

THE TUSCANIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY: RATIONALE, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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INTRODUCTION

Tuscania is a small town some 80 km north-west of Rome in central Italy, in the modern Italian province of Viterbo and administrative region of Lazio (Figs. 1.1 and 1.2). Located at 42°41'86 N x 11°87'03 E, the town is about 150 m above sea level and today has a population of about 8,500 people. The Tuscania Archaeological Survey, the field project that is the subject of this book, investigated the archaeology of the countryside within a 10 km radius

of the town. The project was devised to combine several aims, some historical, others methodological, but it was driven first and foremost by a wish to learn more about the historical processes that have shaped the development of the Mediterranean landscape. In particular, we focused on the changing nature of the relationship between town and countryside by taking as our exemplar the territory of a small town in central Italy that had been continuously occupied since Etruscan times nearly 3000 years ago.



FIGURE 1.1 Tuscania: the walled town. (Photograph: Tom Rasmussen.)



FIGURE 1.2 Tuscania in its geographical setting in Etruria (western central Italy), showing the principal locations and sites in Etruria mentioned in this chapter. Some of the ancient names are shown in brackets; Tarquinia (Etruscan Tarch(u)na and Roman Tarquinii) was known for most of its history as Corneto and only 'renamed' Tarquinia in 1922.

The changing relationship between town and countryside over the timescale of Tuscania's existence has been one of the most important threads running through Mediterranean history (Horden and Purcell 2000). The first half of the first millennium BC was the period of initial urbanization in the Mediterranean, in the aftermath of state formation in the Near East and Egypt (Broodbank 2013). Mediterranean urbanization at this time was characterized by city states, systems of small more-or-less independent polities. Although the focus of most scholarship has traditionally been the city states of classical Greece as the home – Athens in particular – of the literature regarded as one of the foundations of modern Western culture, somewhat comparable political institutions also developed in the central and western Mediterranean. In Italy, urbanization began in Etruria (the western side of the Italian peninsula between the Arno and Tiber rivers, broadly the area between the modern cities of Pisa, Florence and Rome: Fig. 1.2), where the Etruscan city states became the dominant political power in the central Mediterranean until they yielded to the expanding power of Rome in the fourth and third centuries BC (Cornell 1995; Smith 2005, 2014).

By the beginning of the Christian era, Rome's empire encompassed the entire Mediterranean basin. Existing cities and towns had greatly expanded in size, new urban settlements flourished and the countryside was densely settled and intensively farmed to provide for these burgeoning urban populations, especially the *c.* 1 million inhabitants of Rome itself. The decline and contraction of the Roman empire by the middle of the first millennium AD brought profound changes to both town and countryside, with urban life all but extinguished in much of the western and central Mediterranean and the countryside greatly denuded of population (Christie 2006, 2010; Wickham 2005). By the end of the first millennium AD, urban life began to flourish here once more and rural populations to increase, the principal focus of settlement for the latter being the nucleated hilltop villages, the settlement form that is still the dominant feature of the Mediterranean landscape today (Brogiolo et al. 2000; Francovich and Hodges 2003). In the past fifty

years, though, most such villages have contracted again: towns and cities have exploded in size and the countryside has been progressively denuded of population, as people whose forbears traditionally worked on the land have moved to jobs in the expanding sectors of industry, services and tourism (e.g. Gaggio 2017).

Most history has been written by literate elites, and it has often been said that ordinary people to large measure have been denied their history, in the sense of either being ignored by contemporary writers or being written about rather than being able to write about their lives themselves. In the past, as today, such elites have often owned estates in the countryside, rural idylls away from the pace of city life, but from the beginnings of urbanism in the Mediterranean the primary focus for most political activity and elite social intercourse has been the city and town. Hence although most Mediterranean peoples before the modern era lived in the countryside, the history of the Mediterranean landscape, and in particular the changing relationship between town and countryside, has been written mainly from the urban perspective, looking outwards as it were from the city walls to the countryside beyond (Horden and Purcell 2000: 90–92).

Archaeology is commonly defined as the study of past societies through their material remains. Classical and Medieval archaeology in the Mediterranean region has traditionally been dominated by the study of the lives of the rich and powerful – great cities, great monuments, great art – but one of the great strengths of archaeology is that it is also extremely good at revealing the lives of ordinary people as well as the rich and powerful. All societies, and all levels of society, create archaeology: everybody, literate or illiterate, uses material culture, and some of it survives in the ground for archaeologists to recover and study. Like historical documents, though, archaeological data pose profound challenges of bias to scholars in their interpretation: archaeologists have to try to understand why particular types of evidence have survived, how they have been biased not just by physical conditions of survival but also by the discard activities of the people who once used them (artefacts might have been lost, for example, or thrown away as rubbish, or carefully buried

in a ritual context), and how such activities may relate to wider issues of cultural behaviour. Nevertheless, in recent decades archaeologists have demonstrated that they have a considerable contribution to make to the writing – rewriting in fact – of Mediterranean landscape history, including the changing relations between town and countryside, through the application of the techniques of landscape archaeology.

LANDSCAPES AND TASKSCAPES

People use the term ‘landscape’ in a wide variety of senses. It may be used as a gloss to describe a locale or region; to describe the physical environment of a place, shaped by climate and geography; as the physical space, including the built environment, that participates in the structuration of daily life; and to refer to the paintings, photographs and texts that ‘capture’ a place as a cultural image, ‘a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings’ (Daniels and Cosgrove 1988: 1). For archaeologists the multiple senses and meanings of the term landscape, and its ability to encompass both the physical and the conceptual (what Gosden and Head [1994] termed its ‘useful ambiguity’), have given rise to an increasingly diverse landscape archaeology, or rather landscape archaeologies, encompassing very different theoretical agendas and technical approaches.

In his 1925 essay ‘The morphology of landscape’, the geographer Carl Sauer proposed the concept of the ‘cultural landscape’ as a means to bring anthropology and geography together. In some ways W. G. Hoskins’ *The Makings of the English Landscape* (1955), a survey of the historical development of rural England since Anglo-Saxon times, though very different in scope and method in its integration of documentary records, maps, place names and the limited archaeological evidence available to him, stemmed from a similar tradition in historical geography. However, it was Gordon Willey’s pioneering archaeological survey of the Viru Valley in Peru (1953) that provided the best exemplar of regionally based multi-period (diachronic) settlement studies that were one of the most enduring outcomes of the ‘New Archaeology’

of the 1960s. Past human societies, the New Archaeology proposed, needed to be studied not in terms of the culture history that had dominated previous decades but as interacting sub-systems – technological, social, economic, ideological and so on (e.g. Binford 1964, 1965). Archaeologists needed to understand the processes by which such systems developed and changed over the long term (hence the term ‘Processual Archaeology’ came to be used instead of New Archaeology). Social and economic systems could be understood especially as adaptations to particular environmental, technological or demographic circumstances, with changes in the latter being the most likely stimuli of changes in the former. For prehistory, a major focus of Processual Archaeology was on how ecological and subsistence systems interacted. To investigate these relationships, it was argued, archaeologists needed to apply scientific ways of thinking, in the form of hypothesis testing and model building, and use scientific methods so that high quality data were collected systematically and analysed rigorously. The interest in the explanation of diachronic change in social and economic systems favoured the systematic collection of data at the regional scale, and regional field survey was explicitly advocated as an important technique (Binford 1964; Flannery 1976; Plog et al. 1978).

Through the 1980s and 1990s, there was a strong reaction by ‘post-processual’ archaeologists led by Ian Hodder against these concerns with environment, system and process (e.g. Hodder 1982a, 1982b, 1986), with parallel trends in geography (e.g. Cosgrove 1984; Hirsch and O’Hanlon 1995). The argument was that a focus on process dehumanized the past by demoting the role of individual agency (Gosden 1995). The focus on topography, technology and land use, on what people did to the land and how it aided or constrained them, was likely to be at the expense of experience and meaning, of how people thought or felt about it (Knapp and Ashmore 1999: 7). The Western notion of landscape that implicitly or explicitly underpinned much landscape research, it was argued, drew upon the Enlightenment vision of the land viewed by a seemingly disengaged observer, but the archaeologist or historical geographer could not have the detached

gaze of the landscape painter because past landscapes were not like painted landscapes, fixed in time: they were created and constantly refashioned through engagement and occupation, sustaining multiple identities (Layton and Ucko 1998a; Thomas 1993). The ‘Western Gaze’ – elite, usually male, commonly colonialist – had invariably privileged those at the top of the hierarchy and masked and dehumanized those at the bottom (Bender 1993a). The focus should therefore be on the subjective and socially constructed nature of landscape, of landscape situated in ideology and being-in-the-world (e.g. Bender 1993a, 1993b; Cosgrove 1984; Layton and Ucko 1998b). Tilley (1994) in particular advocated a phenomenological approach to try to understand past landscapes as they were perceived and experienced by their various inhabitants, perceptions and experiences that would differ between different individuals and social groups – the ‘multivocality’ of the past.

Landscape has to be contextualised. The way in which people – anywhere, everywhere – understand and engage with their worlds will depend upon the specific time and place and historical conditions. It will depend upon their gender, age, class, caste and on their social and economic situation. People’s landscapes will operate on very different spatial scales, whether horizontally across the surface of the world, or vertically – up to the heaven, down to the depths. They will operate on very different temporal scales, engaging with the past and the future in many different ways ... Each individual holds many landscapes in tension. (Bender 1993b: 22)

An influential paper from this time that has influenced many landscape archaeologists ever since was ‘The temporality of landscape’ by the anthropologist Tim Ingold (1993). In it he sought to find a way forward between what he called the ‘sterile opposition between the naturalistic view of landscape as a neutral, external backdrop to human activities, and the culturalistic view that every landscape is a particular cognitive or symbolic ordering of space’ (Ingold 1993: 152). The landscape was better imagined, he suggested, as ‘an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it and in so doing have left there something of themselves’. Landscape archaeologists were,

in short, studying chronological sequences of what he termed ‘taskscape’.

The Tuscania Archaeological Survey was conceived and executed in the years straddling the processual and post-processual debates about the ‘proper concerns’ of landscape archaeology. Its overriding focus of interest was in ‘the lives and works of past generations’, in Ingold’s telling phrase, in our case the people who had lived in the particular terrain demarcated by the 10 km radius from a small Italian town with origins going back 3000 years. Given our interests in long-term landscape histories and societies at very different levels of complexity and scales, we endeavoured to steer between the more extreme divisions of the processual/post-processual debate characterized by Ingold (1993: 172) as ‘the “scientific” study of an atemporalized nature’, on the one hand, and ‘the “humanistic” study of a dematerialized history’ on the other.

