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Cultural and socio-political development in south Etruria.

The Biedano region in the 5th to 1st centuries BC

Olsson, Hampus

2021

Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):
Olsson, H. (2021). *Cultural and socio-political development in south Etruria. The Biedano region in the 5th to 1st centuries BC*. [Doctoral Thesis (monograph), Archaeology]. Media-Tryck, Lund University, Sweden.

Total number of authors:
1

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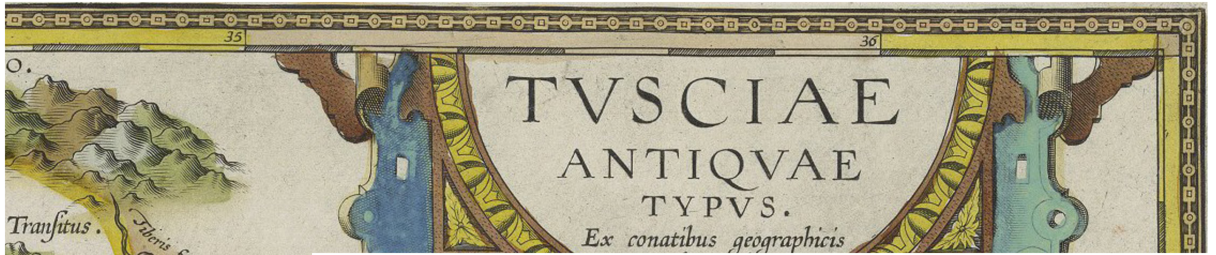

Cultural and socio-political development in south Etruria

The Biedano region in the 5th to 1st centuries BC

HAMPUS OLSSON
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANCIENT HISTORY | LUND UNIVERSITY

Printed by Media-Tryck, Lund 2021 NORDIC SWAN ECOLABEL 3041 0903

Cultural and socio-political development in south Etruria

By the 1st century AD, the Etruscan culture had been completely absorbed by Rome. Etruscans were now fully integrated and to be found at every level of Roman society, even at the very top. Etruria itself was naturally also affected. Roads were constructed connecting the remote areas on the peninsula, and large agricultural estates sprang up everywhere in the countryside, effectively changing the traditional ways of farming. To have an idea of how this came about it is necessary to venture further back in time. In the 4th century BC, a process with no precedents started on the Apennine peninsula. City-states started to expand, subjugating their neighbours until fewer and fewer remained; a development, which eventually would bring about the first unification of Italy, an Italy controlled by Rome. What did this expansion look like and what were the mechanisms behind it? The town of Blera, and the Biedano region, is located in south Etruria. After the fall of Rome's great Etruscan rival Veii in 396 BC, the area found itself bordering Roman controlled territory, and before long the Biedano region would become the theatre of military conflicts between Rome and the great Etruscan city of Tarquinii. Who were the leading families of the region, what was their role in the development, how did they cope, and how did they play their cards in order to remain at the apex of society? In this study, Hampus Olsson explores these processes and how the people living in a small peripheral region, situated on the fringes of the Etruscan heartland, was affected.

Hampus Olsson, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, is a classical archaeologist and ancient historian mainly specialising in Etruscology and Roman Republican history. This is his doctoral dissertation in Classical Archaeology and Ancient History.

LUND UNIVERSITY

Lund University
The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology
Department of Archaeology and Ancient History

ISBN 978-91-89213-91-3

Cultural and socio-political development in south Etruria

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LUND UNIVERSITY

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

by due permission of the Faculty of Humanities, Lund University, Sweden.
To be defended at LUX:C126, Helgonavägen 3, Lund.
22 October 2021 at 1.15 p.m.

Faculty opponent
Dr. Marjatta Nielsen

Organization LUND UNIVERSITY Department of Archaeology and Ancient History Pb 117 SE-221 00 Lund SWEDEN	**Document name** DOCTORAL DISSERTATION
	Date of issue 22 October 2021
Author Hampus Olsson	Sponsoring organization

Title and subtitle
Cultural and socio-political development in south Etruria. The Biedano region in the 5th to 1st centuries BC

