

Connectivity and Disconnectivity in the Roman Empire*

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PEREGRINE HORDEN and NICHOLAS PURCELL, *THE BOUNDLESS SEA: WRITING MEDITERRANEAN HISTORY*. Variorum collected studies, 1083. London and New York: Routledge, 2019. Pp. 228. ISBN 9780367221263. £120.00/\$140.00.

KASPER GRØNLUND EVERS, *WORLDS APART TRADING TOGETHER: THE ORGANISATION OF LONG-DISTANCE TRADE BETWEEN ROME AND INDIA IN ANTIQUITY*. Archaeopress Roman archaeology, 32. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2017. Pp. viii + 213. ISBN 9781784917425. £30.00.

FEDERICO DE ROMANIS, *THE INDO-ROMAN PEPPER TRADE AND THE MUZIRIS POPYRUS*. Oxford studies on the Roman economy. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. xxiv + 381. ISBN 9780198842347. £90.00/\$110.00.

JAMES CLACKSON, PATRICK JAMES, KATHERINE MCDONALD, LIVIA TAGLIAPIETRA and NICHOLAS ZAIR, *MIGRATION, MOBILITY AND LANGUAGE CONTACT IN AND AROUND THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN*. Cambridge classical studies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. 374. ISBN 9781108488440. £90.00/\$120.00.

‘J’ai passionnément aimé la Méditerranée, sans doute parce que venu du Nord, comme tant d’autres, après tant d’autres.’

Fernand Braudel 1949

‘Le “miracle romain” n’a pas fini d’exercer sa fascination.’

Marcel Bénabou 1976

I A RISING TIDE

The last quarter-century has witnessed a transformation in approaches to the study of mobility in the Roman Empire. Social scientific frameworks, especially network analysis and the concept of connectivity, have granted explanatory force to population movements.¹ Technological advances in bioarchaeology, archaeobotany, archaeozoology and related fields provide ever finer-grained views of the role of migration in interactions

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¹ On these frameworks, see below, Sections II and III.

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between people and their environments.² The digital turn has produced new tools for research and visual representations, such as Walter Scheidel's web-based ORBIS: *The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World*, which allows users to simulate communication costs and routes while controlling for complex variables like season and manner of travel.³ Finally, increased use of non-Roman and non-ancient comparanda has allowed for productive theorisation about poorly attested mobilities.⁴

Equally important, though less discussed, is the impact of postcolonial studies on the politics of disciplines concerned with the ancient Mediterranean. Postcolonialism as an analytic began to take hold in the 1980s and 1990s, when scholars such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Malek Aloulla focused on the British and French empires and made a case for rethinking how knowledge is made, organised and evaluated.⁵ In the discipline of Roman history, researchers from historically excluded groups have made two demands that bear on the present and the study of the past: that the discipline adopt approaches that respect marginalised subjects, and that it become a more inclusive community with regard to the scholars therein. These demands are indivisible, since the racialisation of groups in the present-day is partly rooted in interpretations of Greek and Roman taxonomies of power and domination.⁶ The present generation of Roman historians includes those who fruitfully draw on intersectionality, cultural appropriation and related frameworks, and lead conversations about the geographic and cultural myopias that accompany traditional definitions of 'classics' and 'the classical'.⁷ Consequently, research on mobility in the Roman world is shifting its focus on Roman citizens and elites to include non-Roman, non-elite, coerced and women actors.⁸ *Borderlands* and zones of contact increasingly command attention and replace ideas of stark, spatial binaries. In addition, sustained interest in the Black Sea, Indian Ocean and Atlantic Ocean suggests the possibility of unsettling the traditional dominance of the Mediterranean.⁹ The margins have moved a little closer to the centre.

The implications of the developments outlined above are multi-dimensional. A region once viewed as static is now seen to be a dynamic world in motion. At the same time, by paying more attention to systems of power in the Roman world, historians have developed a more nuanced appreciation of relationships between mobility, identity and agency and produced better knowledge about the empire's connections with distant regions. The role of mobility in a wide range of social, cultural, political and economic phenomena has become a large, exciting and important area of study.¹⁰

The volumes reviewed in Section II reflect many of these methodological and political trajectories. With *The Boundless Sea: Writing Mediterranean History* (2019), Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell respond to two decades of discussion about their *The*

² e.g. Killgrove 2010; Prowse *et al.* 2010; Groff and Dupras 2019.

³ The technological team involved in bringing ORBIS to life was composed of Elijah Meeks, Karl Grossner and Noemi Alvarez. Another important web-based tool is *Pleiades*, an open-source gazetteer of ancient places that allows users to download open-licence datasets.

⁴ e.g. Joshel 2013.

⁵ For partial summaries of the influence of postcolonial studies and identity politics: Mattingly 1996; 1997.

⁶ In this regard, the contribution of reception studies to our understanding of these trajectories remains underrated, since the modern academic discipline of Roman history itself is a category of reception. For a range of positions on race and ethnicity in the Roman world: Gruen 2020 and Gardner *et al.* 2013; for studies on postclassical interpretations of ancient race and ethnicity and their implications: Isaac 2004; McCoskey 2012; Siapkas 2014; Kennedy *forthcoming*.

⁷ One example is the recent decision at the University of California Berkeley's former Department of Classics to change its name to the Department of Ancient Greek and Roman Studies.

⁸ e.g. Cuvigny 2010; de Blois 2016; Joshel 2013; Ramgopal 2018.

⁹ e.g. Cojocaru *et al.* 2016; Cobb 2018; Noreña 2021. For additional titles on the ancient Indian Ocean world, see Section II.

¹⁰ For overviews of the mobilities turn in Roman history and other disciplines from angles different from those explored in this paper, see Sheller and Urry 2006; de Ligt and Tacoma 2016.

Corrupting Sea (2000), which transformed the study of mobility in the premodern Mediterranean. Kasper Grønlund Evers, in *Worlds Apart Trading Together: The Organisation of Long-Distance Trade between Rome and India in Antiquity* (2017), and Federico de Romanis, in *The Indo-Roman Pepper Trade and the Muziris Papyrus* (2020), examine trade between the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean worlds. And throughout *Migration, Mobility and Language Contact in and around the Ancient Mediterranean* (2020), edited by James Clackson, Patrick James, Katherine McDonald, Livia Tagliapietra and Nicholas Zair, contributors interrogate the relationship between population movements and language use in the Roman world and, notably, the peoples of pre-Roman Italy.

