: North Necropolis, Tomb 162, view from the west (courtesy of MAIER)
Back cover: Hierapolis tomb 18 (courtesy of MAIER)

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Preface

This book is the product of an encounter. Coming from diverse research backgrounds – history and archaeology – and specialising in different regions and periods (early modern Italy, the Iberian world, the classical Mediterranean, and ancient Egypt) the three editors did not share scholarly traditions, nor a common familiarity with the same type of sources. Despite these differences, they found common ground in their observations of the strong resonances in the behaviour of historical actors, as documented in artefacts and texts. Their collaboration emerged from a shared concern: the social discontinuity resulting from the precarious and ephemeral nature of the human being is strongly counterbalanced by the creation of an illusion of continuity. In an ancient Egyptian song in a royal tomb, supposedly written by a harpist, where the continuity of the life after death is questioned and the author bitterly addresses the social continuity between one generation and the other, demystifying the illusion of continuity:

> Death is a kindly fate. A generation passes, another stays, since the time of the ancestors. The gods who were before rest in their tombs, blessed nobles too are buried in their tombs. [Yet] those who built tombs, their places are gone. What has become of them? I have heard the words of Imhotep and Hordjedef, whose sayings are recited in whole. What of their places? Their walls have crumbled, their places are gone, as though they had never been! None comes from there, to tell of their needs, to calm our hearts, until we go where they have gone!

Death creates social voids that families, human groups, and society need to address. This void not only has an important personal and social dimension in terms of relations between people, but it also affects a more material dimension: the relationship between people and things. Death inevitably interrupts such a relationship. The possession of goods and their succession from one generation to another represents one of the 'genetic codes' of a society, guaranteeing social stability and the sense of continuity. But what happens when the succession of things is interrupted because of death or other natural events and there is no legal, established rule or habit of succession? How do people legitimise the appropriation of abandoned or disputed things and places? Furthermore, how can the notion of abandonment be manipulated to alter economic, social, and political balances?

Abandoned things remain forsaken relics till the moment that someone finds a strategy to appropriate them. This process may not always follow a formal, legal, or institutional route and may instead involve a certain degree of rituality. One ritual prerequisite is that it obscures – voluntarily or not – the relationship between the

action and the goals to be achieved with the performance of the ritual itself. The close entanglement that exists between humans and non-humans make it necessary for those who leave to be replaced by someone who ensures the fulfilment of mutual obligations, who safeguards or replaces the social relations between things and people. In fact, human communities cannot be considered as being composed only of human beings. The editors of this book found it particularly effective to focus on ritual actions, understood as actions and languages of legitimation aimed at creating continuity in discontinuity. These actions and utterances enable actors to behave *as if*, disguising facts with a performative fiction capable of creating and legitimising the weaving of the social fabric.

This volume gathers the fruits of a challenge that began among the three co-editors, was continued by involving students from the University of Pisa, and culminated in an international workshop held in December 2022. The workshop was funded by the Excellence Department Project *Structures in time. Resilience, acceleration, and change perception (in the Euro-Mediterranean area)* inside the framework *Accelerations and Resilience: Expansion and Growth in the Early States and Empires of the Ancient World* for the Dipartimento di Civiltà e Forme del Sapere, Università di Pisa. The workshop aimed to bring together scholars from different disciplines (history, archaeology, anthropology) to address the conflicts, practices, and rituals surrounding the appropriation of goods. The first group of authors who participated in the workshop[1] was later joined by a second group who contributed to the chapters of this volume.[2]

Aware of the disparate backgrounds of the participants, the authors of this volume were deliberately not provided with a strong conceptual framework or the *a priori* definition of terms such as abandonment, ritual, action, and appropriation. The intention was to foster an interdisciplinary dialogue spanning a deep chronology – from the Neolithic to the present day – across various research terrains, from the Near East to the Mediterranean basin and continental Europe, based on the specific sources of each context. The emphasis has been placed on actions and their descriptions. Therefore, the following pages are not intended to serve as a theoretically informed introduction but rather as a presentation of the volume and a hypothesis for dialogue that, according to the editors, can be established between the various chapters. This dialogue is just one of many possible paths and understandings that the reader may envision.[3]

One of the first common themes that emerges from reading the chapters is the notion of legitimisation through operations that could be described, and that are often labelled as such by the actors involved, as acts of care aimed at fostering continuity. Francesca Anichini, Salvatore Basile, Gabriele Gattiglia, and Claudia Sciuto, in their archaeological and ethnographic analysis of 'relict ecologies' in the Apuan Alps (central-northern Italy), for example, illustrate how communities assume roles as guardians, care givers, and stewards of a 'diachronic relationship' intertwining humans and more-than-humans, conceived as 'a pledge for cultural continuity' (p. 93). The

ecology and archaeology of abandonment, therefore, enable the authors to examine (and actively participate in) a process of reproducing an alliance between humans and non-humans, where agency is not solely on the side of the human element. This multi-species alliance, prevalent in mountainous areas characterised for centuries by an agro-sylvo-pastoral economy, has left ecological and cultural traces that can be deciphered through an archaeology of various remnants – pieces of an ancient system now fragmented. Thus, from prehistory to the present, the authors trace the remnants of artefacts, such as cultivated vegetation and flora (isolated chestnut groves, vestiges of an ancient system now abandoned), or the deserted *metati/seccatoi* (drying rooms) and mills. However, the dispersed human communities themselves appear to the authors as relics, isolated remnants of an ancient assemblage, communities intent on rediscovering, re-appropriating, and resemantising both the environments and artefacts, and the memories and ancient practices of this chestnut ecology. The result of this process of creating continuity is precisely to 're-occupy' the abandoned physical and cultural space and to establish new multi-species alliances that facilitate the emergence of 'new social ways of life' (p. 94).

The chapter by Bisserka Gaydarska, Brian Buchanan, and John Chapman transports us to the Neolithic period, focusing particularly on settlements known as Trypillia megasites in Ukraine. The results presented by the three authors is the result of many years of an international research project, incorporating excavation, fieldwork, palaeo-environmental data, and experimental archaeology. Their investigation centres on the phenomenon of 'deliberate burnt houses'. Among the various objects analysed in this volume, the house, as scholars rightly emphasise, is a 'living' object closely intertwined with its inhabitants. Through a series of experiments conducted between 2014 and 2016, these 'domicides' have been demonstrated to be compatible with an interpretation suggesting deliberate acts – a 'ritual burning of a house prior to site abandonment' (p. 8). The results of these experimental tests indicate that the archaeological data align with an interpretation portraying these events as the outcome of a 'major collective effort', constituting a 'deliberate social event' characterised by 'a multi-sensory experience likely regarded as one of the highlights of the Trypillia social calendar' (p. 12). Analysis of the production and re-use of the remains of these ritual pyres leads the authors to formulate several hypotheses. The scattering, deposition into pits, or formation of visible oval mounds of burnt daub signifies the deliberate act of preserving the memory of the house, thus creating continuity. Another hypothesis suggests a connection to the seasonal cycle of the settlement, with ritual practices marking the passage of time. Regardless, the creation of 'memory mounds' through the re-use of the remains of the ritual burning serves as evidence of the 'gradual transformation of the megasite from a place of congregation for the living to a powerful meeting-place for the living and the ancestors as well as a meeting-place only for the living' (p. 18), where newcomers may have sensed a strong ancestral presence. This prompts the authors to contemplate the very concept of abandonment: the act of burning the house does not signify abandonment. On

the contrary, it is interpreted as a precursor to its maintenance as what could be termed an *inalienable asset* through its fragmentation and 'presentification' via the establishment of additional memory mounds. In this context – as elucidated in this chapter and as further explored in subsequent ones – the three authors encourage us to perceive these objects as active participants in the formation of the social fabric. The house, in particular, serves as a significant node within a 'network of nested social relations' (p. 24): its ritual care, not coincidentally, lies at the core of the processes of appropriation and the fostering of social continuity.

The theme of *care*, especially associated with the moment of death, as both an action and a language of legitimation and the establishment of social continuity, occupies a central position in a series of essays that can be read in conjunction. Primarily, those authored by Angelica Tortorella and Alessandro Buono, alongside those by Anna Anguissola and Gianluca Miniaci, explore this theme in depth.

Angelica Tortorella delves into classical antiquity, specifically 4th century BC Athens, in her essay. The focus is on a hereditary conflict, dissected through a literary source – an oration by Isaeus (*On the estate of Kiron*, *Oration* VIII). This case, involving a dispute between two purported heirs, revolves around proving kinship and, consequently, legitimising the appropriation of family property (the *oikos*'s assets). Through her analysis of the source material, Tortorella illustrates how actions deemed as 'caring' – particularly ritual actions – were instrumental in establishing and demonstrating kinship bonds in classical Athens. She argues that the heart of the inheritance dispute lies not merely in blood ties, but in the 'quality' of these ties. The ritual actions undertaken by the individual claiming the role of legitimate heir (such as conducting rituals with ancestors linked to the domestic or public sphere of the brotherhood or the city), and the public acknowledgment the deceased had shown by involving the heir in such actions (*e.g.*, recognising legitimate daughters through dowry), serve as demonstrations not only of legal kinship but also of practical kinship. Central to this kinship are actions aimed at demonstrating one's familiarity with the deceased in emotional terms. Particularly significant is the care exhibited at the moment of death by taking charge of the funeral: preparing the body and overseeing its burial, characterised by the verb *summetakeirizomai*, 'to take charge of something together with someone', which conveys shared responsibility for the reproduction of the *oikos*, thereby entitling one to its associated goods. In Tortorella's analysis, the centrality of objects in family formation becomes apparent: the transmission of things and actions performed through them (such as the dowry or publicly wearing clothes or jewellery) activate the aforementioned 'diachronic relationships'.

In a somewhat surprising manner, the conflicts described by Tortorella, despite their diverse contexts, exhibit a certain family resemblance to those presented in Alessandro Buono's chapter. Specifically, Buono discusses the case of the inheritance of an Armenian merchant, who died without descendants in Livorno (north-western Tuscany) at the end of the 17th century, which was contested between the Christian and Ottoman shores of the Mediterranean. Contrary to intuitive reasoning, where

multiple claimants to an inheritance that has remained vacant might vie for legitimacy, it was the act of 'acting as heir' that validated the successor's legitimacy, rather than the position of being a legitimate heir that legitimised the performance of such actions. Particularly, the actions of behaving as a legitimate heir, by attending the funeral of one's deceased father, being treated and recognised by him as a legitimate relative (*e.g.*, receiving gifts as in the case of wives, or being raised as a legitimate child), all serve to qualify those relationships and thus permit the appropriation of the disputed assets.

In the legal doctrine of the European *ius commune*, it was the actions that proved the quality of the bonds and, in particular, ritual actions were capable of 'putting a person in possession' of his or her legal status. With the aid then of both the discussion of legal cases from early modern Italy and another case of conflict over the property of a Portuguese merchant who died in the late 17th century Spanish Philippines, it is shown how it is in some ways correct to reverse the syllogism: it is not the heir who performs the rite but it is the rite that designates the heir. Buono pushes this reasoning to its extreme consequences, precisely tracing those 'family resemblances' in the world of the ancient Mediterranean: in Roman law, as well as in the practices of justice in the city courts of ancient Greece, the author observes the relationship between acting 'as if' one owns a status, and the recognition of this status, the relationship between the taking care of family relations and the appropriation of family property. Without wishing to argue for a projection into antiquity of early modern European categories, or to trace easy genealogies, Buono goes as far as Ancient Egypt where, surprisingly, the way of reasoning around contested inheritances found in the context of 17th century AD is already inscribed in the customs of the 3rd–2nd millennium BC: 'The property is given to the one who buries', or 'Bury him, succeed into his inheritance'.

Gianluca Miniaci's contribution delves deeply into this context, highlighting the theme of *care*. Miniaci examines how burial and related rituals establish a strong claim on property in cases of disputed inheritances. In the scenarios described by the author, burial as a demonstration of the position of legitimate heir often competes with other forms of 'care'. For instance, in the case of a fugitive's possessions, the dispute might be between a family claiming the possessions because they nourished and housed him and another claimant who performed the burial. Conversely, in a dispute between siblings, those who did not bury their parent may be accused by the others of conduct warranting exclusion from the inheritance. The close link between responsibility for the care of the deceased and claims to the deceased's property, evident in this society, appears to have been institutionalised by the precepts of the pharaohs and the verdicts of the oracles.

In the second part of his paper, Miniaci analyses two other forms of appropriation of the goods of a deceased, through 'mapping' and 'listing', part of a ritual of creating the 'semantics of abandonment'. Objects buried with the dead belong to the dead. They are indeed a kind of inalienable possession. But to get them out of the 'moral

possession' of the deceased and make them re-appropriable, they must somehow undergo operations such as inspections of 'abandoned and ruined graves'. Labelling a grave as 'abandoned and in ruins' (even deliberately omitting the name of the deceased) and 'providing a complete and accurate list' of the objects it contains, is an operation that demonstrates the fact that no one is taking care of the memory of the deceased (p. 152). This will allow the 'discoverer' of the tomb to take possession of the abandoned property and the tomb itself, legitimising his possession through a 'restoration' that will instead demonstrate that he is now in charge of it. The necropolis of Thebe is a clear example of how 'the identification and exploitation of ancient tombs [...] become almost an institutionalised practice' (p. 153), witnessed by the detection of graffiti that is a sign of a mapping of space that, far from being simply a description, is a performative act of ritual appropriation. Finally, the appropriation of a grave, the re-use of objects that belonged to a dead person, or even the reburial of corpses, is a strong channel of legitimisation for those who want to appropriate a social identity, creating particularly relevant fictitious genealogical in the case of claims to the throne of Egypt.

These reflections lead us to the core of another chapter, authored by Anna Anguissola. She examines the funerary areas surrounding the Hellenistic–Roman city of Hierapolis in Phrygia, west-central Anatolia. These vast areas, with their hundreds of tombs, stand out as some of the most conspicuous elements of the urban landscape. These were also focal points for particularly intense processes of appropriation and re-use during periods of economic and demographic growth. Anguissola analyses the traces left by these processes in both epigraphic sources and artefacts. The tombs she examines reveal how successive inscriptions, erasures, and replacements of previous engravings are indicative of the vibrant social activities that took place in these spaces. This process of re-appropriation and re-use appears to be the result of legitimisation strategies accepted by the community of inhabitants and rightful claimants to the funerary space. Anguissola's analysis demonstrates how these strategies, attested by the epigraphic documents and material culture, facilitated the ongoing negotiation and establishment of social continuity and property rights within the community. What the author highlights is, first and foremost, the competition for a scarce resource – the sacred space, a sort of commons for city families – which underscores how the management of the deceased and their burial is central to a legitimisation strategy. Actions involving objects and the centrality of things in these assemblages are crucial to the reproduction strategies of family and civic communities. The tombs analysed by Anguissola, much like those in Miniaci's study, function as 'archives' where inventories of things and people, legacies, wills, and threats to heirs and those responsible for the care of the deceased are inscribed. These inscriptions provide a topographically precise map of possessions and seek to influence future strategies of the living through their materiality. A grave, therefore, becomes a node in the assemblage between human and non-human actors, actively constructing familial and communal landscapes. This perspective aligns with the themes explored in the

previously cited essays, emphasising the interplay between objects, actions, and social continuity.

This reading of the environment as an archive of practices, a theme central to the chapter by Anichini *et al.* essay, remains at the core of Joseph Viscomi's chapter. Viscomi explores the material histories of depopulations in the Calabria region of southern Italy. Using ethnographic and historical sources, he examines the entanglements between human and environmental processes, proposing that the environment is not merely a backdrop or a set of immutable constraints, as traditionally understood in the Braudelian *Méditerranée* tradition. Instead, Viscomi suggests analysing the interactions between humans and the environment in a relational rather than structural sense, which he terms an 'anarchic space-time configuration'. The processes of appropriation of abandoned spaces are thus linked to contextual configurations where the actual places themselves become 'generative of temporal and spatial constellations' (p. 103). This perspective shifts the focus from viewing the environment as a static setting for human actions to understanding it as an active participant in the creation of social and temporal dynamics. Viscomi's approach highlights the fluid and reciprocal relationship between humans and their environment, where both are continuously shaping and being shaped by each other.

In this sense, archives are not merely repositories of information or sites for reflecting on environmental history; they are integral to the history of abandonment itself. The arrival of the researcher in an abandoned community, as seen in the study by Anichini *et al.*, becomes a catalyst for the community to re-inscribe the territory into a new economic future centred on tourism. This process involves operations of territorial appropriation disputed between several municipalities and facilitated by the rediscovery of abandoned archives in the basements of municipal buildings. Researchers are actively invited to use their analysis of cadastral records to forge a connection between past and present. The neglected documentation becomes part of a resignification operation that Viscomi, as an ethnographer, observes – beyond the historical narrative that Viscomi, as a historian, can reconstruct. This recounts entirely different temporal and spatial constellations. It becomes evident to the author that so-called 'depopulated' spaces are, in reality, contested spaces. The labels of 'uninhabitable', 'abandoned', or 'damaged', applied by social or institutional actors, serve to legitimise operations of re-appropriation and re-allocation of use. These actions often occur to the detriment of competing claims and subjects, who are thereby driven out of the place.

Qualifying operations through actions and utterances are central to many of the essays described so far. This issue is also the focus of the essays by Chiara Ombretta Tommasi and Antonio Stopani. Tommasi analyses a 'very old and occult ritual practice' (p. 32), the *euocatio*, used by Roman armies to take possession of conquered cities. To avoid committing sacrilege, it was considered necessary to 'evoke' the deities that protected the enemy city, with the promise of dedicating a temple to them in Rome. This magical-religious and legal ritual served a dual function: 'depopulating'

the enemy city of its gods and simultaneously performing an 'act of possession' over the gods, thus legitimising the appropriation of territory. Through utterances and deeds, the qualification of space as 'abandoned' (by the gods) allowed its re-occupation. These operations were at the heart of Roman imperialist legitimation and what has been called its 'accumulative civic polytheism' (p. 36). Objects played a central role in these operations of qualification, which were highly politically relevant. The removal of the possessions of the gods, the relocation of statues and temples, and historiographical accounts that assured the fact that these statues showed the assent of the gods by nodding or speaking were all significant. Such ancient rites and prodigies persisted throughout the history of Rome, up to the imperial and finally Christian age, as exemplified by Constantine's invocation of the (by now sole) god at the Battle of Milvius Bridge (AD 312). Evocations and miraculous apparitions provided precedents for countless other cases in the history of 'Christian' Europe. Significantly, Tommasi emphasises the 'functional and morphological similarities' seen in such practices from common Indo-European origins, like 'the process of transferring or stealing the relics of the saints from one city to another' (p. 46). The rite is linked to the appropriation of a conquered place, implying a dynamic relationship between forsaking and annexation – a 'dissolution' of the sacred that is functional to the 'restoration of social stability.' Thus, abandonment and occupation are two phases in a cycle of creating social continuity.

Antonio Stopani analyses operations of qualification in a very different context: urban occupations by migrant squatters and the movements that support them in Italy and Greece in the 21st century. In post-2008 crisis Turin, squatting by migrants in the 'abandoned' areas of the former Olympic Village is examined not simply as a form of 'illegal' or 'informal' occupation, but for its capacity to 'challenge local institutions' and generate rights. Through participant observation, Stopani views squatting as a series of 'socially-oriented practices of urban regenerations'. In this context, the pronouncement of the word 'abandonment' (both of people and places) by the social movements supporting the regularisation of these squatters, carries a meaning that is not merely descriptive but performative. It serves as a language of legitimation, claiming a right of occupation stemming from what is perceived as a 'lack of care on the part of the institutions' (p. 120).

The Turin case is compared to similar movements in the cities of Rome and Athens, both also impacted by the financial crisis of 2008, resulting in thousands of abandoned buildings. A parallel process involving the withdrawal of private capital and the failure of public housing policies has led to a spiral of expulsion of large segments of the urban population from the real estate market and a demographic shift that exacerbates the phenomenon of abandonment. It is within this context that social movements have been activated, not only to address the demand for housing policies but also to assert their participation in public policies for the regeneration of neglected urban areas. Occupation is thus viewed as part of a process of constructing a 'micro-society,' where occupants are 'selected' based on their willingness to engage

in caring for the place. Each individual occupation constitutes a contextual and autonomous entity, yet it is called upon to mobilise at various levels (neighbourhood, city) to confront local, national, and European migration and eviction policies. Stopani concludes that 'squatting movements [...] did not (and actually do not) end in a simple "possession" of spaces, but rather in the possibility of reintroducing abandoned, unused, underutilized, and degraded places into the city's life cycle, where they can respond to widespread contemporary social needs' (p. 130). Ultimately, the author analyses a process of constructing new communities and political subjectivities, characterised by 'acts of possession' and 'ritual actions' centred on the idea that 'taking care of abandoned people and looking after abandoned assets' (p. 131) are legitimising operations that enable contested spaces to be challenged.

The articles contained in this volume do not form a coherent theoretical guide to the concept of the abandonment of places and things, but rather, they depict a mosaic of experiences across a wide chronological and geographical range. Above all, they reveal a pattern of analogies in the need for a performative dimension to designate the state of a certain place or thing and one's relationship with it. Through their actions, people in different communities of the past and present establish a relationship with their surroundings and objects, giving shape (and voice) to the definition of 'abandonment' and their desire to fill a perceived void of care, participation, and possession – or to prevent such an operation by others. Several essays specifically explore the significance of blood relationships and family ties in the claim of property in both the ancient and modern worlds. Notably, certain moments, such as death – the ultimate break that disrupts relationships, habits, and established hierarchies – emerge as occasions that necessitate not only the demonstration of one's position but also a reflection on the criteria that govern social continuity. The home – abandoned, re-appropriated through destruction, contested, inherited, occupied – is the place where, more than anywhere else, there is a need to intertwine the legal dimension, the ritual dimension, and the performative solidity of relationships. The landscape – of contested tombs, piles of remains from dismantled buildings, ruins, and new urban encampments – bears the traces of this lively negotiation between the individual, the community, and places.

<div align="right">Alessandro Buono, Gianluca Miniaci, and Anna Anguissola</div>

Notes

1 The workshop was attended by a number of authors whose contributions are not included in the volume: Dace Dzenovska: 'Failed appropriation: post-socialist non-property in the Latvia-Russia borderlands'; Pascal Vernus: 'Human (re-)appropriation of natural pristine elements'; Alcira Dueñas: 'The disappearing commons: from indigenous 'communal' to 'vacant' lands, or the formative anomalies of colonialism'; Érika Ramos: 'Fragmentary death, completeness of memory: the re-use of sacred spaces in Third Intermediate Period Egypt'; Ludovico Rebaudo: 'Appropriation and re-use of grave stelai and other sculptures in the ancient Greek world. Some case studies'; in addition to Angelo Torre, as discussant. The editors would like to thank them for their contribution to the discussion. Special thanks are also due to Érika Ramos for

2 Angelica Tortorella, Francesca Anichini, Salvatore Basile, Gabriele Gattiglia, Claudia Sciuto.

3 We will not deal here with the topic of *place*, which is the subject of an afterword by John Chapman and Bisserka Gaydarska (Chapter 10), written in the immediate aftermath of the workshop. We would like to thank the authors for the sharp critical reflections and insights they raise.

Appropriating places

Chapter 1

The biographies of Neolithic burnt houses: Insights from the Trypillia megasites of Ukraine

Bisserka Gaydarska, Brian Buchanan, and John Chapman

The Trypillia megasites (henceforth TMS) of Ukraine are remarkable settlements, which formed the largest sites in the 4th millennium cal BC in Eurasia, if not the world, and constituted the earliest, low-density, egalitarian cities in the world – larger and earlier than the earliest Near Eastern cities of the Uruk period. After a brief characterisation of TMS, we turn to the repeated social practice of burning down a high proportion of the wattle-and-daub houses as the final act of their lives. The result of these fires was often a dense concentration of burnt daub, which was treated in at least three ways: (1) deposition in a pit near the dead house; (2) left to disperse in the same area as the dead house; and (3) the formation of a low daub mound which persisted through time for an unknown duration. We also acknowledge that between a quarter and a third of all Trypillia houses on megasites were not burnt down at the end of their lives, while some burnt houses did not produce much, if any, daub at all.

In this chapter, we explore each of these five responses to the death of a house, emphasising the way that some burnt houses were transformed into what we have termed 'memory mounds'. We support these points with reference to our own experimental archaeology of house-building, -burning and excavation at Nebelivka. Since Nebelivka was settled for up to 200 years, there was a gradual increase in the density of the mounds – perhaps totalling 100 - leading to the emergence of a hybrid site which combined the living (the houses) and the ancestors (the memory mounds). The changing place-value of TMS will be discussed in terms of this transformation.

Introduction: The Cucuteni-Trypillia network and the Trypillia megasites

The last 15 years has been an exciting time for students of the settlement phenomenon known as Trypillia megasites (henceforth TMS), located in Ukraine and with the largest concentration in the forest steppe zone of the Synukha valley. In addition

to continuing investigations of TMS (chapters in Müller *et al.* 2016), three major international projects have been initiated and published; the Anglo-Ukrainian project at Nebelivka (Gaydarska 2020), the German–Ukrainian project at Maidanetske (Müller *et al.* 2017; Ohlrau 2020) and the German–Ukrainian project at Taljanki (Shatilo 2021). These results of excavation, fieldwork and palaeo-environmental data will form the basis for subsequent research. But there have also been massive advances in the development of methodological strategies for approaching TMS (Chapman *et al.* 2014) and also theoretical strides advancing new interpretations of these huge sites (Gaydarska *et al.* 2023). Whereas once TMS constituted an easily overlooked specialist sub-field in the Chalcolithic of Eastern Europe (Videiko 1996), a series of high-profile exhibitions introduced TMS to a wider audience (Mantu *et al.* 1997; Ciuk 2008; Anthony with Chi 2010) and the results of the recent excavations and fieldwork from 2008 onwards have highlighted the role of TMS as the largest sites in the 4th millennium cal BC in Eurasia, if not the world, and constituted the earliest, low-density, egalitarian cities in the world – larger and earlier than the earliest Near Eastern cities of the Uruk period (Wengrow unpublished; Gaydarska 2017).

The cultural context of these extraordinary sites is, in itself, remarkable. Taken as a single overall group, the Cucuteni–Trypillia (henceforth CT) network stretched over 250,000 km^2 in three modern states – Ukraine, Moldova and Romania – with a duration of almost two millennia (48/4700–29/2800 cal BC) (Mantu *et al.* 1997). This
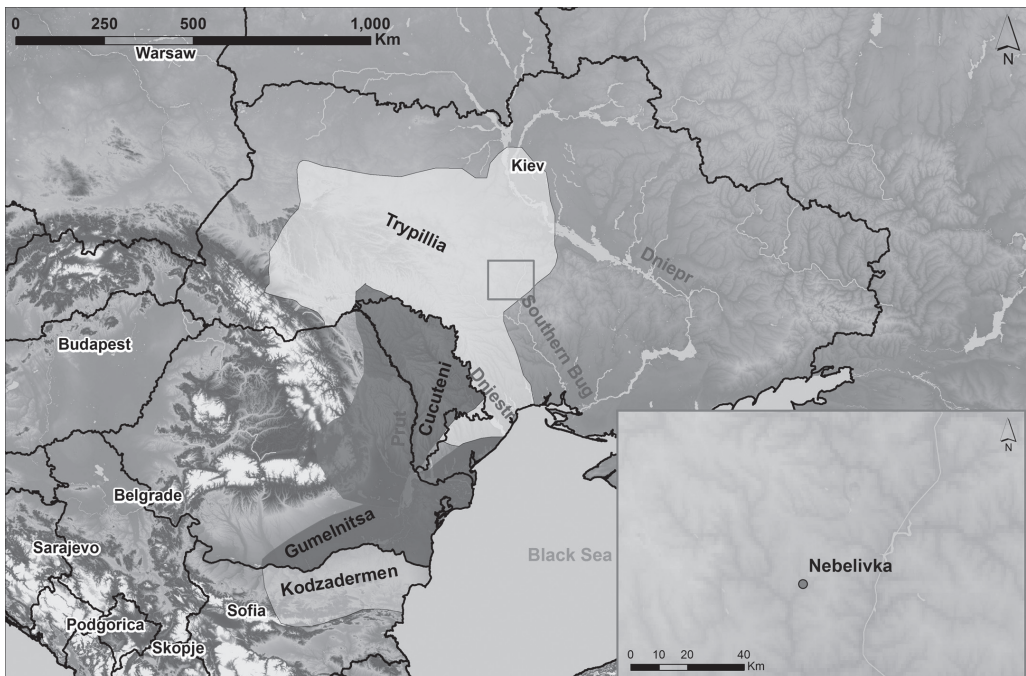

Fig. 1.1. Distribution of the Cucuteni–Trypillia group (© Nebelivka Project).

made the CT network one of the largest known and most stable networks in prehistoric Europe, because so many CT sites had no alternative cultural background on which to grow and develop – no experience of sites with different cultural traditions either in time or in space (Fig. 1.1).

Not only in the investigations of TMS but also in the vast majority of CT sites, there was a long-term priority given to settlement remains consisting of wattle-and-daub, timber-framed houses, in comparison to which there were remarkably few mortuary remains. Combinations and re-combinations of the basic unit of settlement – the house – produced sites of widely differing sizes, with the commonest size being smaller than 5 ha (Nebbia 2020, fig. 3.21). Even in the smaller sites, settlement planning was based upon clearly distinguishable principles of concentric rings of houses surrounding an empty, inner open area, which was accessed from the perimeter of the site via radial streets (Fig. 1.2). However, these three planning principles were not found together on the same settlement before the early 4th millennium cal BC, in the emerging class of TMS. This *bricolage* of settlement features also implies a *bricolage* of communities bringing their own experience of site planning to the larger settlements. The basis of TMS was a settlement of people from many different, smaller, surrounding communities, each of whom recreated their home identity in architectural form on the TMS.

The analyses of the Nebelivka structures were both architectural (Hale 2020, table 4.2) and spatial (Buchanan 2020; Gaydarska *et al.* 2023); they were based upon a total of 1077 burnt houses, 398 unburnt or probably burnt houses and 23 Assembly Houses which we have interpreted as communal structures. The structures were discovered through geophysical prospection which produced what is still the only complete plan of a TMS (Hale 2020; here Fig. 1.3). The plan was based on four nested levels of increasing spatial size: the basic unit of the house; the group of houses termed the 'neighbourhood', comprising between three and 27 houses (Fig. 1.4); the group of neighbourhoods comprising a 'quarter', with between five and 18 neighbourhoods and almost all with its own Assembly House (Fig. 1.5); and the complete site comprising a total of 14 quarters and based upon the three planning principles outlined above (Fig. 1.3). We have argued that each neighbourhood was built by people from the same external small settlement, which we take to explain the considerable architectural diversity found between neighbourhoods and indeed quarters. However, the Visibility Graph Analysis (VGA) of the Nebelivka plan showed a remarkable similarity in the overall structuring of space across all quarters in the analysis (Buchanan 2020), suggesting that everyone involved in the planning and building of quarters at Nebelivka had a shared idea of the overall design principles, to which they adhered with some variations.

Despite the apparent spatial order in the Nebelivka plan, which can readily lead to the mistaken impression of the evolution of a top-down social hierarchy in TMS (Ohlrau 2020), we have argued for the alternative approach which involves three elements: a low-density form of urbanism (Gaydarska 2016), a much smaller population
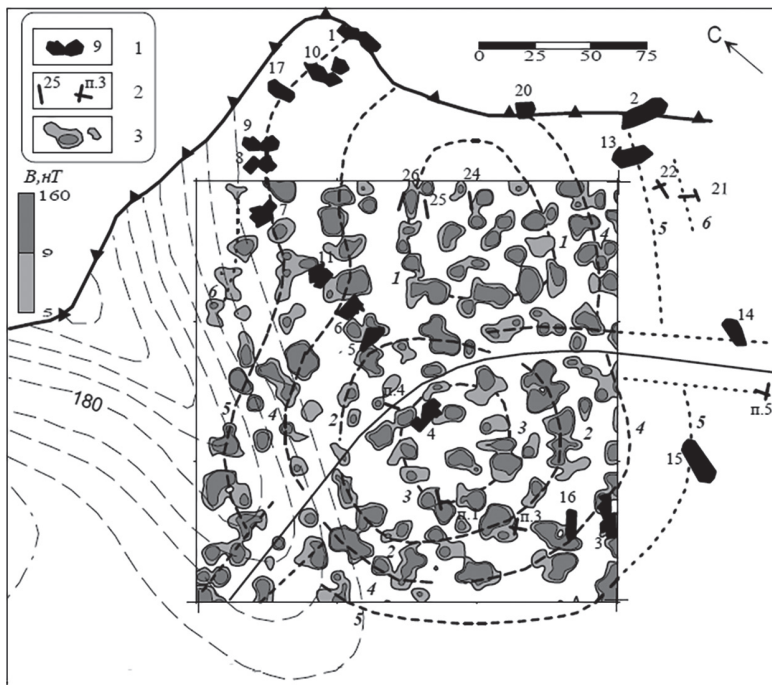
Fig. 1.2. Plan of small site of Grebeni (Koshelev 2004, Ris. 4.14, redrawn by B. Gaydarska).

than is often advocated, with the possibility of seasonal congregations alongside a permanent group of 'Guardians', and a bottom-up egalitarian structure based upon the multiple aspects of Trypillia practices which are consonant with Graeber and Wengrow's (2021) vision of an egalitarian form of political organisation (Gaydarska *et al.* 2023).

The death of Trypillia houses

If the Cucuteni-Trypillia group is dominated by settlements, the settlements are dominated by dwelling-houses (Burdo *et al.* 2013). CT houses materialised an entire worldview for their occupants, creating a warm, safe, comfortable, decorated, ritualised and monumental place which could be endlessly reproduced over *c.* 70 generations. These structures were almost all rectangular (Fig. 1.6), with a mean floor area of 63 m², and showed a tendency towards a modular size, with the core module of 7.5 m in length and 4 m in width, with each 1 m increase in width leading to a further 7.5 m increase in length (Hale 2020).

If the house is an object, it is a very special object – a living house (Bailey 1996), with its own agency, which includes the structuring of time and space, strong connections between the house and those building it and living there, as well as the provoking
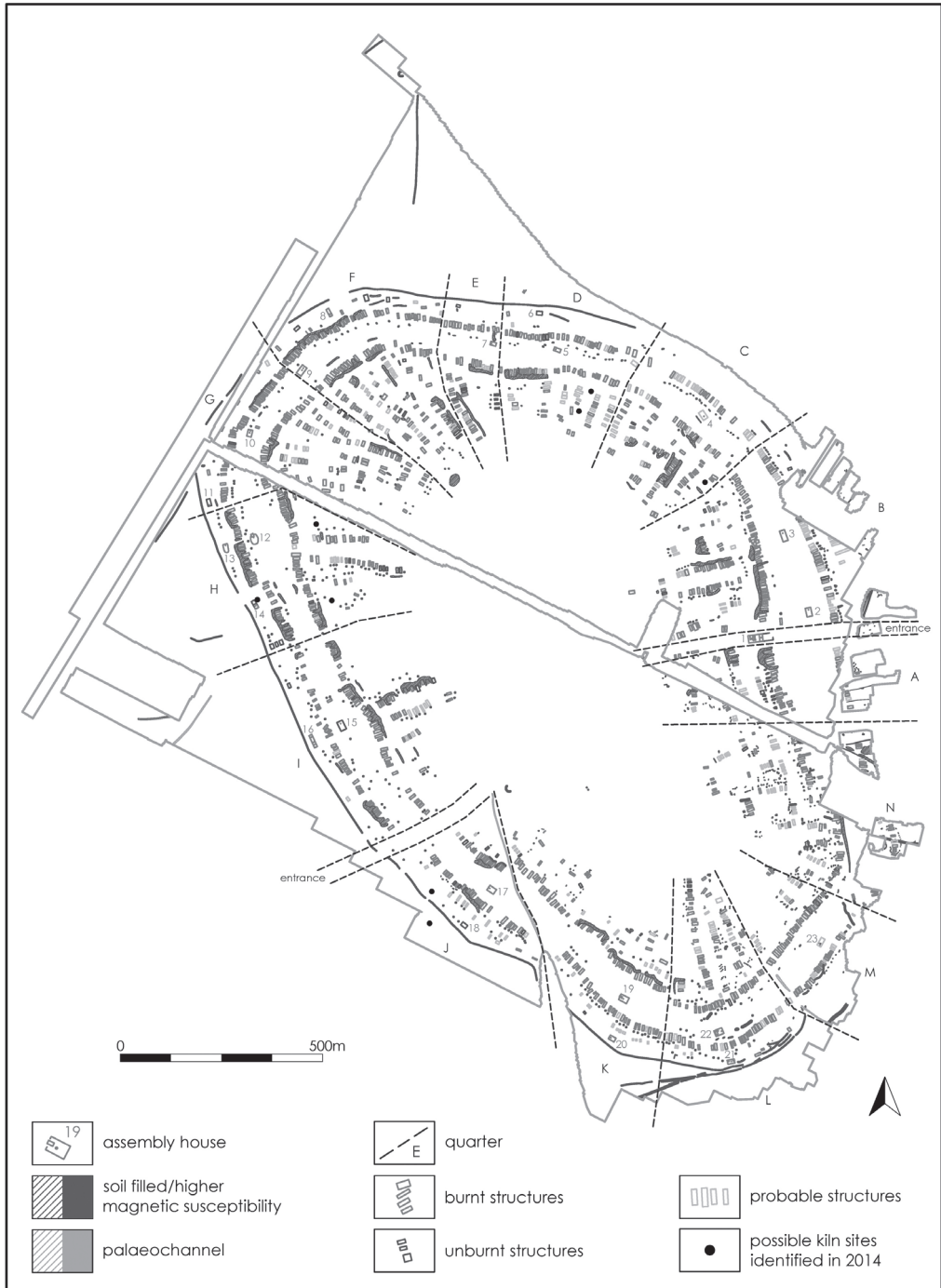
Fig. 1.3. Plan of Nebelivka (Hale 2020, fig. 4.4, © Nebelivka Project).
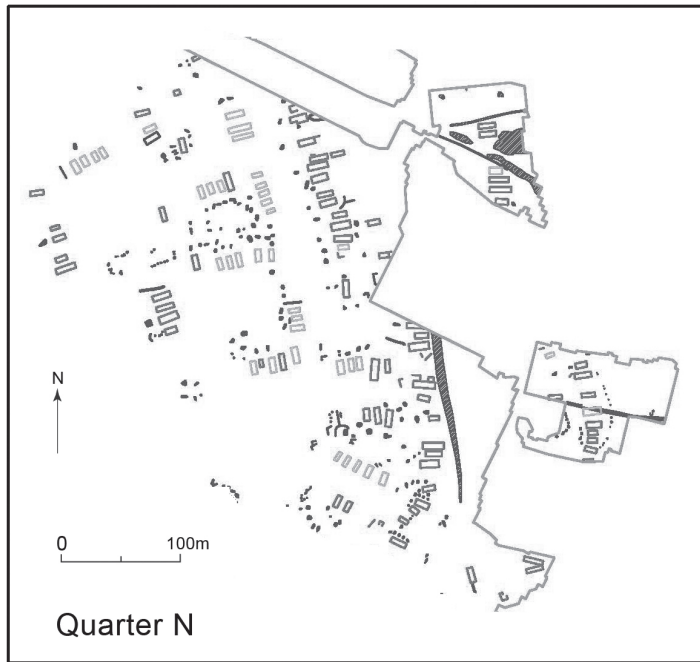
Fig. 1.4. Quarter N and neighbourhoods, Nebelivka (Y. Beadnell).

of deep emotions at the time of the death of the house. Tringham (2005) has even used the term 'domicide' to refer to deliberate house burning. It is important to re-instate the social and emotional ramifications of the death of a house into the debate concerning its physical aspects.

In the earliest investigations of the eponymous site of Trypillia (Khvoika 1901; 1904), the excavator discovered masses of burnt clay full of what became known as 'Trypillia' pottery and other objects. Khvoika termed these burnt clay masses *ploshchadka* – a term referring to the often fused mass of burnt clay and these structures represented 'houses for the dead' (Fig. 1.7). The discovery of similar houses at the site of Petreni in modern Moldova stimulated the excavator, Stern (1904), to follow Khvoika's interpretation. Both specialists soon changed their interpretation of *ploshchadka* to 'houses for the living' to reflect what had been accepted as 'household' assemblages of everyday objects deposited in the burnt houses. The Trypillia context was among the first in prehistoric Europe where the interpretation of the ritual burning of a house prior to site abandonment was proposed (*e.g.*, Zinkovskiy 1975; Kruts 1989; *cf.* Tringham unpublished). Since the 1980s, the debate has continued about the reasons for house-burning – a remarkably widespread practice across Old Europe (Chapman 1999; 2020; Tasić *et al.* 2015). A long list of alternatives to deliberate ritual practice includes accidental fires arising from high-temperature practices such
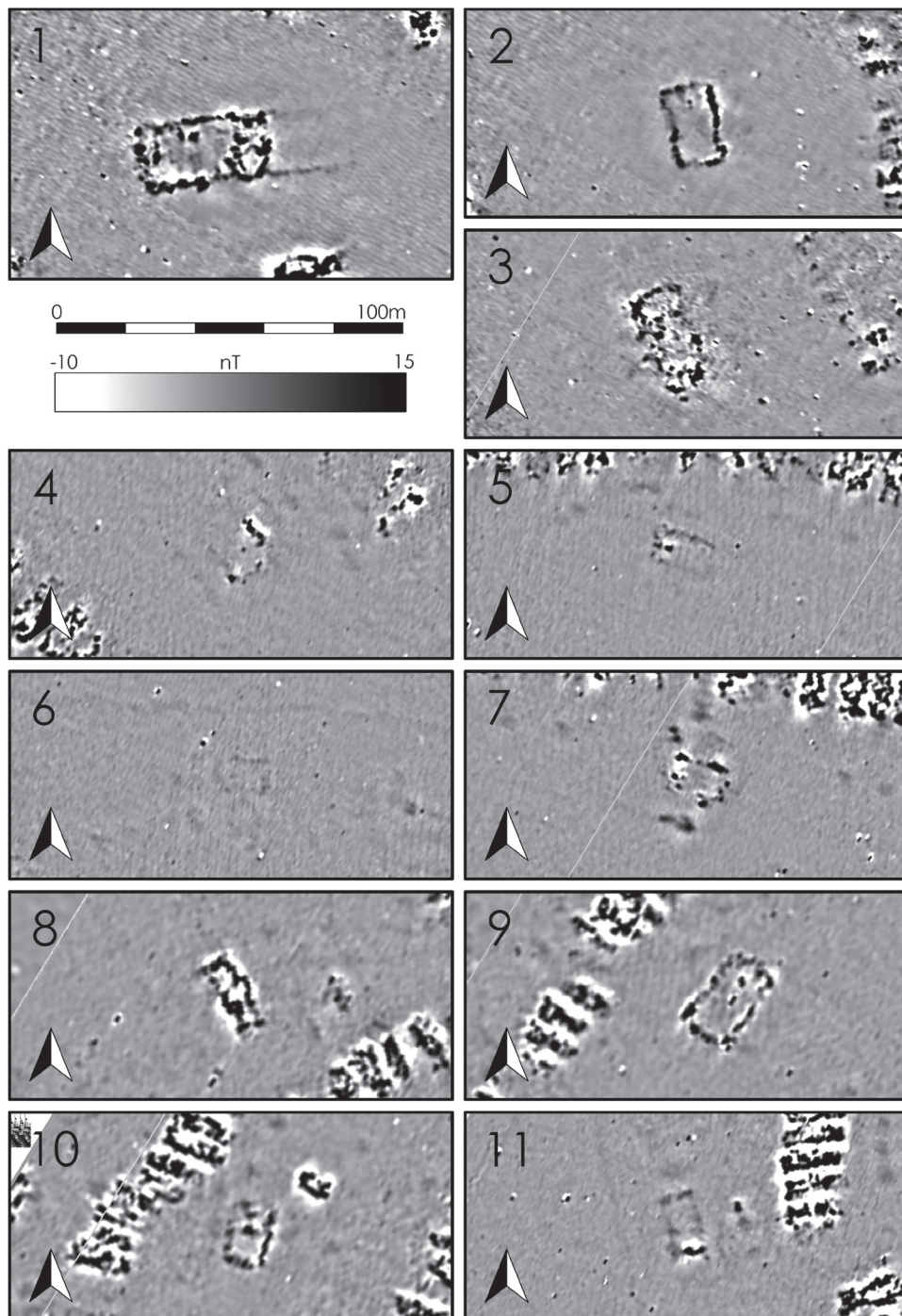
Fig. 1.5. Plans of Assembly Houses, Nebelivka (Hale 2020, fig. 4.8, © Nebelivka Project).
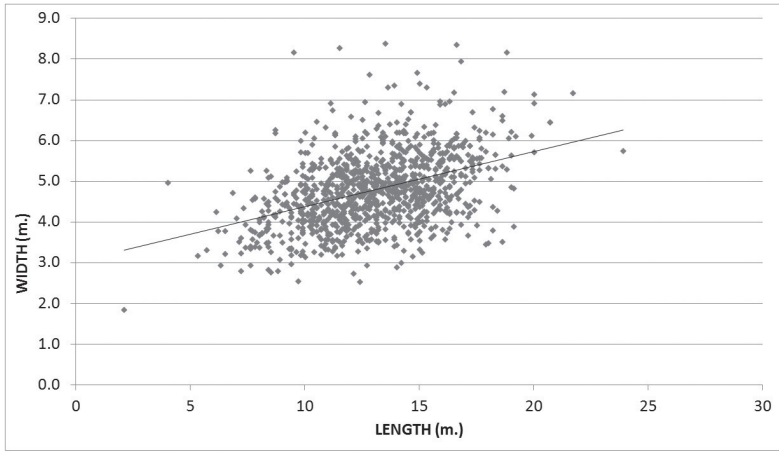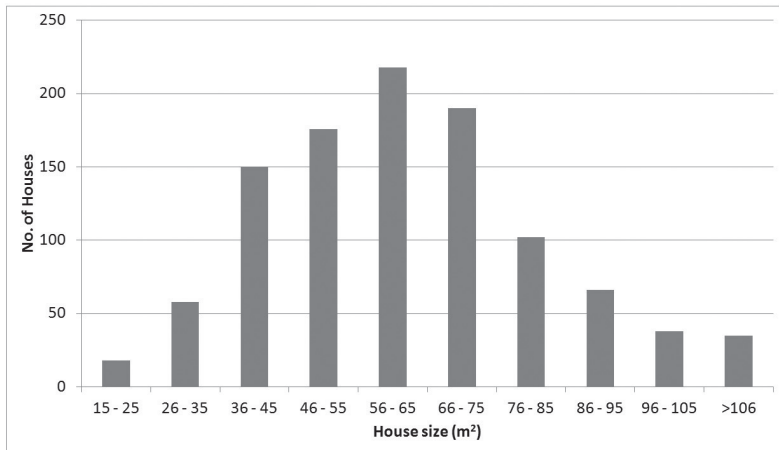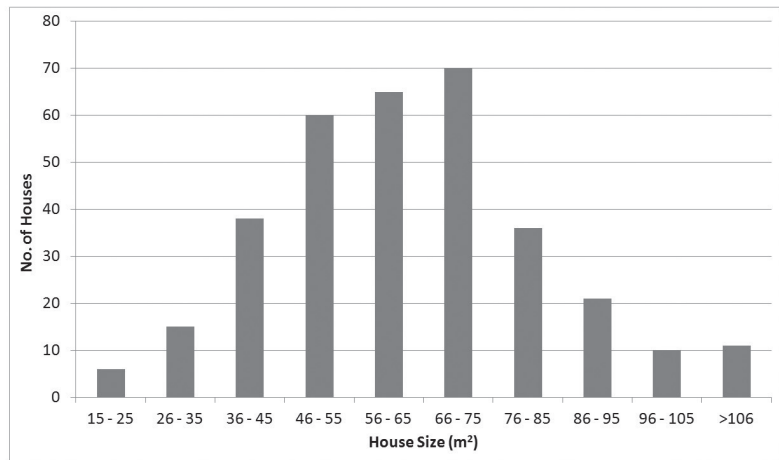
Fig. 1.6. Size of houses, Nebelivka (Gaydarska et al. 2020, SMfig. 9).

*Fig. 1.7. The burnt remains (*ploshchadka*) of House A9, Nebelivka (© Nebelivka Project).*

as baking or pottery-making (McPherron & Christopher 1988, 477–478), defumigation of houses full of insects and other organic refuse (Raczky 1982–1983), inter-village raiding or long-distance warfare (Gimbutas 1977) and the controlled burning of parts of the house clay structure to strengthen the house construction (Korvin-Piotrovskii *et al.* 2012) or to facilitate the re-use of clay in other constructions (Shaffer 1993).

A key intervention in this debate was made by Stevanović (1997), based upon collaboration with the San Francisco Fire Department's analyses of the progress of a fire through a building, allied to multiple firing temperature measurements across each burnt house in her sample of Serbian Neolithic houses. Stevanović demonstrated that it was impossible to reach the firing temperatures found in the burnt houses without the addition of extra combustible materials. This argument at a stroke invalidated all claims for accidental house fires. A total of ten other experiments involving the burning of experimental Cucuteni-Trypillia houses has sought to reproduce the findings on excavations of burnt houses (Cotiugă 2009; Burdo 2011). The eleventh experiment – at Nebelivka – was the first to produce the vitrified daub typical of excavated samples.

The Nebelivka experimental programme of 2014–2016 confirmed the results of both Stevanović's and Cotiugă's work. Two half-size 'Trypillia-like' timber-framed wattle-and-daub houses were constructed in the middle of Nebelivka village – one single-storey and one two-storey structure (Johnston *et al.* 2018; here Fig. 1.8). The two-storey house was burnt down the following year in an event which attracted not

Fig. 1.8. Two experimental replicas of 'Neolithic' houses, Nebelivka village (© Nebelivka Project).

only many Nebelikans but also visitors from several other villages and the local town of Novo'arkhangelsk (Johnston *et al.* 2019). A small team from the Nebelivka research group, working with Dr Oleksandr Diachenko (NAS Institute of Archaeology, Kjiv), returned to Nebelivka in 2017 to excavate part of the burnt house. The results showed that the fire, which was based on the complete filling of the house with dry timber, not only successfully destroyed the whole house, leaving only one wall standing, but also produced vitrified daub of the same kind that is typically encountered on Trypillia house excavations (Fig. 1.9). The calculations of the timber required for these operations showed that between five and ten times the quantity of timber was needed to burn the house than to build it. Not only does this finding reinforce the interpretation of deliberate house-burning but it also underlines the major collective effort required to produce a successful house-burning and how easy it must have been in the past to fail to burn a house properly.

We trust that, by this juncture, we have persuaded the reader that, while there were some exceptions, the vast majority of house-burning was produced as a deliberate social event. This performance constituted a multi-sensory experience that must have been one of the highlights of the Trypillia social calendar (Gaydarska *et al.* 2019).

The physical result of this deliberate practice was usually a dense concentration of burnt daub which was treated in various ways. However, the way the house burnt down could produce very little daub, whether because the firing temperature was too low, with the daub reverting to mud, or because the walls fell outward, leading to dispersal of the daub. Thus, there were some houses whose remains were not

concentrated in a *ploshchadka* (the fourth way). It should also be emphasised that it is difficult to estimate the quantity of the preserved daub. For those houses where the daub was consolidated, there were three ways of treating the remains:

1. the burnt daub was left to disperse in the same area as the dead house;
2. large quantities of burnt daub were deposited in a pit near the dead house; and
3. the burnt daub formed a low mound which persisted through time for an unknown duration.

Before we turn to the implications of how to deal with a burnt house, we should not forget the fifth alternative, based upon the fact that *c.* one-third of all houses at Nebelivka were unburnt (Hale 2020; *e.g.*, House A5: Burdo and Videiko 2016, 107–110; fig. 9; here Fig. 1.10). The place of an unburnt house could still be commemorated but this would seem to involve less materiality – a less rich experience. However, this was not necessarily so, since there was the possibility – not yet demonstrated – that the death of an unburnt house could have been a more 'Green' event, with greater potential for the recycling of house materials. This could have led to the direct incorporation of the dead house's parts, together with its memories into new houses. Nonetheless, the gradual collapse of a house without burning would have missed out on a multi-sensory social event of great communal significance. Instead, the original house slowly sank into the past – with its clay and wood returning to their past states.

The ways in which houses were treated were also related to the kind of occupation at the megasite, in particular whether small-scale, permanent occupation, short, seasonal visits or longer seasonal visits. An initial assumption is that the permanent form of occupation would have led to more intensive ways of treating the remains of burnt houses than the seasonal variant.

Turning to the first way of treating the remains of a burnt house, the scattering of the house daub meant that the place-memory of the house was maintained but in a diluted manner. For those who knew the house or lived there, the house site was an important place, with the traces of the house full of personal and household memories and evoking strong emotions, at least initially. While the relations of the dead house in the wider community were still preserved in cultural memory, it is important to note that no other place was materially implicated in the death of the house. Nonetheless, we have found instances of pottery occurring above the mass of burnt daub; Occam's Razor suggests that these finds were placed there after the *ploshchadka* was abandoned.

As for the practice of removing daub from the *ploshchadka* and burying it in pits, there are no known examples from Nebelivka but two examples have been found at Maidanetske out of a series of over ten excavated pits. Thus, the practice was by no means common at Maidanetske – indeed some of the pits contained less than 1 kg of daub (*e.g.*, the pit in Trench 52: Müller *et al.* 2017, Tab. 7) – but the two examples

Fig. 1.9. (a) Vitrified daub from the excavation of the burnt two-storey experimental house, Nebelivka village; (b) vitrified daub, Test-Pit 33/1, Nebelivka (© Nebelivka Project).

were striking in the quantity of daub transferred. In the pit in Trench 50, 580 kg of daub were deposited in the middle level of the pit, above the structured deposition of two cattle skulls and three vessels on the base of the pit (Müller *et al.* 2017, 51–52; fig. 34; here Fig. 1.11). In the pit in Trench 60, the excavators talk about 'the burial of half a house' as a conscious decision to clear away a former house from a living surface (Müller *et al.* 2017, 56–57, figs 41–42; here Fig. 1.12). This is an interesting case of house fragmentation, with one half buried in a pit and the other half remaining at the site of the house. Burdo and Videiko (2016) have claimed that the primary function of the large pits dug near the houses, often in regular lines (Figs 1.4 and 1.5), was the provision of clay for house-building. The deposition of large quantities of daub in the pit initially dug to provide the clay for the house is a classic example of returning 'natural' material that was cultured to its original natural place (*cf.* the refilling of pits with their original fill: Chapman 2000). Moving a large part of a house to another place sounds like a kind of forgetting but, in fact, deposition in another place retains the memory of the house and creates the strongest possible material link between the birth and death of the house.

The most interesting way of treating the remains of a dead house was the formation of low, oval mounds of burnt daub (Fig. 1.13). The test-pitting of 86 houses at Nebelivka has produced nine examples of these low mounds – an average frequency of one mound in ten burnt houses (Gaydarska *et al.* 2020a, 214, 221).