Abstract
The town of Blera is situated in the southern parts of Etruria and has a history spanning more than 2,500 years. Its location between the two important Etruscan cities of Tarquinii and Caere has meant that Blera, for the entire Etruscan period (*c.* 750–50 BC), alternatively has found itself in either city's sphere of interest. When Rome begins her expansion into Etruria, following the fall of the south Etruscan city of Veii in 396 BC, Blera is to be found in a conflict area between Tarquinii and Rome. The view of the Romanisation of Italy has shifted since the imperialistic interpretations of the early 20th century. According to this view, Roman culture and the Latin language were imposed on the native populations, considered part of an inevitable process. However, later scholarship has begun to question and challenge this view, developing alternative models for how to interpret the development. Rather than treating the Roman expansion on imperialistic grounds, it should be seen as a very complex political and social game, which in the end brought about the political unification of the Apennine peninsula under Rome. The driving mechanisms behind the development were the ambitions of Italy's élite families. Their primary focus was to create and preserve power, influence, wealth and prestige for their own lineage. Their cities of origin, with belonging territories, became the tools with which they could achieve this. The consequence of this power struggle was that the city-states on the peninsula united in a federation, lead by Rome. However, the creation of this new federal state did not immediately substitute the earlier local identities and cultures; the élite families of Etruria did not consider themselves "Roman", because of their new alliances with Rome, but they could foresee that if they wanted to remain important and influential, Rome was the horse to bet on. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the cultural and socio-political development in the region where we find Blera when Rome and Tarquinii sought to expand their political influence. The main material groups studied for this thesis consist of the settlement types uncovered in earlier field surveys, tombs and necropoleis, the road network, epigraphic material, and the works of ancient authors.

Key words
Etruscans, Blera, Biedano region, *ager Bleranus*, Rome, Roman Republic, Romanisation, globalisation, bilingualism, code-switching, imperialism, Etruscan prosopography

Classification system and/or index terms (if any)		
Supplementary bibliographical information		**Language** English
ISSN and key title		**ISBN** 978-91-89213-91-3
Recipient's notes	**Number of pages** 231	Price
	Security classification	

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Classical Archaeology and Ancient History

Department of Archaeology and Ancient History

Published with support from
Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology
Stiftelsen Harald och Tonny Hagendahls minnsefond
Stiftelsen Ingrid och Torsten Gihls fond för Svenska institutet i Rom
Stiftelsen Enboms donationsfond
Stiftelsen C.M. Lerici
Stiftelsen Ludvig och Edith Bauers fond för antik kultur
Stiftelsen Sven Kristenssons resestipendiefond

Cover photo: Map of ancient Tuscia, by Abraham Ortelius.
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Back cover photo: *Ponte del Diavolo*, Blera. Photograph by Rozhin Abedi

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Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology
Department of Archaeology and Ancient History

ISBN 978-91-89213-91-3 (print)
ISBN 978-91-89213-93-7 (electronic)

Printed in Sweden by Media-Tryck, Lund University
Lund 2021

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing a doctoral thesis is, as I think most people who have concluded a doctorate can agree upon, truly a process. It contains moments of stasis when very little is being accomplished as well as periods of extremely high intensity. At times, it was hard to imagine it to ever end. Many people have contributed, in many different ways, to bringing this study to a successful conclusion.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Prof. Henrik Gerding, my supervisor, who has guided me with a steady hand from my very first day as a doctoral student, and who has shown indefatigable interest in my research and has given thoughtful advice and support, also in moments of despair. Always available and enthusiastic, Prof. Gerding has encouraged me to think outside the box and to argue my case. I would also like to thank Prof. Örjan Wikander, my assistant supervisor, whose wide knowledge of Etruscan archaeology, society and culture, and of the Ancient world and Latin literature in general, has been an invaluable resource for this study. I have much enjoyed our discussions on Etruscan prosopography, most often including a cup of coffee, a Danish pastry, and a cigarillo. Additionally, Prof. Wikander very kindly provided this study with an index, for which I am very grateful.

I would also like to thank my dear friend and mentor Dr. Fredrik Tobin-Dodd who brought me along to Blera when I was still an undergraduate student. Fredrik introduced me to the people of Blera and its surroundings, and oddly as it may sound, made me appreciate outdoor life. Fredrik has also read parts of my manuscript giving me valuable comments and suggestions. I would also like to mention the staff at "La Torretta" in downtown Blera, who have served us many a lovely meal through the years.