Each of these publications shows that the tide of interest in Roman mobility continues to rise. This poses the eternal question of what comes next. Of particular interest to me is the prominence of the concept of connectivity, which Horden and Purcell introduced in *The Corrupting Sea*. As Section III observes, studies on mobility in the Roman world tend to implicitly presume that connectivity was accessible, desirable and beneficial to everyone in the Mediterranean. This position, as Section IV explores, obscures the effects of Roman imperialism. Although the rise of Rome was mediated by Mediterranean connectivity and in turn generated novel connections and networks, it also transpired through the enactment of countless separations and detachments. These disconnections, so to speak, remain comparatively unexamined. As Section V articulates, our neglect is partly due to our own ease of movement in the Mediterranean. It hides the absence of such ease for others in the past and today, and leads Roman historians chronically to underplay the region's connections to places remote from it. In light of the Mediterranean's imperial histories, we must remain vigilant in how we define and characterise it and equally aware of the role that our relationships to the region play in debates about it. To quote Michael Herzfeld: 'To say that the Mediterranean "does not exist" is as silly as to argue that facts themselves "do not exist". They exist in the sense that they are representations of something experienced in the phenomenal world.'¹¹ We have arrived at yet another moment in which we should ask: which Mediterranean do we choose to bring into being?

II REVIEWS

In *The Corrupting Sea*, Horden and Purcell presented a new vision of the premodern Mediterranean. They argued that its regional coherence was due to a distinctive regime of risk, logic of production, topographical fragmentation and connectivity. *The Corrupting Sea* (henceforth *CS*) was the self-described successor of Fernand Braudel, who in 1949 argued that the sixteenth-century Mediterranean possessed a 'unity and coherence' that allowed historians to write *longue durée* histories of the region in addition to histories of individuals, peoples and events within it.¹² Of the elements that make up Horden and Purcell's fourfold model, connectivity has been the most influential for how researchers think about the Mediterranean. The authors imported the concept from locational analysis to explain the various ways in which its microregions cohered internally and with each other.¹³ They further argued that the degree to which connectivity characterised the region made it distinct from any other comparable area. Use of the concept now ranges from the strict sense that Horden and Purcell originally

¹¹ Herzfeld 2005: 47.

¹² Braudel's work was published in French in 1949 and republished in English, with revisions, in 1972. Braudel 1972: I.14.

¹³ Horden and Purcell 2000: 122.

intended to a generalising descriptor for connectedness.¹⁴ As Brent Shaw observed, *CS* is ‘one of those manifest watersheds in the study of antiquity’.¹⁵

The Boundless Sea (henceforth *BS*) is not the sequel that *CS* promised, but a response to the discussion and debate it provoked. It consists of a preface and twelve essays; eleven are reprints with light revisions, and all are listed as co-authored, including those that did not originate so. Broadly speaking, the essays fall into one of three kinds of response. Some, like chs 2 and 3, are part of long-term conversations between the authors and their critics, including those who argue that they veer into Mediterranean exceptionalism with their claims of the sea’s distinctiveness. Their reply essentially amounts to an agreement to disagree about whether they present ‘the Mediterranean as the product of, or even as too closely associated with, the hegemonial systems of its history’ (46). The second set of essays considers ways to integrate the Mediterranean into global histories. In ch. 1, the authors describe the relatively new subfield of the history of seas and oceans, which they term ‘the new thalassology’. In this context, they consider ways to define the Mediterranean and contrast it with other bodies of water. They conclude by insisting that the premodern Mediterranean was indeed singular. Subsequently, chs 8, 11 and 12 compare the Mediterranean with northern Europe, the Sahara and Asia. The third kind of response treats the problem of conjoining cultural, social, economic and political histories with approaches to Mediterranean ecologies and logics of communication. Thus, ch. 10 examines periods in which political conditions put people to sea, as when Rome’s conquest of the Mediterranean prompted the emigration of tens of thousands of Roman and Italian *negotatores*, or businessmen, from Italy. Rightly, the authors argue that this population (which Sections III and IV discuss further) ‘articulate[s] a world of connectivity which maps onto what we call the Mediterranean’ (174).

Because the essays that constitute *BS* appear to be randomly ordered, the volume lacks a strong narrative arc. In addition, the absence of maps, charts and diagrams hinders the explanatory potential of its prose. Even so, it is a rich resource. *BS* contains a plethora of bibliographies and notes, and its case studies are chronologically, geographically and culturally diverse, encompassing the Roman and the Greek, the pagan and the Christian, and the ancient, medieval and early modern. It also offers succinct outlines of its predecessor’s primary arguments and good-faith overviews of the debates *CS* prompted. Consequently, *BS* provides a concise introduction to their project and its influence. As importantly, the authors take pains to speak directly to critics like Brent Shaw and Michael Herzfeld.¹⁶ The field needs more public dialogue about the politics of individual scholars’ work, and Horden and Purcell’s articulation of these disagreements in print helps to normalise a reflexive disciplinary culture.

Where *BS* is primarily concerned with the Mediterranean, the monographs of Federico de Romanis and Kasper Evers draw attention to its connections with the Indian Ocean world. Both argue that the Mediterranean’s internal connectivity did not prevent the intensive circulation of people and goods between the Roman world and the Indian subcontinent.¹⁷ Harnessing the heuristic potential of connectivity, they elucidate links between the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean. In doing so, they demonstrate how much researchers can reveal of the Roman world’s wider connections when they decentre Rome. Simultaneously, they add to a growing volume of work on Indo-Roman links.¹⁸

¹⁴ For assertions that the concept has been under-theorised in its more general applications: Osterhammel 2016: 34; Horden 2020: 204.

¹⁵ Shaw 2001: 453.

¹⁶ Shaw 2001; Herzfeld 2005.

¹⁷ de Romanis 2020: 31; Evers 2017: 6.

¹⁸ In the last few years alone: Fitzpatrick 2011; de Romanis and Maiuro 2015; Gurukkal 2016; Cobb 2018; Beaujard 2019. Soon to come are publications from Jeremy Simmons and Emanuel Mayer’s projects on Indian Ocean trade.

De Romanis's monograph centres on the fragmentary Muziris Papyrus (*P.Vindob.* G 40822). An informative and challenging document, the papyrus's recto text details a loan contract, signed in Alexandria, between a merchant and a financier for a commercial operation to Muziris, which has been tentatively located in or near Pattanam in South India. Its verso text, which is written in a different hand, records the customs duties levied on Indian cargo imported by the *Hermapollon*. The papyrus is a valuable source of information for the structure and organisation of trade between Rome and the Indian subcontinent. Using ancient, medieval and even early modern evidence, de Romanis reconstructs its logistical, economic and anthropological contexts and locates his interpretation of its texts therein.

The volume's thirteen chapters are divided into four parts. Part I details the challenges of navigating the Red Sea corridor; the geography and nature of pepper production in the Indian subcontinent; and the ancient literary sources most useful for interpreting the surviving parts of the papyrus's texts and reconstructing its missing sections. Part II focuses on the papyrus's recto text by exploring when the loan was made and for how long; what the loan was to cover; and the stipulations overseeing its repayment. Part III unravels the logics of the verso text's assessment of the *Hermapollon*'s cargo by determining routine procedures for maritime loan agreements in the Greek and Roman worlds. The same section of the book contrasts the cargo and cargo-carrying capacity of the *Hermapollon* with ancient and sixteenth-century comparanda. Finally, Part IV articulates the stipulations that governed customs duties on Indian commodities as they entered the Mediterranean. It also contextualises the professions and identities of the loan's co-signatories.

