CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: THE CHALLENGE OF ETRURIA

Etruria is the ignored case of early state formation and urbanism in comparative studies, only very rarely cited in synthetic work (Hansen 2000). Recent theorisation and synthesis of the global evidence pass over Etruria, even if such works mention Greece and Rome (e.g. Cowgill 2004; Smith 2012; Fisher & Creekmore 2014; Jennings 2016; Scott 2017; Brooke et al. 2018). Why should this be so? Some of the reasons are shared by other, less visible, cases of state formation. The Etruscan state is classified as secondary, as classical, and as lacking in precise texts. However, the main reason is methodological. In spite of the wealth of evidence, Etruria has never been presented in a manner that allows comparison with the recurrent classic cases of state formation in the ancient world. This volume seeks to address this difficulty.

The material culture of Etruria is as rich as the much-studied classical traditions of Greece and Rome and yet, whereas we have the written classical heritage of the Greeks and Latins, we lack the written evidence of the Etruscans. Etruria provides essentially a prehistoric case of state formation. Thus, some of the challenges of Etruria (pre-Roman west-central Italy) (Fig. 1.1) are implicit in the evidence, and some are self-inflicted by the methodologies applied to that evidence. This volume essentially plans to provide the landscape approach to state formation that has substantially been missing, which can be read alongside the rich studies of material culture.

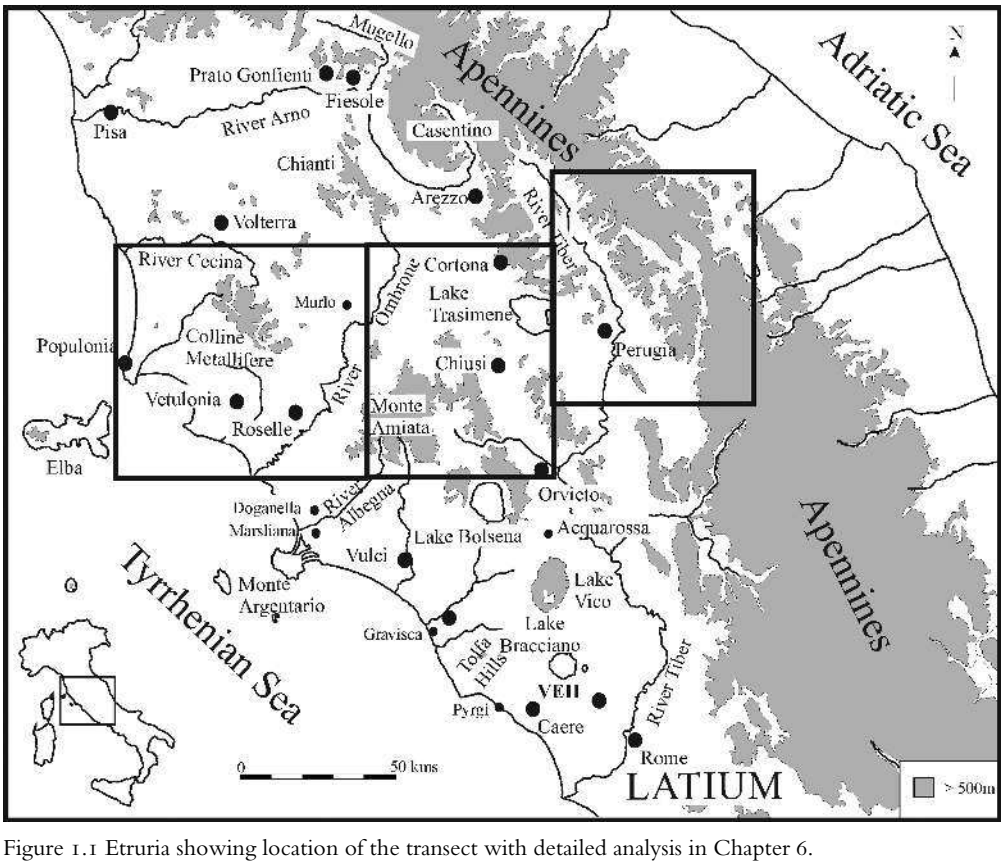

Figure 1.1 Etruria showing location of the transect with detailed analysis in Chapter 6.

