

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE ETRUSCANS

In the Footsteps of the Etruscans describes the archaeology of the countryside within a 10 km radius of the small town of Tuscania near Rome, throwing light on the unrecorded lives of the generations of farmers and shepherds who have lived there. What was the character of prehistoric settlement prior to Etruscan urbanization? How did urbanization shape the lives of the 'ordinary Etruscans' working the land, hardly ever addressed in Etruscan archaeology? What was the impact on these people of being absorbed into the expanding Roman empire and its globalized economic structures? How did the empire's collapse and the subsequent emergence of the nucleated Medieval village affect Tuscania's rural population? The project's 7500-year 'archaeological history', from the first farmers to those grappling with globalization today, contributes eloquently to our understanding of how Mediterranean peoples have constantly shaped their landscape, and been shaped by it.

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IN THE FOOTSTEPS
of the
ETRUSCANS

Changing Landscapes around Tuscania
from Prehistory to Modernity

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 a department of the University of Cambridge.

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 learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009230025

DOI: 10.1017/9781009230018

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First published 2023

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Barker, Graeme, author. | Rasmussen, Tom, author.

Title: In the footsteps of the Etruscans : changing landscapes around
 Tuscania from prehistory to modernity / Graeme Barker, Tom Rasmussen.

Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge
 University Press, 2023. | Series: British School at Rome studies |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022043273 | ISBN 9781009230025 (hardback) | ISBN
 9781009230018 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Landscape changes – Italy – Etruria – Tuscania – History. | Landscape
 archaeology – Italy – Etruria – Tuscania – History. | Etruscans. | Tuscania-
 Etruria (Italy) – History.

Classification: LCC GF587.T868 B37 2023 | DDC
 304.209456/25–dc23/eng20221121

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022043273>

ISBN 978-1-009-23002-5 Hardback

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In the Footsteps of the Etruscans is dedicated to three scholars of the landscape archaeology and history of Italy who shaped our careers and paved the way for this project: John Ward-Perkins, Anthony Luttrell and Tim Potter; and to our friends and collaborators Marco Rendeli and Helen Patterson, both of whom died tragically early during the final months of bringing the project to publication.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The field project that is the subject of this book investigated the archaeology of the countryside within a 10 km radius of the small town of Tuscania some 80 km north-west of Rome. The town is best known in the tourist guides for its two beautiful Early Medieval basilicas, San Pietro and Santa Maria Maggiore, but in fact it has a more-or-less unbroken occupation history from pre-Etruscan times to the present day, a time span of some 3000 years, while the archaeological evidence of people living in the surrounding countryside extends Tuscania's history many thousands of years earlier still. As we describe in Chapter 1, the project was devised to combine several aims, some historical, others methodological, but its overall objective was to contribute to present understanding of the processes that have shaped the development of the modern Mediterranean landscape as a physical and cultural construct. Our particular focus was the changing nature of the relationship between town and countryside, taking Tuscania and its environs as our exemplar.

The fieldwork was undertaken between 1986 and 1990. Although a number of papers were published promptly on emerging results for particular periods or approaches (Barker 1988; Barker and Rasmussen 1988, 1998; Barker et al. 1993a, 1993b; Brown and Ellis 1996; MacDonald 1995; Rasmussen 1991; Rendeli 1993a) and much of the text for this monograph was first drafted by 2000, for a variety of academic, bureaucratic and personal reasons – another book in itself! – it has taken another two decades to bring it to completion. The project was therefore planned and executed within an intellectual context in many respects different from some current archaeological interests, and in a very different technological age, but as the subsequent chapters discuss, the questions and our findings remain as pertinent today as then. We were able to collect a quality of field data that would be extremely difficult, indeed impossible, to collect today in the study area, as in many other regions not just of Italy but elsewhere in

the Mediterranean basin, because of changes in land use, landownership and political and administrative structures. We believe that the deep 'archaeological history' of the countryside around this small Italian town, for all its historical contingency, contributes not insignificantly to our wider understanding of Mediterranean landscape history.

To write such an archaeological history is the work of many hands (and feet in our case in the fieldwork), requires a great deal of logistical organization and depends on the support, commitment and goodwill of many institutions and individuals. We first wish to acknowledge the formal support of the regional office of the state archaeological authorities, the Soprintendenza Archeologica per l'Etruria Meridionale, for our request for the fieldwork permit, and the personal support and advice of the then Soprintendenti Paola Pelagatti and Giovanni Scichilone and of the Soprintendenza's Ispettrici for Tuscania Dott.ssa Anna Maria Sgubini Moretti and Dott.ssa Laura Ricciardi. In the same vein we thank the British School at Rome for formally preparing and promoting the project's permit application, but also for providing excellent logistical support throughout the project, and we are extremely grateful to the staff of the School for their help, especially the administrative secretary Maria Pia Malvezzi when Graeme Barker was director, and we are also extremely grateful for the commitment to the project's success of his successor, Professor Richard Hodges.