De Romanis's contributions are wide-ranging (so much so that he himself provides a numbered list of conclusions in the introduction). I emphasise four. The first is the elucidation of the timeline for the repayment of the loan and the assessment of the *Hermapollon*'s cargo. By determining routine procedures for maritime loan agreements in other Mediterranean contexts, he shows how lenders, borrowers and traders adapted their practices to trade with the Indian subcontinent. Second, he provides a thorough and updated account of the geography of pepper farming, and the gatherers, traders and kings involved in its production and export. In doing so, he dismantles two related arguments: that there was little systematic control of Indian emporia by local governments and that the Indian contribution to exchanges and transfers of commodities with the Roman world did not reach a level of complexity that merits categorisation as trade.¹⁹ Third, de Romanis offers a rare, detailed examination of the contingency of premodern mobility. In 'Bridging Disconnected Seas', he stresses that Mediterranean connectivity did not preclude relationships with distant places. Then, with intricate detail and maps, he shows the interplay of environmental, meteorological and human factors that impacted mobility through the Red Sea corridor, which was crucial to movement between the Roman world and Indian subcontinent. Finally, the monograph as a whole brings the picture of Indo-Mediterranean trade in the Roman period to a level of detail that enables in-depth comparison with trade between these regions in later periods. De Romanis has opened a door to even more ambitious *longue durée* studies.

Evers's *Worlds Apart* complements de Romanis's monograph with its focus on the role of trade and social networks in the systems of production, distribution and consumption that connected the Roman world and the Indian subcontinent. The volume draws on a range of evidence from 30 B.C.E. to the end of the sixth century C.E., a period that spans Augustus' annexation of Egypt and the abandonment of the harbour of Berenike and

¹⁹ Gurukkal 2016.

eventually Egypt itself. The broad geographic and chronological scope of the study is punctuated by case studies.

The first two chapters of *Worlds Apart* summarise the history of the study of Indo-Roman trade and the location of Evers's monograph therein. Ch. 1 outlines the politics of the book and their implications for his conclusions. Evers rejects studies that present Rome and actors from its sphere of influence as dominant in exchanges with the Indian Ocean world. He points out that Romanocentric approaches express colonialist ideals that ascribe an arbitrary hierarchy of value to peoples and cultures. In ch. 2, he sets aside New Institutional Economics to favour a bottom-up approach that leads him to focus on demand in Rome and the provinces for products from the Indian subcontinent, and the private associations (*collegia*, *synodoi* and so on) that participated in the import of Indian commodities. Chs 3–5 focus on networks formed by private associations of craftspeople and traders in Italy and the empire's provinces. Evers argues that such associations participated directly in long-distance, reciprocal exchanges with the Indian Ocean world by acting as a bridge between craftsmen and traders, and by processing goods from the East at Egypt's Red Sea ports. Chs 6–8 turn an eye eastward. Evers details the diverse associations and individuals in Egypt that handled the receipt, taxation and westward shipment of goods from the Indian subcontinent, as well as the operation of Roman, Egyptian, Axumite and Indian networks from Southern Italy to India. The volume concludes by showing the involvement of Indian associations of merchants and associations of craftsmen (*nigama* and *shreni*, respectively) in the production and shipment of goods to the Roman world.

As a whole, Evers seeks to demonstrate the mechanisms that Roman-world associations used to augment group cohesion, enforce contracts with strangers and maintain long-distance networks. In doing so, he categorises some associations and networks as diasporas. His use of this term merits some attention. Evers does not explicate whether or how shared ethnicity or origins differentiated the behaviour of diaspora groups from that of other communities. Yet the designation of a population as a diaspora has limited heuristic value if the population's migration from a shared place of origin is the sole ground for doing so: persecution and other forms of oppression have long been important to distinguishing the behaviours of diasporas from other migrant groups.²⁰ A clear elaboration of Evers's use of the term — even one that rejects the significance of oppression for identifying a group as a diaspora — would have strengthened the theoretical underpinnings of the volume.²¹ Ultimately, however, the absence of a definition does not detract from Evers's contributions. He uncovers the integral role of non-state institutions in long-distance trade networks; the impact of those networks on stylistic preferences in Italy; and the availability of items from India, like pepper and perfume, to non-elite consumers in remote parts of the Roman Empire. In addition, his discussion of Indian associations will be welcome to those who study associations of the Roman world that were involved in trade. Moreover, maps at the end of the book offer helpful visual guidance for a study of such scope.

In contrast with the broad chronological and geographic scope of Evers and de Romanis, the essays in *Migration, Mobility and Language Contact in and around the Ancient Mediterranean*, edited by James Clackson, Patrick James, Katherine McDonald, Livia Tagliapietra and Nicholas Zair, are microhistorical and mainly concerned with Mediterranean contexts. The volume aims to demonstrate how linguistic data can fill out the picture of migration in pre-Roman Italy and the Roman Empire. This evidence,

²⁰ For a sense of the discussion of definitions and uses of the term: Marienstras 1989; Connor 1986; Baumann 1995; Cohen 1996; Vertovec 1997; Dufoix 2017.

²¹ In recent years, 'diaspora' has increasingly emerged as a means of categorising migrant communities of the Roman world. For instances of the term's use by historians of Rome: Eberle and Le Quééré 2017; Gruen 2002; Eckhardt 2010.

the editors point out, has received far less attention than archaeological, osteological and epigraphic material. Yet it can reveal much about the effects of individual and population movement on language use and, in turn, what language use reveals about mobility (4).

The book's introduction (ch. 1) and ten essays assess evidence for pre-Roman Italy and the Roman world. In ch. 2, for example, Daniele Maras marshals epigraphic and literary evidence to explore scenarios in which interethnic mobility and interaction in Italy led to the appearance of non-Etruscan components, like roots and full names, in Etruscan nomenclature. In ch. 3, Elena Isayev reviews the widespread migration and settlement of Romans and Italians in the last two centuries B.C.E. to underscore the routine nature of long-distance mobility in the early Roman Empire and the involvement of Romans and Italians in it. She juxtaposes this evidence alongside the Plautine corpus to demonstrate the playwright's creative responses to the new mobilities that emerged in his lifetime. In ch. 8, Francesco Rovai contextualises a collection of 26,000–27,000 seals from Delos's House of Seals in the island's cultural and linguistic environment and its connections to communities further afield. On the basis of these seals, he shows the wide-ranging linguistic repertoire of the clientele — including Romans' and Italians' preference for Latin for self-identification — and ties it and the 'cosmopolitanism' (177) of this clientele to the extraordinary, unprecedented boom of immigration to and economic activity on Late Hellenistic Delos. In ch. 10, Patrick James draws on linguistic evidence to assess why Romans and Italians journeyed to Egypt before its annexation by Rome. He argues that these travellers were likely to be engaged in overlapping sacred, military and commercial activity, and emphasises their commercial ties beyond Egypt. As on Delos, the use of Latin by Romans overseas materialises as a strategy for self-differentiation. The author takes as his point of departure an intriguing graffito from Philae which dates to 116 B.C.E. and represents the earliest Latin inscription from Egypt. Its author, one Gaius Acutius, scrawled on a Ptolemaic structure at the sanctuary of Isis that he 'arrived here first': *hoc venit primus*.²²