The first challenge was addressed in an earlier volume (Spivey and Stoddart 1990) by giving primacy to the archaeological record. The counterweighing tendency of many Etruscan scholars has been to historicise prehistory (d'Agostino 1991a). The inclination of this volume will be to prehistorise and anthropologise, without impoverishing history. First millennium BC Etruria stands at the boundary between academic disciplines, carved inelegantly out of a continuum of process and development. The study should be of state formation, set in the period 1200–500 BC and encompassing the closing of the Bronze Age and the development of the Iron Age (as defined chronologically more broadly in Europe).

The second challenge is to redress a balance of evidence that has privileged the study of material culture, taken substantially from the context of ritual and principally from the funerary dimension of that ritual. The ambition of this volume is to bring Etruria into line with other studies of state formation, not just the Mediterranean neighbours (Whitley 2001) but also those from Mesopotamia (Pollock 1999) and the New World (Blanton et al. 1981; Smith 2003) which have achieved a balance for several decades. In the English-

speaking world, a first step has been undertaken by Izzet (2007), namely to reassess creatively the cultural evidence for the Etruscans, albeit principally for a short period of its history. A second step has been undertaken by Riva (2010), which has investigated the burial evidence for this period in an innovative fashion. These books are complementary to this volume. The third step undertaken here is to provide and explain the dynamic spatial organisation, the regionality of the Etruscans, and, more particularly, the settlement component and its associated infrastructure, an essential corollary to the rich evidence of material culture, a slant that was only partly undertaken by Rendeli (1993).[1] Fulminante's (2012) volume on the landscape of Rome has provided a parallel study seeking to achieve the same ends immediately south of the Tiber, and this volume addresses similar issues to the north of the Tiber.

ARCHAEOLOGIES OF ETRURIA

There is an enduring and strong division in method and philosophy between prehistorians and classical archaeologists (d'Agostino 1991a; Spivey & Stoddart 1990). Cutting across this division, at least three academic groups in Italy have claimed their own areas of specialisation: the full prehistorians, the protohistorians, a category with archaising connotations in English, lurking in liminal space, and the Etruscologists, lurking in their own liminal space on the fringes of the classical world. Even if these divisions are not as stark as they used to be, they continue to influence the coherence of research.

The Holocene prehistorians of Italy, by definition, have no written evidence to study. Traditionally, the members of this group have been devotees of culture history. Since the 1980s, this group has developed interdisciplinary links with the natural and biological sciences (Cipolloni Sampò 1977–82). Unfortunately, as stressed by d'Agostino (1984: 80), the rigid arts training of the vast majority of post-palaeolithic archaeologists has, until more recently (e.g. Cazzella 2001), militated against interdisciplinary advances. Geoarchaeologists (Coltorti & Dal Ri 1985; Cremaschi 1990), generally geologists with palaeolithic interests, have long formed a major exception and come from a radically different background.

The protohistorians, principally gathered around the person of the late Renato Peroni in Rome and his successors and with a secondary focus in the University of Milan centred on Nuccia Negroni Catacchio, provide another major approach. Their primary focus of study is the latest Bronze Age and the earliest Iron Age, a moment of important social development around the turn of the first millennium BC. In 1969, Peroni detected a series of changes

[1] A friend and colleague who read and acknowledged Stoddart (1987) during a visiting scholarship at Magdalene College, Cambridge.

prominent in the Late Bronze Age, simultaneously stimulating the agenda for protohistoric research (Peroni 1969). The first of these changes was demographic expansion. At the time of his article, this change could only be demonstrated on the basis of indirect evidence: an increased quantity of material culture, measured in the form of more graves, richer goods and better typological information. His pupils developed that suggestion by investigating settlement activity (Cardarelli et al. 1980; di Gennaro 1986; Pacciarelli 2000; Vanzetti 2004). The second change that Peroni noted was an increase in agricultural production. This was again entirely based on indirect evidence, in this case artistic representations and agricultural implements. Excavation work on settlements with appropriate sampling then began to substantiate that suggestion by interdisciplinary investigation (Cassano & Manfredini 1978; Negroni Catacchio 1995; Chapter 3, this volume). Peroni gave a more direct interpretation when he suggested, thirdly, and in common with the rest of Europe, that metallurgical production increased markedly. The typological work that had been, up until then, the focus of his interest, linked accurately and directly with this conclusion. An impressive array of metal types was steadily refined in the work by him and his colleagues (Bianco Peroni 1970, 1979; Carancini 1975, 1984). Under his stimulating influence, this group of scholars has adopted many of the most innovative approaches to the period, emerging out of a strong knowledge of material culture, including mortuary (Angle & Gianni 1985; Bietti Sestieri 1992a, 1992b; Guidi 1993; Iaia 1999) and settlement analysis (Balista et al. 1982; De Guio 1985; di Gennaro 1982; Guidi 1985; Pacciarelli 2000).