In his classic study of Mediterranean history that laid the foundations for the *Annales* school of historical geography, the French historian Fernand Braudel characterized history as the interplay between short-term, medium-term and long-term processes (Braudel 1949, 1972). The former (*événements*) he envisaged as the events of political and military history. Medium-term processes (*conjunctures*) were the kinds of changes in society operating, say, at the scale of one or two generations. Long-term processes included factors such as the constraints of a particular technology, or the natural characteristics of a particular kind of landscape, on how people could live in it (the *longue durée*). Shaping all of these were the *mentalités*, the world-views of particular societies. Building on the experiences of one of us in the Biferno Valley Survey (Barker 1995a, 1995b), we set out to bring a similarly holistic perspective to the Tuscania Archaeological Survey. We were interested in how different kinds of societies and social groups in the past had shaped or created different kinds of landscapes – natural, social, economic, ideological – the interactions between these landscapes, and the interplay between external and internal factors operating at different timescales in shaping the trajectories of landscape change from prehistoric times to the present day.

MEDITERRANEAN PLOUGH-ZONE
ARCHAEOLOGY

The techniques developed by landscape archaeologists for mapping human activity include air photography, satellite imagery, and a variety of systems of geophysical survey for investigating the nature of buried structures (Campana 2018; Pasquinucci and Trément 2000). In the Mediterranean, probably the most important weapon in the landscape archaeologist's armoury is what is generally termed 'field survey' or 'field-walking': the systematic searching for and collection of archaeological artefacts such as stone tools and potsherds visible on the ground surface, especially in ploughsoil (Alcock and Cherry 2004a; Francovich et al. 2000). This was the main methodology

employed by the Tuscania Archaeological Survey. The two major pioneering applications of this technique were the University of Minnesota's Messenia Expedition in the 1960s, which set out to reconstruct settlement patterning around the second-millennium BC Mycenaean palace of Pylos in the Greek Peloponnese (McDonald and Rapp 1972), and the British School at Rome's South Etruria Survey in the 1950s and 1960s, a study of changing settlement patterns in the territory of the ancient city of Veii, and adjacent areas, north of Rome (Potter 1979; Ward-Perkins et al. 1986; Fig. 1.3). The South Etruria Survey was particularly relevant for our own project because, as described in the following section of this chapter, its results provided the principal starting point for our investigation.

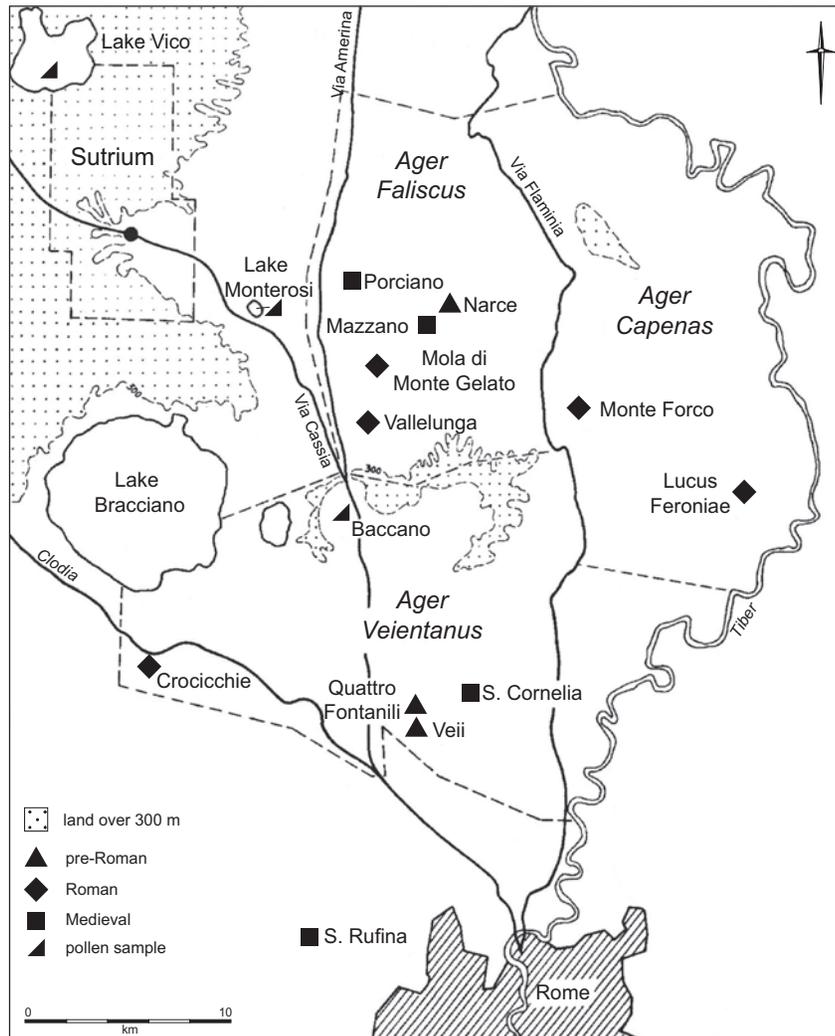


FIGURE 1.3 South Etruria, showing the location of the British School at Rome survey projects of the 1950s and 1960s. (Adapted from Potter 1979: fig. 1.)

The South Etruria Survey was coordinated by the School's then director, John Ward-Perkins. It was developed in the context of the increasing damage to the archaeological record that was visible throughout South Etruria in the form of ploughed-up remains of previously buried ancient structures, as farmers changed from their traditional ox-pulled ploughs, that had ploughed only a few centimetres deep, to tractor-pulled ploughs that cut down 30–50 cm. Ward-Perkins organized teams of archaeologists to walk over freshly ploughed fields. They mapped the locations of concentrations of artefacts lying on the ploughsoil surface that were the traces of buried or destroyed archaeological sites and collected samples of these artefacts as a means of dating when the sites had been occupied. The teams found hundreds of prehistoric, Etruscan, Roman and Medieval sites, the Etruscan and Roman periods being particularly well represented (Duncan 1958; Jones 1962, 1963; Kahane et al. 1968; Ward-Perkins 1961, 1962, 1964; see also Cascino et al. 2012; Patterson 2004; Patterson et al. 2020).

Over the years Ward-Perkins and his collaborators also excavated a number of sites in the survey area including a Bronze and Iron Age settlement, an Iron Age village and cemetery, Roman rural sites and Early Medieval settlements and churches, as well as parts of Etruscan and Roman Veii (e.g. Christie 1991; Potter 1972, 1976a; Ward-Perkins 1961). These excavations produced stratified collections of pottery that were vital to help with the dating of the mixed pottery from the ploughsoil collections, and they also yielded important information about the likely characteristics of the buried structures represented by surface artefacts. For example, excavated Roman remains suggested that artefact collections could be interpreted as the residues of either villas or poorer farmsteads on the evidence of differences in pottery types and the presence or absence of wealth indicators such as mosaic tesserae, pieces of statuary and wall plaster.

Ward-Perkins also encouraged palynologists to reconstruct vegetation history from fossil pollen preserved in lake sediments, and geomorphologists to reconstruct changing river regimes from alluvial sediments, their sequences often having implications for the effects on the

landscape not just of climatic change but also of human activities such as forest clearance for agriculture. The result of this remarkable multidisciplinary programme of survey, excavation and environmental science, as brilliantly summarized by Potter (1979), was an archaeological history of landscape change from the centuries preceding Etruscan state formation to the emergence of the modern landscape of nucleated hill villages at the end of the first millennium AD.

In the ensuing decades, regional survey projects were undertaken in almost all parts of the Mediterranean, building on the examples of the Messenia and South Etruria Surveys. As described in a number of edited volumes summarizing much of this work (e.g. Alcock and Cherry 2004; Barker and Lloyd 1991; Favory and Fiches 1994; Keller and Rupp 1983) and individual project publications (e.g. in Spain: Carreté et al. 1995; southern France: Trément 1999; Italy: Attema 1993; Attema et al. 2000; Barker 1995a, 1995b; Carandini and Cambi 2002; Coccia and Mattingly 1992, 1996; Cucini 1985; Delano-Smith et al. 1986; Hayes and Martini 1994; Lock and Faustoferri 2008; Moreland 1986, 1987; Percorsi et al. 2006; Yntema 1993a, 1993b; Cyprus: Given et al. 1999; Given et al. 2013; Dalmatia: Chapman et al. 1996; Gaffney et al. 1997; Greece: van Andel and Runnels 1987; Cherry et al. 1991; Hayden 2005; Mee and Forbes 1996; Renfrew and Wagstaff 1982; Watrow et al. 2012; Wright et al. 1990), probably the most important achievement of these regional field-walking projects was their demonstration of the complexity of rural settlement in classical times – what John Lloyd (1991) termed ‘the busy countryside’. The classical landscape, it became clear, was characterized by an abundance and diversity of settlement forms entirely unsuspected from the written sources (Launaro 2011).

Collaboration between archaeologists and geographers has been a feature of many of these regional landscape studies and has demonstrated the same sort of complexity regarding the development of the natural landscape and of people's impact on it (e.g. Hunt et al. 1992; van der Leeuw 1995; Leveau et al. 2000; Lewin et al. 1995). Classical farmers in particular seem to have caused deforestation and accelerated erosion in many regions, but

significant episodes of erosion have been noted as well from the Bronze Age to the recent past. Furthermore, different kinds of agricultural processes had different environmental impacts. In the Argolid region of the Greek Peloponnese, for example, erosion seems to have been caused by arable intensification in the Bronze Age, pastoral expansion and terrace abandonment in Hellenistic times, deforestation for arable expansion in the Byzantine period and finally – as throughout the Mediterranean – on a vastly increased scale in recent decades by mechanized deep ploughing (van Andel and Runnels 1987). The Biferno Valley Survey found an equally complex sequence, with a different chronology (Hunt 1995a, 1995b). Climatic change also accelerated erosional trends in the Late Roman and Early Medieval periods, as Vita-Finzi (1969) first surmised.