Like *BS*, this volume falls short when it comes to maps. It contains just one, that of Isayev in ch. 3, which shows long-distance journeys by characters in *Curculio*, *Persa* and *Poenulus* (65). Maps would have vastly improved the legibility of arguments already highly technical in their analysis. But apart from this oversight, this is an exceptional collection of work. By examining the effects of population movement on language, it furnishes new data to historical linguistics and mobility studies. Its focus on fragmentary languages in Italy also gives new detail to our picture of interactions among the peoples of Italy. Recent work has emphasised that a complicated latticework of conflict and collaboration informed their relationships with each other before Rome's conquest and influenced interactions among Romans of different Italian origins after the Social War.²³ This insightful volume raises the possibility that mobility shaped how perceptions of self in relation to place transformed from the peninsula's pre-Roman era to Augustus's *tota Italia* and beyond.

III MOBILITY, CONNECTIVITY AND THE CIRCULATION OF NEGOTIATORES

The volumes reviewed in Section II demonstrate the continued prominence of concepts which pertain to connection and connectedness in the study of mobility in the Roman world.²⁴ While they have played a role in this strand of scholarship since the days of Braudel, they have enjoyed exceptional attention in the last twenty-five years through

²² *I.Syène* 321.

²³ Russo 2012; Patterson 2012; Roselaar 2012; Isayev 2017; Terrenato 2019; Machado 2020.

²⁴ Other recent publications which show that these frameworks endure include Pitts and Versluys 2015; von

the development of frameworks like social network analysis, centre-periphery theory, globalisation theory and connectivity.²⁵ As the publications above show, their application to regions apart from the Mediterranean has enormous and relatively untapped potential.

Here, however, I return to the Mediterranean to explore the stakes of the prominence of connectivity in the study of mobility in the Roman Empire. Research on mobility in the Roman Empire has tended to portray connectivity as a positive attribute of the Mediterranean, though not always explicitly or deliberately. Yet there is abundant evidence for the *dis*connectivities, so to speak, of mobility in the empire. I use the term *dis*connectivity to describe the severance of ties and destruction of networks that resulted from phenomena that have been categorised as instances of connectivity and connection.²⁶ Although ‘isolation’ might seem a more established rubric to describe such disconnections, ‘*dis*connectivity’ puts them in considered tension with connectivity.²⁷ Here and in Section IV, I focus on the unprecedented expansion of Roman power in the last three centuries B.C.E. It is in this period of imperial activity that the contrast between connection and *dis*connect is particularly vivid.²⁸

As ever, the debt our discipline owes to researchers from historically excluded backgrounds is particularly great. The place to begin is the work of Dan-el Padilla Peralta. In his recent edited volume, he describes Horden and Purcell’s presentation of connectivity and the discipline’s overwhelming approval of the concept as a ‘celebration’. He juxtaposes that description with the reminder that the connectivities in the Roman Empire were just that: connectivities *in the Roman Empire*.²⁹ In an essay titled ‘Epistemicide’, he looks to Boaventura de Sousa Santos to draw out the relationship between connectivity, mobility and erasure:

Those Gallic chieftains who trafficked enslaved persons for Italian wine were hardly independent actors on the borderlands of the Roman expansion, and the *negotiatores* who sold them that wine did not have to be active ‘agents of a policy of cultural imperialism’ for their routines to have lasting epistemic consequences.³⁰

In the passage above, Padilla Peralta quotes a very recent publication by Frank Daubner. The fuller context from Daubner is as follows:

The Italians were crucial in the emergence of the ‘mixed’ society of some parts of Macedonia: they brought money and ideas, and assimilated quite well. When they constituted communities, they were helpful in negotiating with the Roman authorities, as we can see in Caesar’s account of the Italian community at Lissus (Caes. *Bel. Civ.* 3.29.1). Finally, we do not have evidence of any provincial Macedonians carrying out Mithridates’s order to kill Italians and Romans in 88 BC.³¹

Bendemann *et al.* 2016; Sweetman 2016; Constantakopoulou 2017; Kolditz 2017; Leidwanger and Knappett 2018a; Capriotti 2020; Hodos 2020; Broekaert *et al.* 2020; Iacono 2020.

²⁵ For summaries of the influence of Braudel and Horden and Purcell, see Malkin 2011; Concannon and Mazurek 2016; Leidwanger and Knappett 2018b; Horden 2020.

²⁶ My use of this term should not be confused with the term ‘*dys*connectivity’ from the fields of psychology and psychiatry. See Ian Morris on the ‘winners and losers’ of connectivity, though he does not write specifically about Roman imperialism: Morris 2005.

²⁷ Isolation is the sense in which Alex Metcalfe, Luciano Gallinari, Thomas Birch, Hervin Fernández-Aceves and Marco Muresu use the term ‘*dis*connectivity’ in their ongoing project ‘Power, Society, and (Dis)connectivity in Medieval Sardinia’: <http://wp.lancs.ac.uk/medsardinia>. For a range of studies focused on isolation, also an under-studied subject: Ager and Faber 2013.

²⁸ For a similar metaphorical use of the concept of connectivity: Padilla Peralta and Bernard 2022.

²⁹ Padilla Peralta 2017: 261.

³⁰ Padilla Peralta 2020: 158.

³¹ Daubner 2019: 150.

Macedonian abstention from the massacre of 88 B.C.E. is not, as Daubner claims, necessarily a sign of non-violent relations among Romans and Macedonians. Is it not possible that Macedonians struggled to re-establish pre-Roman connections of unity and solidarity after Rome divided the region into new administrative units?³² Daubner does not consider the difficulties that their new circumstances may have presented, even though the appearance of Romans and Italians across the eastern Mediterranean disrupted pre-Roman patterns of settlement, political organisation, economic activity and mobility.³³ Lisa Eberle and Enora Le Quéré have shown that the extent of Roman and Italian land ownership and exploitation in the Greek East in the second and first centuries far exceeded what researchers have appreciated.³⁴ Even without their conclusions, the number that Valerius Maximus gives for Romans and Italians killed at Mithridates's behest — 80,000 — demands (even if he exaggerates) that we recognise this reality.³⁵

Daubner's reference to Caesar's account of the Roman community at Lissus also merits a closer look. At *Bciv.* 3.29, Caesar writes:

After that, the assembly of Roman citizens (*conventus civium Romanorum*) which was occupying Lissus, a town which Caesar had previously appointed (*attribuerat*) to them and for which he provided fortification, received Antony and helped him with all things. Otacilius, fearing for himself, fled the town and went to Pompey.³⁶

Daubner misapprehends the power dynamics at Lissus. The lines above do not show the town's Roman community, which Caesar calls a *conventus civium Romanorum*, helpfully mediating between locals and Roman authorities. They show the control that these Romans maintained over the town's political loyalties, regardless of local preference.