Thirdly and finally, the Etruscologists (*Etruscologi*), originally gathered around the person of the late Massimo Pallottino in Rome, are those who have chosen to deal with the complicated exegesis of textual and rich artistic material concentrated on the Orientalising, Archaic and Hellenistic periods, and have, until recently, rarely ventured beyond. Unfortunately, this classical approach, adopted from the models of Greece and Rome, retains certain assumptions about society and its attributes, for instance writing and art, that cannot simultaneously hold for central Italian society of this period. The topics of research are also narrowly focused and until recently have lacked any interdisciplinary contact. There has been a fascinating rivalry between the protohistorians and the Etruscologists, as each group begins to step on the ground of the other (Rendeli 1993) and the boundaries begin to break down in the twenty-first century. This breakdown of boundaries has been hastened by the death of the two senior figures, Massimo Pallottino and Renato Peroni.

Four slices of time provide particular insights into the development of Etruscology: the early 1600s, the 1920s, the 1980s and the current state of play in the early twenty first century. The early 1600s founded the Tuscan ideological focus of the Etruscans. The definition of the discipline in the 1920s

showed signs of great potential. The 1980s provided a reflection of on how much that promise had been fulfilled. The early years of this century show a new energy of development and great excitement with younger scholars, albeit small in number, developing new areas of research.

The political situation in the early 1600s was that ancient centralised Etruria (Cerveteri, Veii, etc.) of modern northern Lazio was located within the papal states, whereas the emerging Duchy of Tuscany was centred on ancient decentralised Etruria (Chapter 6, this volume) in modern Tuscany. The ideological aims of the papacy extended beyond local legitimation. Thus, it was the Duchy of Tuscany that responded to the offer of local legitimation even if the evidence was less materialised in Northern Etruria. Under the earlier Medici, Machiavelli did not choose to give Florence a deep history in the pre-Roman period (Lee 2020), working directly from the available facts. However, by the late 1500s and the early 1600s, two itinerant scholars, the first Guillaume Postel (1510–1581) from France and the second Thomas Dempster (1579–1625) from Scotland (Leighton and Castelino 1990), developed elaborate deep-seated Etruscan histories which culminated in the glory of the Dukes of Tuscany. For the first time (if we discount Annius of Viterbo (1432–1502)), the Etruscans were given a strong focus within the political and academic agenda of the times. This political agenda gave primacy to Florence rather than any more southern city in the construction of the Etruscans. The situation was reinforced and institutionalised by Cesare Correnti, Minister of Education in 1871, when, in 'explicit opposition to Rome', carrying with it a powerful message of regional identity, he created a Museo Etrusco Centrale and a Deputazione per la conservazione e l'ordinamento dei musei e delle antichità etrusche in Florence (Tarantini 2009: 79). This focus on Florence was given further emphasis in the 1920s.

The 1920s were the time of the Primo Convegno Nazionale Etrusco, which was held in Florence in 1926 and whose papers were published in the first issue of *Studi Etruschi*, the house journal of Etruscan studies, of 1927. The volume contained much promise, particularly at a programmatic level, for the balanced diversity of Etruscan study. No particular sector, except perhaps linguistics, dominated the *Atti* of the conference. Topography was given major emphasis under the authorship of Bianchi Bandinelli (1927c), Del Vita (1927), Mengarelli (1927) and Lazzeri (1927). Major statements of the physical and environmental reconstruction of Etruria were made (Marinelli 1927; Negri 1927). There was work on physical anthropology (Cipriani 1927; Puccioni 1927) and metallurgy (D'Achiardi 1927; Stella 1927). This was a time of immense promise, but one which unfortunately was not developed in later years, since many innovative individuals do not appear to have had direct successors.

