CHAPTER 1

The Ancient City

Still a Debated Topic

1.1 The Ancient City: Is a Definition Possible?

Some years ago, the 'Copenhagen Polis Centre' project debated the essence of the ancient Greek city and produced an inventory of all ancient Greek cities in Archaic and Classical times, within a wider comparative perspective of emerging urban societies from different parts of the world and different chronological settings. More recently the 'Reception of the City in Late Antiquity' European Research Council funded project at the University of Cambridge, re-examined the impact of the ancient Greco-Roman city on subsequent urban history in Europe and the Islamic world, investigating both urban fabric and urban ideals. The ongoing 'Centre for Urban Network Evolutions' project (UrbNet) is a ground-breaking archaeological research initiative exploring the evolution of urbanism and urban networks from the Hellenistic Period to the Middle Ages. The 'Social Reactors Project' at the University of Colorado Boulder is investigating the underlying universal mechanism of ancient and modern urbanism through settlement-scaling theory to provide understanding and possibly guidance for current government and policy makers. Finally, the 'Cities and Settlements in the Ancient World' project – run by OIKOS, the National Research School in Classical Studies in the Netherlands – is analysing the historical, material and cultural aspects of the development of the ancient city from the emergence of the first urban centres in Mesopotamia to the transformation and decline of the urban phenomenon in Late Antiquity with an emphasis on the Classical, Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean. Meanwhile, the *Cities* series, published online by the Guardian in the UK (www.theguardian.com/cities), has brought this topic closer to the wider public.

Yet fundamental questions are still widely and vigorously debated: What is an ancient city? When can we say that a nucleated settlement has

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become a city? Why does a city sometime prevail over others and why does it eventually decline? These questions have not yet been definitely answered, especially with reference to central Italy and Rome in particular. The long-term trajectory of Rome is quite well known and established from its early supremacy within Latium vetus in pre-historic and early historic times, to being an emerging power in Italy, during the Republican period, and finally its dominance over the empire, in the first few centuries of our era before the final collapse around the end of the 4th century AD. However, the contributory factors and the determinants of this trajectory that took 'a slightly shabby Iron Age village' to become the 'undisputed hegemon of the Mediterranean' are still very much questioned.[1] In the second part of this chapter, I will present the state of the art on urban formation and urban developments (*urbanisation*) in central Italy, while in this section I will discuss features of *urbanism/urbanisation* on a wider level presenting the current debate on the ancient city, also with particular reference to Arjan Zuiderhoek's recently published *The Ancient City*, which summarises and discusses extensively previous approaches.[2]

Already in the Bronze Age, but more commonly with the advent of the Iron Age, in the Near East, in Europe and in the Americas, many regions had become organised in small independent political units, generally defined as city-states.[3] Since the classic work by Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité Antique*, published in 1864,[4] the debate on the characteristics and origin of the ancient city has been immense, but Zuiderhoek's scholarly and at the same time lively book helps us navigate this dense and intricate subject.[5] As observed by this scholar, the ancient *polis* or *civitas*, according to Fustel de Coulanges, found its origin in a primordial, Indo-European notion of private property, based on claims of land control and household possession through the cult of ancestors. According to Zuiderhoek, Fustel de Coulanges aimed to show that ancient cities came into being in a way fundamentally alien to the medieval and early modern European urban experience, to contrast the Jacobin appropriation of classical ideals to justify their revolutionary aims.[6] Similarly, explains Zuiderhoek, the other famous model of the ancient city proposed by Max Weber,[7] was elaborated contrasting the 'modern-medieval city economy' to the 'ancient household economy', in order to justify and explain the origin of modern capitalism.[8] As correctly emphasised by Zuiderhoek, the famous and dominant model of the ancient city, developed by the ancient historian Moses Finley was strongly influenced by Weber.[9] According to Zuiderhoek, in Finley's model of the ancient economy, his conceptualisation of the ancient city as a consumer city, derived from Weber and developed in a very particular

direction, served as an explanation for the ancient world's relative economic underdevelopment (compared to medieval and early modern Europe). When summarising the ideas of Fustel de Coulanges, Finley and Weber, Zuiderhoek states: 'in stressing the otherness of antiquity, all three were engaged in a much broader discourse concerning the nature and causes of western exceptionalism, that is, the unique development towards capitalism, the Industrial Revolution and modern liberal society in which western European medieval cities were thought to have played a crucial part'.[10]

Besides these fundamental and influential models of the ancient city, Zuiderhoek discussed all major models of urbanism developed by past and current scholarship, which can be summarised and integrated with further discussion as follow:

(1) As suggested by Zuiderhoek,[11] the demographic model can be based either on settlement size, according to which a centre would be urban above 10,000 individuals or in the case of ancient cities, 5,000;[12] the density/nucleation principle, according to which 'cities are places where a certain energized crowding of people takes place';[13] or the demographic composition of the population. With particular reference to this last variable, Zuiderhoek discusses the urban graveyard model, according to which the proximity and bad hygienic conditions of urban crowding caused high mortality rates, especially among infants/children, which needed immigration to compensate for the deceased population in order to allow growth and sustainable development of ancient cities.[14] However, this theory can be contrasted with the model of increased fertility, according to which early cessation of breastfeeding would lead to higher fertility rates which in turn would outweigh high mortality rates, allowing for population survival and reproduction and eventually the demographic growth generally associated with urbanism.[15]

