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Building Connections

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Architecture is the will of an epoch translated into space.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1924¹

Exploring central Italic architecture as part of a connected world brings together one of the most prominent themes in the study of the ancient Mediterranean in recent decades, namely connectivity, and a body of evidence that has often been overlooked in many studies of ancient construction, technology, society, economy, and even the archaeology of early Italy, to wit architecture in Etruria and Latium. Such a partnership is an invitation to move beyond the study of individual elements of structures or sites, for example mouldings or terracottas, and instead use such studies to reconstruct a larger picture of architecture in this region as a discipline and to position it more broadly in space and time. The chapters in this volume respond to this challenge by considering connectivity in more than a geographical sense, showing how architecture in western central Italy between approximately 800 and 400 BC has close connections with Bronze Age and Roman building, with practices locally and across the Mediterranean, with the natural world and the cosmos. Architecture emerges as a window into the lives, knowledge, and values of its makers and users, in short into the world in which it stood, and in doing so raises important questions about the ways in which we study the first millennium BC.

This chapter serves as an introduction for what follows by placing this volume's approach into the context of the past and current study of central Italic architecture. It will point out some of the issues that underlie and join the analyses in the subsequent chapters, including why so many major building projects were undertaken in Etruria and Latium in this period, who and what was moving to create them, and how the results blur the boundaries of what has traditionally been considered 'Roman'. Fundamentally, it will argue not only for the value of central Italic architecture as a source for regional social and economic histories, but also for its potential contribution to the study of ancient architecture as a whole.

¹ Translated from van der Rohe 1924, 31: 'Baukunst ist immer raumgefaßter Zeitwille'.

Past and Present

It is worth acknowledging right from the start that the architecture of early central Italy has long had a far lower profile in the study of ancient architecture than the built environments of Greece and later Rome. Its relative neglect is at least partly due to the available evidence. Central Italic architecture – for the purposes of this volume, defined as the buildings of Etruria and Latium, including Rome, that emerge from the Iron Age and predate the Roman conquest of Veii in 396 BC² – made extensive use of perishable materials. The mud bricks, rammed earth, and timber used in central Italic buildings were all highly subject to disintegration, while the soft *tuffo* stones and calcareous bedrock of southern Etruria and the harder sandstones and limestones of northern Etruria have suffered the effects of prolonged demolition and reuse. The remains of early architecture in this region accordingly often comprise little more than partial foundations, roofs of more durable terracotta tiles, and buried engineering works, although each of these can be substantial. Secondary evidence such as votive models and decorated tomb interiors provide more information about details of roofs, columns, doors, windows, and woodwork.³ Viewed as a whole, and in spite of its limitations, this range of material establishes that the people of ‘pre-Roman’ central Italy had substantial houses, elaborate tombs, imposing temples, and were accomplished civil engineers. But the interpretation of much of this evidence – its reconstruction, its relationship to other cultural traditions, its historical significance, and the terminology to describe them all – is a matter of ongoing debate. This is somewhat a natural consequence of its fragmentary nature. The recent discovery of many remains is another factor, as much only came to light in excavations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and more is appearing every year, prompting constant revision. Finally, the variation in materials, styles, and building techniques between individual sites is as marked in the architecture of early Italy as other forms of art. Thus, while there is now a substantial body of evidence for central Italic construction, to date there is no extensive, unified account of it.⁴

² On Rome’s conquest of Veii as a ‘climactic war’, see Harris 1990, 507; on its influence on Rome’s society, economy, urban form, and self-image, see Cornell 2000, 44–6 and Bernard 2012, 38–9.

³ Best surveyed by Damgaard Andersen 1998, 1: 25–70.

⁴ A short overview, now in need of updating, is provided by Colonna 1986, while the longer treatment by Boëthius 1978 is also out of date. A valuable but unpublished treatment is offered by Damgaard Andersen 1998. See also the works in n. 5 below.