Burnt daub
Elevation
Painted pottery
Kitchen pottery
Bone
Stone
Daub slag
Flint
Contour of dwelling

0   3 m
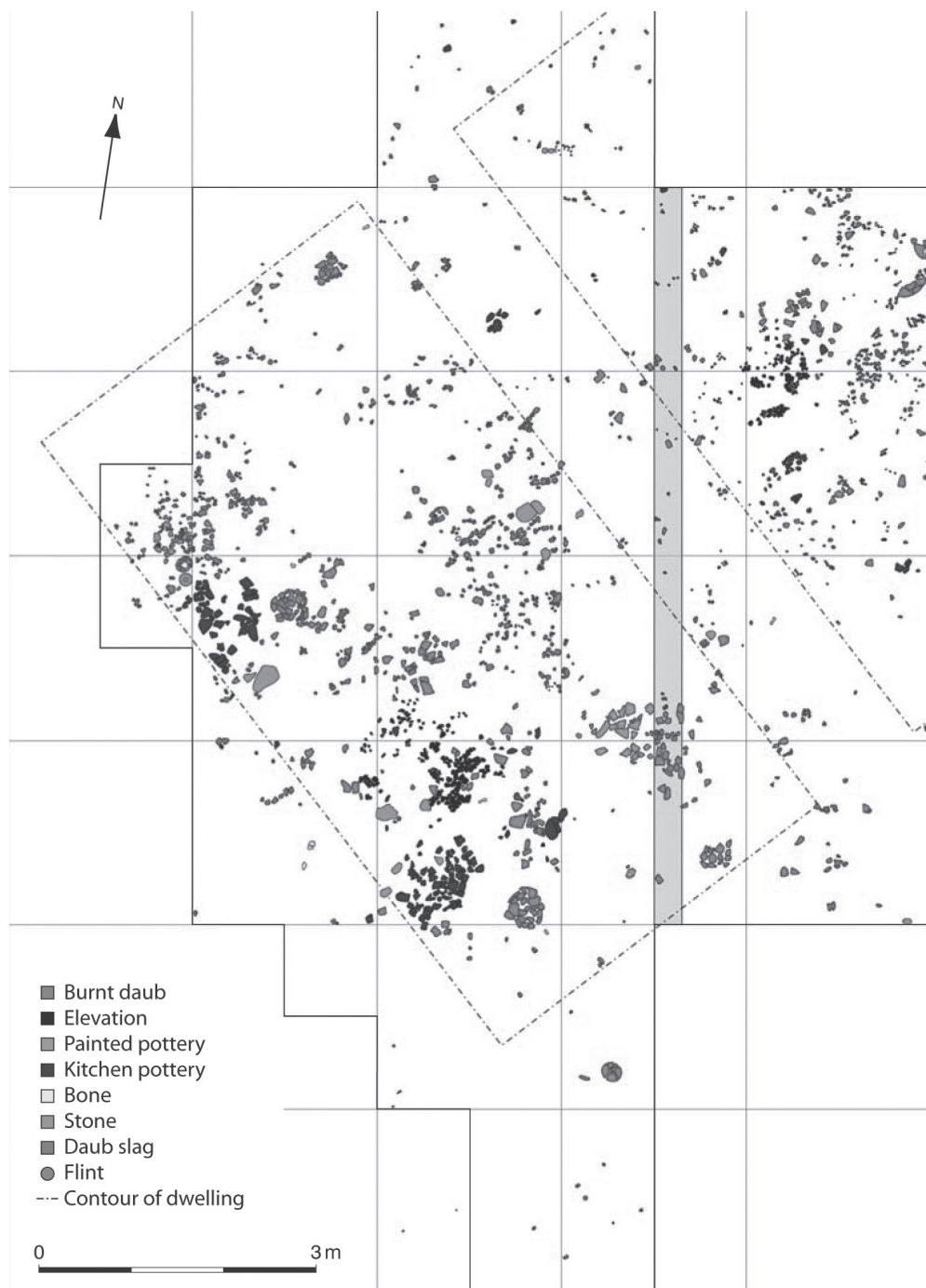
Fig. 1.10. Plan of unburnt House A5, Nebelivka (Burdo and Videiko 2016, fig. 9, © Nebelivka Project).
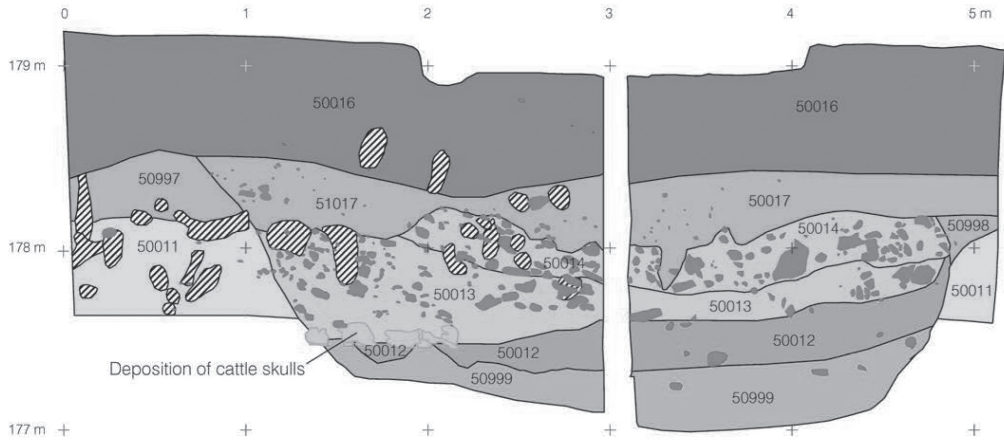
Fig. 1.11. Section of Pit, Trench 50, Maidanetske (Müller et al. *2017, fig. 34).*

Fig. 1.12. Profile of pit, Trench 60, Maidanetske (source: Müller et al. *2017, figs 41–42).*

The mounds would have been visible across the site, standing up to 50 cm above the ground surface of the abandoned house and usually in the context of a neighbourhood that was still partly occupied. Insofar as the mounds were the principal visible remains of a dead house, these small monuments can be considered as 'memory mounds', linking past, present and future. One interesting question was why such a small fraction of burnt houses were transformed into memory mounds. We assert that this was linked to the reason for the burning of the house which, in only some cases, was a response to the death of an important member of the house. Seasonal visits to Nebelivka reduced the likelihood of important household members dying during the visit, which may have been more probable during permanent settlement. We propose the principle that the form of settlement – especially
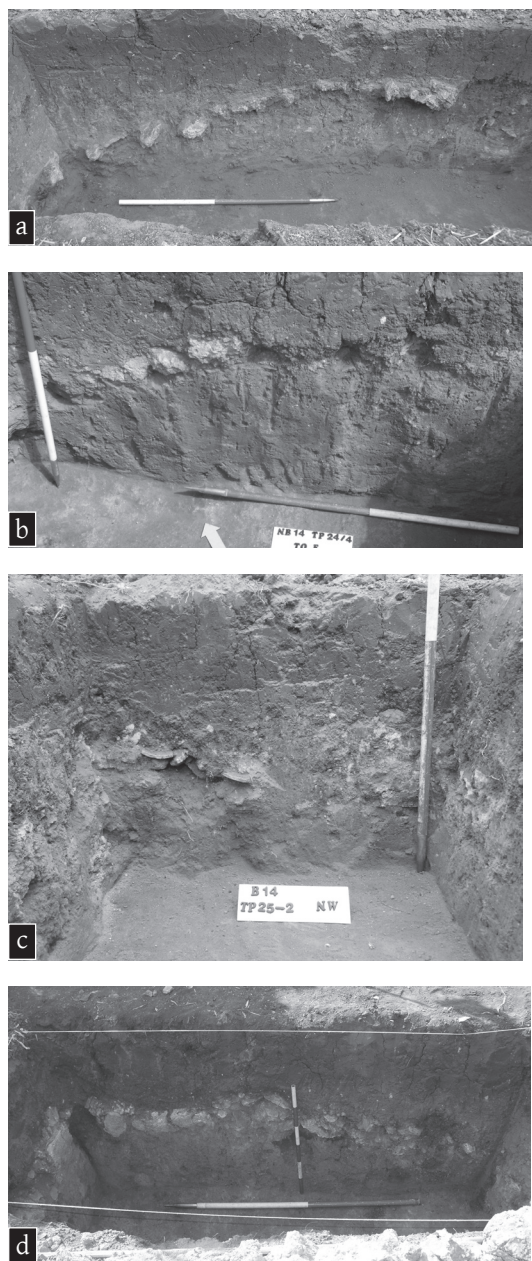
Fig. 1.13. Images of memory mounds, Nebelivka: (a) Test Pit 22/4; (b) Test Pit 24/4; (c) Test Pit 25/2; (d) Test Pit 26/5 (© Nebelivka Project).

whether permanent or seasonal – had an important influence on the reasons for house-burning. Other ritual reasons for house-burning include time-marks of the start and conclusion of a seasonal visit or a cycle of Distributed Governance clan occupation (Gaydarska 2021); not all of these would have necessarily stimulated the formation of a memory mound.

One of the most consistent and intriguing patterns in TMS, as well as on smaller Trypillia sites, is the lack of house super-position – the building of later structures above earlier houses, as was common on Balkan tells (Bailey 1996). House super-position has been used as evidence for the kind of household continuity consistent with Levi-Strauss's concept of 'house societies' (Levi-Strauss 1962), often discussed in prehistoric contexts (Borić 2008). The Trypillia alternative to house super-position was the creation of memory mounds, which continued the life of the house long into the future. Even though houses were central to Trypillia society, it is hard to classify Trypillia as a 'house-society' without stretching the definition of the term to breaking point.

There are many implications of mound creation for the temporal sequence of TMS. The basic temporal trend was the slow, steady growth in the number of memory mounds across the megasite, which produced a growing sense of place-value with the small number of additional mounds per generation (Fig. 1.14). This time-place trend created somewhat denser networks of connectivity across the megasite, in turn attracting more people to
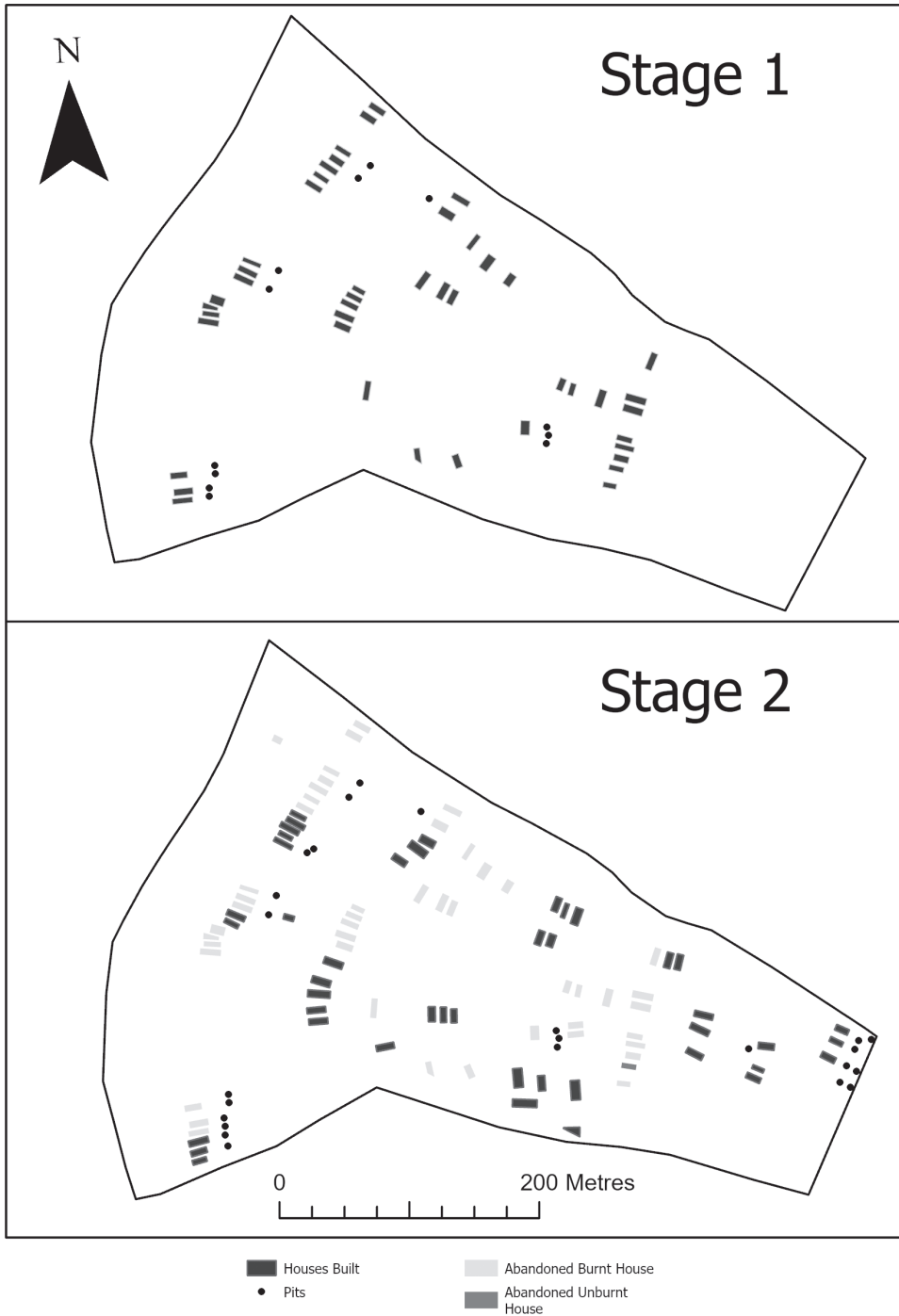
Fig. 1.14. Modelled distribution of memory mounds, Nebelivka: Stages 1–2 (B. Buchanan).

visit the mounds, including a wider range of visitors – both kin and non-kin - to the megasite who could add their own personal objects to the memory mound. This meant that non-megasite dwellers could always have used the memory mound as a visual and material connection to the megasite, even if most people no longer visited the congregation place.

However, the key implication of the proliferation of memory mounds was the gradual transformation of the megasite from a place of congregation for the living to a powerful meeting-place for the living and the ancestors *as well as* a meeting-place only for the living. Over the 180-year duration of Nebelivka (*c.* 3960–3780 cal BC: Gaydarska *et al.* 2023), we estimate the formation of over 100 memory mounds, based upon the selection of one in ten of the 1075 burnt houses for visual memorialisation, or, on average, one new mound every two years. Given that there is currently no method for detecting the presence of memory mounds from geomagnetic data (D. Hale, pers. comm, and *contra* Pickartz *et al.* 2022), we cannot identify either of the two important time-place patterns of the mounds – their locations over time and the cumulative end-pattern of their distribution. Anyone walking across the megasite would have seen memory mounds interspersed between the pits providing the clay for house-building, as well as the living houses, the places where houses would one day be built and the places where houses once stood, some of them marked by surface daub concentrations and others remaining as the places of memories not elaborated through material memorialisation. Different people would have responded differently to these places. Children may have played on the memory mounds, probably retrieving sherds once deposited there for play somewhere else. Older people may have walked between the various memory mounds, creating a processional route that may or may not have developed into a local tradition. Yet others may have walked across the area without paying attention to the mounds, thinking instead of how to reach *their* quarter. All the different actors would have responded in a variety of ways to the local material landscape depending on their own knowledge and memories of the places. At the same time, the material features of the quarter's landscape exerted an agency of their own, attracting and repelling different people, stimulating some to spread the news of a freshly created memory mound to others in different parts of the megasite, others to hurry on without absorbing the memories of 'strangers'.

The key feature of this complex memory map (Küchler 1994) was intimacy – the close juxtaposition of the living and the dead, which produced a layering of the past, present and future in a dense network of presencing. Perhaps, in one quarter, no-one had created a memory mound for several decades, with its ancestral presence slowly fading away without ever dying. By contrast, the presence of a house site marked by the formation of the mound during the previous year's rituals was as vivid as the memories of the house-burning performance. The introduction of memory mounds created layers of complexity hardly experienced in places without their minor but significant ancestral presence.
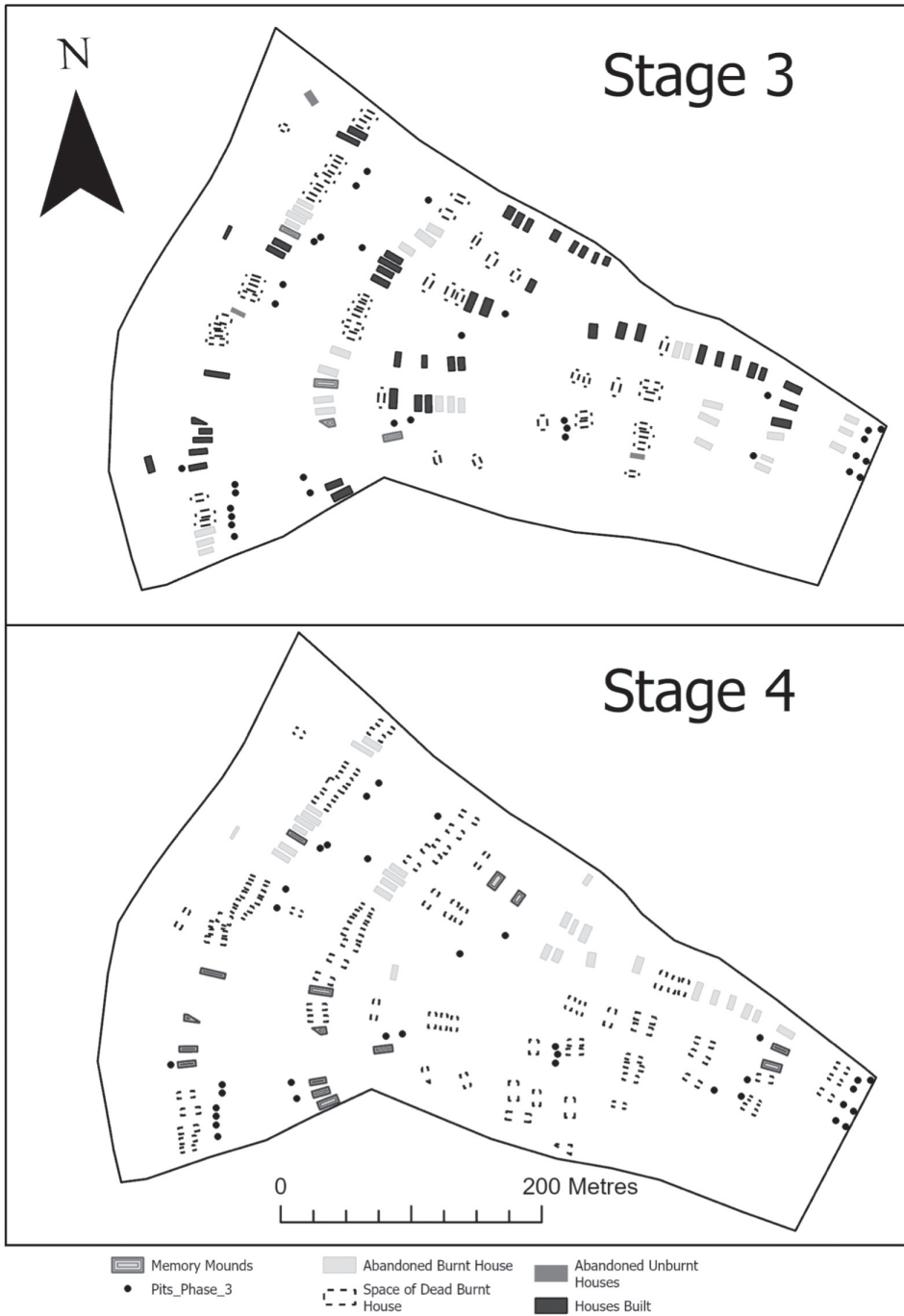
Fig. 1.15. Modelled distribution of memory mounds, Nebelivka: Stages 3–4 (B. Buchanan).

What is striking about the development of Nebelivka through time (Figs 1.14 and 1.15) is the increased complexity of the plan, from the single kind of newly built house in Stage 1 to the multiple uses of adjacent space in Stage 4. The presence of over 100 mounds implies the location of two or three mounds in each of the larger neighbourhoods and multiple mounds in each quarter. The memory maps of visitors to, or residents of, the neighbourhoods and quarters concentrated people's responses to places associated with different times. Anyone visiting Nebelivka after a century and a half's occupation would have encountered not only more memory mounds but also a stronger ancestral presence than experienced by the early arrivals. They would also have been better prepared for these encounters by hearing stories about the mounds, the ancestral houses and their residents from earlier megasite residents or earlier visitors from their home villages. Any household living for decades in their quarter would have had members who lived with the development of the local pattern of living and dead houses, walked past and through the community spaces and participated in the creation of local memory mounds, internalising a significant ancestral presence in the increasingly dense network of places. Residents and visitors in the last two decades of the megasite would have been more deeply attuned to the ancestral presence of over 150 years of living at Nebelivka. The agency of the ancestors would have deeply penetrated the consciousness of the late residents and visitors, making them different kinds of people from those who lived in the first two decades at the megasite. The question of how this difference played out with respect to the abandonment of Nebelivka is an important topic of future research.

General questions

It is now time to turn to the three general questions discussed in the workshop: the meaning of the abandonment of structures, relations between dead houses and people and the means of legitimizing the appropriation of dead houses. We begin with the question of abandonment.

The general picture is that almost 1500 houses were abandoned at Nebelivka over a period of *c*. 180 years – approximately one-third of them burnt down deliberately. The Project has created models for different rates of abandonment for the three different models of site dwelling but the three models yielded similar estimates for the number of abandoned houses *per annum*, ranging from seven to 12 (Gaydarska and Chapman 2020, table 6.3). If the rate of abandonment at Nebelivka fell within broadly similar limits, what did 'abandonment' really mean for the timber-framed houses of Nebelivka and for their occupants?

The household members undoubtedly physically moved out of the 'dead' houses, whether to settle in other megasite houses or return to their home settlements. But there was no sense of total abandonment of the houses, which were treated as

holding a personal identity which was, in some sense, inalienable. The residents chose one pathway from at least four ways of maintaining the inalienable relationship with the house – all of which marked the dead house on people's memory maps.

The location of an unburnt house was fixed in the memory map but former residents developed little elaboration of the actual place. One, as yet un-investigated, possibility for the unburnt house pathway involved the transfer of surviving house components – mostly wooden posts, roof joists and flooring – to other houses, where they became 'ancestral' features in a new or remodelled structure. The burnt house in which little daub was produced was similar to an unburnt house in terms of the materiality of its remains.

The three pathways for maintaining the inalienability of burnt houses differed according to the graded emphasis on the actual house site. Each of them reinforces the practice of the fragmentation of the house, with some daub fragments remaining on the house site and others removed. The strongest material emphasis on the house site came from the formation of a memory mound incorporating many fragments of the 'dead' house as well as fragments of objects either used in the house or brought to it for the burning performance. The mound manifested the ancestral house presence with its household members as a distinctive, visual memory. However, the possibility that the size of most mounds identified at Nebelivka was much smaller than the total quantity of daub produced in house-burning could mean that many house daub fragments may have been removed from the house site to other places, which were in turn enchained to the 'dead' house, its household and the household object assemblage (for 'enchainment', see Chapman and Gaydarska 2007, 4–7). The division of the burnt house daub into those fragments left at the house site and those removed to another place left the least concentrated manifestation of the ancestral house but, at the same time, offered the possibility of enchained relations with many other places. The third pathway of the reburial of a substantial part of the house in a pit near the house site emphasised the origins of the house, achieving the closure of the cycle of house birth, life and death in a dramatic way. Burying part of a house in an adjacent pit meant the combination of visible forgetting and invisible memory in a new place. But since it is possible that not all of the house was buried in a pit, this still allowed for the possibility of enchained links through daub to other places. Daub smeared and plastered on the timber house frame was immobile, functioning in only the local context. But, once fired, the daub took on a new, mobile life of its own and could be transported over distances to establish enchained links with the ancestral house. We may speculate that fragments of daub from a house burnt at Nebelivka were carried back to the home village for incorporation into a special deposit. In these multiple ways, an 'abandoned' house never truly died but remained in the consciousness of the living – a material presence that linked people, places and houses.

The second question concerned the relations between 'dead' houses and people. We have already posited the principal enchained link between these two entities and the third – places. Each of the five pathways for keeping the dead house alive led to variations on the theme of people, places and houses.

The slow disintegration of a house or the decision of the household to move on without burning their house could both lead to the pathway of abandoning a living house with many elements still in good enough condition to be re-used in another house. The household who took elements of their old house as they moved to a new house created a direct inheritance from the old house to the new house, even though the old house may have continued to stand and disintegrate slowly for years if not decades. This visual evocation of time passing emphasised low-key continuity for the household, which became a new version of itself in a fresh set of enchained relations.

As the Project discovered during our experimental house-burning (Gaydarska *et al.* 2019), the burning of a house was one of the most dramatic and evocative periodic events in a Trypillia site's biography. It is impossible to conceive of a successful house-burning without understanding the careful and extensive planning of the event, requiring the co-ordination of many people including, but not limited to, members of the household. Burning a house required a huge concentration of timber which needed drying, cutting into suitable sizes and storage in specially made structures – perhaps in some of the many small structures found on megasites (Figs 1.3 and 1.4). The performance offered the opportunity to neighbours and other households to offer objects to the house-to-be-burnt, creating 'burnt house assemblages' which could differ markedly from 'living house assemblages' *pace* Schiffer (1976). The offerings to the house constituted new, enchained relations between many people and the house and its household. Turning to the burning event, the multi-sensory effects of the performance created a time-mark – a time which people remembered because of its wider significance (Chapman 1997). Different actors would have perceived the domicide in varying ways, depending on their relations with the house, but all would have participated in an unusually intense interaction with others – perhaps not only from Nebelivka but including those from home villages living in the same neighbourhood or quarter as that of the burnt house. After 8–10 hours of burning, the remains of the house defined the house site as clearly as did the once-standing building. There were several instances where excavation demonstrated that people deposited pottery on top of the *ploshchadka* (*e.g.*, Test Pit 33/1: Gaydarska *et al.* 2020b, fig. 4.49). What excavation cannot reveal, however, is the quantity of burnt, newly mobile daub which was removed by the audience after the remains had cooled, usually by the next day.

The third question investigates the process whereby the appropriation of dead houses was legitimised. In the sense that unburnt and burnt Trypillia houses were never completely dead, but already transformed into ancestors in the same way as dead people became first 'the newly-dead' and, later, the ancestors; the process of

appropriation was more complex. We need to relate appropriation to the different stages in the transformation of Trypillia houses. The scattered daub pathway may have contributed to the weakest claims to the house site in comparison with the partial house deposited in a pit or, especially, the memory mound.

Moreover, in the relational approach to houses as living persons, we cannot talk about one 'owner' of a house – whether a household or the lineage head – but a network of nested social relations with the house shared by many people, including immediate neighbours, others living in the same neighbourhood, yet others residing in the same quarter and others living elsewhere on the megasite, as well as those people living in the home settlement whose visitors to Nebelivka had built the house in the first place.

In such nested, enchained relations, the immediate residents, who we assume to be equated with the household 'family' but which may in fact have been embedded in a wider kinship grouping, would have taken initial precedence over the site of the dead or dying house – reinforced by their direct and intimate memories of living in the house and its surrounding area. However, the wide network of enchained relations was a double-edged sword: while embedding ways of legitimising the appropriation of ancestral houses or their spaces, this network opened up opportunities for people from other neighbourhoods or quarters to expand their interest in the house and link it more significantly to their immediate network.

With the passing of time, the overt link between the ancestral house and its residents may have become weaker, as in the case of visitors to Nebelivka no longer making seasonal visits to festivals. This means that, in seasonal settlement mode, the regular coming and going of visitors to festivals for one month *per annum* was sufficient to perpetuate direct links with the ancestral house or house site. However, the choice to visit a megasite was a dynamic process, especially when, in the latter stages of Nebelivka's life, there were two other nearby megasites – Maidanetske and Taljanki – from which to choose (Gaydarska *et al.* 2023). The continued visits of people from the home settlement who had built the ancestral house reduced the opportunities for other groups to appropriate the house site or ancestral house. But the cessation of visits from the home settlement offered new opportunities for others already more distantly related to the ancestral house to appropriate the space for themselves and their network.

In the permanent settlement mode, the preponderance of sedentary groups living for most of the year at the megasite would have enabled the maintenance of stronger links between former residents and ancestral houses. But the same principle of regular visitation applied to this model, with the consequence of groups moving away the loss of their rights to ancestral places. Such a withdrawal may have given the opportunity to the local neighbourhood, the quarter or even the whole megasite, led by the Nebelivka Guardians, to appropriate the ancestral place, with a special chance to convert the memory mounds into part of the megasite's collective memory.

Conclusions

There are many instances in prehistory where house biographies continued long after their 'abandonment'. We may consider the physical survival of the houses at Skara Brae, Orkney (Parker Pearson and Richards 1994) alongside the reproduction of the house form in later mortuary monuments (Midgley 2005), the imitation of Neolithic houses by the builders of mortuary monuments (Hodder 1994) or the super-positioning of later variations of a single house plan on Balkan tells such as Ovcharovo (Bailey 1996). In all these cases, we can think of the houses as possessing the characteristics of humans, whose successive transformations after death into the 'newly-dead' and, later, the 'ancestors' was paralleled in the transformations of houses that were 'abandoned'.

In the Trypillia megasites of Ukraine, we can distinguish at least five ways of continuing the life of the 'abandoned' house:

- the possible re-use of structurally sound of elements of the house in other houses at the time of leaving the house unburnt to die a long, slow death by decay and disintegration;
- the deliberate burning of the house, which left little or no daub scattered over the house site, which remained as an unmarked place of memory;
- the deliberate burning of the house, which converted the clay into mobile daub, some of which was removed to other places and some scattered over the house site as a minor way of marking that place;
- the removal of a substantial part of the daub of a burnt house for deposition in a nearby pit – often the pit from which clay was excavated to build the house in the first place. This practice completed the circle of life–life–death of the house; and
- the removal of some of the daub of a burnt house to other places but the concentration of a substantial part of the daub into a low mound, termed a 'memory mound' at the house site as a physical, visible marker of the ancestral house.

Each modification of the (un)burnt house underlines the fact that an 'abandoned' house never truly died but remained in the consciousness of the living, often, but not only, as a material presence that linked people, places and houses.

In contrast to the low-key transformation of an unburnt house into an ancestral place, the burning of a house was one of the most dramatic and evocative periodic events in a Trypillia site's biography, requiring forward planning and massive timber resources. Each of the five pathways for keeping the dead house alive led to variations in the relationships between people, places and houses but the centrality of enchained relations to an ancestral house was common to all pathways.

The question of appropriation of an abandoned house is complicated by the viewpoint that, in the relational approach to houses as living persons, we cannot talk about one 'owner' of a house – whether a household or the lineage head –

but a network of nested social relations with the house shared by many people. However, this network of enchained relations was a double-edged sword: while embedding ways of legitimising the appropriation of ancestral houses or their spaces, this network opened up opportunities for people from other neighbourhoods or quarters to expand their interest in the house and link it more significantly to their immediate network. Each modification in the house's long after-life led to initial links with the former residents but in time led to different links to other kin groups, neighbourhoods, quarters or even the entire megasite.

What was distinctive about the creation of memory mounds in *c.* 10% of all burnt houses was the way in which the cumulative place-values of the 'abandoned' houses transformed the megasites from settlements into complex interwoven mortuary- and-living zones. The formation of memory mounds consolidated the place-value of the house, contributing to the future memorialisation of the entire megasite.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 The latest major exhibition featuring TMS was the installation *The Nebelivka hypothesis – Cities against the state*, organised by the Forensic Architecture Group, Goldsmiths College, London for the 18th International Architectural Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (https://www.labiennale.org/en/architecture/2023).

2 We suggest that the reason why these mounds of burnt daub have not been recognised earlier is the traditional excavation method used since Khvoika – the uncovering of the whole house in plan form without sectioning any house features – as was used for the excavation of House A9 at Nebelivka (Burdo and Videiko 2016, 99–106).

3 This pattern prompts the fragmenterist's most urgent question: 'where are the missing fragments?' The original quantity of the fragmented entity remains a problem for division of the house as much as for the size of a fragmented figurine (Gaydarska *et al.* 2007).

4 The reflectionist view of burnt house assemblages as simply those objects in use shortly before the burning (*e.g.*, Müller, Ohlrau, Shatilo) fails to take the dynamic performative aspects of house-burning into account.

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Chapter 2

Roman *euocatio*, or how to get possession of a deserted city

Chiara Ombretta Tommasi

Ciel più puro, dèi migliori
T'offro in Roma, ov'io mi reco

A purer heaven and holier gods
I offer you, in Rome. I am going there now
(F. Romani - V. Bellini, *Norma*, Act I, scene 6)

The paper discusses a Roman ritual known as euocatio, *in which, in the course of a war, a Roman general would 'call out' the gods that protected the enemy city and formally offer them a new home and cult in Rome. Scantily attested, yet much discussed in modern literature, this particular ritual has almost never been investigated as a form of appropriating a city. The paper considers the sources that either attest to the practice or transmit the evocation formula pronounced by the general, among whom were Livy, Plutarch, Macrobius, and Servius, and provides a re-assessment of the scholarly interpretations and an extended reading of its theological significance. Indeed, by means of* euocatio, *Rome was able to confirm her rights over a given territory while, at the same time, the symbolic nullification of the sacred boundaries of the conquered towns became a way to include them in the ritual structure of the* imperium, *characterised by the* pax deorum, *and thus acquired the meaning of a redemptive hegemony.*

[7] *Si deus, si dea est, cui populus civitasque Carthaginiensis est in tutela, teque maxime, ille qui urbis huius populique tutelam recepisti, precor venerorque veniamque a vobis peto ut vos populum civitatemque Carthaginiensem deseratis, loca templa sacra urbemque eorum relinquatis, absque his abeatis* [8] *eique populo civitatique metum formidinem oblivionem iniciatis, propitiique Romam ad me meosque veniatis, nostraque vobis loca templa sacra urbs acceptior probatiorque sit, mihique populoque Romano militibusque meis propitii sitis. Si <haec> ita feceritis ut sciamus intellegamusque, voveo vobis templa ludosque facturum.*

I call upon the one in whose protection are the people and community of Carthage, whether it be a god or a goddess, and upon you above all, who have undertaken to protect this city

and people, and ask you all for your favor: may you all desert the people and community of Carthage, leave their sacred places, temples, and city, and depart from them, and upon this people and community heap fear, dread, forgetfulness, and come to Rome, to me and my people, with kindly spirit, and may our sacred places, temples, city be more acceptable and approved in your sight, and may you be well disposed to me and the Roman people and my army. If you all should do these things so that we know and understand them, I vow that I will make temples and games for you (transl. R.A. Kaster).

In Book 3 (chapter 9, 7–8, quoted above) of his miscellaneous and erudite dialogue set during the Roman festival of the Saturnalia, the fifth century AD antiquarian Macrobius proposes an exegesis of the Vergilian lines of *Aen.* 2,351, *Excessere omnes adytis arisque relictis / di quibus imperium hoc steterat* ('All the gods on whom this empire was stayed have gone forth, leaving shrine and altar', transl. H.R. Fairclough) – a passage alluding to the Trojan tutelary gods, who leave the city and abandon its shrines, thus signifying the final downfall of the city. (The reading *propitiique* is a correction by Huschke (1908, 15) adopted by most editors instead of the transmitted *proditique*, defended by Heussler (1979), who translates *herausgekommen*; similarly, *propitii* is a correction by Bergk (1873) instead of the transmitted *propositi*; *haec* has been supplied by by Fraenkel (1957, 237).)

Macrobius explains (as his roughly contemporary Servius would also do) this passage by linking it to a very old and occult ritual practice (*vetustissimus mos ... occultissima sacra*), usually known in the sources as *euocatio*. He then cites the aforementioned words, a rhythmical *carmen* that had to be recited when performing the rite, whose wording is traced back to the antiquarian Quintus Serenus Sammonicus (3rd century AD) and, even earlier, to a certain Furius, an author that has been identified either with Lucius Furius Philus (2nd century BC), or, less probably, with the historian Furius Antias, or with the Neoteric poet Furius Bibaculus (1st century BC). Since the *carmen* mentioned in Macrobius was pronounced during the Third Punic war to evoke the tutelary gods of Carthage, it seems quite plausible that the name Furius alludes to Philus, a member of the Scipionic circle (see Fraenkel 1957, 238; Rawson 1973). As implied in the *carmen* itself, but also as suggested by its etymology, *euocatio* was meant to 'call out' the tutelary gods (or goddesses: this precision is not casual, as we shall see) of a besieged city, so that they might abandon it and, what is more, transfer their protection to Rome or, in other words, take their favour away from those to whom these gods had granted it until then, in order to give it to the Romans. As a reward for such a 'betrayal' the Romans would grant these gods a cult and a temple in Rome (provided that this decision was ratified by the Senate), outside the *pomerium*, that is, the open space marking the city's border. In the Roman religion, therefore, the verb *euocare* sometimes acquires a technical and more restricted meaning if compared with the usual practice of invoking or summoning the gods, attested to in different religious contexts (Blomart 2013) provides a collection of late antique and Christian texts in which the switch towards a more usual meaning is clearly detectable).

Scantily attested, yet much studied,[1] the ritual of *euocatio* involves at least four ideas, some of which are instrumental, some conceptual: it functioned as motivation

for the army and, at the same time, was intended to seek support from gods that were supposed to be hostile, all the while avoiding committing a sacrilege by violating their sanctuary, so as to safely get possession of the enemy city, as stated by Lenski (2008, 234). While it is a matter of dispute as to whether and when this eccentric ritual – strictly linked to war and military action – actually took place, some further equivalents may be found in the Hittite religion, where the custom appears more widespread and can be retraced even in the famous myth of the disappearance of the Sun-god Telepinu. Hittite sources attest how various gods, hidden from their usual environment and function, were asked to 're-appear', by means of a general invocation (*mugawar/mugeššar*) or a specific formula (*talliyawar*); at least in one case, their presence was meant to secure their help in view of a battle.

Parallels were first noted by Wohleb (1927), who relies on the texts published by Friedrich (1925), among which are KUB (*Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi*) VII 60 (a ritual in which the gods of a conquered city are 'called out') and KBo (*Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi*) II 9 and II 36; the dossier has been further enriched and discussed by Basanoff (1947, 141–152), who also includes KUB XV 31; 34; X 92; KUB XXIX 4; KUB XVII 32; KUB XXXV 84; IBoT III 148; VBoT 24 III 4; ABoT 28–31 + IBoT II 113 + KUB XXX 38 + 38b + 738/b + 756/b + 1134/c + 1721/c + 2107/c; KUB XXXII 50; Bo 2987; 284/n (all these texts from Kizzuwatna, therefore belonging to a Luvian-Hurrian milieu). Particularly important are KUB XXXVI 89 and KUB IV 1, aiming at gaining the gods' favour before a siege. Significantly enough, in KUB VII 60, the urban gods are invited to walk along carpets coloured in white, blue and red, which clearly points to an Indo-European legacy (for a general re-assessment of the question see Ferri 2008b and Sacco 2011a. Fuscagni 2009 provides some new texts). As in Rome, statues were supposed to nod in order to show their consent and, as in Rome, the task of summoning the god required a priest (or a priestess), yet such a larger documentation permits us to outline also substantial differences compared to the Roman practice, which was almost restricted to a military context, whereas the Hittite evocation had a more general character and quite often involved pacific aspects. In general, the Hittite sources do not testify to a defeat of the enemy god but, rather, highlight the aspect of divine disappearance and abandonment.

If most of the older and 'classical' studies were centred on the main features of the rite and on its quasi-magical implications, it is only in recent times that the practice of *euocatio* has been understood as a way by means of which Rome was able to confirm her rights over a given territory; at the same time, the symbolic nullification of the sacred boundaries of the conquered towns became a way to include them in the ritual structure of the *imperium*, characterised by the *pax deorum*, and thus acquired the meaning of a redemptive hegemony. When examining the *euocatio* under the perspective of a crisis ritual, it is also possible to show the development of ritualised individuals (priests, generals and emperors) who, through the application of their formally acquired abilities, were able to modernise the repertory of traditional ceremonial activities that were distinctive to a particular community and employed

them in a specific circumstance. Among recent scholars, Musiał and Gillmeister (2018) interpret *euocatio* relying on the concept of 'crisis ritual' developed by Victor Turner and corroborate it by means of Catherine Bell's suggestion about ritualisation tactics as characterised by adaptability and practicability. They also employ the notion of *Konsensusritual* as postulated by Flaig (1995). Such a concept was perhaps already implied in the undoubtedly juridical aspects characterising the rite, a vow (*votum*) that functioned as a sort of contract, by means of which the Romans were eventually able to conquer a city and the gods, in turn, received and took possession of a new venue. The idea of fulfilling a promise or a vow, stated in all the aforementioned studies, has been recently revived by Blomart (2020), who also provides examples of the juridical *Fachsprache* involved in these formulas. It is precisely this contractual aspect that most characterises the rite.

However, the Roman ritual also entails many questions, some of which are destined to remain highly hypothetical and necessarily speculative, just because of the meagerness and vagueness of our sources. Moreover, the questions it raises are strictly intertwined with other concepts or ideas, such as the cautionary formula *siue deus siue dea*; the secret name of the tutelary god; and, finally, the links with the *deuotio hostium*. As for the first point, since the evoked god was actually unidentified, and his gender unknown, the address starts with the cautionary address: 'be you a god or a goddess', intended to avoid any error and to avert any irritation on the part of these unknown gods. This was customary for many sacral formulas, not only the present one, and this is sometimes attested to in the similar varied address *quisquis es* ('whoever you are'), a formula discussed by Alvar (1985); Guittard (2003) and, earlier, Norden (1913, 144). It is another late antique writer, Servius, who provides such an explanation, when commenting on the same Vergilian lines discussed in Macrobius's passage (*Aen.* 2,351):

> *excessere quia ante expugnationem evocabantur ab hostibus numina propter vitanda sacrilegia. inde est, quod Romani celatum esse voluerunt, in cuius dei tutela urbs Roma sit. et iure pontificum cautum est, ne suis nominibus dii Romani appellarentur, ne exaugurari possint. et in Capitolio fuit clipeus consecratus, cui inscriptum erat 'genio urbis Romae, sive mas sive femina'. et pontifices ita precabantur 'Iuppiter optime maxime, sive quo alio nomine te appellari volueris': nam ipse ait 'sequimur te, sancte deorum, quisquis es'.*

> They departed because the divinities had been called forth by the enemy before the conquest in order to avoid sacrilege. For this reason, the Romans wished to keep secret the god in whose guardianship the city of Rome abides. And by the pontifical law, a precaution is taken lest the Roman gods are called by their own names so that they may not be execrated. And on the Capitolium a shield was consecrated with the inscription 'for the spirit of the Urbs Roma, whether it be male or female'. And the pontiffs also pray thus, 'Iuppiter Optimus Maximus, or by whatever other name you wish to be called'. (*Aen.* 4, 575–576; transl. N. Lenski, slightly modified)

Similarly, both Macrobius and Servius link this practice to the notion of the tutelary or prophylactic god of a single city, who had to be 'evoked' by means of particular

carmina, otherwise either the city would not fall down or, if conquered, their gods would have impiously been taken as prisoners (Macr., *Sat.* 3,9,2–3). Interestingly enough Servius links to *euocatio* the episode in which the horse is introduced into the city of Troy, notwithstanding Laocoon's vain attempt at preventing it: see Austin (1959, 21). When commenting on line 244, *instamus tamen immemores caecique furore*, Servius explains the Trojan 'forgetfulness' by recalling that in the *carmen euocationis* the gods were asked to instill 'fear, dread and oblivion' in the enemies. A different interpretation, aimed at denying the evidence of an *euocatio*, is put forward by Isaenko (2017). Furthermore, Rome herself had her own tutelary god but his or her name was jealously kept secret in order to avoid the risk of making the city subject to an analogous process of *euocatio* on the part of the enemies.

The same idea also recurs in Macrobius, on which see Ferri (2010b); Tommasi (2014) and, more in general, Dubourdieu (2005):

> [2] *Constat enim omnes urbes in alicuius dei esse tutela moremque Romanorum arcanum et multis ignotum fuisse ut cum obsiderent urbem hostium eamque iam capi posse confiderent, certo carmine evocarent tutelares deos, quod aut aliter urbem capi posse non crederent aut etiam si posset, nefas aestimarent deos habere captivos.* [3] *nam propterea ipsi Romani et deum in cuius tutela urbs Roma est et ipsius urbis Latinum nomen ignotum esse voluerunt.*

> For it is commonly understood that all cities are protected by some god, and that it was the secret custom of the Romans (one unknown to many) that when they were laying siege to an enemy city and were confident it could be taken, they used a specific spell to call out the gods that protected it, because they either believed the city could otherwise not be taken or – even if it could be taken – thought it against divine law to hold gods captive. That's why the Romans themselves wanted both the god responsible for protecting Rome and the Latin name of the city itself to remain unknown. (transl. R.A. Kaster)

For example, in his discussion about magical enchantments, Pliny the Elder (28,18–19) counts among them the *carmen euocationis*, without mentioning its words, and adds the same detail concerning the secrecy of the tutelary god of Rome – a detail that is also known to Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.* 61 (278f), who, in all likelihood, also relied on the Augustan antiquarian Verrius Flaccus, as suggested by Rawson (1973, 169) and Köves Zulauf (1972, 89–108):

> *Verrius Flaccus auctores ponit, quibus credat in oppugnationibus ante omnia solitum a Romanis sacerdotibus evocari deum, cuius in tutela id oppidum esset, promittique illi eundem aut ampliorem apud Romanos cultum. et durat in pontificum disciplina id sacrum, constatque ideo occultatum in cuius dei tutela Roma esset, ne qui hostium simili modo agerent.*

> Verrius Flaccus cites trustworthy authorities to show that it was the custom, at the very beginning of a siege, for the Roman priests to call forth the divinity under whose protection the besieged town was, and to promise him the same or even more splendid worship among the Roman people. Down to the present day this ritual has remained part of the doctrine of the Pontiffs, and it is certain that the reason why the tutelary deity of Rome has been kept a secret is to prevent any enemy from acting in a similar way. (transl. W.H.S. Jones)

By means of this rite (and, probably, to the intertwined one of the *deuotio*), the enemy gods could be appeased, and they were literally transferred to Rome. As a consequence, they belonged to the *peregrina sacra*, that is, foreign divinities which, according to a vague enough definition by Festus (268 L.) – a late 2nd century antiquarian and epitomator of Verrius Flaccus, a grammarian of the Augustan Age – were arranged into two types, those obtained pacifically or, so to say, spontaneously, and those who had been 'evoked' during a siege:

> *Peregrina sacra appellantur quae aut euocatis dis in oppugnandis urbibus Romam sunt conlata, aut quae ob quasdam religiones per pacem sunt petita, ut ex Phrygia Matris Magnae, ex Graecia Cereris, Epidauro Aesculapi: quae coluntur eorum more, a quibus sunt accepta.*

> Foreign cults are the ones called, which either have been transferred after an evocation of the deities during the siege of cities, or have been fetched in times of peace because of certain religious reasons, like the Magna Mater from Phrygia, Ceres from Greece, Aesculapius from Epidauros: and these cults are celebrated according to the manner of the peoples from whom they were taken. (transl. author)

In this sense Craige Champion (2017, 126) was able to interpret *euocatio* as another form of accumulative civic polytheism. The idea of *peregrina sacra* is also discussed by van Doren (1954) and, from a juridical perspective, Sini (1994). Orlin (2002a, 3) points out the questions raised by this passage, namely the absence of a chronological perspective and the extreme paucity of the information (see, more in general, Poletti 2018).

Finally, *euocatio* is directly linked to another rite called *deuotio*, 'consecration'. As a matter of fact, *deuotio* was meant to pray the infernal gods to keep the Roman army safe and accept the death of the enemy as a substitute victim. Roman religion knew two types of devotion ritual, one performed by the general (*deuotio ducis*), who voted himself and sacrificed for the safety and triumph of his army, while the other, known as *deuotio hostium*, 'transferred' this sacrifice to the enemies and the conquered cities and, as such, is connected by Macrobius to the practice of the *euocatio* (for a modern analysis see Versnel 1976 and Ferri 2017).

Edlund-Berry (1994) provides different examples of practices similar to *deuotio* concerning the cursing and destruction of a city, among which the refounding nearby or the ploughing of salt to ensure that the land would be deserted (on this point see also Ridley 1986). It is disputed whether and in which particular cases a *deuotio ducis* could take place, for ancient sources only record three examples, namely the three members of the Decian family (father, son and grandson) who immolated themselves in three different circumstances (in 340, 295 and 249 BC respectively) and were praised as examples of patriotism even in Christian sources.

Once again, we know the exact formula of the *carmen deuotionis* and the peculiar gestures that accompanied it, such as touching the earth when Tellus was invoked, raising up the hands when the name of Jupiter was pronounced and, finally, placing the hands over the heart in order to fulfil the vow, thanks to Macrobius (*Sat.* 3,9,10–11):

[10] *Dis pater Veiovis Manes, sive vos quo alio nomine fas est nominare, ut omnes illam urbem Carthaginem exercitumque quem ego me sentio dicere fuga formidine terrore compleatis quique adversum legiones exercitumque nostrum arma telaque ferent, uti vos eum exercitum eos hostes eosque homines urbes agrosque eorum et qui in his locis regionibusque agris urbibusque habitant abducatis, lumine supero privetis exercitumque hostium urbes agrosque eorum quos me sentio dicere, uti vos eas urbes agrosque capita aetatesque eorum devotas consecratasque habeatis ollis legibus quibus quandoque sunt maxime hostes devoti.* [11] *Eosque ego vicarios pro me ‹meaque› fide magistratuque meo pro populo Romano exercitibus legionibusque nostris do devoveo, ut me meamque fidem imperiumque legiones exercitumque nostrum qui in his rebus gerundis sunt bene salvos siritis esse. Si haec ita faxitis ut ego sciam sentiam intellegamque, tunc quisquis votum hoc faxit ubiubi faxit recte factum esto ovibus atris tribus. Te Tellus mater teque Iuppiter obtestor.*

[10] Father Dis, Veiovis, Manes, or by whatever other name it is right to call you: may you all fill that city of Carthage, and that army of which it is my intention to speak, and those who will bear arms and missiles against our legions and army, with the urge to flee, with dread, with panic; and may you lead away that army, that enemy, those people who dwell in these places and regions, fields and cities, deprive them of heaven's light; and the enemy's army and the cities and fields of those people of whom it is my intention to speak, may you consider those cities and fields and the people's lives and lifetimes cursed and execrated according to those laws under which enemies have at any time been cursed. [11] In place of myself, my duty, and my office, I dedicate and curse them in place of the Roman people, our armies and legions, that you might vouchsafe the wellbeing of myself, my duty and command, our legions and our army on this campaign. If you do these things so that I know and understand them, then whoever has made this vow, wherever he has made it, may the appropriate action be performed with three black sheep. I call on you, mother Earth, and you, Jupiter, as witnesses (transl. R.A. Kaster).

This other *carmen* which, in the *Saturnalia*, immediately follows the one pronounced to perform the *euocatio*, raises some other questions or, at least, suggests further reflections. Before enumerating some of the many cities that had been 'devoted', Macrobius also points out that *deuotio* was an appanage of the sole *dictator* or *imperator*. This precision corroborates the idea that it was another person's task to pronounce the *carmen euocationis*, namely a priest or a cult minister (as openly stated in Pliny). Hence the cursing of the fated to be defeated city (*exsecratio*) could be officiated after the gods had been evoked. This latter aspect is of great interest, especially if we consider the military context in which *euocatio* was allegedly performed.

Besides Macrobius, who is a very late testimony and was essentially driven by antiquarian interests, *euocatio deorum* does not seem to receive much attention in the sources, which led some scholars to suppose either that this ritual, due to its exceptional character, had a very limited diffusion, being reserved only to cities that had been founded according to the Etruscan rite (Wissowa 1909; Basanoff 1947, 197; *contra*, Bruun 1972, 115) or, conversely, 'exactly its frequency and "banality" are the causes of its scarce evidence: it could have been mentioned only in famous cases like those of Veii and Carthago and understood in all the others' (Ferri 2008, unpaginated; see also Le Gall 1976, 51). On the other hand, Orlin (2002b, 15) inclines to surmise that the role of *euocatio* has been largely over-estimated by modern scholarship relying

only on late testimonies. Therefore, he seems to agree with those who postulated a very limited use of the rite, as does Isaenko (2017; 2019).

While from Pliny's words (p. 35) it seems possible to infer that *euocatio* was rather customary, an explicit mention of the ritual is attested to in two cases belonging to the Republican Age and raise issues about their reliability. The aforementioned cities recorded by Macrobius as being the object of a devotion, nevertheless, invite one to surmise that their tutelary divinities had also been previously evoked, yet it is not at all sure that every *euocatio* implied a subsequent *deuotio* and *vice versa*. Versnel (1976, 381) seems to imply that the two rituals were intertwined, on the basis of Macrobius's assertion that *urbes exercitusque deuouentur iam numinibus euocatis*. This is obviously likely, yet one must add that Macrobius himself exercises caution and explicitly asserts that many were wrong in stating that with one and only one *carmen* the gods were evoked and the city cursed (*sed uidendum ne quod non nulli male aestimauerunt nos quoque confundat, opinantes uno carmine et euocari ex urbe aliqua deos et ipsam deuotam fieri civitatem*, 'We should see to it, however, that the mistake some have fallen into not confuse us too – I mean the belief that a single spell both summons the gods from a city and devotes the city to destruction').

