INTRODUCTION

Ever since *La formazione della città nel Lazio* (The Formation of the City in Latium) seminar, held in Rome in the late 1970s,[1] the origin of the city in middle Tyrrhenian Italy has been a hugely debated topic. To simplify a complex question, the key issues of the debate have always been: When did the city begin in middle Tyrrhenian Italy – the sixth, seventh or even eighth century BC? And what was there before the city?

On the first question, scholars generally agree that urbanisation was well under way in middle Tyrrhenian Italy between the late Orientalizing Age and the beginning of the Archaic Age (i.e., between the second half of the seventh century and the sixth century BC).[2] By that time Rome had been largely monumentalised and most of its civic, religious and political foci had been built or even restored in stone or with a stone foundation:[3] the Regia, the Temple of Mater Matuta in the sacred area of S. Omobono, the Archaic temple found under the so-called *auguratorium* in the Magna Mater sanctuary at the south-west corner of the Palatine Hill, the House of the Vestals and the so-called House of the Kings at the foot of the Palatine Hill towards the Forum, the Forum itself with the Comitium, the so-called Servian Wall, the Cloaca Maxima, possibly the Circus Maximus, and finally the Capitoline temple, dedicated in the first year of the Republic, 509 BC.[4] Similarly, by the same period, numerous centres across Latium vetus and Etruria also had defensive stone walls and were adorned with monumental temples with stone foundations.[5]

However, recent research, such as stratigraphic investigations conducted in the historical and archaeological centre of Rome (Palatine Hill and Forum valley), and re-evaluations of old excavations have drawn attention to a series of civic monuments dating from between the middle of the eighth and the beginning of the seventh century BC. These include an earthen wall around the Palatine and a rectangular building for communal meals and gatherings (which represent an earlier phase of the later House of the Kings with stone foundations), both dated to the mid-eighth century BC; a place for civic assemblies in the Comitium; and communal civic cult places, such as the votive deposit of the Capitoline Hill and possibly the votive deposit of the *tholos* of Vesta.[6] These seem to indicate the existence of a community of citizens, possibly ruled by a centralised authority, whose communal and political identity is conveyed and defined by those monuments, even at such an early time.[7]

As for the origin of the city in middle Tyrrhenian Italy and the nature of settlements in the region, the debate over the past forty years can be viewed as polarised between two opposing schools of thought, 'exogenous' and 'endogenous' (although many scholars actually fall somewhere in between). Proponents of the exogenous view (mainly historians, classicists and etruscologists) highlight the role of external influences (diffusionist model), namely from the Near East via Greek and Phoenician colonists, in the birth and development of cities and urban aristocracies.[8] By contrast, proponents of the endogenous view (mainly pre-historians and a minority of etruscologists and classical archaeologists) emphasise autochthonous factors and local trends towards higher complexity, which can be detected in settlement patterns and in social developments (mirrored by funerary evidence) already by the end of the Final Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age (end of the eleventh and beginning of the tenth century BC), if not earlier.[9]

Building on this tradition of studies as well as on the funerary approach adopted in *Le sepolture principesche nel Latium vetus* (Princely burials in Latium vetus [Fulminante 2003]) and using newly published and unpublished data from recent surveys and excavations, this work will investigate urbanisation in middle Tyrrhenian Italy. It will focus specifically on settlement patterns in the Roman region from the Middle Bronze Age to the Archaic Age, that is, from the seventeenth to the end of the sixth century BC.

In particular, three levels of analysis will be adopted, and the development of very early Rome (Chapter 3) will be defined in relation to its immediate hinterland (*ager Romanus antiquus*, Chapters 4 and 5) and the regional setting (Latium vetus, Chapter 6). Then settlement patterns will be compared with other trajectories of social evolution: social stratification (as mirrored in funerary evidence), economic developments, craft specialisation, ritual and cult places, ethnicity and identity, land evaluation and vegetation history; in this way it will be possible to demonstrate that local developments leading to

1. 'Cypro-Phoenician' bowl from the Bernardini 'princely' tomb in Praenestae (Palestrina), second quarter of the 7th century BC. (Rome, Museo Nazionale di Villa Giulia, ICCD photographic archive inv. F3 686.)

centralisation and higher complexity had already started by the end of the Final Bronze Age and, more clearly, from the beginning of the Early Iron Age, well before the first Greek colonies were founded in southern Italy (Chapter 7).