Alongside field survey's remarkable contribution to knowledge of Mediterranean landscape history, however, has been continuous debate among both its critics and its practitioners about its methodologies and overall effectiveness (Campana 2018). Areas of discussion included the relative effectiveness of different techniques for defining survey areas and sub-samples within them, conducting the field-walking and interpreting the materials collected; the effects of soil processes such as alluviation and erosion moving or burying surface material; the effects on artefact discovery of different kinds of land use, ploughsoil conditions, and changing conditions of light and shadow; and biases caused by the variable skills and experiences of field team members.

Differential 'archaeological visibility' was recognized as likely to be particularly significant: the fact that some components of the archaeological record were inherently likely to be better represented than others in terms of the quantities of what there was to be found, or likely to be visible or both. In Italy, for example, the Roman period was generally characterized by high rural populations living in dispersed farms (Launaro 2011). Potentially, therefore, they built lots of sites for archaeologists to find. These farms, moreover, usually had well-built structures with walls of brick and roofs of tile, both durable materials. The people used well-made pottery (so durable) that was

produced on a large, sometimes almost industrial, scale, and the finest wares tended also to have bright polished surfaces (so likely to be visible in the ploughsoil), and the period of manufacture of many such sherds can also be dated to individual centuries. In the Early Medieval period, by contrast, there was a much smaller population, living in houses that excavations showed were for the most part of wood and thatch (so leaving no durable, easily visible, traces), in small nucleated settlements on hill-tops that frequently today are wooded and so effectively inaccessible to systematic field-walking (Francovich and Hodges 2003; Moreland and Pluciennik 1993; Moreland et al. 1993). Also, much of their technology was probably of organic materials that do not survive (wooden bowls, for example), and much of the pottery they used was rather poorly made and friable. The Biferno Valley Survey was typical of many field projects in Italy in finding hundreds of sites for the (approximately) thousand years of the classical period (c. 500 BC–AD 500), but less than a dozen for the ensuing 500 years (Barker 1995a). In Tuscany, 95 per cent of the c. 20,000 archaeological sites located in a 30-year-long programme of landscape research by the University of Siena relate to the time span between the sixth century BC and sixth century AD (Campana 2018: 20).

Plough-zone survey has also been criticized for its common delineation of a past landscape as a map of dots (most assumed to represent habitation loci of some kind) separated by white space, with little direct insight into the multifarious tasks that must have characterized most taskscapes beyond the habitations (Campana 2018). (Excavation of activity loci could, of course, provide indirect evidence of the activities beyond them.) Also, the landscape activities of different kinds of societies produce different kinds of signatures, some more visible than others. Ethnoarchaeological studies of hunting and pastoral societies, for example, show that they often move between a series of seasonal camps which may be in the same general location year by year, but the settlement archaeology created can consist of thin spreads of debris extending over hundreds of metres rather than a concentration of occupation materials at a fixed site. Mobile people in the

past would likely have created a much more ephemeral archaeological record than people living in fixed settlements. How people disposed of their rubbish will also have affected the kind of surface archaeology created: for example, people might spread their rubbish as manure on the fields surrounding their settlements or bury it in pits – the latter was commonly the case on Medieval urban sites, including at Tuscania itself (Johns et al. 1973; Ward-Perkins et al. 1972).

At the time we were planning the project, therefore, it was clear that Mediterranean landscape archaeology had to confront challenging methodological problems in trying to distinguish absence of settlement evidence from evidence for an absence of settlement, and evidence for dense settlement from evidence for prolific, well-preserved and conspicuous artefacts. The variability of the field techniques, the context of the POPULUS project (Barker and Mattingly 2000a–e), was severely weakening the potential of landscape archaeology to write regional or in particular Mediterranean-wide landscape histories integrating the results of different regional survey projects (Alcock 2000; Alcock and Cherry 2004; Mattingly 2000). These were all challenges that we hoped to address in the Tuscania Archaeological Survey field-walking programme, using the methodologies described in the next chapter.

RESEARCH ISSUES

The specific research agenda of our project was developed in the light of previous archaeological and historical studies of town and country relations in central Italy, building especially on the work of the South Etruria Survey. Sets of questions were framed focusing especially on the Etruscan, Roman and Medieval landscapes and the transitions between them.

Etruscan Urbanization

The first main area of interest related to the origins and character of Etruscan urbanization. Debates over this have centred around the chronology of its emergence and

the role of Greece as a possible source of inspiration. Some historians have tended to see the question in terms of the importation of an already fully developed Greek model *c.* 700 BC, the beginning of the Orientalizing period (so-called because of Eastern influences discerned in Etruscan art from this time) (Drews 1981; Harris 1989). Genetic studies of modern central Italian populations were taken as evidence for an east Mediterranean/Anatolian origin of the Etruscans (Achilli et al. 2007; Brisighelli et al. 2009). Some studies of ancient DNA in Etruscan skeletons did not find persuasive evidence for significant genetic continuity with later Italian populations (Belle et al. 2006; Ghirotto et al. 2013); others proposed indigenous rather than exotic origins (Tassi et al. 2013). The most recent, using the ancient DNA (aDNA) of around 80 individuals from Etruria spanning from 1000 BC to AD 1000, including around fifteen from the centuries of Etruscan hegemony and independence from Rome (the seventh to the fourth centuries), proposes an Indo-European-associated steppe ancestry for the Etruscans in line with the steppe ancestry that geneticists have also proposed, equally controversially in relation to the archaeological evidence, for the wider European population in later prehistory (Allentoft et al. 2015; Olalde et al. 2015). While acknowledging the profound cultural impacts of Phoenician and Greek settlement and commercial activity, most archaeologists have argued that there is no need to look beyond Italy for the dominant impulse towards the formation of the Etruscan city states, because the seeds of state-level or urbanized societies were present already in the communities of the Villanovan Iron Age in Etruria *c.* 900–700 BC, and even perhaps before then (Barker and Rasmussen 1998; Broodbank 2013; Fulminante 2014; Guidi 2006; Rasmussen 2005; Riva 2020; Spivey and Stoddart 1990; and see Chapters 4 and 5). While this is the view that we ourselves have favoured (Barker and Rasmussen 1988) and continue to favour, demonstrating a significant increase in social complexity is one thing but explaining it quite another. Advancing understanding about the trajectory of urbanism in Etruria has been greatly hampered by lack of detailed knowledge about the nature of settlement in the centuries before the appearance of Etruscan towns,

and in the initial stages of their development. Had there been a gradual process of nucleation, with people coming together into fewer, larger, settlements in the preceding phases of prehistoric occupation, or had the growth of central sites been rapid? In either case, to what extent was the surrounding countryside depopulated?

Etruscan archaeology for generations has been concerned with the controlling elites and with the expensive goods with which they surrounded themselves that fill the world's great museums today. What has been conspicuously missing has been any focus on the lower end of the settlement hierarchy, most of whom are assumed to have been living on the land (Barker et al. 1993a; Potts and Smith 2021). Knowledge about Etruscan lives had been derived almost exclusively from necropolis archaeology, and D. H. Lawrence, writing in 1932, was hardly exaggerating when he commented that 'now, we know nothing about the Etruscans except what we find in their tombs ... Of first-hand knowledge we have nothing except what the tombs offer' (1986: 31). It is, of course, because the tombs have offered up so great a wealth of objects, from the great assemblages of the Orientalizing period, such as that from the Regolini-Galassi tomb at Cerveteri to the Hellenistic riches of the Volumnii tomb at Perugia, that the temptation to pillage, and later to excavate, cemeteries has always been extreme. At first, objects were simply pulled out of context and treated in museum displays as *objets d'art*. Later, they were studied for the creation of coherent typologies of artefacts on which the major chronological divisions of Etruscan culture are based: Orientalizing (700–570 BC), Archaic (570–470 BC), classical (470–300 BC) and Hellenistic (300–31 BC). (The Hellenistic phase encompasses the final retreat of Etruscan power in the face of Roman territorial expansion, 31 BC being the date when Augustus, Rome's first emperor, came to power.) Researchers, especially in more recent times, have also tried to make sense of Etruscan museum collections in social, economic and ideological terms (e.g. Izzet 2010; Riva 2020), but their success has always had to be tempered by the biases in the material itself: that it is mainly funerary, and that it is concerned for the most part with the highest strata of society (Potts and Smith 2021).

Settlement archaeology came late in Etruscan studies and, with the exception of Marzabotto near Bologna on the edge of the Po plain in the north, especially late where investigation of the major urban sites is concerned. Attention on the city sites has, by intention or luck, focused mainly on sanctuary sites. At Cerveteri this is true both of the old excavations of Mengarelli and of more recent initiatives (Cristofani and Nardi 1988; de Grummond and Pieraccini 2016), though a huge deposit of dumped material looks more domestic in nature (Cristofani 1992–1993). It is true, too, of excavations on the acropolis of Populonia, at Volterra, Fiesole and also on the Pian di Civita at Tarquinia (Bonghi Jovino and Chiaramonte Treré 1997). Part of an industrial complex was uncovered in the lower town of Populonia (Cristofani and Martelli 1979), as was a series of Iron Age huts on the Monterozzi ridge at Tarquinia (Linington 1982). At some other sites, investigations have been on a larger scale but have penetrated through to Etruscan levels only at certain points – notably at Roselle to a substantial archaic house (Donati 1994) and to one or two even earlier domestic structures. Rather different are the cases of Doganella (Perkins and Walker 1990) and Veii (Cascino et al. 2012; Guitoli 1982; Patterson et al. 1999; Tabolli and Cerasuolo 2019; Ward-Perkins 1961), both large urban sites which have been carefully surveyed and field-walked, but at which only relatively small areas of domestic structures have been excavated. At Cerveteri too, in addition to excavations mentioned above, survey resulted in a series of settlement maps of the urban area from the Early Iron Age to the first century AD (Merlino and Merenda 1990).