A long account in Livy, 5,21–22 provides the first evidence of the *euocatio* during the war against Veii in 396 BC, under the dictatorship of Furius Camillus. In this passage, Furius makes a vow to Apollo, namely that he will give him the tenth part of the spoils, and then prays Iuno Regina, who rules over Veii, to concede the victory to the Romans and follow them to Rome; as a reward, he guarantees the goddess a temple worthy of her majesty. The Romans were able to enter the city by means of a subterranean gallery and therefore could take the enemy by surprise. Livy also adds that the inhabitants of Veii were totally unaware of the fact that 'some of the gods had already been invited to share in their despoiling, while others having been entreated to quit their city were beginning to look to new homes in the temples of their enemies'. The next day the Romans

> began to remove the possessions of the gods and the gods themselves, but more in the manner of worshippers than of pillagers. For out of all the army youths were chosen, and made to cleanse their bodies and to put on white garments, and to them the duty was assigned of conveying Queen Juno to Rome. Reverently entering her temple, they scrupled at first to approach her with their hands, because this image was one that according to Etruscan practice none but a priest of a certain family was wont to touch; when one of them, whether divinely inspired or out of youthful jocularity, asked, 'Wilt thou go, Juno, to Rome?' —whereat the others all cried out that the goddess had nodded assent. It was afterwards added to the story that she had also been heard to say that she was willing. At all events we are told that she was moved from her place with contrivances of little power, as though she accompanied them voluntarily, and was lightly and easily transferred and carried safe and sound to the Aventine, the eternal home to which the prayers of the Roman dictator had called her; and there Camillus afterwards dedicated to her the temple which he himself had vowed. (transl. B.O. Foster)

In addition to the description of an evocation, the passage is noteworthy for another consideration, namely the allusion to the nodding or speaking statue asking or assenting its willingness to be brought to Rome. A similar account is to be found in Plut, *Camill.* 5,5–6,2 (while Val. Max., 1,8,3 has a brief reference to the episode, which is referred to also by Dion. Hal., 13,3):

> At any rate the city was taken by storm, and the Romans were pillaging and plundering its boundless wealth, when Camillus, seeing from the citadel what was going on, at first burst into tears as he stood, and then, on being congratulated by the bystanders, lifted up his hands to the gods and prayed, saying: 6 'O greatest Jupiter, and ye gods who see and judge men's good and evil deeds, ye surely know that it is not unjustly, but of necessity and in self-defence that we Romans have visited this iniquity upon this city of hostile and lawless men. But if, as counterpoise to this our present success, some retribution is due to come upon us, spare, I beseech you, the city and the army of the Romans, and let it fall upon my own head, though with as little harm as may be'. With these words, as the Romans' custom is after prayer and adoration, he wheeled himself about to the right, but stumbled and fell as he turned. The bystanders were confounded, but he picked himself up again from his fall and said: 'My prayer is granted! a slight fall is my atonement for the greatest good fortune'. [6] 1 After he had utterly sacked the city, he determined to transfer the image of Juno to Rome, in accordance with his vows. The workmen were assembled for the purpose, and Camillus was sacrificing and praying the goddess to accept of their zeal and to be a kindly co-dweller with the gods of Rome, when the image, they say, spoke in low tones and said she was ready and willing. 2 But Livy says that Camillus did indeed lay his hand upon the goddess and pray and beseech her, but that it was certain of the bystanders who gave answer that she was ready and willing and eager to go along with him. (transl. B. Perrin)

Far from being a naiveté, the idea of a nodding statue played a fundamental political role, namely to bear witness to the diplomatic ties established in the Mediterranean and even make acceptable the imperialistic or expansionistic ambitions of the Romans. Perhaps the most significant example is the official transfer of the simulacrum of Cybele in 204 BC, as the result of an alliance with the Pergamene king Attalus (Liv., 29,11, discussed in Virgilio 1993), where the goddess herself was said to be nodding and accepting to be brought to Rome, where a temple in her honour was built some years later in 191 BC. This episode is considered by Festus as a remarkable example of the aforementioned category of *peregrina sacra*. A similar practice is attested to in the Hittite context. More generally, Bremmer (2013) deals with the different ways the statues were believed to 'act' in the Greco-Roman world. The opposite case (namely the refusal of the god Terminus to move from his place when he was asked to leave so that the temple to Jupiter could be built) is recorded in Liv., 1,55,3–4; Ov. *Fast.* 2,667–70; Serv., *Aen.* 9,446: see Blomart 2020, 401).

It might be possible to add that, conversely, some statues are attested to have appeared in dreams to some emperors (Galba or Domitian) to signify their disgrace and the vanishing of their fortune. Furthermore, this tradition of moving and nodding statues is probably to be linked to other traditions, such as the theft of the Palladium of Troy and its ultimate transfer from Rome to Constantinople (see Hekster 2010;

Ando 2001 on the Palladium). To these cases one would like to add Plutarch, *Ant.* 75, where the gods, in particular the Alexandrian Dionysus, are said to have abandoned their protégé Antonius – a detail that has been interpreted by Rose (1924) and more recently by Pelling (1996, 63) and Johnston (2015, 173) as if Octavian performed an *euocatio* to leave his enemy deserted by his tutelary divinity.

While some scholars suggest that Livy's almost epic account about the conquest of Veii shares many legendary or fictitious patterns, among which was the *euocatio* of Juno, that should be read as a projection into the past of a more recent practice (Bayet 1954, 155), a different opinion is put forward by Ogilvie (1965, 674) who admits the plausibility of Livy's account and provides a concise summary of all the questions involving the ritual. A similar scholarly controversy surrounds the interpretation of the alleged *euocatio* of the tutelary goddess of Carthage in 146 BC: that the goddess (Tanit, or Iuno Caelestis in the Roman interpretation, on which see Lancellotti 2010, 41–42) was first 'exorated' (*i.e.*, solemnly supplicated: Palmer (1974, 49) interprets the verb *exorare* as if it implied a nuance of 'softening, appeasing' by means of prayers. An explanation in Serv., *Aen.* 3,370, who paraphrases *exorare* as *impetrare* ('to impetrate, to supplicate') during the Second Punic war, is attested by Servius (*Aen.* 12,841), a Virgilian passage dealing with the reconciliation of Jupiter and his spouse at the end of the poem, a passage in which modern interpreters, on the basis of Servius's commentary, have retraced a metaphorical *euocatio*, aimed at appeasing an otherwise hostile divinity, patroness of the Italian tribes: see Johnston 2015 and Cairo 2021).

Macrobius instead states that the Carthaginian goddess was definitely evoked by means of the aforementioned *carmen* during the ultimate conquest and destruction of Carthage in 146 BC. Moreover, the lateness of these sources has sometimes allowed for suspicion, also because there is no evidence of a temple dedicated to Caelestis in Rome until the Severan Age. Consequently, some scholars suggested that the evocation at Carthage never took place, being instead a forgery produced during the 3rd century AD and based on the case which had happened at Veii, although other clues seem to make the hypothesis of an *euocatio* more tenable. For this latter hypothesis see Wissowa (1909), Rawson (1973, 171), and Isaenko (2019); likewise, Gustafsson (2000, 140) is skeptical about the truthfulness of Macrobius's passage, which she interprets as also reflecting the contemporaraneous events of the sack of Rome. The question is discussed at greater length by Berti (1990), who supposes that Hor., *Carm* 2,1,25–28 (*Iuno et deorum quisquis amicior / Afris inulta cesserat impotens / tellure, victorum nepotes / rettulit inferias Iugurthae* – 'Yes, Juno and the powers on high / That left their Afric to its doom, / Have led the victors' progeny / As victims to Jugurtha's tomb', transl. P. Shorey and G. Laing) and Ov., *Fast.* 6, 37–46 bear witness to an actual evocation and transfer to Rome. The same Horatian passage is also quoted as evidence of an *euocatio* by Kloppenborg (2005, 435) and has been the object of a seminal commentary by Fraenkel (1957, 237–238). Following a suggestion already put forward by Cumont (1899), Basanoff (1947) had supposed that, since no new temple was dedicated to Juno Caelestis in Rome, the statue of the goddess had been hosted in the already

existing temple of Juno Moneta until it was again transferred to Africa, when the *colonia Iunonia* was deducted near the old site of Carthage in 122 BC, probably as the result of anti-Scipionic politics pursued by Gaius Gracchus (Plut., *Gracch.* 11). To these passages one might also add Prud., *Symm.* 1, 180–184: *haec Italos induxit avos vel fama vel error /... ut ... / Libyca Iunonem ex arce vocarent* ('This legend or error it was that led our Italian ancestors to bring Juno from her own stronghold in Africa', transl. H.J. Thomson). The question has been resumed by Champion (2017, 210–221) and discussed under the new light of a socio-psychological interpretation, namely what could be the implied purposes that led Scipio to perform the rite.

Although not explicitly recorded as such, a third *euocatio* had perhaps taken place during the siege of Falerii in 241 BC, concerning the tutelary goddess Iuno Curitis, even if probably the Romans left the cult and the temple of the goddess on the spot as well: while the worship of Iuno Curitis is attested to in Rome since an earlier period, the temple in Falerii still continued its activity after the conquest. According to Basanoff (1947, 53) the temple of Iuno Curitis in Campo had already been dedicated by Camillus in 388 BC (after a first conquest of the city in 394, that is two years after the allied one of Veii) by means of a simple *exoratio*, while the actual *euocatio* would have taken place a century later, after the city's final defeat in 241. The entire question has now been summarised by Ferri (2011) who also discusses the epithets of the goddesses from Falerii (Iuno Curitis and Minerva Capta) and their probable etymology and meaning, suggesting, for the latter, a possible relation with the theme of the 'enchained' statues (on which see Meuli 1975).

Finally, another god, Vertumnus (Etruscan Voltumna) was probably introduced in Rome in 264 BC as a result of M. Fulvius Flaccus's defeat of Volsinii although, in this case too, evidence is too scant for ascertaining whether an *euocatio* had taken place or not (Basanoff 1947, 56–63): our principal source is an elegy of Propertius (4,2, on which see Boldrer 1999; for more detail see Suits 1969; Marquis 1974, 494).

It is, however, possible to agree with recent interpreters (mostly Gabriella Gustafssonn (2000) and Alain Blomart (1997), namely that *euocatio* was a more flexible concept and therefore could imply different forms of the ritual and its transformations, although it seems to be going too far to consider as an *euocatio* every practice of introducing foreign gods into the Roman pantheon, as Blomart seems to suggest (1997, 103–107). Nevertheless, the ritual undeniably underwent some transformations and probably later lost much of its original features, developing into a simpler *votum*, all the while being employed in a larger number of circumstances. In this regard, particularly meaningful is the inscription found in 1970 in Bazkir (Turkey) celebrating the conquest of Isaura Vetus in 75 BC on the part of Publius Servilius Vatia, who consequently acquired the cognomen Isauricus (AE 1977, 816 = CIL I^2 2954). The text was first published by Hall (1973), who tentatively speaks of 'a ceremony similar to evocatio'; Le Gall (1976) and Ferri (2010c) incline to consider the text as a confirmation of an actual *euocatio*, whereas Orlin (2002b, 15) is more skeptical. On Servilius see De Caprariis (1996–1997):

Serveilius C(ai) f(ilius) imperator / hostibus victeis Isaura vetere / capta captiveis venum dateis / sei deus seive deast / quoius in / tutela oppidum vetus Isaura / fuit [---] votum solvit

Servilius, son of Gaius (Servilius), imperator, having conquered the enemies when Isaura Vetus was captured and sold the captives (into slavery). Whether it was a god or goddess who was protecting this town, Isaura Vetus, (...) fulfilled his vow.

Notwithstanding some doubts that have been expressed, namely whether or not this vow indicates an *euocatio*, it is possible to state that the text represents the first and (thus far) sole epigraphic evidence of a ritual otherwise only known through literary sources. Moreover, the lexical similarities with Macrobius's text suggest that Servilius performed the *euocatio* and, at the same time, provide a confirmation of the reliability of the formula transmitted in the *Saturnalia*.

These transformations or changes in the ritual are probably to be understood as a consequence of Roman expansion in the Mediterranean which implied, on the one hand, some changes in the old Italian city-state model or in warfare tactics and, on the other, the difficulty of a physical transfer of every cultic statue to Rome, so that although the gods evoked are promised a temple in the Urbs, most likely they still continued to be honoured in their original city, perhaps in an area consecrated by the Romans as Roman territory (see Ferri (2008a), who also mentions the case of Fortuna at Antium (Tac. *Ann.* 3,71,1)). This suggestion is put forward by Saulnier (1998, 556), in analogy to the ritual practised by the *fetiales*, who symbolically threw their spear to declare war in a place outside the *pomerium* believed to be enemy land.

Thus, strictly speaking, there was no need for a physical transfer (Rüpke 1990, 162–165). It is also possible to surmise that the transfer to Rome had become a metaphorical one, namely that the local gods or goddesses were assimilated to Roman divinities by means of a process usually referred to as *interpretatio* which consisted in superimposing on an already existing god the characteristics of the foreign one, by virtue of the same function, as already outlined in Wissowa's (1916–1919) seminal discussion.

The imperial sources do not explicitly record any evocation of a foreign divinity, yet at least two episodes share similar features and have been treated as possible parallels. Almost paradoxically, Giorgio Ferri (2008a) and, in much more detail, Noel Lenski (2008) suggest that the last Roman *euocatio* might be considered the vision by which Constantine, at the eve of the battle at the Milvius Bridge in 312 BC, sought divine favour from the Christian God. Lenski in particular argues that the vague language by which Constantine's victory is celebrated as a result of a divine impulse (*instinctu divinitatis*) in the *Panegyrici Latini* and on his triumphal arch – always read as a fine and skilled example of the imperial propaganda meant to please both pagan and Christian subjects at the same time – is inspired by the old accounts of Livy and is meant to 'evocate' the *euocatio*, by means of which the gods transferred their benevolence and protection to the conquerors, as proposed by Lenski (2008; see in particular his reference at 238, where Liv. 5,15,10 *divino instinctu* is quoted as a possible model for the Constantinian inscription). Lenski also notes that the episode

of Veii is recorded twice by Lactantius (*Diu. Inst.* 2,7,11 and 2,16,11). In the following pages Lenski traces some further parallels between the description of Constantine in Nazarius's Panegyric and that of Furius Camillus, as well as a comparison between the siege of Verona and the battle at the Milvian Bridge and that of Lake Regillus, which has been related to *euocatio* (Basanoff 1947, 153–155).

It is, however, very probable that the same God had already been formally evoked by Titus during the long and painstaking siege of Jerusalem in AD 70 According to Tacitus (*Historiae* 5,13), the day before the final battle

> *Evenerant prodigia, quae neque hostiis neque votis piare fas habet gens superstitioni obnoxia, religionibus adversa. Visae per caelum concurrere acies, rutilantia arma et subito nubium igne conlucere templum. Apertae repente delubri fores et audita maior humana vox excedere deos; simul ingens motus excedentium. Quae pauci in metum trahebant: pluribus persuasio inerat antiquis sacerdotum litteris contineri eo ipso tempore fore ut valesceret Oriens profectique Iudaea rerum potirentur. Quae ambages Vespasianum ac Titum praedixerat, sed vulgus more humanae cupidinis sibi tantam fatorum magnitudinem interpretati ne adversis quidem ad vera mutabantur.*

> Prodigies had occurred, which this nation, prone to superstition, but hating all religious rites, did not deem it lawful to expiate by offering and sacrifice. There had been seen hosts joining battle in the skies, the fiery gleam of arms, the temple illuminated by a sudden radiance from the clouds. The doors of the inner shrine were suddenly thrown open, and a voice of more than mortal tone was heard to cry that the Gods were departing. At the same instant there was a mighty stir as of departure. Some few put a fearful meaning on these events, but in most there was a firm persuasion, that in the ancient records of their priests was contained a prediction of how at this very time the East was to grow powerful, and rulers, coming from Judaea, were to acquire universal empire. These mysterious prophecies had pointed to Vespasian and Titus, but the common people, with the usual blindness of ambition, had interpreted these mighty destinies of themselves, and could not be brought even by disasters to believe the truth. (transl. A.J. Church and W.J. Brodribb)

Certainly, the motif of the gods who abandon their city and leave their sanctuary can be understood *per se*, as for example in Diod., 17,41,8; Eur., *Troad.* 23–27, with the considerations by Isaenko (2017), or in the Jewish sources mentioned by Kloppenborg (2005, 445), such as Jer 12:7; Ezek 8:12; 9:9; 1 En. 89:56: 'I saw how [God] left their house and their tower and cast all of them into the hands of the lions'; Prov. 2.11–12; Psalms 7:1–2. Yet, many hints in this Tacitean passage, as well as in its close parallel in Flavius Josephus, suggest the possibility that the description conveys an *euocatio* accomplished by Titus or someone in his army.

Ios., *Bell.* 6,299, however, 'rationalises' the detail of the gods who abandon the Temple: the preceding passage mentions the intensification of bad omens in the days immediately before Titus's capture of Jerusalem, among them a sword-like star and a comet; the sudden thunder and lightning during the night; a heifer bearing forth a lamb into the precinct of the Temple where its heavy gates spontaneously opened; the menacing cry of a certain Jesus, son of Ananus, who predicted the cursing of the city and the people; and, most of all, during the night of the Pentecost celebration, the priests 'said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise,

and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, "Let us remove hence"' (transl. W. Whiston, A.M. Auburn and B.J.E. Beardsley; the original Greek text reads κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἑορτήν, ἣ πεντηκοστὴ καλεῖται, νύκτωρ οἱ ἱερεῖς παρελθόντες εἰς τὸ ἔνδον ἱερόν, ὥσπερ αὐτοῖς ἔθος πρὸς τὰς λειτουργίας, πρῶτον μὲν κινήσεως ἔφασαν ἀντιλαβέσθαι καὶ κτύπου, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα φωνῆς ἀθρόας 'μεταβαίνομεν ἐντεῦθεν').

On the relationship between Josephus and Tacitus see Norden (1966 [1913], 261–266), who denies that Josephus could have been a source for the Latin writer, suggesting instead the work of Antonius Julianus, himself procurator of Judaea between AD 66 and 70. This episode, together with the mention of the sources, and an allusion to the 'abandonment' of the gods is also echoed by Minucius Felix (*Oct.* 33):

> Scripta eorum relege, vel, ut transeamus veteres, Flavi Iosephi, vel, si Romanis magis gaudes, Antoni Iuliani de Iudaeis require: iam scies, nequitia sua hanc eos meruisse fortunam, nec quidquam accidisse quod non sit his, si in contumacia perseverarent, ante praedictum. Ita prius eos deseruisse conprehendes quam esse desertos nec, ut impie loqueris, cum deo suo captos, sed a deo ut disciplinae transfugas deditos.

> Carefully read over their Scriptures, or if you are better pleased with the Roman writings, inquire concerning the Jews in the books (to say nothing of ancient documents) of Flavius Josephus or Antoninus Julianus, and you shall know that by their wickedness they deserved this fortune, and that nothing happened which had not before been predicted to them, if they should persevere in their obstinacy. Therefore you will understand that they forsook before they were forsaken, and that they were not, as you impiously say, taken captive with their God, but they were given up by God as deserters from His discipline. (transl. R.E. Wallis)

In addition to the suggestion by Saulnier (1998), see the further considerations put forward by Kloppenborg (2005) and Hadas Lebel (2009), and more recently by Chauvot (2020). Lewy (1942, 29) had already provided some seminal hints and useful parallels. Magness (2008) deals with the iconography on the triumphal arch; conversely, Des Rosiers (2019) prefers interpreting the spoliation of the Temple in a purely economic sense, devoid of any religious meaning, most of all as the result of the transfer to Rome of the symbols of a divinity that had been previously evoked. Tacitus's text is redolent of many Virgilian echoes and its colour perfectly fits the sacral language of Roman religion. In particular, it is worth considering the expression *excedere deos*, the same employed by Vergil in the passage discussed at the beginning of this paper and linked by both Servius and Macrobius to the *euocatio* ritual. Sources are quite elusive on this point, however, the transferring to Rome of the *insignia* of the Temple, which were later stored in the temple of Peace (that of Jupiter Capitolinus having been destroyed during the civil wars) might be a further confirmation of this formal rite, as are the Jewish paraphernalia depicted on Titus's arch, which symbolise the attributes of the captive God transferred to Rome (see Ios., *Bell.* 7,158–162, with Saulnier's (1998, 558) considerations. On the equation (*interpretatio*) of the God of the Jews to Jupiter see the sources collected in Tommasi (2013)).

Furthermore, in Josephus, as perceptively noted by John S. Kloppenborg, the previous events seem to provide a further confirmation of the idea that the God(s) had departed. Describing the Roman capture of the second wall in May, Josephus (in contrast with his adversary John of Giscala) admits that 'fortune had indeed from all quarters passed over to [Rome] and God, who went the round of the nations, bringing to each in turn the rod of empire, now rested over Italy' (Ios., *Bell.* 5,367 and 571; see also 5,412) and concludes in quite a dramatic tone that 'the Deity has fled from the holy places and taken his stand on the side of those with whom you are now at war'. Likewise, Titus, whom Josephus tries to absolve of his responsibility by stating that the Temple was destroyed by a fire started by a soldier against the emperor's will, nevertheless declared that the deity had departed, invoking as a witness to his own innocence both his own ancestral gods and 'any deity who watched over this place – for now I believe that there is none', and also mentioning the memory of destroyed Carthage (*ibid.*, 6,127 and 323).

> Hence without actually describing the *evocatio* ritual, Josephus leaves sufficient hints in his account that it probably was performed. Josephus is not likely to have referred directly to the ritual, since he would scarcely wish to convey the notion that the Romans were able to provide enticements for the Jewish deity to leave the temple. According to Josephus, the deity's departure was due instead to the impious conduct of the 'tyrants' who had seized control of the city and temple and who were responsible for the catastrophe of the First Revolt. (Kloppenborg 2005, 444)

These examples, notwithstanding the incertitude that still surrounds our modern understanding of the *euocatio*, show that the rite is definitely linked to the appropriation of a conquered place, implying a dynamic relationship between forsaking and annexation. However, in contrast to the destruction or the despoliation of the defeated city, which is customary in the context of a war (Rutledge 2007; Tarpin 2013), through the performing of an *euocatio*, as suggested by Jörg Rüpke (1990), the sacred boundaries of the city were dissolved, thus permitting it to be conquered. Moreover, the restoration of social stability was one of the fundamental outcomes of *euocatio*, as in general is aimed at by every crisis ritual, even though ritualistic actions really constructed a new reality rather than reviving the old one. One of the factors allowing us to conclude that the ritual in Rome was primarily intended for its own residents is the consensual nature of the ceremony and the implied idea that the gods had to depart prior to the conquest of the city, so to avoid committing a sacrilege. As stated by Ingrid Edlund-Berry (1994, 17): 'ideally, a city would not be destroyed while it was still under the protection of its deities and, even if the deities left, their sanctuaries were treated separately from the other buildings'. In this perspective, it represents one of the most significant pieces of evidence of the idea of the *pax deorum*, namely the equilibrium and mutual agreement between humans and gods, elaborated by the cultures sharing a common Indo-European origin. This feature clearly emerges in Caecilius's address in Minucius Felix (*Oct.* 6): as a representative of the pagan feeling, Caecilius is proud of the fact that Roman

potestas et auctoritas totius orbis ambitus occupavit, sic imperium suum ultra solis vias et ipsius oceani limites propagavit, dum exercent in armis virtutem religiosam, dum urbem muniunt sacrorum religionibus ..., dum obsessi et citra solum Capitolium ..., dum captis in hostilibus moenibus adhuc ferociente victoria numina victa venerantur, dum undique hospites deos quaerunt et suos faciunt, dum aras extruunt etiam ignotis numinibus et Manibus. Sic, dum universarum gentium sacra suscipiunt, etiam regna meruerunt. Hinc perpetuus venerationis tenor mansit, qui longa aetate non infringitur, sed augetur: quippe antiquitas caerimoniis atque fanis tantum sanctitatis tribuere consuevit quantum adstruxerit vetustatis

power and authority has occupied the circuit of the whole world: thus it has propagated its empire beyond the paths of the sun, and the bounds of the ocean itself; in that in their arms they practise a religious valour; in that they fortify their city with the religions of sacred rites ...; in that, when besieged and taken, all but the Capitol alone, they worship the gods which when angry any other people would have despised ...; while in the city of an enemy, when taken while still in the fury of victory, they venerate the conquered deities; while in all directions they seek for the gods of the strangers, and make them their own; while they build altars even to unknown divinities, and to the Manes. Thus, in that they acknowledge the sacred institutions of all nations, they have also deserved their dominion. Hence the perpetual course of their veneration has continued, which is not weakened by the long lapse of time, but increased, because antiquity has been accustomed to attribute to ceremonies and temples so much of sanctity as it has ascribed of age. (transl. R.E. Wallis)

It might be finally added that some scholars have understood the process of transferring or stealing the relics of the saints from a city to another as a legacy of the *euocatio* ritual: while it is obviously impossible and unsound to suggest any kind of historical continuity or influence between the two phenomena, there are nonetheless a certain number of functional and morphological similarities, such as the impetration to the saint and, after his or her assent, the taking of the relics culminating with the triumphal arrival (*aduentus*) and deposition in the new place, usually considered better than the previous one, so as to promote an active and vigorous cult that prevents the saint being neglected or abandoned (seminal considerations in Canetti (2007) and copious examples in Papasidero (2019)). Like its Roman antecedent, such an interpretation of this widespread medieval practice opens new paths to describe a process that involved different ideas and was meant to strengthen the links between the human and the sacred agency, all the while postulating a continuity between something that had been forsaken and the new reality into which it was to be received.

Notes

1 In addition to the classical general studies on Roman religion, from Wissowa to Dumézil and from Palmer to Beard, North and Price, the most important modern research on this subject includes the monographs by Basanoff (1947); Gustafsson (2000); Ferri (2010a). Shorter articles worth mentioning are Bruun (1972); Alvar (1984); Blomart (1997); Guittard (1998); Ferri (2006; 2008a); Ando (2008, 128–148); Sacco (2011a). The author wishes to thank Dr Noor Giovanni Mazhar for having revised the English text, Cesare Letta and Andrea Raggi for the insightful discussions concerning the *deuotio.*

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Chapter 3

Reclaiming the funerary space: The protection and re-use of tombs in the burial grounds of Hierapolis in Phrygia

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During the Roman imperial period, the city of Hierapolis in Phrygia was surrounded by hundreds of tombs in the north, west and south. By the early 3rd century AD, all available space in the few flat areas along the street and terraces in the larger North Necropolis was occupied. Monuments began encroaching upon one other, often obstructing visual and physical access to earlier structures. The burial grounds of Hierapolis thus offer a unique vantage point for observing the competitive dynamics of urban societies in the imperial Greek East and for understanding how private identities were projected into the public sphere. What legal, customary, ritual, and visual instruments were used to assert ownership over a grave, whether for acquisition or mere maintenance? How did familial identity construction, manifested through monumental legacies, help to establish one's status and dynastic aspirations? The first section of the paper examines the methods used to safeguard tombs from fraudulent alienation. The second section addresses the strategies used to occupy tombs, by asserting legitimate succession or the regular transfer of ownership. Last, the third section confronts the symbolic significance of claiming ownership over ancient tombs. The paper addresses each perspective through a selection of case studies focusing on the North and South-West burial grounds of the city, contributing to a more comprehensive and nuanced portrayal of Hierapolis' funerary landscape.

Originally established as a colony by Seleucid rulers in an area occupied by Phrygian settlements bordering Phrygia, Lydia, and Caria, Hierapolis evolved into a Roman city closely tied to the center of power and other regions of the Mediterranean (D'Andria 2001; for a comprehensive understanding of the natural, historical, and mythological landscapes of the Maeander valley in antiquity, see Thonemann 2013; and for the regional borders, see Filippini 2021). Hierapolitan society's unique historical characteristics were shaped by a complex network of trade – over both short and long distances – that was deeply rooted within the city. Nevertheless,

the Roman inscriptions reveal numerous non-Greek names, reflecting the enduring influence of the original local communities centuries later (Ritti 2017, 37–40). The frequent occurrence of the *cognomina* Makedon and Makedonikos (and the feminine Makedoniane) in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD indicates the desire of prominent local families to claim descent from their Greek colonist founders (Ritti 2017, 39, 283–285).[1]

Hierapolis experienced its greatest splendor between the late 1st and the middle of the 3rd century AD. The city's social life in this period was characteristic of what Peter Brown terms an 'age of ambition', describing the lives of the urban elites dominating the political and cultural landscape of the Greek East in the 2nd and early 3rd centuries (Brown 1978, 27–53). Within an imperial framework, the vertical structure in which these groups competed for recognition and rewards functioned alongside local networks of emulation, distinction, and the negotiation of identities (see Goldhill (2001) and Borg (2008) for further insights into the social and cultural dynamics in the urban societies of the eastern provinces).

At this time, the city was surrounded by hundreds of tombs (Fig. 3.1), constituting one of the urban landscape's most conspicuous elements (Equini Schneider 1971–1973; Scardozzi and Ahrens 2015 for overviews). The largest necropolis extended to the north, toward Tripolis and the Meander valley (D'Andria *et al.* 2008, 73, 75, 79, 81, 83–84; Scardozzi 2015, 97, 99, 103, 105, 109, 111, 115, 121, 123, 124; Ronchetta 2017). Dozens of tumuli dating from the 3rd–1st centuries BC indicate the use of this funerary area from the city's earliest period. The burial grounds also extended to the hills east of Hierapolis (D'Andria *et al.* 2008, 139; Scardozzi 2015, 115, 119, 131, 133, 138, 143, 153, 183) and outside the city walls to the south, toward the Lykos valley, Laodicea, and Colossae (D'Andria *et al.* 2008, 143–147; Scardozzi 2015, 191, 195–197, 201, 205; see also Anguissola *et al.* 2014; 2016). Those who reached the city from any direction would encounter a long road lined with hundreds of funerary buildings before reaching the city's central monuments: the gates, the colonnaded street, temples, and the theatre. By the early 3rd century AD, all available space in the few flat areas along the street and terraces in the larger North Necropolis was occupied. Monuments began encroaching upon one other, often obstructing visual and physical access to earlier structures; tombs bridged the water channel running along the street and invaded public space (on the organisation of space and movement in the North Necropolis, see Ronchetta and Mighetto 2007; Anguissola and Costa 2020, 313–325).

The burial grounds of Hierapolis thus offer a unique vantage point for observing the competitive dynamics of urban societies in the imperial Greek East and for understanding how private identities were projected into the public sphere. Investigating the overcrowded and highly competitive funerary spaces of Roman Hierapolis requires that we examine how individuals carved out space for themselves where none existed. What legal, customary, ritual, and visual instruments were used to assert ownership over a grave, whether for acquisition or mere maintenance? How did familial identity construction, manifested through monumental legacies, help to establish one's status and dynastic aspirations? Through a selection of case

Fig. 3.1. Map of Hierapolis in Phrygia. The city is surrounded by extensive burial grounds: (1) Tomb A28 or Tomb of Flavius Zeuxis, in the North Necropolis; (2) Tomb S10 or Tomb of Thalamos, in the South-West Necropolis; (3) Tomb 162, in the North Necropolis; (4) Tomb 159c, in the North Necropolis; (5) Tomb 144 or Tomb of Zeuxis and Iouliane, also in the North Necropolis (courtesy of MAIER – Missione Archeologica Italiana a Hierapolis di Frigia).

studies focusing on the North and South-West burial grounds of the city, this chapter addresses these questions within the broader context of the history, institutions, and funerary practices of Roman Hierapolis.

The first section focuses on the need to preserve the integrity of tombs, following a period of demographic and economic growth coupled with a fiercely competitive cultural atmosphere in urban societies. Accordingly, by drawing on both archaeological and epigraphical evidence, this first section examines the methods used to safeguard tombs from fraudulent alienation. The second section correspondingly addresses the strategies used to occupy tombs, by asserting legitimate succession or the regular transfer of ownership. Amid widespread concern about usurpation, those occupying spaces in fully developed burial grounds sought to ensure the unequivocal legitimacy of their ownership rights. Last, the third section confronts the symbolic significance of claiming ownership over ancient tombs. Asserting historical ownership of a familial tomb – or creating an impression of hereditary lineage back to the city's Hellenistic foundations – allowed prominent figures in imperial society to solidify their social standing from a historical angle, tacitly enabling them to shape their dynasty's trajectory. The chapter addresses each perspective through one or two primary examples, facilitating exploration of the individual questions while also presenting a comprehensive and nuanced portrayal of Hierapolis' funerary landscape.

Planning for death: the Tomb of Tiberius Claudius Thalamos

Hierapolis's main street, lined with pilasters and columns, was built by Sextus Julius Frontinus, the Proconsul of Asia, in AD 84/85, and served as a cohesive part of the urban framework (Ismaelli 2009, 171–346; see also Ismaelli 2010 for a more general overview). A bilingual inscription on either side of the city gate commemorated the construction of the *porta*, *turres*, and *nova via* (in Greek, *pylē*, *pyrgous*, and *kainē hodos*) and their dedications to the emperor (Ritti 2006, 73–77, with earlier bibliography). This thoroughfare led to the city's religious and cultural heart, which comprised the clustered sanctuary of Apollo, the Ploutonion, and the theatre. The juxtaposition of structures old and new, including the Nymphaeum of the Tritons (Campagna 2018), along with inscriptions and images, fostered a processional atmosphere and implemented 'monumentality through rehearsal', grounded in collective memory of the city's historical events and figures (see Ng 2018 on the concept of 'monumentality through periodic rehearsal' in the context of Ephesus).

At the turn of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, a few years after the construction of Frontinus Street, the merchant Titus Flavius Zeuxis acquired a plot adjacent to the gate to build his tomb (Ronchetta 2017, 217–221, 252–254, with earlier literature; D'Andria 2022). Flavius Zeuxis was possibly involved in the flourishing purple dye trade, a major manufacturing activity in Hierapolis at the time; his acquisition of the plot thus marked his status (Fig. 3.2). Those who entered the city would immediately witness the product of a high imperial magistrate's generosity and the funerary

Fig. 3.2. Hierapolis in Phrygia: North Necropolis, Tomb A28 or Tomb of Flavius Zeuxis, late 1st or early 2nd century AD. In the background, the west tower of the Frontinus Gate and Frontinus Street can be seen behind the funerary monument (courtesy of MAIER).

monument of a proud businessman (*ergastēs*) who had made the sea journey to Italy an impressive number of times (for the funerary inscription of Zeuxis, see Ritti 2004, 573–574, no. 7; 2006, 67–70). Zeuxis explains that he built the monument (*mnēmeion*; for more detail on this word, see Equini Schneider 1970, 475–477) for himself and his sons, to whom he leaves full freedom of control over its future. Atop the structure sits a frieze adorned with metopes and triglyphs (Ismaelli 2009, 399–402), consistent with the Doric-order façades along Frontinus Street, while the rosette motif closely resembles the frieze on the portico of the Sanctuary of Apollo, at the heart of the city (Ismaelli 2009, 49 fig. 68, 377 fig. 406, 395 fig. 418). The tomb's high-stepped podium simultaneously made space for the underground chamber and placed the building's entrance at the same level as the street and the city gate.

Across the city lies a similarly striking example of the interplay between public city space and the private – albeit social – space of the dead: the funerary complex of Tiberius Claudius Thalamos (Tomb S10). Until recently, the façade, with street-facing openings resembling windows (Fig. 3.3), was interpreted as an eloquent example of a *Grabhaus*, or house tomb, a kind of dwelling for the afterlife (most notably in Equini Schneider 1971–1973, 117; see Anguissola *et al.* 2016, 522 n. 77 for the fortune of this explanation in the case of Tomb S10). However, the absence of an entrance and the

Fig. 3.3. South-West Necropolis, Tomb S10 or Tomb of Thalamos. View of the west façade toward the street; the 2nd century AD inscription of Tiberius Claudius Thalamos runs along the architrave and frieze (courtesy of MAIER).

inscription on the frieze and lintel, dating to the early 2nd century AD, seemingly indicate otherwise (Anguissola *et al.* 2016, 510–513): the inscription describes the tomb as a *mnēmeion*, a 'monument,' composed of a *kamara*, a 'burial chamber,' and a *bōmos*, an 'altar.' Above the altar were two sculpted (*kataglyphoi*) sarcophagi in precious Docimian marble. Excavation (Anguissola *et al.* 2016, 508, 514–518) revealed a vaulted burial chamber, the *kamara*, and an enclosure enabling access to the tomb at the façade's rear (Fig. 3.4). One must deduce that the 'altar' of the inscription corresponds to the façade itself and should be understood not as the front of a dwelling but rather as one explicitly monumentalised side of the enclosure. Although the heroisation of the prominent deceased atop the tomb aligns with a well-established funerary tradition in Asia Minor, the treatment of one side of the enclosure as *monumental* parallels the funerary architecture of central Italy and the western provinces (Anguissola *et al.* 2016, 520–527). Thus, Tiberius Claudius Thalamos's tomb is a hybrid creation reflecting the fluid context of funerary architecture in Roman Asia Minor.

Given its proximity to the city's monumental entrance, the Tomb of Flavius Zeuxis stood out as one of Hierapolis's most striking public funerary structures. The Tomb of Thalamos, built along a less major route, relied instead on architectural design to signify its connection to and continuity with the public sphere. This tomb's resemblance to structures erected along Frontinus Street exceeded mere superficial

Fig. 3.4. South-West Necropolis, Tomb S10 or Tomb of Thalamos. View of the east façade, along with the funerary enclosure and burial chamber, following the excavation conducted in 2009 (courtesy of MAIER).

similarity; it also emulated their architectural elements, suggesting that materials initially intended for the new street's construction were potentially repurposed for the tomb only years later (Anguissola *et al.* 2016, 520–521). The sarcophagi atop the *bōmos* were crafted from marble imported from Docimium, renowned for its production of columnar chests characterised by intricate architectural features and elaborate mouldings (Waelkens 1982; Strocka 2017; see also Frate 2006; 2007 and Scardozzi 2016a for further details of the types and provenance of the marble sarcophagi from Hierapolis). Even though it is impossible to determine their exact form, these chests must have complemented the façade's arrangement, resulting in an impressive architectural display. The tomb evoked a seamless transition between public and private spheres; rows of street-facing shops subtly transformed into the altar from which, quite literally, Thalamos and his descendants oversaw the city's comings and goings.

The inscription on Thalamos' tomb states that its maintenance was entrusted to his freedmen, who, to this end, were probably issued a testamentary bequest. Tomb care encompassed both physical upkeep and organising ritual ceremonies, such as the 'coronation' (for the legal aspects of funerary foundations in Hierapolis, see Ritti 1992–1993; 2004, 562–565; 2016). Evidence of this ritual is visible in the traces of fixings for wooden structures on the upper surface of Thalamos's *bōmos*, as well as several roof-shaped marble sarcophagus lids (Anguissola *et al.* 2016, 512; see also the marble roof in front of Tomb 61). Furthermore, the inscription stipulates that the two figural sarcophagi imported from Docimium are designated *exclusively* for

Thalamos and his children; any attempt to introduce other deceased into either coffin would demand a fine of five thousand denarii payable to the city treasury. Such regulations' prevalence (De Visscher 1963, 177–195; Cormack 2004, 128–133; Ritti 2004, 510–520, 539–541; for the case of Rome, see Gregori 2004) underscores the widespread abuse of tombs in a period when demographic and economic growth made Hierapolitan monumental burials relatively accessible, sparking fierce competition for burial space and visibility. Hundreds of funerary inscriptions written between the 2nd and 5th centuries indicate the owners' frequent reliance on lengthy texts to stress the tomb's continued use and regular maintenance by the deceased's family, freedmen, or a professional association. Typically, these inscriptions describe the tomb's architectural and topographical features; their arrangement, for instance, and occasionally even their dimensions. Significant attention appears to have been paid to underground structures or chambers (referred to as *bathron* or *thema*), which remained hidden and susceptible to unauthorised use. Prohibitions included burying unauthorised individuals in a sarcophagus or chamber, relocating a sarcophagus to accommodate others, selling monuments not belonging to one's own family, invading or subdividing another's burial plot, obstructing visibility or impeding access to a tomb, and tampering with the metal pins that secured the lid to the chest (Ritti 2016, 454–456, no. 7 and fig. 9, 502–506, no. 25 and figs 26–27). These metal pins proved particularly significant: nearly *all* marble chests discovered at Hierapolis and the most elaborate pieces crafted from travertine show evidence of the use of metal pins to seal the ensemble (Fig. 3.5a–b).

Most inscriptions imposed fines on transgressors, typically to be paid to the treasury, suggesting that *tymbōrychia*, the 'unlawful disturbance of a tomb' (for further insight into this term, see Ritti 2004, 589–591, nos 32–34), was plausibly deemed a matter of public concern. Duplicate inscriptions in the city archives ensured the document's preservation (Ritti 2017, 70–71). These inscriptions sometimes described the archive as public, city owned, Hierapolitan, or tied to specific groups, such as the Jewish community. Occasionally, they identify a responsible official by name. Ultimately, however, the individuals or institutions responsible for enforcing regulations and mediating private disputes over the tombs remain unclear. There remains no indication that illicit burials could be removed, for instance, and it seems that conflicts were often resolved through monetary compensation alone. Regardless, the proliferation and concentration of such inscriptions suggest that both private individuals and public authorities struggled to control and regulate the situation, indicating widespread concern about losing burial rights, potentially resulting in social instability. They illuminate the strategies employed to secure ongoing ownership of a tomb and prevent others from laying claim to it.

Undeniably, the public sphere played a role in this negotiation, through institutions housing duplicate copies of the epigraphic document or collecting fines. However, the effectiveness of these regulations appears to have depended on customary practices and a tacit agreement regarding their validity – without necessarily

Fig. 3.5. a: Marble sacophagus of Neratia Maximilla, now in the Museum, inv. nos E.5311 (chest) and E.5312 (lid), short side; b: North Necropolis, travertine sarcophagus of Glykonianos (currently situated on the main street near Tomb 70), short side. Human figures holding a curved stick and a palm are carved on the front, possibly depicting the judges of the poetic competitions in which the young deceased may have participated (courtesy of MAIER).

ensuring their enforcement. Only a few years earlier, Flavius Zeuxis seemingly saw no need to legally safeguard his tomb from usurpers, deferring all judgment to his successors; Thalamos's inscription, on the other hand, represents one of the earliest Hierapolitan cases of increasing anxiety over unauthorised transfers of ownership.

The construction of legitimacy: multiple owners for Tombs 162 and 159c

The case of the Tomb of Thalamos is emblematic of the appearance and history not only of the burial grounds of Hierapolis but also of many other cities in the Roman Empire during periods of economic and demographic growth, when an available, well-appointed tomb was not just an indispensable commodity but an increasing rarity. Changes in property ownership and emerging competitive claims appear to have unfolded so rapidly that today it is nearly impossible to reconstruct a complete history of individual structures.

One notable example is Tomb 162, built along the wide paved road toward the Meander valley: a prominent location of the North Necropolis (Ronchetta 1999, 150; D'Andria *et al.* 2008, 61). This tomb features two entrances leading to distinct areas, potentially suggesting separate, independent functions (Fig. 3.6). An inscription dating to the first half of the 3rd century runs along the façade by the main entrance (Pennacchietti 1967, 321–323, no. 50; Scardozzi 2016a, 242), explaining that the altar-like structure (*bōmos*) and white, fluted sarcophagus (*hē soros hē leukē hē xustrotē*) belong to the head scribe (*archigrammateus*) Artemidoros

Fig. 3.6. a: North Necropolis, Tomb 162, view from the west (i.e., from the main street). The inscription of Artemidoros and Aurelia Ammia is positioned on the blocks to the left of the main entrance portal (i.e., the north portal or the left one in the image); b: view from the street, detail of the inscription of Artemidoros and Aurelia Ammia, first half of the 3rd century (courtesy of MAIER).

and his wife Aurelia Ammia (for further information on the *grammateis* of Hierapolis, see Ritti 2017, 69–70, particularly n. 235 regarding the identification of this tomb). It remains unclear which part of the tomb functioned as a *bōmos* ('altar') for the fluted sarcophagus, which has not yet been found. The tomb's inner spaces were seemingly intended for entirely unrelated individuals. One of the sarcophagi inside the left chamber, crafted from gray limestone, carries a late 2nd or early 3rd century inscription designating its use for the burial of one Aelia Glykonis, her mother, and her son (Ritti 2006, 52–53, no. 3).

Adjacent to this is a marble sarcophagus decorated with a common Hierapolitan motif: roughed-out garlands (Fig. 3.7a), which are believed to reflect a preference for products prioritising the prestige of the material over stylistic intricacy (Scardozzi 2016a, 244–251). According to its lid's inscription, dating back to the late 2nd or early 3rd century, the sarcophagus and the chamber (*kamara*) belonged to Marcus Aurelius Ammianos Menandrianos (Ritti 2006, 48–52, no. 1; 2016, 515–518, no. 30; 2018, 363–364). He reserved the use of the tomb exclusively for himself, his wife, and their children, imposing a fine on those who violated this stipulation. A fund (*stephanōtikon*) was bequeathed to the corporation of flax workers (*hē ergasia tōn linōtōn*), intended to ensure the regularity of commemorative ceremonies (Ritti 2016, 517; 2017, 155). Seemingly lacking confidence in his professional guild, the tomb's owner stipulated that if the workers failed in their duties they ought to pay a larger sum to another association, of which he was also apparently a member: the *philoploi*, or 'lovers of arms', possibly a group of enthusiasts of gladiator games (Ritti 2006, 51; the *philoploi* are also documented at Ephesus and Miletus, *e.g.*, *I.Ephesus* nos 2226, 3055, 3070; *Milet* III, 2, no. 403; an inscription on a sarcophagus in Termessos in Pisidia states that the *philoploi* had prepared the coffin itself, *sōmatothēkē*, *TAM* III, 1, fig. 400). The connection – if any – to Aelia Glykonis and the individuals on the façade entitled to use the chamber's upper surface as an 'altar' remains unclear.

A later inscription from the 4th or 5th century was haphazardly carved in large letters across the chest of Marcus Aurelius Ammianos Menandrianos's sarcophagus (Fig. 3.7b), flagrantly disregarding its existing carvings (Ritti 2006, 52, no. 2; 2016, 518–519, no. 30a). This inscription replicates the earlier text with three notable alterations. First, a man named Acholios Ammianos Molybas asserts ownership of the sarcophagus itself, emphasising its material worth (the text reads *hē soros hē marmareinos*, 'the marble sarcophagus'; see Scardozzi 2016a, 248). Second, his estate appears more extensive, encompassing not only the chamber but also the sarcophagus in front, probably the one formerly owned by Aelia Glykonis. Third, he claims inheritance of the property, employing the standard legal expression 'by hereditary succession' (*ek progonikēs diadochēs*), a common phrase in the city's burial grounds. This same figure appears to have actively operated in Hierapolitan real estate, being involved in property acquisition and sales throughout the burial grounds. Acholios Ammianos Molybas's claims re-appear, similarly articulated, on another sarcophagus in the necropolis he purportedly inherited (Ritti 2016, 465–467, no. 11; Ritti 2018, 364–365). Elsewhere he is also documented as

Fig. 3.7. a: North Necropolis, Tomb 162, north section of the complex. To the right is the travertine sarcophagus bearing the inscription of Aelia Glykonis, dated to the late 2nd century. In the centre, directly across from the entrance portal, rests the sarcophagus belonging to Marcus Aurelius Ammianos Menandrianos (dated late 2nd–3rd century) and later to Acholios Ammianos Molybas (possibly in the 4th century); b: detail of the sarcophagus owned by Aurelius Ammianos Menandrianos and later by Acholios Ammianos Molybas. The inscription of this latter individual runs across the roughed-out garlands adorning the chest (courtesy of MAIER).

having owned an entire monument, then transferring its ownership to a woman named Patrikia (Ritti 2018, 363). Evidently, he not only possessed funerary property for himself and his family, but amassed a larger estate comprising both structures and, notably, sarcophagi. Examples such as this demonstrate that the purchase of property was guided by prudent consideration of proximity to, and visibility from, the road, as well as the coffin's material quality. It is crucial to note, concerning sarcophagi in particular, that ownership typically encompassed not just the coffin but also the

plot of land (*topos*) on which it lay: jointly owning the sarcophagus *and* its location justified the dual prohibition of burying another deceased therein, and of moving or replacing the coffin.

One way to claim ownership of funerary property was to assert the legitimacy of one's acquisition of or succession to the building or sarcophagus, or even to efface the previous owner's name, substituting it with one's own. Using a more sophisticated approach, some appear to have precisely replicated the previous inscriptions' text, positioning themselves in complete continuity with them. An example of this is Tomb 159c, facing the main street and situated nearby Tomb 162 (Fig. 3.8), with limestone walls enclosing approximately 114 m². In the 4th century, the architrave above the entrance displayed the name Flavius Philippos, seemingly replacing an earlier inscription mentioning the city's *gerousia* (Anguissola and Costa 2020, 315). A lofty, vaulted chamber dominates this funerary precinct's open-air space (Fig. 3.9). Seemingly, the tomb's construction occurred later than the upper terrace monuments to the east and displayed little regard for their accessibility, by impeding the stairs leading to the structures behind it (Fig. 3.10).

Near the chamber's entrance, two limestone sarcophagi bear their owners' names. One features a 3rd century inscription explaining the sarcophagus and 'all the area around it' (*ho topos pas*), measuring 15 × 6 cubits (6.86 × 2.74 m), as well as the 'heroic monument' (*hērōon*) 'in front of it for those who progress toward the left' were owned by Marcus Aurelius Rouphos Asklepianos (Ritti 2004, 471; Anguissola and Costa 2020, 317–318). The second limestone chest's inscription, dating to the 4th century, closely resembles the former, stating that the sarcophagus was owned by deacon Theodoros (Ritti 2004, 471, 569–570, no. 1; Ritti 2018, 361–362; Anguissola and Costa 2020, 318). Again, it stresses the plot's size and indicates that Theodoros owned five other sarcophagi and the funerary chamber (*hērōon*) 'to the left for those who enter the tomb'. Both inscriptions' emphasis of the funerary chamber's position, combined with the fact that the area these men owned appears significantly smaller than the entire plot, becomes understandable in light of data provided by the tomb's close examination (see Anguissola and Costa 2020, 313–325 and fig. 9 for the remains of the second chamber or inner enclosure). Excavations revealed a second, smaller chamber in the southern part of the enclosure (*i.e.*, to the *right* of those who enter), which clearly was not part of the estates of either Marcus Aurelius Rouphos Asklepianos or Theodoros. Plausibly, two individuals shared the monument in the 4th century: Flavius Philippos, mentioned on the architrave, may have owned most of the property – including the smaller chamber – and could thus assert his position most visibly, while the tallest chamber, described as a *hērōon*, and six sarcophagi (including their platforms) belonged to Theodoros.

A notable disparity between the inscriptions of Marcus Aurelius Rouphos Asklepianos and Theodoros is the heightened precision with which the latter identifies topographic details. Traces of an earlier, erased inscription are discernible on Theodoros's sarcophagus, identifiable for at least one and a half lines. Conceivably, the lost text dated

Fig. 3.8. North Necropolis, area of Tombs 162 (no. 1) and 159c (no. 2) (aerial photograph taken in 2019 by the Geomatics team of the Politecnico di Torino, courtesy of MAIER).

back to the initial placement of the sarcophagus in the enclosure and its removal may be linked to an act of appropriation by Theodoros (or one of his predecessors) that was not entirely legitimate (Ritti 2018, 361–362). Thus, the choice to replicate the adjacent sarcophagus's wording in this replacement inscription takes on increased importance: presumably, the aim was to strengthen public perception of its legitimacy. To further fortify his claim, for example, Theodoros states that he inherited this property (*ek progonikēs diadochēs*). By utilising the participial form of the verb *politeuō*, typically translated as 'to be a citizen' but commonly understood to denote 'being a member of the curial class' (Ritti 2017, 43–44), he emphatically underscores his affiliation with the city's elite. Clearly, he associates himself with a cohort whose status and wealth stem from longstanding family prestige. Naturally, then, one might assume that a member of this privileged class could inherit valuable effects such as a tomb in the main thoroughfare.

Unfortunately, the inscriptions discovered in or around Tombs 159c and 162 offer limited assistance in reconstructing the structures' history with much precision. The funerary inscriptions indicate many owners and agencies; it thus remains uncertain whether the tombs were originally intended for one family. A few decades following Tomb 162's construction, fragmentation had progressed enough that the exterior façade was, both legally and functionally, treated separately to the interior of the tomb, being examined instead in connection with the sarcophagi lining the street. These few inscriptions provide crucial insights into the practices of appropriation. First,

Fig. 3.9. North Necropolis, Tomb 159c, view from south-east (courtesy of MAIER).

Fig. 3.10. North Necropolis, Tomb 159c, staircase to the upper terrace blocked by the construction of Tomb 159c (courtesy of MAIER).

it was considered essential to list items within the property precisely and their relative spatial arrangement. Second, inscribing words in stone was crucial: claims had to be physically documented, either by appending a new and longer text to the existing one or by replacing the previous owners' names. Indeed, several Hierapolitan funerary inscriptions specify that the document itself should remain unaltered (Ritti 2004, 576–577, no. 11 and 590–591, no. 34; T. Ritti in Guizzi *et al.* 2012, 658–659, no. 14; Ritti 2018, 372–383). For instance, in the roughed-out marble sarcophagus inside Tomb 162, the written declaration of its material worth evidently mattered more to the new owner than the marble surface itself, which he had covered entirely with large, untidy letters.

To comprehend an inscribed text's significance and purpose, it is imperative to consider the role of burial grounds for Roman inhabitants, particularly in a vibrant,

Fig. 3.11. North Necropolis, exedra 55 along the main street (courtesy of MAIER).

cosmopolitan city like Hierapolis. The inscriptions describe a variety of social activities occurring in or around the tombs: occasional visits, maintenance, ceremonies, and larger festivals organised by families, their freedmen, and professional associations. In the North Necropolis alone, there are nearly 200 stone seats scattered among the chambers and platforms (Fig. 3.11), providing a comfortable rest for visitors or travellers (Costa 2021; Anguissola *et al.* 2022). Evidently, individuals passed significant time in the burial grounds, for anything from numerous collective rituals to discussions about relationships, lineage, and formal transactions, reinforcing intimate familial bonds as well as social or professional identities. The monuments' regular visitors would not only detect any physical inconsistencies in the layout and arrangement of the tombs, or in the written messages, but would also have expected to receive updated information on any visible changes.

Old monuments for a new society: the Tomb of Zeuxis and Iouliane

Nearby the Tomb of Flavius Zeuxis in the Northern Necropolis, close to the Frontinus Gate, archaeologists unearthed a marble sarcophagus (Fig. 3.12) retaining both its fluted chest and a roof-shaped lid with a floral frieze (now in the site's museum, inv. nos. E.5311, chest, E.5312 lid; D'Andria 2022, 193, fig. 1, no. A28c1, 199, fig. 9, 200, 201,
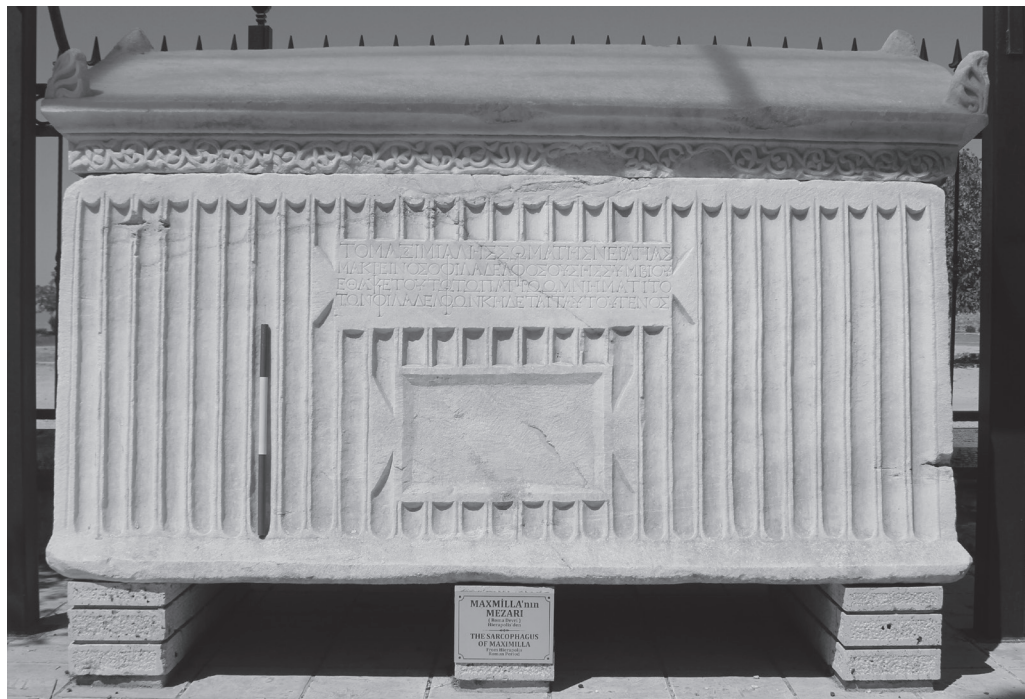
Fig. 3.12. Marble sacophagus of Neratia Maximilla, early 2nd century AD, currently placed in the Museum, inv. nos. E.5311 (chest) and E.5312 (lid) (courtesy of MAIER).

fig. 10; Anguissola 2023, 6–7, 9, 12–13). Recent studies on the Hierapolitan marble sarcophagi reveal that imports from Docimium – the regional centre for high-range products – were a marginal phenomenon (Scardozzi 2016a). This corresponds with findings from the neighbouring Aphrodisias, where local production using stones from nearby quarries, and embracing unique themes and stylistic language seemingly dominated the market.