(2) More classically, the socio-economic model, characterises urbanism by specialisation of labour, social stratification and complementarity between the consumer city and the producing countryside, that together make up the market economy.[16]

(3) The model of urban environment and/or urban landscape, based on the appearance of the ancient city, 'with the presence of central squares or plazas, paved streets, defensive walls and gates, public architecture for religious, political or ceremonial/ entertainment purposes and some element of town planning. It is perhaps in this

sphere that the intuitive understanding of a settlement as 'urban' (we know it when we see it) is strongest'.[17]

(4) The political model, according to which 'Greek and Roman cities were political communities, which possessed the institutions required for autonomous collective decision-making'.[18]

(5) The ritual and identity model according to which cities were communities not only for full members of the political body (*civitas*) but for a wider group of people, including women, children, freedmen, resident foreigners and slaves, who were effectively non- or semi-citizens but would find unity and interactions in the comprehensive and inclusive action of the city rituals and festivals.[19] While religion has often been connected to power as a means of coercion and ideological control (*Religio Instrumentum Regni*), from ancient classical authors[20] to Niccoló Macchiavelli's treatise,[21] Jorg Rüpke is developing a new dynamic way of looking at religion as a means of actively creating power and the changes that led to early states societies.[22]

To these models identified by Zuiderhoek, another has now to be added: the 'house society' model, originally developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss and since elaborated on by numerous scholars, with reference to Mediterranean Bronze and Iron Age societies[23] and to central Italy,[24] in particular. This model emphasises the role of the family as an institution, with related anthropological and social practices such as marriages and hereditary rights, and seems to offer the missing link between egalitarian pre-urban societies and stratified and hierarchical urban developments; the family is also a key factor, in a dialectic manner, for the creation of state institutions. This view, reminiscent of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' perspectives,[25] had already been suggested by Renato Peroni[26] and Andrea Cardarelli,[27] in their elaboration and definition of proto-urban societies, and seems most promising. In my previous work on the urbanisation of Rome and Latium vetus[28] and in an article on the Latin people,[29] I have discussed most of the above themes presented by Zuiderhoek with reference to the material culture of this specific region. In the second part of this chapter, I am going to summarise and update this discussion and show how this book contributes to the current debate on urbanisation in general and central Italy, in particular.

Zuiderhoek's book, these discussions and the rich literature of comparative studies on urbanism[30] demonstrate that while the debate on what is an ancient city is still very much open and far from being resolved, it is still

possible to identify some common traits and common trajectories, at least with some limited grounds of variability, that characterise settlements and communities across a great variety of historical and/or chronological settings. These works, in particular, suggest that a common feature of settlements is their ability to create connectivity and generate greater division of labour and specialisation, enhanced technological invention and innovation, monumentalised and communal ceremonial building/ public spaces, common ideology and/or religious belief, albeit with costs to levels of equality, quality of life and standards of living, as well as impacts on the environment, which cannot be separated from the emergence of confederations and states. However much of the discussion of these themes, within historical and archaeological circles, has been on a discursive or qualitative level, and therefore it is often difficult to harmonise the different models that have been applied to date into a consistent empirical and/or theoretical framework. A new approach to settlements throughout different contexts should now be within our grasp, however, thanks to both the ease with which information can be disseminated and the facilities that recent developments in information technology offer us the means to model, analyse and statistically test data. As suggested by Monica Smith, 'the capacities for human interaction in concentrated locations are exercised within a limited set of parameters',[31] that should be possible to study quantitatively. Zuiderhoek seems to be sceptical about these interdisciplinary and quantitative comparative approaches to urbanism and urbanisation that 'may eventually be able to arrive at some universal understanding of urbanism'.[32] In contrast, I believe that qualitative discussion and comparative quantitative approaches are not alternatives but complementary and it is still possible to keep details about cultural-historical specificity within wider comparative perspectives.

In this sense Zuiderhoek underestimates a whole tradition of studies from the pioneering work by Louis Wirth[33] to the more recent contributions by Michael Batty,[34] both discussed and presented in the recent quantitative approach to Central European urbanism by Oliver Nakoinz.[35] The quantitative comparative approach presented in those works, such as in the recent Special Research Topic edited by myself, John Hanson, Scott Ortman and Louis Bettencourt (*Where Do Cities Come From and Where Are They Going To?*; www.frontiersin.org/ research-topics/7460/where-do-cities-come-from-and-where-are-they-going-to-modelling-past-and-present agglomerations-to-u), allows us to connect recent developments in archaeological research with those in other disciplines, including economics, anthropology, sociology and social ecology.

This not only enables us to add historical depth to our models of urbanism, but also to connect understanding about cities in the past and present, offering opportunities to predict their evolution and improve policies in the future. While there is a large array of methods and tools to assess and to analyse quantitatively degrees of urbanism and/or urbanisation processes, such as complex systems theory, settlement scaling theory, agent-based modelling, rank-size analysis, gravity models and space-syntax, in this work I choose to analyse Transportation Systems through the Network Science Approach. After summarising most current research and debate on urbanisation in central Italy, I will show in Chapter 2 why I believe this is a very promising field of research that has been relatively neglected in the past few decades and is definitively novel and unexplored for Iron Age central Italy.

