

decolonization. The book manuscript is now complete and under contract with Northwestern University Press, where it is scheduled for publication in autumn 2024.

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ROME FELLOWSHIPS

doi: 10.1017/S0068246223000235

TULAR: human mobility and social–cultural shifts in frontier areas of pre-Roman Italy

During the first millennium BC, Italy was characterized by well-defined archaeological groups. Among these, the Etruscans are recognized as the leading group of pre-Roman Italy, expanding across the peninsula and undergoing significant sociopolitical changes. Proto-Etruscan (also known as Villanovan) settlements are among the earliest cases of early state formation in Italy. During its formative phase (tenth–eighth centuries BC), this group, mainly located in Etruria (modern Latium, Umbria and Tuscany), developed extensive networks, reaching areas all over the peninsula. The Etruscan society and its rapid development across the Mediterranean have been the focus of extensive research, but much is still unknown about the formative period that brought such success to these people.

The TULAR (Etruscan for frontier/border) project explores population dynamics at proto-Etruscan sites inside and outside Etruria through osteological, multi-isotope analysis for diet (carbon and nitrogen) and mobility (strontium, oxygen, sulphur), and ancient DNA (aDNA) analysis. Within this broader framework, the Rome Fellowship has provided a unique opportunity to study comprehensively the osteological record from the necropoleis of Fermo (Marche, ninth–fifth centuries BC) and Vulci (Latium, ninth–sixth centuries BC) at the Servizio di Bioarcheologia of the Museo delle Civiltà in Rome.

Fermo is one of the most puzzling Villanovan sites outside Etruria. Located near the Adriatic coast — several kilometres from Etruria — in a territory dominated by the so-called Picene culture, the site revealed hybrid features in the funerary ritual and material culture. In the ninth–eighth centuries BC, the funerary record showed that the site was part of the proto-Etruscan network, having funerary rituals and object typologies which recall the main sites from Etruria. Fermo experienced different outcomes compared to the other main Etruscan sites in the Orientalizing (eighth–sixth centuries BC) — when borders, networks and power relations were reorganized all over Italy — developing unique hybrid-local funerary rituals which suggest an abandonment of the original proto-Etruscan networks. Additionally, no shift towards increasing social complexity and urbanization was evident. By contrast, Vulci represents one of the principal Villanovan sites of Etruria, which became Etruscan in historical times. Like other major centres in Etruria, Vulci expanded on a large plateau (126 hectares), which started to be occupied in the Final Bronze Age 3 (c. 1025–925 BC) and was surrounded by a significant area of necropoleis.

The time spent in Rome has allowed me to carry out basic morphological analysis (sex and age-at-death). A total of 99 graves (n individuals = 172) were analysed from Fermo (10 cremations, 162 inhumations). If we add those tombs to the ones previously studied, a total of 171 tombs has been reached for Fermo (n individuals = 292). The osteological analysis will soon be published with the main archaeological information. The study of the necropolis of Vulci Ponte Rotto is still ongoing and so far has encompassed fifteen tombs. This period has also allowed an intensive sampling campaign for histological and isotope analysis, contributing to the ERC MOTHERS (ERC-2022-STG 101077348), MSCA TULAR (Grant agreement ID: 101065320) and other collaborative projects with Cardiff University. Other activities have involved research articles, a book chapter and conferences.

The combination of diverse disciplines has so far contributed to the understanding of the Italian Early Iron Age, a crucial moment for the formation of groups that dominated the Mediterranean. In the long term, TULAR will set new directions in research on community connectivity and its impact on ancient and modern societies, making a major contribution to current themes surrounding human mobility and migration.

I am very grateful for the Rome Fellowship. Special thanks go to Abigail Brundin, Emlyn Dodd, all the award-holders and the BSR staff for making this period so pleasant.

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doi: 10.1017/S0068246223000247

Villa pulcherrima imminet litori: maritime villas, ports and Africa Proconsularis in Trajan's Mediterranean politics

Imperial villas, far from being just luxurious leisurely retreats or mere locales for conspicuous consumption, played a crucial role in the daily life of the Roman imperial court, as emerges from a wealth of archaeological, epigraphic and literary evidence. My doctoral research (Oxford, 2022) examined the use of imperial villas as centres for the government of the empire, and investigated the extent to which the activities that emperors performed in fulfilment of their role impacted on the design of the spaces allocated to them (reception halls, entertainment buildings, bathing facilities and dining halls).

The research that I carried out at the BSR explored this 'public' role of imperial residences in further detail and from a different angle, focusing on a group of seven maritime villas on the coast of northern Lazio and southern Tuscany, that were either built from scratch or altered significantly in the Trajanic period. Alongside their chronological framework, the residences under examination have two further elements in common. First, they all have large ports, as well as articulate facilities such as reservoirs and warehouses, that could hardly have been geared solely to the need of importing and exporting goods for the exclusive consumption of the villa. Second, they lay on the final section of one of the maritime routes that connected Africa Proconsularis to Rome. Whilst my PhD examined villa sites individually, focusing on