A few smaller sites – towns and large villages rather than cities – have been investigated with considerable care. The process began with the Swedish excavations at San Giovenale and Acquarossa in the 1960s and 1970s (Wikander and Roos 1986) and continued at Poggio Civitate near Murlo (Phillips 1993). The latter is usually discussed in terms of a large isolated building complex but is more likely to have been part of a larger settlement (there is a necropolis area nearby). Work was conducted also at a group of houses set in the vicinity of Lago dell'Accesa in the Colline Metallifere ('metal-bearing

hills') east of Populonia (Camporeale 1997). However, it is buildings and farms out in the countryside that have received least attention by excavators – the humble dwelling of the kind that leaves traces in the form of small surface scatters of artefacts that can be encountered in many parts of Etruria. Some of these have proved on further investigation to have been completely ploughed out, but an example of the high quality of data that can be extracted from a poorly preserved rural site was the Etruscan farm at Podere Tartuchino (Perkins and Attolini 1992), a striking discovery of the Albegna Valley Survey (Carandini and Cambi 2002). Field survey therefore has significant potential to tell us about the nature of rural settlement patterns and densities. Agriculture lay at the heart of the Etruscan socio-economic system and of the conditions necessary for the development of Etruscan urbanism, as elsewhere around the ancient Mediterranean, and we wanted to devise a research programme that would shed light on the exploitation of land resources in a chosen area and on the density of rural settlement both at the beginning and height of Etruscan power and as it was affected by the aggrandizing power of Rome in the last centuries BC.

Etruscan society was characterized by clientship, and the economy of Archaic Etruria was pre-monetary in the sense that coinage was not used extensively or systematically, with most economic relations being embedded in networks of social and ritual obligations (Barker and Rasmussen 1998; Izzet 2010; Riva 2020). However, beginning before the advent of coinage, bronze ingots (*aes rude*) are thought to have acted as some kind of standard medium of exchange and, as they have been found in both towns and farms, there could have been some form of primitive market exchange between urban centres and their surrounding rural populations. Could such relationships be investigated from comparisons of urban and rural material culture? Could we by the same means also gain insights into the nature of rural Etruscan societies, and the extent of their independence from or obligations to urban societies from factors such as wealth indicators from structural remains and artefacts? Were Etruscan cities and towns nucleated centres housing not only elites

and specialist groups such as craftworkers but also people who farmed the surrounding landscape (what are sometimes called 'agro-towns')? Or did they function more as administrative centres or markets of some kind for dispersed rural populations? Did some Etruscan elites in fact live in the countryside and not – as always assumed – in the city? Could graves and grave goods in the countryside be used as signatures of the rural population's participation in or exclusion from the norms of Etruscan ideology? In short, could field survey around a typical Etruscan centre cast new light on how Etruscan towns interacted with their hinterlands in economic, social and ideological terms?

'Romanization' and Roman Imperialism

The next major group of research questions concerned processes of Roman imperialism in central Italy. Much historical work on this process of 'Romanization' in Italy, as in the rest of the Roman empire, has suffered from a Romano-centric, colonialist perspective (Barbara Bender's 'Western Gaze' again), characterized by an assumption of a normative experience of Roman imperialism and an evolutionary cultural paradigm in which under-developed societies succumbed inevitably to Roman power and culture. More recent approaches have tended to emphasize the diversity of people's engagements with Roman power and cultural norms, and the dialogues and negotiations between colonizers and colonized (Alcock 1993; Ceccarelli 2016; Keay and Terrenato 2001; Mattingly 1997, 2006, 2011; Millett 1990; Webster and Cooper 1996; Witcher 1999). To what extent was Romanization an active policy imposed on subject peoples, or the result of local elites actively emulating Roman ways, and in the latter case was motivation primarily socio-political or economic or ideological (or, more likely, complex combinations of these)? Much of this rethinking has been stimulated not only by the changing paradigm of post-colonial perspectives but also by the results of archaeological research: the complex changing social relations of Romanization manifested themselves in changing material culture in towns, changes in rural settlement

forms and systems of land use, and changes in town and country relations, all of which were amenable to archaeological investigation.

Although there has been a considerable history of research on individual Roman towns in Italy as elsewhere in the Roman empire, most excavation has concentrated either on exceptionally well-preserved and in many respects atypical towns, such as Pompeii and Ostia, or on major public buildings within selected towns. Understanding of Roman urbanism in Italy has been transformed in recent decades by the systematic investigation of different kinds of urban sites in the area of the British School at Rome's South Etruria Survey using a variety of remote sensing techniques that in favourable conditions are capable of surveying hectares of land per day (e.g. Campana 2018; Carlucci et al. 2007; Gaffney et al. 2014; Hay et al. 2010; Johnson et al. 2004; Keay et al. 2000, 2014; Opitz 2009; Verdonck et al. 2020), enhancing survey archaeologists' ability to 'fill in the white space' of an archaeological landscape (Campana 2018). Modern excavations of rural sites are still remarkably rare in central Italy. An early example was Barri Jones' excavation of Monte Forco in the Ager Capenas, a small rural site was investigated at Giardino Vecchio in coastal Tuscany (Carandini 1985b: 106–107) and a modest Samnite and Roman villa was excavated at Matrice in the Biferno valley (Lloyd 1995a), but the picture has recently been transformed by the excavation of a series of small rural sites around the villages of Cinigiano and Pievina in inland Tuscany (Bowes 2020; Ghisleni et al. 2011; Vaccaro et al. 2013). The largest-scale study has been of the Settefinestre senatorial villa at the top end of the social and economic spectrum in the territory of the city of Cosa (Carandini 1985a).

By collecting new survey data from the countryside around Tuscania, a town we knew was occupied in Roman as well as Etruscan times, we hoped to inform current debates about the nature of Roman imperialism in its first critical phase of expansion north of the Tiber. An obvious question regarded the extent to which the conquest and Romanization of Etruria meant continuity or rupture in rural settlement. Potter (1979) had

concluded from the South Etruria Survey data that in the Ager Faliscus to the north of Veii the survival rate of farms into the Roman period was less than 20 per cent, whereas around Veii itself the ratio was much higher – about two-thirds. Hemphill's survey of the westernmost part of the BSR survey area, between the Via Cassia and Via Clodia (Hemphill 1975), showed a similar continuity of settlement between the Etruscan and Roman periods to that of the Veii area. Yet there were also clear examples elsewhere in Etruria of disruption to patterns of rural settlement. The rich farmlands of the Maremma coastal lowlands, for example, attracted particular Roman interest once the Roman colony of Cosa was established on the coast in 273 BC. The Albegna Valley Survey had picked up traces of 'centuriation' (systems of Roman land division) around this centre, as well as around the colonies of Heba and Saturnia further inland, revealing how a landscape that was quite densely populated in Etruscan times became much reduced in population immediately after the Romans moved in, and once under Roman control the land was increasingly intensively farmed in the last two centuries BC (Attolini et al. 1991; Perkins 1991). On the Adriatic side of the peninsula in Samnite territory, the Biferno Valley Survey had picked up a marked decline in numbers of farms, a drop in fact of around 40 per cent, when this area became part of the Roman state after 80 BC (Lloyd 1995a, 1995b).

The reliable demonstration of settlement continuity and discontinuity is one of the most debated areas of field survey methodology (Francovich et al. 2000). One significant problem concerns the difficulties of dating site foundations and abandonments when rich sites with plentiful fine wares can be dated more precisely than the (usually) many more sites with poorer ceramics. Another is judging the significance of mixed sherd assemblages: when do a few sherds of Etruscan pottery in a rich Roman assemblage denote continuity, and even if continuity of occupation has been demonstrated, what did that mean in terms of continuity of settlement forms and social and economic structures – of ways of living? Could we contribute to these methodological issues, and understanding of the Romanization of Etruria, by

a detailed study of the transition between Etruscan and Early Roman (Republican) settlement in the countryside around Tuscania?

Formalist or modernist perspectives on the Roman economy emphasize money, markets, long-distance trade in low-value goods, and specialization in craft and agricultural production, whereas substantivist or primitivist models argue that production and exchange were embedded in social relations, in particular the social and economic needs and aspirations of elites. The survey and excavation data from Roman Italy had been cited notably by Andrea Carandini as evidence in support of general historical models broadly within the formalist paradigm, concerning the impact of conquest on agricultural development in Italy, in particular the investment of wealth in land and the growth of large villa estates sustained by the 'slave mode of production' at the expense of the small farmer (Carandini 1981, 1985a, 1985b, 1988). Could the surface archaeology of the countryside around Tuscania inform such debates about the nature of the Roman economy, and the changes to the agricultural landscape of central Italy, through the several centuries of the Roman Imperial period? Methodological concerns were critical here. For example, could historically attested settlement forms such as the villa be satisfactorily identified from archaeological survey sites using measurements of size, density and wealth of surface remains? To what extent could negative evidence in an archaeological survey (mindful of our earlier comments about different survey methodologies) be used to support historical models regarding the collapse of the peasantry (Foxhall 1990)?

Medieval Settlement and *Incastellamento*

South Etruria in the Early Medieval period was one of the principal arenas where changing power relationships between the Lombards and Carolingians on the one hand, and Rome and the Church on the other, provided the context for the emergence of the city states of Medieval Italy (Christie 1991, 2006). Our final set of questions concerned the transformations to the landscape in the post-Roman period onwards, in particular the origins

and development of the phenomenon called *incastellamento* whereby populations moved from lowland habitations and established fortified hilltop sites – in the case of Tuscania, the hilltop settlement of Colle San Pietro now crowned by the magnificent Early Medieval church of San Pietro (Fig. 1.4). The nature of these processes, their chronology, and in particular their cause or causes, were and remain much debated (Francovich 2002; Francovich and Hodges 2003; Wickham 1989) and, exactly as in the case of Etruscan nucleation, much of the debate has concerned the nature of rural settlement across the Roman/Early Medieval boundary: was the countryside abandoned, or did lowland farms and hamlets continue to be occupied as vestiges of the Roman landscape? Were the new hilltop villages agro-centres from the outset, or did they function more as seats of feudal power controlling rural populations in their environs?

Most modern Italian hill villages have foundation dates around a thousand years ago, giving the impression of a rather static landscape since then of long-lived successful villages surrounded by dispersed farms. However, archaeological surveys such as that in the Biferno valley had shown how some regions of the Italian countryside had witnessed significant episodes of population expansion and contraction over the past thousand years, with 'lost villages' from past phases of high population marked today by isolated churches in the countryside, or by concentrations of surface archaeological materials around what are now isolated farms (Hodges and Wickham 1995). Such episodes were not apparent in the evidence for Medieval and Post-Medieval settlement collected by the South Etruria Survey (Potter 1979), but studies of post-Roman ceramics had advanced considerably since that project's completion, making it an open question whether the rather stable post-Roman landscapes indicated by the South Etruria Survey reflected genuine evidence of an absence of episodes of settlement expansion and contraction, or were more a question of archaeological invisibility and insufficiently refined ceramic chronologies. (This was in fact an important focus of the major re-study of the South Etruria Survey material in the late 1990s and early 2000s: Cascino et al. 2012; Harrison et al. 2004; Patterson



FIGURE 1.4 Tuscania's Colle San Pietro acropolis, looking south-east from the Medieval/modern town. (Photograph: Graeme Barker.)