The same focus on Florence as the centre of Etruscan studies (albeit balanced by Pallottino's chair in the University of Rome) was reawakened in the 1980s. The *Anno degli Etruschi* of 1985, more popularly known as *Buongiorno Etruschi*, was heavily supported by the Regione Toscana, as well as Fiat. Exhibitions and the Secondo Congresso Internazionale Etrusco were concentrated in Florence and other decentralised Etruscan centres in north-eastern Tuscany (Siena, Arezzo, Cortona). Unfortunately, the Berensonesci, accustomed to the more appropriately seated achievement of Florence – the Renaissance – were unimpressed: 'the pretentious display did not compensate for the shortage of items worth looking at' (Vertova 1986: 172). Over the course of the 1980s and the 1990s, the three key political regions of Italy overlapping with the core region of ancient Etruria responded differently to the opportunity for cultural politics offered by the Etruscans. In Tuscany, there was a twofold approach of regional-level sponsorship of the exhibitions and congress of 1985, and communal-level sponsorship of many new museums and a number of archaeological parks in the following decade (e.g. Cimino 1986; Mangani 1983; Minetti 1997; Paolucci 1997). In Umbria, a region containing the frontier city of Perugia, but also many centres declaring an Umbrian origin, the focus was on searching out international connections for Umbrian material in the museums of the world (Corbucci & Pettine 1989, 1990, 1991; Neri & Pettine 1988), apart from one exhibition on Etruscan writing in Etruscan Perugia as part of the *Anno Etrusco* (Roncalli 1985). By contrast, in Lazio, where cultural loyalty was divided between *Latium vetus* and Etruria meridionale, the main cultural focus was on the local identity of the many small Etruscan centres, often centred on museums (e.g. Barbieri 1991; Cataldi 1993; De Lucia Brolli et al. 1991; Gazzetti et al. 1992; Marconi Cosentino 1995; Sgubini Moretti 1991; Timperi et al. 1994).

The 1980s were a decade when the state of knowledge can be readily measured through the products of the *Anno degli Etruschi* (1985): a series of catalogues of thematic exhibitions and the proceedings of the Secondo Congresso Internazionale Etrusco against the background activity of *Studi Etruschi* over the same decade. Statistically, the contents of the two international conferences on the Etruscans and *Studi Etruschi* provide evidence of the foci of study. Culture history dominated many of the later volumes of *Studi Etruschi*, and rare theoretical research was often concealed under the heading *Naturalistica*. The categories employed by Dyson (1985), in his study of North American journals, show that *Studi Etruschi* had a strikingly similar profile to the *American Journal of Archaeology*, contrasting with *American Antiquity* which (before the foundation of *Latin American Antiquity*) covered New World State formation. Thus, the study of material culture and epigraphy dominates the pages of *Studi Etruschi*. There is some scientific analysis, but this tends to provide new dimensions for material culture. Explicit theoretical topics are

especially rare. More particularly for the present volume, all types of landscape study were only rarely represented. Until the end of the 1980s, Etruscan research was concentrated on the study of material culture with little sense of the landscape in which the objects are found. The published record of the *Anno Etrusco* is a set of lavishly produced exhibition catalogues and the proceedings of the Secondo Congresso Internazionale Etrusco of 1985 (Maetzke et al. 1985), which appeared in 1989 (Maetzke et al. 1989).

The reviews of these volumes by scholars closely related to Etruscan studies are revealing. Mario Torelli (1985), the Italian classical archaeologist closely involved with Etruscan studies, in his introduction to the catalogue entitled *Case e Palazzi*, recalled the paucity of the evidence and the dependence on Swedish and American work for the information that was available. The tradition of landscape archaeology was outside consideration (Potter & Stoddart 2001). Carandini (1985b: 21), the Italian Roman archaeologist was even more forceful: 'Monographs on Etruscan cities and their territories are missing ... tradition has led the privileged collection of intact and beautiful objects (hence the cemeteries) ... preferred to the modest traces of life in the countryside.' Carandini is echoing his teacher, Bianchi Bandinelli (1959), who put the situation very well: it is easy and useful to excavate necropolises that can be programmatically opened and closed, with rich and predictable profit in the form of visually pleasing artefacts. Following his teacher's thread, it is Carandini who urges change most powerfully, developing the seminal work of Bianchi Bandinelli (1925) on deep time topography. Oswyn Murray, the Oxford ancient historian, noted that 'Every exhibition confronts the visitor with the basic fact that our knowledge of the Etruscans is almost wholly derived from a funerary context' (1985), echoing the frustration of Finley (1975: 94) on the funerary source of the only literary evidence. Nigel Spivey (1986), the Cambridge classical archaeologist recalled 'The distaste with which classically trained Etruscologists are liable to regard such matters as bones and subsistence was manifested by the way in which a single paper at the Etruscan conference became something of a comic interlude.' These varied but convergent views provide an assessment against which to consider current research.