1.2 Urbanisation in Central Italy

Thanks to the work of many scholars over the last few decades our knowledge of urbanisation processes in southern Etruria and Latium vetus (Fig. 1.1) from the Final Bronze Age to the Archaic Period is nowadays much more advanced. In this section, I am going to revise the many different dimensions and/or trajectories of social evolution that scholars have studied in relation to the development of cities in Early Iron Age central Italy.[36] The absolute chronology of Bronze and Iron Age Italy is still a much debated question, which has changed from traditional approaches based on pottery typology, to modern scientific radiocarbon dates and dendrochronology. For a brief discussion of the state of the art I refer to my previous work.[37] Here, an updated table is presented to synthesise the main relative and absolute comparative chronologies in central and southern Italy (Table 1.1).

Settlement Dynamics

When considering settlement dynamics, in particular (Table 1.2), it is well known that between the Final Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age southern Etruria and Latium vetus witness a process of centralisation and nucleation from small dispersed villages, during the Bronze Age, into large settlements of the Early Iron Age on the plateaux, that will be later occupied by the cities of the Orientalising and Archaic Periods.[38]

This process is generally considered more sudden and revolutionary in southern Etruria where mainly during Final Bronze Age 3 (between the second half of the 11th and the first half of the 10th century BC) small,
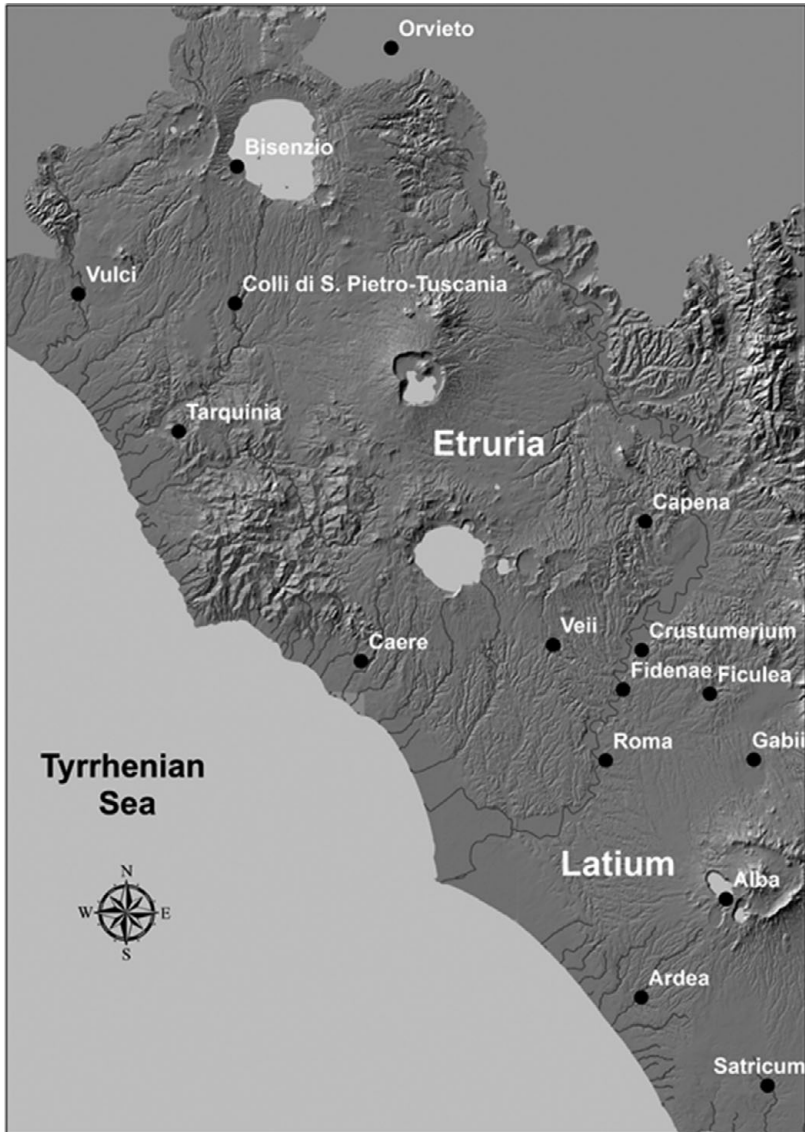
FIGURE 1.1. Southern Etruria and Latium vetus in central Italy.

dispersed villages of the previous Bronze Age (area on average 5–6 ha but sometime up to 20–25 ha) are abandoned. At the same time the wide plateaux (area between about 100 and 200 ha) of the future historical cities (Veii, Tarquinia, Caere, Vulci, Bisenzio and Orvieto) are settled

TABLE 1.1. *Comparative relative and absolute chronologies in central and southern Italy*