2004.) Could a new survey project give better understanding of the development of post-Roman landscapes in South Etruria?

THE SELECTION OF TUSCANIA

Today Tuscania is off the main tourist routes – most travellers crossing Etruria to and from Rome take the coast road past Tarquinia, or the inland route, the Via Cassia, passing through the provincial capital of northern Lazio, Viterbo. Those who come to visit Tuscania for sightseeing do so with two main purposes: to see Etruscan tomb material, and to admire the Medieval architecture of San Pietro and Santa Maria Maggiore on Colle San Pietro, among the finest Romanesque churches in Italy (Figs. 1.4 and 8.2). The discerning among them may even notice a visual connection between the two: the 'running' male figure on the left of the façade of San Pietro is carved in

a markedly late 'Archaic Etruscan' manner (Moretti 1984: fig. 6). A few may also be struck by the realization that much of the bleak atmospherics of Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1966 *Uccellacci e Uccellini* (Hawks and Sparrows) was created by filming on the Colle San Pietro acropolis around the church itself and the ruined towers.

We selected Tuscania for three principal reasons: its known archaeology and history; its geographical location; and its surrounding landscape.

Tuscania's Settlement Archaeology and History

Tuscania seemed likely to be typical of many towns in this part of central Italy in its evidence for more-or-less continuous occupation since Etruscan times, and with some indications of earlier settlement too. The Colle San Pietro hill had produced a sporadic find of a Neolithic axe of dark stone, perhaps 5000–6000 years old (Gianfrotta and

Potter 1980: 438). In her survey of the known archaeology around Tuscania for the *Forma Italiae* series (Figs. 2.6 and 7.5), Stefania Quilici Gigli (1970: 148; figs. 211 and 212) had illustrated a sherd with the characteristic stippled decoration of the Earlier or Apennine Bronze Age (2200–1400 BC) that had been picked up at a site some 2 km to the south on the right bank of the Marta river. A number of sherds of the Late and Final Bronze Age (1400–900 BC) had been reported from the foot of the hill itself (Colonna 1974: 256, plate 54). In 1974 traces of Early Iron Age (900–700 BC) huts were found on its north-west slope in an excavation directed by F. Boitani (Sgubini Moretti 1986b: 247, note 7).

In February 1971 Tuscania was struck by a devastating earthquake which ruined much of the town (Fig. 1.5) and killed many inhabitants. Before reconstruction of the urban centre began, the British School at Rome (BSR) was asked to help conduct archaeological soundings and investigations on Colle San Pietro and in the *centro storico*, the historic centre of the town within the Medieval walls (Johns et al. 1973; Ward-Perkins et al. 1972). Immediately after the earthquake, hasty explorations and clearance operations had taken place on Colle San Pietro in an area measuring some 55 m by 35 m. The subsequent investigation of exposed surfaces and structures by an archaeological team revealed a long sequence of occupation from the Early Iron Age to the Late Middle Ages (Gianfrotta and Potter 1980). A detailed study of the Medieval town walls was also undertaken (Andrews 1982). This work had enabled a reasonably clear picture to be drawn of the development of Tuscania, showing that Colle San Pietro had been the focus of pre-Etruscan, Roman and Early Medieval occupation, with settlement then shifting a few hundred metres north-westwards to the Rivellino hill, the site of the later Medieval and present-day centre of habitation (Fig. 1.6). One consequence of the earthquake for our own project was that a small school or asylum for the children orphaned by the earthquake was built outside the town adjacent to the church of the Madonna del Cerro. Long empty at the time of our fieldwork, it was made available by the *comune* as the project base for the first three seasons of fieldwork.

The first major exhibition of Etruscan objects staged outside Italy, in Pall Mall in London in 1837, was in fact organized by excavators who were themselves based at Tuscania (Swaddling 2018: 45–53). It consisted of a series of ‘walk-in’ reconstructions of chamber tombs, together with their contents, from Tuscania, Tarquinia, Vulci and Bomarzo, and was clearly a great success, with enthusiastic reviews in *The Times*. A full catalogue accompanied it (Campanari 1837), and graphic designs for the tomb interiors are in the possession of the British Museum. One of these (Fig. 1.7) shows a chamber with several stone sarcophagi, all of which were found in a tomb near Tuscania by the road to Tarquinia. The repercussions of the London exhibition were far-reaching. The British Museum bought up much of the material, including the sarcophagi from



FIGURE 1.5 The historic centre (*centro storico*) of Tuscania after the 1971 earthquake. (Photograph: Graeme Barker.)

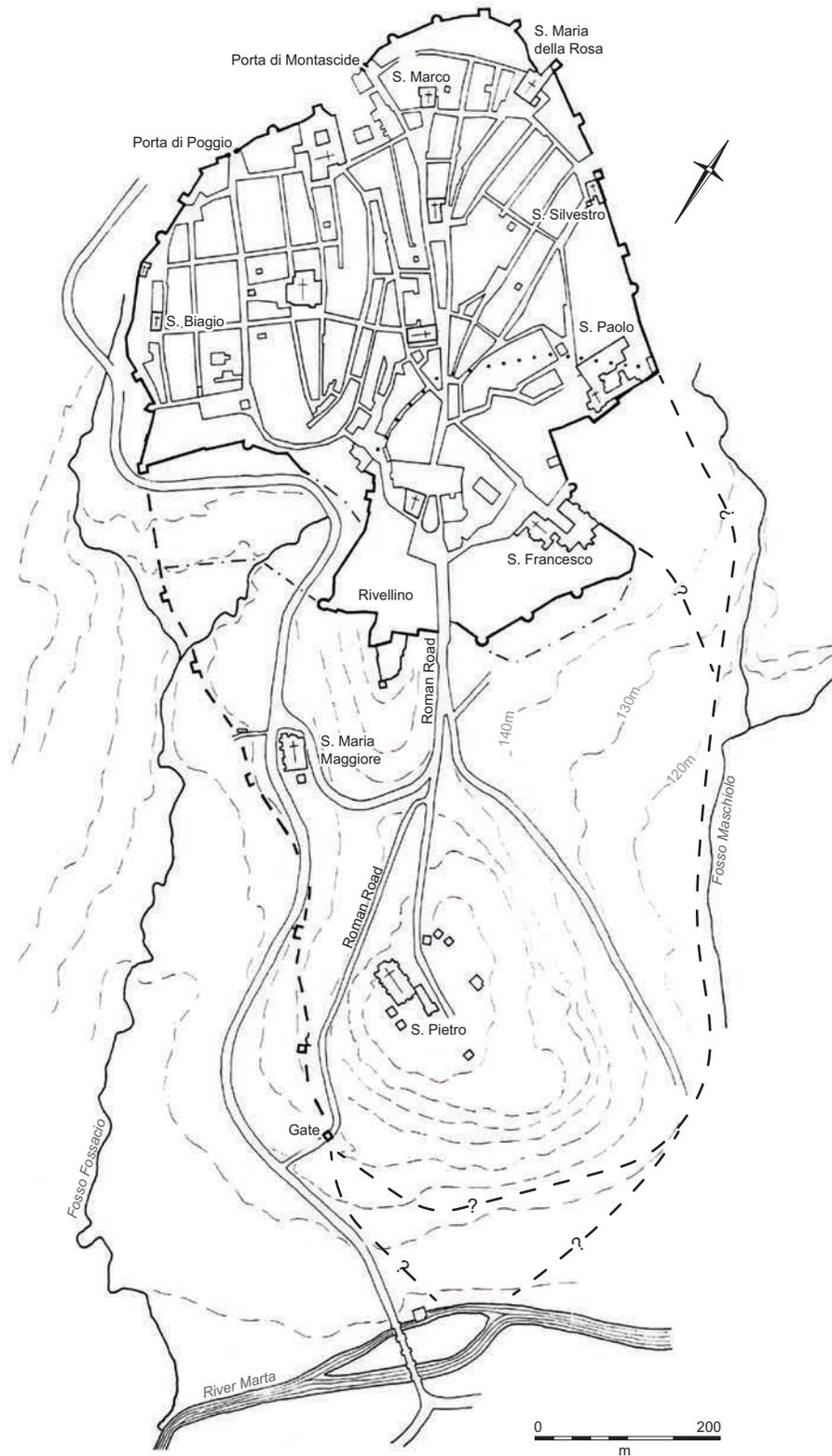


FIGURE 1.6 Tuscania: plan of Colle San Pietro and the later Medieval town; the dashed lines indicate David Andrews' suggested reconstruction of the town walls, incorporating suggestions of earlier studies by Turriozzi and Campanari (the dashed lines with question marks). (Adapted from Andrews 1982: fig. 3.21.)

Tuscania, to augment its burgeoning Etruscan collections. One visitor to the show was Elizabeth Caroline Hamilton Gray, who was inspired by it to go out and visit some of the sites of Etruria. These included Tuscania, where she was entertained by the Campanari family who had been responsible for the Pall Mall event. In Vincenzo Campanari's courtyard-garden she was shown a full-scale reconstruction of the tomb of the Vipinana family, with its several generations of sarcophagi, excavated on the lower slope of the San Pietro hill only a few months before her arrival (Colonna 1978: 93). It was partly in response to her travel book (Hamilton Gray 1841) that George Dennis wrote his classic work *The Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria* (Dennis 1848) to correct what he considered to be deficiencies in her work. He included a substantial chapter on Tuscania's antiquities.

After these pioneering and momentous activities of the Campanari family, tomb discoveries continued to be made around Tuscania, the Statlane tomb found in 1896 producing even more sarcophagi than the Vipinana tomb. The big find of more recent times was the three tombs of the Curuna family excavated in 1967–1970 at the

Madonna dell'Olivo necropolis 1 km south of the town (Moretti and Sgubini Moretti 1983). The sarcophagi and associated material from these and from other tombs are on display at the Museo Nazionale in the cloister of S. Maria del Riposo.