Yet the last 30 years have seen a notable expansion in the number of publications that address different aspects of this material. Modern excavations have allowed developments to be reassessed and changing interpretive frameworks have asked new questions of old evidence. There are now books on the architecture of archaic Rome, on religious architecture in Etruria and Latium, on monumentality in central Italy, on Etruscan and Roman mouldings, on building techniques, on architectural terracottas, and a host of chapters in edited volumes.⁵ These analyses have indicated that architecture has the capacity to refine long-standing accounts of certain aspects of central Italic culture. The relationship between Rome and its neighbours, the economy of Tyrrhenian Italy, and networks of specialist craftsmen around the Mediterranean are all coming into sharper relief through the study of buildings created before the middle of the Roman Republic.

Recent studies have also produced more nuanced accounts of changes in building over the time frame considered in this volume. In general terms, between the eighth and fourth centuries BC, thatched huts were supplemented and replaced by monumental temples, rock-cut tombs, and houses with stone foundations and tiled roofs. Plans and building materials diversified, either in response to trends elsewhere or to internal political and socio-economic developments, or more likely a combination of both, while some traditional building techniques were maintained.⁶ Building functions appear to have become more differentiated and the use of space in settlements and within buildings seems to have altered.⁷ Landscapes acquired cities, sanctuaries, estates, villages, and farms. Over the same period, central Italic society is thought to have become more complex, with hierarchies becoming more visible in the archaeological record and populations increasing and centralizing. Scholars offer different interpretations of the precise relationship between these architectural and social developments but agree that this is a period of marked change in both respects.

What drove these changes, and in particular, the role of external influences, is not a new subject. Relationships between Etruria, Latium, Rome, and their Mediterranean neighbours have been studied both in terms of

⁵ Books: Rystedt, Wikander, and Wikander 1993; Lulof and Moormann 1997; Edlund-Berry 2000; Edlund-Berry, Greco, and Kenfield 2006; Cifani 2008; Winter 2009; Lulof and Rescigno 2010; Thomas and Meyers 2012; Potts 2015; Hopkins 2016; Miller 2017. Chapters: Colonna 1986; Izzet 2000; Edlund-Berry 2008; Warden 2012, among others.

⁶ On building techniques, see Miller 2017. On the difference between 'technology' (the application of calculated ideas) and 'technique' (an operational sequence associated with a specific technology), see Miller 2017, 2 n. 1.

⁷ Van't Lindenhout 1997; Steingraber 2001; Izzet 2007, 143–64.

architecture and material culture more generally, and have tended to follow recognizable patterns in classical archaeology and archaeology as a whole, which, in turn, have been affected by prevailing paradigms in intellectual history.⁸ Albeit to a lesser extent than other parts of Etruscan archaeology – which traditionally subsumed the study of early Rome and Latium – architecture was long interpreted through a Hellenocentric lens through which Greece emerged as the inspiration for central Italic practice. Through the 1970s and 1980s, at the time when the modern discipline of Etruscology was emerging, plans, ornaments, building functions, and town planning were often seen as pale imitations of Greek systems. Changes were presented as unthinking copies or the conscious choice of aristocrats seeking to enhance their power by drawing on practices elsewhere. The introduction of buildings with stone foundations and tiled roofs during the seventh and sixth centuries BC, and the subsequent concentration of these buildings in cities, was attributed to the arrival of new materials and concepts from Greece and especially from Corinth or Euboea via Campania.⁹ Orthogonal town plans were attributed to exposure to Greek norms that came via colonies in Campania, southern Italy, and Sicily; it was thought that Etruscan houses had rooms resembling the Greek *andron* and dedicated feminine spaces; and the building beneath the later Regia in Rome was once presented as a deliberate formal and functional replica of the *prytaneion* in the Athenian agora.¹⁰ Central Italic architecture has also been seen as a follower of Near Eastern models, particularly in the so-called ‘Orientalizing period’ of Etruscan history spanning approximately 720–580 BC. While some forms of architecture at this time do indicate strong Near Eastern connections, such as the construction of funerary tumuli across central Italy and the use of the *murs à piliers* technique to build walls at Tarquinia, some scholars have drawn less direct connections, for example, seeing the lavish houses built in Latium during the seventh and sixth centuries BC as derivations of *bit hilāni* palaces in Syria.¹¹ Roman influence has also been posited although more obliquely. Descriptions by Vitruvius have been used as a framework for interpreting buildings that stood half

⁸ Trigger 2006, with special reference to pp. 61–6 on the development of classical archaeology.