Thus this work will challenge the traditional diffusionist view, which espouses the model of the city in the western Mediterranean as an idea that was imported, along with products and goods (such as the so-called Cypro-Phoenician bowls; Fig. 1), from the superior cultures of Greece and the Near East.[10] However, opposing perspectives, which claim the priority of the West in the development of the city-state model, specifically in the early urbanism of Rome, should also be considered, albeit cautiously.[11]

In line with new perspectives and studies on Bronze and Iron Age Mediterranean connectivity,[12] this work will suggest that a combination of the traditional model of 'peer polity interaction' and the novel 'network model' be adopted in order to provide not only a new interpretative framework but also a methodology and an analytical tool with which to better understand the tensions between regional cultures (Greeks, Phoenicians, Latins, etc.) in the global Mediterranean arena, as well as local differentiations (city-states) within the regional cultures themselves.

In particular, Chapter 1 establishes the theoretical foundations upon which the following chapters are based. It is divided into three main sections. Section 1.1 outlines the current debate on the origin of the city in middle Tyrrhenian Italy, with a focus on Latium vetus. Section 1.2 discusses a number of theoretical models of social evolution, ranging from traditional evolutionary theories to the latest multi-trajectory and holistic approaches (such as heterarchy, agency and tinkering, corporate vs. network modes and chaos theory), which criticise evolutionary thinking as predeterministic, teleological, universalistic

and irreconcilable with local and specific variations. Section 1.2 also considers the recent comparative approach taken by the Copenhagen Polis Centre Project and compares it with the model of social evolution elaborated by the Italian scholar Renato Peroni for pre- and proto-historic Italian communities. Finally, it illustrates the 'socio-ecological model' of urbanisation developed by John Bintliff for first millennium BC Greece,[13] which, as will be demonstrated in this work, can be fruitfully applied to middle Tyrrhenian Italy as well.

Section 1.3 suggests adopting a multi-dimensional and multi-theoretical framework, thus circumventing the sterile debate between evolutionary and anti-evolutionary perspectives. Such an approach has already been embraced by Gideon Shelach in his work on social complexity in northeast China from the fifth to the first millennium BC; in fact, a multi-dimensional theoretical perspective 'has the potential of arriving at a much more complex reconstruction of social systems and a comprehensive understanding of social processes',[14] which are multi-faceted and sometimes contradictory in their own right.

Chapter 2 begins with a discussion of the geographical context under study: Latium vetus. Section 2.1 illustrates the geographical, morphological and geological characteristics of the area in the wider context of central Italy; defines the limits of the region, which is a debated topic in itself; and discusses the nature of settlement organisation in Latium vetus. Section 2.2 provides a review of archaeological research in Rome and Latium vetus since the end of the nineteenth century and offers an overarching view of the foundational studies on which this work is built. Section 2.3 examines the nature of the data collected and used at both the territorial and regional levels; it also discusses possible biases that might affect the analyses and that have to be taken into account in their interpretation. Finally, Section 2.4 considers methodological and theoretical issues, currently debated in relation to the application of spatial analyses and locational models, specifically with reference to geographical information systems tools, which have been adopted in this work.

Chapter 3 discusses new evidence, provided by recent excavations in the historical and archaeological centre of Rome, in combination with previous studies in order to reassess, from an archaeological point of view, the evolution of Rome from a small Bronze Age village to the great city of the Archaic Age, while also taking into consideration the current debate on the origin of the city. This redefinition of the city's development will then be compared with the analysis of settlement patterns at both the territorial (*ager Romanus antiquus*, Chapters 4 and 5) and regional (Latium vetus, Chapter 6) levels.

According to ancient authors, the *ager Romanus antiquus* (old Roman domain) was the most ancient territory of Rome, prior to any conquest, and was identified by a boundary marked by a series of sanctuaries located at about five to six Roman miles (between ca. 6 and 9 km) on a few main roads leading from the city. Chapter 4 discusses the extent and chronological evolution of this

territory, comparing results from the traditional literary approach with new theoretical approaches, based on the analysis of the archaeological evidence.