Pontecagnano	Pithekoussai	Veio	Tarquinia	Latium	Trad chronology (Colonna, 1976; Ampolo, et al., 1980)	Phase	Dendro-chronology (Peroni, 1994; Bettelli, 1997)	C14 Chronology (Bietti Sestieri, et al., 1999-2000)	New absolute chronology 1 (Pacciarelli, 2001, 2005; Nijboer, 2005)	New absolute chronology 2 (Van der Plicht, et al., 2009)	New absolute chronology 3 (Nizzo 2007)
Proto-Appennine		Grotta Nuova	Grotta Nuova	Grotta Nuova /	1600	Middle Bronze	1700		1700	1700	
Apennine		Apennine	Apennine	Apennine	1400	Middle Bronze	1500		1400	1400	
Subapennine		Subapennine	Subapennine	Subapennine	1300	Recent Bronze	1365/1350	1350	1325/1300	1325/1300	
Protovillanovan		Protovillanovan	Protovillanovan	Protovillanovan	1150	Final Bronze 1	1200	1200	1175/1150	1200	
					1100	Final Bronze 2	1150				
Protovillanovan		Protovillanovan	Protovillanovan	I	1000	Final Bronze 3	1085		1050/1025	1050	
IA		IA	IA	IIA	900	Early Iron 1 Early	1020	1020	950/925	950	
IB		IB-IC	IB	IIB	830	Early Iron 1 Late	950	900 ca.	900 ca.	900 ca.	
IIA	First settlement	IIA-IIB	II	IIIA	770	Early Iron 2 Early/Late	880	850/825	850/825	825/800	
IIB	Late Geometric 1	IIC	II	IIIB	750	Early Iron 2 Final	810				750
Early Orientalising Age	Late Geometric 12	IIIA	IIIA	IVA1	730/720	Early Orientalising	750	780	750	725	725
Middle Orientalising Age	Middle Proto-Corinthian 1– Middle-Proto-Corinthian 2	IIIB	IIIB	IVA2	670/660	Middle Orientalising					680/675

Table 1.1. (*cont.*)

Pontecagnano	Pithekoussai	Veio	Tarquinia	Latium	Trad chronology (Colonna, 1976; Ampolo, *et al.*, 1980)	Phase	Dendro-chronology (Peroni, 1994; Bettelli, 1997)	C14 Chronology (Bietti Sestieri, *et al.*, 1999-2000)	New absolute chronology 1 (Pacciarelli, 2001, 2005; Nijboer, 2005)	New absolute chronology 2 (Van der Plicht, *et al.*, 2009)	New absolute chronology 3 (Nizzo 2007)
Recent Orientalising Age	Late Proto-Corinthian–Ancient Corinthian	IV	IV	IVB	640/630	Recent Orientalising			630/620	630/620	650/630
Archaic Period	Middle Corinthian	Archaic Period	Archaic Period	Archaic Period	580	Archaic			580	580	580
Early Republican Period	Early Republican Period	Early Republican Period	Early Republican Period	Early Republican Period	509	Early Republican					
Middle Republican Period	Middle Republican Period	Middle Republican Period	Middle Republican Period	Middle Republican Period	400	Middle Republican					
Late Republican Period	Late Republican Period	Late Republican Period	Late Republican Period	Late Republican Period	200	Late Republican					
					31/27						

TABLE 1.2. *Settlement patterns in southern Etruria and Latium vetus from the Final Bronze Age to the Archaic Period*

Pre-urban/ Proto-urban	Proto-urban		Proto-urban/ urban	Urban	
Final Bronze Age 3 (Lazial Period I)	**Early Iron Age 1 Early (Latial Period IIA)**	**Early Iron Age 1 Late (Latial Period IIB)**	**Early Iron Age 2 (Latial Period IIIA-IIIB)**	**Early and Middle Orientalising Age (Latial Period IVA)**	**Recent Orientalising Age (Latial Period IVB) & Archaic Period**
1050/1025–950/925	950/925–900	900–850/825	850/825–750/725	750/725–640/630	640/630–509
Nucleation and centralisation of settlements	Large proto-urban centres		Definition of limits or emerging urban centres and internal organisation	Urban realization	Urban monumentalisation
		Foundation of secondary centres	Widespread colonisation of the countryside		
Settlement hierarchy 1/2 tiers	Settlement hierarchy 1/2 or 2/3 tiers	Settlement hierarchy 2/3 or 3/4 tiers	Settlement hierarchy 3/4 or 4/5 tiers		

extensively, with a patchwork occupation of hut compounds interspersed with gardens and allotments. Scholars have calculated that about 15–20 villages are abandoned for each large developing proto-urban centre.[39] In Latium vetus the process is more gradual and slightly delayed. In this region, the formation of large proto-urban centres occurs mainly during Latial periods IIA and IIB (between the second half of the 10th and the first half of the 9th century BC) with the occupation of large plateaux often linked to small *Acropoleis* previously occupied during the Bronze Age.[40] Recent studies, however, have emphasised that in both regions there were more varied and different specific cases and exceptions to the general trends than previously thought, and therefore the two regions are probably more similar than previously assumed.[41]

Later during an advanced stage of the Early Iron Age (Early Iron Age 1 Late, around the first half of the 9th century BC) both in southern Etruria and Latium vetus satellites secondary centres are founded by proto-urban centres creating a settlement hierarchy of two to three tiers with primary settlements generally larger than 100 ha in Etruria and generally larger than 40–50 ha in Latium vetus but sometime also between 25 and 50 ha, and small secondary settlements always smaller than 15–20 ha.[42] Following this, during the Early Iron Age 2, (second half of the 9th and first half of 8th century BC), it is possible to observe a progressively more precise definition of the limits and internal organisation of large proto-urban centres now developing towards urbanisation and consisting of a series of changes markedly visible around the mid 8th century BC. This is shown by:

(1) Demographic growth of the emerging urban centres, testified by an increased density of sites on the surveyed plateaux.[43]

(2) Sharp definition of the boundaries of the inhabited area of the settlements with a concentration of the sites rigorously within the limits of the plateaux and the abandonment of the sites previously located along the external slopes of the plateau.[44]

(3) Formalisation of these boundaries with the realisation of symbolic[45] or more functional fortifications.[46]

(4) The internal organisation of these centres with the creation of public spaces and official building for assemblies and communal activities, cult places and special larger residencies, probably occupied by royal families or aristocratic elites.[47]

At this time, around the mid 8th century BC, there is also a more dense and diffuse occupation of the territory by 'urban' elites[48] with small aristocratic settlements dispersed around the countryside. This leads the

settlement hierarchy to three to four level tiers with primary settlements (various orders, generally larger than 100 ha but sometime between 25 and 100 ha), secondary settlements (always smaller than 15–20 ha) and small high-status settlements in the countryside generally indicated by small burial grounds.[49] At this stage, by the mid/late 8th century BC, the proto-urban centres can be said to be properly urban although they will reach a mature consolidated urban stage in a fully monumentalised form only in the Orientalising and Archaic Periods (7th–6th century BC).[50]

Social Hierarchy and Community Identity

When considering the development of social hierarchies and the construction of community identity as mirrored in the funerary evidence (Table 1.3) it is generally agreed by most scholars that princely burials of the late 8th century BC and beginning of the 7th century BC have an important precedent in warrior burials and rich female burials of the full 8th century BC, and they represent only the final point of a long process of social differentiation whose early stages have to be placed at least in the Final Bronze Age.[51] In fact, important discoveries and studies by Anna De Santis and Anna Maria Bietti Sestieri have identified religious and political leaders in a few exceptional male burials of Latial Period I found in the territory of Rome (e.g. Quadrato di Torre Spaccata and Santa Palomba). These burials in fact have a full suit of armour including double shields (identified with the *Salii* shields by Giovanni Colonna), greaves, spears and swords, numerous pottery items, and cult and prestige objects, including a knife, an incense burner, possibly a *holmos* (vase stand) and a cart, which according to Bietti Sestieri and De Santis refer to the political (sword and weapons) and the religious role (knife and incense burner).[52]

Similarly, it is now generally agreed that the slight funerary variability of Latial Period IIA and IIB and of earlier Villanovan cemeteries (second half of 10th to first half of 9th century BC) is not due to lack or absence of social stratification but to the egalitarian ideology of the newly formed proto-urban communities which tend to mask or hide internal inequalities.[53] Further evidence comes again from a discovery by Anna De Santis who excavated and published tomb 6 from Tenuta Cancelliera at Santa Palomba, dated to Latial Period IIB (first half of 9th century BC) and equipped with amazing objects such as a complete suit of armour (including double shields, greaves, spears and swords), an axe, working tools, a cart, small human figures and a gold nail.[54] In an analogous way, the populist and egalitarian ideology of the city fully formed under the

TABLE 1.3. *Social differentiation as reflected in burial customs in Southern Etruria and Latium vetus from the Final Bronze Age to the Archaic Period*

Pre-urban/ Proto-urban	Proto-urban		Proto-urban/ urban	Urban	
Final Bronze Age 3 (Lazial Period I)	Early Iron Age 1 Early (Latial Period IIA)	Early Iron Age 1 Late (Latial Period IIB)	Early Iron Age 2 (Latial Period IIIA-IIIB)	Early and Middle Orientalising Age (Latial Period IVA)	Recent Orientalising Age (Latial Period IVB) & Archaic Period
1050/1025–950/925	950/925–900	900-850/825	850/825–750/72	750/725–640/630	640/630–509
EMERGING BURIALS	SHARED SYMBOLS OF POWER		WARRIORS AND RICH FEMALE BURIALS	PRINCELY BURIALS	REDUCTION AND DISAPPEARANCE OF GRAVE GOODS
Political and religious leaders (complete suit of armour, knife, cart, incense-burner, holmos (stand)?)	Prestige and power symbols (weapons for male burials, spinning and weaving tools for female burials, hut-urn, statuettes, knife) distributed among various individuals		Warrior graves with complete suit of armour and prestige goods (flabellum, incense-burner, metal vases, etc.)	Princely burials with hundreds of pottery vases, precious material vases and ornaments (gold, silver, amber, ivory), drinking-sets, oriental power symbols (*flabellum* or fan, footrest and sceptre)	Drastic reduction until complete absence of grave goods; family chamber tombs.
Rich infant burial (Le Caprine tomb 5, Latium vetus) with spinning and weaving instruments and knife	Exceptional tomb 6 Tenuta Cancelliera (Santa Palomba): offensive and defensive weapons, cart, statuettes, working tools, knife, gold, many vases		Rich female burials with many ornaments, bronze cist, spinning and weaving tools		

tyrannical regime of the Tarquins imposed a drastic reduction in the number of grave goods until eventually they disappeared fully from Latin burials during the Recent Orientalising Age and the Archaic Period (end of 7th–6th century BC).[55]