To re-quote Horden and Purcell: the collective movements of *negotiatores* in this period 'articulate[d] a world of connectivity which maps onto what we call the Mediterranean' (174). Many such businessmen formed groups like that in Lissus which engaged in concerted action under epithets like *conventus civium Romanorum*, *cives Romani qui negotiantur* and Ῥωμαῖοι οἱ πραγματούμενοι. Wealthy, numerous and widespread, they garnered prestige and power as corporate bodies and for the individuals that formed them.³⁷ Inscriptions reveal their frequent interaction with non-Roman individuals and communities.³⁸ Yet the networks and connections that we see therein cannot have been founded on equitable relations. Literary accounts suggest that the influence of Roman communities like the *conventus* of Lissus was not rare. During a visit to Corduba, Caesar thanks the Roman citizens there for 'for their enthusiasm in keeping the town under his control'.³⁹ Ps.-Caesar reports that in a speech at Utica, Caesar censures a similar group of Romans and confiscates their money and property. At the same time, he thanks the people of Utica for their support, revealing that the local Roman population steered the loyalties of the town against the will of its people.⁴⁰ Similar

³² On the persistence of unrest in the region: Haensch 2018: 5.

³³ On the arrival of Roman civilians in Macedonia: Rizakis 2002.

³⁴ Eberle and Le Quéré 2017.

³⁵ On the massacre: App., *Mith.* 22–24; Val. Max. 9.2.3 (ext); Memnon of Heraclea Pontica 31.9 (= *FGH* III B, p. 352, lines 16–21). See also Bryn 2021 on the power to abuse as a privilege of Roman citizenship.

³⁶ Translation adapted from Damon 2016.

³⁷ On the strategic use of collective action by Romans and Italians in the Eastern Mediterranean: Ramgopal 2017.

³⁸ For example, *IDélos* 1642 and *IK* Kibyra 49. The practice continued into the imperial period: Ramgopal forthcoming.

³⁹ *Bciv.* 2.21. Caesar calls this community a *conventus civium Romanorum* at *Bciv.* 2.19.

⁴⁰ *B Afr.* 90. Caesar and Ps.-Caesar refer to these Romans as a *conventus civium Romanorum* at *Bciv.* 2.36 and *B Afr.* 68.

circumstances emerge at Zama, Thapsus and Hadrumetum.⁴¹ The most notorious episode occurs in the previous century. In Sallust's account of the leadup to the Jugurthine War, he describes events in Cirta while the city was under siege from Jugurtha in 112 B.C.E. A group of individuals whom he calls *Italici* coerce Adherbal to surrender to Jugurtha. Adherbal yields, but not because he thinks any good will come of it: he knows the *Italici* will make him do it anyway. After seizing the town, Jugurtha executes him and the *Italici*.⁴²

Daubner's view has a lineage. He cites Ramsey MacMullen's claim in *Romanization in the Time of Augustus* that Roman and Italian civilians 'moved or lodged where they pleased, while fitting in not too badly'.⁴³ This opinion is similar to that of Robert Errington, who in 1988 argued that the 'peaceful penetration of Greek social and state institutions by Rhomaioi' had favourably transformed Greek economic, social and cultural institutions, on the one hand, and Roman and Italian identity on the other: '[they] often remained in their chosen Greek city so long and lived there with such enthusiasm that they obtained local citizenship'.⁴⁴ An earlier generation of historians includes Edward Gibbon, Francis Haverfield, René Cagnat and other colonial-era writers who saw Rome's presences overseas as essentially beneficial. Not coincidentally, their narratives resemble that of some Romans. 'In fact', Cicero declares in the *Verrines*, 'our Roman businessmen (*negotiatores*) are linked with the Sicilians in the closest way by daily interaction, material interests, common sense and friendly rapport'.⁴⁵

Cicero wanted to convey that for the most part, Romans and non-Romans got along. But this was a dubious claim to be making within two decades of the Mithridatic massacre. Elsewhere in the *Verrines*, Cicero himself gestures at widespread anger at Roman greed and injustice.⁴⁶ In *Pro Lege Manilia*, he states, 'It is difficult to say, Quirites, the extent to which we are held in hatred among foreign peoples due to the degeneracy and abuse of those whom we have sent to them with military command these last years'.⁴⁷ In *Pro Fonteio*, Cicero conveys the ubiquitous financial power of *negotiatores* in the first century B.C.E.: 'No Gaul conducts any business without the aid of a Roman citizen; not one coin in Gaul changes hands without being entered in the accounts of Roman citizens.'⁴⁸ As Padilla Peralta would have us consider: to what extent were non-Romans free actors? We must ask if locals could choose not to work with Romans and remember that peace is not the same as the absence of physical violence.

IV REPUBLICAN DISCONNECTIVITIES

Compared to other peoples of the Mediterranean — including their neighbours the Etruscans — the Romans were late to long-distance mass-migration. Until the first war with Carthage, their movements were focused on terrestrial and riverine routes in the Italian peninsula.⁴⁹ But by the end of the Third Macedonian War in 168, Mediterranean geopolitics and Roman mobility were permanently altered. A wave of civilian emigration from Italy swept the sea and remade patterns of circulation in and

⁴¹ *BAfr.* 97. In this context, it should be noted with regard to Daubner's assessment of Macedonia that at least one such group of Romans was active in the region in the Late Republic: *EKM* 1. *Beroia* 59.

⁴² Sall., *Iug.* 26. For an important analysis of the execution of these *Italici*: Morstein-Marx 2000.

⁴³ '... and they too spoke Greek not only to do business but for the very good reason also that, as often as not, they too were Greeks in some sense — from southern Italy or Sicily, or freed slaves descended from once-Greek families': MacMullen 2000: 1.

⁴⁴ Errington 1988: 156.

⁴⁵ Cic., *Verr.* 2.5.8. Translation adapted from Greenwood 1935.

⁴⁶ Cic., *Verr.* 2.3.207.

⁴⁷ Cic., *Leg. Man.* 65.

⁴⁸ Cic., *Font.* 11. Translation adapted from Hodge 1953.