The location of sites will be analysed in relation to environmental variables (geology, altitude, slope and distance to modern rivers), at both the territorial (Section 5.3) and regional (Latium vetus, Section 6.2) levels, in order to identify settlement location patterns. In addition, the hierarchies of settlements will be examined, again at both the territorial (Section 5.4) and regional (Sections 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5) levels, by applying spatial and locational analyses such as the rank-size rule, spatial efficiency model, central place theory and Voronoi diagrams, in order to identify socio-political trends and territorial dynamics.

Chapter 7 integrates the settlement dynamics identified at the local (Rome), territorial (*ager*) and regional (Latium vetus) levels with a number of other trajectories of social evolution elaborated by analysing different types of archaeological evidence: settlement centralisation, funerary evidence and social organisation, economy, craft specialisation, ritual and cult places, ethnicity and identity, land evaluation and vegetation history (Section 7.2). A comparison of several such trajectories (Section 7.3) will highlight specific, eccentric and even contradictory paths of development but will also enable us to identify general patterns of change and points of convergence of several trajectories, which mark specific steps towards higher complexity ('conjunctions' of social evolution, according to the definition of Gideon Shelach; see Section 1.3).[15]

Subsequently, the socio-ecological model developed by Bintliff for the evolution of the city-state in Greece during the first millennium BC[16] will be applied to Latium vetus. Thus this work will provide a possible explanation for the unresolved question of how and why, by the end of the Final Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age, small dispersed villages were abandoned in favour of large nucleated and centralised settlements on tuff plateaux (so-called proto-urban centres); by the mid-eighth century BC these settlements had started to show incipient urbanisation, which was completed by the seventh to sixth century BC (Section 7.3).

Finally, the network model will be introduced, not only as a useful theoretical framework but also as an analytical tool for the study of urbanisation in middle Tyrrhenian Italy and the Mediterranean in general, which will allow us to circumvent the old debate between exogenous and endogenous perspectives.[17] In particular, it will be shown that both the traditional diffusionist model, which considers the idea of 'city' to have been imported from the East to the western Mediterranean via Greek and Phoenician colonists,[18] and a new approach, which advocates an earlier elaboration of the city-state model in the western Mediterranean, as attested, for example, by the early foundation of Rome around the mid-eighth century BC,[19] have to be reassessed in the light of new research and novel perspectives on Mediterranean 'connectivity'.[20]

To conclude, this work will explore settlement dynamics in Rome (Chapter 3), its territory (Chapters 4 and 5) and its region (Chapter 6) by analysing archaeological evidence from recent excavations conducted in the centre of the city; survey data from a sample area, recently intensively surveyed, in the immediate surroundings of the city; and settlement data (known both from surveys and excavations) from the whole of Latium vetus. The geographical context, the nature of the data and methodological and theoretical issues will be discussed, in particular, in Chapter 2.

This study of settlement dynamics, conducted at three levels of analysis – Rome, its territory and Latium vetus – will then be integrated with several other approaches to social evolution in the same region, based on different types of archaeological evidence and interpreted in the light of a number of theoretical models (Chapter 7), whose foundations are established at the beginning of this work (Chapter 1).

In this way the research presented here aims to demonstrate that (1) clear signs of urbanisation can be detected in Rome by the mid-eighth century BC; (2) trends towards higher social complexity and settlement centralisation, which led to this fundamental threshold, have their roots in processes already evident in the Final Bronze Age, if not earlier; and (3) these phenomena (in particular settlement dynamics at the regional level) show a marked acceleration by the end of the ninth century BC, much earlier than the appearance of the first colonies in southern Italy. By highlighting these early local and autochthonous developments leading to higher complexity, this work will challenge the traditional diffusionist theory and will demonstrate that urbanisation and state formation in middle Tyrrhenian Italy were probably 'entangled' with,[21] but certainly not 'triggered' by, external influences from the eastern Mediterranean.

Further research drawn from this work would entail measuring the level of these entanglements. In line with a number of traditional and current developments in British scholarship, it will be suggested that concepts such as 'peer polity interaction',[22] 'mediterraneanisation',[23] 'connectivity'[24] and 'networks'[25] provide a more balanced approach to understanding local and networked contributions to political changes, both among neighbouring regional entities and more widely within the Mediterranean basin.