A great part of the research for this study was carried out during three separate sojourns at the Swedish Institute of Classical Studies in Rome. This would not have been possible without the financial support of the Institute who twice granted me the fellowship in Classical Archaeology, and of the Stiftelsen C.M. Lerici. I would like to express my profound gratitude to the former directors of The Swedish Institute of Classical Studies in Rome, Prof. Barbro Santillo Frizell and Dr. Kristian Göransson, and to the current Director, Dr. Ulf Hansson, for giving me this opportunity. Moreover, I wish to thank the current Deputy Director Dr. Maria Oen for invigorating conversations and for having a glass of chilled Prosecco and taralli ready at hand in

times when it was much needed! I would also like to thank all former and current administrative staff members at the Institute, always ready to assist and solve all imaginable problems, dott.ssa Stefania Renzetti, dott.ssa Astrid Capoferro, dott.ssa Linda Lindqvist, dott.ssa Federica Lucci, Ms Fanny Lind, and dott.ssa Liv D'Amelio. Many thanks also go to Ms. Marie Kraft Selze of the Circolo Scandinavo in Rome, for always having time for a glass of wine and a chat.

Furthermore, I wish to thank all the members of the higher seminar of Classical Archaeology and Ancient History at Lund University, headed during my first four years by Prof. Anne-Marie Leander Touati, and thereafter by Prof. Henrik Gerding. Dr. Renée Forsell, who most kindly read the final version of my manuscript, Dr. Susanne Berndt Ersöz, Dr. Thomas Staub, Dr. Charlotte Malmgren, Dr. Maria Nilsson, Dr. Anas Al Khabour and all former and current fellow doctoral students in Classical Archaeology and Ancient History, dott. Danilo Marco Campanaro, Ms. Fanny Kärfve, for stimulating discussions on the 1960s rock scene and English football, Ms. Rikke Randeris Thomsen, fil.lic. Anna-Stina Ekedahl, Dr. Lovisa Brännstedt, Mr. Peder Flemestad, who, together with Dr. Tuomo Nuorluoto, kindly read and commented on my Latin translations, for which I am very grateful, Dr. Johan Vekselius, fil.lic. Richard Olsson, and dott.ssa Valentina Vassallo, have all provided a stimulating forum for insightful and interesting discussions during all parts of my work on this study.

I would also like to thank the higher seminar of Classical Archaeology and Ancient History at Uppsala University, where I spent my undergraduate years and attained my master's degree, and I would like to express my very special thanks to Prof. Lars Karlsson who first introduced me to the wonderful world of the Etruscans. Attending Prof. Karlsson's lectures on the Swedish archaeological excavations in Etruria with pictures shown on a slide projector is definitely one of the highlights of my time in Uppsala!

In addition, I wish to thank everyone at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History at Lund University, and especially to all former and current doctoral students at the department whom I have had the great pleasure to get to know, Dr. Kenth Hansen, Dr. Stella Macheridis, Dr. Anna Tornberg, Dr. Adam Boethius, Dr. Sian Anthony, dott.sa. Paola Derudas, Mr. Greer Jarrett, Mr. Johan Sterner, Mr. Andreas Svensson, Ms. Gertie Eriksson, Mr. Robert Bergman Carter, Mr. Jan Kockum, Mr. Erik Johansson, Ms. Lena Strid, Mr. Blair Nolan, Ms. Erika Rosengren, Mr. Jerry Rosengren, Mr. Andreas Nilsson, and Dr. Katarina Botwid. Moreover, I wish to thank Doc. Giacomo Landeschi, Dr. Domenica Dininno, Doc. Nicolò Dell'Unto, Dr. Mikael Larsson, Dr. Melda Kucukdemirci, and Dr. Mikael Fauvelle for contributing to interesting discussions and a healthy "aperitivo" culture at the department.

Furthermore, a great thank you to the department's librarian Ms Marie Hoen who has always tried her best to meet my demands and to locate the rarest books or journals needed for this study.

I am also very grateful to The National Graduate School of Historical Studies and all its participants, for inspiring discussions, good food and wine!

I am thankful to the following foundations and institutions for financial support, without which this book would never have been completed: Kungliga Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, Stiftelsen Harald och Tonny Hagendahls minnesfond, Stiftelsen Ingrid och Torsten Gihls fond, Stiftelsen Enboms donationsfond, Stiftelsen C.M. Lerici, Stiftelsen Ludvig och Edith Bauers fond för antik kultur, and Stiftelsen Sven Kristenssons resestipendiefond.

A special thank you also to my dear friends: Dr. Johan Vekselius who, with his most peculiar and original wits has the ability to convert even the most lacklustre affairs into a fête, Dr. Per Östborn whose company is always enjoyable, whether the topic is Sunday roast or the question of Scanian liberation. Ms. Ingrid Dunér who has contributed to many memorable evenings and to discussions on all imaginable topics, Mr. Johan Åhlfeldt guided me through the QGIS programme during my first years in Lund, and he also accompanied me to Blera to assist me with field investigations in the early stages of my research for this study. Dr. Kasia Herd and Dr. Jacob Löfgren for stimulating discussions on Swedish football culture and "dålig stämning", and for throwing great crayfish parties!