⁴⁹ Isayev 2017: 109–117; 2020: 55.

beyond it. Often forgotten but important early victims of their mobility were the people of Delos. Following the conclusion of the Third Macedonian War, Rome granted administration of the island to Athens and made it a free port to punish Rhodes for lacklustre support in the war. In addition, Rome expelled the island's native population via embassy. Polybius reports that those expelled migrated to Achaëa, where they received citizenship.⁵⁰ Their land was likely leased out or turned over to the Sanctuary of Apollo.⁵¹ In their place arrived Romans and Italians from Italy.⁵²

Here we see the complexity of mobility and connectivity under Roman imperialism. Politically motivated displacement was not new to Delian history. In an earlier era of Athenian control, Athens expelled the local population in 422, but expellees returned a year later.⁵³ The expulsion under Rome, however, had permanent consequences. Long before the island's Roman phase, and despite the fifth-century expulsion under Athens, Delos had been part of an international network. As a major cultic centre, its place in this network generated a regional islander identity and a specifically Delian identity.⁵⁴ But its ties in this network were permanently cut — disconnected, let us say — in 167/166. Thereafter, the international network of which Delos was a part took on a radically different shape. Interlocking social, cultic and financial relationships among Romans, Italians, Greeks, Phoenicians and others on and beyond the island grew on a scale that was novel to the history of mobility and networks on Delos and the Mediterranean itself.⁵⁵

The Romans and Italians on Delos were deeply involved in trade and finance. Their language use in inscriptions shows strategic navigation: Greek to show their place in Hellenic society and relationships with local and regional elites, Latin to emphasise their ties to Rome.⁵⁶ Attuned to their recently acquired ease of movement, they deliberately drew attention to where they were and where they had been. For example, in the last half of the second century B.C.E., two groups of Romans and Italians — similar to those which Caesar and Ps.-Caesar would later describe — installed a statue to honour Lochos, son of Kallimedes, kinsman of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II and Queen Cleopatra, on the dromos of the Sanctuary of Apollo. The dedication on its base described them as 'the Roman shippers (ναύκληροι) and merchants (ἔμποροι) who, in the capture of Alexandria, were treated benevolently by King Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, god'.⁵⁷ Around 99 B.C.E., a statue base went up in the so-called Agora of the Italians.⁵⁸ Its Latin and Greek dedication described its authors as 'the Italians who were at Alexandria'.⁵⁹ As inscriptions from across the Greek East and even Italy attest, the practice extended well beyond Delos.⁶⁰ In light of these migrants' awareness of place, the graffito by Gaius Acutius that P. James discusses takes on a new look. The most fanciful explanation for *primus* — namely, that Acutius believed he was the first Roman citizen or Latin speaker to make it as far south as Upper Egypt, and that he knew the import of that position — begins to seem credible.

⁵⁰ Polyb. 32.7.

⁵¹ Müller 2017: 100.

⁵² On the island's native population in this period: Müller 2017: 94; on Delians who remained on the island: Baslez 1976; on the Delians who became Achaean citizens: Rizakis 2012: 32; on Delian agency: Gettel 2018, who makes the important observation that the deportees considered Athens to be responsible.

⁵³ Thuc. 5.32; Constantakopoulou 2016: 127.

⁵⁴ Scott 2013: 45–76; Constantakopoulou 2017.

⁵⁵ Huzar 1962; Baslez 1976; 2002; 2019; Hasenohr 2007a; 2007b; Étienne 2010; Lindhagen 2013; Rovai 2020.

⁵⁶ Adams 1994.

⁵⁷ *IDélos* 1526; see also *IDélos* 1527 (145–116 B.C.E.). On Roman-Egyptian ties: Huzar 1962; Mavrogiannis 2002: 175–7; Heilporn 2010.

⁵⁸ On the misidentification of this structure as an agora: Trümper 2008; 2014.

⁵⁹ *IDélos* 1699.

⁶⁰ Picard 1966; van Andringa 1998; Avram 2007; Ramgopal 2017; forthcoming.

Italy, Philae, Alexandria and Delos were worlds apart. Italy is at the sea's midpoint. To the east lies Delos, at the centre of the Cyclades. Alexandria perched on the Egyptian coast and the island of Philae sits in the Nile in Upper Egypt, just north of where the Aswan High Dam now stands. Mediterranean connectivity made travel across the varied, difficult topography that separated these places possible for those with the means. Yet connectivity alone was not responsible for the arrival of migrants from Italy to Delos and Egypt and the rise of their wide-ranging networks. The connections adumbrated above depended on disconnections like that of Delians from their homeland and the social, political and cultural worlds of which they were a part. Such disconnections were essential to the mechanics of empire.

If we shift our gaze a little further back in time, we see that Rome was not new to the expulsion of native populations.⁶¹ In Italy, after a battle with the Senones in 284 B.C.E., Rome drove survivors from their territory.⁶² In 268 B.C.E., it expelled the Picentes and resettled them at the gulf of Paestum.⁶³ In 187, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus defeated Ligurian Friniates and other Ligurian groups and 'removed a multitude from the mountains into the plains'.⁶⁴ From 180 to 179, Ligurian Apuani were transferred to and resettled in Samnium.⁶⁵ Also in 180, Quintus Fulvius oversaw the resettlement of Ligurians to lowlands in an unspecified area.⁶⁶ These few examples suffice to show that forced population movement in northern Italy under Rome took a variety of forms, ranging from expulsions that left victims to wander to state-funded resettlement schemes that foreshadow the Republic's later land policies.

Of a transfer of Apuan Ligurians from Liguria to Samnium in 180, Livy writes, 'There was among the Samnites public land (*ager publicus*) belonging to the Roman people, which had belonged to the Taurasini.'⁶⁷ Before their transfer, the Apuani begged the consuls Marcus Baebius and Publius Cornelius that they 'not be forced to give up their household gods, the settlements in which they had been born, the tombs of their ancestors'.⁶⁸ Liguria and Samnium may have shared some topographic features, but the deportees' new home was unfamiliar to them. This robbed the Apuani of the specific places in which to conduct their rites and the means to pass them on.⁶⁹ New forms of land management would have further contributed to their epistemic losses. Lowland areas also gave Roman authorities an ease of surveillance and movement that Apennine topography did not.⁷⁰ Together, these factors imposed a fixity upon the Apuani that was previously unknown to them.⁷¹

⁶¹ For more on this practice during and after the Republic: Galsterer 2001; Pina Polo 2004; 2006; 2009; de Blois 2016. On the infrequency of deportations by Rome compared to other ancient societies, see Woolf 2016.

⁶² Polyb. 2.19.

⁶³ Strabo 5.4.13; Plin., *HN* 3.70.

⁶⁴ Livy 39.2.

⁶⁵ Livy 40.38; 40.41.

⁶⁶ Livy 40.53.

⁶⁷ Livy 40.38. The communities founded by the transfer of Apuani by Marcus Baebius and Publius Cornelius persisted into the second century C.E.: Plin., *HN* 3.105; *CIL* IX 1455 = *ILS* 6509. In light of the energy and financial resources required to transfer montane populations to lowlands, Alberto Barzanò makes the intriguing suggestion that the Ligurians were resettled as part of a *foedus*; Francisco Pina Polo disagrees: Barzanò 1995; Pina Polo 2004: 219–22; 2006: 185–8.

⁶⁸ Livy 40.38. Translation adapted from Sage and Schlesinger 1938.

⁶⁹ 'If, as several scholars have strongly urged, we think of Roman and Italic religions as religions of *place*, then it stands to reason that the destruction of specific places entailed, quite literally, the destruction of certain religious forms that were attached to and articulated through local communities: epistemicide' (Padilla Peralta 2020: 171).