The financial support for the project was provided by the British Academy, the British School at Rome, the Higginbotham Trust, the Royal Society, the Society of Antiquaries, the University of Leicester and the University of Manchester, and the University of Bologna provided scholarship funding for Nicoletta Vullo to undertake her research stay at the University of Leicester.

The on-the-ground support of the *comune* of Tuscania and mayors Paolo Pantalei, Antonio Marconi

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

and Domenico Staccini was fundamental to the project's success, especially in the provision of the Madonna del Cerro school as the main project base. In addition to the Soprintendenza permit to undertake the excavation of the Etruscan farm at Guidocinto (see note on spelling, p. 137) reported in Chapter 5, we are grateful for the permission of the landowner La Marchese Ferrari and the tenant Felice Mariotti. We benefited from the advice of Luigi Salvatori of Tuscania's branch of the Gruppo Archeologico Romano. Among the many kindnesses we received from the citizens of Tuscania we thank in particular those of the late artist Rudolf Kortokraks, our most enthusiastic supporter throughout the project, who arranged an exhibition of the project's work and was always extremely generous with his time, local knowledge, contacts and hospitality.

We are very grateful to the substantial pottery cataloguing undertaken by Stefano Coccia, John Patterson and Nick Whitehead in the early phase of the project, to Giuseppina Battaglia for her assistance in the study of the prehistoric pottery and to Paul Arthur and J. P. Morel for their specialist advice on aspects of the Roman material. Alison MacDonald's many acknowledgements for the help and advice she received in the study of the prolific Roman material are detailed fully in her Oxford DPhil thesis, but we would like to thank especially her supervisor, the late John Lloyd, for proposing she use the Tuscania material as the main case study for her thesis and for guiding her through it until his tragic and premature death in 2000. Dr Jan van Dalen and Professor Peter Fisher (University of Leicester) provided technical support and guidance for Nicoletta Vullo's GIS project and her probability models were computed in GRASS using a script compiled by Dr van Dalen. We also thank Alessandro Launaro for his

detailed comments on Chapters 6 and 7, Richard Hodges and Emmanuele Vaccaro for commenting on Chapter 8, and the helpful comments of the British School at Rome's two anonymous reviewers. In the production of the volume, we would like to acknowledge the professional support of Vicki Herring for her excellent illustrations, Ed Moss for scanning slides and Naomi Rasmussen for her invaluable assistance with the development of the Survey Gazetteer.

And finally we offer our heartfelt thanks to the almost seventy archaeologists who participated in the fieldwork, mostly under broiling heat: Giuseppina Battaglia, Paul Beavitt, Rachel Bellamy, David Best, Stefania Bevastro, Elizabeth Cloud, Robert Coates-Stephens, Emma Coleman, Diane Collier, Lisa Cooke, Bibi Cordtz, Jules Cox, Sally Cupitt, Clare Dales, Simon Dobinson, Antonia Douthwaite, Melanie Down, Karen Elder, Jean Gilbert, Kevin Glowacki, Annie Grant, Simone Grosse-Brauckmann, Anna Hamilton, Sanne Hansen, Jonathan Hayes, Peter Hinge, Andrew Hoaen, Ben Hobbs, Stephen Hoyes, Christopher Hunt, Jo Jones, Alex Layman, Helen Loney, Cecilia Luttrell, Alison MacDonald, Stefano Mammini, Federico Marazzi, Isobel McDonald, Ian McGuire, Mikolai Melnyczek, Eric Milne, Sheila Mitchiner, Kate Morton, Diane Moss, Mandy Munro, Alessandro Naso, Catherine Nightingale, Kim Nissan, Marsha Okun, Helen Patterson, Matt Ponting, Eve Pugh, Marco Rendeli, Laura Ricciardi, Jeremy Robinson, Christina Rushe, Sarah Ryder, David Sankey, Kyla Scott, Emma Skipper, Jon Snoxhall, Nigel Spivey, Nigel Thew, Philip Tye, Rachel Tyson, Andrew Upton, Jake Waters, Ross Whitehead, Bruce Whitmee, Helen Wilson and Andrea Zifferero. In the most literal sense *In the Footsteps of the Etruscans* owes everything to them.

Graeme Barker and Tom Rasmussen