ONE

URBANISATION AND STATE FORMATION IN MIDDLE TYRRHENIAN ITALY: HISTORICAL QUESTIONS AND THEORETICAL MODELS

1.1. THE ORIGIN OF THE CITY IN MIDDLE TYRRHENIAN ITALY

The different perspectives on urbanisation in middle Tyrrhenian Italy espoused by the principal schools of thought known as 'exogenous' and 'endogenous' can be better appreciated if we consider how the two traditions interpret the same Early Iron Age settlement evidence found on the tuff plateaux of Etruria and Latium vetus, which were later occupied by the cities of the Archaic Age. During the late 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s a series of surveys and topographic explorations were conducted in central Italy as a result of growing urbanisation and agricultural mechanisation.[1] This research revealed a number of Bronze Age and even more numerous Early Iron Age pottery deposits on the tuff plateaux, which went on to be urbanised in the Archaic Age. These scatters of pottery (so-called sites) were interpreted by scholars in radically different ways. For example, on the basis of a survey conducted in the territory of Veii, John Ward Perkins interpreted the various Early Iron Age deposits found on the plateaux as 'different settlements' or 'separated hamlets' belonging to independent communities.[2]

According to him, those settlements came together as an incipient urban community only after the Early Iron Age ended, during the Orientalizing and Archaic Ages, via a 'synoecism' triggered by external influences, such as the new city–state model introduced to southern Italy by the recently founded Greek colonies. Ward Perkins's interpretation has been generally accepted by scholars of the exogenous perspective. It was confirmed, according to its supporters, by

the presence of several Early Iron Age cemeteries, presumably each belonging to a different community, discovered and excavated around the tuff plateaux of many Etruscan and Latin first-order settlements.[3]

By contrast, scholars, who adopted an endogenous perspective and emphasised local developments leading to urbanisation, interpreted the same scatters of Early Iron Age pottery on the big plateaux later occupied by Archaic cities as evidence of 'unitarian' or 'nucleated' large settlements. These settlements, defined as 'proto-urban' centres (not yet cities but with the potential to become so), would have been inhabited by an homogeneous community, or at least by close-knit groups, at an advanced stage of unification, well before the appearance of the first colonies in southern Italy.[4] In addition, according to these scholars, dramatic changes in the settlement organisation were evident in middle Tyrrhenian Italy by the Late Bronze Age (or the very beginning of the Early Iron Age), much earlier than the arrival of the first Greek colonists.[5]

In fact, recent surveys and topographic research have shown radical changes in settlement patterns between the Final Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age. Several studies have noted (1) a dramatic decrease in the total number of settlements; (2) the abandonment of many small, dispersed Bronze Age villages located in open positions or on small hilltops (generally less than 2–3 hectares,[6] with an average of 5–6 ha and a few settlements between 10 and 20 ha); (3) and the beginning of a generalised occupation of the big plateaux that were later occupied by Archaic cities (generally ranging from a minimum of 20–25 ha, particularly in Latium vetus, to a maximum of 180–200 ha in southern Etruria).[7]

According to scholars adopting the endogenous perspective, these changing patterns in the settlement organisation clearly point to settlement nucleation and centralisation, which is one of the premises of urbanisation.[8] While the exogenous perspective seemed to dominate during the 1970s and early 1980s, in the subsequent decades the endogenous point of view started to emerge. In particular, a series of surveys conducted on several plateaux of both Etruria and Latium vetus showed that the scatters of pottery, generally identified as separated hamlets, were widely and almost evenly distributed throughout the plateaux, generally separated by small distances (a few tens or hundreds of metres), not sufficient to be interpreted as independent communities.[9] In fact, as conceded even by scholars who generally espouse the theory of 'separated hamlets', such limited distances imply at least some sort of common strategy and collaboration between these domestic units, dwelling in the same limited and defined space and exploiting the same land.[10]

In line with this argument, it has been suggested that the numerous Early Iron Age cemeteries around these plateaux did not belong to different, independent communities, but were funerary areas for different social and/or political groups or sub-divisions within the same community – for example, family groups, lineages, *gentes* or *curiae*.[11] It has also been noted that Bronze Age villages often had several funerary areas, but no one has challenged the

unitary nature of those settlements.[12] However, recent examination of looted funerary areas around the plateaux of Crustumerium has revealed that this settlement is surrounded entirely by funerary areas (Francesco di Gennaro, personal communication).