⁹ Pallottino 1975, 174; Drews 1981, 154–7; Ridgway 1988, 666–7.

¹⁰ On town planning: Colonna 1986, 464; Owens 1991, 96, 104–5. On possible Etruscan versions of a *gynaeceum* and *andron*, see Torelli 1983, 56 (discussing Poggio Civitate); Small 1994, 90 n. 4. On female spaces in Etruscan and Roman houses: Jolivet 2011a, 254–62; Jolivet 2011b. On the *regia* and Athens: Ampolo 1971; cf. Scheffer 1990. More generally: Ward-Perkins 1977, 11; Musgrove 1987, 210, 16–17; cf. Torelli 2000a, 196–7; Donati 2000, 321–3.

¹¹ Torelli 1985, 27–32; Cifani 2008, 269–72; Torelli 2000b, 72–3, 77. Walling techniques at Tarquinia: Bonghi Jovino 1991; Ciafaloni 2006.

a millennium before his time,¹² and terms from Roman culture have been retrojected onto Etruscan buildings, for example, in the category of buildings in central Italy labelled *regiae*.¹³ Many of these interpretations stemmed from approaches in which texts were given primacy or were outgrowths of historical traditions that viewed the peoples of pre-Roman Italy as culturally overshadowed by those with whom they had contact, as passive recipients of goods, technology, and concepts.

More recently, just as postcolonial perspectives have been applied in classical archaeology, the peoples of central Italy have been repositioned as active and independent proponents of cultural change. Their autonomy in areas such as myth, religion, art, and social customs has been stressed.¹⁴ Ethnography and anthropology have been used to describe changes and account for them without recourse to anachronistic texts, and the selective adoption and adaptation of ideas and practices has been highlighted. Population growth and concomitant economic specialization in cities have been posited as local catalysts for architectural changes, as have related ideologies whereby elites sought to renew and differentiate themselves through exclusive lifestyles in which architecture played an important role.¹⁵ There are now accounts of the indigenous origins of certain forms of domestic architecture and urban planning,¹⁶ and studies that show strong connections between buildings and the landscapes in which they appeared.¹⁷ At the same time that local developments have been stressed, the connected world in which they occurred is also featuring more prominently in scholarship. Just as modern society has become more marked by networks, connectivity, migrations, and global phenomena, scholars are re-examining connections between people and cultures in ancient settings including early central Italy.¹⁸ The mobility of traders and elite groups within Italy and around the Mediterranean from the Iron Age

¹² Discussed and critiqued by Edlund-Berry 2013, 695–9; Potts 2014–15, among others.

¹³ Following *Aeneid* 7.170–91: Torelli 2000b.

¹⁴ Autonomy has been stressed by Hampe and Simon 1964; Small 1994; de Grummond 2006; de Grummond and Simon 2006; and Small 2008, for example.

¹⁵ Nijboer 1998, 339–45; Riva 2010, 23–9, 41–4; Bartoloni 2012, 258–66, 71–8; Leighton 2013, 138–9.

¹⁶ For example, Colantoni 2012; Govi 2014.

¹⁷ Edlund 1987; MacIntosh Turfa and Steinmayer 2002; and for this aspect of tumuli, see Zifferero 1991 and Mandolesi 2008.

¹⁸ For example, Horden and Purcell 2000; Riva 2005; Riva 2006; Van Dommelen 2006; Malkin, Constantakopoulou, and Panagopoulou 2009; Malkin 2011; Demetriou 2012; Kistler et al. 2015; Isayev 2015; Isayev 2017. For an important critique of earlier concepts of ‘Orientalization’, see Purcell 2006. On the rise of interest amongst archaeologists in such subjects: Trigger 2006, 484–5.

onwards is becoming ever clearer, while stories of migrant nobles such as Demaratus of Corinth and wandering heroes like Odysseus, Aeneas, and Hercules are assuming greater significance in cultural histories.¹⁹ Ongoing studies of places where cultural boundaries may have been crossed or broken down, such as cosmopolitan sanctuaries, emporia, and highly connected settlements like Pithecusae, are suggesting that control of such contacts could be used to maintain power. Globalization, network theory, hybridity, and peer-polity interaction have all been used to analyse these developments.²⁰ As a consequence, more interpretations of archaeological remains are now balancing the local and the international, and are being informed by theoretical models from the social sciences in which both elements are viewed positively.