⁷⁰ Livy (39.1) explicitly notes the difficulties that Roman soldiers faced in Ligurian landscapes.

⁷¹ Livy reports that a commission of five was formed at the consuls' behest to allot land to the deportees and divide among them 150,000 sesterces of silver that the state had relegated for the their establishment. Barzanò 1995: 187–8 makes an important comparison between the money received by the Apuani and the Lex Sempronia, which would not come into being until 133.

Presumably, the region that these Apuani were made to occupy was partially emptied of Samnites during a previous phase of Roman conquest. Territory in the north acquired new residents and forms of land use as well. Newcomers from central and southern Italy arrived to inhabit settlements that were very different from those of northern peoples. New colonies studded the region.⁷² Many more Romans migrated north to occupy land outside these state-sponsored foundations.⁷³ Centuriation, drainage and the construction of canals and roads accompanied these waves of migration.

Roman roads are a particularly well studied index of continuity and change. Despite their fame, even in antiquity, for their transformation of landscapes, they often followed existing routes and did not impose perceptible changes in archaeological evidence for pre-Roman local settlement, trade and social patterns.⁷⁴ Such is at least one conclusion about the Via Postumia, which was constructed from Genoa to Aquileia in 187.⁷⁵ Yet Roman roads were powerfully different from earlier routes. Durable construction material shortened journey times and made road travel more reliable, thereby transforming the experience of mobility within northern Italy and between it and the rest of the peninsula.⁷⁶ Calgacus's speech in Tacitus' *Agricola*, though imaginary, suggests the suffering that roads caused native populations that were forced to build them.⁷⁷ Milestones and other monuments declared Rome's primacy.⁷⁸ In northern Italy, the creation of a new political space was clear to locals.⁷⁹ Between 187 and 131, Rome constructed the Via Aemilia, Via Postumia, Via Annia and Via Popilia. Together, these roads enclosed the Po plain.⁸⁰ The *Sententia Minuciorum*, which records the settlement of a dispute between the Genuates and the Langenses Viturii, thought to be a Ligurian tribe, suggests that northern peoples understood the role of the Via Postumia in demarcating their movements and use of land. The dispute seems to have concerned the occupation of *ager publicus* and grazing rights in territory through which the Via Postumia ran.⁸¹ The Via Sebaste, which was also constructed in a recently and fiercely rebellious area in Pisidia, provides a useful comparison. Built in 6/5 B.C.E., it reshaped local mobility by connecting a group of new Augustan colonies and ignoring preexisting local centres. The decision to route the Via Sebaste thus could be explained by the fact that these centres were already connected by a regional network. But as Stephen Mitchell and his co-authors point out, it was a tool for facilitating imperial aims.⁸²

The long-term outcome is indisputable. The flourishing northern Italy that late republican and early Augustan authors describe came into being through repeated and heterogeneous disconnections. The extent to which mass death, enslavement and coercive resettlement diminished local populations may be why the region seemed vacant

⁷² Republican colonists may have been victims of displacement as well: Jewell 2019.

⁷³ Broadhead 2000.

⁷⁴ For ancient authors on Roman roads, see, for example, Dion. Hal. 3.67.5, Strabo 5.3.8, Plut., *C. Gracch.* 7.1, Aristid., *Or.* 26.101. As Richard Talbert observes, these are Greek authors with particular political motivations: Talbert 2012: 238. On the short- vs long-term impacts of Roman roads: Hitchner 2012: 223; Witcher 2017.

⁷⁵ Pasquinucci 2019: 472–3.

⁷⁶ Laurence 1999.

⁷⁷ Tac., *Agr.* 31.2; Talbert 2012: 237–8.

⁷⁸ Díaz Ariño 2015; Carlà-Uhink 2022.

⁷⁹ On the low likelihood that Romans viewed their road system as a network: Talbert 2012.

⁸⁰ Roncaglia 2018: 34.

⁸¹ *CIL* I² 584 = *CIL* V 7749 = *IILRP* 517. The inscription dates to 117 B.C.E. The commissioners, Quintus Minucius Rufus and Marcus Minucius Rufus, may have been selected for this role because they were descendants of Quintus Minucius Rufus. As consul, he commanded successful campaigns against Ligurians in 197 B.C.E. For commentary: Crawford 2003; Mennella 2004; 2014; Pasquinucci 2019.

⁸² Mitchell *et al.* 2021: 52.

to the wealthy Roman elites who acquired property there.⁸³ Our reliance on Romanocentric literary sources and uncertainty around the question of whether Ligurians were actually distinct from Gauls is also telling: we hardly know who they were.⁸⁴ We should contextualise the strenuous efforts of the linguists who contributed to Clackson *et al.*'s volume within this ignorance. The fragmentary nature of the languages they examine is the outcome of Roman imperial expansion through the matrices of Mediterranean connectivity. Refugee and settler, Aeneas was indeed the quintessential *ur*-Roman.

V 'THE ROMAN MIRACLE'

The intellectual trajectory of which Daubner, MacMullen and Errington are a part arises from the unwavering commitment to an ideal that Marcel Bénabou called 'the Roman miracle' in the opening lines of his 1976 treatise *La résistance africaine à la romanisation*:

Le "miracle romain" n'a pas fini d'exercer sa fascination. A qui se désole des divisions présentes de l'Europe ou de l'instabilité des régimes et des constitutions, l'Empire romain apparaît comme une prodigieuse réussite, une expérience privilégiée, voire unique, de stabilité et d'unité. Et l'on est sans cesse tenté de lui demander des leçons pour le présent, tant il est difficile de se résigner à considérer comme définitivement hors d'usage les principes et les méthodes qui ont mené à un épanouissement apparemment si éclatant. C'est dire que l'on se lance rarement dans l'étude de l'impérialisme romain avec une parfaite innocence.⁸⁵

The discipline of Roman history, Bénabou argued, legitimised Europe's past and present colonial projects, and rendered Rome into Europe's ideal image of itself. The process called Romanisation was central to the creation of this image. In studies of Roman Africa, it portrayed native North Africans as passive beneficiaries of Roman society and culture.⁸⁶ Bénabou has not had the last word on cultural change in Roman Africa, of course, but *La résistance africaine* remains relevant.⁸⁷ It problematised triumphalist accounts of the effects of the crucible of mobility and Roman imperial activity. A glance at recent literature on Rome's road system, for example, regularly yields positive rhetoric to describe its effects in antiquity and even today.⁸⁸ To quote again from MacMullen on the early Roman Empire: 'A thing of wonder, indeed!'⁸⁹ The miracle is alive and well.

In 'Epistemicide', Padilla Peralta urges us to do more than consider how we think about Roman history: we must contemplate how we *feel* about it.⁹⁰ The same is true of the Mediterranean. As Horden and Purcell point out, seas and oceans provoke strong emotions (177). In his introduction to the first edition of *La Méditerranée*, Braudel wrote: 'I have loved the Mediterranean with passion, no doubt because I am a northerner like so many others in whose footsteps I have followed.'⁹¹ Braudel penned these lines in 1949, but it is easy to imagine encountering the same sentiment in recent

⁸³ Broadhead 2000.