This evidence suggests, as in the case of other Early Iron Age Etruscan and Latin settlements, that so-called necropoleis or cemeteries were distributed in a sort of circular arrangement around the plateaux[13] and should rather be seen as 'burial areas', being part of a continuous buffer zone around the inhabited area. This buffer zone would be reserved for funerary use and other extra-mural functions, serving as the site of military and religious offices, underworld and liminal cults and temporary or permanent residences for foreigners. Giovanni Colonna has identified a similar buffer zone around Rome, marked by a line of sanctuaries located at the first mile from the Servian Wall and mostly dating back archaeologically to at least the Archaic Age. He compares this area to the *proastion* of many Greek cities.[14] As already mentioned, different funerary areas within this buffer zone might have belonged to different and 'competing' social and/or political groups or sub-divisions within the same settlement.

The long-standing debate between 'exogenous' and 'endogenous' perspectives is ongoing,[15] and there remain many other unresolved issues, such as (1) the supposed priority of urbanisation in Etruria as compared with nearby regions, such as Latium vetus;[16] (2) how and especially why, within the limited time scale of a few generations, settlement organisation changed so radically in both Etruria and Latium vetus at the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age, and people moved from widely scattered and dispersed villages in open positions or on small defended hilltops to large nucleated settlements on big plateaux, which later grew into cities.

This book explores settlement dynamics in Rome, its hinterland and Latium vetus, and integrates the results of these analyses with other trajectories of social evolution which are analysed using different types of archaeological evidence (multi-dimensional approach).[17] It combines traditional evolutionary theories with more recent multi-trajectory and comparative perspectives (multi-theoretical approach) to address these questions in light of the wider debate between the exogenous and endogenous schools. The following sections of this chapter illustrate the theoretical foundations of analysis and interpretation of data which will be presented in subsequent chapters.

1.2. APPROACHES TO URBANISATION AND STATE FORMATION FROM A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Evolutionary Approaches

In the development of human cultural systems, the trend from simpler and smaller to larger and more complex communities started at least 100,000 years

ago, and while the formation of cities and states occurred at different times in various parts of the world, it can be said to have really begun only in the past 5,000 years. Urbanisation is generally considered to be the most radical development of the pre-industrial era since the transition to agriculture.[18] Starting with the groundbreaking works by Edward Burnett Tylor[19] and Lewis Henry Morgan[20] in the second half of the nineteenth century, the evolution of complex societies has been a dominant theme of social evolutionary studies in the field of anthropology.

Collating a great amount of new information on non-Western people collected by missionaries, travellers, colonists and nascent ethnographers, Morgan and Tylor divided cultural development into three basic consecutive and progressive stages – savagery, barbarism and civilisation – assigning certain characteristics to each stage. Tylor's and Morgan's works, based on the assumption of cross-cultural similarities, were criticised by Franz Boas,[21] who focused on the individuality of cultures and emphasised local geographical and historical contexts.[22]

However, archaeology had by then demonstrated its capacity to investigate the evolution of complex societies. In fact, given its temporal depth (long-term perspective) and broad geographical distribution (almost the entire globe), archaeology was able to provide an immense amount of material for studying the origin of complexity in society both diachronically and synchronically. The debate on social evolution thus shifted from anthropology to archaeology.[23]

Despite Boas's criticisms, by the middle of the twentieth century Leslie White and Julian Steward revived the evolutionary model. Steward proposed a model with levels of increasingly complex socio-cultural integration (family, band, folk society and state) and applied it to many parts of the world.[24] White, by contrast, was interested mainly in universal patterns, and in his model he emphasised the impact of technological progress and the development of economic systems for capturing energy in the evolution of social and political complexity.[25]

At the same time, evolutionary perspectives were prominent in works on pre-historic societies and the origin of complexity by Gordon Childe, whose original cultural-historical approach (diffusionist model)[26] had been greatly influenced by Friedrich Engels's ideas after his visit to the Soviet Union in 1934.[27] White and Steward's pupils – Elman Service,[28] Morton Fried[29] and Marshall Sahlins,[30] who worked during the 1960s and 1970s (neo-evolutionists) – combined White's general model with the multi-linear, specific evolution of Steward and developed alternative wide-ranging models which could be applied to specific cultural contexts. Service and Sahlins proposed a model based on different levels of social integration (band, tribe, chiefdom, state), while Fried developed a model that focused on the organizing principles of political organisation (egalitarian, ranked, stratified and state society),