An additional thank you goes to my dear friend Dr. Tuomo Nuorluoto for interesting discussions on Roman prosopography, the Finnishness of the Swedish language of Finland, the great importance of Finnishness in every aspect of life, Finland's natural place as part of the Swedish Realm, and for the prominence of always ending an evening to the tones of Carl Michael Bellman.

My beloved Rozhin Abedi deserves my deepest gratitude. She has beared with me and has constantly encouraged me during the last months of this work. She has been supportive, understanding and gave me sincere love and affection in moments of need. Rozhin also kindly provided this book with superb city plans for which I am additionally grateful. Thank you Love.

Lastly, I would like to thank my dear parents, Ingemar Olsson and Suzanne Wåhlberg Olsson, for their everlasting support. This work is dedicated to them.

Hampus Olsson

LUND, SEPTEMBER 2021

1 INTRODUCTION

About 55 km, as the crow flies, north-west of Rome, in the midst of high hilltop plateaux and spectacular ravines covered with thick vegetation, one finds the sleepy hilltop town of Blera. When I, as a master's student, first set foot in the land of the *Blerani*, back in 2011, a special bond was immediately formed which sparked the beginning of a dear friendship, with the land itself and with its inhabitants. Blera lies in the centre of an area which, I would like to argue, constituted a geographical, cultural and, possibly, political entity in south Etruria.

Although many important separate studies have been conducted in the hinterland of Blera, none of these have aimed at taking a full grip on the diverse material at our disposal, in order to establish a historical narrative for the crucial centuries that brought about the incorporation of the area into the Roman world. With this study I have wanted to dig deeper, to truly understand the nature of the inhabitants, their land, and their history. Who were these people, these *Blerani*, dwelling in this very countryside, in many respects still having the same appearance as back then, more than 2,000 years ago.

1.1 Aims

The main scope of this study is to provide a solid and scientifically grounded picture of the settlement patterns, socio-political development, or change one might say, and inter- and intrastate relations, in an area in south Etruria surrounding the Etruscan town of Blera, in connection to Rome's sphere of interest expanding into Etruscan territories. Following this, the study aims to understand the consequences the incorporation into the Roman world had on economic, political, and social structures in the region. Connected to the social development is the question of how the dwellers of the region looked upon themselves and the land they inhabitated: is it possible to speak of a local Bleran identity, and if so, did the presence of Rome contribute to this, or had there for a long time already been a specific local identity?

How a comparatively peripheral area such as the subject of this study was affected by such developments is of course interesting in its own right, but it can also serve as an example of how to approach the development in other regions of similar character. Another interesting factor which this study intends to investigate is the role of the local élite and its composition over time, who they were, and how they reasoned. The role of the élite is closely connected to the inter- and intrastate relations between different towns and cities; members of the most influential and wealthy local families constituted the apex of the political body and therefore their interests directed the policies of towns and city-states in many respects. Their connections with other Etruscan cities, but also their connections with Romans, are of great interest. In order to answer these questions, they will be approached through the study of different groups of material, both archaeological and literary.

1.2 Chronological framework

The time span covered in this study is set to the 5th–1st centuries BC. These limits are motivated by two, for Etruscan history, important, catalysing events. The 5th century BC marks the economic decline usually referred to as the "Etruscan crisis", which affected the major Etruscan cities and their hinterlands, economically as well as politically. Traditionally, the igniting spark is considered to have been the devastating naval defeat of an Etruscan fleet in a battle against Syracuse, in the waters outside Cumae in 474 BC, but as early as the late 6th century BC there were already contributing events that helped lead up to the crisis.[1] The subject area of this study is no exception. The end of the study period is marked by the Social War, which was fought in 91–88 BC between Rome and her Italian allies, and its aftermath. The outcome of the war entailed the granting of Roman citizenship to all free Italian inhabitants, and the subsequent reorganisation of the regions of Italy into the Roman state. Thereby the Etruscan cities officially ceased to be autonomous polities, allied to Rome, even if they *de facto* had not been independent for several centuries. The chronology applied for this study is based, save for some minor adjustments, on the one

[1] "The most critical moment of the entire history of the Etruscan World", as put by Stefano Bruni. See Bruni 2017, 1141, and also Cerchiai 2017, 635, and Terrenato 2019, 71, 77, 114.