A strong impression of Etruscan studies at this stage is of a small group of powerful and engaging personalities, leading their own personal schools of engagement with the subject, magnifying the differences of approach within a broad range of similar activity. Clearly these rivalries are best seen through the body language of conferences, but occasionally they reveal themselves in print. A good example of these internal cross-currents is the analysis by Mario Torelli (1992) of the partnership between Marina Martelli and his senior rival, Mauro Cristofani. She is preoccupied with philological detail: the up-to-date bibliography, the accurate comparandum. Her aim is exclusively the reconstruction of the personality of an artisan or the placing of an unpublished epigraphic

fragment. She tolerates no deviation from detail by others but publishes no monographs which would allow review of her own thoughts. Anything more global is classified as sociological deviancy. Mauro Cristofani, in the words of Torelli, is more complex. After a misspent youth in the global realm of sociological deviancy, he has moved towards clean, dignifying, archaeology, closely connected to connoisseurship. One British scholar is an eloquent and rhetorical, albeit slightly tongue-in-cheek, commentator on the Anglo-Saxon world, seeking to maintain perceived standards through comments in introductions and reviews. One example relevant to this volume will be sufficient: 'Iron Age archaeology in Italy has traditionally been funerary archaeology . . . our Italian colleagues cannot reasonably be expected simply to abandon the actual fruit of more than a century's laborious investigation' (Ridgway & Ridgway 1979a: 415). Such an opinion brings an excitement to academic discussion, but there is also the accompanying risk that the more timid will be reluctant to step out of line if their career depends on it. The generations have now passed on, as obituaries are written, and the study of the Etruscans has become more connected with other cases of state formation where art and material culture are placed in their spatial context.

ETRUSCOLOGY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AD

The last two decades have witnessed considerable changes in Etruscan archaeology. A number of the powerful personalities such as Pallottino, Cristofani, Peroni and Ridgway have died, and many of those who remain are engaged in wider fields than the purely Etruscan, most notably Torelli. Only Colonna continues to work energetically in the same spirit of the old, managing to provide a polymathic approach to the Etruscans, across fieldwork, material culture, landscape and linguistics. Interpretative value has been added to knowledge of material culture, in fields such as trade and exchange (Rendeli 1989) and enhanced contexts such as sanctuaries (Colonna 1988–9; Donatella Gentili 1990) and even underwater archaeology (Bound 1991a, 1991b, 1991c; Long et al. 2006). New catalogues of material with greater spatial detail give new opportunities for interpretation, and some of these implications will be explored in Chapter 7, building on work already presented (Spivey & Stoddart 1990). Scholars of Etruria have also participated in the plethora of handbooks that are currently under production on many topics, and these give a sense of the current state of play. Some derive more from the Anglo-Saxon world (albeit Italians in exile) (Bell & Carpino 2016; Maiuro in press; with more in preparation) and some from a more Italian background (Torelli 2000), with at least one a significant redeployment of Pallottino's 1942 title *Etruscologia* now in English by a German publisher (Naso 2017). These handbooks are beginning to address the issue of landscape, at least at a generalised level sometimes still under

the guise of topography, although not always allowing the comparative framework with other cases of state formation, and the main coverage is still drawn from material culture. Handbooks of the European Iron Age tend to be focused on other regions and, when covered, prioritise a Greek perspective (Wells et al. 2018) The relatively new journal *Archeologia e Calcolatori* has also picked up on a number of more quantitative approaches, especially in the field of urban landscape (Camporeale 2017; Baglione et al. 2017; Cinque et al. 2017; Lulof & Sepers 2017; Bagnasco et al. 2017). Approaches have clearly begun to change as the distinct, even silo-encased nature of Etruscan studies have begun to be broken down. Two areas will, however, be given further emphasis here because they relate to the spatial dynamics of this volume: literacy and settlement.