In microcosm, Tuscania presents to the public the kind of Etruscan archaeology that is well known throughout Etruria, one that is very much cemetery-based. The visitor can see this material in the town's attractive museum, and there are more sarcophagi laid out in the aisles of San Pietro church and dramatically crowning the walls of the Piazza del Comune (Fig. 1.8). The tombs from where all this material comes, however, are not themselves especially dramatic: at Tuscania they tend to be very plain rock-cut chambers, though some of the tombs discovered later do have considerable architectural and sculptural elaboration (Sgubini Moretti 1982, 1986a, 1989). However, these latter have been little publicized and today the tourist will probably only be directed to the very intricate series of chambers of the Tomba della Regina complex (of Hellenistic date) at the Madonna dell'Olivo 1 km south of the town.

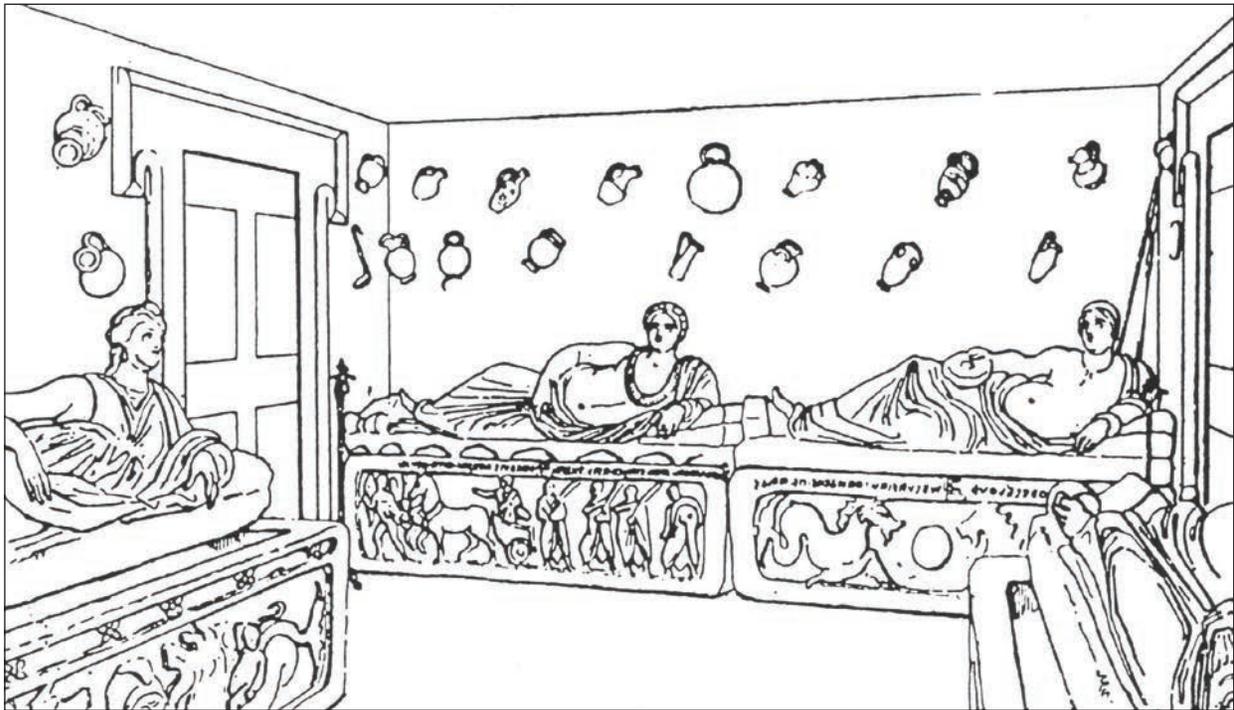


FIGURE 1.7 Restored tomb interior with sarcophagi from Tuscania, displayed at Pall Mall, London, in 1837. (After Pryce 1931, fig. 48.)



FIGURE 1.8 Etruscan sarcophagi on the walls of Tuscania's Piazza del Comune, with the Late Medieval walls and towers of the *centro storico* behind. (Photograph: Graeme Barker.)

At only 8.4 ha (hectares), Colle San Pietro was a rather small Etruscan settlement. The five major settlements of South Etruria – Veii, Caere (modern Cerveteri), Tarquinia, Vulci and Volsinii (modern Orvieto) – each measured between 100 ha and 200 ha. The Etruscan remains known from Tuscania before our project were also few. In the rescue excavations on Colle San Pietro after the earthquake, most early Etruscan material, beginning from the later eighth and early seventh centuries BC, was found out of its original context mainly mixed in with later Medieval deposits. Two rough chamber tombs, one with material from the later sixth to early fifth centuries BC, the other with black-glazed pottery from the end of the fourth into the third centuries BC, suggested that the hill itself, or part of the hill, was not a centre of habitation in these periods. Yet the Etruscan cemeteries around Tuscania are very extensive, prompting the question as to whether

the Etruscan centre was in fact somewhere else in the vicinity (Torelli 1993: 227). The Tuscania Archaeological Survey did in fact confirm that the San Pietro hill was the main centre of habitation, the Etruscan levels having been almost completely obliterated by the large-scale Medieval building works, but that settlement extended down the southern slopes to near the Marta river, where we found dense spreads of domestic Etruscan settlement material (see Chapter 5). Presumably the hill functioned primarily as an *arx* or acropolis for the Etruscan population living on its flanks.

Clear evidence of sophisticated urban life in the Archaic Etruscan period (600–500 BC) is provided by figurative architectural terracottas. Some of these have been known for a long time, though their precise findspot is uncertain (Andr n 1940: 73). Others have been excavated, not on Colle San Pietro, but at the Ara del Tufo necropolis to the

south (Sgubini Moretti 1982; Winter 2009: 561–562; Fig. 1.9), where they were scattered about some time after the tombs in question went out of use in the sixth century BC. Probably they had decorated one or more funerary shrines (*naiskoi*) at the necropolis. They show that Tuscania had wide contacts in this period: several types of antefix and revetment plaque from Ara del Tufo are matched by identical terracottas – from the same moulds, indeed – from the Etruscan settlement at Acquarossa north of Viterbo.

Settlement at Tuscania in the Hellenistic period is indicated by remains of foundations of Late Republican houses with later black-glazed pottery and associated coarse wares. To the same period, or rather later still, belong the remains of a bath-building in the valley at the bottom of the northern slope of Colle San Pietro, which include walls in *opus quadratum* and *opus reticulatum* and traces of black-and-white mosaic (Quilici Gigli 1970:

163–167). A part of it, set against the foot of the Rivellino hill, is still visible.

When in 89 BC the whole of Etruria was given Roman citizenship, Tuscania (called *Tuscania* in Roman times) was included in the Roman tribe Stellatina, along with a number of other towns such as Tarquinia and Graviscae (Harris 1971: 244). In the Roman Imperial period the town had the status of a *municipium* (Quilici Gigli 1970: 22, note 11; Pliny 3.5.52). Roman buildings covered much of Colle San Pietro, and a street laid with basalt blocks climbed the northern slope, lined with houses embellished with mosaic floors. However, this part of the hill at least was abandoned by the end of the fourth century AD, and there is no evidence of further occupation here until around three centuries later, when houses of wood were constructed along much the same alignment as previously, later to be rebuilt with stone walls.



FIGURE 1.9 Circular tumuli of the Ara del Tufo Etruscan necropolis; looking north, with Tuscania in the distance. (Photograph: Graeme Barker.)

Yet Tuscania (Medieval *Toscanella*, a name that persisted until modern times) clearly continued to be a centre of some importance throughout this period, and it was the seat of a bishopric at least from AD 595 until AD 1192 when the latter was transferred to Viterbo, confirming that town's growing superiority in status in relation to Tuscania (Andrews 1982: 138–139; and see Chapter 8). Around 1200 Colle San Pietro was given a circuit of walls, of which there are today very few traces, though some of the towers which were later built to reinforce it still remain.

The great churches of San Pietro (Fig. 8.2) and Santa Maria Maggiore, the latter in the valley to the north-west of the Colle San Pietro hilltop but still within the early wall circuit (Fig. 1.6), seem to have been first built in the eighth or ninth century AD. Colle San Pietro, with its big towers for defence and habitation, together with smaller houses clustered around, appears to have been densely populated until the fourteenth century, by which time the population had begun to expand to the adjacent Rivellino ridge. Gradually Colle San Pietro was abandoned as a place of settlement, while the enhanced status of the Rivellino, its area considerably greater than that of the neighbouring hill, was confirmed by the final completion in the fifteenth century of the circuit of defensive walls around the present *centro storico*. Today, Tuscania is one of many small towns in the province of Viterbo, the large and bustling provincial capital. At the time of our survey, it had a paper mill (which closed in 2014) and one or two other small-scale industries, but its economic life was much centred on agriculture, an annual highlight of the entertainment calendar being a tractor race around the streets.

Another feature of the known archaeological record of Tuscania that was important in persuading us to select the territory of the town for our project was the existing archaeological map of the town and the immediately surrounding area compiled by Stefania Quilici Gigli in the *Forma Italiae* series, published in 1970 (Figs. 2.6 and 7.5). The *Forma Italiae* is a long-running mapping project by classical archaeologists of the University of Rome, and the basis of each of its surveys is one of the 1:25,000 maps

of the modern Italian topographic grid. The mapping exercise is usually undertaken by a classical archaeologist working on their own for a research thesis, who compiles the map by a combination of exhaustive bibliographic research, the study of museum collections, discussions with local museum curators and landowners, and follow-up visits to known or suspected archaeological sites. As a compilation of material collected in different ways by different people at different times, it is akin to what used to be termed the Sites and Monuments Record of an English county.

The best of the *Forma Italiae* maps, of which the *Tuscania* map is certainly one, are extremely informative, but the reliance on individual fieldwork and on the assembling of known information inevitably means a bias towards the most highly visible components of the archaeological landscape, Etruscan tombs being a prime example. The special focus of Quilici Gigli's study was on the Etruscan cemeteries and tombs in the vicinity of Tuscania, which were carefully recorded and illustrated. The resulting map of the area was very informative on the position of these, as well as of the visible cuttings and other traces of ancient roads. There were also references in her commentary to 'scatters of surface material', though relatively few had been visited and their spatial characteristics recorded. The study was before knowledge of pottery styles had been refined, especially for later Roman pottery, so the description of most of these scatters was very general, with little attempt at periodization. Nevertheless, the *Forma Italiae* map gave us reasonable confidence that, fifteen or so years after its compilation, such sites were still going to be well enough preserved in the ploughsoil for us to map them. It also provided an ideal opportunity to compare this kind of archaeological map, compiled over the years by chance discoveries and individual researchers interested in particular topics or classes of material, with the data collected by systematic team-based fieldwork, in which material of all periods would be valued equally. Theoretically, the latter should be more effective than the former as a means of 'writing archaeological history', but would the reality on the ground bear this out?