employed by Alessandro Naso, for the 2017 *magnum opus Etruscology*, vols. 1–2.[2] The periods are divided as follows:

Protovillanovan period, *c*. 12th century–900 BC
Villanovan period, *c*. 900–730 BC
Orientalising period, 730–580 BC
Archaic period, 580–480 BC
Subarchaic period, 480–320 BC
Hellenistic period, 320–250 BC
Roman Republican period, 250–50 BC

The Biedano valley was probably the political and economic centre of this area in the 7th, 6th, and 5th centuries BC;[3] it was to a great extent autonomous, but under the ultimate sphere of interest of the great Etruscan city of Caere. In the Archaic period, the area was densely populated, and we find three larger settlements at today's Blera, San Giuliano, and San Giovenale, together with two smaller ones at Grotta Porcina and Cerracchio. Beside these there was also a large number of minor settlements in the southern regions of the area. There is a similar cluster south of San Giovenale and modern Civitella Cesi, at Monterano, Stigliano, and Rota. At the same time the northern parts of the region seem to have housed few larger settlements, Norchia and Axia being the only exceptions.[4]

In the late 5th or early 4th century BC, the area came under the control of Tarquinii, one of three major Etruscan cities in south Etruria, which by now was recovering from its earlier decline in the 5th century BC.[5] In the 4th century BC, city-states in central Italy began to expand, and compete with each other for power and influence on a scale that had not been seen up to that time. Among the key players in this competitive environment we find Tarquinii and Rome. The first half of the 4th century marked the beginning of Rome's influence in south Etruria with the fall of Veii in 396 BC and the establishment of Sutrium as a Latin *colonia* in the succeeding decade, around 383 BC.[6] Henceforth, these parts of south Etruria took on the character of a buffer zone between two city-states with expansionist ambitions, Tarquinii and Rome. Beginning in the 4th century BC, earlier important urban settlements lost primacy, to the benefit of other

2 The main adjustments consist of the addition of the "Subarchaic" and Hellenistic periods, roughly covered in Naso's work by the "Late Classical and Hellenistic periods": see Naso 2017, 5.

3 Colonna 1990a, 13.

4 See e.g. Colonna 1967c, 13; Santella 2014, 6.

5 The others being Veii and Caere.

6 Livy gives the date of the foundation of the colonia at Nepet as 383 BC, but Velleius Paterculus fixes the foundation of Sutrium to this year, and Nepet to ten years later (i.e. 373 BC). See Livy 6.21.4–6, and Vell. Pat. 1.14.2.

settlements that had previously been small and insignificant. Towards the end of the century the rural population started to increase, and dispersed rural settlements such as *villae rusticae* and farmsteads sprang up in large numbers. Traditionally, this development has been accredited to the Roman presence in the area, and many scholars have been of the opinion that this is the work of a deliberate Roman policy of decentralisation aiming to undermine any local resistance, which they either regarded as heroes or as passive victims.[7]

The hinterland of Blera too displays indications of a shift in the political situation, which is above all visible in two material types: the necropoleis and the inscriptions. The sites housing the most extended Orientalising- and Archaic-period necropoleis are clustered in the southern parts of the region, at Blera, San Giovenale, and San Giuliano; here we find most of the region's monumental tumulus-type tombs. But when large, monumental tombs make their return in the middle of the 4th century BC, the most important necropoleis are to be found further to the north, at Norchia and Axia. The same tendencies can be noted in the epigraphic material; while the largest number of Archaic-period inscriptions are to be found in the south at Blera, San Giovenale, and San Giuliano, most of the late Etruscan inscriptions hail from the north.[8] What factors cause this shift? Could there be a Romanisation without the direct presence of Rome? Or has this development nothing to do with Rome, and if not, would it not be time to roundly revaluate the development in areas conquered by the Romans at this time?

1.3 Methodology and source material

The source material of this study can be divided into two categories, archaeological material and written sources. The archaeological material consists of information yielded by previously conducted field surveys, which examine remains of human activity in the countryside in the form of e.g. minor settlements, road networks, and tombs. To the archaeological material belong the monumental rock-cut necropoleis of the area, which form an important part for the analysis of the nature of the local élite, and to some degree archaeological excavations carried out in urban environments, above all at San Giovenale.