Sculptors from both Hierapolis and Aphrodisias carved sarcophagi with garlands, among which are numerous semi-finished chests decorated with garlands and discs (Işık 2007; Scardozzi 2016a, 244–251). In Aphrodisias, however, there is evidence of locally produced chests with columns, re-interpreting Docimian prototypes with distinct decorative elements and imagery (Ogus 2014; 2018). Contrastingly, workshops in Hierapolis seemingly specialised in creating fluted chests as their distinctive product (Scardozzi 2016a, 255 presents the findings of analyses conducted on five fluted chests). Fluted sarcophagi were scarcely documented in Rome and the western provinces, where curved strigillated motifs prevailed; seemingly they were also extremely rare in the Eastern Mediterranean (Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 477, 534; Huskinson 2015, 1, no. 2; a certain number of examples were identified at Aphrodisias: Turnbow 2011, pls 23, no. D043, 61, no. D009, 127, no. D131, 260, no. S-26, 266, no. S-492,

294, no. D049). Only at Hierapolis do fluted chests constitute a substantial portion of the corpus, with around 40 specimens dating to the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD (Frate 2007, 464; Scardozzi 2016a; Anguissola 2023). Despite some numerical variation, even estimates from smaller pools of examples suggest that these chests represent approximately 15% of those found in the North Necropolis. Therefore, it is probable that viewers could easily identify this type of sarcophagus as a typical Hierapolitan product, a familiar sight to the city's inhabitants but unusual for visitors accustomed to different shapes and motifs.

An epigram inscribed in iambic trimeters on one of the two *tabulae* carved on the chest, dating to the earlier half of the 2nd century, elucidates that the sarcophagus discovered near the Tomb of Flavius Zeuxis was an 'ancestral monument' (*patrōon mnēma*) dedicated by one Makrinos Philadelphos to his bride Neratia Maximilla (Ritti 2006, 152–154, no. 35; Ronchetta 2017, 254–255). The bones of a young woman in her late teens were discovered inside the coffin. Just as the monument's history, according to the text, is intertwined with the owner's genealogy, so too are his family summoned to ensure its care in the future: the sarcophagus is to be placed under the protection of the *genos* of the Philadelphoi. On both short sides, the sarcophagus was fitted with metal pins, whose remains are preserved, to secure the coffin's lid and prevent the placement of unauthorised deceased (see Fig. 3.5a, above).

Apart from its conventional poetic elements, there are significant parallels between this text and an inscription in elegant script found on a tomb's façade in the same necropolis (Tomb 144; Fig. 3.13), dated through palaeographic and onomastic analysis to the 2nd century AD (Judeich 1898, 151, no. 261; Ritti 2004, 570–571, no. 3; Scardozzi 2016a, 242). This latter inscription names a married couple, Zeuxis and his wife Iouliane, as owners of 'the white sarcophagus [*hē soros hē leukē*] and the old sarcophagus [*hē palaia*] adjacent to it, as well as the altar-shaped building [*ho bōmos*] upon which they are both situated, along with the heroic monument [*sun tō hērōō*]'. Here the tomb's upkeep is assigned to Zeuxis and Iouliane's daughter and grand-daughter, indicating their desire to establish a familial legacy of responsibility over their burial site. Several large fragments of a fluted marble sarcophagus (Fig. 3.14) and a marble chest with roughed-out garlands have been identified both on the tomb's roof and scattered at its base, along with a third chest made of travertine (Scardozzi (2016a, 242) identifies the fluted and garland chests with nos H15_516 and H15_517, respectively; during the 2022 survey, a total of five pieces of a fluted chest were discovered: see Anguissola 2023, 3 n. 5). While pinpointing the specific pieces described as 'white' and 'ancient' in the inscription is challenging, clearly the sarcophagi – even those less elaborate than chests featuring figural friezes, columns, or *klinē*-shaped lids – were central to any given tomb's design. Assessments of these artefacts thus took into account factors such as their origin, appearance, antiquity, and ornamentation.

A tomb's multiple chronological layers extended beyond the sarcophagi, encompassing the entire structure. Not only was one of the façade's sarcophagi
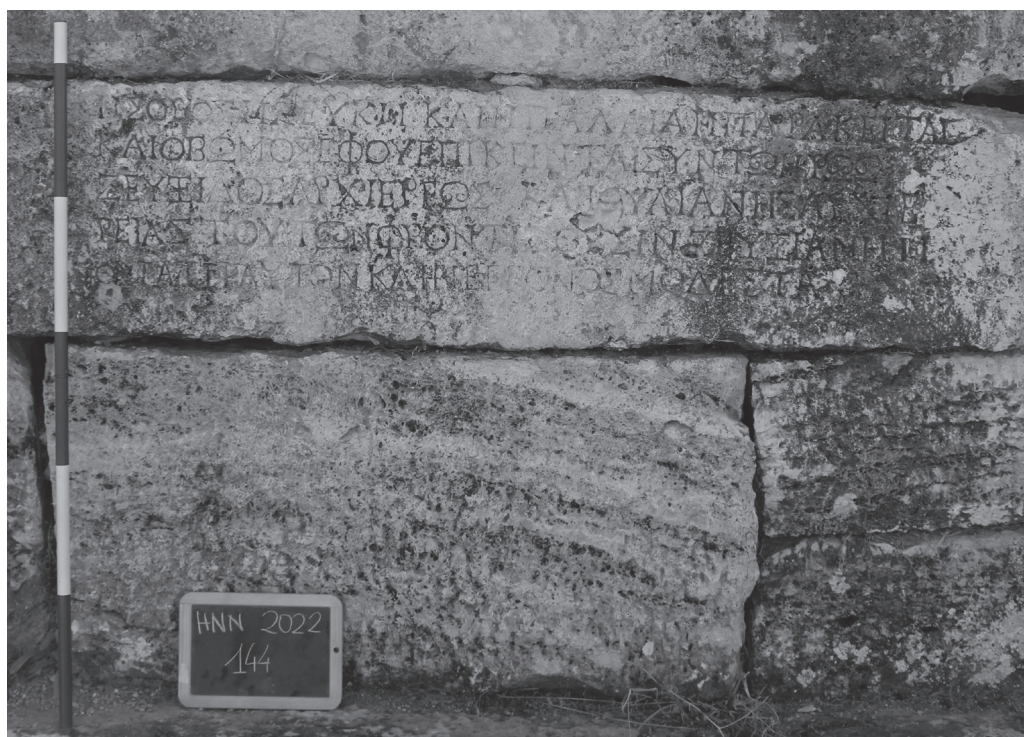
Fig. 3.13. a: North Necropolis, Tomb 144, view of the façade from the main street, i.e., from the west. The inscription of Zeuxis and Iouliane is positioned on the block in the centre of the façade, immediately to the right of the measuring rod; b: Tomb 144, view from the street, detail of the inscription of Zeuxis and Iouliane, 2nd century AD (courtesy of MAIER).

Fig. 3.14. North Necropolis, Tomb 144, view from the north of the main body of the complex (the tumulus) and its rectilinear façade (on the right side of the image) (courtesy of MAIER).

deemed older than the other, but the very building identified as a 'heroic monument' (*hērōon*) dated far earlier than the 'altar-like' façade (*bōmos*) overlooking the street from a higher vantage point. The tomb's main body includes an impressive tumulus, a funerary monument typical of Hellenistic Hierapolis. The development of this typology, which in Hierapolis seemingly evolves from structures partially carved into the rock to monuments with a high pseudo-isodomic ashlar crepidoma (Ronchetta 2016; see also Scardozzi 2016b for the distribution of tumuli in the territory around Hierapolis), may have been influenced by the indigenous community, who would have been familiar with the long tradition of tumulus tombs in Phrygia, Caria, Lydia, and Lycia (Hülden 2011). The Hellenistic tumuli of Hierapolis seemingly remained in use throughout the city's lifespan. Occasionally, subsequent owners preserved the inscribed stelai of the tomb's earliest occupants (F. Guizzi in Ritti *et al.* 2007, 602, no. 3; F. Guizzi in Guizzi *et al.* 2012, 670–672). Upon becoming Zeuxis and Iouliane's property, the tumulus was significantly altered, newly equipped with a high rectilinear façade leaning against the circular crepidoma and aligned with the secondary road. Later, this road was obstructed by the construction of Tomb 159c of Marcus Aurelius Rouphos Asklepianos (Fig. 3.15). The old monument's transformation into its new layout reflects both adaptation to contemporary taste and a testimony to a rich and enduring family history.

The funerary self-representation exhibited by this family gains additional significance upon consideration of the use of titles on the façade's inscription. Both Zeuxis and

Fig. 3.15. North Necropolis. Aerial photograph of the area between Tombs 159c (bottom left) and 144 (upper right corner), taken in 2019 by the Geomatics team of the Politecnico di Torino: (1) staircase to the upper terrace blocked by the construction of Tomb 159c (see Fig. 3.10); (2) Tomb 144 (courtesy of MAIER).

Iouliane are described as high priests of an unspecified deity, indicating their affiliation with the imperial cult (Frija 2019). Among the monumental tombs of persons holding office and priesthoods in Hierapolis, those belonging to the imperial cult's *archiereis* (or 'high priests') are particularly notable. In Hierapolitan funerary inscriptions, references to tomb owners' titles or positions are rare, unlike honorary inscriptions. The title *archiereus*, often jointly bestowed on married couples sharing the role, stands out as an exception found on just a few tombs, stelai, and sarcophagi (Judeich 1898, 110, no. 118; Ritti 2006, 185–188; Ritti 2017, 182–183 and fig. 40; Ritti 2016, 449–451, no. 5; the inscriptions were all discovered on or near tombs of particular prestige, featuring one or more marble sarcophagi). Serving as an *archiereus* evidently carried prestige both within and outside the community, extending well beyond one's religious or administrative duties, and therefore warranted detailing in the funerary monument. The same individuals, presenting themselves as members of the city's oldest families by re-using a monumental tumulus, also take care to assert their roles as priests of the imperial cult. Zeuxis and Iouliane therefore construct their identity as citizens fully embedded in the social and political networks underpinning imperial institutions. The family's proud emphasis on coexisting local and imperial identities is a compelling illustration of the tensely competitive culture in the Greek East of the Roman Empire.

Conclusions

Hierapolitan burial grounds and their unparalleled contextual evidence present a fascinating case study for exploring the legal framework of property and the underlying practices that support it. Examining this site's tombs and sarcophagi

reveals a community that depicted individual, familial, and civic ties through their funerary customs. The architectural language demonstrates co-existing local traditions and imported designs, as well as a process of acculturation resulting in hybrid ensembles, wherein continuity with urban space seemingly outweighed typological consistency. Central to the often sophisticated appropriations of tombs constructed several centuries earlier were desires to emphasise one's familial roots within the community and assert one's legitimate ownership of a prestigious plot.

The tombs of Flavius Zeuxis and Tiberius Claudius Thalamos, built only a few decades apart and located at opposite ends of the settlement, offer enlightening examples of the strategies employed by the city's elites to signify their proximity to political power and status. Both structures exploited their resemblance to façades of the new Frontinus Street to align themselves with prominent imperial officials' influence, implicitly or explicitly evoking the cosmopolitan dimension of their cultural affiliations. Zeuxis achieved this by reference to his business ventures in Italy, while Thalamos utilised architectural language reminiscent of Italian models.

However, the inscription on the façade of Thalamos's tomb also exposes growing concerns regarding the longevity of tomb ownership and the ability to safeguard property and its exclusive use. Through meticulous regulation, citizens tried to thwart attempts at usurpation and, along with the tomb, protect the prestige of the family for whom it was intended. Neighbouring tombs 162 and 159c similarly shed light on responses to these regulations, showcasing various practices employed to seize control of another's tomb. One approach was to openly claim that one had inherited or legally acquired the tomb; more subtly, one might closely echo (and thereby closely align oneself with) a previous claim's language. By detailing a tomb's features and identifying those responsible for its upkeep, one could ensure the ongoing legitimacy of its ownership.

Alongside references to their legal bases, subsequent ownership claims could also be supported by ample topographical details. The inscription of one's name over or near another's epitomises both a powerful assertion of one's agency and a ritualised practice regarding memory, its formation, and an acknowledgment of its potential erasure. The emphasis on a sarcophagus's antiquity, as exemplified in inscriptions for Maximilla and the *archiereis* Zeuxis and Iouliane, not only highlights the family's entrenched status within the Hierapolitan civic fabric, but also affirms their legitimate ownership of the burial site. Deliberately using a conspicuously older tomb showcased one's family's ancient lineage, purposefully implying heritage dating back to the city's Hellenistic founders. Concurrently, adapting a tumulus to contemporary architectural styles (*e.g.*, outfitting it with a monumental façade in line with the street) enabled it to fulfill typical functions of the city's funerary buildings, like accommodating lengthy inscriptions and one or more sarcophagi on its roof. Just as the structure itself embodied both antiquity and modernity, the owners presented themselves as both heirs to ancient lineage and significant figures within the contemporary political landscape.

The inhabitants of ancient Hierapolis were keenly attuned to the significant role played by actions concerning property – whether claiming, relinquishing, reinforcing, or passing it down – in the city's institutional, economic, and social dynamics. The prevalence of re-used tombs suggests that appropriation was widespread, tolerated insofar as it adhered to shared conventions characterised by the use of sophisticated and highly standardised written formulas. Using architectural design and opulent furnishings within the funerary space, individuals not only showcased their existing status but also curated ancestral lineage through inscriptions on, and the repurposing of, ancient structures. Past and present converged to lay the groundwork for future dynastic aspirations. Within Hierapolitan burial grounds, members of the educated elite asserted and exercised their status; they shaped individual and familial identities, articulated social expectations, and established norms for collective behaviour.

Notes

1 This chapter's case studies draw on field research in the Hellenistic and Roman burial grounds of Hierapolis that has been conducted by the team of the University of Pisa since 2008. The 2008–2011 seasons targeted the excavation of the Tomb of Tiberius Claudius Thalamos (S10) in the South-West Necropolis. Between 2017 and 2019, work focused on Tomb 159c in the North Necropolis; the catalogue of the marble and travertine sarcophagi of the site was undertaken in 2017 and is currently in progress. I am grateful to the Director of the Italian Archaeological Mission, Grazia Semeraro, who entrusted the team at the University of Pisa with studying Hierapolis's Hellenistic and Roman burial grounds. Major thanks are owed also to Francesco Guizzi, who generously assisted our reading and dating of epigraphic documents during fieldwork in the North Necropolis, as well as Antonio Monticolo and Angelica Tortorella, for their contributions to the marble and travertine sarcophagi catalogue. Finally, I wish to thank Domitilla Campanile and Fabio Guidetti for their invaluable discussions of this paper's content and perspectives.

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Redefining abandonment

Chapter 4

Relic(t) ecologies. Exploring abandonment in the Apuan Alps

F. Anichini, S. Basile, G. Gattiglia, and C. Sciuto

In the last 80 years, the landscapes of the Versilia mountains, the slopes of the Apuan Alps in the north-west of Tuscany, have undergone profound changes. The strong depopulation of these mountain areas has led to the disappearance of a large part of the agro-sylvo-pastoral activities, with visible consequences in the contemporary landscape features. Since 2020, the historical and contemporary archaeological, anthropological, and environmental analysis of these highland areas has led to outlining the relationships between humans and non-humans, mapping their various relationships of co-existence, co-operation, and even friction. The data collected have led us to reflect on the concept of abandonment itself, its meaning, and the proxies we consider significant in defining the absence of human activity. The cessation of subsistence activities, forest management, roads, and slope stabilisation has led to the proliferation of certain species of flora and fauna. The mountain space is being re-occupied and resemantised with the construction of new interspecies relations, the result of new social ways of life in the villages, as well as the development of tourism. This paper examines the notion of abandonment as applied to the Versilia mountains, challenging the anthropocentric perspective within which archaeological analysis often operates to explore multi-species responses, ecological relics, and resurgences.

Introduction

The Apuan Mountains are a multifaceted and polysemic territory in north-western Tuscany, Italy. Our study focuses on the Versilia side of this mountainous area, which includes the municipalities of Camaiore, Stazzema, and Serravezza at an altitude above 500 m above sea level.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, a massive emigration affected the Versilia slopes, with families and communities moving towards the urban and

industrialised centres of the coast. This process accelerated after the Second World War, during which this area was crossed by the Gothic Line and was subjected to Nazi fascist massacres, reprisals, and evacuations (Di Pasquale 2010; Pezzino 2012). The depopulation of the mountain slopes was associated with the ending of most agro-silvo-pastoral practices, which has triggered landscape character changes and the loss of cultural landscapes, identities, memories, and ecological niches connected to them (AA.VV 2002). Today, the landscapes of these slopes are the result of long-term processes whose traces are visible in abandoned farmsteads, unmanaged forests, as well as in the evidence linked to the Second World War (*i.e.*, trenches, forts, bomb craters).

Within this scenario, the ARAM (ARchaeologies of Abandonment on the middle Mountain) and Forsaken Ecologies projects (respectively funded by the Tuscany Region and PON REACT EU) aim at providing a transdisciplinary methodology for an archaeological study of the timing, dynamics, and aftermath of the abandonment. This aim is pursued through an archaeological, anthropological, and ecological analysis of the dynamics of depopulation, documenting and describing the continuous long-term renegotiations of the relations between human communities and the environment from a diachronic perspective. These projects combine the analysis of the material traces of anthropic activities with the located knowledge of communities and environmental data to create multi-faceted and multi-vocal narratives.

Part of the research was carried out as educational fieldwork. Students were invited to explore the different dimensions of the abandoned landscape: paths, farmsteads, mills, and terracing. The environmental archaeological dimension of the research also included documenting the multi-species responses to the abandonment of pastures, forests, cultivated areas, and quarries, documenting the dynamics of the occupation of spaces by different species and how these can provide important information for reconstructing the history of mountain territories. The team has collected a solid dataset of archaeological and environmental evidence that can now be subjected to different types of interrogation, allowing the study of the multiple relationships between the subjects involved in the life of mountain landscapes. The tangle of interactions makes it possible to read some ecological and social dynamics over a short distance, to analyse processes in the making, and to reflect on some definitions from a theoretical and methodological point of view.

What kind of abandonment?

Abandonment became a subject of interest to the international scientific community in the 1970s (Lange and Rydberg 1972; Stevenson 1982; Cameron 1991; Cameron and Tomka 1993), mostly within the framework of processualism. In this theoretical framework, abandonment was conceived as a strictly anthropogenic phenomenon, as archaeologists defined levels of abandonment as those where evidence of human activity was decreasing. Archaeologists recognised that the archaeological record

itself was evidence that a place had been abandoned by someone at some time (Schiffer 1987). Abandonment was thus defined as a process of decentralisation and depopulation by the human actors involved in a given area. The interpretative dualism of abandonment/occupancy had been framed in the overly synthetic dichotomy between natural and anthropic: where contexts considered as natural are generally associated with the absence of anthropic activity and thus with the abandonment and defunctionalisation of the areas studied.

In collecting data on the timing, nature, and consequences of abandonment, the need arose to develop a definition of abandonment that encompassed the phenomena and dynamics we observed. The descriptive and taxonomic approach, derived from the processualist view, could be combined with a more holistic perspective. From a theoretical point of view, abandonment could be freed from the centrality of human agency. This perspective implies that the study of the metamorphoses of a landscape considers the establishment of new forms of memory and multi-species revival.

Contemporary archaeology has explored the concept of abandonment extensively, including phenomenological aspects related to the aesthetics of ruins (Pétursdóttir 2013; 2014; LeCain 2014; Olsen & Pétursdóttir 2014). In exploring landscapes marked by recent abandonment, we encounter an idiosyncratic feeling. The material evidence is the famous 'familiar made unfamiliar' that characterises archaeological research in the recent past and the contemporary world; on the other hand, the proximity of the finds speaks directly to our baggage of experience: things affect us (Graves-Brown 2000; Buchli *et al.* 2001; Pétursdóttir 2014; González-Ruibal 2020). In survey, when we enter a farmhouse that has been abandoned for decades, we imagine that we are entering a time capsule, where the dimensions of time and space are compressed into a single interface and the place, objects, and memories become a unique assemblage. We observe the details that allow us to create an accurate unit record but with the excitement and emotion that can only come from peering into the lives of others. Faced with this drastic shortening of the emotional distance between us and the objects that challenge us, we spontaneously ask ourselves what the causes of abandonment were, why that person or those people left, and why no one after them came back to collect these things. We question the nature of the relationships between these materialities, the real subjects of abandonment, and the people who left.

Despite the feelings that run directly through us when confronted with the scenario of recent abandonments, the real change of perspective in the analysis of abandonment is the attempt to decentralise the search for causes, but rather observing the re-arrangement of relations between humans and non-humans in time and space, which conveys the complexity of new ecological systems:

> Abandonment allows for the formation of new relations between things previously kept apart, and thus for new collaborative beginnings and strange irreversible wholes. (Pétursdóttir 2014, 354)

In order to explore the facets of the bonds created between humans and non-humans in the dynamics of abandonment, archaeology draws on the theoretical frameworks of environmental anthropology. Anna Tsing's reflections on the sustainability of Holocene resurgences are particularly valuable in describing the dynamics of co-existence and abandonment:

> Where human lives are sustained across generations, it is because they have aligned themselves with the dynamics of multi-species resurgences. (Tsing 2017, 17)

In Tsing's analysis, inter-species alliances are key to understanding the links with an economy based on agro-sylvo-pastoral activities. For centuries, the livelihoods of mountain communities have been based on the harvesting of chestnuts, the provision of grazing for livestock, and the management of forests for charcoal production. All these activities were based on seasonal resurgences, on the periodic renewal of a pact of co-operation between humans and non-humans. Human livelihoods depend on resurgences and they depend on the ability to renew alliances of multi-species viability.

The formation of new relationships and the repositioning of non-human subjects becomes particularly evident when observing the articulation of vegetation in abandoned places. The rapid growth of shrubs and weeds is a clear sign of the lack of human activities to maintain the viability of spaces. In the Apuan Alps, the more-than-human effects of past activities have transformed the nature of inter-species relationships fostering the emergence of *new wild worlds* (Tsing 2015). The depopulation of the highlands has broken the chain of inter-species alliances, leading to the imbalance of certain equilibriums, with anthropic interventions such as the clearing of undergrowth in chestnut groves. The new forests are not traversed by communities and their life cycles; as a consequence, new ecologies develop. The secondary forests contain elements of previous assemblages as well as new species that can be considered as markers of past activities. This is the case of pyrophytic plants (such as broom: *Ulex europaeus*) or shrubs used to mark the boundaries of fields or pastures (such as hawthorn: *Crataegus monogyna*).

Hillsides are palimpsests where fragments of ecological systems with different histories co-exist. Successive land uses over time have left clear traces in today's geological/vegetation/animal assemblages. At present, elements of the life of mountain communities in the last century can still be seen in the mountain vegetation.

When ecological conditions change, it is possible for a sub-set of a population to remain isolated in the area where liveable conditions persist. These sub-populations are then called 'relict' populations, and they may shrink or follow different evolutionary trajectories from the rest of the population. This concept is well codified in the ecological sciences but could also be used to describe intertwined eco-cultural phenomena: the patchiness of archaeological and environmental evidence is linked to ecosystemic relict phenomena.

Exploring patchiness

Our research is based on a dual process of data collection and analysis, both in the laboratory and in the field. As a first step in our research we collected archaeological data from old excavations and surveys from archival and bibliographical sources, covering a time span from prehistory to the present. All these data were digitised and systematised in the new online platform MAGOH (Anichini *et al.* 2023), which allows archaeological spatial and descriptive data to be stored, managed, and visualised in a single web application. During this research phase the database was implemented with 79 archaeological interventions and 119 finds (Fig. 4.1).

The GIS platform

Aerial photographs and cartographic data of the study area, as well as information on land use/land cover, and vegetation for different 20th century decades were provided as shapefiles (.shp) by the Regional Park of the Apuan Alps and collected from Regione Toscana Geoportal 'Geoscopio' (https://www.regione.toscana.it/-/geoscopio). These include land use in 1835 (in percentages); place names; geological and pedological maps; hydrographic maps; maps of land use/land cover changes over the last 70
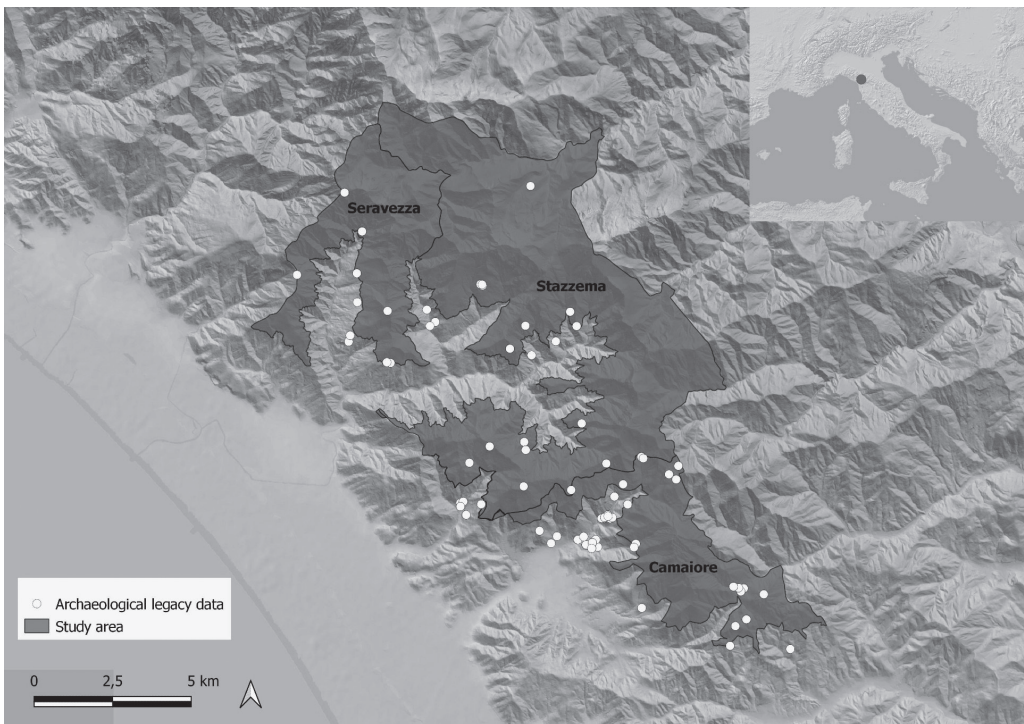
Fig. 4.1. The study area with the archaeological sites/findings implemented in the GIS platform and obtained from legacy data.

years (which also include prevailing species data 1954–2019); 19th century and contemporary cadastral maps; and aerial photography from 1954 to the present day. The 19th century cadastre, known as the Leopoldino-Ferdinandeo cadastre (Biagioli 1975), is available as a WMS service on the Tuscany geoportal (CASTORE project: https://www.regione.toscana.it/-/castore), and it is currently being vectorised, recording information on property and land use. Of the elements represented in the cadastre, 2437 buildings and 2852 parcels have currently been digitised. This provides an image of the 19th century landscape and settlement and a comparison to assess the transformations of the last century (Fig. 4.2).

One of the techniques we have used to superimpose different layers of information and map the abandonment of the Apuan Alps is Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) (Turner 2006; Turner *et al.* 2018; Brandolini *et al.* 2023). HLC is a qualitative but formalised method that helps to visualise and interpret the historical processes that have led to the landscapes we see today. It maps the temporal and spatial complexity of historic landscapes by identifying 'historic landscape character types' (HLC types) with distinct characteristics derived from known historic processes (Dabaut and Carrer 2020). The data collected allow us to map changes in landscape character and to create a database for observing changes in land use/land cover, plant species, and land management. By overlapping aerial photographs, cadastral, environmental, and archaeological data of different periods, it is possible to identify the smallest 'Uniform Diachronic Unit' (UDU) with distinct landscape character through time. Each UDU is a polygon whose dimensions and shape depend on how the HLC type varies through time (Brandolini and Turner 2022). At the moment, HLC mapping has been completed for the area surveyed in 2022. However, assessing which areas have been transformed the most due to reduced anthropogenic pressure in recent years is already possible. The archaeological and environmental data collected can therefore be read together with this data to obtain a complex overview of the abandonment dynamics (Fig. 4.3).

Field survey

Starting from 2020, the MAPPA Laboratory research team has started to collect data on the field through extensive archaeological surveys. Archaeological features recognised in the field are positioned through GPS using *Geopaparazzi* mobile open-source app. By modifying the app. source code, *Geopaparazzi* allows to compile Topographic Unit (TU) sheets, to position TUs, and to track surveyed areas (Paperini *et al.* 2022). At the time of writing, 469 TUs (Fig. 4.4) have been documented, most of which are buildings (136 TUs), charcoal pits (86), military fortifications (58), quarries (27), rock shelters (23), and cableways (18).

Starting in 2022, we began to record the characteristics of vegetation and flora in the investigated area through a specific set of datasheets also created through *Geopaparazzi*. The vegetation datasheet includes information on forest management, the presence of agricultural terraces, the characteristics of the dominant specie,
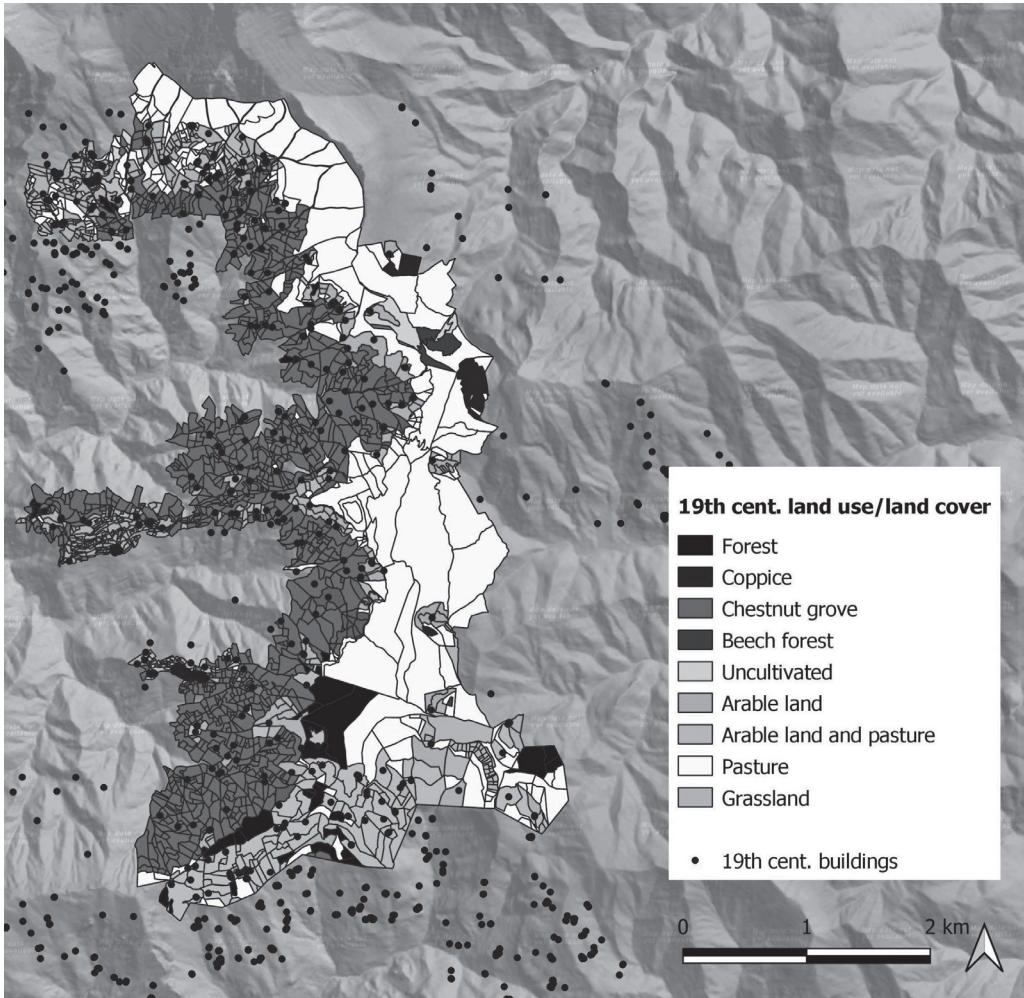
Fig. 4.2. The digitisation of the Leopoldino-Ferdinandeo cadastre (still in progress) shows the different land use and cover at the beginning of the 19th century and the connection with the rural buildings.

and up to three companion species. The vegetation is mapped using the EUNIS code (https://eunis.eea.europa.eu/index.jsp), and notes and pictures can be added. The flora datasheet is used for flagging the presence of species, the number of plants, their age, and the salient features of the plants that can be used as markers for agricultural or forest management activities (*e.g.* the presence of chestnut or beech trees, stumps, or uneven-aged forests).

We documented the characteristics of the vegetation and flora in an area of approximately 357 ha. Using this protocol, we are recording information on the timing of primary and secondary successions, the spread of pioneer species, and the

Fig. 4.3. Land use/land cover in 1954 (top left). In 1978 (top right), in 2000 (bottom left), and 2020 (bottom right).
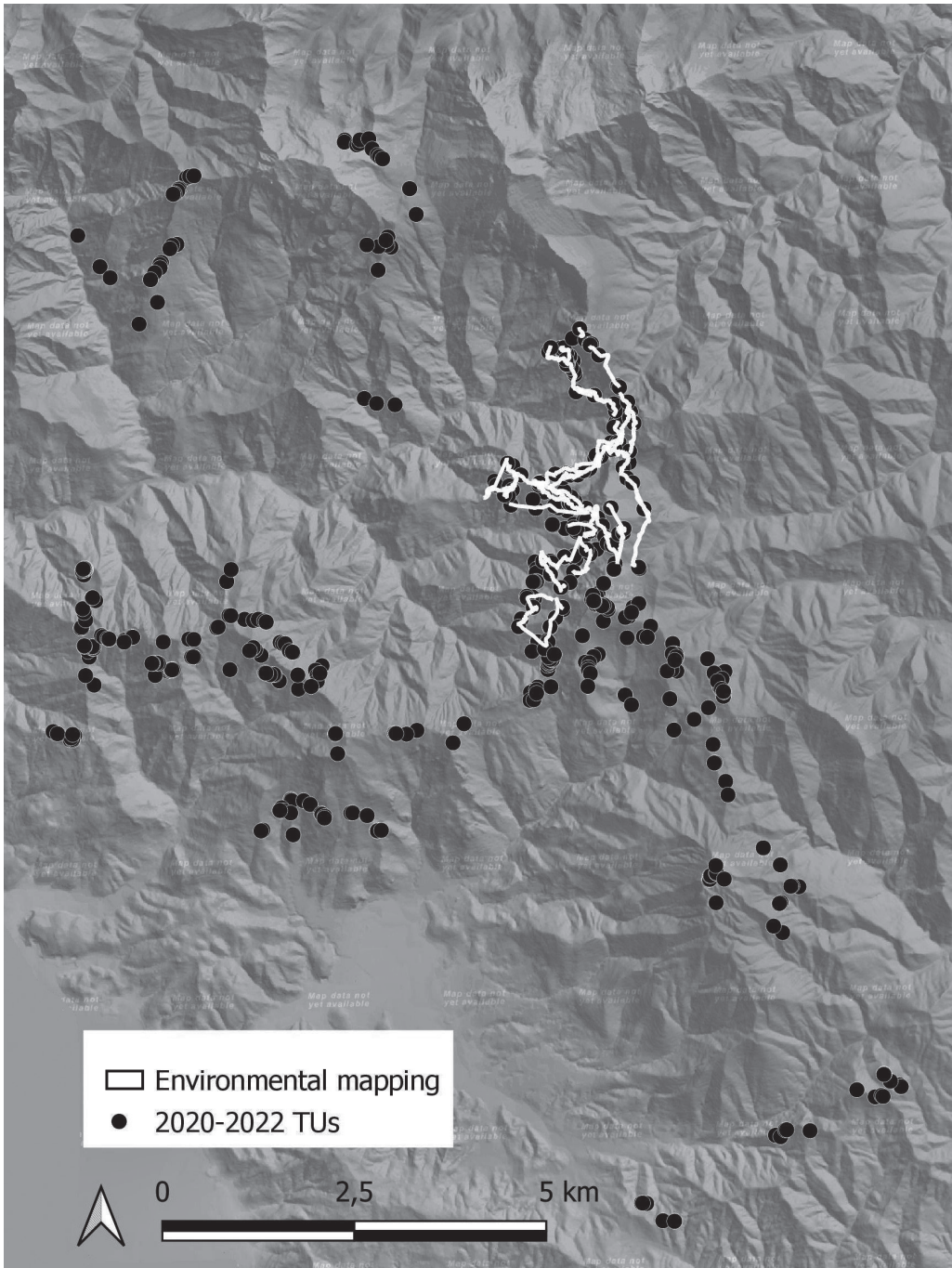
Fig. 4.4. TUs documented in surveys from 2020 to 2022 and environmental mapping.

interactions between cultivated trees and new arrivals; elements that will allow us to understand the process and timing of abandonment/resurgence. The analysis of these data allows us to look at the relationship between depopulation and environmental and landscape change from different perspectives.

Ethnography and community involvement

Our ethnographic work begins with co-conceptualisation and active participation in the materialisation of local memories and traditional knowledge. People are constantly renegotiating their position in the ecosystem, moving through new needs and relationships, balancing activities, and maintaining memories, more-or-less consciously. We analyse the relationships between humans and non-humans and between humans and the environment, established by the main groups living in the mountains. First are the inhabitants, involving the communities of the municipality of Stazzema with a two-year project with the Educational Institute of Martiri di Sant'Anna di Stazzema, where students from 14 villages meet. The project began with a codesigning exercise carried out with the teachers at the schools, from nursery to high school. The focus is on finding the right way for children to read phenomena of transformation and renegotiation through material traces in the landscape and their family environment. The younger children, from 3–5 years old, have worked on identifying emotions linked to some characteristic places, such as the chestnut drying room and the mill. The primary school pupils, experimenting with archaeological and ethnographic approaches, collected data in the field and involved relatives and neighbours; starting from the material traces of the old school buildings, they tried to reconstruct the transformation over time, linking objects and paths as shared trajectories of different types of relationship with these places. This kind of activity in the villages contributed to a slow process of networking towards a wider community. Secondary school students used archaeological and ethnographic observation as their main methods, choosing to describe significant elements of their landscape. Secondly, we met people who live in the mountains and who work to maintain and preserve the heritage, rediscovering activities that bear witness to past equilibria and using them as a starting point for redefining new forms of community directly linked to the environment. We took part in the construction of a charcoal kiln and the sifting of dried chestnuts, all activities carried out by a large group of people from a village. The participatory observation made it possible to explore different ways of reclaiming and managing part of the territory, also through economic investments and creative solutions, where humans and non-humans become actors of community and cultural modalities of cohabitation.

Finally, as we write, a co-mapping project is being developed. A selected part of the Versilia Apuan Alps has been mapped and printed in 2000 copies. The maps have been distributed among schools, bars, and a refuge. Tourists and residents of the area have called to fill the map with their references: favourite places and itineraries, places of memory or stories or legends, memories, or sensations, *etc.* All

these types of data will be geolocalised and annotated, superimposed on the historical and archaeological information, to create a counter-map where the dynamics of co-existence and redefinition of the functional and symbolic meanings of the spaces and the relationships with the environment will be analysed.

Relic(t) trajectories: chestnut farming

The intricate network of information gathered makes it possible to explore the trajectories of multi-faceted objects and trace their interactions and evolution over time. The trans-disciplinary data collection results in a tangle of data articulated as a relational map whose threads can be followed in different directions. For complex and stratified objects, such as chestnut groves, a comprehensive trajectory can be traced.

Cultivated chestnut groves have characterised the Italian mountain landscape for centuries and, in the Apuan and Apennine areas, are an essential part of the cultural landscape (Cevasco *et al.* 2015; Agnoletti 2018). The development of the chestnut grove is particularly interesting, as the combination of archaeological features and vegetation characteristics is informative for documenting the complexity of inter-species relationships on these mountain slopes. Drying rooms, mills, and cableways are scattered throughout the forest, marking the nodes of correspondence between human and non-human agencies. The chestnut forest appears as relict of the mountain agro-sylvo-pastoral system. The trees survive in a transitional phase in which the facilities for drying and grinding chestnuts have been abandoned and the human communities have disappeared (Agnoletti 2007). The trees remain isolated from the system of which they were once a part, immersed in the new wild world of mountain slopes after depopulation. While in palaeogeography 'relict' refers to a population or taxon that is peripheral to a larger population, in environmental archaeology the term could be used to indicate the isolated nodes of a system of correspondences between humans and non-humans that is now disjointed.

Chestnut cultivation is well attested in archaeological contexts by archaeobotanical data and its spread in Central and Northern Europe seems to be associated with the Roman conquest, although recent studies are calling this paradigm into question (G. Di Pasquale *et al.* 2010; Buonincontri *et al.* 2015; Jarman *et al.* 2019). For centuries, the rural population of the Italian peninsula has been linked to chestnut cultivation, so much so that it has been called the 'chestnut civilisation'. In his compendium on the life and work of Versilia's mountain communities, Lido Gherardi writes: 'From birth to death, from one season to the next, from morning to evening, to night, always the man of the mountains has close by, helpful and useful, indispensable and resolving, the chestnut tree' (Gherardi 1994, 54, transl. by the authors).

In the case study area, 14 structures interpreted as *metati/seccatoi* were surveyed. These are chestnut dryers found in mountainous areas where chestnuts are grown

(below 800 m), but many *metati* are also found in villages. These structures are shared by several families who harvest the chestnuts separately, each on their own plot of land, and come together during the drying season. *Metati* are usually small, two-storey buildings with narrow windows (Fig. 4.5a). They are characterised by a double entrance, one on the ground floor and one on the first floor. On the ground floor, the space is reserved for the hearth, which is placed directly on the floor, while the ceiling is made up of a trellis: large wooden poles supporting a system of smaller wooden elements. The chestnuts are placed on the trellis and slowly dried by the heat of the hearth, while the small windows on the upper floor blow out the smoke produced in the drying room. The drying process takes about a month, during which the fire must never be extinguished.

Once dried, the chestnuts are removed from the *metato* and peeled using various techniques, usually by beating the skin. The dried chestnuts are then ground into flour, which is easy to store and can be used in various preparations. The mills (only four in our study area) used to grind chestnuts are located near watercourses, which provide the energy for the millstones. The small number of mills studied is probably due to the altimetric selection of the sample studied. It should be noted that the survey was carried out on slopes above 500 m above sea level. Most of the chestnut-grinding buildings were located at lower altitudes, as shown by the Leopoldino cadastre (dated 1820s–1830s) and in the vicinity of the villages. The mills (Fig. 4.5b) can be easily identified by some structural features such as the canalisation and damming of the water.

Fig. 4.5. features documented that are linked to chestnut farming: a) a chestnut drying room (metato); b) a chestnut mill; c) a cableway.

Good milling depends on the correct drying of the chestnuts and good flour makes it possible to preserve the product for the winter season, providing food for the mountain population. The flour is kept in crates called *cascioni* or *zuppidiani*, also made of chestnut wood, in which it is pressed to prevent oxidation or the proliferation of moulds and parasites.

The transport of goods, including chestnuts and flour, up the slopes is carried out by people and animals using a dense network of transport infrastructure: the cableways (Fig. 4.5c). Evidence of cableways (19) has been recorded in the study area. They are scattered at different altitudes, in forests, pastures, and near chestnut groves. The evidence generally consists of the departure/arrival stations of the carriages, built with wooden posts and metal pulleys, and of stretches of cable. The trolleys were moved by means of counterweights, which is why we could often find piles of stones next to the stations that were used to weigh down the trolleys and move the cable. At some dis-used cableway stations, trolleys have been documented, made of metal or consisting of a half-barrel of fuel attached to the cable with chains.

The traces of the chestnut culture and its imprint on the vegetation of the Versilia mountains can be traced in the historical cartography (as described above). The characterisation of land use helps to understand the expansion of chestnut woods since the beginning of the 19th century and the evolution of the landscape with the advance of uncultivated woods. In the 19th century cadastre, the terms used to define land use can vary and the interpretation of the terms is sometimes ambiguous. Terms such as 'grassland' or 'pasture' are used in the indicative tables to describe parcels but it is not always possible to say what the difference was in the character and management of the land. For example, if we find a reference to land being managed as 'woodland', we have no further information on whether animals were grazing in the undergrowth or not.

In assessing land use, we had to account for these ambiguities by grouping the various categories recorded in the cadastre into the broader categories of wooded and unwooded land (Table 4.1). Wooded land covered 35.35% of the study area and unwooded land 64.65%. Among the unwooded areas, pastures account for the largest share (39.72%), arable land for 10.70% and the hybrid category of arable land and pastures for 9.91%.

Of the wooded area, 27.53% is occupied by chestnut groves, while only 1.02% is registered as coppice (a percentage that is undoubtedly higher in reality but for which more precise cadastral estimates are not available). The chestnut groves are located between 500 m and 800 m above sea level, in the zone that oak woods would naturally occupy. Recent cartographic data confirm that the chestnut groves recorded in the Leopoldine Cadastre have been preserved in the landscape of later centuries. These are forests that still have a majority of chestnut trees but whose undergrowth is no longer regimented, thus offering new spaces for the colonisation of pioneer species.

Table 4.1. Land use/land cover from 19th century cadastre.

Land use/land cover		Total (ha)	Total (%)
Wooded land	Unmanaged forest	96.64	4.47
	Coppiced forest	22.93	1.02
	Chestnut forest	592.60	27.53
	Beech forest	12.86	0.56
	Macchia (unmanaged wood)	38.60	1.77
Unwooded land	Uncultivated	19.05	0.88
	Arable land	230.87	10.70
	Arable land and pastures	213.60	9.91
	Pastures	854.89	39.72
	Grassland	68.63	3.16

The regional cartography produced by the LAMMA consortium shows that most of the plots recorded as chestnut groves in the Leopoldine cadastre are now deciduous mesophyll forests (oak and chestnut groves) with a canopy cover of 80–100%. The land use map of the region of Tuscany shows that the area dedicated to chestnut cultivation in 19th century cartography is now covered by woods with predominant chestnut. Both emphasise the presence of species other than the chestnut alone, a fact that is also confirmed by survey observations. The environmental traces recorded indicate that the species associated with the chestnut tree are mainly maple, hornbeam, manna ash, and hazel.

The civilisation of the chestnut therefore appears to be fragmented, in pieces, apparently unconnected, but stemming from a common management of the mountain slopes. The material evidence of chestnut cultivation is still clearly visible and the memory of the agricultural practices associated with it is still a binding element for mountain communities. The ethnographic and archaeological work carried out in the Versilia mountains has allowed us to document some rediscoveries and revivals of these ancient practices. In the village of Azzano (Stazzema), some terraces adjacent to the north-western sector were cleared in 2020–2021. The people involved report that the work of opening up the undergrowth took place during the isolation and restriction of interactions between individuals that characterised the Covid-19 pandemic. The inhabitants of the small and isolated village of Azzano, forced by government decrees to remain within the limits of the municipal territory, have dedicated themselves to recovering a fragment of the chestnut culture that once characterised the village. The hillside is divided into wide terraces separated by low dry-stone walls. On the terraces, large chestnut trees have been planted about 5 m apart. The undergrowth is covered with grass and a few low bushes.

In the same area, an old *metato* has been brought back to life and put at the service of the community. Our first visit was during the period of drying chestnuts, when the upper floor was completely covered with a 30–40 cm layer of chestnuts collected by numerous members of the community. Other smoking products (meat and fish) hung above the chestnuts. In mid-November, after the chestnuts had been left to dry, the people of Azzano gathered at the *metato* for the husking. Everyone took part in the various operations. Three people would drop the chestnuts from the upper floor through an opening in the floor; others would collect them in buckets on the lower floor. The full buckets were taken outside and poured into a machine where the chestnuts were peeled and the different parts separated: the *pula* (shell) was kept for the following year to be used in the smoking process; the parts of the chestnuts that were too small were separated and used as feed for the pigs; the whole chestnuts were poured into buckets and distributed among the members of the community. Everyone was entitled to a quantity of chestnuts proportional to the number of chestnuts they had collected (Fig. 4.6).

The trajectory of the chestnut tree can also be followed in other contexts, where school education is synchronised with the rediscovery of agricultural and community practices related to the production of chestnut flour. The school of Ponte Stazzemese has acquired and restored a *metato* to dry the chestnuts collected by the children

Fig. 4.6. The husking of dried chestnuts at the metato *in Azzano (Stazzema).*

and families and to carry out educational projects. The students are therefore well aware of the chestnut cycle, even if the practice of harvesting and processing is no longer systematic.

The relationship between human communities and the chestnut tree has been strong for centuries and is now fading. However, the network of human and non-human relationships articulated in agricultural practices and seasonal rhythms has settled in local memory and can be partly read. Chestnut civilisation is preserved in certain features of the cultural landscape, of which communities are the guardians. As Emanuela Borgnino points out in her work, the care for their stories is a pledge for cultural continuity (Borgnino 2022). The community is the keeper of a diachronic relationship, a co-existence. They are the custodians of wild edges, the patches in which Holocene resurgences can help a new promise of a participated existence.

Conclusions

Our archaeology of abandonment and resurrection is an archaeology of patchiness, of building new relationships that are more-than-human. It is an archaeological practice in which the term abandonment is not associated with a negative connotation because it encompasses re-appropriations, reconquests, and resurgences of non-human agents. The disappearance of a species (in our case, the human) implies changes that lead to the re-appearance of other species and objects (for the latter, it is understood as a new chapter in their biography). Abandonment should be replaced by a new term, or at least resemantised, to mean both abandonment and resurrection, but avoiding the simplistic solution of a perpetual dualism between the two. On the contrary, the new resematisation should embed the complex nuances of meaning that arise from a tangle of multi-species relationships between more-than-humans and non-humans. To study multi-species responses, ecological relicts, and resurgences from an archaeological perspective – here understood as a method of observing the network of contextual relationships perceivable through the traces – means dealing with the fragmentation of the environmental system and crossing different sources (ethnography, materiality, cartography, *etc.*).

This archaeological perspective has allowed us to study how the mountains have been re-occupied and resemantised. The chestnut ecology described in this paper is both a relict of the late modern and contemporary chestnut cultivation system and a living species at the centre of the construction of new interspecies relations, leading to new social ways of life in the villages as well as to sporadic tourism.

Authors' statement and funding

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Chapter 5

Depopulating landscapes: Methodology and the materiality of archives in Calabria

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This chapter explores the question of archives destroyed by neglect, decay, and natural events. It argues that these archives pose specific problems to apprehending the pasts, presents, and futures of depopulation, especially in the context of anthropogenic climate change. Earthquakes, floods, landslides, and fires have rendered visible political and cultural processes, but their effects are often obscured by the destruction of archives. This paper, therefore, aims to interrogate how material processes influence and shape history. My concern with 'materiality' is rooted in the potential of neglected archives and physical landscapes to provide different levels of historical data. On the one hand they serve as situated repositories of information about the past; on the other, they bear witness to the process of emptying as materials of that same past. People's relationship with these archives, then, is often in dialogue with their relationship to the very landscapes they inhabit. While many archives have been neglected or destroyed, this abandonment was at times a choice, a decision to disregard norms of an increasingly bureaucratic state and to inhabit a place, even as it emptied. By interrogating these problems, Archiving emptiness enhances the analytic tools we have to comprehend how people and land have been mutually constituted through history, and how scholars can access, assess, and study these stories.

Emptied towns in Southern Europe have become common features in popular media. These sites are framed as ghost towns, potential tourist havens, or as locations that expose the dramatic material consequences of environmental change. Their inhabitants are often depicted as relics of a distant Mediterranean past. Some historians have argued that departures from these areas were stimulated by the exhaustion of resources and degradation of 'natural' environments (McNeill 1992; Grove and Rackham 2001). In scholarship, the emptying of these towns has been seen as an inevitable outcome of trajectories that trace back to early modern

urbanisation and political-economic transformations during the long 19th century. In this context, the study of migration has replicated these discourses, following migrant histories out of and away from their points of departure. Despite a growing focus on emigration regimes and the politics of departure, rare are the studies that attempt to understand the worlds 'left behind' by migrants.[1] This trend reflects a broader dearth of scholarship on the connected histories of rural places in the modern Mediterranean.[2] Rather than being portrayed as central to historical knowledge about the processes and consequences of enlightenment, modernity, and industrialisation, rural (and often depopulated or emptied) places are seen as peripheral, out of sync and out of time with processes of urbanisation.[3] In Italy, a movement has begun to re-inscribe meaning in these partially depopulated places, drawing in part on already existing ideas about rural heritage and the long-standing ties between urban centres and agricultural landscapes (see De Rossi 2018; on Spain: del Romero Renau 2018). Few studies, however, have considered the complex histories of the material landscapes from which migrants departed despite a nuanced discussion of landscape and heritage (Tosco 2017).

The primary aim of this essay is to explore methodological possibilities. I argue that the histories of depopulation in emptied towns and villages in the modern Mediterranean uncover connections between material environments and social and political histories. While there is a specifically Mediterranean context at stake in this chapter, the approach that I propose could be more widely applicable. To see this, we need a critical approach to historical materiality. Here, I will show how interrogating the material landscapes of depopulation provides new insights into the region's history. Recent scholarship on the Anthropocene has challenged us to rethink modern history, more generally (McNeill and Engelke 2016). If the argument is that we have understood the implications of these historical processes a generation or so too late, as Bruno Latour and others imply, then we require alternative modes of investigation and conceptual frameworks and also should reconsider a whole swath of historiography (Chakrabaty 2009; 2018; Latour 2018; Ghosh 2019). Wolfgang Behringer (2009 [2007] does precisely this in his thought-provoking analysis which places climate change, as *histoire probleme*, as the subject of vast tracks of historical changes (for a more recent example see Fressoz and Locher 2024). Other scholars have engaged in a critical reading of the history of ideas such as 'the environment' or 'sustainability' (Warde 2019; Warde *et al.* 2019). Yet, in a region whose historiography is rigidly divided into ancient, medieval, early modern, and modern blocks, unpacking these historical processes entails both a rethinking of conventional periodisation and a careful reassessment of regional coherency.[4] The intellectual and material history of the Mediterranean (and Mediterranean studies) offers much in both regards.

To begin, histories of abandonment, emptied, and depopulated landscapes require a fresh analytic discussion on the connections between archives, materiality, and land. Through which archives and material landscapes might we access histories of

depopulation? Which social and political processes are rendered visible or concealed by 'natural' events that shape and transform the land? How do events function as vehicles for social and political transformation? How are emptying towns part of urban expansion, bureaucratisation, and other trans-regional movements? In what ways do the material histories that connect individuals, communities, and land challenge understandings of centres and peripheries? I do not propose to answer all these questions, but rather to explore the paths they open. To do so, I first consider methodological possibilities to studying material environments in modern Mediterranean history using two paradigmatic approaches as the basis for analysis. Second, I illustrate some of the problems of periodisation, temporality, and spatial interaction and connection. This part of the essay, then, addresses these questions by foregrounding the materiality of an archive that I interpret as indicative of historical processes and as produced by those processes. Through the micro-historical lens of Petrizzi, a small town in Calabria whose population declined steadily during the 20th century, I suggest that 'natural' events such as earthquakes, fires, and floods punctuate depopulation and might help us understand the interconnected processes that have transformed environmental, social, and political structures.