Tuscania's Neighbours

The second reason for selecting Tuscania was its location in terms of other ancient settlements in the region and its likely communication links with them (Fig. 1.2), given that it could be expected that the history of an ancient town's relationship with its surrounding countryside would need to be studied in the context of its place within changing networks of power at the regional scale.

Like many other ancient settlements in South Etruria, Tuscania was situated on a promontory flanked on both sides by streams, which at Tuscania run into the river Marta flowing at its foot. Clearly the advantages of the site lay in its proximity to the river and its valley, which from earliest times must have provided a north–south communications route. But there was another important route that crossed here too and led south-east to other Etruscan settlements such as Blera and Norchia. After the whole area became Roman, this road was systematized and properly laid with basalt blocks, perhaps as early as the third century, but in any case not later than 183 BC. Called then the Via Clodia, it ran from a junction of the Via Cassia, where that road was closest to the city of Veii, to the Roman colony of Saturnia (founded in 183 BC) above and to the west of Lake Bolsena. At Tuscania the Via Clodia crossed the river Marta just downstream from the present road-bridge, ran up the left slope of Colle San Pietro and on up the Rivellino hill; a short excavated section is visible here beyond the ruins of the Roman baths (Fig. 1.10).

Etruscan Tuscania lay quite close to a number of other smallish settlements, but these did not all flourish at the same time. To the north was Bisenzio on the edge of Lake Bolsena (Babbi et al. 2019), a site extending to 35 ha over its various phases. Excavations on the hill here had uncovered Late Bronze Age buildings (Delpino 1982), while its cemeteries reveal considerable prosperity between the ninth and early seventh centuries BC, the Early Iron Age and early ('Orientalizing') Etruscan period. A decline followed, and there is no indication of settlement at all from the fifth century BC until Roman times when, according to literary and inscriptional evidence, there was a town

here called Visentium. The decline from the seventh century BC onwards and the growth of Tuscania at the same time may not simply be coincidental.

The closest ancient settlement of any size was situated to the east of Tuscania, at Musarna. This small (4.5 ha) foundation was a late one, laid out in a planned manner at the end of the fourth century BC (de Casanove and Jolivet 1983). The habitation site has been under excavation by the *École Française de Rome*, but from the Hellenistic cemeteries there are ambitious stone sarcophagi that have long been known and now fill up much of the Museo Civico at Viterbo. Musarna continued to support a population, even if a diminished one, through into the Late Roman period.

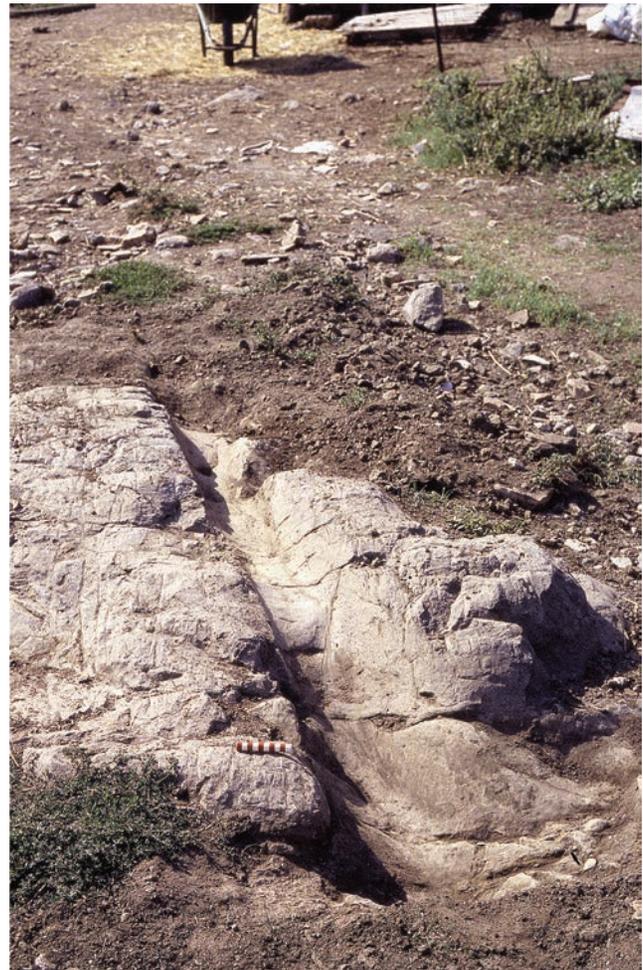


FIGURE 1.10 A fragment of the Via Clodia Roman road at Tuscania. Scale: 10 cm. (Photograph: Tom Rasmussen.)

Still in the east, but further anti-clockwise from Tuscania, lie Castel d'Asso (11 ha) and Norchia (9.5 ha). Like Musarna, they occupy precipitous promontory positions, but on a rather larger scale. The rock-cut necropolises of both have been closely studied, but the settlements themselves have only been surveyed. At Castel d'Asso the town site seems to have been at its maximum extent in the Archaic Etruscan period (Colonna di Paolo and Colonna 1970: 52), but contemporary settlement at Norchia was only small-scale. At both sites, however, the necropolises, as so far explored, belong essentially to the Hellenistic period (after 300 BC), with no evidence of further use after the middle of the first century AD (Colonna di Paolo and Colonna 1978: 412). This fact in the case of Norchia is especially noteworthy, as the Via Clodia ran right across the settlement plateau.

To the south and west respectively, Tarquinia (220 ha) and Vulci (190 ha) were major Etruscan cities and important centres of settlement from the Early Iron Age until the Roman occupation of 281–280 BC. After the granting of Roman citizenship in 89 BC, both continued as Roman *municipia*, though their populations must have been much reduced. At Vulci, many of the visible remains on the site are of Roman Imperial date, including a *mithraeum* that was in use through the third and fourth centuries AD (Carandini 1985b: 73). These two cities are equidistant from Tuscania, but the influence of Tarquinia on the development of Etruscan Tuscania and the territory around it was by far the greater. That is not much of a surprise given the topography of the region: the natural lines of communication run northwards along the Marta valley and the plateaus to either side, stretching up as far as Lake Bolsena, whereas communications eastwards from Vulci to Tuscania are across the grain of the country, hampered by numerous obstacles in the form of deep stream gulleys running north to south. Vulci's line of influence was especially north along the valleys of the Fiora and its tributaries, again reaching as far as Lake Bolsena but from a different direction (Rendeli 1993a: 171). Significantly, the tomb material from the lakeside site of Bisenzio in the eighth century BC has noticeable stylistic similarities with Vulcentine products (Delpino

1977: 48; Sprenger and Bartoloni 1983: 77), while that from Fiora valley settlements such as Castro and Poggio Buco has affinities with Vulci in the Archaic period.

In the Roman period Tarquinia seems to have been the key settlement of the area that includes Tuscania, and its territory, the *Ager Tarquiniensis* mentioned by Cicero a couple of times, seems to have been very extensive. Pliny (2.95) talks of a *Lacus Tarquiniensis*, which must refer to Lake Bolsena, for he mentions its two islands, which he describes as floating on the lake. But Tarquinia's hold on the area was probably strongest in the period from the later fourth to the first centuries BC, when the status of Tuscania would seem to have been very much that of a dependency. Several factors suggest this. The beginning of the period saw the rise of great families such as the Curuna, whose three sarcophagus-filled tombs at Tuscania can be matched with another Curuna tomb at Tarquinia (Pallottino 1937: 515, 525, 544), from where it is likely that the family originated. In style and subject matter, there is often little to distinguish the carving of stone sarcophagi from Tuscania from those from Tarquinia, and no doubt Tarquinian sculptors were employed at both centres (Barker and Rasmussen 1998: 289). Moreover, Etruscan titles of magistracies found in funerary inscriptions not only at Tuscania but also at neighbouring centres such as Musarna (*TLE* 169–76) and Norchia may refer to offices with jurisdiction not just over these local communities but over the wider area controlled by Tarquinia.

The river Marta, the only outlet of Lake Bolsena, reaches the sea just north of Tarquinia Lido. Tuscania, rather closer to the lake than to Etruscan Tarquinia, is the only modern settlement of any substance that lies beside the river. In previous times there were no doubt others, but none were of notable size. Perhaps one of the more important was Ancarano, a promontory site midway between Tuscania and Tarquinia, and around 10 km from both, where there are remains of Medieval defensive walls surrounding an inner citadel. There may also have been an Etruscan settlement here, for there are Etruscan tombs in the neighbourhood (Pallottino 1937: 581). On a spur opposite, across the river, are the ruins of Pian Fasciano, another small defended Medieval site

of the thirteenth century and later (Andrews 1981: 324; Maggiore 2012: 230–231).

The Physical Landscape

The third reason for the selection of Tuscania was the character of the surrounding landscape, which was typical of the wider region in its topography and land use, and demonstrably well suited to investigation by field survey.

The geology of the area is discussed in detail in Chapter 3, but its principal characteristic is that it is dominated by volcanic formations. South Etruria consists predominantly of a recently formed volcanic landscape, one of the most extensive in the Mediterranean area, forming an undulating plateau punctuated by a series of crater lakes. The most northerly of the latter is Bolsena, which is also the largest, and was the main source of the lava and ash flows that underlie most of the Tuscania countryside as

tuffs (*tufo*) and ignimbrites. In the survey area, the terrain within a 10 km radius of Tuscania, the plateau shelves gradually from the north-east at about 300 m above sea level to the south-west at around 100 m. Much of the volcanic plateau landscape, including that around Tuscania, looks benignly flat from a distance (Fig. 1.11) but is, in fact, dissected by rivers and streams which at frequent intervals gouge dramatic ravines into the soft *tufo*, their faces making favoured locations for Etruscan rock-cut tombs (Fig. 1.12). The principal streams in the Tuscania area are the Marta (which flows immediately past Colle San Pietro) and, in the west, the Arrone. The highest areas surround the crater lakes, the highest altitude being east of Viterbo at 1053 m above sea level at Monte Cimino, the summit of the hills forming the northern rim of the Lake Vico crater some 30 km east of Tuscania. Immediately north of the Tuscania Archaeological Survey area, the hills surrounding Lake Bolsena rise to about 600 m above sea level.