Linked to the development of social stratification and urban and state institutions is the problem of the birth of the 'gens', identified as a specific institution of the Roman Republican state, but often linked to 'clan', 'lineage' and 'family' organisations that can be clearly identified in the archaeological record, such as in the 'gentilician central group' at the Iron Age cemetery of Osteria dell'Osa,[56] or the aristocratic 'family group *tumuli*' of the Orientalising period, related to secondary and local settlements at the periphery of the territory of Rome.[57] Christopher Smith has offered a detailed discussion of the origin of the 'gens', by debating and comparing both literary sources and available archaeological evidence, and rather cautiously suggested that it is very difficult to link the Roman institution, as known from literary sources and classical archaeological evidence, to its predecessors, indicated by Iron Age and Orientalising material culture.[58]

While combining literary narratives and prehistorical material evidence is always risky and must be done carefully, it is the merit of Nicola Terrenato to have laid the foundations for a constructive debate, open also to the inclusion of the growing archaeological evidence. Such evidence has emphasised the key role of the 'family' and the 'gens' (especially but not only 'aristocratic' ones), as active agents and a connecting link in the delicate and still somehow 'obscure' passage between pre-urban village communities and urban societies, and later on thorough the whole development of Roman expansion and dominance.[59]

Craft Specialisation

Albert Nijboer[60] and Johann Rasmus Brandt[61] have studied craft specialisation in central Italy by applying different theoretical models but have both formulated similar craft specialisation processes in the region from the 9th to the 4th centuries. According to these scholars, during the 9th to the beginning of the 8th centuries, pottery was still produced within the household for domestic use only. By the end of the eighth and during the seventh centuries, the formation of the first fortified settlements, the adoption of polyculture (with the introduction of olives and wine), the beginning of social stratification (documented by the appearance of lavish burials), pre-monetary early market exchange and demographic pressure created new socio-economic conditions favourable to the development of

household pottery production, mainly for their own use and some small trading/exchange.[62] By the end of the 7th and during the 6th century, a population increase, agricultural intensification and technological improvements (such as greater diffusion of the potter's wheels and proper kilns) led to the beginnings of a workshop industry, and eventually large industrial workshops, such as those attested at Populonia, Marzabotto (Etruria) and Acqua Acetosa Laurentina (Latium vetus).[63] According to Brandt[64] and Nijboer,[65] pottery craft specialisation was paralleled by a similar development in house building, which evolved from simple, small huts to big, complex houses with stone foundations, during the second half of the 7th century.

In addition, Nijboer emphasises that metallurgy production underwent a similar process of increased specialisation. During the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age, metalworking was a part-time activity of resident smiths, which operated within a regional or inter-regional network for the exchange of locally exploited raw material. But during the 8th century, significant changes occurred in metalworking: bronze *fibulae* started to be produced in series, and copper alloys tools and weapons were replaced by iron objects.[66] By the end of the eighth and during the seventh centuries, an increase in the number of iron tools (spearheads, swords, knives, spits, horse bits, components of chariot wheels) is attested in Latin burials, especially in association with luxury grave goods, and in votive deposits at Satricum. This means, according to Nijboer,[67] that metals were manufactured locally.

Brandt and Nijboer correctly relate craft specialisation to socio-economic changes which occurred in central Italy during the late Early Iron Age, Orientalising Period and Archaic Age. It is important, however, to note some remarkable technological and typological innovations towards specialisation and standardisation, which occurred in Latium vetus already during the late Early Iron Age. Colonna, Carafa and Bietti Sestieri all demonstrate that remarkable innovations such as standardisation of products,[68] and the introduction of updraft kilns (suggested by the production of red impasto alongside brown impasto vessels)[69] and possibly of fast potters' wheels (suggested by the presence in Rome of *depurata* vessels presumably of local production[70] were already occurring in Latial Period III, at least during the 8th century. Similarly, according to Cristiano Iaia,[71] during the 8th century, it is possible to note a greater standardisation in the production of bronze sheet cups and possibly postulate an emerging market exchange-circulation for these objects, rather than simply a more traditional gift-exchange circulation.

Textile Production

Besides traditional studies on pottery and metal crafts, valuable studies by Margarita Gleba and more recently Sanna Lipkin have contributed to uncovering the importance for the Italic economy of a rather hidden and perishable commodity such as textile. Due to the constant association of textile tools (spindle whorls, spools, loom weights) with female individuals in Etruscan and Italic burial contexts, textile production has been generally associated with female gendered activity.[72] Research by Gleba[73] has recently highlighted how the production of ceremonial textiles was an important economic activity, which required highly specialised skills and was generally reserved for women of relatively high status. During the Early Iron Age, this production was mainly confined within the household, as indicated by the regular small quantities of tools generally found within settlements.