In this volume, scholars of central Italic architecture engage with these discussions with results that are beneficial for both local and broader histories. The evidence that architecture was an international industry for much of the first millennium BC means that it can provide new examples of Mediterranean connectivity and the transmission of technical knowledge in antiquity. Cross-fertilization between architectural elements in Asia Minor, the Near East, Greece, and Italy prompts questions about the limitations of traditional typologies, long based upon linguistic divisions, which seldom make allowances for mobile craftsmen and materials, let alone shared concepts and meanings. The migration of architectural concepts and practices in this period moreover puts the mobility that is such a feature of Roman architecture under closer scrutiny, suggesting that the Roman period may have seen a change in the scale of connectivity rather than the fundamental nature of design. The next sections explore some of these ideas in more detail.

Building in a Connected World

Starting in *c.* 800 BC, at approximately the time when the Phoenicians established a permanent base at Carthage, the Mediterranean world considered in this volume is one in which Phoenician and Greek merchants, traders, craftsmen, agents, and colonists had long been interacting with one another and, by the eighth century, often in ways that resembled commercial trade more than the elite gift-giving and exchange of earlier

¹⁹ For example, Malkin 1998; Bonnet 2005; Della Fina 2013; Della Fina 2014.

²⁰ For example, Hodos 2009; Malkin 2011; van Dommelen 2017. Cf. Sherratt and Sherratt 1993 and Morris' 'Mediterraneanization' (Morris 2003).

periods.²¹ As a peninsula in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea with natural harbours, Italy's geography had long made it a natural participant in these ancient networks of trade and cross-cultural contact. Rivers and volcanic activity gave Etruria in particular famous agricultural fertility and mineral resources that drew traders from as early as the Bronze Age. Finds of Mycenaean pottery, elephant ivory, and ostrich eggs in Italian sites such as Frattesina – itself exhibiting strong Etruscan connections – show contact between Italy and the eastern Aegean and Africa, while Baltic amber is testament to trade routes to the north.²² Italian helmets, swords, belts, and razors found in modern Ukraine, Austria, France, and Dalmatia show links with central Europe had existed since at least the eighth century BC.²³ Etruscan trade reached new heights in the seventh and sixth centuries BC with exports of wine and oil to southern France and Spain; at Marseille, for example, amphorae from Etruria appear to have outnumbered those from Greece in the second quarter of the sixth century BC.²⁴ Caere had a treasury at Delphi (Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.3) while tablets inscribed in Phoenician/Punic and Etruscan at Pyrgi show other connections echoed by finds such as an Etruscan *tessera hospitalis* in Carthage.²⁵ Ceramic technology, metalworking techniques, and painting styles also reveal extensive interaction with other cultures, while epigraphy and linguistics further indicate the movement of people of different ethnicities between regions and countries by the Archaic period.²⁶ In the first half of the first millennium BC, people in central Italy were clearly in contact with goods, merchants, and migrants from other societies ranging from Carthage to southern France, and often appear to have been the dominant power in interactions.²⁷

As the ultimate physical expression of a culture, architecture could be expected to reflect these conditions. The chapters in this volume support that theory and argue that such reflection should be sought in more than formal analyses. Architectural design is an organic process, an undertaking in which practical and symbolic elements, people, materials, decoration, and engineering interact to produce a structure that functions in a number

²¹ Hodos 2009, 232.

²² Bietti Sestieri 1997, 390–6; Pearce 2000, 110; Vianello 2005; Blake 2014, 41, 130–2.

²³ Camporeale 2004, 104–9.

²⁴ Gantès 1992; Gras 2000; Sourisseau 2002; Gori and Bettini 2006.

²⁵ Benveniste 1933; Rix 2014, II. Af. 3.1; recently discussed by Prag 2006, 8–10.