The written sources consist of the works of ancient authors and the epigraphic material preserved in the form of inscriptions. The main literary sources for the period

[7] E.g. Potter 1979, 93–95; Harris 1979; 1990; Oakley 1993; Raaflaub 1996; Cornell 2004.
[8] Santella 1988, 8; Benelli 2014a, 84–85.

are Livy, Diodorus Siculus, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, all of whom present serious problems of interpretation and reliability, due to the quality and quantity of their own sources, different chronologies, and confusions and repetition of events.[9] Other important literary sources worth mentioning are Polybius, Cicero, Strabo, Pliny the Elder, Appian, Ptolemy, Gellius, Cassius Dio, Festus, and Servius. The epigraphic material is mostly composed of funerary inscriptions from the area of investigation, found on sarcophagi, in tombs, or in their surroundings. In the majority of cases these have yielded little more than the name of the deceased, but occasionally they can provide us with information on family networks as well as political offices. The strategy of this study has been to take a full grip on all available material, both archaeological and literary, and combine it, in order to give as full a picture as possible of the cultural and socio-political development in the area. The different material groups complement each other; for example, both the monumental rock-cut tombs and the funerary inscriptions of presumably wealthy local individuals shed light on the dealings of the élite families of the area. Consequently, this approach is an absolute necessity for a wider understanding of the development

1.4 Theoretical approach

Francis J. Haverfield in defining Romanisation stated that "It has been said that Greece taught men to be human and Rome made mankind civilized. That was the work of the Empire; the form it took was Romanization".[10] Much has of course happened since then, and the perspectives on Romanisation have varied along the years. As noted by Jan Nederveen Pieterse, this is a brief, and now old and worn-out, version of the Romanisation paradigm.[11]

That the Etruscan culture eventually was absorbed by the Roman is more or less a fact. The interesting question to pose is rather what this process looked like. The view on the Romanisation of Italy has shifted drastically in the last two centuries. In the light of modernity ideas of the 19th century, Romanisation was seen as a consequence of an inevitable development process where the various peoples of Italy received the new order with open arms; they wanted nothing else than to be Romanised. In the mid-20th century, the Romans were seen as invaders who wiped out the cultural

[9] For a discussion, see Ch. 4.1 below.
[10] Haverfield 1912, 11.
[11] Nederveen Pieterse 2015, 225.

characteristics of the free peoples of Italy, while the later years of that century, in the wake of the post-colonial trends, saw the entry of concepts such as hybridity, creolisation, fusion, and *métissage*. The post-colonial ideas have been welcomed by several scholars, among whom are Nicola Terrenato and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill.[12] Homi Bhabha speaks of a "third space" between the colonised and the coloniser. Here the coloniser is not simply perceived as a destroyer of existing cultures imposing his own, and the colonised not only as a passive victim, or stubbornly resistant; the coloniser would rather create a hybrid culture which takes on elements both from his own, colonising culture, and from the native one.[13] Wallace-Hadrill is welcoming of this perspective, but he argues that Bhabha's approach has its own problems; above all it requires an end-product consisting of a mixed culture in turn derived from "two 'pure' parents".[14] Together with Chris Gosden, Wallace-Hadrill launches an alternative to hybridity and creolisation, as with many other approaches a loan from the field of linguistics, namely *bilingualism*, often expressed through so-called *code-switching*; one alternates between languages according to one's needs. No mixed culture is born; instead, we have to imagine cultures united in a continuum of redefining themselves as a direct consequence of contact with the other. Rome becomes a middle way; rather than exclusively "Roman versus the other" (the other in various degrees assimilated into Rome), instead a highly versatile exchange throughout an immensely wide territory where influences came from all over. Not only do cultures blend to form new units, but cultural elements can survive in abundance side by side, perhaps as discrepant identities, or even as parallel or coexisting elements.[15]

In languages, both above-presented phenomena, bilingualism and creolisation, can contain words or phrases from different languages, although there is a significant difference between the two; while he who speaks a creole language perceives the language he is using as one language following specific grammatical rules, he who is bilingual and is exercising code-switching is very much aware of the fact that the linguistic elements he is using derive from distinct languages. Wallace-Hadrill connects this phenomenon to what became the result of Roman rule, and this is of interest.[16] According to him there are two perspectives on the purpose of Romanisation:

[12] See e.g. Terrenato 1998a; 1998b; 2005; 2019; Wallace-Hadrill 2008; Versluys 2014; 2015.
[13] Bhabha 1990; 1994.
[14] Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 12.
[15] Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 12–13; Gosden 2004, 105.
[16] Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 13.

