

Social Spaces and Industrial Places:  
Multi-Scalar Approaches to Production in the Ancient Mediterranean

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From massive industrial installations such as the large terra sigillata kilns at La Graufesenque or the mountains collapsed by imperial gold mining at Las Médulas, to neighborhood-level production of bread at Pompeii, to the metal workshops associated with many Greek sanctuaries or the household-level production of textiles in houses across the Mediterranean, people made things at many different scales and in many different places in the ancient Mediterranean, with varying social and economic consequences and benefits. As interest in the archaeology of production increased in the 1980s and 1990s, innovative scholars like van der Leeuw, Peacock and Costin sought to develop models to aid comparative archaeological study of the organization of production, producing typologies which included scalar categories like “household industry,” “nucleated workshops,” and “community specialization.” These models directed attention to often-overlooked aspects of productive activity and inspired many new approaches in subsequent years.

One unintended consequence of this work, however, has been the reification of scalar categories as a hierarchy of development. Thus, in many studies, production activities at either end of the scale are not subject to the same types of analysis as workshop production—domestic production is assumed to make very little impact on the larger economy while, conversely, major industrial works are often subsumed within the study of empire and political economy, obscuring the complicated reality of how very large scale industrial ventures worked on a human level. Following a recent call for more rigorous integration of data at different scales of analysis by Dietler, among others, we propose in this session to investigate ancient production that took place at different scales alongside one another to examine the role(s) of production in larger social and economic processes and questions in the ancient Mediterranean world. We will take an intentionally broad definition of the word production, encompassing both craft production (ceramic, glass, metal, leather, etc.), major industrial production (mining and quarrying), as well food production (olive oil, fish salting, etc.). Examining labor organization and the role of production in wider communities and landscapes can illuminate commonalities and differences in production at the household-, neighborhood-, workshop-, industrial- levels, especially when considered in comparative perspective.

We invite papers that consider social or economic aspects of production at any scale from Greek, Roman, or other Mediterranean contexts, with the aim of forming a colloquium in which we can discuss production from a multi-scalar perspective. Topics may include new or innovative archaeological work at a site of production; labor organization in houses, workshops, or industrial communities; the social role of production in wider communities; production in urban or rural settings; and the wider economic impacts of production. Additionally, we especially welcome papers that consider the issue of scale in analysis, from archaeometric analysis of industrial debris to landscape/GIS models of ancient productive activity.

*Please send titles and abstracts of 400 words or less to [linda\\_gosner@brown.edu](mailto:linda_gosner@brown.edu) by March 18 for consideration in this colloquium, which we intend to submit as a session for the Archaeological Institute of America Annual Meeting in San Francisco on January 6-9, 2016.*