Mediterranean methodologies, across time and space

Braudel's *Mediterranean* (1996 [1949]), as an exploration of the possibility of history, was a product of social and environmental forces as much as it was a descriptive narrative of the early modern Mediterranean. As it was inspired by his personal itineraries, its complex hierarchy of temporal rhythms was also shaped by the physical constraints in which it was thought and written, during and that at the ends of the colonial sea (Braudel 1972; 2015; Caygill 2004; see also Borutta and Gekas 2012). At that conjuncture of intellectual and material histories we can begin to flesh out an approach to articulating and understanding the relevance of materiality in modern Mediterranean history. Perhaps one of the strongest critiques of Braudel's approach to the 16th century Mediterranean world, however, is that he does not connect the temporal planes that are fundamental to his analysis. He labours over the (then overlooked) nature of geohistorical time and then, after passing through the socio/economic time of the middle duration, when the reader arrives to the *histoire evenementielle*, they are left largely disconnected from those other processes (and times). Indeed, the idea that history was in part determined by forces external to human agency (*i.e.*, 'natural' processes) was a key belief of the Annalistes (Trevor-Roper 1972). They have been abandoned to a vast backdrop and the ways by which geohistorical processes interact and connect with event history are left to conjecture.

   Despite the sea's temporal multiplicity in his analysis, in his preface to the first edition, he notes that the first part (*i.e*, the majority of his tome) is 'a history whose passage is almost imperceptible, that of man in his relationship to the environment, a history in which all change is slow, a history of constant repetition, ever-recurring

cycles' (Braudel 1996 [1949]). Although this is presented as a layer of historical temporality that structures event history, we do not learn how the environmental processes and landscapes that are so intricately detailed throughout much of his work permeate the political events of which he was so critical (and that which inevitably influenced the conditions under which he wrote during the Second World War).[5] The immediacy of events is distinct from their underlying currents which accordingly move 'over long periods of time'. Braudel declares, '[r]esounding events are often only momentary outbursts, surface manifestations of these larger movements and explicable only in terms of them' (Brudel 1996 [1949]). But is this necessarily so? Are these events mere outpourings of longer *durée* histories, protrusions of the slow, deep time that shapes environments? Or do these processes go both ways?[6] Are Mediterranean environments, perhaps, more prone to change according to the extension of events than Braudel would have imaged? To what extent does Braudel's temporality foreclose (the possibility of) a deeper entanglement of human and environmental processes?

Both empirical and theoretical interrogations of historical time have offered more complex readings of how distinct rhythms and temporalities might be layered into the past, present, and future. These approaches to historical time do not necessarily negate the tiered understanding of history presented by Braudel; to some extent they may even reinforce it (see, especially, Koselleck 2018). Indeed, building on the work of Reinhart Koselleck, many scholars have come to understand historical time as both layered and multiple, containing diverse and sometimes conflicting temporalities.[7] Likewise, in the time that has passed since 1949, scholars of the environment have probed the intersections of events and processes, and consequently challenged conceptual separations between natural and social worlds (Behringer 2019; Warde *et al.* 2019; this critique has been impactful in thinking especially in the field of anthropology, see Palsson and Descola 2003; Descola 2013; Tsing 2016). Technology studies (and STS) – informed by thinkers like Bruno Latour – in particular has focused on how state institutions (or private ones linked to the resources of the state or empire) have employed power (by means of empire and colonialism, especially in the Mediterranean region) in relation to the environment as a means to concretise their occupation over resources and territories. In a sense, 'event history' takes a leading role in these narratives, compelled largely by forms of power (and powerful institutions) but underpinned by environmental processes or materials acting as agents in historical time (Kirchberger and Bennett 2020). While they give presence to forces outside the human/political, they often remain locked within a conception of process that is informed first and foremost by categories of modernity such as 'empire', 'nation-state', and coloniser/colonised dichotomies.

In this chapter, I suggest that a more anarchic reading of Braudel's temporalities, in light of recent research, can help historians to better comprehend the entanglement of human and more-than-human transformations in the modern Mediterranean, especially in the context of the emptying landscapes of Southern Europe. Horden and

Purcell's *The Corrupting Sea* (2000), inspired by Braudel's massive scope and published over 50 years later, turns much of his framework inside out. The book marks an epistemological shift from *histoire totale* to *histoire probléme* insofar as it aims to tackle conceptual and methodological problems rather than navigate large-scale structural processes (although the large scale it does not disavowal; Horden and Purcell 2000, 44; see 39–45 for their most interesting engagement with Braudel's history). The authors' approach to a history of the Mediterranean region presupposes 'an understanding of the whole environment', which they clarify further: 'the environment in question is the product of a complex interaction of human and physical factors, not simply a material backdrop or a set of immutable constraints' (Horden and Purcell 2000, 9). They embrace the connectedness (even inseparability) of social and cultural processes (*i.e.*, human factors) and material processes (*i.e.*, physical factors). This iteration of environment diverges from Braudel's 'almost imperceptible' undercurrents. All factors, human and physical, are active participants in *The Corrupting Sea*'s history of the Mediterranean. Rather than envisage the existence of the region as an *environmental whole a priori*, as one might argue Braudel does, the *whole environment* is worked out through what Horden and Purcell call 'micro-ecological settings'. This posits a thorough reassessment of Braudel's temporal triad by framing the Mediterranean not as a sea of temporalities but as a spatial sea. It is an important and suggestive – albeit incomplete – analytical shift.

Following on a sustained critique of geographical constructs in regional studies,[8] Horden and Purcell disapprove of history 'in' the Mediterranean, an approach which they claim 'need not comprise a large area, time-space, or topic, and is related only contingently or indirectly to its geographical setting' (2000, 9). They mount their critique of the determinedness of the regional unity articulated in Braudel's (and his predecessors') work on perceptions of the Mediterranean; for example, they draw on a variety of historical representations of the sea to demonstrate how its spatial understanding has transformed over time: from the late-Roman *Peutinger* Table, where the sea was portrayed as a route or passageway, to medieval and early modern *Mappe Mundi* (and *portolani*), which present coast-wise (and settlement-based) orientations of the Mediterranean. They attribute this shift in understanding the spatiality of the Mediterranean in part to the 'discovery' of the Americas, which resulted in a wedding of abstract and pragmatic understandings of space. In other words, the Mediterranean emerged as a zone that could be conceived of beyond its practical encounters.[9] One might argue that similar reconceptualising of Mediterranean spaces have occurred since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, when the region became both more central as a passageway and yet less relevant to globalising empires, shifting the focus away from hinterlands (and zones of production) and onto imperial port cities (Tabak 2008; 2009; Furhmann 2020).[10]

The use of so-called micro-ecological settings, then, allows Horden and Purcell to develop a methodological analysis 'of' the Mediterranean (not 'in' it, as they so adamantly insist!) based on the dynamics of interaction and connectivity: what they

refer to as a combination of 'interactionist' and 'ecologizing' approaches (Horden and Purcell 2000, 45). The former, they claim, have been focused on the maritime space of the sea itself, while the latter have been concentrated on hinterlands (this appears to be a shorthand for studies that examine communication between social bodies and material physical features around the sea, respectively; *ibid*., 10). As readers of *The Corrupting Sea* have observed, interaction and connectivity are not the end game for every historical process – a position with which I strongly agree. Despite proposing a powerful conceptual framework for a spatial analysis of the Mediterranean, Horden and Purcell do not follow through with a sufficiently nuanced model for understanding how discontinuity, rupture, and breaks happen in the passage of historical time (Fentress and Fentress 2001; Algazi 2005). This is ironic as Purcell later proposes that the purpose of *The Corrupting Sea* was to do precisely as its title suggests, to corrupt, to resist homogeneity (Purcell 2003).[11]

What we *do* acquire from the intellectual project that is *The Corrupting Sea* is a sense of variably, a 'precarious unity': their Mediterranean is 'unpredictable', 'variable', and 'local' (Horden and Purcell 2000, 13, 24). It is a space marked by zones of transition, edges, and densities in connections that allow for internal complexity and coherency, while also permitted tensions to emerge.[12] Horden and Purcell propose that we consider a four-pronged approach by examining: 1) risk regimes (the ability to respond to various environmental risks); 2) logics of production (forms of production, circulation, commerce, *etc*.); 3) topographical fragmentation (communicability between various micro-regions); and 4) connectivity (extensive networks that connect to create a certain fluidity between places). They contend that in highlighting these four aspects we can envision a Mediterranean whose internal connections are more dense than external ones (Horden and Purcell 2006, 733, 735). In other words, this is the justification for the very existence of a region and regional connection. But this approach also provides a kind of conceptual toolkit for a different kind of micro-history of environment. What is key to isolating these connections and interactions is, contrary to the position taken by Braudel, that they are *relational* and not *structural*.

Braudel's structures (and his articulation of multiple temporalities) may still play an important role in what we come to conceive of as the modern Mediterranean. Paolo Squatriti, for instance, challenges Braudel's geohistorical temporalities by arguing that many of the changes in agricultural practices and climatic adaptations were 'but a prolonged muddling-through, a series of tentative experiments by anonymous subsistence farmers, created the triad of grain, olives, and grapes that became enduringly "Mediterranean"' (Squatriti 2014, 32). In other words, space and time have come together to shape region in contingent ways. So, while interaction and connection may have been most scholars' takeaway from the intellectual endeavour of *The Corrupting Sea* over the course of the past decades, I suggest that we expand on this aspect of relationality to incorporate a more structural approach to change over time. Hence, an anarchic space-time configuration.

If we are going to interrogate questions of environment in modern Mediterranean contexts then we must navigate and explore zones of transition, edges, and densities and consider their endurances and breakages in time. Embracing 'micro-ecological settings' as starting points, I propose that we begin such an endeavour by seeing specific locations as generative of temporal and spatial constellations.[13] More prevalent in studies of ancient and early modern worlds, even discussions about global micro-history have been the preoccupation mostly of pre/early modern scholars (*Past and Present* 2019). In scholarship in (not 'of') the modern Mediterranean – *i.e.*, ones that are based along the shores of the sea, like Mitchell's examination of colonial technologies in Egypt or Davis's consideration of the French use of the environment as a means to colonise Algeria (these are just two examples: Mitchell 2002; Davis 2007) – the environment assumes a secondary role, even when it is agentive, to the state. This remains the case in more contemporary studies of the sea in the context of the migrant 'crisis', where ideas of enclosure have shaped our perception of how the Mediterranean's space is being used by the European Union to reinforce its neo-colonial practices and to reify imperial nostalgias (Heller and Pezzani 2017; Soto Bermant 2017; also argued by the present author (in press)). Why does history of the environment remain confined to 'deep' times and why does it get relegated to the political structures of the nation-state in the modern period? Can we tell a micro-history of environmental change that incorporates event history and in doing so corrupts temporal determinacy and rethinks how 'momentary outbursts' can propel or culminate longer *durée* processes?

Finding the archive

To rethink the messiness of these temporal and spatial conjunctures, I begin with an institution that is, especially for modern historians, central to our analyses: the archive (Radkau 2008). I propose that we see archives as material in the way argued for by historian Timothy LeCain, as non-living things that 'shape humans as much as humans them' (LeCain 2017, 15, 84; for more on this debate see Ingold 2004 and AHR roundtable 2014). In other words, archives are not sites for reflection on environments but are part of the histories of depopulating landscapes in Southern Europe and, through their materiality, their material records, and their contested role in social life, we can better understand the relationship between environment and socio-cultural/political change in the modern Mediterranean.

In 2018, I arrived in Petrizzi to begin archival research on depopulation and the processes of 'emptying' that marked much of rural southern Italy and elsewhere in rural Europe since the 19th century (Dzenovska 2020). After having introduced myself to the municipal council in the *Comune*, the mayor at the time stopped me when I passed through the piazza (Fig. 5.1). He knew that I had been given the keys to the old municipal building where the archives had been stored since the 1920s. The mayor asked if I had found the material useful. I told him I had. As though I had not spoken, he abruptly

said: 'You know, if those are useful documents, you can take them back [to London] with you, we can figure that out'. I would eventually learn that, to the mayor, the archive stood in the way of a municipality-run apartment for tourists. Sometime later, a different member of the municipal council approached me with another inquiry about the documents I was consulting. This time, I was asked whether I had seen a document – one that he and others claimed certainly existed – that attested to the town's 'ownership' of coastal Mediterranean land, nearly 8 km south of the mountain location. He assured me that the said document existed among the others and needed to be pulled from the archive for the administration, which sought to claim historical rights from the neighbouring *Comune* to a small portion of the coast in order to make the town truly 'Mediterranean'. Again, this was intended to boost tourism.

Fig. 5.1. Petrizzi: a: Comune; b: Piazza Regina elena.

These scenes took place in a town located at the point in the province of Catanzaro with the shortest distance between the Tyrrhenian and Ionian seas. Despite its closeness to the sea, the town has historically been more connected to the mountains and, like many towns in Calabria, isolated by relatively few transport routes. In 2019, the population was 1054 (see ISTAT: http://demo.istat.it/bilmens2019gen/index. html). Its population has steadily declined since it peaked at around 2500 inhabitants in the mid-1930s. It is not as emptied, or abandoned, as the towns devastated by the floods of 1950–1951 and then in 1973 (Stajano 1979), and is surrounded by several 'revivalist' projects that have been used as models for regenerating value in emptied landscapes.

Petrizzi is said to have been constructed by earlier populations that fled raids on coastal towns during the late Middle Ages. It expanded under the feud of Squillace and was sold in the 16th century to Salvatore Marincola, from Aragon, Spain, when it became a Duchy. It remained under the Marincola until the abolition of feudalism in 1806, yet the Marincola family and local nobility dominated local politics and labour

patterns (Diego Marincola, long after the family's removal from local politics, was later installed as *podestà* by the National Fascist Party in Rome). Built on the edge of the mountains, the town's economic life has been centred around small- and medium-scale agricultural production, known from the 16th–19th centuries for its vineyards, olives, and cactus fruit (*opuntia ficus-indica*), the latter useful as much for containing soil erosion as for its fruit. The old part of town – built after the 1783 earthquake which destroyed the majority of the original town – runs along one mountain ridge with a granite bedrock; a narrow road passes from an overgrown area, Santa Caterina, named after a church that once marked the promontory, to the *piazza vecchia* (as it has been called since at least the 1840s). The road winds upwards, past the town's main church and eventually arrives at the central piazza, once the limit of the town and point of market exchange with neighbouring towns and merchants. It continues, passing through *le baracche* (the barracks), a road constructed after the 1783 earthquake, to a smaller square (*menzuchianu*) and cluster of homes (*timpaneddhu*) developed in the 19th century and inhabited largely by agricultural labourers and artisans. Since the early 20th century and due to the destruction caused by erosion, the town has expanded upwards along the ridge as houses crumbled, collapsed, and were abandoned due to flood and earthquake damage. Although Petrizzi's population has halved since the end of the Second World War, the town itself has doubled in size.

The mayor's offer to relocate the archive and the municipal administration's request for one specific document invoke two distinct material histories which, when placed in dialogue with one another, locate Petrizzi within Mediterranean trajectories. The offer and the request are fundamentally linked through the *Comune*, the local institution of authority and political power; one that has become increasingly separated from the state (and its resources) since the national government implemented devolution policies after the 1970s (Walston 2016). On one hand, the two engagements with the archive represent a particular temporal mapping of the town. They inscribe the territory with value in relation to its potential (a tourist destination); but this value would have to be legitimised or confirmed through the physical document which stands as 'evidence' of its location in history. On the other hand, such physical documents do exist (they are not imagined) and are stored (or forgotten) in abandoned archives. Archives that are, according to the former Mayor, disposable, as they stood in the way of a project to convert the town into a tourist destination – he offered them to me without concern for the legal and bureaucratic procedures required for this kind of operation.[14]

Documents and territory in time

The documents that had been deposited in the municipal building had been abandoned. It is worth noting that following the 1973 floods, the town's mayor had entered into the administration as a civil engineer, advising the town which areas were unsafe for development. He remained part of the administration and then

mayor until June 2022. Documents had been left to rot and decay, to decompose among hastily stacked shelves and closets. In the absence of material documentation of the town's past, in 2016 select parts of the 18th century cadastral survey were reproduced and published by Petrizzi's Pro-Loco, an organisation formed in 1975 to promote the town's heritage and tourism (only one year after the creation of the Ministry of Culture). The *catasto onciario* was compiled to create a uniform taxation system in the Kingdom of Naples. In Petrizzi, it was completed in 1742, even though its completion took over a decade in many places. Stemming from Carlo III of Spain's rule, the *catasto* was part of a wider reform meant to grant the Kingdom of Naples greater autonomy from the Spanish Bourbons and to re-organise the bureaucratic structure of towns and villages around Naples (one could think of this process in similar terms as Mehmed Ali's semi-autonomy from the Ottoman Empire in early 19th century Egypt; Davis 2006, 37). As a survey or census aiming to assess the value of property and possessions, it was organised by local administrations and elected officials in cities, towns, and villages throughout the Kingdom of Naples. The *catasti* (plural) also account for the presence and size of families living under one roof, known as *fuochi* (fireplaces).

Such surveys have been exploited on a large scale by lay historians and genealogists as a means to explore lineages and gain a sense of historical landscapes in local communities. The editors of the Pro-Loco's volume note in their introduction:

> [the *catasto*] functions as a historical document because it gives us a 'still image' of society, economy, and judicial relations in Southern Italy: a definitive point of departure to understand, by means of that which we were, what we became and what we are (*attraverso ciò che eravamo, quell che siamo diventati e ciò che siamo*). (Anzani and Piperata 2016, 11)

The document itself is rich in details – it records professions, livestock ownership, credits and debts, numbers of co-habitants in households, and other forms of property (for example, whether someone owns a house or rents from another). It notes how plots of agricultural land were covered ('planted with …'), their size, and, although it does not include coordinates for mapping, the descriptions of the confines of agricultural properties (*fondi*) and inhabited areas help to vividly conjure the landscape.[15]

The *catasto*, as the editors claim, offers a snapshot: it is especially valuable in this part of Calabria because it depicts a world that, 41 years later, would be turned upside down by a destructive earthquake. The earthquake of 1783 not only levelled Petrizzi, it also unsettled the administrative structure and power hierarchies of the town that are portrayed in the *catasto*'s description of relations between inhabitants and land (Placanica 1997; see also Cecere 2013). It is part of the ending and beginning of towns in Calabria. The 1783 earthquake opened pathways for regional reforms intended to draw power (and resources) out of local religious authorities indebted to feudal elite and place them into emerging state institutions. The government in Naples created the Cassa Sacra, an administrative organ whose purpose was to

liquidate ecclesiastical accounts and invest them in the reconstruction of towns and, in so doing, re-organising and centralising power through Naples, a process linked to the justification for the *catasti* nearly half a century prior (the most extensive study of the Cassa Sacra is Placanica 1970). Indeed, in the aftermath of the 1783 earthquake, the ducal family of Petrizzi, which had acquired their property by royal decree in the early 17th century, transferred their wealth and personal archives out of the town (there are records that until the mid-19th century their palazzo, the current municipal building, was left abandoned in ruins; Archivio dello Stato di Napoli (2)). The bureaucratic transformation would be exacerbated when Napoleon's troops occupied southern Italy and officially abolished feudalism in 1806. Administrative powers were increasingly transferred to municipal councils composed of local nobility and a nascent class of liberal professionals (notaries, lawyers, doctors, *etc.*) and to separate committees representing the interests of peasants and artisans.

For members of the Pro-Loco the *catasto* as historical document functions to draw together past and present. Yet, they have only presented a partial and one-dimensional view of the document. From the perspective of one encountering the archive, to apprehend the document as a 'still image' and portray it as a testament to the town past without considering the various processes which constituted its emergence is to generate distance between past and present. It indeed referred to past realities, as much as that it was produced by them, but it was also part of a wider constellation of encounters with the land across the 18th and 19th centuries and into the present. It was archived and largely forgotten on the ground while social, economic, and judicial relations transformed.

Reading the *catasto* in dialogue with documents from later periods, a rather different sense emerges of how the landscape was cultivated, worked, and inhabited and to which plots of land were attached value and signification. Documents detail a selling 'mania' as landowners sought to move capital outside of the town in the early 19th century, driving emigration as smallholders or artisans attempted to acquire cash to purchase land. Some years later, in the 1830s, plots of feudal lands were converted into communal lands and distributed to landless peasants. These lands have played an important role in the town's history and have been a point of frequent contention in times of economic recession when the municipal administration looked towards them as a possible resource and attempted to re-appropriate them for its own fiscal benefit. Moreover, one can see how social and political networks overlapped in various ways with changing regimes of land ownership. For example, in the municipal archive, one document records quotidian financial transactions from 1850–1880 (known as a *libro mastro*) of the Carnovale family, who inherited large amounts of land from the Marincola family (Fig. 5.2). The *libro mastro* demonstrates how a tight network of peasants, carpenters, labourers, and others, over several generations, depended on the continued employment for their income and sometimes for their housing. Changing seasons and events such as heavy snows or rains, extensive harvests, the introduction
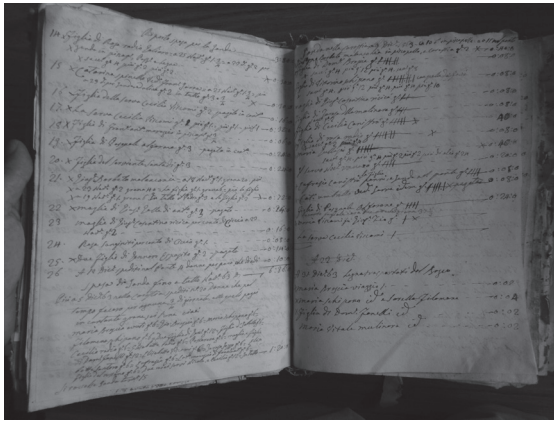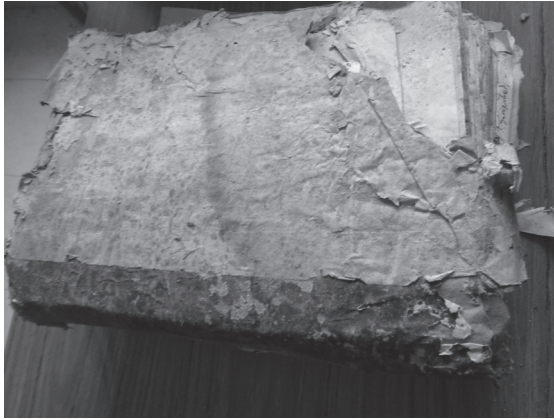
Fig. 5.2. *Libro mastro, 1850–1880.*

of new crops, and the mobility of migrant labourers who arrived to Petrizzi for temporary employment, all punctuate this document. As land ownership fragmented and traditional structures of power were dismantled, land maintained symbolic value locally even while it lost economic value. Precisely around Italian unification in 1861, artisans began to emigrate to North and South America, using remittances to purchase land sold at inflated rates by landowning families (some of these elite families began to disappear from the social landscape of Petrizzi during this same period, following their 18th century predecessors to urban centres such as Naples or Rome and taking their wealth with them).

This emigration to the United States and Argentina was quickly followed by peasants, many of whom previously depended on employment by landowning families. The emptying of land due to emigration began to create visible 'problems' for the local administration and the state. For example, in 1911 the regional engineer corps attributed the drastic rise of devasting fires to the absence of manual labourers available to maintain agricultural land. The landscape also witnessed an increase in damage caused by floods and erosion. Here, it seems, suddenly we begin to see how the social and material histories of the landscape become more deeply interlocked. The occurrence of fires, floods, earthquakes, and other disasters create material barriers to Petrizzi's inhabitants' ability to cultivate land and live in the town, just at the same moment that land is more available to them (at least in theory). As land was privatised and its ownership diversified, its value in terms of potential yield fell and the cost of maintenance rose. Migration became a crucial conduit for filtering capital into the local economy (and when Mussolini attempted to control emigration in the 1930s, military service to Italy's colonies rendered individuals and their families eligible for state subsidies and pensions in many ways serving the same purpose as remittances from emigration; Bevilacqua *et al.* 2009).

The departure from the land, at once informed by its importance and centrality, in turn fuelled other historical processes. In other words, in looking at the *Catasto* as a historical point of reference frozen in time, one can see hints of the centrality of land, but as a 'snapshot' of Petrizzi's agricultural past, it does nothing to understand how that land and its use in the past relates to the value that it holds in the present. Micro-regions, as derived from *The Corrupting Sea* are transformed in their relationality when to their complexity is added the hierarchies of Braudelian times. Absent from documents like the *Catasto* – used as a reference for those who wish to see the town's landscape's historical richness – is a record of Petrizzi's wealth and prosperity prior to Italian unification as the myth of neo-Bourbonism dictates and which guides a commitment on the municipal administration to 'restoring' the Petrizzi to an idealised world in which sea and land are joined. Indeed, the documents abandoned in the old *Comune* recount a different history altogether; one of the struggles over ownership, profit, and connection to the land. Importantly, they recount a history in which the sea itself does not often figure. They demonstrate how a small number of families who, historically, held power and property accumulated wealth and progressively extracted and distanced their wealth from the community, at the same time attempting to market property as valuable to those from whom it was being dispossessed; and how, various states (first from Naples, and then from Rome) sought to channel funds from traditional institutions of power and reform hierarchies in their own interests.

This fragmented series of events between the 18th and 20th centuries provides insights into transformations in various regimes of power, law, land ownership, agriculture, and production. The temporal and spatial constellations which it unveils illustrate shifts from imperial systems to the consolidation of bureaucratic institutions administering policies for the modern nation state; a drama in which Petrizzi persists as a specific location in the modern Mediterranean but, due to the reconfiguration of local, regional, national, and global horizons, its social, political, and environmental significations have transformed. It is through the example of Petrizzi that we can understand how, on one hand, environmental forces were shaped by human actions, but on the other hand propelled and shaped socio-cultural change. The absence of archives created a local sense of belonging that can only be understood by marrying these modern processes, very much tied up with the bureaucratisation of the state and consolidation of power, with longer *durée* histories of the landscape and agricultural change in southern Italy. For the Pro-Loco, the *Catasto*'s value manifests in its potential to reference what was, what became, and what is in Petrizzi's landscape, to create a particular temporal mapping of the town's history; it was a kind of nostalgia to which Braudel may have subscribed (Grove and Rackham 2001, 10). During a walk around the emptied part of town, Antonio, a member of the Pro-Loco's leadership, narrated the landmarks of which there is no living memory – multiple churches of which nothing remains but the knowledge that, once, Petrizzi had

more churches than its current two. He told me that this knowledge is based on notations in the *Catasto*, a collection of documents that he 'acquired' while working in the municipal office for 25 years, and as a carer for the last living member of the Carnovale land-holding family. We walked through the old narrow streets overcome by wilding, but formerly cultivated, terrain. Fig trees, prickly pear cactus, vines, wild fennel, wild mint, and oregano filled the hollowed shells of homes, a plate remained on a shelf in a house where the floor has fallen through two stories down.

Leaving the land

After the Second World War and the collapse of the Fascist government, which had imposed local authorities (*podestà*) from feudal, ducal, and baronial families throughout southern Italy, there was a moment of unrest that – in some places – recalled the political turmoil of earlier periods. In several towns in Calabria peasants declared independent republics, as in the case of the Red Republic of Caulonia that lasted for three days in March 1945; in Melissa several peasants who occupied land were killed by the landowners sparking protest throughout the countryside (Faeta 1979; Forlenza 2021). In Petrizzi, the war was followed by a gap in political power when the *podestà* was removed. An earthquake in 1947 and floods caused by inclement weather in the winter of 1950–1951 (nearly 2 m of rain fell in around 100 hours) brought uncertainty upon the town's future (Atti Parlamentari, Camera dei Deputati 1948; 1951). Around 48 towns in Calabria were affected by flooding and landslides caused by these storms, the province of Reggio Calabria was worst hit (Atti Parlamentari, Camera dei Deputati 1950). Petrizzi's standing administrative leader (not officially a mayor) at the time regularly sent petitions to regional and national offices beckoning prompt intervention as the town's situation quickly declined. The roads had suffered greatly – the main route in and out of the town, which runs down the mountain towards the sea, remained blocked for months and was only cleared through the efforts of local volunteers; a story that is replicated throughout Calabria in this post-war moment and even fills the pages of a recent novel-cum-film by Pietro Criaco, *Via dall'Aspromonte* (2019). In municipal assemblies and around Petrizzi, discussions were held about the possibility of relocating most of the population to the nearby *frazione* Farnia, a smaller town that had emerged further 'inland' and was attached to agricultural lands farmed by many of Petrizzi's inhabitants. While the full relocation never took place, some *case popolari* (public housing) units were built and the conversations have been registered in local memory (these events, elsewhere in Calabria, have been addressed by Pipyrou 2016). Repairs from the earthquake and flooding required extensive state subventions and, as they concurrently marked a horizon of greater distance from the state in its delayed intervention, they fuelled emigration to northern Italy and Europe, which lasted through Italy's so-called economic boom.

Discussing the wider implications of this moment, anthropologist Vito Teti notes (2004, 460) that while earthquakes and floods that occurred in the post-war years were unforeseen 'natural' events, they accelerated ongoing historical processes: '… the seed of refuge and abandon pre-existed the floods and would constitute no more than a pretext for fulfilling or giving legitimacy to a process of mobility already underway'. In letters attesting to the damage caused by the earthquake and floods, many inhabitants drew attention to their 'small' plots of land but concurrently emphasised the land's importance as a means of subsistence. They also noted that damaged land had acquired historical value and significance, as in many cases it had been attained through the remittances of past migrations (Archivio comunale, Petrizzi). Funding for the reconstruction of these lands – both urban and agricultural – were delayed for nearly a decade, despite continued requests for the intervention of the Genio Civile (State engineering corps). It was in 1959 that a law (the so-called *Legge dell'alluvione 24 Luglio* 1959) was passed to provide assistance to families who had suffered material damages in floods caused by storms on the Adriatic. This law would enable the release of funds in Calabria long after departures became concrete realities in the town's landscape. The law had its origins in another region, Puglia. The fact that the *Legge dell'alluvione* was meant to bring change elsewhere in Italy, and only reached Petrizzi through Puglia, through channels of the state to Rome, and then back south to Calabria, adds further dimension to this history.

In 1973, the town was struck again by devastating floods. It is this moment to which many people link Petrizzi's depopulation. After the floods, many houses in Petrizzi's 'old town' were determined by the administration to be at risk of collapse. Around 200 families were evacuated and relocated (temporarily housed in the public school and on other communal properties such as a clinic built in the 1930s that had remained vacant; Archivio vecchio municipal 1973). At this point, the mayor who offered me 'the archive' at the beginning of this essay enters the story as a young engineer working for the municipality. He was among the few who decided that a vast portion of the town was 'uninhabitable', and he was also the engineer behind plans to develop large apartment complexes and a new road just outside the old town. In the mid-1970s, through his involvement with the municipal authorities, he designated another part of the town 'out of bounds' for development using the precedent of the damage from the 1973 floods, and meanwhile he blocked attempts by others to resettle further up the mountain.

In 1975, the Pro-Loco was constituted in collaboration with the then administration and with national and regional tourism agencies. The town's value changed radically in these years vis-à-vis the legislative procedures of the Italian state, local networks of power, and 'natural' events, as did its relative location: it was transformed from a site of agricultural production, the livelihood of many inhabitants, to a destination for migrants returning in summer from Domodossola, Milan, or further afield in Switzerland, Canada, the United States, or Argentina. The new homes, and the town's history, were marketed to those who had left.

In 2018, I catalogued and photographed documents in the archive of the former municipal building (Fig. 5.3), which – we recall – was marked by the municipal council to be converted into a hotel as part of the *albergo diffuso* project. The building was without electricity. Amongst folders that had been strewn about were files from the mid-to-late 19th century which included municipal meetings, accounts, and balances, extensive records from the 20th century, and, thrown on the floor, public works files from the 1950s–1990s. Some were placed on the shelves and left untouched; others hand been taken and utilised or re-organised (for example, to make a case for the extension of one road in the 1960s a trace of documents had been pulled together dating back to 1811 and displaced into a later folder). These were the documents that, as described above, the mayor suggested I take with me when I left, unburdening the administration of this clutter. These are also many of the documents that helped to construct the above narrative. While reading and note-taking in a small room above the archive, three individuals visited from the tourism company – based in another town and chosen at the expense of a local cooperative formed by the mayor's political opponents – which was to oversee the larger project of transforming the town into an open hotel. They looked curiously at the documents, and at me, as they assessed the space and its possibilities for renovation.

When I returned to the archives in 2019, many of the documents which implicated the mayor in the assessment of development possibilities after 1973 had disappeared. The archives from the old building had been relocated to the current municipal

Fig. 5.3. State of the archives in the emptied municipal building.

building, the restored Marincola palace, a process in violation of multiple laws. Assessing the new placement of the archive, I learned that most of the public works documents had disappeared and others had been haphazardly placed in the building's attic. The chaotic organisation of the old municipality archive – where the documents were stacked and distributed according to the time in which they were deposited and which reflected one historical temporality of the town – had been disrupted, disturbed, and re-ordered.

After 2019, members of the administration repeatedly asked me to find documents that would legitimise a historical claim to coastal land. The extension of the town's territory towards the sea has been matched with an attempt to repossess communal lands provided to peasants in the early 19th century. These lands could – as has happened elsewhere in the region – be converted into wind farms (with large companies and corrupt money behind them, Walters 2013; Sergi and South 2016), which would require the designation of extensive plots of land as uncultivable (a process already underway due to the rising population of destructive wild boars). At the same time that members of the administration sought access to documents (which may not exist) that would position Petrizzi's future in relation to its history, they removed and 'disappeared' documents which help to understand the confluence of material processes shaping the town's history. The leader the local opposition movement, *Petrizzi rinasce* (Petrizzi is reborn) and one of the founders of a cooperative ('A Menzalora) working to make the town 'liveable' for its inhabitants, defined the current administration and its leadership as capable of dealing with only 'concrete and cash' – other material histories which interact and connect Petrizzi with wider processes extending in time and space that have shaped the modern Mediterranean.

Conclusion

In lieu of a conclusion, I want to raise several questions evoked by this exploratory essay. First, how does the materiality of these archives challenge temporal limits to or the periodisation of the 'modern' Mediterranean and, by extension, the modern world? I propose that, by combining the approaches of Braudel's hierarchies of temporality and Horden and Purcell's precarious unity in space, we can understand how the Mediterranean continues to be shaped by processes that emanate from earlier historical periods. Moreover, we can expand this claim to see how the processes that unfold in this Mediterranean context continue to provide valuable details on the historical unravelling of human and more-than-human processes. In this way, the long history of depopulation and the complex of archival processes that it both reveals and through which it is revealed, place the periphery of emptied out rural landscapes back into the centre of the processes of modernity. Moreover, the evocation of these periods in popular imagination, too, at the conjuncture of increased state bureaucracy, political corruption, migration, and agricultural transformation is part of the socio-cultural history of the modern Mediterranean. Secondly, how do the materials of the

landscape in small places challenge geographic boundaries in the Mediterranean? If they have been defined in various ways at different historical moments, what do we do with the quickly changing conditions of climate change? In other words, can the Mediterranean become less Mediterranean as water evaporates from the sea, the salt level rises, agricultural practices become less efficient, and archives dissolve and disappear into the landscape? Is it more Mediterranean as tourism and other political economies impose their imagined realities on its landscapes? Finally, what about the (intractable) mobility question. When people move away and landscapes are depopulated, does the 'Mediterranean' as a region stay stable, or might we envisage the inverse of what I have described? In other words, an absorption of the Mediterranean into various elsewheres, its abstraction and dispersion (thinking, for example, of how crops and practices disperse in time and space, like potatoes and tomatoes).[16] Through the emptying of Petrizzi, a process that extends backwards and forwards in time, this essay has sought to consider how methodological approaches to archives invite historically-inclined scholars to think differently about material landscapes.

Notes

1 One clear exception to this is Linda Reeder's brilliant *Widows in White: Migration and Transformation of Rural Women, Sicily, 1880–1928* (2003); on emigration regimes and the politics of departure see Green and Weil 2007 and Green 2017. I myself have followed this conventional approach to migration history in Viscomi in press.

2 There is a growing body of scholarship in Spanish on the subject. See Collantes and Pinilla 2019. There are also more general histories and journalistic essays on depopulation, such as Molino 2016 and Escudero 2022.

3 This perspective has perpetuated the myth of backwardness and atavism that informs social scientific research based on the work of Edward Banfield. For a thorough critique of the epistemological framework of enlightenment modernity see Ghosh 2016.

4 On the latter point, see Oktem 2010 for the modern period, who rethinks Mediterranean periodisation through 'regionalising moments'.

5 Braudel (1972) makes some allusion to this problem in his later writing, when he states that he attempted to suggest some of the links.

6 In the recent trend of deep-time style investigations, scholars seem to remain committed to temporal linearity that moves in one direction.

7 Recent work on time and power has gone further to understand how these processes and approaches play out, including a thorough critique of the Koselleckian framework. See Edestein *et al.* 2020.

8 The myth of continents, see the extended debate in *The Corrupting Sea* (Horden and Purcell 1000, 15) about the relevance of 'Europe' and the Middle East as categories.

9 Interestingly, it would be Michael Herzfeld's seminal article (1984) on the 'horns' of the Mediterraneanist's dilemma that makes almost the inverse argument, seeing the abstracted sea as taking too important a role in understandings of regional, cultural unity.

10 Even in their comprehensive ecological history of the Mediterranean, Grove and Rackham (2001, 10) point to the larger political economic changes that have consequently influenced perceptions of Mediterranean landscape histories and been taken up by scholars like J.R. McNeill.

11 It is worth pointing out that there was a whole post-*The Corrupting Sea* series of publications which attempted to reiterate and clarify aspects of the argument set out in the book.

12 Purcell (2003, 16) claims the purpose was to explore the Polybian problem of making sense of more than one place at a time.
13 This is the main claim that we have made in a recent volume (Rommel and Viscomi 2022).
14 He would have had to first consult the *Soprintendenza archivistica*, the state authority over archives for the Ministry of Culture, created in 1974 at the same time that a number of laws would link archives, historical artefacts, and the political economy of tourism (*Gazzetta Ufficiale* 1974).
15 Archivio dello Stato di Napoli (1); Daniel Smail (1999) describes how this approach to understanding mapping reveals how people thought about personal and collective geographies.
16 Again, the work of an early modernist! See, David Gentilcore (2010; 2012).

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Chapter 6

Rehabi(li)tating abandonment. Urban occupations and their regenerative practices

Antonio Stopani

Drawing on research carried out in Italy (Turin) and Greece (Athens), this article analyses the rhetoric of abandonment in both discursive and political practices that the new social movements in the global North put into action in the aftermath of 2008 economic crisis. In this long historical conjuncture, abandonment refers both to people – those who are excluded from some fundamental rights to survival such as the right to housing and work – and to things – buildings which are stripped of their original social functions (i.e. for productive or housing uses) due to both managerial incompetence and/or speculative calculation. Qualifying an asset as abandoned is first and foremost a political and moral denunciation of the political and financial logic that has taken it away from its original social function. Secondly, the denunciation of abandonment is mobilised as a principle of legitimisation by those who appropriate a building left unused to counteract the social effects of abandonment. As a matter of fact, occupations are turned into an instrument, in the very material sense of the word, a means through which social movements address crucial issues of exclusion that affect a wider segment of the urban population. Finally, the occupation of abandoned assets becomes a driving force of urban regeneration policies from social movements, whose aim consists in meeting social needs and aspirations of their neighborhoods which remain disregarded by local and central policies.

This paper is part of a larger body of research that examines how new social movements claim to play an active role in the main transformations of cities in the global North and how they actually do so. I approach social movements by taking their assertions seriously: social actors who develop their own politics to address a set of widespread social problems in cities connected to convenient housing, education, culture, health services, and other basic public amenities.

Squatting is the core and cornerstone of these politics since it enables social movements to challenge local institutions and materialise their presence in the city by transforming previously abandoned buildings into urban regeneration projects. In this text, 'squatting' and 'squat' refer to an act of informal housing through the

occupation of vacant buildings or flats/apartments as a result of collective initiatives that frequently involve tens or (less frequently) hundreds of people. In the Italian and Greek contexts, which are the focus of this essay, 'squatting' implies organisation, programmes, and planification since it relies on the capacity to occupy entire buildings and transform squats into focal points for more socially oriented practices of urban regeneration.

'Abandonment' reverberates in the semantics of social movements as a term that is employed as a keyword to account for broader ongoing political and economic processes. At the same time, discourse on 'abandonment' serves as a powerful tool in the legitimisation of squatting. As I will explain, words such as 'abandonment' and 'abandoned' must be denaturalised because they have a performative effect rather than a merely descriptive or denotative function, and those who use them expect them to produce this effect. Qualifying a specific property as 'abandoned' is not a neutral political idiom and the very act of designating the abandonment transpires within struggles for the right to housing that are embedded in local contexts. In this sense, the discourse surrounding the abandonment of a property aims to open it to new practices. In fact, denouncing a building's abandonment paves the way for its occupation to satisfy social needs that are not fulfilled by institutions. It is precisely at the moment when a property is occupied, and therefore filled with new housing functions, that the word 'abandonment' is uttered in the public space and used to legitimise the occupation.

The declaration of abandonment of ancient production sites, of buildings previously dedicated to services (such as schools, offices, hospitals, and barracks), and of former buildings with residential or accommodation functions (such as hotels), calls the model of the neo-liberal city into question in the eyes of social movements. Abandonment is viewed as an indicator of managerial incompetence or as a speculative calculation on the part of the public or private owner and this accusation is used to highlight a disregard for the immediate needs of ever-expanding sectors of society. In this sense, the informal re-appropriation of assets occurs in response to a situation of distress or tension that is perceived by the community as a lack of care on the part of the institutions.

This article starts with a reflection on the widespread use of terms such as 'abandoned' and 'abandonment' within social movements in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. These terms are used to refer to both the consequences of the welfare state's withdrawal from supporting people who have become impoverished as a result of the economic crisis as well as the contraction of economic activity resulting in the proliferation of vacant buildings. Drawing on my fieldwork in occupations created to host migrants in Turin and Athens, I will focus on the specificities of local contexts. Secondly, irrespective of the social composition of occupations and the diverse conditions that can justify the choice to live in an occupation in the eyes of its inhabitants, the focus will be on the broader political agenda of social movements that underpin occupations. As I will explain further, a large number of collective

occupations in the past decade have yearned for a role in urban regeneration agendas with the specific aim of influencing broader social and political transformations. Occupying vacant buildings, therefore, brings together a residential function with projects likely to attract cultural laboratories and incubate new initiatives attuned to social needs in specific locations. Living collectively in an occupation and creating space for socially oriented activities necessitates a process of self-discipline, which lies at the core of relations between activists from social movements[1] and those who actually inhabit the occupation. An occupation is not simply a building that houses people; rather, it aims to create a space for more vulnerable individuals to recover the resources necessary to rebuild their lives. This is why many occupations aim to embody a so-called 'safe space', which is, in the words of Steph Grohman (Grohman 2018, 517): 'a "transformational device" between two distinct but interrelated states of being', a place that provides a physically and psychologically protected environment in which those who suffer from different kinds of social exclusions can recover the essential conditions for personal intimacy and bodily safety through community backing. If occupying a vacant building is only the first step that is supposed to bring a new community into being, then this one is intended to self-govern as a safe space. Since, as Grohman notes again: 'self-governance is not self-evident' (2018, 519), in the third and final section of this paper, I attempt to demonstrate the complexity of this process and how strewn with incidents and misunderstandings it is. Some notes from my 2018 fieldwork in Athens will illustrate this point to reconstruct the multi-scale political working that occurs within an occupation in order to transform it and its inhabitants into a community that actively participates in the bottom-up regeneration processes.

Abandonments: A matter of politicised semantics

Discursive practices on 'abandonment' and 'abandoned assets' emerge in connection with a close examination of the urban fabric. Rather than being an objective feature, 'abandonment' is discursively produced and, once used to qualify a particular edifice, it foresees its occupation. In fact, the state of abandonment is not always self-evident; it is not immediately apparent to anyone who passes by, nor is it a sudden and unambiguous break in the continuum of urban materiality and life. In a phenomenological vein, we can say that one must be acquainted with the city's order of things in order to notice a state of vacation and to grasp the prolonged suspension of conventional uses and the slight disappearance of urban functions. It is a gaze that is both expert and interested, as well as locally rooted. It is an expert gaze because it arises from familiarity with the local socio-material environment and grasps and differentiates its routine and intermittent presences, as well as its temporary and prolonged absences. In any case, familiarity is what makes it possible to perceive the discontinuity between 'what has been' and 'what is no longer' and measure the time between use and non-use. It is an interested gaze because the ability to identify

absences implies personal involvement in a community and boosts a political desire to contribute to its incidents. In other words, the absences affect her, him, or us in varying degrees and intensities with regard to the making of the community.

This type of engaged familiarity with a specific, local landscape makes a person's gaze sensitive to what is deserted, prompting a mapping of the absences with respect to an expected use, observing and analysing the void and the emptying as precursory acts to its filling. Critical reflections on the contemporary city and discussions on its possible urban plans do not escape this logic. One of the topics of the debate on post-Fordist city government concerns urban voids. The common trait of these areas – alternatively called 'strategic zones', 'inner suburbs', 'transitional urban voids', 'abandoned areas', and 'derelict land' (Accordino and Johnson 2000; Moroni *et al.* 2020) – is that they are all made vacant due to the obsolescence of the previous intended use and are awaiting a change. 'Empty', 'abandoned', 'marginalised', or 'derelict' are adjectives synonymous with an abandonment that emerges from the observation of what I call absences and is associated with their disposal for future uses. The very act of observing, recording, and qualifying abandonment simultaneously predicts its reversal into social life using unprecedented methods and planning. The right to the city is above all a demand that emanates from social movements. Such a claim transcends the struggle for housing, as demonstrated by the fact that, in collective squats, the eminently residential dimension co-exists with a large number of cultural and socially oriented activities that are attracted to and located within occupations. Thus, the occupation becomes the site of a dual regeneration project: it re-establishes a residential function in the occupied building and transforms it into a constituent tool for direct participation in the 'making of the city' (Cellamare 2008; Agier 2015). In fact, squatting is expected (and squatters are expected) to institute new forms of self-organisation and cohabitation practices to host pre-existing associative activities and to attract novel initiatives that foster a different concept of city and living.

Conjunctures and local contexts

The 'opening of an occupation' pre-supposes an organisational capacity and a political project which, in turn, unfold from a pre-existing social milieu. Martinez Lopez (2013) has outlined some of the socio-spatial conditions under which the practice of squatting could proliferate. Alongside the availability of abandoned properties in good condition, the severity of the penalties envisaged by administrative codes for those who occupy them, and the slowness of urban planning and restructuring projects, Martinez Lopez notes that the ability of social movements to make local and global struggles co-exist within specific occupied sites and simultaneously have roots in specific local contexts and connections with more general instances plays a crucial role.

The fields where I conducted my research (Turin and Athens) are characterised by the resonance of certain struggles that coalesce into a housing issue and the

enlargement of the audience of people affected by this issue. This situation has led to the birth of movements that strongly claim the right to housing, federating themes for social movements. First, the difficulty of buying or renting a home and securing a space in which to live with one's family is not new but the 2008 financial crisis has had a major impact on the situation. Low labour income is increasingly incompatible with house prices determined by the real estate market. In cities such as Rome and Athens, housing is not in short supply but people's ability to bear the costs of rent or a mortgage is decreasing (Cianci and Molinari 2019). According to a vast body of sociological literature, the housing shortage is associated with certain widespread changes in urban policies known as gentrification and touristification[2], processes that are taking place in many European and North American cities. The acceleration of the changes brought about by post-industrial regeneration urban policies is such that Giovanni Semi, just to limit myself to the Italian and Mediterranean contexts, wonders whether all cities are destined to become so many Disneylands (Semi 2015). In this context, urban phenomena such as housing deprivation are viewed as the opposite of gentrification and touristification, with the latter exacerbating the former's trends.

Labour market flexibilisation and the proliferation of fixed-term contracts, as well as the spread of tourist and student accommodations, contribute to a growing number of people finding it difficult to access the real estate market. Indeed, as a result of the 2008 financial crisis and the ensuing budgetary austerity policies, the effects of what is known as the housing shortage are proving to be even more negative in countries such as Italy and Greece, where investments in the public housing stock and low-rent apartments have drastically diminished.

While generalising to increasingly broad sectors of society, the social geography of the work-housing nexus tends to produce more acute effects among populations, including immigrants and, increasingly, refugees (see El-Kayed and Hamann 2018; Scanlon *et al.* 2014; on Italy, more specifically Saraceno *et al.* 2013; Dalla Zuanna 2013). The position of immigrants in the labour market is particularly tenuous in Italy and Greece, where the workforce of foreign origin is a more recent phenomenon. In these countries, the precarious situation of foreigners in the labour and rental markets is also a result of respective national immigration policies, which underpin a reluctance to promote the prompt regularisation of immigrants. The regularisation of illegal immigrants (*sanatoria* in Italian) takes the form of recurrent massive and *ad hoc* amnesties. Implemented every ten years, they affect hundreds of thousands of people. As one can easily imagine, these people who live and work without any legal protection are the first victims of economic failures and productive relocations, urban rehabilitation plans, and renovation projects.

As a matter of fact, it is not surprising that the political subjects and actors who circled around housing rights movements in the 2010s are completely different to those in the 1980s and 1990s and face a different scenario. Today, subjects and material needs have changed, as have the concepts of housing and urban social squats. However, if occupations are part of the repertoire of social movement actions, their

sources of legitimisation are derived from conjuncture – and context specific frames of reference. Therefore, it is necessary to reconstruct some of the local configurations in a synthetic and more concrete manner by emphasising their interweaving in singular urban dynamics.

Collective squatting and right to housing: The case of Turin

The case of Turin is significant given that the urban policy of social movements brings together several of the themes mentioned above. Here, the anti-capitalist criticism of real estate rent as a cause of social injustice, of the budgetary restrictions resulting from the 2008 financial crisis, and of European migration policies assumes a specific local characteristic. On the one hand, there is the irresolute and decades-long opposition to the major public works of the Turin-Lyon high-speed railway with its 100 km tunnel beneath the Alps, better known as 'NO TAV'. This movement has been successful for 30 years in federating a politically and intellectually transversal opposition by feeding a critical reflection on the local impacts (economic, environmental, and social) of similar pharaonic projects and, more generally, on a development model based on colossal infrastructures. Similar criticisms were, on the other hand, levelled against investments in the Olympic Games during the first decade of the 21st century, since the City of Turin and the Region of Piedmont hosted the winter version in 2006.

In an economic context deeply marked by the recession and subsequent 2008 financial crisis, these criticisms prove to be even more unifying as they highlight the role of the Olympic Games in dramatically increasing the city's debt. At a time of economic and financial crisis, this debt is viewed from a new perspective since it is considered to have a negative impact on local welfare policies. Moreover, the Olympic Games and local political elite were accused, on the one hand, of diverting investments in the renovation and expansion of public real estate and, on the other, of producing a series of unused or under-used infrastructures (often as useless as the bobsled tracks due to their high costs of activation and maintenance). In addition to the sports facilities and the oversized hotels, the Ex Moi building stock is one such example that was built to accommodate athletes and journalists during the Olympic Games. In 2013 four of these buildings, that had remained uninhabited for seven years, became, in the eyes of local social movements, the fulcrum of the most significant contradictions in the development plans of contemporary societies. Similarly, if urban policies have produced goods in search of people and social functions, emergency migration policies continue to produce people in search of goods. Thus, a double breach in the chains of responsibility – those of local policies in the administration of public funds and those of national policies in the management of migration – is highlighted, creating new spaces for action.

In the years straddling the great 2008 financial crisis, several occupations were established with an ephemeral lifespan, such as the dis-used buildings of military barracks (squats in Via Revello from 2008–2015 and in Via Chieri), a hospital clinic

(San Paolo in 2008–2009), municipal police offices (Via Paganini in 2007, which is still occupied; Corso Chieri), and a school (Neruda in 2015, which is still active). The populations who settled there, under the initiative of an anti-racist movement that brings together activists from historic Turin squats (Askatasuna and Il Gabrio), are made up of immigrants who have lost their jobs and homes as a result of the economic crisis, as well as refugees who have never had either. Particularly, the refugee becomes the focus of several critical discourses directed at local institutions for their culpability in the abandonment of people most in need of support. The figure of the refugee highlights the absence of long-term policies supporting social inclusion. As in the case of natural calamities such as earthquakes or floods, migration policies towards asylum seekers are increasingly adopting a sense of urgency. What Didier Fassin calls the 'humanitarian reason' (Fassin 2011) goes hand in hand with another reason, an emergency 'reason'. As a sort of variation in the moral and political discourse and practices that Fassin also places at the heart of the government of mobilities, the humanitarian-emergency reason inspires short-term and exceptional political initiatives in response to localised, short-term, but (supposedly) exceptional events. In reaction to this 'reason', an emergency system consisting of reception centres designed to host and support asylum seekers, as well as bureaucratic personnel handling their legal procedures, was set up and operates in parallel with the standard reception structures regulated by immigration policies. In the aftermath of the turmoil known as the Arab Spring, the disembarkation of several thousands of people fleeing the economic crisis in Tunisia and the civil war in Libya provided the pretext for the Italian government, led by Berlusconi, to implement an emergency migration management system dubbed *Emergenza Nord Africa* (North Africa Emergency). This programme operated from January 2011 to December 2012 in parallel with the standard reception and processing system for asylum applications and involved approximately 30,000 people. The duration of *Emergenza Nord Africa* was politically driven, with no regard for the variable duration of individual asylum procedures. *Emergenza Nord Africa* abruptly (at least in the eyes of its beneficiaries) closed its doors, leaving thousands of people in a juridical limbo (since their asylum claims were still ongoing in Italian courts) and eventually distributing €500 apiece to meet their initial material needs.

A rhetoric of abandonment developed within the anti-racist movement in Turin, particularly in the post-2008 context, becoming a sort of keyword and concept that activists mobilised to confront government (local and national) policies and their social consequences. When I began to attend meetings at Il Gabrio and Askatasuna, I often got the impression that 'abandonment' is used as a *passe-partout* term that describes, in an apparently unproblematic manner, a vast array of class conscious political strategies on the part of urban powers. While abandonment is intentionally produced, it is leveraged in two ways: it concerns people as much as it does buildings that remain disused, such as the buildings and structures built for the Olympic Games. Whether attributable to the ineptitude of administrators or to the

speculative calculations of both public and private actors, abandonment fomented social movements toward the four buildings of the former Olympic Village. The issue at hand posed a challenge to the local and national administrations, which were deemed incapable of making socially beneficial investments and overseeing migration policies that respected the people in care. Numerous individuals believed that it was now necessary to reverse the logic of urgency based reception policies. The occupation of the four buildings at the Ex Moi in Turin stemmed from a critical analysis that matched a broader reflection on 'by design' disused urban spaces and political inaccuracy in migration policies. Squatting was an act that voluntarily aimed to provide a concrete solution to the paradox of dwellings without inhabitants and inhabitants without dwellings, thus housing migrants expelled from the *Emergenza Nord Africa* programme.