1. The purpose of the Romanisation project was to replace one cultural package with another.
2. The purpose was to introduce the Roman cultural package in addition to the already existing local one.[17]

What is attained by viewing the development through the lens of bilingualism is a possible description of how people were affected by, and how they reacted to, the development set in motion. But what triggered this development? The question of whether there was a greater intention at all from the Romans needs to be asked. The Roman expansion over Italy has for long been described as a military takeover of the various free peoples inhabiting the peninsula. The Italian peoples are obviously the losers in this story.[18] However, recent scholarship has begun to question, and challenge, this approach. Terrenato for example, has proposed that, rather than viewing the Roman expansion on imperialistic grounds, it should be seen as a highly complex political and social game which in the end brought about the unification of the entire peninsula under Roman rule.[19] What drives this development is, according to Terrenato's approach, not competing polities *per se*, but the leading families of those polities. Their primary focus is above all to acquire power, influence, wealth, and prestige for their own lineage. Drawing on these ideas it is logical to view the polities, in which the leading families have their power bases, as sorts of vehicles through which they can achieve all this, and in the beginning of the expansion, Rome was merely one of several other vehicles. The consequence of this struggle for power will eventually bring the Italian polities to join in a federation led by Rome. However, the entry of this new federal state does not immediately replace the earlier identity and culture; for example, the leading families of Etruria would not regard themselves solely as Romans because of their decision to associate themselves with Roman families, and to involve themselves in the political life of Rome.

Arthur Eckstein proposes yet another approach. Leaning on the ideas of Realist theory, the development should be seen as a natural competition among states. In the view of Realist theory, states in the premodern world, which lacked any international law, or central authority, were forced to compete with each other in order to maintain their own security. Since security under such conditions is limited, this competition tended to be violent. In the view of Eckstein, contrary to that of Terrenato, the independence and identity of each state is of high importance. In order to maintain its political independence, the state needs to acquire power. What we see in Italy in the

[17] Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 14.
[18] E.g. Coarelli 1988; Gabba 1994.
[19] Terrenato 2019.

4th to 3rd centuries BC is, according to Eckstein, an example of this inter-state power struggle. As some states grow larger and more powerful, the number of competitors constantly diminishes until reaching a point when only one state is left, having obtained, and been able to preserve, power for itself on the expense of all others.[20] In the case of Italy, by the mid-3rd century BC, this remaining state would of course have been Rome.

In the end we cannot circumvent the fact that the Etruscan culture, together with other cultures on the peninsula, eventually disappeared or were absorbed, but they also reformed and reinvented what was Roman. The development leading up to this state is what has here to be explored and discussed. When used in this study, Romanisation is applied in its weakest sense, barely serving as an umbrella term to describe the development.

In this particular case, and during this period of time, if we see the Romanisation of Italy as a period of transition, I find bilingualism much more suitable as a theoretical approach than hybridity or creolisation; becoming Roman did not necessarily imply to cease being Etruscan, Umbrian, Oscan, or Sabine. It could well be possible to be both at the same time, albeit in different circumstances. As an example, the Lucanian poet Quintus Ennius could be mentioned, he who according to Aulus Gellius was said to have had three hearts, one for each language he spoke, namely Oscan, Greek, and Latin.[21] What is remarkable about this is not the fact that Ennius knew these three languages, but that he referred to them as hearts. Apparantly Ennius found that the languages represented different parts of his identity and that it was the context that determined which language he was to use on which occasion and thus which identity he was expressing at that particular moment. Another example is provided by the great author and statesman M. Tullius Cicero, who informs us that most Romans had two homelands, *duae patriae*, one where they were born and one which had adopted them. In Cicero's case, the natural homeland would have been Arpinum where he was born, while the adopted one would have been Rome. However, Cicero is very clear on the point that there can be no doubt towards which of these countries a Roman had to show his allegiance.[22] As mentioned above, there are important questions to pose about Roman intentions regarding the Romanisation process. What is clear however is that linguistically there was a long period of bilingualism between Latin and the local language before the latter was ousted by the former, and according to Wallace-Hadrill this phenomenon could be transferred to all types of cultural expressions.[23]

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[20] Eckstein 2006.
[21] Gell. *NA* 17.17.1–3.
[22] Cic. *De Leg.* 2.3–5.
[23] Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 97.