FIGURE 1.11 Looking north across the Tuscania Archaeological Survey area from near its southern boundary. Tuscania is in the distance, at the centre of the image. The land rises slowly behind it towards the hills edging Lake Bolsena. (Photograph: Graeme Barker.)



FIGURE 1.12 The Marta valley to the north-east of Tuscania. (Photograph: Tom Rasmussen.)

The main forested area today is the Monti Cimini around Lake Vico. In the later fourth century BC, these mountains were renowned and feared by the Romans for their deep and impenetrable forests (Livy 9.36). Today there are tracts of tangled wood and *macchia* especially on the plateau to the east and south-east of Tuscania as well as in the stream and dry-valley gorges, but most of the plateau-land in the environs of the town is open and intensively farmed (Fig. 1.13), so we were not hampered by large areas of woodland inaccessible to field-walking though now amenable to investigation by airborne Lidar survey. Crops include cereals, lucerne, olives, vines and tobacco, but there is also some stock-raising of sheep and cattle (*bufalo*) especially on outcrops of cretaceous limestone and flysch. Farms and field systems are all the time increasing in size, and large-scale agro-industrial ranches were making their appearance at the time of the fieldwork. Ever larger swathes of the terrain are being

farmed for high-output crop management and, as in other parts of central Italy (e.g. Barker 1995a: 306), year by year the landscape is becoming increasingly eroded and prairie-like. The predominantly open character of the land obviously made it very suitable for investigation by field survey.

Archaeologists' access to land has been relatively easy in Italy with appropriate permission from the town authorities, with which field-walking teams can enter unfenced land as long as they do not cause any damage. Although increasing amounts of land around Tuscania were being fenced in by the big estates during the period of our fieldwork (1986–1990), most of the landscape remained accessible, though part of it north of the town has literally been quarried away for its *tuffo*, which is in high demand as a building material (Fig. 1.14). As for the ploughlands, these are being subjected to an ever greater depth of excavation by ploughs pulled by tractors

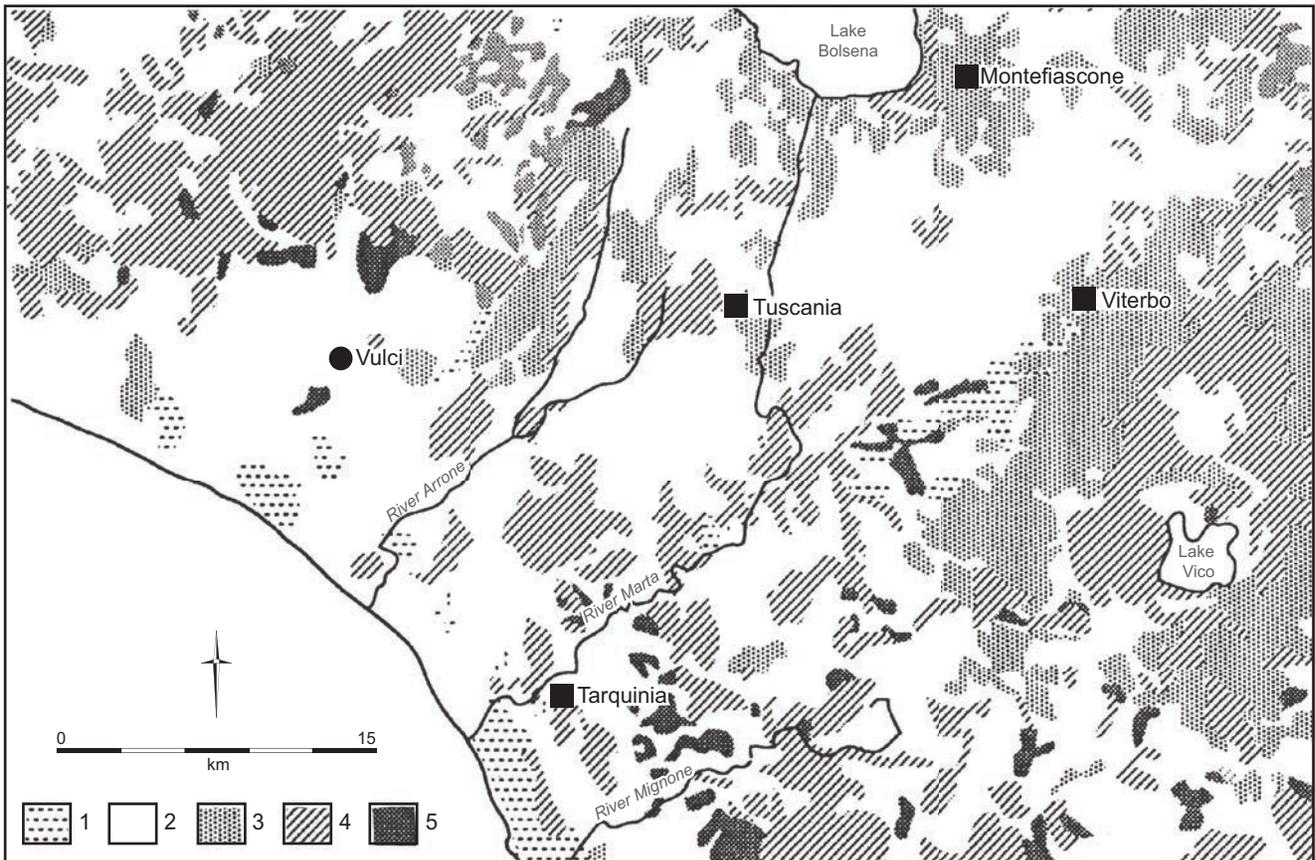


FIGURE 1.13 Simplified patterns of recent land use in South Etruria: 1. drained land; 2. arable; 3. polyculture (cereals, olives, vines); 4. woodland; 5. pasture. (Adapted from the *Carta dell'Utilizzazione del Suolo d'Italia*, 1959: sheet 12.)

on caterpillar tracks, which are bulldozing the bedrock and bringing it to the surface (Fig. 1.15). All these factors together made our survey intervention an especially timely one. Far less land would be available to survey now than when we conducted the fieldwork, and it is highly unlikely that the quality of surface finds today would be nearly as good as it was for us.

PROJECT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The project was originally planned as a joint collaboration between Graeme Barker and Tom Rasmussen. GB, as Director of the British School at Rome at that time, was keen to develop a field project in South Etruria to build on the tradition established by the British School's South Etruria Survey in the 1950s and 1960s and his own Biferno Valley Survey. TR, with primary research

interests in Etruscan archaeology, was keen to see a resumption of survey in South Etruria that would cast light on the least-understood component of Etruscan culture, rural settlement. Both of us had in fact been doctoral research students together at the British School at Rome in the early 1970s, kept in friendly check by John Ward-Perkins in his final years as director. Like most students who passed through the School at that time, we had on various occasions either volunteered, or been volunteered, to help with the South Etruria Survey fieldwork. We planned a programme of five seasons of fieldwork, which took place each September from 1986 to 1990, followed by a further month's study season of the survey finds in 1991. The geomorphological fieldwork described in Chapter 3 and the detailed analysis of the major classes of finds was undertaken during the 1990s (Brown and Ellis 1996; MacDonald 1999; Rendeli 1993a).



FIGURE 1.14 *Tufo* stone quarry north of Tuscania. (Photograph: Tom Rasmussen.)

Like most archaeological field projects, the Tuscania Archaeological Survey did not proceed to an exact pre-arranged plan but developed organically as discoveries fed back into theories and methodologies, and as new personnel brought fresh perspectives and research interests. Perhaps the most intellectually stimulating feature of archaeological fieldwork, in fact, is this interaction between theory, method and discovery on the one hand, and between overall project goals and individual research agendas of team members on the other. Annie Grant joined the project after the first two seasons and developed the databases for the field survey and finds cataloguing systems. Chris Hunt initiated the work on the history of the natural environment of the study area with a palynological study, and the palaeoenvironmental programme was then continued and enlarged by a team led by Tony Brown. A variety of specialists was involved in the study of the survey finds. The prehistoric material

was studied by GB and Francesco di Gennaro (pottery) and Tim Reynolds (lithics), the Etruscan material by TR and Marco Rendeli, the prolific Roman material by Nick Whitehead and Phil Perkins in the first two seasons and then the whole data set by Alison MacDonald for her Oxford DPhil (MacDonald 1999), and the Medieval and Post-Medieval material by Helen Patterson. Nicoletta Vullo made an important contribution by bringing GIS (Geographical Information Systems) to bear on the entire data set, as described in Chapters 2 and 9.

CONCLUSION

The Tuscania Archaeological Survey was planned as a contribution to Mediterranean landscape history, especially town–country relations, by focusing on the archaeology of the countryside around a small town in South Etruria near Rome. Chance finds and systematic work

CONCLUSION



FIGURE 1.15 Deep-ploughing technology used in the countryside around Tuscania at the time of the fieldwork.
(Photograph: Graeme Barker.)

on Tuscania's archaeology previous to our project indicated that the site had probably been continuously occupied since urbanism first began in Italy with the Etruscan city states almost 3000 years ago. The archaeology in the immediate environs of the town, especially Etruscan tombs, had been mapped previously in the *Forma Italiae* series, a study that also indicated that other kinds of archaeological sites would be found by modern systematic survey, in the process providing us with a good opportunity to compare results. The terrain was well suited to the techniques of field survey, with much land under the plough and accessible to archaeological survey teams. We hoped that the project would not only make use of

current survey methodologies but also contribute to their evaluation and improvement. Our overarching aim was to use the techniques of landscape archaeology to write a long-term archaeological history from a holistic perspective, illuminating major themes such as relations between people and environment, between town and countryside, between Tuscania and the wider world, patterns of settlement, economic structures and the like – and in the process, revealing the successive 'taskscape' that the lives and works (in Ingold's phrase) of past peoples had created in this landscape, taskscape that would also have been shaped by the lives and works of past generations just as they are for us today.