²⁶ For example, Ampolo 1976–7; Moretti 1984; Lejeune, Pouilloux, and Solier 1988; Cristofani 1996; Steingraber 2006, 281–301; Gran-Aymerich 2009; Della Fina 2014.

²⁷ For overviews, see Cristofani 1996; Naso 2000; Camporeale 2001; Naso 2006; Della Fina 2013; Della Fina 2014; Isayev 2017.

of different ways.²⁸ Architecture is moreover social: in general, substantial buildings represent aggregated resources, make statements about communities, and have a public dimension.²⁹ By considering the social ideas and conditions that these buildings represent, facilitate, and draw meaning from alongside their visible elements – that is, by taking what the philosopher Karsten Harries has called an ethical approach to architecture³⁰ – these buildings can be read as useful sources of information about the architects, craftsmen, patrons, and communities involved in their life cycles. If we can recognize these people in the physical evidence, then these buildings may have as much to tell us about culture as architecture in Etruria and Latium prior to the fourth century B.C.

Architecture has been an overlooked resource for the study of central Italic life despite its necessary and transformative properties. Buildings are utilitarian but their ubiquity shapes space, creates place, and thereby provides a framework for all activity. Monumental examples are realized through sustained action and consensus that some theorists believe express cross-generational or intrinsic cultural values, even if they are only those of an elite group, in ways more revealing than any text.³¹ As the most plastic of the arts, architecture also has abundant meanings that are conferred and altered over time and contribute to the expansion of world views, implicating it in the formulation of religious, cultural, and historical identities.³² Appreciating the potential of this body of evidence for the study of early Italy requires recognition that it has documentary potential irrespective of the controversial literary record, which it nonetheless contextualizes, and as such is far from mute; multiple readings of the evidence are possible even if some interpretations are more speculative than others.

Art and Agency in Architecture

The question of who and what was travelling to produce all or part of significant buildings in early central Italy is open to different reconstructions. Studies of human mobility and technological transfer in the ancient Mediterranean have suggested four types of craftspeople that can form a useful basis for such discussions: itinerant entrepreneurs, immigrant

²⁸ Revell 2014, 391; Wilson Jones 2014. ²⁹ Goldberger 2009, x, 15, 43, 174, 182.

³⁰ Harries 1998.

³¹ Jones 2000, 1: 137–8, and in the context of Indian architecture: Fergusson 1867, 11; Ghosh 1982, 1.

³² Jones 2000, 1: 110.

artisans, overseas apprentices, and forced labourers or slaves.³³ The movement of all four groups is subject to socio-historical circumstances and power relationships, both of which would also have affected the contexts in which these people interacted with local populations and one another.³⁴ To date, such groups have been considered more in relation to the production of art other than architecture in central Italy. Scholars have argued that artistic production in central Italy during the first millennium BC included migrants from Sardinia, Syria, Persia, Greece, and central Europe.³⁵ Some of these migrants have been regarded as master craftsmen responsible for the introduction of particular styles and techniques in ceramics, metalwork, jewellery, and painting, and as founders of schools and workshops. Whether a similar model of travelling experts can also be applied to architecture is less clear, however.

Although architectural design is informed by aesthetics and crafts, there is a fundamental difference between small portable works and building projects that span multiple lifetimes, require vast manpower, and provide infrastructure for the conduct and rituals of civic life. There is moreover a different level of risk: given that a building must remain standing, experience and knowledge are just as important as creativity in architectural design, if not more so.³⁶ The sought-after nature of such expertise in antiquity is hinted at in later literary sources in ways that support a model of itinerant architects or experts for hire, or at least a belief that this had been the case in earlier centuries. For instance, the Cretan architect Chersiphron and his son Metagenes are described as the architects of the archaic Temple of Artemis at Ephesus (Vitruvius, *On Architecture* 7. preface 16; Pliny, *Natural History* 7.125, 36.95), and it has been proposed that Rhoikos, one of the architects of the monumental Temple of Hera at Samos (Herodotus, *Histories* 3.60.4), may be the same individual who inscribed his name on an eye cup dedicated to Aphrodite at Naukratis in Egypt, another site of significant cultural exchange that happened to have a strong Samian presence and Samian architectural features.³⁷ For central Italy, Pliny follows

³³ For recent application of these categories to Mediterranean history, see Blake 2016, 189–92; Gosselain 2016, 195–7.