'Capital' configurations or the squatting movements between urban and social regenerations: The cases of Athens and Rome

The discourse on the double abandonment of people and property assets, which spread throughout the activist milieu in Turin, bore a resemblance to the more comprehensive critical reflections within social movements in the Italian and Greek capital cities. In the middle of the post-2008 financial crisis, with the subsequent collapse or severe reduction of national and local welfare in the Mediterranean countries, social movements were inclined to overtly step into the field of urban politics. In capital cities such as Athens and Rome, where wealth creation is locally rooted in a service economy (rather than industry or finance), a similar dynamic was at play in the aftermath of 2008. On the one hand, the economic shrinkage led to the decline of business, commercial, and trade activities, resulting in a rise in the rate of unemployment (more severe in Greece than in Italy and Spain) and the abandonment of tens of hundreds of buildings. Therefore, the majority of occupations do not take place in inhospitable ancient buildings or those in a dreadful, unsanitary state, but rather in places recently vacated by their owners (namely financial groups, banks, and public agencies under the authority of the municipality or the central State). On the other hand, the economic crisis triggered a withdrawal of private capital from the financing of local and national public debt, thereby exacerbating the public's inability to pursue politics for the protection and promotion of economic and social well-being, which falls on governments at the urban and national levels. Through the occupation of empty buildings, social movements filled the void left by the withdrawal of public authorities from addressing the housing issue in line with standard administrative procedures. Moreover, as I will explain below, social movements' entry into the field of housing politics demanded a broader shift toward participation in plans for the regeneration of distressed and decaying urban areas. In a more systematic manner than in the case of Turin discussed above, the provision of convenient housing for people evicted from the real estate market was not the only

objective, as social movements claimed to promote the livability of towns' districts for their entire population.

In the case of Rome, urbanist Carlo Cellamare pointed out that the immense vacant and unused public heritage – at least 285 abandoned buildings, of which 109 are public assets according to the City Council's data (Cellamare 2019) – has increased during the last 20 years in response to the growing number of people who have lost access to the real estate market. Some data facilitate a better understanding of the proportion of the phenomenon by highlighting the number of major occupations and the people who live there. Examples include

- The former headquarters of Indap (the National Pension and Assistance Institute for Public Administration Employees) in Via Collatina No. 385, which have been home to around 500 and 700 political refugees and asylum seekers from 2004 to date;
- in the central San Giovanni district, a building owned by the Bank of Italy that has been empty since 1989 has been occupied since 2003;
- a building in the Bufalotta area has been occupied by families since 2007;
- two hotels, the *Eurostar Roma Congress* and the *Aniene Roma Palace*, have been occupied by approximately 200 and 100 people since 2013 and 2012, respectively;
- a building located in Via delle Provincie has been occupied by more than 100 people since December 2012;
- the old Roman headquarters of the newspaper *La Stampa*, located between Tor Cervara and San Basilio, was occupied in 2013;
- a former INPS (National Institute of Social Security) office became home to approximately 100 families in 2012;
- a building that housed several offices belonging to the Region of Lazio in the Tor Marancia area has been occupied by around 200 people since 2013;
- a former school in La Magliana has been occupied since 2007 in order to house families evicted from several apartments in the same district;
- a 274-bed nursing home that went bankrupt in 2011 was occupied in 2012 in the district of Valle Fiorita;
- the former 'Calabria' school in the district of Primavalle has been occupied since the early 2000s;
- a building in the suburb of Centocelle has been occupied by around 60 people since 2013;
- and about 800 people, mostly migrants, lived in Palazzo Selam, which previously belonged to the University of Tor Vergata, between 2006 and 2018.

A similar situation has been described in Athens. In a capital city where the urban space is saturated with buildings, the severe economic crisis, followed by European financial supervision between 2008 and 2022, was the cause of a high unemployment rate that drastically altered both purchasing power and public expenditure. The

population's demographic structure was also altered, resulting in a massive outflow of people, especially among younger generations. As in Rome, the under-40s generations from the middle class have been the main victims of what Saskia Sassen (Sassen 2014), specifically drawing on the Greek case, defines as the 'expulsive' logic of modern-day capitalism. It is an expulsion, explains Sassen, that affects increasingly large sectors of the population in relation to the 'work-house-citizenship' social contract that characterised the liberal democracies of the 20th century. In this sense, the 'evicted' can be defined by three phenomena: evictions (*i.e.*, inability to obtain suitable housing), impoverishment (difficulty of engaging in consumption), and unemployment (inability to access the labour market in a stable manner). The proliferation of buildings stripped of their original functions has also affected central districts such as Exarcheia in Athens (Tsavdaroglou *et al.* 2019). The buildings that had been occupied between September 2015 and 2016 served as schools (Notara 26, Acharnon Squat; 5th School, Gini Squat; School 2, Filoxenio Prosfigon), hotels (Hotel Oniro, City Plaza Hotel), and public offices that once operated within entire buildings (Clandestina, Kaniggos 22, Themistocleous 58, Cat's Spirit).

The purposes of collective occupations were not limited to addressing specific housing needs. Over the past 15 years, occupations have become increasingly viewed as two-way laboratories. In reality, taking possession of vacant buildings, undertaking self-restoration works, and meeting the demand for low-cost housing were only the first steps of a major political process aimed at constructing a kind of micro-society within the occupation.

As Chiara Davoli explains (Davoli 2018), each movement (*i.e.*, Blocchi Precari Metropolitani, Coordinamento Cittadino di Lotta per la Casa, and Action[3]) has its own organisation and an assembly that meets regularly to decide when and where to conduct an occupation. To this end, each movement compiles a list of people who live in dire circumstances and are keen to engage in a binding collective experience, such as squatting. At the same time, Davoli continues, each movement is responsible for its own squats. In other words, each squat is founded by, dependent on, and bound to, one specific movement. Each occupation autonomously organises both its internal life (deciding which spaces are allocated to common uses and which are reserved for homes) and its interactions with the outside world (organising festive, cultural, and political events and setting up services and activities beneficial to the local population). At the same time, however, occupiers are called upon to uphold the commitments necessary for the occupation and the relevant movement's survival by taking part in the numerous mobilisations that the three movements undertake, either individually (at the neighbourhood level) or jointly (at the city scale). From anti-eviction pickets of tenants under eviction to demonstrations against European and national migration policies or the defence of local social services (schools, health centres, post offices, *etc*.) under threat of closure. These are just some of the politically significant interventions that innervate the repertoire of actions of social movements towards which the communities of occupiers are rallied (Grazioli 2021).

Both the Athenian occupations that arose in the Exarcheia district and the Roman occupations that were formed in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis exist as urban spaces where expelled or abandoned subjects experience alliances in different ways. *For a common struggle of migrants and locals*, the motto that united the many Athenian occupations during the Syriza government (2014–2019), could not be more explicit in foreshadowing the advent of a community of expellees, *à la Sassen*. Faced with the collapse of European migration policies and the Greek reception system (2015), Athenian occupations initially proliferated by hosting those who were in transit from Athens and Thessaloniki towards northern Europe along the Balkan routes. Later, following the agreement between the EU and Turkey (21 March 2016), squats in and around Exarcheia began to welcome and host those who remained trapped in Greece awaiting the processing of the asylum application and the outcome of the relocation or family re-unification procedures. A composite anti-authoritarian and left-libertarian front is the origin of what the large political science literature defines as 'squats of migrants' or 'migrant squatting'. Several studies have underlined how the disruptive nature of these experiences of solidarity resulted in a spatial and social de-ghettoisation of migrants, at least according to the intentions of social movements. In a more decisive way than in Italy, institutional reception in Greece is predicated on the concentration of asylum seekers in former military camps located far from the cities and, for the most part, poorly connected to these cities. Beginning with the Notara 26 squat in September 2015, occupations in the subsequent months occupied public offices, schools, and hotels whose functions have been eliminated by demographic, economic, and social crises. In fact, the wave of occupations in Athens during the years of the Syriza government (2014–2019) is the result of a powerful social movement that, from the simple protest against the memoranda imposed by Europe on Greece from 2008 onwards, animates thousands of solidarity initiatives throughout the country (canteens, clinics and dispensaries, kindergartens, and neighbourhood assemblies) self-managed by those same subjects who are suffering the consequences of the closure of economic activities and unemployment, the suppression of public services, and state welfare programmes.

Similar to these solidarity initiatives, the squats that have been set up in the Exarcheia district or its immediate vicinity since 2015 only perpetuated the spirit that animated these solidarity projects. In short, it was a matter of involving migrants in participating in the self-management of the occupied places together with the Greek militants and international solidarity groups. The occupations aimed not only to make the city and its material resources accessible to migrants but also to give life to regenerative practices of social relations, starting with the reversal of roles between providers, suppliers, or givers and purchasers, customers, or users. Thus, 'the common struggles of migrants and locals' aptly summarises the spirit of cooperation that runs through the expectations of social movements for the construction of a common front of mutual solidarity and participation in founding a society free from the speculative, expulsive, and exploitative characteristics of capitalism.

In a nutshell, squatting movements in Rome and Athens did not (and actually do not) end in a simple 'possession' of spaces but, rather, in the possibility of re-introducing abandoned, unused, under-utilised, and degraded places into the city's life cycle, where they can respond to widespread contemporary social needs. This is why they also explicitly resulted in the development of new public and political cultures and more sustainable ways of living together (Grazioli and Montagna 2019). One of the goals of housing movements is to transform occupations into communities that adhere to the principles of equality, social justice, and solidarity. Self-organisation and participation are principles of reference that are intertwined with the rejection of discrimination (regardless of the forms it may take: gender, class, or ethnicity) and with the prohibition of oppression and violence in the resolution of internal disputes in the community.

The making of new communities and political subjectivities: Acts of possession and rituals at work

As we have seen, the right to housing is viewed as an instrument for the propagation of all other fundamental rights of the individual, thereby ensuring their validity and effectiveness. As Cianci and Molinari emphasise in the case of Rome: 'the satisfaction of the housing problem is not resolved with a safe shelter, but it is all the more effective the more it can place its inhabitants in urban services: health, education, work, transport, etc.', so that occupying disused buildings expands the ability to address such claims 'to public administrations, which can only be filled through appropriate public policies, which are still incapable of adapting to the socioeconomic changes taking place' (Cianci and Molinari 2019, 2).

Therefore, several works encourage us to grasp the multiple dimensions of regeneration projects which involve considerably more than a simple re-use of a vacant building for residential purposes. Most of the housing occupations spawned by the 2008 financial crisis attempt to make their space accessible to the regenerative dynamics of neighbourhood life. The Spin Time Labs in the Esquilino district of Rome is a paradigmatic example of this, where the notable residential dimension co-exists alongside a political practice constructed by many cultural and social realities. As Cellamare (2019) points out, urban regeneration is conceptualised as a community and political practice that can be interpreted on both the architectural-urban and social levels. Therefore, Spin Time Labs not only responds to the housing emergency, which affects more than 400 people from 27 different nationalities including approximately 90 minors, but also attempts to integrate within the neighbourhood by providing services to residents of the occupied buildings and the Esquilino district. Spin Time Labs aspires to be a 'cultural site of urban regeneration'. For this reason, a so-called 'laboratory of ideas' was established within the occupation to manage a popular school (*i.e.*, support for foreigners and afternoon coaching for children and teenagers for the study of the Italian language), a cinema, a clown school, theatre workshops, a disco, a carpentry workshop, a graphic laboratory, and a room dedicated to the applied arts.

As we can see, squatting, which is the occupation of empty and vacant buildings for the purpose of habitation, is a practice that is viewed less as a nested presence in a district and more as a process of becoming ingrained in it. In other words, the focal point for occupiers and the social movements behind them is the interaction with people who conventionally live in a specific urban area, while simultaneously dedicating their own space and competencies to the benefit of a wider community. In this sense, taking possession of a building and squatting after declaring it abandoned entails the implementation of a series of activities that are deemed to be acts of possession. In other words, the diverse activities – sometimes labelled 'laboratory of ideas', 'workshops', and '*ateliers*' and qualified by the adjective 'popular' – are intended to publicly demonstrate and legitimise the actual possession of the building. For a specific social movement, these actions are intended to convey that such possession proves its care for urban life. In fact, becoming rooted in a district and in the town is a process that leads social movements and, by extension, those who inhabit the squat to be recognised as actors sensitive to and engaged in responding to widespread and unfulfilled social needs and desires. By acting as though they are the owners, social movements manage the property they occupy and their activities in lieu of public authorities. Taking care of abandoned people and looking after abandoned assets are intended to turn social movements into actors capable of challenging local governments in the field of social and urban regeneration, and occupations are a central component of these politics.

Learning to be a community

Movements that organise and provide material support to occupations accomplish considerably more than merely intervene in the inequitable distribution of rights (*e.g.*, housing, urban space). Their objective is to establish areas of exception within the neo-liberal political space by conceptualising them along certain lines of substantial discontinuity: achieving autonomy from the welfare state's distributive forms and the reliance they generate; rejecting the logic that individual rights merely encompass property and legal statuses that are recognised, distributed, and protected by the rule of law; and overthrowing neo-liberal constraints on individual moral responsibility and economic self-sufficiency through structures of collective and egalitarian management of one's aspirations. In short, occupations strive to define a paradigm of subject by implementing pedagogical strategies (Saitta 2017) that foster the development of self-determination processes. In this sense, they are the physical and figurative place of an encounter: on the one hand, they host the expectations, cultures, and political projects of the social movements that establish an occupation; on the other, they accommodate the needs and aspirations of individuals from diverse social backgrounds, geographical locations, and cultural origins who possess very different capabilities and hold equally varied expectations regarding the collective existence that is frequently perceived as a temporary and fallback solution or as an opportunity

to capitalise resources in view of the fulfillment of their migratory projects. The success of this meeting rests on a pedagogical relationship that unfolds its effects by requiring adherence to ideal principles, soliciting mimetic behaviour with respect to the social environment, promoting regulatory interventions of individual conduct that require reflexivity and personal adaptation to action schemes.

The primary setting in which such a pedagogical process takes place is the assembly, a ritualised moment common to all occupations where issues pertaining to everyday life within are discussed, from the distribution-attribution of private spaces to the organisation-destination of the use of spaces and the presentation-discussion-solution of problems among the occupants, including those related to their turnover. Assemblies are moments during which tensions are condensed, verbalised, and channeled. In order to grasp such a pedagogical process at work and to highlight its difficulties, I use my personal fieldwork from Autumn 2018 in an Athenian occupation that I refer to here as 'The Tavern'. The following brief observations illustrate how social movements implement their own governmental initiatives in an effort to regulate activities within the occupation and instruct their inhabitants on how to be members of a community by conforming their conduct to the ideals of an 'anti-capitalistic and anti-patriarchal society'. By so doing, the assembly becomes the crucial ritual where major issues that are at stake in the squat's daily life become visible, harsh conflicts emerge during the course of the discussion, and concrete decisions are debated. I contend that the role of social movements in regulating a squat as a space of collective living characterised by the principles of gender equality and democracy, tranquility and cooperation, or mutual assistance can be discerned in the moments of tense debates such as those I discuss below. In line with the findings of Amanda Huron, who has examined the transformations that have taken place within occupied buildings in Washington DC (Huron 2015; 2018), I also contend that the very intervention of activists from social movements in such regulatory and tutorial practices can be interpreted as acts of possession, that is, actions that seek to retain possession of the squat until its dissipation.

The community project under threat

When I first arrived at The Tavern (the fictitious name I gave to the squat), two months after its opening in July 2018, about 30–40 of its 80 residents and half a dozen activists were present for the squat's assembly. Several young women and some families with children were among the residents present. In fact, The Tavern was founded to provide hospitality primarily to the most vulnerable people living on the street. The international militants who established the squat, members of a famous anarchist squat in Exarcheia, did not reside in the squat permanently. They did live in The Tavern during the first few weeks but they then only visited it sporadically. Nonetheless, at least some of them consistently attended the assemblies. I noticed that while the inhabitants were openly debating, they would inadvertently glance at the

activists, even though the latter remained silent and just listened to the discussion. The assemblies were held in the main common room, which was about 50 m² in size. Although Farsi was the language of 90% of those present, communication took place in English. There was always someone among the inhabitants who translated: into French for the benefit of two young North Africans; into Farsi for those who did not speak English.

My arrival coincided with an extremely tense moment due to certain men who had entered the occupation in early August, about one month after its opening. In the assembly, they were spoken of as a source of disputes that had been contaminating the squat's atmosphere for some weeks: drug dealing, verbal abuse, and sometimes physical threats against women and their companions. Some of them confided in Caroline, an activist, who urged them to condemn this behaviour, which she defined as 'sexist' and 'patriarchal' during the assemblies. She added that quarrels had a detrimental impact on education, even with respect to children. Caroline threatened the perpetrators that they would be removed if these events did not stop. She invoked the *Charter of Patmos*, a kind of decalogue drawn up by the occupiers and activists at the beginning of the occupation to establish the rules of common management. During the debate, those who were accused of drug dealing claimed they were unaware of this charter.

A more-fueled militant component intervened in the two following meetings. The external activists explained the connection between drug dealing in and around the squat and pointed to the dangers of collusion with the drug mafia that was creeping into Exarcheia. After the inhabitants reflected on the value of the common struggle with the militants, the latter reminded the occupants that the squat did not fit into a social and political vacuum; rather, the reason for its existence is that it is nestled in the Exarcheia district. Exarcheia had its own specific history and balance of power, and the squat's inhabitants had to bear this in mind if they wished to continue living there. They had to respect certain rules, one of which was refraining from doing business with the drug mafia so as not to provide the police with an excuse to suppress the social movement that made it possible for those places to exist. 'In a nutshell, if you don't stop trafficking, we will kick you out!'

The accused men did not seem to be daunted. Moreover, they retorted that the anti-capitalist movement held a considerably more nuanced view of drugs. The sale of hashish and marijuana was allowed, given the difficulties faced by asylum seekers in Greece in order to survive. They continued, 'We are merely adhering to this norm; we peddle, but never inside the squat'. After all, they counter-attacked, 'You, the activists, you need and exploit immigrants to resolve your internal quarrels; we know that … anarchists, anti-authoritarians, and others, remember that we, the migrants, we are the movement'. In reality, and in an attempt to reverse the roles, they were referring to, relying on, and capitalising on the contentious debates among the various militant organisations active in Athens at the time, which were involved in several autonomous housing occupations (as stated previously). There was tense disagreement with regard to these kinds of activities (Cantat 2019).

It is not the activists who state they are expelling the accused but the latter who call for the departure of the former. In the following meeting, the residents were called upon to attest to whether the internal situation had been appeased and, if not, to decide whether or not to expel the accused. The discussion degenerated into shouts and mutual accusations among the inhabitants themselves. The second front was more conspicuous and resolute in accusing the drug dealers: 'Through drugs, you have brought money and enlisted others in your circle'. 'You took the rooms without respecting the initial division between female and male space'. 'Try to protect single women in exchange for what?' Two women, a mother and daughter, took the floor. The daughter said she was against the expulsion and the mother explained: 'We can all make mistakes, and it is not fair that we have to adopt such a severe measure for this'. The scene clearly demonstrated that the drug dealers had acquired an important role in The Tavern as a result of their activities and the financial resources they had at their disposal.

How do you belong to The Tavern?

By the end of September it appeared that the final decision was near. The charges were again discussed for two hours in the presence of at least a dozen militants, the majority of whom were external. Ultimately, the expulsion was decided with no further possibility of appeal. However, nobody raised the question of who would enforce the decision and how it was to be enforced. Moreover, the defendants did not attend this assembly, despite being in the building and having taken part in all the other meetings. The assembly was attended almost exclusively by those who were in favour of the expulsion. Someone then pointed out that the decision had to be communicated to them and they were called to the assembly. The entrance was theatrical. Two of them came downstairs in silence and listened to the verdict with composure, nodding in dismay and despondency. They raised their hands, patiently waiting for their turn to speak (the one who was more impulsive was encouraged to calm down with gestures from the other). They spoke in a subdued tone, which was in sharp contrast to previous meetings. At first glance, their behaviour suggested that they still wanted to negotiate. Everyone, including the majority of fathers of families, appeared relieved and willing to believe them. 'What!' two women protested, 'We spent hours deliberating whether to send them away, and as soon as they come down and say they are willing to change, all you men back down and abandon your duty?' I did not envy the position of the assembly's male component and I understood that they silently hoped not to have to proceed with the expulsion.

The northern European anarchist militants who had established The Tavern had remained practically silent during the previous two meetings, limiting themselves to recalling the seriousness of the accusations with respect to the safety and tranquility of the occupation, women, families, and children. Once again, the meeting was concluded

without a definitive decision. On 15 October, John (another comrade) and Caroline declared their withdrawal from the squat and publicly voiced their disappointment at no longer perceiving the environment they had tried to create. The inhabitants' lack of accountability towards the management of the internal crisis was expressed as follows: 'We no longer want to participate in the life of the squat for as long as you, the inhabitants, allow these disturbing elements to remain'. John stated that the city provided other opportunities for militancy and that he preferred to stay away if this squat did not change. He got up and walked away as soon as he finished speaking. Caroline held back a while longer. She was on the verge of leaving several times but was held back, notably by two migrant girls: 'You have always told us that we have to fight. Are you leaving now that we are about to make a decision regarding expulsion?' When confronted with the inhabitants' inability to accept responsibility, the militants' tactic was to abandon the squat and blame them for having been unable to maintain the established rules. Evidently, the declaration of delusion was the last, clumsy attempt to compel The Tavern's inhabitants to adhere to the principles of a safe space.

This incident can be interpreted from different points of view. The anthropologist Appadurai (Appadurai 1996, 178–199) calls upon scholars to consider how long it takes to establish a sense of belonging within the communities with which we associate. He further argues that this process is time-consuming and needs to be framed through rituals. Appadurai stresses that we all learn to belong in a proper way; we are all trained to use languages and to behave in an appropriate manner, which changes according to the type of community we belong to. Appadurai also cautions that a common danger looms over every community, and it can come from within. In this sense and given that no group is ever protected from discord and dissipation, it is imperative that those who wish to be involved in the community consistently strive for mutual understanding. This observation resonates with a number of anthropological approaches concerning the embeddedness of ethics in everyday life. Drawing from the Foucauldian notion of ethics becoming a 'technology of the self', James Faubion calls for an examination of the technologies through which individuals cultivate specific virtues or dispositions to align themselves with pre-defined standpoints and to behave in pre-determined (even though not fixed forever) manners (Faubion 2011, 3–24). This process of 'ethical autopoiesis' is replete with incidents and conflicts comparable to those described above, demonstrating how complex and intense the provision of care in an occupation can be.

A conclusion?

The objectives of collective occupations extend beyond responding to a social need and the right to housing. Social movements perceive occupations through the lens of three-way laboratories. To begin with, the right to housing is seen as a means to attain other fundamental rights or to make them valid and effective (Stopani 2023 and see quotes from Cianci and Molminari 2019 cited above). Occupations are an instrument,

in the very material sense of the word, through which social movements address issues of exclusion that affect a wider segment of the urban population, certainly one that extends beyond the inhabitants of a specific squat. Occupations are transformed into political spaces in a very substantial manner through the organisation of protests against evictions, or physically gathering to demand rights to very specific places, or by attending events and debates. In so doing, occupations are made overtly visible, both within the city itself and in the urban area where they are situated, functioning as distinct spaces attached to specific social movements.

Secondly, occupying entails more than merely re-using a vacant building for residential purposes. As discussed, the majority of housing occupations established in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis have attempted to make their space accessible to the regenerative dynamics of neighbourhood life. Squatting is a practice that is perceived less as a naturally nested presence in a district and more as a never-ending process of becoming embedded in it. In other words, the social movements that advocate for occupations are concerned with interacting with people who reside in a specific urban area in a conventional manner, as well as using their own space and competencies to the benefit of a wider and marginalised community. Thus, taking possession of and squatting in a building after having declared it abandoned signifies the execution of a series of activities. The activities are inspired and organised by social movements and take place within the occupations: educational (free language classes), festive, medical, legal, sporting, and cultural activities. For social movements, this means 'to meet the district', 'to listen to the unfulfilled needs of the people', and to offer for free what must be paid for elsewhere in the jungle of capitalistic relations.

Thirdly, an additional objective of housing movements is the transformation of occupations into communities that respond to the principles of equality, social justice, and solidarity. Self-organisation and participation are fundamental principles that are intertwined with the rejection of all forms of discrimination (including but not limited to gender, class, and race) and the prohibition of oppression and violence in community internal dispute resolution. In other words, they also contribute to the development of new public cultures and ways of co-existing. Such claims are readily available to the public via Facebook pages or, in cities such as Athens, via posters and placards on outside walls. Incidentally, this is an additional method of attaining visibility and staking a political claim in the making of the city.

Assemblies are an essential, ritualised political technique for at least two inter-related reasons. One aspect to consider is that assemblies are supposed to overtly tackle major issues that arise in the ordinary life of the squat. As we have seen, the squat's assembly is an event common to every occupation in which issues concerning everyday life are discussed: distribution and attribution of private spaces, organisation and destination of use of spaces, and presentation-discussion-resolution of problems among the occupants, the turnover of inhabitants, the admission of new inhabitants, *etc*. As a consequence, assemblies are not impervious to harsh conflicts, which would deserve much more attention from the specialised literature on urban struggles.

Another aspect is that assemblies are rituals set and supervised by specific social movements, as I have illustrated with reference to Rome and, more concretely, The Tavern. In fact, assemblies do not simply happen; rather, they require organisation, oversight and verification of their regularity, consistent invitations to the occupiers, and the drafting of an agenda. Assemblies must be held and their decisions must be executed. Essentially, assemblies required significant effort to regulate and control them. It is my contention that the very intervention of social movement activists in regulatory and tutorial practices can be interpreted as actions to confront activities that have the potential to lead the squat to its dissipation and to degenerate the principles of gender equality and democracy, calm and cooperation, or mutual assistance.

Social movements strive to maintain a role that is consistent with their criticism of abandonment and its social outcomes by organising and coordinating laboratories within the squat, allocating space for socially significant uses in accordance with alternative principles to capitalism, and assuming a leading role in regulating squatters' living conditions. Occupying resembles a multifarious process in that it aims to go far beyond the simple response to housing needs and invests in a variety of activities that fall under 'urban regeneration'. Occupying can also be considered a multi-scalar process because its scope surpasses the spatial limit of a single building or the community of occupiers and challenges urban regeneration policies in relation to its actors (external private and public investors, business start-ups, and promoters of better housing) and its underlying principles rooted in capitalistic accumulation, as argued by David Harvey (2012). Therefore, if social movements engaged in promoting and governing occupations are unanimously denigrated by both leftist and conservative political parties, the reason seems to extend beyond the violation of property rights, as it is always denounced by the main media. I would like to put forth an alternative viewpoint: social movements, that have a history of being subversive toward regeneration programmes as they are usually undertaken by urban policies, actively contribute to the making of the city by claiming and undertaking a series of responsibilities in place of public authorities. In other words, social movements occupy a physical and conceptual space that has been neglected by public authorities with regard to low-income urban dwellers and their frustrated needs and desires.

Notes

1 'Social movements' refers to informal cultural and political entities and structures that have emerged since the 1970s around so-called 'autonomous social centres'. In the Italian context, social centres are deemed 'autonomous' as they are independent of any authorised organisation (political parties, trade unions, and associations) and share a set of general characteristics. They are placed in a previously occupied private or public building without the owner's consent; non-profit cultural and political critical oriented activities are organised (concerts, book presentations, sports, talks, and meetings on global and local topics of significance); a strong local sense of belonging focuses cultural activities on the requirements of the town district where

the social center is located; social centres differ in their unique political approaches, which have become relevant over time and across generations. Consequently, social centres cannot be compared to one another even on an urban scale, even though they occasionally unite in specific struggles. Moreover, it is not always easy to differentiate autonomous social centres from anarchist ones, as both are engaged in fostering counter-culture debates and practices. Even though anarchist occupations tend to self-identify as 'squats' in line with northern European lexical tradition and to be assumed to be concerned with housing issues, such a distinction is less relevant in the Italian context since autonomous social centres have been engaged in housing struggles since the 1970s. In fact, when I write 'social movement', the reader should be aware that a specific local social centre (district-based) and its own organisation are behind it. For a general discussion and framework, see Mudu and Chattopadhyay 2017.

2 The term 'touristification' is used to refer to a dual process: on the one hand, it indicates the trend to change the permanent inhabitants of specific places (generally towns or some of their districts) to be replaced by tourists and, on the other, it denotes the consequential transformation of the economic structure of such places towards consumption-oriented activities (Ojeda and Kieffer 2020; Semi and Tonetta 2021).

3 Blocchi Precari Metropolitani, Coordinamento Cittadino di Lotta per la Casa, and Action were founded in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis at the end of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 2000s.

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Claiming things

Chapter 7

After death: Rituality used to legitimise the appropriation of abandoned goods in ancient Egypt

Gianluca Miniaci

This paper aims to analyse the rituals used in ancient Egypt to legitimise the taking possession of abandoned or ownerless goods after a person's death. It examines two case studies: 1. goods left behind with unclear succession or disputed inheritance; and 2. goods 'brought' with the deceased into the afterlife. In the first case, the burial of the deceased was often used to gain legitimate access to disputed inheritance, as evidenced in two letters to the dead, Papyrus Boulaq 10 and Ostracon Petrie 16. In the second case, Ostracon Vienna O. Wien Aeg. 1, several sources from the Valley of the Kings, and the activities of the priest Butehamun in the Theban necropolis, demonstrate how the rituals of mapping, listing contents, and restoring ancient tombs create the semantic for abandoned goods and their successive appropriation. As one of the prerequisites of a ritual is to obscure the relationship between action and outcome with the performance of the ritual itself, this paper aims to uncover the codification of rituals for the appropriation of abandoned or ownerless goods after death in ancient Egypt.

Death as a socially disruptive moment

Death is usually perceived as a moment of disruption within a community, whether it be a small family unit or a larger society. Beyond the personal, affective, and emotional impact (Unruh 1983), the moment of death also creates an important social void (*e.g.,* Mizoguchi 2014) that needs to be addressed in order to maintain social harmony (Lauwers 2023). This is particularly important given that significant change in a social structure can be perceived as chaotic and disruptive (see below the example of the *Admonitions of Ipuer*). As such, funerary rites and rituals often serve as a means of providing a social response to death, helping to minimise its impact on the broader community (Renfrew *et al.* 2014).

Human existence is often divided into two distinct tracks: personal and social identity (SPID), biological and social life (Ashforth and Mael 1989; Mack 2003; Vignoles 2019; however, see the critique in Walker 2022 and Witt 2011, 107–126 for a tripartite ontological approach: self/person, social individual, and human organism). Likewise, death also occurs along the same binary trajectories: biological and social. Biological death can take place when all the organs of the body including the brain have ceased functioning, while social death is when an individual is excluded from a social context (Seale 1998; Králová 2015). Indeed, if deprived of social relationships, individuals experience a void in their life which can be compared to death (James 1950, 293–294; Lieberman 2013; Riva and Eck 2016; Wesselmann and Williams 2017, 693–694 with a full bibliographic list at the end).

Guenther notes that 'there are many ways to destroy a person, but one of the simplest and most devastating is through prolonged solitary confinement. Deprived of meaningful human interaction, otherwise healthy prisoners become unhinged' (Guenther 2013, xi). In ancient Rome, for instance, a form of punishment for criminal behaviour was the withdrawal of all legal, social, and cultural protection, leaving the offender excluded from any religious context should they die (*homo sacer*, see Agamben 1998). Similarly, in ancient Egypt, the cancellation of one's name was considered a severe punishment for a crime (Assmann 2005, 41) since the name represents the social 'code' of a society (Landgraf 2012; Melcer-Padon 2015). The Brooklyn papyrus (35.1446) records an instance where a ship's captain was first removed from his position for aiding a fugitive, then deprived of his name (*wꜣ n rn.f*), and finally banished (*sḥr*) from society (Hayes 1955, 53f.; Lorton 1977, 17, with other examples, esp. § 12). This type of banishment results in social death, which can lead to both psychological and physical death (Kalish 1968, 225). Social death becomes total when a person is completely forgotten, causing them to become 'non-existent'. The various types of death do not necessarily occur simultaneously, as someone who is still alive may be socially dead (Biehl 2004, 476) and vice versa. A person's social life can continue after their biological death as long as their memory persists within a social system (Ariès 1977; Baines 1991, 147–151).

The common perception of ancient Egypt revolves around funerary elements such as texts, liturgies, rituals, and structures, giving the false impression that living Egyptians were pre-occupied with death (Harrington 2013, 147). However, this is far from the truth. In fact, an overwhelming number of funerary elements suggests that the Egyptians were focused on living life to the fullest (Miniaci 2014, 27–31). The purpose of these funerary elements was to honour, preserve, and manipulate the memory of the deceased person (*e.g.*, Renfrew 2014), keeping them alive in the minds of the living. The architecture of tombs is a prime example of the importance of funerary ritual, which includes the construction of these structures as a way to keep the memory of the deceased alive.

The burial space in ancient Egypt served two main purposes: secrecy and memory (Assmann 2003, 46–47). Typically, Egyptian tombs were composed of two parts – an

underground, secret, and inaccessible space and, above it, a visible, often monumental, public cult space. The secret and inaccessible space was designed to create the necessary conditions for the body's protection and sacralisation (secret and sacredness in ancient Egypt are closely related; Riggs 2014, 153–221), while the visible space aimed to keep the deceased's memory alive. To achieve this, the space needed to be clearly visible to the public, from small heaps of earth to towering stone buildings. The memory and visibility of the structures, including statues, reliefs, paintings, stelae, and monuments, were all intended to preserve the social presence of the deceased person, even after their death. Keeping the dead alive serves the practical purpose of maintaining their 'influence' over society (Thériault 1992). However, this practice can also be manipulated for personal gain. For example, in the text known as the *Teaching of King Amenemhat I to his son Senwosret*, the deceased pharaoh communicates with his future successor, King Senwosret I, to recount his assassination during the night by traitors, and invest him as the next ruler: 'The attack happened when I was without you, before the court had heard I would hand over to you, before I had sat with you, to make your position for I had not feared it, I had not envisaged it' (Quirke 2004, 128). The funerary cult of Amenemhat I at Lisht, which continued for years after his death, aimed to extend the king's social and political influence over time. This allowed his son, Senwosret I, to use his father's memory to legitimise his claim to the throne.

Death as a material disruption

However, the traumatic impact of a deceased individual's absence goes beyond just social implications, as it also leads to a significant material disruption. Properties and belongings that were previously claimed by the deceased – whether legally or not – were *temporarily* losing their owner (a physical or institutional person). As a result, these items become ownerless and abandoned after the person's death. This loss of ownership can occur in two scenarios: first, when the belongings are left without clear succession or when succession is disputed; and second, when items are taken into the afterlife by the deceased. Taking possession of abandoned goods after death requires some form of legitimization. This process may not always follow a formal, legal, or institutional route and may instead involve a certain degree of ritaulity.

The performance of a ritual can legitimise an action not perceived as customary or conflicting with the current practice or legislative use (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994). One ritual prerequisite is that it obscures – voluntarily or not – the relationship between the action and the goals to be achieved with the performance of the ritual itself (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994, 175, quoting Lévi-Strauss 1981, 671–672: 'The gestures are not being performed, or the objects manipulated, as in ordinary life, to obtain practical effects resulting from a series of operations, each following on from the preceding one through a causal link'). A ritual must be disconnected from the usual

nexus of intentions, motives, purposes, and goals. For instance, in non-ritualised cases, candles are lit to illuminate or to set a romantic mood in a room, whereas burning candles in a chapel may serve to keep the memory of a dead person alive (Boyd and Williams 1996, 136; see also Bell 1992). The purposes are disconnected from the actions: keeping a light on will not bring a person alive, while it can create light in a room. Nonetheless, performing rituals does also achieve concrete purposes: 'though purposes do not account for what people do in rituals, it is nevertheless through performing these acts that purposes are achieved', (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994, 187). An example provided by Alessandro Buono in this volume shows how ritual, institutionalised powers and structures, and intrinsic goals can be intimately intertwined. The will of Manuel Soares de Oliveira, a wealthy landowner in the late 17th century, left all his real estate and assets to his spiritual welfare. This was achieved through the celebration of 720 annual masses, which were intended to ensure the salvation of his soul. However, this bequest also prevented his relatives from making any potential claim on his assets (further examples can be found in Buono and Gabbiani 2020).

Some sources from ancient Egypt offer the possibility to open a window into the connection between a performed ritual and its intended goal.

Things left behind without a clear succession

The mechanisms of succession and transmission of the goods and properties in a society are usually regulated by straightforward practices and rules because, as stated by Fleming, the process of goods succession represents the 'genetic code' of a society, guaranteeing social stability across generations (Fleming 1978, 233). Without precise rules, there can be ambiguity and potential for social instability when a person dies, leading to disputes over property ownership. A clear example is provided by an Egyptian text preserved on Papyrus Leiden I 344r, also known as the *Admonitions of Ipuer*. The historical romance uses political-propaganda to convey the idea that without clear rules, there is a risk of national distress and political chaos:

> The grain of Egypt is 'I go-get-it'. Lo, the laws of the chamber are thrown out, men walk on them in the streets, beggars tear them up in the alleys [...] See, he who had nothing is a man of wealth, the nobleman sings his praise. See, the poor of the land have become rich, the man of property is a pauper. (Lichtheim 1973, 155, 157)

The lack of definite guidelines for succession creates a possibility of subverting social order and can lead to uncertainty over property and goods.

The ancient Egyptians had a well-established system for transferring goods from one individual to another (the designated heir/s). This process was not only clearly defined but was also institutionalised (Goedicke 1970; Allam 1999; 2001; Lippert 2008; 2013; van Blerk 2019; 2023). The inheritance passed through a legal order of succession based on the identification of a sole (male) heir, usually the firstborn son (*sꜣ smsw/ šr ꜥꜣ*), the eldest, or a fictitious eldest son.[1] However, beside the 'natural' order of

succession, there was also the option to choose different heirs, based on a declaration of intent in the form of a will (Seidl 1951; Lippert 2013, 2–5). This declaration of intent, whether oral or written, is closer to that used in the legal jurisdictional system of Western culture. According to Papyrus Berlin P 9010 (dated to the Sixth Dynasty, *c.* 24th–23rd centuries BC), the established legal order of succession of the property belonging to User to his son, Tjau, was disrupted by the emergence of a written will in favour of Sobekhotep (Goedicke 1974). Tjau doubted the authenticity of the will and demanded that Sobekhotep provide three 'effective and reliable' witnesses (Ganley 2002). This case exemplifies the sophisticated process of succession in ancient Egyptian society, where a written document[2] or testimony could override the traditional 'natural' order of succession explicitly stated in the will of the deceased.

However, in several cases, the customary system of succession/inheritance did not adhere to the prescribed course. This may occur when the deceased lacks a 'natural' heir/s, a will is absent, no clear succession is designated, or the designated heir/s is not recognised by the family or community. As a result, the assets become practically abandoned and without an owner. In these instances, rituals provide invisible alternatives to legal and formal protocols.

The ritual of burying the dead: The creation of the semantic of Legitimisation

The corpus of documents known as *Letters to the Dead* reveals the obscure relationships between ritual acts and the pragmatic aims of burying the dead, particularly in cases involving disputed inheritance. The letters to the dead are essentially 'missives' written to a deceased person (Gardiner and Sethe 1928; Donnat 2009). They do not contain, as we would expect, any form of emotional or formal (prayer) communication with the deceased. Rather, they seek assistance with real-world problems from recently deceased family members in the netherworld, ranging from illness to property disputes (Miniaci 2014, 18–20; Donnat 2019; Hsieh 2022, 5–6). Given their nature, they are less formal than most societal codes (Baines 2023) and provide unique insights into the underlying rituals (Donnat and Moreno-Garcia 2014; especially Miniaci 2014, 30–31).

A double letter written by Shepsi to his deceased parents (one for his father and the other for his mother) shared the extensive lengths he undertook to ensure that his brother, Sobekhotep, received a proper funeral (Miniaci 2016, 99). In both letters, Shepsi reminds his deceased parents that he brought his brother's body from a distant place to his hometown cemetery, and just how much the transportation and funeral cost (the equivalent of 30 gallons of Upper Egyptian barley). He emphasised that he provided both practical and financial support to ensure everything was taken care of (Miniaci 2014, 58–63; for a philological reading see Miniaci 2016, 92–98). While his actions may seem pious, there was an underlying motivation for Shepsi. At the end of the letter addressed to the father, Shepsi expressed concern that Henu, son of Sher,

was attempting to take possession of his property, which most likely had to do with Sobekhotep's inheritance. As Shepsi was the one burying his brother, he believed he had the rightful claim to the property.

> [Letter to the father]: I buried him, I brought him from the fort[ress], [(5)] I placed him among his desert tomb-dwellers, even though thirty measures of Upper Egyptian barley stood against him as a loan (for me) – one loin-cloth, one *mnw*, six measures of Upper Egyptian barley, one *šns*-shape of linen pack, and a *mḥ.t*-cup –[3], even though I did for him what had never (been) done (before). He has done this against this your son very wrongfully [(7)] - although you had said to this your son: 'All my property is vested in my son Shepsi'. See, all my fields have been taken by [(8)] Sher's son Henu.
>
> [Letter to the mother]: Might you judge me together with Sobekhotep. I brought him back from another town, and placed (him) in his town, [(5)] among his male and female dead, and gave him burial cloth. (Miniaci 2016, 92–93)

What is only alleged in the letters of Shepsi is explicitly mentioned in another letter to the dead preserved on a bowl in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford (dated to the Second Intermediate Period, *c.* 1800–1550 BC). The letter presents the first-hand account of Teti-aa, son of Neny, who attests to his rightful inheritance of the possessions of the fugitive Meniupu. Despite the competing claims of another family, Mut[...]nu and Teti, who had nourished and housed him, it was Teti-aa's act of burying Meniupu that granted him the legal right to claim his belongings, which had likely been left without a clear succession.

> Said by Teti-aa, son of Neny: 'Meniupu came as a fugitive. The father of Mut[...]nu (?) and his wife Teti feeds him. He dies and then my mother buries him. It was her husband Neny who said to her: "Bury him and inherit from him".' (Hsieh 2022, 296; see also Miniaci 2014, 69–71).

Other documents attest that the ritual of carrying out the funerary duties for the deceased, especially burying them, gave them access to inheriting abandoned or disputed properties.

In an inscription (Cairo, JE 57139) containing the instruction for the cult of Tjenti and his family from Giza (dated to the Sixth Dynasty, *c.* 2350–2181 BC), Tepemnefret, wife of Tjenti, was legitimised to receive part of the family property. This was due to her role in burying Bebi, Tjenti's mother, and performing the funerary rites for her. Although not explicitly stated, the inheritance pattern is apparent. Tjenti, as the eldest son, inherited his mother's properties and designated a portion to his wife upon his own death, probably in the absence of a designated heir. The reason for this allocation was explicitly stated as Tepemnefret's role in burying his mother, which likely served as the legitimising factor.

> With regard to the first of two fields which provide the invocation offerings for my mother, the royal acquaintance Bebi, it now belongs to my wife, the royal acquaintance Tepemnefret. She is the one who shall make the invocation offerings for me and my mother, the royal acquaintance Bebi. [...]. I am her eldest son, her heir; I it was who buried her in the necropolis [...] (Jasnow 2003, 125; see also Strudwick 2005, 202–203, no. 115, 452)

On the recto of papyrus Cairo CG 58092 (also known as Papyrus Boulaq 10, dated to the end of the 13th–beginning of the 12th century BC), Hay is entitled to receive his mother, Tagemyt's entire estate inheritance because it was he who provided for her burial. His 'brothers and sisters' are explicitly excluded, being 'accused' of providing no help with the burial (see comments about the question of inheritance in Janssen and Pestman 1968).

> [1]List of the things [...] [2]which he gave to the lady Ta-[gem]yt, his mother: 1 burial place [3]after he had given her coffin to Pa-[tjau-em]-diamon, makes 40 deben. [4]Again, what he gave to her: 1 coffin for her burial after he had provided a burial-place [5]for Huynefer, his father. But see, the children of the lady Ta-gemyt [6]contest this today, in order to claim her possessions, [7]although they are not those who buried their father, and although her children did not [8]bury (her [i.e. Tagemyt]). It is her property which they claim [9]today, although they did not bury together with my [10]father, when he buried his father and mother. 'Let the possessions [11]be given to the one who buries', so says the hep of Pharaoh. My good lord, l.p.h.! [12]Look, I am in the presence of the officials; cause that the right thing is done! [13]Now, look, the landed properties of Tanehesy was given to Sawadjyt after (he) buried her, [14]and he gave her his coffin. He was given her share in 'the presence of the officials, [15]for it was King Amenophis who gave it to him in the court. (Jansen and Pestman 1968, 140)

In support of his claim, Hay also cites a past inheritance question that an oracle favoured (Jin 2001). This particular case involved a similar matter, the disputed transfer of property belonging to a woman named Tanehesy to Sawadjyt, who had buried her. By mere chance, this same event is recorded on Petrie Ostracon 16, dating to the Twentieth Dynasty (*c.* 1190–1069 BC; Černý and Gardiner 1957, 7, pl. 21.1; Allam 1973, 231–233, no. 231). The dispute between Sawadjyt and his siblings over the lady Tanehesy's properties hinged on their involvement or lack thereof in the burial ritual.

> [6]List of objects, which the workman Sawadjy made [vs1]in order to bury the lady Tenehesy, his [vs2]mother, while his brothers and sisters did not help him: 1 wooden coffins, decorated [vs3]and treated with oil, makes 33 deben; [vs4]1 small hollowed inner coffin, makes 20 deben. May my lord [deified King Amenhotep I?] take care [vs5]to let it be shared with me because of these (objects), [vs6]since he (sc. Siwadjy) took care of her when she was dead. (Janssen and Pestman 1968, 153)

Another similar case is listed in the same ostracon, relating to the inheritance of a storehouse claimed by the children of the workman Nebsemen, who had been responsible for the burial of Iner, procuring a wooden coffin for her. Iner's daughter, Waab, opposed such a transaction, as it was evidently depriving her of a rightful portion of the inheritance.

> [1]List of what the workman Nebsemen, my father, made for the lady [2]Iner: 1 wooden decorated cofhn, for her share, which consists of the lower storehouse. [3]But see, Waab, her daughter, (now) comes in order to take a share with the workman [Huy-]nefer [4]in the storehouse. May my lord [...<deified King Amenhotep I?>...] take care to let her share be given to me, < saying : > 'Share it [*i.e.* the storehouse], [5]you children of Nebsemen, for he [Nebsemen] it is who has buried her. (Janssen and Pestman 1968, 153)

Burying a dead person and taking care of the deceased's cult was a moral and institutional duty (Pestman 1969, 64). Officially, the one receiving the inheritance (or part of it) was the one taking care of the funerary processes (Pestman 1969, 59; Baines 1991, 144). For instance, in the will of Heti (Old Kingdom), the elder son, while receiving part of the inheritance, was entrusted with supervising the mortuary priests performing the rites for the deceased (Jasnow 2003, 125). In the inscription of Tjenti, seen above, the process is expressed in a rather clear manner: the one who received the income from the field, the brother Kaiemnefret, should provide the funerary offerings for his mother, Bebi, and Tjenti himself.[4]

The concept of the commutative property, where 'burying the deceased' is equated with 'taking possession of his/her goods', is a key element in understanding the relationship between 'receiving the inheritance' and 'assuming the financial and moral responsibility/obligation of performing the funerary rites and offerings' for the deceased. This suggests that the performance of the funerary ritual was a means of legitimising the claim to an abandoned property after death.

According to the text on papyrus Cairo CG 58092 (quoted above), it appears that over time, the ritual of burying the dead became somewhat 'institutionalised' (Théodoridès 1967). As evidence, Hay, in support of his own claim, cites a precept (*hep*) of the pharaoh, which states, 'Let the possessions be given to the one who buries', and the verdict of an oracle. Although *hep* is usually translated as law, it is more accurately interpreted as 'precept' or 'convention' (see Nims 1948, 243; Hayes 1955, 47–48; Lippert 2020, 795–796). This could indicate a form of more structured 'transcription' of what was involved in the ritual act of burial: a means of legitimising and gaining access to a portion of the inheritance.

Things 'brought' into the afterlife

In ancient Egypt, the deceased was frequently buried in a tomb cut into the ground, ranging from a simple hole to the highest pyramid. Not infrequently, for the higher strata of the population, the deceased was accompanied by a number of artefacts buried in the ground/tomb at the moment of the interment (Miniaci 2023; examples of poor burials without objects or with a limited number can be found in Grajetzki 2003; 2020; Goulding 2013). Some objects were made specifically for the burial, such as the coffin, canopic boxes, heart scarab, *etc.*, while others were objects of daily life destined to be buried with the deceased person. The objects were not only those which could have belonged to the deceased but also gifts, heirlooms, community symbols, and objects of the people who buried the deceased.

Artefacts buried with the deceased automatically transformed into the 'property' of the deceased, even if the dead could not have claimed them in any direct way. The objects remained under the 'moral possession' of the deceased, until someone in their inner circle decided to claim them (or part of them) or until the burial place was safely guarded and protected. With the loosening of the social ties between the

family/collective and the deceased, the objects entered the domain of abandoned goods. They were at the mercy of other people's ethical judgment. For instance, the coffin of King Seqenenre was entirely stripped of its golden foil apart from the divine symbols of the cobra and vulture (Daressy 1909, 1–2; Miniaci 2011, 224), implying that the people appropriating part of the king's goods had 'decided' that the golden foils in the specific spot still ethically 'belonged to the deceased'.

The ownerless objects in a burial were most frequently appropriated without any form of rituality (Antoine 2023). John Garstang, during his excavations of the tombs in the necropolis of Beni Hasan (Middle Egypt), noticed that several burials were deprived of certain objects (especially the most precious ones) at the time of the deposition or soon after.[5] The rapid development of multiple burial systems in Egypt, *i.e.* family and collective burials, also made the appropriation of objects relatively immediate and a direct consequence of sharing the sacred space (Miniaci 2019a; 2019b). Even the objects produced exclusively for the burial, such as coffins and canopic boxes, have often been repurposed for their materials (Betrò and Miniaci 2018; Cooney 2021; 2023; Betrò 2023). However, ancient Egyptian sources reveal traces of rituals that legitimise the appropriation of the goods left in the tombs.

The ritual of mapping, listing, and restoring: The creation of the semantic of abandonment

In the Papyrussammlung National Library in Vienna, there is an ostracon (O. Wien Aeg. 1) recording the inspection of an old and abandoned tomb, followed by an unusual and very detailed list of all the objects found inside a ruined tomb.

> [1] [Year 25, first month of summer, day] 9. Account of the survey of all things [2] [fou]nd in the ruined tomb opposite the burial place of Amennakhte, [3] son of Ipuy. 'One coffin of god's stone. One sarcophagus with a linen (?) pall. One coffin with a linen (?) pall. [4] One ebony folding stool with duck's heads, repaired. Two couches. One foot-stool of papyrus. Three head-rests. [5] One *irks*-basket filled with old cloth. Two pairs of sandals. One palette. One *gꜣ* … One water bag'. […] The chief workman Khonsu. The chief workman Khew. [11] The district officer Neferhotep. The district officer Khaaemope. The guardian Penmennufe. [12] Khaaemnun. Usihe. Aanakhte. Irsu. [13] Huynufe. Neferho. The scribe Amennakhte. [14] [It has been blocked and sealed] with a seal. (Zonhoven 1979, 89–91)

The author of the ostracon is most probably Amennakhte, son of Ipuy, a scribe in the reign of Ramses III and his immediate successors (*c.* 12th century BC). The ruined tomb discovered by Amennakhte, which seems to have been in front of his own burial place, was probably uncovered during building works. Amennakhte's excessively detailed description of the tomb contents provides a full and accurate list of its contents, even including the opening of all the boxes.[6] Once the inspection was complete, the tomb was blocked and sealed. The visit to the tomb was likely part of a larger inspection of other tombs in the Theban Necropolis by the priests to assess their state of preservation (Reeves 1990, 229; Vernus 2003, 1–49; Miniaci 2008).

Nonetheless, the text reveals several ritual actions intended as 'particular modification of the normal intentionality of human action' (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994, 71). In the first sentence, the state of the tomb is immediately labelled as 'in ruin'. The term 'ruin' stresses the lack of a specific owner or people who can claim the tomb as their property.[7] Given the presence of three sarcophagi (one in stone), the possibility that they were not inscribed with a name is low. Therefore, the name(s) seems to have been deliberately omitted. The text thus artificially recreates a 'semantic of abandonment', which is propaedeutic to the action of appropriation. On this semantic, there are two other rituals performed: the tomb is located and discovered by Amennakhte (and, at the end of the inspection, it is blocked and sealed); Amennakhte describes the tomb's contents in excessive detail, providing a complete and accurate list of its contents. Both these actions can be intended as part of a ritual of taking possession of the abandoned goods, especially compared with some other episodes recorded in Egyptian sources related to the Theban necropolis.

In a letter sent by the scribe Butehamun to the High Priest and General Piankh, mention is made of Piankh's desire to have one of the 'ancient' tombs located and left sealed until his arrival. The ritual was the task of identifying and locating an old tomb. The task was not easy, and to do so, Butehamun relied on the scribe Tjaroy, an expert in the Theban necropolis's topography.

> Look now, you sent (us a letter) saying: 'Uncover a tomb among the ancient tombs and preserve its seal till my return', so said our lord. We are carrying out commissions. We shall enable you to find it fixed up and ready – the place which we know about. But you should send the necropolis scribe Tjaroy to have him come so that he may look for a marker for us, since we get going and go astray not knowing where to put our fee. (Wente 1990, 194, 315, LRL No. 28)

Even if there is no reference to the likely appropriation of the tomb contents in this letter, an ostracon discovered in the Valley of the Kings (Thebes) dated a couple of generations after Butehamun suggests that the ritual of targeting ancient tombs could result in the appropriation of their contents. A grandson (?) of Butehamun wrote the ostracon, which contains a prayer to Amon-Re asking for the location of a place filled with gold and silver in the Valley of the Kings. Such a discovery would have been intended for the High Priest of Amun at Thebes, Masaharta, who lived during the reign of Pharaoh Smendes (*c.* 1077–1052 BC).

> (Text) done in the year 24, 1st month of Akhet, day 27: Amon-Re, king of gods, my lord, show me a place where is piled argent and gold, so I can bring (it) to Masaharta. (Polis 2022–2023, 78).

The Theban necropolis is 'filled' with a large number of graffiti carved by Butehamun and his family, as well as his successors (Wood 2020, appendix; see also Barwik 2015; for the appropriation of space with ritual writing, see Navrátilová 2020). These markings seem to indicate a 'project' aimed at exploring and mapping the necropolis

(Bickel 2021). The identification and exploitation of ancient tombs, especially royal ones, seem to have become almost an institutionalised practice during Butehamun's time (see discussions in Betrò 2021) and his successors, with a policy of dismantling and appropriating burial contents on a large scale probably to support a declining economy (Reeves 1990, 276, 278; Jansen-Winkeln 1995). The ancient Egyptians were known for appropriating a landscape through locating, surveying, writing (graffiti), and mapping a place. For example, an ostracon from the village of Deir el-Medina, O. DeM 45, records the visit of the vizier Neferrenpet, accompanied by two royal butlers, to the Valley of the Kings, where the suitable location for Ramses IV's tomb was ritually concluded with the performance of foundation rites in front of the selected place (Dorn 2016, 87). Such identification, mapping, and marking/sealing of a place with rituals often led to the appropriation of the landscape (Weinstein 1973; see also Spence 2007 for funerary contexts; Karkowski 2016 for cult contexts; Müller 2018 for settlement contexts).