Consumption, however, was not limited to family use especially for non-essential, fine, colourful and decorated textiles which were a valuable commodity and often were deposited in high status burials, for example, in Tomb 2 at Santa Palomba Tenuta Cancelleria, *ca*. 11th to 10th centuries,[74] or later in Tomb 89 from Verrucchio, end of 8th/beginning of 7th century; Isis Tomb from Vulci (Etruria), 7th century; or Barberini and Bernardini Tombs from Palestrina, second quarter of the 7th century;[75] or dedicated in sanctuaries possibly as part of rituals involving the whole community.[76] In addition, a progressive standardisation in the shape and weight of the tools indicated that there was a certain degree of specialisation and 'professionalism' practised by individuals within the domestic sphere.[77] With the Orientalising Age a new mode of production in workshops seems to appear, as indicated by the large number of tools found in specific areas or structures, such as at Poggio Cividate (Murlo) and Acquarossa.[78]

Staple Economy

As far as staple economy is concerned, early cultivation of cereals and legumes has been demonstrated in Latium vetus by research conducted in the Pontine Plain: in this region agricultural activities occurred at least from the Neolithic Period onwards. However, the first introduction of polyculture (cereals, olive, wine) in the region is far more uncertain.[79] There are some hints that polyculture in the form of production of olives with cereals had begun in central Italy and Latium vetus by the middle of

the 8th century, but the evidence is not conclusive. Land evaluation research, conducted in the Pontine Plain by Ester van Joolen,[80] demonstrated a slight improvement in the suitability of land for polyculture from the Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age. Unfortunately, pollen diagrams did not show any sign of these kinds of land use in that area.

Taking into consideration the whole of central Italy, however, there are archaeological indicators of an early introduction of polyculture. Grape pips and olive stones, for example, have been found in several 9th and 8th century settlement contexts (Gran Carro, near Lake Bolsena, and Cures Sabini, near Rieti),[81] and vases containing liquids and drinking pots are common in funerary contexts of the 9th and 8th centuries. In addition, a small image of a plough on a bronze incense burner from the necropolis of Olmo Bello in Bisenzio, dated to the 8th century, might be an indication of the existence of iron ploughs at this time,[82] but the evidence is too scanty to be definitive.

An interesting attempt to link crop processing with state formation processes in Latium (Rome) was undertaken by Laura Motta.[83] Her study detected a general increase in the quantity of grain processed during the 7th and 6th centuries, but the situation was not homogeneous. According to Motta, the heterogeneity among the samples signifies the co-existence of different circuits of crop processing in the same community. It is likely that traditional, pre-existing, kin-based production systems survived and co-existed with a new state-based economy. Therefore, Motta suggests that a heterarchical model would be more appropriate to explain Rome's proto-urban complexity than the hierarchical, Marxist theories of production.

A comprehensive study of the faunal economy in central Italy has been recently undertaken by Claudia Minniti.[84] According to her work, during the Bronze Age settlements show generally a 'self-sufficient primary economy,' based on agriculture and limited husbandry (sheep, goat, pig) for meat supply destined for local consumption; moreover, livestock could have been moved over great distances for pasturage. Cattle at this time were primarily used for traction in fields. But an exception to this practice is the late Bronze Age settlement on the Capitoline hill, where animals were slaughtered and by-products processed. During the final Bronze Age, the first changes are attested in primary economic activities: some sites show the slaughtering of a discrete percentage of steers for meat; it is only, however, during the Early Iron Age that sheep and goat secondary products start to be more fully exploited.

In addition, the site of Rome during the later Iron Age shows a dramatic increase in the consumption of pigs. These animals, which require

minimal effort to keep, rear and feed, might have been considered a valuable option as a consequence of demographic growth (perhaps rendered possible by the intensification of agriculture), which in turn might be an indicator of urban development.[85]. On the other hand, more sophisticated social and economic practices of Latin communities during the late Iron Age seem to be confirmed by the presence at Fidenae of rare and exotic animals, such as the domesticated cat.

Religion and Cult Activity

In several publications over the past forty years, Guidi has demonstrated an interesting connection between the formation of proto-urban centres and important developments in the ritual activities of Early Iron Age Latium vetus.[86] While in the middle and late Bronze Age cult places were respectively represented by natural caves and open-air bronze objects deposits (in springs, lakes, rivers or pits), during the Early Iron Age some special huts within the settlement area seem to acquire the role of cult places for the whole civic community. Many hut structures of the 8th–7th centuries have been found under the Archaic temples of Velitrae (S. Stimmate), Satricum and Ardea (Colle della Noce).

In addition, votive deposits are known from the Quirinal Hill (S. Maria della Vittoria),[87] the Palatine Hill[88] and the Capitoline Hill in Rome,[89] and the cult hut of Vesta has likely been identified in the very heart of the city.[90] Other votive deposits in Latium are attested in Campoverde and Tivoli (Acquoria).[91] According to Guidi,[92] the existence of central cult places which served the whole community in the 8th century BC is a sign of incipient urbanisation.

By contrast, Christopher Smith[93] connects urbanisation with the stone temples of the 7th to 6th centuries and distinguishes them from ritual activity in open-air deposits of earlier times. Even though Smith admits the existence of social status and ritual activities conducted by the head of the clan group (gens) acting for the community already in the 9th century, he tends to interpret votive deposits of the 7th century as an expression of a more 'individual' and 'private' kind of religion and to downgrade the importance of the huts which preceded stone temples. Therefore, the debate is still open.

