

## Epilogue

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Chaironeia is, and has been throughout its history, a small place. The village never became a hub bristling with culture, nor did it evolve into a regional center that pulled others into its orbit. Smallness, however, does not itself suggest a backwater place. In the case of Chaironeia, the opposite holds true. Situated along a major travel artery for the movement of armies through central and into southern Greece, the environs invited a series of major and indeed famed battles in antiquity. On less violent days, the passageway from the Kephissos Valley to the Lake Kopais region served as a convenient route for trade, mobility, and migration. The rich epigraphic body of manumission records from the Hellenistic period suggests that the village was not flyover country exclusively, but a keen destination for many who sought liberation from slavery. And after the dust of the major battles had settled, Chaironeia attracted numerous visitors who came to explore a site where history was made. At the height of this development, during the first two centuries CE, the local horizon of Chaironeia was firmly interlocked with the all-pervasive networks of the Roman Empire, fusing distant markets with the commodities from local farmers and manufacturers, including olive oil, perfume, and reeds.

To Plutarch, Chaironeia's foremost son, the smallness of his hometown was a given, formative to the local identity of place. "I live in a small city," he asserted in a famous verdict that has been cited in this volume already, "and I prefer to dwell there that it may not become smaller still" (*Dem.* 2.2). Scholars are quick to denounce the statement – along with other appreciations of the local horizon – as a literary trope, an expression that marries romantic ideas of home with projections of boundedness. The resulting image of fixity was both inherent and vital to prominent strategies of securing social distinction and authority. In the lived experience, so the standard reading, normative fixity yielded to the omnipresent force

of cultural connectivity that has been found to be so characteristic of settlements in Roman Greece – and elsewhere in the connected Mediterranean, for that matter. But smallness is not the same as parochialness, and localness is no synonym for fixed, frozen conditions, disconnected from the fast-paced algorithm of globality. One of the major pitfalls in the study of cultural entanglement in the ancient Mediterranean is indeed the tendency to relegate the local horizon to the realm of topicality and, effectively, dismiss the quest for the local as a shortsighted endeavor that does not grasp, and account for, the dynamics of cultural connectivity.

The writings of Plutarch bear rich testimony to the mechanics of cultural practices that on the one hand are inspired by, and reflective of, a connected world, yet on the other owe so much to the local horizon in which they were carried out. A citizen of the Roman Empire at one point in his life, a prominent office holder in his hometown, student in Athens and priest at Delphi some 30 kilometers up the road from Chaironeia, Plutarch's biography oscillated between the local and the global, with multiple realms of engagement between both.

The papers assembled in this collection add critical depth to the unravelling of the form and force of each of these horizons. First, the notion of globality. Debates about the concept attribution of the global and its derivatives – globalization, globality – have somewhat cooled off in recent years. Few subscribe to the idea fostered so long, mostly by historians of modernity, that the globalization paradigm applies to the histories of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries exclusively. Plutarch's lens captures a world that is intimately entangled, meaningfully connecting and impacting the sentiments, experiences, and opportunities of people around the Mediterranean Sea and in its adjacent lands. At the time, this was a truly global geography.

The inhabitants of this global Roman Empire formed something that has been labelled a paradoxical community. The term describes a community made up of people who reconcile to a level of foreignness but are yet tied together by bonds of togetherness, without an eminent merging or melting of the various cultures that ground their foreignness. Indeed, Noreen Humble argues that the imperial framework of the Roman Empire provided a blueprint for universal togetherness and cultural distinction and idiosyncrasy, each entity in fruitful cross-fertilization with the other. It has often been observed, but has not always been fully appreciated, that in the cultural and religious matrix of the Roman order, Rome's

genuine input was hardly that of a superior, privileged entity because of the power with which it was vested, speaking down upon its subordinates in Italy and beyond.

The verdict of intricacy is important as it resonates with the old question of how Plutarch viewed intercultural conversations between Greece and Rome, starting with his own relationship with Rome, in a world that was thoroughly entangled. The hybridization of culture saw no hard borders in Plutarch's days. Mediterranean intertwinement was the new natural, a deeply internalized state of being. Susan Jacobs shows in her contribution how cultural amalgamation had advanced even to a degree where the acknowledgement of the hybrid nature of political leadership – of its foundations and traditions – was a key prerequisite for the performance of good leadership. Also, hybrid fusion was not confined to the Graeco-Roman blend. Turning to the paradigmatic pair of Philopoimen and Flamininus, Jeffrey Beneker unravels the complicated cultural conversation between Greece and Rome, and the decisive turning points along the way to amalgamation. At the same time, the global scope of Plutarch's mindset went far beyond the two, extending into realms that might be subsumed under the umbrella of 'barbarian' but that were, in Plutarch's view, not really defined by Greek nor Roman. The papers by Rebecca Moorman and Thomas Schmidt display Plutarch's sincere interest in and fascination with this otherness. In Plutarch's connected world, cultural practice was determined by contact with all. The stories that were told, the moral lessons that were learnt, the consequences that followed: all of this was drawn from an extensive array of cultural mixtures and choices.

The pick and choose from the currents of connected cultures is, however, a hard-wired practice. It requires real people making choices, implicitly or cognitively, and it calls for an arena where abstract concepts of interculturality translate into the realness of place. If "all politics is local," so is the demeanor of cultural practice. When connected worlds hit the grassroots level of the community, the prevalence of the local shines through, not only because people are concerned with their immediate environment first and foremost, but also because the act of cultural amalgamation itself is subject to the force of quotidian rhythm and local systems of truth. These, too, are tied to a local environment and its physical characteristics: a workshop or marketplace and its prevailing attitudes and beliefs, or, in the papers of Karin Schlapbach and Sebastian Scharff, a dancefloor and sports field, each one with its own regime of appropriateness.

Plutarch's writings make us wonder if, amidst a connected world, the foregrounding of the local and the stabilities it suggests to some was really just a narrative device that lent

persuasiveness to the recollection of lives and moral stories. To be sure, tracing the local landscape through which Plutarch's narrative traverses, circling seamlessly from Chaironeia into its surrounding region of Boiotia and back to his hometown, Chandra Giroux demonstrates how Plutarch creatively crafted images and shaped imaginations of a local kosmos that lived up to the comparison with that of any other place in Greece, including Athens. It required the emic eye, a particular type of local knowledgeability and experience, to foreground the distinctiveness of place and highlight its role in a connected world. It is tempting to dismiss this endeavor as a romantic trope, declaring it – suggestively so – the mirage of fixity. All the while, it also documents a sense of attachment to a place where the omnipresent force of global change might be observed with composure and confidence.