⁸⁴ Häussler 2007; 2013.

⁸⁵ Bénabou 1976: 10.

⁸⁶ The discipline consisted, as Bénabou's peer Abdallah Laroui wrote, of the imposition 'd'une colonisation à l'autre'. The opposition caused by Bénabou's argument underscores its importance; see David Mattingly for an overview of the debate. Laroui 1970: 32–65; Mattingly 1996: 58–9.

⁸⁷ For valid criticisms of Bénabou: Mattingly 1996: 57–9, 62–3; Woolf 1997: 340–1; van Dommelen 1997: 308.

⁸⁸ Hitchner 2012; Witcher 2017; Flückiger *et al.* 2022.

⁸⁹ MacMullen 2000: ix.

⁹⁰ Padilla Peralta 2020.

⁹¹ Braudel 1972: 1.17. For the French, see this essay's epigraph. For a brief analysis of Braudel's *La Méditerranée* as a literary work: Valensi 2010.

scholarly prefaces, the result of the journeys of western-origin researchers to and in the region.⁹² Now we can stretch the idea of disconnect to the present day. Inextricably tied to the miracle that Bénabou condemned is the relationship that today's historians of Rome have with the Mediterranean. Their — *our* — mobility is its own Grand Tour, anchored by foreign schools like the French Academy in Rome, the American Academy at Rome and British School at Athens. Several were, in fact, founded in the era of the Grand Tour, and they functioned to realise the imperial ambitions of the nations they represented.⁹³ This is brutally apparent in cases like the involvement of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens in displacing the populations of the neighborhoods of Vrysaki and Vlassarou (whose numbers included refugees who had relocated to Greece from Asia Minor in the 1920s) and dismantling their homes to excavate the site of the agora of classical Athens.⁹⁴

These discrepant mobilities are part of a broader spectrum of imperial phenomena. Today, the central Mediterranean Sea is the deadliest part of the water for undocumented migration, a mass grave for those who drown before they can reach inhumane conditions on Lesvos and Lampedusa. From 2013–2014, Italy monitored the movements of these migrants and prevented their entry with Operation Mare Nostrum, which was named for how the Romans expressed the political unity wrought by domination: *mare nostrum*, 'our sea'.⁹⁵ The Italian operation was succeeded by *Mos Maiorum*, a collaboration with the EU's Frontex Border and Coast Guard Agency.⁹⁶ Many of the migrants policed by these regimes of control originate in African nations in regions previously subjected to Italian imperialism, which was also inspired by the Roman Empire's control of the sea. 'Roma antica sul mare', Mussolini declared in 1926, to conclude a lecture in which he asserted the importance of maritime power.⁹⁷ The Roman Mediterranean formed an important ideological strand of Fascist *romanità* and the rise of a new imperial Italy.⁹⁸

In the discrepant mobilities of the modern Mediterranean, we can discern the cosmopolitanism that we impose on the Roman sea. Rovai in Clackson *et al.* describes Late Hellenistic Delos as a centre of 'cosmopolitanism', for example, and Claudia Moatti has used the concept to frame her studies of migration to the city of Rome and

⁹² As Woolf 2005: 127 mordantly observes, 'More than one eminent classicist has succumbed to the romantic lure of the inland sea; indeed, it is something of an occupational hazard'.

⁹³ French Academy in Rome: 1666; American Academy in Rome: 1894. Americans become visible in the phenomenon of the Grand Tour during the Gilded Age. For a general history of the foundation of these institutions, see Frederick Whitling, though he is not deeply attuned to the imperial ideologies that drove their aims: Whitling 2019.

⁹⁴ Classical Athens being superior to other ancient Athenses, including archaic and Roman imperial. On the colonial dynamics of the Agora's excavation, its significance for Greek nationalist and American democratic ideology, and the role of the American School: Hamilakis 2013; for documentation of Vrysaki and Vlassarou: Dumont 2020 (but see also criticisms of her work by Dimitris Plantzos in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*).

⁹⁵ Jan Nelis points to a key passage from Mussolini's *Omnia Opera*: 'Riassumendo, la storia marittima di Roma antica può dividersi in tre epoche: la prima nella quale Roma subisce le talassocrazie altrui: siracusana, greca, etrusca, cartaginese. La seconda nella quale Roma lotta ed annulla la superstite supremazia cartaginese. La terza che va dal 147 a.C. a tre secoli dopo Cristo, durante la quale Roma ebbe il dominio incontrastato del Mediterraneo. Si può dunque affermare che Roma fu potente anche sul mare e che questa potenza fu il risultato di lunghi sacrifici, di una incrollabile tenacia, di una tetragona volontà. Queste virtù valevano ieri, varranno domani e sempre.' (Mussolini, *Omnia Opera* 22.227). See Nelis 2007: 400; Gori and Lami 2018: 34; Agbamu 2019: 255–269.

⁹⁶ On the classicising language of modern European efforts to control Mediterranean migration and their ideological ties with Italian Fascism: Agbamu 2019.

⁹⁷ My own experience as an American citizen flying over the sea from Tunis to Rome in 2019 illuminates in yet another way: I did not need a visa to enter either country and enjoyed easy entry to Italy from Tunisia through a line in Fiumicino that moved swiftly past fellow travellers of Tunisian nationality.

⁹⁸ On the centrality of the Roman past to Fascist ideology: Arthurs 2012.

in the empire as a whole.⁹⁹ In their and many other Mediterraneans, individuals form pluralistic communities as a result of living and moving freely.¹⁰⁰ This traditional formulation of liberal cosmopolitanism is not just misleadingly depoliticised: it is dangerous. It feeds into Mediterranean exceptionalism, which is in turn bolstered by the connectivity that made such allegedly free movement possible.

In CS, Horden and Purcell alleged ‘the end of the Mediterranean’ as a subject of interest to historians and geographers.¹⁰¹ Famously, the opposite occurred: over the last two decades, Mediterranean studies have surged. Much of this interest can be traced back to CS and its claim that the degree of connectivity that characterised the premodern Mediterranean was unsurpassed. But there is no proving such a claim — nor is there a way to make it without upholding what the authors call in *BS* ‘the hegemonial systems of its history’ (46). When they write that ‘[t]he Mediterranean has some claim to be the great original of seas as the subject of history’ (2), they do not see that the resources allocated to the study of other seas have been comparatively limited. Were that not so, we might better perceive the connectivities of the Indian Ocean, for example, or the Pacific Rim. Such an outcome demands that we continue the process of shattering our attachment to the status of our discipline, the peoples and places we study, and, crucially, the movements that link them together and break them apart.

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⁹⁹ Moatti 2010; 2013; Rovai 2020: 172, 177, 200.

¹⁰⁰ Calhoun 2008; Kurasawa 2011.

¹⁰¹ Horden and Purcell 2000: 39–43.

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