Ethnic Identity

A well-known traditional work by the eminent Etruscologist, Massimo Pallottino,[94] observed a striking coincidence between Early Iron Age

regional material cultures of central Italy (which emerged and differenti-
ated themselves from the middle and late Bronze Age cultural homogen-
eity) with the distribution of later inscriptions and territories of the
historical people as they are recorded in ancient literary sources. Since
then several studies, among which probably the most comprehensive is the
work by Guy Bradley[95] on Umbrian ethnicity, have warned against this
'common sense' approach and have adopted a problematised approach to
ethnicity. As observed by Bradley, in fact, the traditional equation between
material culture and ethnicity can no longer be simplistically accepted, and
boundaries among different material cultures in central Italy are often
blurred and overlapping, as in the case of Veii and Rome, or Umbrians
and Etruscans along the Tiber valley. In addition, he has correctly empha-
sised that the reliability of literary accounts of such ancient times (Final
Bronze Age and Early Iron Age) are highly questionable and that most
examples of ethnic group self-designations come from the second half of
the first millennium and hardly pre-date 600 BC.[96]

As noted by Bradley himself, some other Italian scholars, such as Renato
Peroni,[97] have adopted a problematic approach to ethnicity. Similarly,
Carmine Ampolo has suggested the idea of ethnic fluidity of a central
Italian inter-regional cultural commonality (koiné).[98] More recently, Guidi
and other authors[99] have emphasised the fluidity of cultural boundaries
based on material culture, while Gabriele Cifani[100] has studied the com-
plex dynamics between ethnic groups along the Tiber frontier by analysing
changing settlement patterns in central Italy from the Bronze to the
Archaic Age. Finally, Francesco di Gennaro[101] has emphasised similarities
between Crustumerium (Latin) and Veii (Etruscan), which faced one
another from opposite sides of the Tiber River. To conclude, while the
original hypothesis by Pallottino can no longer be accepted without being
problematised and taken cautiously, the strong relationship between ethnic
formation and socio-economic developments (increased social complexity,
state formation, urbanisation) in central Italy suggested by this scholar
remains valid.[102]

These trajectories identified in different dimension of social evolution in
of middle Tyrrhenian Italy between the Final Bronze Age and the Archaic
Period also shed new light on the longstanding debate over the origin of the
city in central Italy during the Early Iron Age. This debate over the last forty
years can be viewed as polarised between two opposite schools of thought,
'Exogenous' and 'Endogenous' (although many scholars actually fall in
between). Exogenous (mainly historians, classicists and Etruscologists)
highlights 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.[103] On the other hand, Endogenous (mainly pre-historians and a minority of Etruscologists and classical archaeologists), emphasise autochthonous impulses and local developments towards higher complexity, which can be detected in settlement patterns and in social developments (mirrored by the funerary evidence) already by the end of the Final Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age (end of the 11th and beginning of the 10th century BC), if not earlier.[104]

The trajectories delineated above, seem to lend further vitality to and provide evidence for the Endogenous over the Exogenous school of thought. The formation of large nucleated and centralised proto-urban centres in southern Etruria and Latium vetus between the Final Bronze and the beginning of the Early Iron Age, and then the colonisation of the countryside first with second- and then with third-tier high-status settlements, points to early hierarchical organisation of the settlements. The evidence of the presence of political leaders both in southern Etruria and more clearly in Latium vetus, by the end of the Final Bronze Age (Latial Period I, second half of the 11th and first half of the 10th century BC), hints at an early presence of social differentiation. Craft specialisation, specialised textile production and differentiation of cultures and preferred domestic animals is well documented for the 8th–7th century BC but hinted also for the later stage of the Early Iron Age in various places of central Italy. The presence of common cult places and spaces suggest the presence of conscious political communities in central Italy at least since the middle of the 8th century BC, while the differentiated yet intermingled material cultures suggest an advanced process of ethnic differentiation in Early Iron Age central Italy, but with mobile communities very open to accept and integrate foreigners and outsiders. Therefore, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, a new paradigm-shift in the conceptualisation of modes of contacts and interactions in the Mediterranean during pre- and proto-history has introduced a new model which makes it possible to overcome the old debate between Endogenous and Exogenous factors in favour of a new perspective of reciprocal catalysing interactions.[105]

1.3 Conclusions

Several new international projects investigating cities and cities networks from their origin to Late Antiquity, as well as some recent Cambridge University Press books, such as Zuiderhoek's *The Ancient City* or my own

The Urbanisation of Rome and Latium vetus from the Bronze Age to the Archaic Era, shows that the debate over ancient cities is far from being exhausted, and what defines a city still eludes our classification and characterisation, both from a qualitative and quantitative point of view. However, the Social Reactors Colorado Project, which seeks to understand underlying mechanisms of urbanisation in the past and present to help current and future policies in developed Western societies as well as developing countries, has shown that this debate is very much relevant for us today and attempts in this sense are still worthwhile, both for the advancement of scholarship and the benefit of our communities. As it will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, by taking a network perspective, as already advanced briefly in my previous work on the urbanisation of Rome and Latium vetus, this book aims to contribute to this debate, hoping to add a slightly different and novel perspective that will open new lines of research and will have practical applications also in disciplines beyond history and archaeology, such as urbanism and or transportation studies. In addition, by taking a comparative perspective on Latium vetus and southern Etruria, it will try to provide an answer to the question that has puzzled historians a great deal: Why Rome and not Veii? How did a small and not exceptional village, like many others in central Italy, supersede all equal powers and gain supremacy in the region and eventually all central Italy and later all the known world?