The ritual appropriation of land through exploration and mapping is not unfamiliar to us (Miniaci 2020). The epistemologies of travel and exploration in the so-called *Age of Discovery* (15th–17th centuries AD; see Gruzinski 2002; 2014) translated the landscape into an object that could be comprehended, but especially colonised and consumed (Carter 1987; Harley 1988; Winichakul 1994; Craib 2000). The discovery of a new territory was an opportunity to exploit it ('the country did not precede the traveller: it was the offspring of his intention', Carter 1987, 349), and this was accomplished through a scientific and ritualistic process of surveying, naming places, recording data, and creating maps. In particular, maps, often seen as objective representations of the natural landscape, are actually biased and ritualistic tools for territorial appropriation. Understanding and describing a territory is a way of conceiving, articulating, and structuring the human world and the first step towards legitimising its possession and exploitation (Harley 1989; Wood 1992).

The ostracon of Vienna also brings another ritual for appropriating the funerary contents to our attention – drafting a 'list'. This apparently 'harmless' act contains the seed of a powerful ritual nature and a premise for future appropriation. Listing means creating 'knowledge' and order of content about which one was unaware before, hence exerting control over it. As in modern society, where the creation of lists and taxonomies (and databases) are part of ritual appropriation by listing things (Lincoln 2014; see some examples and comments from the Roman world in Rüpke 2016, 97–120), the ritual power of 'listing' was also perceived in ancient Egypt as a means of exerting control over a subject. For instance, the kings of Egypt were listed in succession, from the first presumed rulers of Egypt to the last ruling one, in a series of documents attested almost since the beginning of their history (Palermo Stone, *c.* 2390–2280 BC, see Wilkinson 2000; Nuzzolo 2021) and variously attested in all later periods (Turin king-list, also known as the Royal Canon of Turin: Ryholt 1997; with updates 2004; Karnak Ancestor Chamber: Delange 2015; Abydos king lists of Seti I: Alfi 1993) up to the last phases (demotic king-list pCtYBR 2885rto:

Quack 2009). The listing approach of the royal power was never abandoned and transmitted even in the later periods of historiographical re-elaboration (Herodotus mentioned a list of kings documented in 'a papyrus roll' when counting the total of pharaohs, (*Histories* II, 100), and also the *Aegyptiaká* of Manetho seems to have been built on a similar annalistic system). The scope of listing kings is to create a knowledge of the past through the survival of the memory (the Egyptian word for 'annals', *gnwt*, comes from the word '*gnt*', memorisation; Redford 1984; 1986, 65–68): the knowledge of the past also resulted in the support for royal power. Not only support but also appropriation. Indeed, not by chance, one of the best-preserved king-lists belongs to Pharaoh Seti I carved on the walls of his temple at Abydos. Seti I was the son of Ramses I, a person of non-royal blood, without any connection to the preceding royal family (Eighteenth Dynasty). He became king only in the last part of his life after a career in administration and the army, dying after only one year on the throne (Vandersleyen 1995, 493–498). Therefore, Seti I had to claim his power and legitimacy to be king of Egypt, and he also relied on the ritual power of listing all the kings of Egypt in his temple at Abydos as a means of power appropriation.

The ritual of mapping a place and listing objects was often followed by another ritual – not explicitly mentioned in the Vienna ostracon: the restoration of abandoned goods. At the time of Butehamun (11th century BC), a large-scale project called '*wḥm ḳrs*', *i.e.* repetition of burial, intended to be a programme of restoration, was carried out in the Theban necropolis and especially in the Valley of the Kings (Reeves 1990, 229). Such a process resulted in the movement of the royal mummies to more hidden places (especially cache TT 320 and the tomb of Amenhotep II, for which see Aston 2021 and Piacentini 2005) but also a complete exploitation and appropriation of the objects preserved in the royal tombs, most of which ended up in the royal necropolis of Tanis in the north of Egypt (Stierlin and Ziegler 1987). At the time of Pinudjem I (*c.* 1070–1032 BC), the unfinished royal tomb of Ramses IX (KV 4) seems to have become a workshop for processing artefacts from other royal tombs and stripping precious materials from objects (Reeves 1990, 122). The more the process of search, individuation, appropriation, restoration, and exploitation of the ancient tombs became frequent and institutionalised, the less often rituals were performed (for the question of the re-use of tomb elements, see the summary in Harrington 2013, 133–137). Indeed, before the 11th century BC, the appropriations recorded in the Theban necropolis were sporadic, hidden, and targeting only a few isolated precious objects.

The restoration did not only involve the physical appropriation of things but also of the social identity of their owner. For instance, the tomb of Queen Hatshepsut (*c.* 1478–1458 BC), a woman who declared herself pharaoh of Egypt, seems to have restored and expanded the original tomb of her father Tuthmosis I in the Valley of the Kings (KV 20, see Romer 1974; 1976), providing him with a new sarcophagus that was originally made for her (Der Manuelian and Loeben 1993). The physical appropriation

of the tomb and 'body' of her father, a legitimate king of Egypt, was also meant to justify and legitimise her claim to the throne of Egypt, even though she was a woman and a legitimate heir was already present – the future Tuthmosis III – although too young to rule Egypt (Laboury 2014). When Tuthmosis III ascended to the throne, he decided to re-bury Tuthmosis I in a new tomb constructed on his behalf (KV38) and provided with a new sarcophagus (Romer 1974). The fictitious restoration of Tuthmosis I's tomb – *i.e.* the creation of a new tomb and coffin with the additional movement of the body – was aimed at appropriating the social identity of the pharaoh, who was considered the legitimate founder of Tuthmosis III's dynastic line (Cline and O'Connor 2006). Restoration, protection, and musealisation also represent(-ed) a modern ritual of appropriation and colonialisation (Bennett 2018; see also Mitchell 1991; Reid 2015 for Egypt and Egyptology; more specifically Quirke 2010; Stevenson 2015) but this is not the topic for this paper.

Concluding remarks

Humphrey and Laidlaw, searching for the Jainism ritual meanings in Western India, noted:

> There is thus an important distinction between ritual as practice and the set of organized metaphors, narratives, and argumentation which constitute religious commentary on particular rituals. A ritual does not necessarily or directly 'express' the meaning of the commentaries on it or codifications of it. (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994, 200)

The ritualisation of actions can obscure and redirect goals rather than neutralise them. The ancient Egyptian sources provide examples of ritual codification, where the burial of a dead person involved stratified and complex networks of rituals connected to important social and financial questions such as removing social insecurity and accessing abandoned or disputed inheritance. The ethical question of the deceased's property deposited in tombs was often addressed through the creation of the semantic of abandonment and appropriated through the universal canons of exploring, mapping, listing, restoring, and preserving. The diachronic approach also revealed that the more a ritual process is internalised and accepted by society, the more it becomes visible and 'institutionalised,' and the less ritual performance is perceived as necessary.

Notes
1 It is difficult to reconstruct the inheritance system of ancient Egypt precisely from the available sources until the Late Period. However, based on the evidence, it is likely that the same mechanism was used throughout pharaonic history since the 3rd millennium BC with few major modifications (Lippert 2013).
2 In the case of Tjau, the mere presence of a written will does not seem to be conclusive. However, in today's legal system, this written document can be regarded as the definitive evidence of any legal agreement.

3 The list of objects (indicating economic value) that Shepsi had to pay in order to cover the transportation and funeral costs of his brother.

4 'As regards the second of these two fields which provide the invocation offerings for my mother, the royal acquaintance Bebi, it shall belong to my "brother of the funerary estate", the soul priest Kaiemnefret. He it is who shall provide the invocation offerings there for my mother, the royal acquaintance Bebi and for myself'. (Strudwick 2005, 202–203, no. 115, 452)

5 'We found that the lid of the coffin had been hastily prised open. In other cases, where the lid itself had resisted, small holes had been made in the side of the coffin, through which the contents had been rifled' (Garstang 1907, 48).

6 The ostracon, at line 5, also reports the contents of three baskets: 'One *dbw*(*?*)-basket. (6) Contents: knife. One pin. One bowl. One libation vase. One razor-case. One rotating razor. One scraping razor. Granite vessels. Five *mnt*-vessels. (7) One bowl. One *t(ꜣ)b*-vessel. One staff. One food basket [with] bread. One wooden *ḳrn*. One alabaster *k(ꜣ)b*-vessel. Two wooden (8) *nšỉ*-containers for medicine. One *dbw*(*?*)-basket. Contents: One faience amulet. One *k(ꜣ)b*-vessel. One *ḥnw*-vessel for unguent. (9) Ten … One *dbw*(*?*)-basket. Contents: One alabaster *k(ꜣ)b* -vessel. One comb. One eye tweezer. (10) One [alabaster] *nmst*-One *ḥꜥr*. Two pieces of scenting material' (Zonhoven 1979, 89–91).

7 See the example of the Tollund Man (Denmark), who became an 'archaeological artefact' only after the police had ascertained that the body had no living relatives or friends able to recognise him (Hallam *et al.* 1999, 91–92).

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Chapter 8

How to preserve an *oikos*? The case of Isaeus's *Oration VIII*

Angelica Tortorella

The aim of this article is to consider how, in 4th century BC Athens, one could claim an inheritance. For this purpose, Isaeus's Oration VIII *– full of legal information and news regarding customs and rituals – is used as a case study. After having illustrated the court case and its historical, cultural, and legal context, the methods applied by the speaker to demonstrate the legitimacy of the hereditary succession are outlined: in this case they concern a grandson claiming his deceased grandfather's assets. After having demonstrated the legitimacy of this lineage, the orator must describe the particular ties that bound the grandchildren to their grandfather, re-inforced daily through the performance of sacrifices, participation in public holidays, and the grandchildren's preparation of their grandfather's funeral. Finally, I discuss how the right to inherit is demonstrated. While a law is cited which illustrates the order in which the members of the deceased's* oikos, *based on their closeness in parental terms to the deceased, can aspire to the latter's inheritance, the character of the counterpart is outlined in negative terms: a man unworthy of inheriting the family assets because he proved incapable of managing an* oikos *and its assets. Isaeus's text shows how hereditary succession was not a private fact, but rather an expression of the relationship between the single individual and his* oikos *and between the latter and the* polis. *The frequency of the meetings and their public dimension, rooted in the religious life of the house and the city, are a guarantee of the ties and their continuity.*

This contribution discusses the way in which, in 4th century BC Athens, a kinship could be demonstrated and hence the right to an inheritance. I have investigated the dynamics and motivations underlying the choice of themes taken from the life of the *oikos*, in the light of *Oration VIII* of Isaeus (on the life of the orator, see Ferrucci 1998, 23–49). This oration offers valuable insights into the strategies employed to claim goods whose ownership is difficult to reconstruct; in fact, as has been observed by Martin (2009, 17),

> It is the only extant speech in which the speaker adduces all four types of rite by which the orators commonly demonstrate citizenship or kinship (Isae. 8. 15–27): the formal introduction at the gathering of the phratry, participation in public celebrations, attendance at the burial of the deceased and a special relationship expressed at sacrifices.

The Athenian judicial orations of the Classical Age provide valuable evidence on the history and culture of the period making it possible to investigate, in a broader perspective, the forms of interaction, integration, and friction between the public and private spheres (MacDowell 1989; Roy 1999; Ferrucci 2007). In particular, in Isaeus's production, questions linked to legitimate descent and, in general, to the criteria that determine belonging to the *oikos* take on a central importance. The concept of *oikos*, in this context, is to be understood as an 'organism in which things, people and rites are included' (Paoli 1961, 36): a broad concept that includes the home, all the objects it contains – the family heritage – and the members who live there, including slaves, and who contribute to its functioning and administration, as well as all activities – including sacred ones – which take place within it (Ferrucci 2006a with bibliography; Edwards 2007, 5; for a discussion of the concept of *oikos* in light of 'kinship studies', see Harders 2015).

The orations that the author composes for his clients (on Athenian logography, see Bearzot 2006, 133–135) effectively reflect the social and cultural panorama of the years between the end of the Peloponnesian War and the beginning of the Macedonian hegemony, providing a wealth of data useful for reconstructing the complex and ramified interweaving of private and public life in 4th century BC Athens. *Oikos* and *polis* emerge as two mutually dependent dimensions from the point of view of social, economic, religious, and cultural organisation (Nardi Perna 2012, 25–44). In this sense, *Oration VIII*, dated between 383 and 363 BC, constitutes an exemplary case study.[1] At the root of the discourse is a question of deciding whether to assign the inheritance of a man named Kiron, who had died intestate (Biscardi and Cantarella 1974, 135–138 on testamentary succession), to direct line descendants (the sons of Kiron's daughter) or to a collateral-line descendant (the son of Kiron's brother). In order to portray effectively the characters and dynamics of Kiron's family, Isaeus complements the narrative with legal information and news relating to customs and rituals (Avramovic 1997, 272). The oration has a two-part structure: the first part (§§ 1–29) aims to demonstrate the nature and quality of the ties between Isaeus's clients and the deceased, the second discusses the assignment of the inheritance itself. In the first part of the oration, the position of Kiron's daughter and grandson are discussed. First, the legitimacy of descent produced by regular marriages between full citizens is addressed. The argument for legitimacy relies on a double private and public dimension: Kiron, within the family, recognises the marriage of his daughter by giving her a dowry; the husband's phratry and the deme itself are witnesses of the union and, by welcoming the woman and her potential offspring, establish its validity. The next point concerns the relationship between grandfather Kiron and his grandson who claims his inheritance. Their mutual affection and the public dimension of their

bond are substantiated by their shared participation in rites inside and outside the house, which culminate in the funeral procession of Kiron himself, which the nephew helps to organise. The second part of the oration, however (§§ 30–46), focuses on the reasons why, according to Isaeus's clients, they have the right to inherit Kiron's estate; these reasons, as will shortly be seen, have to do with the negative behaviour of his opponent Diokles (both when Kiron was alive and after his death) and with a legal rule that is cited precisely for this purpose. The analysis of this text raises some essential questions: which aspects of custom, ritual, and social life can be used for the purposes of claiming and assigning an inheritance? What relationship binds the members of an *oikos* to each other and, therefore, each of them to the goods of the others?

The case, the context, and the procedures

The legal context

As Todd (1993) notes, the concept of claiming an asset and the aspiration to a wealthy inheritance take on particular importance in the Athenian context, where the wealth of an *oikos* mostly derived from the possession and use of land. The attention that the Athenian society of the time paid to the ways in which material goods could be exploited (on the composition of private assets in Isaeus, see Ferrucci 1998, 115–132) is demonstrated, for example, by the legal action taken against those who squandered assets (the *graphe argias* and the *graphe paranoias*), which made the heritage itself lose value (Todd 1993, 245), or intended to claim the ownership of land stolen through theft (the *apagoge* and the *dike exoules*). The surviving orations seem to reflect a generally negative opinion about those who sold an asset received as an inheritance (Isae. V, 41–7 and Aesch. I, 95–105; Todd 1993, 246).

The dispute of which Isaeus's *Oration VIII* in part takes the form of a *diadikasia* (Biscardi 1982, 199–205; Todd 1993, 119–122; Avramovic 1997, 225–227; Harrison 2001; Cobetto Ghiggia 2002, 19–26, 185–186 n. 258), that is, a court case in which the roles of plaintiff and defendant are not clear-cut, since the parties present their claims to the inheritance at the same level. The *diadikasia* made it possible to establish who had the right to an inheritance, therefore also acting as an *epidikasia*, an 'assignment' (*cf.* Biscardi and Cantarella 1974, 139). While the direct descendant had the privilege of inheriting an estate without any legal procedure (that is, he had the right of *embateusis*; Griffith-Williams 2013, 162), in the case of uncertain kinship it was necessary to resort to *diadikasia*. However, the rhetorical strategies adopted by the orator in this case make the court proceedings themselves more similar to an *idia dike* (private court case) or a *demosia dike* (a public one), also called *graphe* (written request), whose characteristic is instead that of containing a request for compensation by the plaintiff (in a position of clear advantage compared to the other parties, since, at every stage of the court case itself it can retract the statements and/or disputes previously advanced) for a wrong suffered or a misconduct carried out to his detriment (on the types of court

proceedings, see Wolff 2013). In fact, as Griffith-Williams (2013, 7) states, 'Despite the supposedly non-adversarial nature of the *diadikasia* it must have been difficult, if not impossible, for an Athenian litigant to sustain his own claim to an estate without undermining, or even directly attacking, his opponent's arguments'.

The case

Kiron died leaving an estate worth about 90 minas (a talent and a half) and an interest-bearing unspecified sum on loan (on Kiron's estate, see Ferrucci 1998, 92–95). Since his two sons had pre-deceased him, his brother's son had claimed the estate as next of kin. This request was challenged by Isaeus's' clients, who claimed the assets as the legitimate sons of Kiron's daughter.

Diokles, the brother of Kiron's second wife, seems to be the real adversary of Isaeus's clients, even if in court it is the nephew on Kiron's father's side who claims the estate. The speaker says that Diokles, taking advantage of his kinship with his sister and using Kiron's nephew as if he were a front man, unjustly took possession of the inheritance. Previously, Diokles had also allegedly taken possession of his uterine sisters' wealth, having managed to be considered the adopted son of their father.

To make the kinship ties within Kiron's *oikos* more understandable, the speaker illustrated the genealogical tree of the deceased's family and the main events of his life: From his first marriage to a cousin, Kiron had had the future mother of Isaeus's clients; after his wife's premature death, Kiron married a second time, fathering two sons. In the meantime, the man had betrothed his daughter from his first marriage to Nausimenes, who had died before giving her children; Isaeus's clients were born from the daughter's second marriage (Fig. 8.1). For both marriages, Kiron had provided his daughter with a dowry: in the oration, this gesture is used to prove the legitimate status of the woman and, consequently, of her marriage and the offspring that would derive from it (Edwards 2007, 130; Cobetto Ghiggia 2011).

Such a detailed narrative would be indispensable in a case like this, which revolves around the need to demonstrate that the orator's mother was Kiron's legitimate daughter and legitimately married. Otherwise, in fact, her children could not be considered full citizens and inherit their grandfather's estate. In the absence of a legal instrument capable of demonstrating a marriage's validity, the elements which may have made a marriage official are still a matter of debate among scholars (Vernant 1973; Gernet 1997; on marriage, see also Nardi Perna 2012, 96–117). The legitimacy of the marriage is used to demonstrate that the inheritance belongs to Isaeus's clients, as direct descendants of the deceased.

The legitimacy of Kiron's daughter was, however, difficult to prove for two reasons. The first was the greater difficulty in proving the legitimate birth of a woman compared to that of a man: women did not enjoy men's citizenship rights, so the documentation relating to her status was difficult to trace (Schaps 1975; in general on the concept of the citizen and citizenship see Blok 2005; on the social status of women
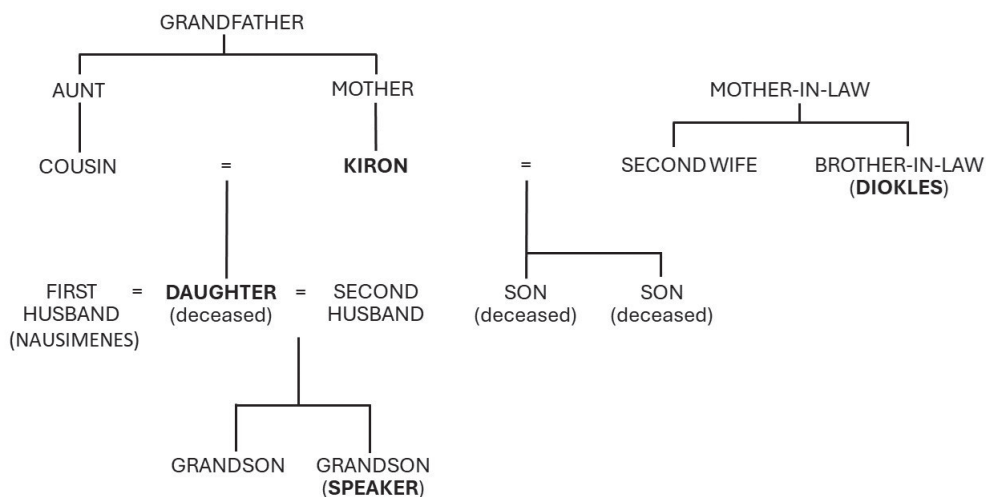
Fig. 8.1. Kiron's family tree (adapted from Griffith-Williams 2013, 90).

in Classical Athens see Gould 1980). The second reason was that she had died about forty years before the case was discussed in court, which made finding information about her particularly complicated (Griffith-Williams 2019 for parallels between the plot of Isaeus's *Oration* VIII and those of comedy).

The methods for demonstrating the oikos's ownership

In the speeches dealing with inheritance disputes, the speakers used arguments that appealed to existing laws and other evidence that went beyond the strictly legal realm (Hardcastle 1980; Griffith-Williams 2013). It is necessary to underline that, in the court context, these two types of evidence carried the same weight. The jury of the Athenian court, in fact, was not composed of law experts but was made up of citizens selected by lots to provide annual service (Lanni 1999, 29–31; Bearzot 2006, 132; Edwards 2007, xxi–xxviii; Wolff 2013, 97).

In reading the judicial orations of Classical Athens, one notices that often the arguments put forward to demonstrate the right to inheritance are not linked to the sphere of the laws but could appeal to probability (Griffith-Williams 2020, 68) and an individual's more-or-less morally correct conduct (Sickinger 2007, 286). In the absence of irrefutable evidentiary methods or reliable documentation capable of confirming or denying a family relationship, it was necessary to provide as much information as possible about the person in question and his/her family unit. In such a framework, information relating to both internal relationships within the *oikos* and those external to it was useful and important. The latter legitimised internal ties through their confirmation by the community of citizens. As Edwards (2020b, 161) notices, moral and social values were of fundamental importance in the context of Athenian courts

because inheritance law 'was designed to ensure not only the future preservation of each *oikos*, but also the future security of the *polis* as a whole'.

Isaeus's orations are exemplary of the arguments that an Athenian citizen had at his disposal to claim a right to inheritance. In fact, it was a question of showing one's ties with the deceased not only in terms of kinship but also of affection (on the dual use of the *oikos* as a space of affection and of patrimonial calculations in court, see Ferrucci 2013). For this purpose, in addition to testimonies, circumstantial evidence relating to concrete facts, defined in Greek as *tekmeria*, is even more important for evidentiary purposes: occasions, that is, in which the particularly strong bond between the two people was demonstrated (on their use in Isaeus VIII see Ferrucci 2006b).

We can therefore say that the dichotomy between legal evidence and non-legal or extra-legal evidence is a modern construction that makes no sense in the context of a Classical Athens court dispute. This duality, in fact, does not help us to understand two fundamental aspects of the functioning of Greek society: first, that the *oikos* is not an administrative entity entirely linked to a judicial system based on laws; secondly, that *oikos* and *polis* are inseparable from each other, as demonstrated by the problem of assigning an inheritance, where whoever has the right to it is the one who best demonstrates to the *polis* that they are closely linked to the holder of the heritage, as well as knowing how to manage the latter as best as possible.

In the light of these observations, it is therefore perhaps more correct to speak of 'internal to the *oikos'* rather than 'private' and of 'external to the *oikos*' rather than 'public'.

From the *oikos* to the *polis*: The legitimisation of family relationships

The relationship between Kiron and his daughter: The role of the dowry

Establishing the identity of Kiron's daughter is an essential step in determining the grandson's right to inherit his grandfather's estate (Avramovic 1997, 183). In this sense, it is necessary to provide information regarding two marriages: the one between Kiron and his first wife (from which the mother of Isaeus's clients were born) and the one between Kiron's daughter and the father of Isaeus's clients. This first point of the argument is linked to elements that are entirely within the *oikos* and to the relationships between its members. Their demonstration, therefore, passes through the testimonies of people who, although external to the *oikos*, have consolidated ties of closeness and custom with it – that is, who are able to play a pivotal role between the life of the *oikos* and the social sphere of the *polis.*

Nausimenes's relatives and those of the father of Isaeus's clients (respectively the woman's first and second husbands), still alive at the time of the court case, are called to testify in this regard.[2] Their testimonies aimed at demonstrating, first of all, the legitimate origin of the woman, born to parents who were both full citizens and legally married, and raised by them (§§ 12–14). Secondly, the testimonies focus

on the most effective proof of the legitimacy of Kiron's daughter's marital ties: the availability of a dowry granted by her father. In fact, if, as Biscardi (1999, 13–14) notes, 'from its [*i.e.*, the dowry's] non-existence it is not possible to deduce the nullity of the marital bond, the inverse proposition is not equally true: that from its presence it is not possible to deduce, analogously, the existence of the former. The dowry is, in fact, a characteristic sign of marriage'.

Details such as the presence of clothes and jewels, what nowadays we could define as a 'wedding trousseau', contribute to corroborating the testimony relating to Kiron's daughter's dowry. The debate regarding the inclusion of these goods within the actual dowry is still open: there are many cases in which speakers refer to the trousseau as an addition to the dowry, while in others they seem to be considered part of it (Cf. Isae. II, 9, Isae. III, 35; Harrison 2001, 47–49 for the discussion on the legislation with reference to III, 35; see also Dem. XXVII,10). In any case, it is stated that the woman's first husband (Nausimenes) would have died insolvent, thus preventing Kiron from recovering the dowry of 25 minas intended for his daughter and forcing him to collect a second dowry when she married again (with the father of Isaeus's clients), of only 10 minas.

The wedding of Kiron's daughter and the phratry

To demonstrate the legitimacy of a marriage it was necessary to find testimonies on three fundamental events: the carrying out of the ceremony within the *oikos* (of which the presence of a dowry was, in fact, proof), the offering of the sacrifice, and the wedding banquet and the groom's contribution to the Thesmophoria meal (Parker 2005, 270–283; Martin 2009, 266–268).

Isaeus therefore focuses on the actions carried out by the father of his clients towards his wife, including crucial elements of evidence linked to the relationship with the members of the phratry, a sort of family-based brotherhood made up of people who believe they descend from a common ancestor (§§ 7–8). Isaeus places emphasis on the testimonies of community members since, thanks to these, it is possible to present his clients as legitimate citizens and allow them, even before proving that they are Kiron's relatives, to appear in court to claim an inheritance.

The second husband of Kiron's daughter, on the occasion of the wedding, would have offered the wedding feast, complete with sacrifice and a banquet, to the members of the phratry (who therefore acted as witnesses of the marriage) according to the ritual norms established by them. The ritual of official presentation to the phratry was, if not sufficient, then at least necessary to demonstrate legitimate descent (Humphreys 2007; see also Lambert 1993). The children born from this marriage would therefore have been officially presented to their father's phratry without any objections from its members.

In the context of *Oration VIII*, the mention of these events constitutes a fundamental element in order to corroborate the identity of Isaeus's clients. The web of family relationships, already made concrete by the testimonies of relatives relating to the

double dowry collected by the father for his daughter, is reconstructed through his projection into the public sphere.

The legitimisation of the demotes and the 'presidency' of the Thesmophoria

In a progression from the 'private' to the 'public' sphere, Isaeus also resorts to the testimonies of the members of the deme, whose degree of officiality is even greater than that of the members of the phratry (§§ 18–20):

> § 20: And you cannot think that if our mother had been the kind of woman our opponents allege, our father would have given a wedding breakfast and wedding feast, rather than hushing all this up; or that the wives of the other demesmen would have chosen her to be the joint overseer of the festival with the wife of Diocles and put her in charge of the sacred objects, rather than entrusting this office to some other woman; or that the members of the phratry would have admitted us, rather than complaining and justifying their objection, if it had not been universally agreed that our mother was Ciron's legitimate daughter. As it was, because the facts were evident and many knew them, no such dispute arose in any quarter. And to prove I'm telling the truth in this, call the witnesses to the facts.

Isaeus, who was aware of this, included among the evidence fundamental information about the social relationships established by the mother of his two clients: she had been selected from the wives of her husband's demotes together with the wife of Diokles to play a central role on the occasion of the Thesmophoria, the holidays in honour of Demeter. The two women, in fact, would have shared the responsibility for the objects and the task of presiding over the carrying out of the rituals. One such circumstance automatically qualifies the woman as a legitimate descendant of Kiron and is that the participants in the rite, namely, the *Thesmophoriazuses*, were chosen from among Athenian women of high nobility (Ar. *Thesm.* 329–330, Parke 1977, 82–88; Detienne 1979, 199; Gherchanoc 2012).

The bond between grandfather and grandchildren: Sacrifices and celebrations

In order to make it clear to the public what type of relationship existed between Kiron and his two grandsons, reference is made to the private sacrifices and public celebrations in which the three always took part together (§§ 15–17). It is claimed that Kiron would never have made any sacrifice without his grandsons, whatever the importance of the ritual: this type of sharing established an intense bond of affectionate intimacy between grandfather and grandsons (Bremmer 1983; Martin 2009, 268).

It is no coincidence that the sacrifice to Zeus Ktesios is mentioned (§ 16), a divinity linked to domestic worship and who, in particular, ensured the wealth and protection of the *oikos* (Aesch. Supp. 445), as after all is revealed by the god's own epiclesis, with the reference to 'property', which finds its material expression in the house.

> § 16: we attended public spectacles with him and sat next to him, and we went to his house for all the festivals. When we sacrificed to Zeus Ktesios, a sacrifice that he took especially seriously and to which he did not admit slaves or free men from outside the family, but

performed all the ceremonies personally, we shared in this, laid our hands on the victims with his, placed our offerings with his, and assisted him in the other rites; and he prayed that Zeus grant us health and wealth, as was natural for him, being our grandfather.

The sacrifices in his honour could be public, as we see in Isaeus's oration, or private (In Paus. I, 31 there is evidence of an altar dedicated to the god in the deme of Phlia; in Dem. XXI,53, according to an oracle of Dodona, a calf had to be sacrificed to the god). As recent research has highlighted, devotion to Zeus Ktesios and the rites linked to it informed the physical space of the *oikos* no less than its religious and symbolic dimension (Jaillard 2004; see also Faraone 2008, 216–217). The decision to intertwine the lives of Kiron and his grandsons with the veneration of the divinity par excellence linked to the domestic sphere, with its reference to the spaces and objects of family life, is therefore significant. The exclusive nature of the relationship between Kiron and his grandsons, sanctioned by the shared veneration of a divinity responsible for the well-being of the *oikos*, is implicit in the information according to which the man would not have admitted other people – neither slaves nor free men – to the rites in honour of Zeus Ktesios, but only his grandsons. As has been noted by Jaillard (2004, 883), 'le renouvellement ou l'accroissement auxquels préside le Ktésios se jouent dans la succession des générations' ['the renewal or growth over which Ktesios presides takes place in the succession of generations'].

Such co-participation extends to public holidays (§ 15): Isaeus's clients claim to have always been taken together by their grandfather to attend the Rural Dionysia, an anniversary celebrated within the deme in the month of Poseidon (Parke 1977, 101–103; Parker 2005, 316–317). In this case, these are occasions in which the bond between the two generations of the same family is made visible in the sphere of the deme, in which relationships of kinship, neighbourhood, custom, economic, social, and political alliances were intertwined.

Funeral honours for Kiron

To demonstrate the kinship bond with Kiron, a final fundamental element is represented by the funeral honours that were paid to his body by his grandson. As we know, the adequacy of funeral honours was a fundamental aspect through which filial piety was measured (Isae. II 25, 36; IX, 4; Paus. II 25, 2). In this regard, it is therefore essential to provide as many details as possible on the ways in which these took place, as well as on the people involved. The oration then focuses on the role of Isaeus's clients who, as the protagonists, perform the funeral honours for their grandfather, in explicit contrast with the questionable behaviour of the contender Diokles which, as we will see, is considered in depth in the second part of the oration.

It is reported that the grandson's intention was to start the funeral procession with the transportation of the deceased from his own home and that, to carry out this ritual, he had brought with him an *oikeios* (a member of his own *oikos*). The man would not have succeeded in his intent only because he was moved to compassion by Kiron's widow who wanted to start the ceremony from her own home (§§ 21–22).

§ 21: [...] I came with one of my relatives, my father's cousin, to remove his body for burial from my own house. I did not find Diocles at the house, so I entered, accompanied by bearers, and was ready to remove it. §22: But when my grandfather's widow asked me to bury him from that house, and with supplications and tears said she herself would like to help us lay out and adorn his body, I consented, gentlemen. I went to our opponent and told him in front of witnesses that I would conduct the funeral from there, because Diocles' sister had begged me to do so.

The woman would also have asked his grandson and cousin to be able to prepare and arrange the body together with them: an action described through the verb *summetakeirizomai*, 'take on something together with someone else', attested only in this passage. This is evidently an unusual lexical choice aimed at underlining the role of Isaeus's clients within the family, in which they were fully integrated and allowed to share gestures and rituals that were as intimate as they were endowed with a strong symbolic value. Implicit on the part of the widow is the recognition of her grandson as an *oikeios* of her husband, therefore authorised not only to conduct the funeral ritual but even to arrange the body. The orator then re-iterates the fact that he had no impediment from participating in the funeral ceremonies (§ 23–25).

In the narration of the funeral honours reserved for Kiron, Isaeus begins to compose the character of Diokles, alluding to some elements which will later be explored in greater detail (on the *ethopoiia* or character building in Isaeus, see Edwards 2020a; in general, see Kennedy 1963, 91–93). The description of the event, although laconic, reveals elements of contradiction between Diokles's words and actions. His behaviour will then be compared with the correct, sensitive, and generous nature of the speaker, whose only concern is to pay due honours to his grandfather and alleviate the suffering of his relatives. On the other hand, not only would Diokles not have raised any objections to this behaviour (implicitly demonstrating his awareness of the closest kinship bond between Isaeus's clients and Kiron and, at the same time, revealing a substantial disinterest in the funeral rite as such) but he would also have taken care to refer immediately to the inheritance, confirming the attachment to money mentioned at the beginning of the oration (§ 3). Diokles's venality emerges from two circumstances: from the request for re-imbursement for the funeral expenses and from the reference to Kiron's estate which, moreover, according to Diokles himself, had left nothing as an inheritance (§ 23). The contrast between the two characters in the context of funeral honours will be taken up again in the second part of the oration (§§ 38–39), where the arrogance of a man dominated by greed is constructed through the contrast with a man moved by sincere affection based on respect towards his grandfather and his body, of which the commitment made in guaranteeing the success of the ceremonies is underlined (for a similar argument cf. Isae. II 36–37; IX, 7–8). From these passages of *Oration VIII* it seems to emerge that paying honour to deceased ancestors guarantees the survival of the *oikos* (protected, as seen, by the *polis*) and

confers the right to inherit, as foreseen by Athenian law (Isae. II, 45). A man who claims an inheritance, therefore, well knows that he must take into consideration the funeral of the deceased as a means of proof (Isae. VI, 40). As in the oration in question, also in *Oration VI* (§§ 21–24), those who declare themselves to be the grandchildren of the deceased are defined as legitimate heirs, on the one hand, by virtue of their participation in rites both within and outside the *oikos*, and, on the other, as a consequence of having concerned themselves with the funeral (Griffith-Williams 2012). In the oration, Kiron's funeral is a moment of synthesis between the 'private' and 'public' dimensions, both as regards the affective sphere (since it expresses, on the one hand, affection towards the deceased and, on the other, awareness of the social obligations imposed by the death of a relative), both in logistical terms: the funeral procession starts from the *oikos* of the deceased or of a close relative and crosses the city. The procession itself imposes on the *polis* the role not only of spectator of the event but, through the awareness of the death, of the void that this creates in the *oikos* and of the hierarchy of family relationships, but also of guarantor of the succession and of the continuity of the *oikos*.

The devolution of the inheritance

The laws on 'close kinship' and against the mistreatment of one's forefathers

This last part of the oration, like the first, can be divided into two main sections: a more strictly juridical section intended to illustrate two tests that serve to demonstrate who is entitled to Kiron's inheritance, and one focused on the figure of Diokles. The opponent is given a ferocious portrait, which paints him as a bad citizen through the description of his past actions, his attitude towards his relatives, and his character. The connection between the two parts is constructed through the reading of the law referred to, followed by the reading of the inventory of Kiron's estate, thus creating the premises for a digression on Diokles's greed.

At this point of the oration, the speaker believes he has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate the legitimacy of Kiron's daughter and therefore no longer needs to reconstruct past events or inter-personal relationships among the members of Kiron's *oikos*. Now, however, it is necessary to convince the audience of the fact that the two pieces of legal evidence to which he refers to claim the inheritance are perfectly applicable to his case, compared to the position of the opponent, who has no right to the inheritance from a legal point of view and that in any case he does not deserve it due to his reprehensible behaviour.

Since the owner of the disputed estate had died intestate, the estate had to be assigned judicially and the hierarchy of who could enter the line of succession had to be meticulously established. The law that regulated this procedure, probably dating back to the age of Solon, is cited in the pseudo-demosthenian oration *Against Macartatus* (XLIII, 51) which explains which relatives of the deceased were included in the *ankhisteia*, that is, in the group of relatives who could enter the line of succession

(a paraphrase of a part of the law is found in Isae. XI 1–2; for the analysis of the law, see Paoli 1936). It is not possible here to deal in depth with topics related to Attic inheritance law: it is enough to know that the concept of *ankhisteia* establishes which are the closest consanguinity relationships with the deceased, in order to indicate in court who has the right to inherit.

Arnaldo Biscardi and Eva Cantarella (1974, 122) define the concept of *ankhisteia* in Attic law as:

> The set of those relationships which, determined in the legitimate family, and limited to a certain degree of kinship, were producers of certain legal consequences in matters of inheritance and holiness. More specifically, only within the *ankhisteia* were the inheritance rights of women and descendants in the female line recognised [...].

One can therefore understand the significance of Isaeus's insistence on this law, in the light of the internal dynamics of the deceased's family, whose nucleus revolves around his daughter. Within *Oration VIII*, the *ankhisteia* is provided with a framework designed, on the one hand, to make the legal context understandable to a jury of people who are not necessarily experts in law and, on the other, to overshadow aspects potentially capable of undermining the line of reasoning. According to the *ankhisteia*, Kiron's daughter, being a direct descendant, would have precedence in the hereditary axis over Kiron's brother himself; in turn, her children would have the right to inherit their mother's assets. However, the *ankhisteia*, as Neblett (1999, 32) observes, is not clear in explaining what happens in the absence of living children. It is, in effect, a question of claiming the estate of a deceased person and, on that basis, asking for it to be assigned to his or her children. In his use of the legislative bases for the assignment of inheritance, Isaeus shows himself to be an expert in the rules that regulate the relationships between the members of a family, capable of exploiting them within his line of reasoning, and making them understandable to an audience that is not necessarily able to follow a technical explanation. For the benefit of this audience, the issue is illustrated through situations related to everyday life. He therefore performs his job as logographer to the best of his ability knowing, perhaps, that the law of *ankhisteia* is not really a relevant argument for convincing the jury and that it is more important, in this case, to leverage contingent facts that demonstrate the strength of the bond between the grandfather and his grandsons.

Athenian legislation provided for a specific sentence, also probably introduced by Solon, called *graphe goneon kakoseos*, or legal action (*graphe*) against the mistreatment (*kakosis*) of parents (*goneis*) which provided, as a penalty, absolute *atimia* (Harrison 2001, 145–149; on the definition of *atimia*, Griffith-Williams 2013, 253). The speaker himself alludes precisely to this legal action when he underlines that it is the children's duty to support their ancestors, if alive, not only in the case in which they possess assets to bequeath but also, and above all, in the case in which they are devoid of any substance.

The existence of such a law reveals the interest of the *polis* in maintaining balance in the family: respect for the elderly members of an *oikos* is a question that concerns not only the individual *oikos*, but also all other citizens, regardless of their membership with the family unit in question. As in various other points of the oration, here too reference is made to an aspect of family life in which the interests and dimensions of the *oikos* and the *polis* overlap.

The construction of character: Diokles and the ruin of the oikos

Diokles's immorality is reflected in his inability to administer wisely an estate. Isaeus pays particular attention to this aspect, which he constructs rhetorically with the intention of creating indignation for having placed the selfishness of economic interests before the rights of the family to obtain an immediate gain.

Claiming an inheritance entailed a series of responsibilities and burdens on the part of the *kyrios* (guardian) and the request for assignment to the court involved the ability to convince the judges not only of the validity of the legal titles (indispensable, yet often difficult to demonstrate definitively) but also of the will to make good use of the assets, in case of victory. Thus, the negative characterisation of the opponent, in addition to a general discredit that it was intended to arouse against him, serves a more precise purpose, when it is focused on his behaviour in the economic and social spheres: to demonstrate to the judges that the city will make an economic mistake in assigning him the management of an *oikos*.

Diokles, in fact, pretending to be the adoptive son of his stepfather and being supported by his stepsisters' assets, took away their status as heirs (§ 40); when the husbands of two of the sisters showed up to claim the property as *kyrioi*, Diokles imprisoned the husband of the eldest sister (on the imprisonment, see Avramovic 2010) and attempted to kill that of the second (§ 40).

Diokles's behaviour is invariably characterised by deception, hypocrisy, selfishness, emotional disinterest for his family members, attachment to money, and shamelessness. This nature is expressed through a skillful use of vocabulary: for example, the use of derogatory terms such as the verb *gruzo* (§ 27), which means the cry of the pig, or the repetition of terms deriving from the verb *paraskeuazo*, with reference to deception and machination; the mention of the nickname 'Orestes' which in ancient sources refers to violence or incorrectness (Cobetto Ghiggia 2012, 327 n. 10).

In an oration that revolves around the two essential problems of genealogical legitimacy and the devolution of an inheritance, it is no coincidence that insincerity (and therefore unreliability) and perverse venality are highlighted, thus undermining the foundations of his argument, whose instrumental nature can be imagined. Given the nature of the evidence adduced by Isaeus's clients, essentially pertaining to the domestic sphere and its intersections with the public one, it is not surprising that Diokles's emotional disinterest and predatory attitude towards family members are described in particular.

Claiming inheritance inside and outside the *oikos*: a summary

In Isaeus's *Oration VIII*, the claim to an inheritance is presented only in part as a private fact, where the family and intimate dimension itself of a kinship relationship imposes, for the purposes of its legal existence, the validation of the community. The claim is based on various types of evidence, some of which are designed to demonstrate the existence of kinship and emotional ties. Instrumental to the claim is the recognition of these ties in the broader dimension of the *polis.* In addition to the blood and emotional bond, the ability to manage effectively an *oikos* seems to have represented a fundamental requirement to aspire to inherit it.

The author seems to give the same weight to the evidence that makes use of legal norms and to that which has to do with descriptions of public and private ritual actions, also transmitted through witnesses, or descriptions of the character of the adversaries, which therefore referred to situations and circumstances that have occurred throughout the lives of those who aspire to Kiron's legacy. Eidinow (2020, 130), who defined this last type of evidence as 'gossip' or 'firsthand experience', underlined their fundamental social value in the context of the law court not only as a rhetorical device to keep the attention of *dikastai* (the members of the jury): 'In the fourth-century Athenian law courts, gossip was not so much 'idle talk' but, rather, a powerful form of 'social action'.

The continuous references to themes of daily life such as rites, celebrations, and systems of social aggregation act, on the one hand, as evidentiary elements in the presence of a rather slippery case, and on the other hand they contribute to keeping alive the interest of the public (which, it should be remembered, was not made up of a class of legal experts, which did not exist in Athens, and often had some difficulty in dealing with complex legal issues).

After all, the first of the two points discussed in the oration, namely the legitimacy or otherwise of the mother of Isaeus's clients, cannot be addressed without resorting to testimonies linked to the family's customs and the perception that the community had of them, while the second, linked to the actual devolution of inheritance, is argued through a poorly codified and largely ambiguous, but essential, regulatory system which the judges should have interpreted based on opinions, perceptions, and personal experiences.

The structure of the oration respects the thematic bipartition with two sections constructed with impeccable logic and a shrewd alternation between argumentative and narrative parts, thus contributing to the credibility of the orator. In the search for harmony with the audience, the characterisation of the speaker in contrast with the character of the opponent is also functional.

The evidence contained in the first part of the oration, dedicated to the question of legitimate descent, essentially concerns the relationships between the members of the *oikos* and those between the *oikos* itself and super-ordinate social structures (phratry, deme). The existence of internal ties within the *oikos* is legitimised by the

community of citizens, which accepts and confirms them. In this first section of Isaeus's *Oration VIII* an argument takes shape through which the orator constructs the legitimate descent of Kiron's daughter and grandsons rooting their identity within the *oikos* (Johnstone 1999, 33–42). Proceeding through concentric circles, Isaeus moves from the strictly domestic dimension (the *oikos*, also understood as physical space, pervaded by devotion to Zeus Ktesios) to the public dimension of the phratry and then of the deme, seeking in the structures that include and transcend the family unit elements that prove the lineage of his clients. Finally, the kinship bond between Kiron and those who claim to be his grandchildren is visualised thanks to their role in an event that involves and crosses both the *oikos* and the *polis*: the mourning and the funeral procession.

On the basis of an historical and literary analysis, it seems possible to add a further significant fact to such an interpretation, underlining the *Ringkomposition* character of the first part of the oration. In relation to the first and last of the rites mentioned – the sacrifices conducted in the intimacy of the family nucleus on the one hand, the funeral and the related procession on the other hand – Isaeus in fact underlines the solidity of the emotional relationships within the *oikos*, referring to the closeness between grandfather and grandsons and the thoughtful assistance given by the latter to the widow. Also, through a linguistic guise (through the repetition of kinship-related terms or verbs having to do with ritual actions performed in common, as in §§ 7, 8, 15, 18, 19, 20, with the repetition of the family ties between Kiron and Isaeus's clients), Isaeus stages a 'symmetry of affections', as in describing the first and last of the rites mentioned he focuses on the solidity of emotional relationships within the *oikos*. If, moreover, the account of the domestic sacrifices to Zeus Ktesios is used to express the grandfather's affection towards his grandsons, the narration of the latter's funeral rite overturns the extremes of the relationship, illuminating the devotion and love of the grandsons towards their grandfather. The circular structure of this first part of the discourse, concluded in itself also in an emotional sense, is functional to the bipartite structure of the text which was discussed and which responds to the substantial duplicity of the legal issues to be resolved. The logical structure that Isaeus builds for his clients therefore reflects a need to legitimise a family relationship, first within the *oikos* and then in front of the *polis*: it is only in this way that, evidently, in the Athens of the 4th century BC, anyone who wanted to claim an inheritance could hope to convince an audience of amateurs that he had a right to it.

In the second part of the oration, faced with an equally complex legal problem that is difficult to resolve through recourse to the rules alone, reliance is put on the construction of the opponent's character, evidence widely used in oratory. Where the issues to be addressed concern a problem of legitimacy and the devolution of a sum of money, unreliability and greed are precisely two of the many negative aspects of the character that come to light most and which are therefore of particular importance for the purposes of the subject matter of the case. The fact that these characteristics are presented through elements linked to family events has sometimes pushed critical

literature to consider that the context of the characterisation of the adversary is essentially a private one (*i.e.* Martin 2009). However, the public importance of these topics cannot be overlooked: if the context of the case is purely private, the approach to it reveals the public value and the importance, within the community, of respecting correct succession criteria. The negative characterisation of the opponent, portrayed as an individual undeserving of obtaining a part of the *oikos* of the deceased because he is incapable of preserving and administering it (establishing relationships of trust and family collaboration), casts a shadow on his suitability as a member of the political community.

Finally, it can be stated that the evidence, not pertinent to the scope of the law, brought forward to demonstrate the legitimate descent and claim to the inheritance of Isaeus's clients, is linked to the inseparable connection between the complementary dimensions of the *oikos* and the *polis* more than those conventionally defined as 'legal', on which the claim to inheritance is based. The two dimensions, private and public, intersect in their sharing of some rites as well as in the importance, for the *polis*, of ensuring competent and balanced management of the *oikos*. Thanks to *Oration VIII* it is possible to analyse from numerous points of view the importance of the sharing of ritual and cultic aspects such as sacrifices and public holidays. The performance in groups of these actions, used as evidential elements in the context of a court cements family and social ties, both inside and outside the *oikos*. As noted by Evans (2004, 24): 'Participation in the cultic democracy defined the citizen's identity as a member of a family of a phratry, of a deme, and of the polis'.

Notes

1 For the textual analysis of the oration I used the annotated edition of the texts of Ferrucci (2005), Edwards (2007), Cobetto Ghiggia (2012), and Griffith-Williams (2013) which is also useful for the glossary on Greek words at the end of the book, and the less recent edition of the text by Wyse (1904), functional above all for the reconstruction of the manuscript tradition and for the detailed commentary on the text. Furthermore, I used the lexical indexes to the Isaic orations by Denommé (1968) and Goligher and Maguiness (1961). Translations in text are taken from Edwards (2007).

2 With the exception of proceedings for violent crimes, the use of testimony became established starting from the 4th century BC (*cf.* Bonner 1979; Humphreys 2007). A legacy of the archaic period, it was the testimony which guaranteed the truthfulness of both a statement (a guarantee given by belonging to a cohesive group) and of written documentation. In virtually all of Isaeus's orations, the testimonies were read by an official (*cf.* Fezzi 2004).

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Chapter 9

How to claim things with rites. Care for the dead and inheritance rights in early modern Europe (and beyond)

Alessandro Buono

This chapter explores the relationship between funerary rites and inheritance claims in early modern Europe, where rites served as a tangible demonstration of kinship, often used to establish the legitimacy of hereditary claims in court. Practices such as paying for requiem masses and taking responsibility for the burial of the deceased were powerful indicators of one's right to inherit, especially in cases where no direct heirs were identified. This concept of 'possession by ritual' is rooted in a legal culture where actions produce and substantiate both kinship and ownership. The chapter centres on an early modern Tuscan case study and extends the analysis beyond early modern Europe, exploring ancient Mediterranean societies and other cultures where similar practices were observed. This broader scope illustrates that the relationship between care for the dead and inheritance rights is found across various societies and eras. Ultimately, the chapter suggests that the link between rites and rights reflects a deeper anthropological understanding of ritual and legal languages, where 'acting as if' can legitimise social status and ownership. This perspective underscores the importance of caring actions, both during and after life, in shaping inheritance claims and maintaining social continuity, highlighting how these practices contribute to the reproduction of social structures and the allocation of entitlements.

The burier is the heir

On 29 April 1674, Anton Bogos, alias Antonio, known as 'the Celibì', died in Livorno, Italy. A wealthy Armenian merchant and shipowner, he had arrived in Tuscany some 20 years earlier and left a large estate but no direct descendants. His daughters had died before him and he had not made a will. Immediately the question arose as to who the rightful heir to those assets was: palaces in Livorno and Pisa, a ship, huge sums of money, furniture, and jewellery (as well as a large quantity of credits, debts,

and legal disputes in many Tuscan courts (Frattarelli Fischer 1998; Pesciatini 1998; Calafat and Santus 2011; Buono 2024).

In early modern Tuscany – as in many European and non-European contexts (Cerutti and Grangaud 2017a; Buono and Gabbiani 2020) – the inheritances of those who died without heirs and without a will were declared 'vacant' (*bona vacantia*) and forfeited by the State treasury. Therefore, the authorities of the Grand Duke of Tuscany hastened to seize the assets, inventoried them, and began investigating who and where the Armenian merchant's legitimate heirs were, if there were any.

Only a few days after the death of Anton Bogos, however, the first claims for those allegedly vacant properties began to arrive in Livorno. No less than six Bogos nephews presented their petition through their solicitors:

> Having become aware [of the death of the Celibì] in Galata of Constantinople, Abraham, Jsach, Jacut, and Huri, sons of the q. Anna, the late sister of the said Celibì, and by Melcum and Xuripsima, sons of the q. Cerchis, the Uterine brother of the said Celibì, claim that the said inheritance is devolved to them *ab intestato*, and that they have accepted it with benefit of inventory.[1]

Having justified their claims through witness statements and written certifications by the ecclesiastical authorities of the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Bishop of the Armenians, these first six alleged heirs, Armenian Christians living in Istanbul, obtained a favourable ruling on 8 November 1675. The judges delegated by the Grand Duke of Tuscany established that they were indeed who they said they were, the nephews of Antonio Bogos, legitimised to inherit *ab intestato.* The inheritance, therefore, was not to be considered 'vacant'.

The claims on Celibì's assets, however, did not end there: unpaid servants and merchants, a Pisan monastery and a crowd of creditors continued to claim recovery of Celibì's debts against the heirs for the subsequent 20 years (Pesciatini 1998; Buono 2024). But the six heirs did not only have to face creditors; only a year after the first judgment, three more of Bogos's alleged nephews appeared. They were Abdullah, the son of his brother Hasan Hagha, who had converted to the Islamic faith; and Ghiul and Mugal, the daughters of Petros, Bogos's consanguineous half-brother, Christians of the Armenian rite. The first was soon excluded: a Muslim could not inherit the property of a Christian who had died on Christian soil. The other two, however, were granted a favourable ruling from the highest courts of the Grand Duchy in 1678: the Florentine Rota, one of those great tribunals whose decisions contribute to creating the jurisprudence of the *Ius Commune Europaeum*, and the Supreme Magistrate, the embodiment of the jurisdiction of the Tuscan Prince (Sbriccoli and Bettoni 1993).

How could a 'vacant' inheritance be claimed in a court in early modern Europe? What evidence could be adduced to prove *possession of the status* of a legitimate heir? The case of Ghiul and Mugal is particularly interesting and was extensively analysed by the judges of the Florentine Rota in 1678. To claim the inheritance of their uncle, the two Armenians had to prove certain facts: first, that Petros was really the brother

of Antonio Bogos; secondly, that at the time of the merchant's death in Livorno, Petros was still alive and had accepted the inheritance (*eredità adita*); and thirdly, that they, Ghiul and Mugal, were indeed Petros's legitimate daughters.

In this chapter, I will focus on the third demonstration: legitimate filiation. The demonstration of filiation, and especially paternity, is something considered to be of great difficulty in a medieval or early modern court. It could well be said that this is not specific to Europe's early modern context: actually, it was only with the development of DNA evidence in the 1980s that it became possible to prove what in early modern courts was essentially based on 'legal presumptions' (Pomata 1994; Hespanha 2015; Bartoloni and Lombardi 2018).

How is legal presumption established? Through the repetition of qualified actions. In the late medieval and early modern legal mentality, in fact, actions reveal people's intentions, their will (*animus*). The words spoken, the way one behaves and acts in front of society are therefore capable of establishing presumptions that can become evidence on which rights can be claimed (see, for example, Herzog 2003 on citizenship or Bassani 2012 on kinship). Until at least the end of the 18th century, proof of kinship (and, more generally, of personal status) had to go through the medieval trio of *nomen*, *tractatus*, *fama*, or what was known as 'possession of status' (*quasi possessione filiationis, quasi possesso della consanguineità, possession d'état, posesión de estado, etc.*): being called kin, and having been treated and publicly reputed by one's neighbours as such, was regarded as sufficient presumption of kinship with all its legal consequences (*e.g.*, right to alimony, inheritance rights, duty of cohabitation and mutual care, *etc.*: Lefebvre-Teillard 2008; Buono 2020; 2023).