ETRUSCAN LITERACY

In the study of Etruscan writing, an impasse has been reached in the traditional forms of study. On the one hand, the writing can be easily read, since it is related strongly to Greek script. On the other hand, the seemingly non-Indo-European status of the language prevents an equal understanding of content. A narrow range of lexical recognition has been achieved, understandably related to funerary and ritual contexts. However, a full understanding of syntax and grammar is far from being reached and will probably not be achieved even through comprehensive computerised catalogues (Rix 1991), although these do provide a ready source of information on the distribution of the products of literacy. The reconstruction of the Etruscan language remains a painfully slow process because of the language's structural uniqueness and inadequate data. This is in spite of the claims for a watershed in the study of the Etruscan language, dated as early as 1969, by Cristofani (1979: 373). A more informative reading of the available Etruscan texts is only to be found through a more interdisciplinary approach: a reading of text and context.

The Etruscan type of writing that is being considered here is very different from the types of writing that are normally studied: the development of early writing systems or the effects of printing and widespread literacy in the modern world. It is, therefore, not possible to make transfers from the Mesopotamian world (Schmandt-Besserat 1980, 1992) or from our modern conceptions of writing. Equally, our conceptions of writing taken from the Greek and Roman world are inapplicable. Etruscologists have incorrectly assumed that the primary function of writing was commercial and administrative (Hus 1980; Strong 1968). The writing under consideration here is exotic and restricted. Inscriptions are artefacts of social power, especially in the form that they are preserved in Etruria, albeit often concealed from much of the population. The

distribution of surviving inscriptions therefore has an interest for landscape archaeology (Chapter 7, this volume).

The definition of 'restricted', in relation to literacy employed here, is that of Goody (1977; Goody & Watt 1968), ironically conflicting with his prediction of the technological power of the alphabet to democratise. Nevertheless, the restriction of written language took, as he predicted, three forms: the list, the table and the formula. In Etruria, all these forms are present, but the formula is the dominant mode that has survived. In spite of this clear case of Goody's rule of reduced form, content and context, classical scholars and Etruscologists, in particular, have tended to ignore the fact that writing represents only a very restricted and particular aspect of linguistic performance. Unwarranted ethnocentric assumptions have been made. It has been assumed, for instance, that the personal names recorded in writing are a 1:1 representation of those employed by members of society in everyday life (Cristofani 1979: 403), even though the contexts of all the inscriptions are funerary and therefore, in sociolinguistic terms, exceptional. At worst, it has even been stated that the identification of people by name began when the decision was made to write names down. In fact, the nature and presence of a name recorded (usually) in stone or clay is very much dependent on the sociolinguistic context, and writing itself considerably transforms that context (Stoddart & Whitley 1988b; Street 1984).

Archaeology has at its disposal the means of providing extensive information on time, space and context which represent, in sum, the sociolinguistic framework for analysis. In the words of Jakobsen (1960: 353), the verbal structure of a message depends primarily on the predominant function. In Jakobsen's terminology, the referential and the phatic functions are common among the messages in Etruscan writing. In other words, most of the messages offer a ritualised repetition with respect to a particular referent. An understanding of the formulaic mode of expression is critical to a study of Etruscan writing. Formulae are ready tools for manipulation and legitimisation of social authority. The formula imparts information at two levels. It communicates with those able to read and substantiates positions between those who share higher status. Simultaneously, it impresses upon those unable to trace its exact meaning, the illiterate, the separation of the élite from the non-élite. In time, the numbers of individuals cognisant of the actual meaning of the formulae are increased, and formulae are elaborated to adjust for the influx of larger numbers of participants in the élite structure. A fusion is required between the different levels of context: the named individuals and power of the descent group and community of which they are part.

Etruscologists have made innovatory steps in the more sociological study of Etruscan inscriptions, and some of these have been in the direction of the study of context. The seminal work has been that of Cristofani (1981b) who noted various spatial and diachronic trends of the personal name which are quite