³⁴ Blake 2016; Gosselain 2016.

³⁵ Recently summarized by Camporeale 2013. On the role of artisans and master craftsmen in pre-Roman central Italy, see Colonna 1988; Bonghi Jovino 1990; Nijboer 1997; Smith 1998; Camporeale 2011; Della Fina 2014. But cf. the reminder that nationality may be less important for art history than skill and style: Pallottino 1952, 15 (discussing Etruscan painting).

³⁶ Cf. Mertens 1994, 196–7; Hopkins 2016, 112–16; cf. the chapter by Turfa in this volume.

³⁷ Boardman 1999, 132. A large quantity of mugs and cups found in the sanctuary of Hera also have exact parallels in the Samian Heraion and were produced from the same clay: Villing and Schlotzhauer 2006, 6, citing analysis by Hans Mommsen.

Varro in writing that the sculptor Vulca was summoned to Rome from Veii to work on art for the archaic Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (*Natural History* 35.157; cf. Plutarch, *Poplicola* 13), and that the Greek artists Damophilus and Gorgasus worked on the Temple of Ceres on the Aventine in Rome in the following century (Pliny, *Natural History* 35.154), again in accounts that should also be understood as part of a tradition of discussions about the influence of Greece on other cultures, often with moralizing overtones, and as partial reflections of practices in the period in which they were written.³⁸ The material remains, however, suggest a comparable scenario of travelling expertise: an unnamed Ionian architect has been proposed for the archaic Capitoline Temple in Rome, for example, and technical connections have been drawn between this temple and the Heraion on Samos, the Artemision at Ephesus, and the Olympieion in Athens.³⁹ Both regional and Mediterranean-wide mobility may thus have been a factor in central Italic construction.

Ancient authors also describe the permanent migration of artisans to central Italy. In this context, the immigrant *par excellence* was Demaratus, a seventh-century exile from Corinth who settled in Tarquinia with an entourage of knowledgeable Greeks, fathered a future king of Rome, and subsequently assumed the role of cultural hero (Livy, *Books from the Foundation of the City* 1.34; Tacitus, *Annals* 11.14; Pliny, *Natural History* 35.152; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 3.46–9; Strabo, *Geography* 5.2.2). The ‘professional’ or ‘speaking’ names of two of his companions, Eugrammus (‘good designer’) and Diopus (‘keen-eyed’), suggest they may have been architects, and members of the same retinue were also credited with introducing the art of modelling figures in clay (Pliny, *Natural History* 35.152), again in a narrative that may recall changes even if not fully record them.⁴⁰ There is physical evidence of migrant ceramicists working in central Italy in the seventh century BC, such as the Greek potter Aristonothos who signed a *krater* at Caere made of local clay, while in the sixth century BC the Campana Group, the Northampton Group, and those responsible for Pontic Vases are thought to have been Greek or Greek-trained artists working in Italy.⁴¹ Ceramicists were also involved in architecture through the manufacture of architectural

³⁸ See, for example, Zevi 1995; Ridgway 2012.

³⁹ Cifani 2008, 331; Cifani 2012, 132–3; Hopkins 2016, 114.

⁴⁰ Camporeale 2013, 890. Bibliography on Demaratus and his entourage is extensive and marked by contradictory views of historical veracity: see, for example, Cornell 1995, 122–30; Zevi 1995; Poucet 2000, 164–5 n. 12; Ridgway 2006; Rieger 2007, 240–56; Camporeale 2011, 20–1; MacMullen 2011, 22–4; Ridgway 2012; Colonna 2013, 14; Isayev 2017, 98–100.

⁴¹ Discussed recently by Warden 2008. On the Aristonothos *krater* (c. 650 BC, Musei Capitolini, Rome: Castellani 172), see Ducati 1911; Schweitzer 1955; Dougherty 2003, 50–2; Izzet 2004.