Going back to the case at hand, it is no coincidence that the various alleged heirs were all trying to prove that, when he was alive, Anton Bogos 'Celibì' had publicly treated them as relatives and that this had therefore put them in 'quasi-possession' (*i.e. as if* they were in possession of an incorporeal thing) of the personal status of legitimate heirs. The solicitor of one of the heirs, Melcum, says:

> for having been treated as a relative by the Celibì, both in Leghorn and in the Levant, which constitutes him in a quasi-possession of consanguinity, and this for having received him in his house, and honoured him as such, which establishes quasi-possession [...] and this is especially true in our case, which is a question of inheritance rights for having named him as nephew, and being this as public opinion both in Leghorn and in the Levant.[2]

Indeed, any action could establish a presumption of kinship, in particular, actions that demonstrate care and taking responsibility for others. As stated in medieval and early modern European legal sources, all divine, natural, and human laws urged both animals and humans to care for their children. In the *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X the Wise, King of Castile (1221–1284), for example, it was clearly stipulated that parents were to feed, clothe, and shelter their children, just as children were 'naturally' inclined (and requested) to love and respect their parents, and provide for them in their old age (and beyond).[3] Actions of 'care', therefore, were constantly marshalled

in court as proof of kinship by the claimant heirs: it was therefore important to imprint deep in the community's memory the record of these actions, so that they were publicly acknowledged, and, if uncontested, could become 'public voice and fame', later vindicated in a dispute (Buono 2019a; 2024).

What is more, 'caring actions' did not cease with demise. The work of reproduction (Weiner 1980), through which social continuity is continually reconstructed beyond the life cycle of people and things, especially in a society like that of the *ancien régime* where the dead are regarded as an age group among others (Zemon Davis 1997), includes caring for the living as much as for the deceased. This is clearly demonstrated by the case at hand. Listing the various 'urgent conjectures and presumptions' (*urgentes coniecturae, et praesumptiones*) that had convinced the Florentine judges that Ghiul and Mugal were indeed the legitimate daughters of Petros, we find an attestation by the bishop of the Armenians of Nicomedia (present-day İzmit, in Anatolia), dated 4 October 1676:

> The second [presumption] had been deduced from the attestation of the Bishop of the Armenians of Nicomedia, dated October 4, 1125 Armenian style, who deposed that the said Ghiul and Mugal were legitimate daughters of the said Petros, saying again that they are legitimate sisters, and that these [Ghiul and Mugal] entrusted the corpse of their father Petros to burial, which act of burial testifies to the fact that these are legitimate, for this is usually done by legitimate children, but not by natural children, for [legitimate children] can be the legitimate heirs of their father, heirs to whom it is as a rule obligatory to make the burial [...], and legitimate filiation may be proved by the deeds done after the death of the parents, no less than [by those done] during their lives [...].

> And just as the legitimate son [of a father] is presumed to be the one with whom [the father] does the acts that are appropriate to the Father, for Father is said to be the one who performs the paternal acts [...], so correlatively must legitimate Father [of a son] be said of the one who does with him [with the father] the acts that are appropriate to the son, in the same manner as of an heir, who is said to be the one who performs the hereditary acts [...].[4]

Here is the reasoning: Ghiul and Mughal, at the time of their father's death, buried him; it is the legitimate children's duty and not the natural children's, to bury their father; therefore, Ghiul and Mughal are the legitimate daughters of Petros. 'Hereditary acts' are what define the heir, just as 'paternal acts' define the father (and so on). Such acts are capable of proving filiation (but such reasoning could apply to any other social position and status) both during the lifetime and after the death of one of the parties. Therefore, these acts allow appropriation of rights to the things associated with kinship.

The rite defines the heir

In the 16th and 17th centuries, European *ius commune* jurists, unfailingly quoted in the above-mentioned decision of the Florentine Rota, agreed that funerals served as proof of kinship, enabling one to claim rights to patrimony. Giovanni Cefali

(1511/1512–1580/1581) clearly stated that the fact that a woman had been publicly honoured by a man with 'pompous funerals' was sufficient presumption to prove that the latter was her legitimate husband (Cefali 1579, cons. 435, no. 66).[5] Similarly, Marco Antonio Pellegrini (1530–1616), discussing the legitimacy of Ottavio and Leonora, the children of Giovanni Offer and Tullia Ballina, considered their parents' behaviour as evidence (Pellegrini 1608). In Venice, their father and mother were reputed to be legitimately married precisely because 'Tullia was seen walking around the city of Venice, in churches and public places, with honorable garments befitting a married woman'; because she wore her ring both at home and outside 'as married women do, and ran the house with preeminence and honor, as wives do'. Moreover, their children were treated by Giovanni, both before and after Tullia's death, with love, kindness, and compassion (*caritas*), consistently with the treatment expected of one's legitimate offspring.

Marital behaviour had also occurred upon Tullia's death:

> The funeral of said Tullia was sumptuously done by Giovanni, that is, in congruence with the fact that she was his wife, and his house, as is usually done, remained for days and months in mourning, sad and abandoned in rags.[6]

Mourning, the expression of feelings, is an effective way of publicly revealing the bond of kinship that underpins claims to ownership rights. Giovanni's house, by 'dressing in mourning', showed the community that the woman who had died was indeed his lawful wife: later on, this would allow their children to prove that they were legitimate.

Are we simply faced with a scholarly interpretation by professional jurists? Judging by the attention paid to the words and actions performed by social actors in the past, I would say that this is not the case. Men and women of the *ancien régime* were fully aware of the effectiveness of mourning and funeral rituals as a premise for claiming inheritance rights and the estate. The depositions of witnesses in the courts of the *ancien régime* are replete with such attestations: when questioned by the Milanese Magistrate's officials about the legitimacy of the marriage and whether Giulio Litta and Paola Castella cohabited *more uxorio*, a witness stated that he had seen the woman:

> in the act of Giulio's death, when my uncle [the parish priest] gave him the sacred oil in the house of the said Giulio, and she cried, and wept saying 'oh my husband, oh my husband'.[7]

The fact of weeping over the death of her husband at the ritual event of extreme unction demonstrated the *truth of the facts* (Barrientos Grandón 2004): a particularly effective caring action, we might say. Thanks to this action, Paola's children could try to claim Giulio's assets against an opponent who had accused them of being illegitimate and of usurping that property.

In short: the people we see claiming disputed inheritances seem to be fully aware of the 'constitutive' force of their behaviour. In the process of inheritance, devotional activity constitutes 'the sacred, public and ceremonial aspect' of the process of transferring 'legal responsibilities', and therefore ownership rights (among other

responsibilities; Torre 1995, 206). This concept holds true to the extent that we can even reverse the terms of the equation: 'it is not the heir who performs the ritual, but it is the ritual that publicly indicates the heir' (Torre 2017, 163). Early modern men and women in their wills (especially those who had no direct heirs) provided for ritual ceremonials capable of publicly designating the heir and validating him/her in front of their community, offering him/her a powerful weapon of legitimisation against any dispute. In other words, the process of selecting the heir relied on a public demonstration by those among the claimants who paid for the deceased's requiem mass and took control over the succession procedure.

An additional case worthy of scrutiny involves Manuel Soares de Oliveira, a distinguished Portuguese *letrado* and official who rendered services to the King of Castile in the Philippines in the 17th century. Faced with the prospect of his demise without progeny, Manuel resolved to bequeath his substantial real estate and assets, spanning territories between the Philippines and Mexico, to a kinsman named António de Oliveira. In this testamentary disposition, he instituted a *morgado* (entail) in favour of António and his progeny.

However, disagreement ensued between Manuel and António, prompting Manuel, in a subsequent will dated 1674, to disinherit António and designate his very soul as the 'universal heir' (Buono 2019b). In lieu of entailing his possessions under the management of a familial lineage, Manuel's assets underwent a process of 'spiritualisation'. This alternative course sought to confer 'inalienable property' status upon the assets (Weiner 1992; Chauvard *et al.* 2012; Cerutti and Grangaud 2017b; Chauvard 2018), binding them to the discharge of a specific duty – namely, the spiritual welfare of the deceased (Rosa 2012). In accordance with the testator's stipulations, a number of charities were to be instituted and overseen by the influential confraternities of the Misericórdia, operating both in Manuel's hometown of Pereira and in Coimbra.

In a strategic ruse, Manuel Soares de Oliveira designated the confraternities as his testamentary executors, tasking them with overseeing an array of foundations dedicated to caring for his spiritual welfare. These foundations were mandated to perpetually maintain Manuel's spiritual well-being, displayed through the annual celebration of 720 masses for salvation of his soul, until the end of time (at least in the intentions of the testator). A powerful charity, under the direct patronage of the King of Portugal (Sá and Lopes 2008), took the role of custodian, acting as a surrogate 'ritual heir' (I take this concept from the context of early modern Korean ancestral ritual practices, particularly from Martina Deuchler 2015). The role of managing Manuel's vacant estate, initially entrusted to a relative, was now delegated to a charitable foundation.

Crucially outlined in his will, Manuel explicitly stipulated that neither António nor his descendants, nor any of his kin – despite attempts by some to assert their claims with both the King of Castile and the King of Portugal – were to engage in the execution of the will. This prohibition extended specifically to the performance

of religious ceremonies and charitable distributions to the poor, all of which Manuel had meticulously prescribed (Buono 2019b; Lopes 2019). By entrusting the ritualistic aspects of succession to an institutional entity, Manuel aimed to preclude his relatives from making any legitimate claim to his assets.

Funeral rites and inheritance rights in the ancient Mediterranean world

Is the situation described specific to the culture of early modern Europe? As some chapters in this volume show, I think it is fair to say that this way of thinking about the relationship between actions and belonging goes beyond the early modern European context.

Certainly, it can be traced back in the sources of ancient Mediterranean societies. In the lengthy allegations cited by European *ius commune* jurists, references to Roman law obviously abound. In some passages from Ulpianus, for instance, one can find the same concern we saw more than a millennium later beset the testators: preventing the performance of ritual acts, and especially those related to the care of the deceased, from legitimising claims on the deceased's property. Or, on the contrary, forcing someone acting *as if* he was the heir to accept responsibility for succession.

The intimate correlation between the status of heir and the prerogative to conduct funeral rites for the deceased unequivocally establishes the act of burial as a conspicuous display (Finch 2007) of taking such role (acting *as* heir, performing *hereditary actions*).[8] This reminds us of an anthropology of actions that is very different from the one that has emerged in Europe since the 18th century. As the distinguished Roman legal historian Yan Thomas stated, in the objectivist view of Roman law, the agent is 'held' by his action, and the obligation binds the subject as an external bond (Thomas 1977, 71–72).

Potential heirs who had not yet formally accepted the inheritance refrained from overseeing the interment of the paterfamilias due to apprehensions that such an act would be construed as taking the role of heir.[9] Only members of the *familia*, an entity comprising rites, assets, living people, and ancestors, had the right to be buried in the hereditary estate. Disinherited individuals could not, and freedmen (*liberti*), unless elevated to the status of heirs, were similarly excluded.[10] Given the imperative to promptly arrange the burial of the deceased, even prior to a thorough evaluation of the desirability of accepting the inheritance, an alleged heir should have, as a precautionary measure, explicitly stated that such actions were conducted 'out of pity', to pre-empt any presumption of acceptance of the inheritance, based solely on the act of burial.[11]

Such reasoning by Roman jurists in the first centuries of the Christian era – which late medieval and early modern European jurists would re-interpret and use in their disputes and *consilia* – does not seem to be specific to the Roman legal civilisation. As Sarah Humphreys (1980, 98) stated, in classical Greece 'a man who intended to put in a claim to an estate also tried to take charge of the deceased owner's funeral'. A

case in point, in support of this statement, can be found in the orations of that Attic orator, Isaeus, from whom we can most readily glean information about hereditary disputes in 4th century BC Athens (among the various orations, see in particular, Isaeus II, IV, and VI; the same could be said of Demosthenes, also quoted concerning this matter by Humphreys 1980, 98–99). In this regard, the dispute that arose around the inheritance of Kiron – thoroughly analysed in Angelica Tortorella's chapter in this book – is particularly interesting.[12]

The speaker (Kiron's grandchild), defended by Isaeus, builds his claim precisely on the fact that the ritual actions that Kiron had carried out in his lifetime, as well as those that his grandchild did after Kiron's death, unequivocally demonstrated his status as the rightful heir. None of this was disputed by the claimant, a fact that, in the eyes of the speaker, revealed Kiron's intention to recognise him as his 'material' and 'ritual' heir. The ritual legitimation of the heir, which begins in life, continues in death, and is significantly qualified by Isaeus as a 'right to bury the dead' (Isaeus 1962, VIII, 24). Who the legitimate heir is, in other words, is demonstrated by he who possesses that right and one proves to possess it by exercising it undisputedly.

> Furthermore, gentlemen, the conduct of Diocles [the supporter of Isaeus's client rival, who was accused of having fabricated the whole case in bad faith] on the occasion of our grandfather's death clearly shows that we were acknowledged as the grandchildren of Ciron. I presented myself, accompanied by one of my relatives, a cousin of my father, to convey away the body with the intention of conducting the funeral from my own house. I did not find Diocles in the house, and I entered and was prepared to remove the body, having bearers with me for this purpose. When, however, my grandfather's widow requested that the funeral should take place from that house, and declared that she would like herself to help us to lay out and deck the corpse, and entreated me and wept, I acceded to her request and went to my opponent and told him in the presence of witnesses that I would conduct the funeral from the house of the deceased, since Diocles' sister had begged me to do so. Diocles, on hearing this, made no objection, but asserting that he had actually bought some of the requisites for the funeral and had himself paid a deposit for the rest, demanded that I should pay him for these, and arranged to recover from me the cost of the objects which he had purchased and to produce those who had received the deposit for the objects for which he alleged that he had paid a deposit. Immediately afterwards he casually remarked that Ciron had left nothing at all, although I had not said a single word about his money. Yet had I not been Ciron's grandson, he would never have made these arrangements with me, but would rather have said, 'Who are you? What right have you to carry out the burial? I do not know you: you shall not set foot in the house.' This is what he ought to have said, and what he has now instigated others to say. As it was, he said nothing of the kind, but only told me to bring the money next morning (Isaeus 1962, VIII, 21–24).

In Ancient Greece, the reciprocal relationship between fathers and sons, ascendants and descendants, was conceived of as a bond of mutual responsibility, capable of building moral/legal/ritual obligations based on the mutual duty/right of care. Isaeus, on behalf of his client, makes this explicitly clear through an analogy that his audience – but we have seen that the same could have been easily understood by

a jury in ancient Rome as well as by an early modern European tribunal – evidently perceived as significant:

> if my grandfather were alive and in want of the necessities of life, we, and not our opponent, would be liable to prosecution for neglect. For the law enjoins us to support our parents, meaning by 'parents' father, mother, grandfather, and grandmother, and their father and mother, if they are still alive; for they are the source of the family, and their property is transmitted to their descendants, and so the latter are bound to support them even if they have nothing to bequeath to them (Isaeus 1962, VIII, 32).

Engaging in the care of both the living and the deceased entitles one to enjoy their property and use it for fulfilling this responsibility. This responsibility becomes even more pronounced when hereditary lands serve as the final resting place for ancestors. This phenomenon is evident not only in the ancient Mediterranean world but also in early modern Europe, as exemplified by the close links between entails and chapels, family tombs, and monastic foundations, devotional altars, and burials of confraternity members, *etc.*

How far can we extend the historical connection between ritual responsibility, caregiving, and ownership rights? Egyptologist Sandra Lippert, in her entry on inheritance in the *UCLA Encyclopaedia of Egyptology*, emphasises this relationship:

> The strong connection between the burial of the deceased and the inheritance of his property is already visible in the *Inscription of Tjenti* of the 5th Dynasty [2500–2350 BC]. But from at least the Second Intermediate Period [1800–1570 BC] onwards, when the injunction 'Bury him, succeed into his inheritance!' is attested on a ceramic bowl in the Pitt Rivers Museum, this connection took on a life of its own, ultimately resulting in a law (Nims 1948, 243; Lippert 2020, 795–6), 'The property is given to the one who buries,' cited in P. Cairo CG 58092 recto and referred to obliquely in Ostracon Petrie 16 of the 20th Dynasty [1185–1078 BC]. (Lippert 2013, 4)

More than one source confirms this custom: 'Let the effects be given to him who [cared for] the interment, says the Pharaoh's rule', is the translation offered by Allam (2001, 160).[13]

In the Papyrus Cairo CG 58092, in fact, the author explicitly invokes the precedent of 'a son, who provided coffins and saw to his mother's funeral, inherited her estate to the exclusion of others' (Jansen and Pestman 1968). This reference serves as a basis with which to challenge the claims of his siblings, emphasising that he alone had undertaken responsibility for his mother's burial. The effectiveness of this precedent is further underscored in another source, datable to the 12th–11th centuries BC, where the care provided at the time of death legitimises the inheritance even for 'outsiders or distant relatives':

> In Ostracon Petrie 16, a man was alleged to have furnished a deceased woman with a coffin; hence he got her part in a building (Jansen and Pestman 1968, 153). Then, his son pretends to this part, but her daughter is challenging him. As no relationship point is indicated between the two parties, the father and son might have been outsiders (or distant relatives)

who put forward their claim and supported it by quoting the aforementioned precedent. (Allam 2001, 160)

As we can see in the corpus of documents known as *Letters to the Dead* (analysed by Gianluca Miniaci in this volume), the association between taking responsibility for the living and burying the dead, and the administration of his/her assets, was equally established:

Said by Teti-aa, son of Neny: 'Meniupu came as a fugitive. The father of Mut-...nu (?) and his wife Teti feeds him. He dies and then my mother buries him. It was her husband Neny who said to her: "Bury him and inherit from him"'. (Hsieh 2022, 296; see also Miniaci 2014, 69–71).

Obviously, the aim here is not to establish a direct derivation, as if individuals in early modern Europe were aware of the practices and languages of legitimisation from the ancient Mediterranean world. Instead, it is to observe a certain way of conceptualizing relationships between people and things based on caregiving responsibilities.

Concluding remarks

This chapter is part of a broader reflection that I am undertaking alongside two colleagues on the theme of the relationship between things and people, examined through the lens of responsibility (Buono *et al.* 2024). The interactions between people and things, and between things themselves, always entail a responsibility for taking charge. The reproduction of the world is not an automatic process; it demands continuous efforts, encompassing both the material (Hodder 2014) and the cultural dimensions (Weiner 1980). This ongoing labour, embodied by repeated actions, establishes rights and duties for those providing care and those receiving it. The connection between caring for the departed and appropriating their assets, in this context, is a compelling instance for examining the broader issue of how society undergoes continual reproduction despite the transient nature of human beings and all things in the world.

Late medieval and early modern legal culture, as previously observed, inclined towards treating personal rights and statuses as 'incorporeal things', akin to possessions one can quasi-own. This was evident in the case of filiation, characterised as something one utilises and possesses (*possessio*) rather than merely holding title to. This perspective is firmly entrenched in legal doctrine and court proceedings and acknowledged by social actors in the past. Indeed, in early modern European society, all relationships between entities and individuals can be framed in terms of possession. Legal historians have effectively demonstrated this concept in examining relationships such as that between lord and servant (Conte 1996) or between husband and wife (Madero 2015), both conceptualised as a *ius in re aliena* – a right held within the body of the other, similar to an easement (*e.g.*, right of way, grazing right, *etc.*), that one can have over a neighbour's field. This possessory perspective extends to the

realm of jurisdiction, both secular and ecclesiastical, characterised by a possessory 'physics of power' (Madero 2016).

Well-known is the example of the 'acts of possession' made by the European *conquistadores* in the lands they designated as the 'New' World, an alleged *terra nullius* (Fitzmaurice 2007; 2014; Herzog 2015; 2021; Greer 2018), to be occupied by means of those same actions that the purchaser of a land could have made on the property he took possession of in the Old World. A Genoese praetor, in a jurisdictional cross-border dispute in northern Italy, for example, acted in this way in 1593:

> The pretor stand, hoe, carve, cut the grass and the fruit of the branches, walking hand in hand with me the notary, drinking at the source, eating and sitting peacefully and quietly without anyone contradicting it.[14]

Likewise, Juan Diaz de Solís, about to 'discover' and take possession of new lands in the name of the King of Castile, received in 1514 these instructions:

> The way you should have in taking possession of the lands and parts that you discover, is that you have to do – in the presence of a notary and as many witnesses as you can, and the most renowned ones – an act of possession in our name, by cutting trees and branches, ... erecting some small building ... and making a gallows there, and making sure that someone ask for justice, and you as our captain and judge issue a sentence and determine it.[15]

The effectiveness of these ritual actions was so profound that, as previously discussed, engaging in behaviours *as if* one were legitimately entitled to do something was enough to establish a legal presumption of possession. Hence the constant emphasis on the lack of opposition in the documentation of possession-related acts (Bastías Saavedra 2020). In essence, as the renowned jurist Jacopo Menochio (1532–1607) re-iterated, even if actions are deemed 'fictitious', they are nonetheless effective in creating rights. Even *fictitious* actions produce *truth*:

> For example, we see that the truth is produced by a fictitious act (*ex actu ficto verum produci*). Just as in a pact, although there has been a delivery in a certain way fictitious, nevertheless the possession transferred by it is said to be real possession [...] in the same way, from the fictitious act of transfer of inheritance, the real inheritance is obtained [...] just as from putative marriage legitimate children are born [...].[16]

Once again, Yan Thomas has highlighted this very well: *fictio iuris* is a procedure, the most proper *modus operandi* of law (Thomas 2016, 17) but it should not be understood as 'acting falsely' but rather as 'ritually regarded as real' (Spanò and Vallerani 2016, 99). In this, legal action and ritual/religious action share the same power: that of constituting reality, of giving life to a *subjunctive reality*, 'the creation of an order *as if* it were truly the case' (Seligman *et al.* 2008, 20; *cf.* the classical Austin 1962).

Put another way, law, religion, are one of the many ways (and certainly among the most powerful) in which human beings construct what Maurice Bloch calls the *transcendental social.* In contrast to other hominids, such as chimpanzees, which show the ability to create complex social organisations, humans have the ability to create

'essentialized social roles and groups', *i.e.* to go beyond the *transactional social* and build 'imagined communities' such as 'a descent group or a nation' (Bloch 2008, 2056). According to Bloch, 'essentialized roles exist separately from the individual who holds them. Rights and duties apply to the role and not to the individual. Thus, a person who is a professor should act 'as a professor' irrespective of the kind of person he/she is at any particular stage in the transactional social game' (Bloch 2008, 2056).

But precisely because rights and duties belong to statuses and not to individuals, then, acting *as if* (especially in a society such as the early modern European one, in which, as we said, rights are conceived of *as if* they were *things*) allows those who demonstrate, through their actions that they are acting consistently with their role, to embody that role and possess it. As Max Gluckman (1963) would say, the process of transforming a *fact* into a *fact-in-law* occurs when there is recognition that the person is behaving like a 'reasonable man' in his position would have done.

Ritual action is thus particularly effective in ensuring the reproduction of the transcendental social, in responding to what seems to be a pressing cultural concern of human beings: ensuring continuity beyond the cycle of life and the decay of all worldly entities (Weiner 1980). Therefore, whoever upholds the reproduction of a transcendental community, and acts as a member, can rightfully claim membership in this community, along with all the rights and duties associated with it.

Notes

1 Essendosi risaputo in Galata di Costantinopoli da Abraham, Jsach, Jacut, et Huri figli della q. Anna sorella germana di detto Celibì, e da Melcum e Xuripsima figli del q. Cerchis fratello Uterino del med.o Celibì e pretendendo tutti essereli devoluta ab intestato la detta Eredità, hanno la med.a accettato con legge, e benefitio d'inventario» Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Auditore dei benefici ecclesiastici, 5683, Eredità Celibì: [s.d. s.l.] Informatione per li ss.ri Muyssart, e La Fontana ne mm e nn Contro il Fisco, e Gran Camera Ducale.

2 Per esser stato dal Celibì tanto in Livorno che in Levante il s.r Melcum trattato come parente, il che lo constituisce in un quasi possesso di consanguineità e questo per con haverlo ricevuto in sua casa, et honorato come tale qual quasi possesso opra [...] e questo ha specialmente luogo nel caso nostro, che è di domanda di heredità per haverlo nominato nipote, et esserne di ciò come opinione tanto in Livorno che in Levante'. Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Auditore, 5683, Eredità Celibì: Doc 7. [s.d. s.l.] Informazione per li ss.ri Muyssart, e La Fontana ne mm e nn Contro il Fisco, e Gran Camera Ducale.

3 Partida IV, Título XIX: 'Como deben los padres criar a sus fijos, et otrosi de como los fijos deben pensar de los padres quando les fuere meester' *Las Siete Partidas glosadas por el Licenciado Gregorio López*, Salamanca, 1555.

4 'Secunda desumebatur ex attestatione Episcopi Armeni Nicomediae die 4. Octobris 1125. stylo Armeno deponentis dictas Ghiul, et Mugal esse filias legitimas dicti Petri, dum dicit eas esse Sorores legiti-mas, easque sepulturae tradidisse cadaver eiusdem Petri eorum patris, qui actus sepelendi eas esse legitimas arguebat, cum hoc fieri soleat a filiis legitimis, non autem a naturalibus, cum legitimi Patris haeredes esse possint, ad quos haeredes obligatio funerandi regulariter transit [...] et ex actibus gestis post mortem parentum non minus, quam in eorum vita legitimam filiationem probari posse [...] et sicut filius legitimus is praesu-mitur illius, qui cum eo facit actus, qui conveniunt Patri, cum Pater dicatur ille, qui actus parternos gerit [...] sic correlative is Pater legitimus debet dici illius, qui cum eo facit actus, qui conveniunt filio,

ad instar haeredis, qui dicitur ille, qui actus facit haereditarios'. *Selectarum Rotæ florentinæ decisionum thesaurus*, Firenze, Ex Typographia Bonducciana, 1783, t. X, decisio XXIII, p. 261.

5 'Undecima coniectura sesumitur ex honoratis ac pomposis funeralibus, quibus domina Lucietta fuit sepulta, ut etiam per omnes testes. Sicut enim matrimonij est praesumptio, quando vir mulierem induit, et eam superstitem ad Ecclesiam mittit. [...] Idem est dicendum, quando tandem defunctam honorifice mittit ad Ecclesiam, cum eadem ratio militet [...]'.

6 'Funeralia istius D. [Tullia] fuerunt a D. Ioanne sumptuose facta, congruentia inquam eius vxori, et domus sua, sicut fieri solet, stetit per dies et menses lugubris et moesta destituta pannis'.

7 'In quell'atto che detto signor Giulio moriva che mio zio gli diede l'olio santo in casa di esso signor Giulio, et lei gridava, et piangeva dicendo "o mio marito, o mio marito". Archivio di Stato di Milano, Finanze p.a. 674: 1616, 22 March. Deposition of «Antonio Tizzoni f.q. Joseph abitante in loco Cassani Magnaghi, territorio di Gallarate».

8 Digest, Book 11. Tit. 7. 11.7.0. De religiosis et sumptibus funerum et ut funus ducere liceat. (*Concerning religious places, the expenses of funerals, and the right to conduct the same*) (see the online edition published by the Université de Grenoble (https://droitromain.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/Corpus/digest.htm); *cf.* also <http://dbtvm1.ilc.cnr.it/digesto/>).

9 D.11.VII.4 'Scriptus heres prius quam hereditatem adeat patrem familias mortuum inferendo locum facit religiosum, nec quis putet hoc ipso pro herede eum gerere: finge enim adhuc eum deliberare de adeunda hereditate. Ego etiam si non heres eum intulerit, sed quivis alius herede cessante vel absente vel verente ne pro herede gerere videatur, tamen locum religiosum facere puto: plerumque enim defuncti ante sepeliuntur, quam quis heres eis existet. Sed tunc locus fit religiosus, cum defuncti fuit: naturaliter enim videtur ad mortuum pertinere locus in quem infertur, praesertim si in eum locum inferatur, in quem ipse destinavit: usque adeo, ut etiamsi in legatum locum sit illatus ab herede, illatione tamen testatoris fit religiosus, si modo in alium locum tam oportune inferri non potuit'.

10 D.11.VII.6 'Vel quod pater familias iure hereditario adquisiit. Sed in utroque heredibus quidem ceterisque successoribus qualescumque fuerint licet sepeliri et mortuum inferre, etiamsi ex minima parte heredes ex testamento vel ab intestato sint, licet non consentient alii. Liberis autem cuiuscumque sexus vel gradus etiam filiis familiae et emancipatis idem ius concessum est, sive extiterint heredes sive sese abstineant. Exheredatis autem, nisi specialiter testator iusto odio commotus eos vetuerit, humanitatis gratia tantum sepeliri, non etiam alios praeter suam posteritatem inferre licet. Liberti autem nec sepeliri nec alios inferre poterunt, nisi heredes extiterint patrono, quamvis quidam inscripserint monumentum sibi libertisque suis fecisse: et ita Papinianus respondit et saepissime idem constitutum est'.

11 D.11.VII.14.8 'Plerique filii cum parentes suos funerant, vel alii qui heredes fieri possunt, licet ex hoc ipso neque pro herede gestio neque aditio praesumitur, tamen ne vel miscuisse se necessarii vel ceteri pro herede gessisse videantur. Solent testari pietatis gratia facere se sepulturam. Quod si supervacuo fuerit factum, ad illud se munire videntur, ne miscuisse se credantur, ad illud non, ut sumptum consequantur: quippe protestantur pietatis gratia id se facere. Plenius igitur eos testari oportet, ut et sumptum possint servare'.

12 As Anna Anguissola and Angelica Tortorella rightly pointed out to me, an important difference between the case of 4th century BC Athens and the European or colonial world of the early modern age, however, concerns the fact that the Athenian court was composed of citizens with no legal training. Nonetheless, what I am interested in emphasising is the fact that we can find a similar way of reasoning, which gives actions a power to ground and prove rights over things and people. I thank the two colleagues for their readings and criticism.

13 We do not know if the papyrus refers to an actual 'Pharaoh's rule' or to an oracle dictated by a deified pharaoh. Therefore, Lippert and Allam's interpretation must certainly be taken with caution. I would like to thank Gianluca Miniaci for his invaluable help in reading these sources, and I refer to his chapter for a more in-depth analysis.

14 'Prefactus Mag.cus D. Pretor stetit ac fodi et incidi ac secari fecit erbam et fagum ramos, deambulando per manum aprehensus per me notario, ad fontes bibendo comedendo ac sedendo pacifice et quiete et nemine contradicente videntibus nonnullis hominibus landensibus Strepeti ville Complani, et non contradicentibus et presertim dum hec agebantur in fonte vocato fontana Zemella aderat multitudo hominum ville Casalis Iurisdictionis Complani parum procul quantum esset medium lapidis iactum videntium audientium et non contradicentium imo consentium et permittentium [...]' (Raggio 1996, 137). To Osvaldo Raggio, I believe, must be given the merit of having well highlighted how a wholly "culturalist" reading of the *marvelous acts of possessions* of the New World (Greenblatt 1991) failed to detect the profound jurisdictional significance that those acts had.

15 'La manera que habéis de tener en tomar de la posesión de las tierras e partes que descubriéredes ha de ser que estando vos en la tierra, o parte que descubriéredes, hagáis ante escribano público y el más número de testigos que pusiéredes, e los más conocidos que hobiere, un auto de posesión en nuestro nombre, cortando árboles e ramas, e cabando o haciendo, si hobiere disposición, algún pequeño edificio, e que sea en parte donde haya algún cerro señalado o árbol grande, e decir cuántas leguas está de la mar, poco más o menos, e a qué parte, e qué señas tiene, e hacer allí una horca, e que algunos pongan demanda ante vos, e como nuestro capitán e juez lo sentenciéis e determinéis, de manera que en todo toméis la dicha posesión; la cual ha de ser por aquella parte donde la tomáredes, e por todo su partido e provincia o isla, e dello sacaréis testimonio signado del dicho escribano'. *Instruccion que dió el Rey á Juan Diaz de Solís* (24.11.1514). *Collección de los viajes y descubrimientos ... Por don Martín Fernández de Navarrete*, Tómo III, Madrid, 1829 (see Morales Pardón 1955, 32).

16 'Quemadmodum videmus ex actu ficto verum produci ut in constituto quod etsi fictam quadam traditionem habeat possessio tamen eo translata vera et propria possessio dicitur [...] sic ex actu ficto delationis haereditatis vera et propria haereditas quaeritur [...] sic ex putativo matrimonio filii nascuntur legitimi [...] sic ergo dicendum et in casu nostro'. Menochio 1690[1569], Quaestio LXXXIX (p. 250). Quibus probationis filiatio probetur, et de partuum tempore plura hactenus non explicata, enucleantur

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Afterword

Chapter 10

Biographies of place and the significance of place-value

John Chapman and Bisserka Gaydarska

A key insight that has emerged within archaeology in the last two decades is the inter-connectedness of people, places, and objects, as demonstrated in the Identity Triangle. This has expanded our interest in the biographies of people to include not only object biographies (the birth, life, and death of, for instance, a polished stone axe) but also place-biographies (such as the various uses to which a place is put and how later uses build upon earlier uses in often creative ways). This means that the theorisation of place and, especially, the key aspect of place-value, is central to discussions of abandoned places. Recursive connections between people, places, and objects will be explored in a sequence of case-studies from the workshop, which we hope will shed new light on abandoned places in general.

Introduction

'I am a citizen of Pisa'. 'You are visiting from Firenze'. 'She was born in Lucca'. 'We support Inter Milan'. 'Every year they attend the Burning Man festival'. Five places – five identities. We may not know these persons as (in)dividuals but we have already formed in our minds' eye an image of an aspect or aspects of their *persona* – what makes them distinctive from persons associated with another place. Anthropological insights confirm these first impressions. Robinson (1989) discusses pre-Columbian Amerindian groups in whose languages there are no separate words for 'person' or 'place' – only a portmanteau word meaning 'person-place'. Wilson (1988) identified the moral force of coming from a specific place, in contrast to the nomad or traveller of no fixed abode, who has no moral standing at all for settled communities. It is hard to deny the significance of place in the formation of personal identities.

Indeed, examples of famous materials from particular places make equivalent links, whether the bluestones from the Preseli Mountains used in the construction of one phase of Stonehenge (Parker Pearson *et al.* 2022), the silver from the Classical mine of Lavrion in the Peloponnese (Jones 1982), amber from the Baltic Sea (Beck *et al.* 2003),

marble from Roman quarries (Hirt 2010), or even Parma ham. Even though we may not know the names of those working in such-and-such a place to produce its famous product, some of these persons – though not necessarily slaves working in mines and quarries – would have been known at the time of use and gained a reputation from the place, the quality of the material, and the skills they had developed to fashion the object. In a parallel sense, Munn (1986) recognised that the fame of (in)dividual shells exchanged in the recent Melanesian *kula* shell exchange network were indivisible from the reputation of those persons who had owned the shells and vice versa. Such recursive connections between people, places, and objects are demonstrated in the Identity Triangle (Chapman and Gaydarska 2007; Fig. 10.1) and lie at the heart of this chapter, which we hope will put the papers delivered at the Pisa workshop into a context of place.

Just as the attribution of the ham to Parma gives it a certain value and the annual visit to Burning Man helps to create a person's significance, so the value of a place becomes part of that place's identity (Chapman 1998). Place-identity is recursively linked to the time of that place, with the changing valency of place-value related to the length of time which the place has been used and for what purposes (for full discussions of the concept of 'place-value', see Chapman 1998: 2012). In summary, the key question to be posed for each of the case-studies presented at Pisa is Tuan's (1977) question: 'What time is this place?'. Tuan was at pains to emphasise that not only is the significance of a place dependent upon the person interacting with that place but that place-value is very much in the eye of the beholder. A good example of this view is Shields's (1991) presentation of the place-value of Brighton on the south coast of England from several viewpoints: the traditional middle-aged visitor to the Royal Pavilion; the Mods and Rockers fighting pitched battles on the beach; the homeless folk sleeping rough under the pier; and the family with four children enjoying the pleasures of a day on the beach. The reputation of those Mods who influenced the outcome of a famous victory over the Rockers in 1982 would have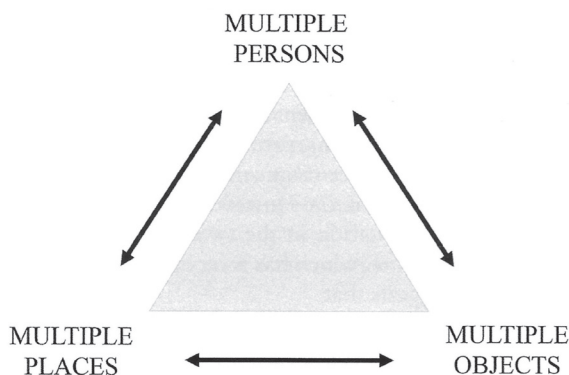 spread far and wide, staying with the victors for decades and shaping their later lives. Equally, the ability of a visitor to the Royal Pavilion to interweave the history of the place with their own personal recollections marked their cultural accomplishment (Bourdieu's educational capital), for example at dinner-parties.

There is thus a temporal sense to the accumulation of place-value, with long-lasting sites and monuments gaining significance through the performative experience of multiple temporalities. It could be argued

MULTIPLE
PERSONS

MULTIPLE
PLACES

MULTIPLE
OBJECTS

Fig. 10.1. The identity triangle (source: Chapman and Gaydarska 2007, fig. 1.2).

that one of the key, yet under-stated, reasons for the long-term significance of Stonehenge through five building phases and two millennia was the consistent growth of place-value with every century and each plan modification (Chippindale 2012). The notion of a place-biography becomes an integrating concept by which we can better understand the interactions of persons and objects with that place.

In a workshop devoted to the abandonment of buildings, monuments, and places, we have focused on a late stage – perhaps not necessarily the final stage – of that place-biography. It is impossible to understand that late/final stage without a keener appreciation of the formative stages of the place-biography as well as a more nuanced realisation of the trajectory of a place's place-value. Although the unknown future may hold potential for the upcycling of monuments or material culture in a re-contextualised iteration of place-value, there can be little doubt that, in the short term at least, abandonment and loss led to a diminution of place-value, if perhaps rarely its complete obliteration. Here the recursive relation between people, objects, and places – often cited in positive terms – can have a negative effect, with the scattering of people combining with the destruction of objects and the abandonment of a sacred place to produce a decline in place-value; a decline sometimes offset by a strengthening in cultural memory. An example would be the abandonment of upland cave sanctuaries on Minoan Crete although the figurine fragments typically deposited there continue to be found in later occupations of the palaces to which they were most closely associated (Peatfield 1992).

Another approach to recursive relations has rarely been considered in terms of negative effects. This is the so-called 'dynamic nominalist' approach developed by Rorty (1989) and Hacking (1995) as a form of agency theory influenced by Foucault and utilised in prehistoric archaeology (Blake 1999; Chapman 2000 34–37). The core notion is that categories of people came into existence at the same time as kinds of people emerged to fit these categories in a recursive interaction. Foucault's (1973) example sees soldiers in the early modern period in Europe as becoming different kinds of people from medieval soldiers because of new institutional forms of discipline and uniforms. This means that agency and structure come together in the formation of identities through the practice of self-description through categorisation. Both positive and negative outcomes of this process can be seen in Dace Dzenovska's study of post-Communist – capitalist late 20th century AD Latvian–Russian borderland settlements. The 'positive' sense of the change of people's status from 'residents' to 'owners' interacted with the change of status of the buildings from 'personal' to 'private' to create a new economic context. By contrast, the decline in the need for the empty houses reinforced the absence of cultural memory in those who had moved out, creating a new, alienated social context. The dynamic nominalist approach may be strengthened by what we take to be some of the first discussions of negative outcomes.

We now turn to some examples of abandonment and (re-)appropriation discussed at the workshop to understand how place-value made a difference to the narratives presented there. The vast majority of the papers related to the creation of place,

whether directly (*e.g.*, rock inscriptions in otherwise 'natural' places in Egyptian borderlands: paper presented by Pascal Vernus) or indirectly (*e.g.*, the material record in the form of objects or archives: this volume, papers by Miniaci and Viscomi). We have identified two recurrent themes in the presentations, each related to Tuan's fundamental question and each producing changes in place-value: spatial scales of abandonment and appropriation and temporality, memory, and connections. We begin with a consideration of the spatial scales of abandonment and appropriation.

Spatial scales of abandonment and appropriation

The only workshop contribution that approached the origins of place-value in depth was Vernus's paper on ancient Egypt, in which he enunciated the critical Egyptian distinction between landscape features and objects as pristine, divine creations as opposed to monuments and buildings as human products. Vernus moved between the landscape scale and the individual building, showing the power of the Pharaoh to create boundaries using inscribed stelae to 'domesticate' unused areas of the landscape and to lay claim, again with stelae, to islands newly formed by natural riverine processes in the Nile. These Pharaonic interventions were as decisive in adding place-value to these landscape elements as were the additions of rock inscriptions to rock outcrops or the names of divine manifestations to striking or unusual landscape features such as pyramid-shaped hills. The history of the Giza sphinx showed how the transformation of a natural hill into a monument and its uncovering and subsequent reshaping and inscription after burial under sand could change a pristine, divine product into a famous artefact with redoubled place-value. In each of these cases, it was the fame of the place that recursively reflected upon the Pharaoh whose agency of transformation was equally important in the new creation.

Zooming in to the site scale, we can note that one of the Pharaoh's main duties was the care of the wide range of temples in his territory, comparable to the moral duty of the restoration of earlier tombs. These duties were solely a Pharaonic responsibility until the Middle Kingdom, when private individuals started to restore sacred spaces. The by-product of these private initiatives was the partaking of these individuals in Pharaonic fame and divine authority but, spatially, this led to a differentiation of the place-value of sacred space which now involved a wider association of diverse persons. Appropriation of any such sacred structure inevitably played into, if not directly exploited, the accumulated place-value of earlier associations.

The spatial relationships between residential areas, public areas, and the urban mortuary zone have long been a special area of study in Pharaonic archaeology (Gsell 1901; Stone and Stirling 2007). In two of the workshop studies of long-lived Egyptian cemeteries, the phenomenon recently defined by Rous (2019) as 'upcycling' had profound impacts on the urban landscape. In contrast to the more neutral term 'recycling' and the more ideological term 'spoliation', as in Rous's (2019) examples from ancient Athens, 'upcycling' emphasises the dynamic transformation of older

materials into newer structures whose visibility enabled the creation of landscape meaning and memory-building (see below). In Érika Ramos's workshop presentation, the earlier New Kingdom cemeteries and monumental tombs were shown to be characterised by a strong place-value which emerged recursively with the onset of elites. Any upcycling of the fine stonework of the earlier structures, whether through collection from damaged buildings or by direct appropriation from standing buildings, increased the place-value of the new mortuary foci, even though it occurred up to a millennium later. Ramos is surely correct in her claim that the spatial re-organisation of the cemeteries played a major role in reshaping social relations. It would be interesting to learn more of the relationships of proximity between old and new tombs, their degree of inter-visibility, the architectural echoes in the later structures, and the visual contrasts between new and old building materials.

In Anna Anguissola's study (Chapter 3) of the Hierapolis cemeteries, the scalar contrast between the 'global' and the 'local' appears, with changes in the totality of the mortuary space, with probably varying place-values for different urban cemeteries for the different relations each had with the urban core. A key point for the Hierapolis cemeteries was John Barrett's (1994) spatial observation, made in connection with sites in general, that the initial form of the site was rarely the same as its final form observed today and that there was no guarantee that the site would evolve in a particular direction. Each temporal phase of the Hierapolis cemeteries set the stage for the future growth of the mortuary space by defining the space available for new building, any pressure on space and therefore the need for changing existing structures in response to the growth or decline of the urban population. It was this 'global' spatial trajectory, with its overall place-values, that was in interaction with the use, transformation, and upcycling of local space which was appropriated regularly over a period of many centuries (see below) and through which people developed their own dynamics of place-value. On many occasions, the family appropriating the tomb redefined its surrounding plot as a clearer demonstration of their own identity. One aspect of changing place-value concerned the opportunities for the insertion of stone seats which not only allowed contemplation at times of emotional visits but also enabled families to memorialise the deceased through the personalised inscriptions on the seats.

A recurrent theme of the workshop contributions was the notion that abandonment of landscapes, settlements, and structures created not only loss but also opportunities for future growth and spatial change. However, the most pertinent question is opportunities for whom? Nonetheless, it would be otiose to deny that such loss often destroyed hard-earned, cumulative place-value. A classic case of the loss of place-value was Dzenovska's presentation on her study of the Latvian–Russian borderland communities where the collapse of social relations sustaining community identity and place-value went hand-in-hand with the abandonment of buildings with no roles in the harsh, capitalist economic realities. In a drastic loss of place-value, the names and locations of some villages have even been removed from new maps of

the area, creating a phenomenon comparable to that of deserted medieval European villages (Dyer and Jones 2010). The transformation of Soviet-era 'personal' property, connected to the use-value of houses within a structure of communal land use, into post-Soviet 'private property' has had devastating effects on local societies, who have also suffered from the lack of authentic rituals of ownership in a capitalist economy. Dzenovska seems to offer little hope of opportunities for restoration of personal dignity and personal and place-value away from alienated land and buildings.

Unsurprisingly, the opportunities for growth and change tend to favour imperialist victors, such as the Romans in the Old World and the Spanish in the New World. When Chiara Tommasi (Chapter 2) discusses the massive changes in a city newly conquered by the Romans and in that city's former territory, she is not talking about new opportunities for the conquered population, although the survival of their temples and the successful incorporation of their gods into the Roman pantheon through *euocatio* helped to assure future stability for the conquerors. The local populace must have felt a massive loss of place-value, until and unless some kind of acceptance of Roman lifeways provided alternative possibilities. Tommasi discusses the *symbolic* nullification of the conquered city's sacred boundaries but we would be interested to discover what actually happened to those boundaries on the ground and who was affected?

Alcira Dueñas's presentation demonstrated how the rich tapestry of the incorporation of Andean landscapes into the Spanish Empire opened up the possibilities for the amassing of wealth and profit for the *conquistadores* and Philip II back at home, with the sale of disposed Indian lands particularly benefitting the Spanish state. What came across strongly from this research was the change from a pre-conquest dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets, with land acquiring use-value and a range of vertically differentiated, often commonly owned, zones producing a wide range of foodstuffs from water, pastures, groves, and forests, to a nucleated village settlement pattern, controlled by the Spanish who forced the Indians to live in the villages. Village boundaries were defined through Christian ceremonies and the placing of stone cairns in a possibly native tradition, while the extortion of Indian common land provided new 'resources' for the conquerors. In the same process, place-value changed from the use-value of land and houses in hamlets to the economic classification of 'resources' depending on the fertility of the land and the distribution of minerals – a place-value based on the value of silver coinage in Iberia. There is an implied dynamic nominalist narrative in the interaction between the removal of their land from the natives and their transformation from 'residents' into 'citizens' (albeit landless 'citizens'). Dueñas does not emphasise any possibilities for the Indian populations, whose sense of place was seemingly lost without compensation.

In his long-term study of a Sicilian community, Viscomi (Chapter 5) analyses the mutual constitution of people and land through history. It is clear that the emptying of landscapes entailed a loss of place-value coeval with the loss of status and personal value of the people once using the land, just as the neglect or destruction of

community archives also ran in parallel to the neglect of the land. Viscomi takes us through cycles of land use, natural catastrophe, settlement decline, and the seizing of new opportunities at the start of a new cycle. Two opportunities are discussed: first, after the deadly earthquakes of the late 18th century caused the abandonment of the Ducal palace and the collapse of the entire socio-political system and the loss of many villages, the vacuum allowed the emergence of new elites who began a new, post-feudal phase of land use. In the mid-20th century, the destruction of the major nucleated town by flooding in 1973 caused the decision to abandon part of the old town, leading to the loss of 200 homes and the decay of the archive. However, soon after this disaster, new mayors developed a new nostalgia-centred discourse on the past glories of the region and initiated a new phase of tourism. In both cycles, the destruction of the traditional place-values through environmental disasters led to the creation of radically new discourses of place-values, with the 20th century discourse readily critiqued as inauthentic and hence unstable.

In Antonio Stopani's consideration of the most recent period of history to be discussed in the workshop (Chapter 6), it appears that the abandonment of modern factories and housing complexes in the years after the financial crisis of AD 2008 in Athens and Torino represented a dramatic loss in place-value, with the original functions of the structures providing the major component of that place-value. The new opportunities for local communities transformed not only the buildings themselves but also the wider area of their neighbourhoods, leading to three foundations for new place-value – residential squatting, meeting places for citizens' assemblies, and the creation of a new community with a sense of belonging that gives value to the people as well as sustaining the place-value of the buildings. In a spatial sense, the social relations underpinning these developments radiate out from the squats to the local neighbourhoods and financial centres as well as city hall. If re-occupation of abandoned buildings is the key to the regeneration of neighbourhoods, it would be interesting to know more of the spatial context of re-occupation, how many squats were in each neighbourhood and how they inter-related.

Running through this commentary is the renewed emphasis on place-value as not just a reified entity, remote from both the people involved in everyday social action and the buildings and sites where they lived and worked, but a vital cognitive source of decision-making and the creation of a framework for living. The workshop examples discussed here show that place-value has a strong spatial component which varied across spatial scales and social contexts. It is now time to examine the role of place-value in the temporalities of the landscapes and places discussed in the workshop.

Temporality, memory, and connections

W.H. Auden once famously remarked that 'art is our chief means of breaking bread with the dead' (Mendelson 2015, 477). But the poet under-estimated the power of material culture, even including grubby sherds and fragments of sculpture, to make

the same connections. The workshop was full of examples of the upcycling of older materials in the service of people in later times, sometimes more than a millennium later. Miniaci (Chapter 7) has studied the letters to the dead in the Tanis necropolis which dated to the 1st millennium cal BC and which reference much older grave goods as well as the objects associated with the newly deceased. It is now well understood that the most frequent answer to Tuan's question concerns the multi-periodicity of place – the dynamic history of creation, use, abandonment, stasis, and re-use as the start of a new cycle. This was seen most dramatically in the history of the two groups of Egyptian cemeteries discussed by Ramos (in the workshop) and Anguissola (Chapter 3), with the former noting that memory was created by the connection of multiple temporalities and the latter remarking on the mosaic of different temporalities in many tombs. What remains unclear in both cases, however, is the specificity of the links between the latest generation and their predecessors – were they generalised ancestors, fictive ancestors, or particular families or individuals with definable kinship links? And what difference did this make to the memories that could be displayed to other members of the community? Were imagined communities sufficient to sustain present legitimacy?

We have long discussed the concept of 'presencing' – the making present and visible of someone/something/some place that was in fact absent – with particular reference to objects (Chapman and Gaydarska 2010). There is every probability that this quality of objects goes back a long way – indeed into the Lower Palaeolithic over one million years ago, when hominins started to acquire raw materials from 50 km away, extending the range of object movement from the 32 km separating the Makapansgat cobble from its source *c*. 3 million years BP (Bednarik 1998). While the exchange of raw materials brought groups into contact with other groups, these connections would have been seasonal or short-term and the social issue was the absence of the other groups for most of the year. We have suggested that the 'exotic' raw materials symbolised the connection to the absent groups (Chapman and Gaydarska 2010). But presencing can also operate over time as well as through space.

Vernus's stimulating exploration of the expansion of Egyptian state power in spatial terms also conveyed a temporal dimension of presencing, which relied for its effect on the ritual power of the Pharaohs. These forms of presencing had to bridge a huge gap between the present and a remote, pristine past as materialised in the hills and rock outcrops in the landscape as much as primeval, supra-human objects such as fossils, flints, fluorspar and feldspar crystals, and water-worn pebbles. It is doubtful if mere mortals could have achieved such presencing which was a recursive assertion of Pharaonic authority guided by divine inspiration. These connections formed part of a temporal process of the creation of the world that was never complete, as illustrated by the Pharaoh's desire to capture by naming those islands freshly formed by the geomorphological processes of the Nile.

The counterpart to the long-term, divine scale of temporality was the punctuated narratives that Viscomi invokes (Chapter 5) to explain the inter-calated changes in

the Sicilian archives, townscape, and landscape. Despite the almost instantaneous temporality of environmental disasters such as earthquakes and floods, with immediate community responses often leading to long-term change, these events were also embedded in longer-term landscape processes. Thus, it was fully a generation after the start of the 'Great Migration' in the 1880s that population levels had declined so far as to reduce the potential for land management and risk mitigation to dangerous levels. By contrast, one response to the catastrophic flooding of 1973 was the bridging of present and past through a new generation of mayors' invocation of past glories in a nostalgic presencing of the 'good old days' for touristic reasons.

Imperial conquest appears to document an irreversible rupture of the historical narrative. But not even the Spanish conquest of the Andean region could destroy the local landscapes and land use potential, with every new Christian initiative at land control presencing past settlement and changing kinship patterns of use-rights. This slow process of dispossession of native lands is a classic case of punctuated temporality which lasted generations, as was witnessed by the land litigation in the 'late colonial period', and which has formed cultural memories that have lasted until today.

A final question concerns the squatting movement, discussed so eloquently by Stopani (Chapter 6). What was not clear from the workshop was the temporal background of the squatters and their appropriated buildings – something that could give a sense of social memory. It would be interesting to know more of the appropriated buildings and how the old factories and disused residential buildings were themselves connected to their neighbourhoods. This may in turn give insights into the basis of the formation of the new communities springing out of the squats, for their origins clearly relate to a temporal process linking them with past people, places, and objects.

Conclusions

Since this chapter has taken the form of an extended discussion of materials presented at the workshop, we propose seven brief conclusions, all of which have been illustrated by the contributions to the workshop.

- There is an under-appreciated importance of place in the creation of personal identities. This is illustrated in the Identity Triangle (Fig. 1), which shows the recursive connections between persons, place and objects.
- There are two potential ways of investigating the significance of place. The first concerns the concept of place-value, which becomes part of that place's identity. Place-identity is recursively linked to the time of that place, with the changing valency of place-value related to the length of time which the place has been used and for what purposes. This is another way of describing the second way – the biography of that place. The notion of place-biography is seen as an integrative concept, bringing together all the persons who lived or visited that place with the objects they used on their occupation.

- John Barrett's (1994) research on the trajectories of sites and monuments remind us that the initial phase of site usage probably looked very different from the final stage of the monument, which may have gone through several transformations. It is also important to recognise that the subsequent stage in a site's development was not necessarily an inevitable consequence of an earlier stage but came about as a result of choices made at that point in the trajectory. Each change in the site trajectory offered a political opportunity.
- The dynamic nominalist approach of Rorty (1989) and Hacking (1995) offers a way of transcending the structure–agency contrast through the relationship between the emergence of categories of people at the same time as kinds of people emerged to fit these categories in a recursive interaction. Such an approach has merit in illuminating not only the positive creation of new identities but also the loss of place and personal identity in times of environmental disaster.
- From the Palaeolithic onwards, people have been seeking strategies to overcome the absence of other persons, places, and objects with whom they have been in short-term or seasonal contact. The notion of presencing – literally making the absent present – relies on the enduring materiality of objects and their biographical stages, from origins to deposition, to make and sustain otherwise missing connections. The way that they presence missing persons and places is one of the most powerful aspects of an object's agency.
- An important theme that the workshop has brought out is the decline in place-value caused by the loss, emptying, abandonment, or destruction of a place or entire landscape. Just as recursive connections between persons, places, and objects can have positive impacts and results, so the downward spiral of negative effects can have significant, sometimes long-term, impacts.
- The contributions to this workshop and other recent studies have provided an important answer to Tuan's question with which we started this chapter: 'What time is this place?'. The answer most frequently applied to sites and monuments discussed in this volume is that the places were multi-period in nature, with the connections between different temporalities creating cultural memory. The mosaic of temporalities of places was complex and often cyclical, with many persons contributing to their place-biography. We find it impossible to understand the abandonment and appropriation of sites and monuments without due consideration of place-value.

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