1.5 Previous research

Relatively limited research has been conducted on Etruria in the post-Archaic, Hellenistic, and Roman Republican periods, an assertion also valid for the area where we find Blera. Italian cartographers were the first to conduct archaeological field surveys in Italy in the second half of the 19th century. The purpose was to provide an archaeological map of all Italy, the *Carta Archeologica d'Italia*.[24] Regarding specifically south Etruria, important field surveys were carried out by the British School at Rome under John Ward-Perkins in the 1950s and 1960s, as part of the South Etruria Survey and later, from 1997 to 2004 the Tiber Valley Project, under Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, Tim Potter, and Helen Patterson. These surveys were above all rescue missions aiming to register visible remains in response to the increasing adoption of deep ploughing in Italian farming in the 1950s.[25] The results from the project were finally published in 2020 by Helen Patterson, Robert Witcher, and Helga Di Giuseppe.[26] Within the framework of the same project Guy Duncan conducted fieldwork in the 1950s in the area around Sutri.[27]

As concerns the region here under investigation, important studies were conducted by a German expedition in the early 20th century, mainly focusing on the necropoleis surrounding the city plateau of Blera.[28] Research on the necropoleis of San Giuliano was published by Augusto Gargana in 1931.[29] From 2015 onwards, the Virgil Academy of Rome and Baylor University, Texas, in collaboration with the Province of Viterbo, the Italian Soprintendenza Archeologica, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per l'Area Metropolitana di Roma, la Provincia di Viterbo e Etruria Meridionale, and the Municipality of Barbarano Romano have conducted new investigations at San Giuliano. These investigations are still pending publication.[30]

The Swedish excavations of the 1950s and 1960s were concentrated at Luni sul Mignone and San Giovenale, and were complemented by field surveys carried out in the 1960s and 1980s. The research generally concerned the Archaic period, and was pioneering at the time since the primary focus of interest was not the Etruscan tombs and tomb architecture, but rather the settlements.[31] Johnny Bengtsson's work on Luni

[24] Gamurrini *et al.* 1972.
[25] Kahane *et al.* 1968.
[26] Patterson *et al.* 2020.
[27] Duncan 1958.
[28] Koch *et al.* 1915.
[29] Gargana 1931.
[30] Zori *et al.* 2017; 2018.
[31] The results from the Swedish excavations at Luni sul Mignone and San Giovenale are continuously published in the publication series of the Swedish Institute for Classical Studies at Rome, and there was

sul Mignone, a diachronic study covering the site and hinterland of Luni from Neolithic times into the Middle Ages, and Yvonne Backe-Forsberg's study of the Etruscan bridge complex at San Giovenale as well as her later research on a possible village on the Vignale plateau, south-east of San Giovenale, are also of great importance. The latest contribution to the research in this part of the region is Tobin's work on the chamber tombs of San Giovenale.[32]

For the area immediately surrounding Blera, extensive field surveys were conducted in the 1970s by Stefania Quilici Gigli.[33] Elena Colonna di Paolo and Giovanni Colonna conducted research on the rock-cut tombs of the sites of Castel d'Asso (Axia) and Norchia.[34] The research and subsequent publication of the necropoleis of Norchia has recently been continued by Laura Ambrosini.[35] Pamela Hemphill's field survey of the area around the modern town of Civitella Cesi is also highly important. These surveys, which were carried out in the 1980s, also cover San Giovenale.[36] An additional field survey was also carried out by Maddalena Andreussi in the 1970s. This survey covers the area to the east, towards Sutri, and to the south towards Vejano.[37] However, Andreussi's survey has not yielded any finds of particular interest dated to the time span and in the area of investigation covered by this study, and although the results have been taken into consideration, they have therefore not been included in the investigation of settlement patterns in the region.

The data collected from the various field surveys constitute a highly important source of information which is essential for this study. The first, and most important, attempt at a synthesis of the published archaeological record of south Etruria, and on an analysis of the south Etruscan cities and their dealings with Rome in the early Hellenistic period, is Luca Pulcinelli's *L'Etruria meridionale e Roma.Insediamenti e territorio tra IV e III secolo a.C.* from 2016.

Regarding the epigraphic material, important and influential studies have been carried out by Enrico Benelli, Giovanni Colonna, Mario Torelli, Alessandro Morandi, and Stéphane Bourdin, to mention a few.[38] The only complete synthesis of south Etruscan family names was carried out by Massimo Morandi Tarabella, in his impressive *Prosopografia etrusca. Vol. 1, Corpus 1, Etruria meridionale*, from 2004.

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also a more summarized early publication, with one volume in English and one in Swedish: Boëthius *et al.*, 1962.

32 Bengtsson 2001; Backe-Forsberg 2005; Tobin 2015.

33 Quilici Gigli 1976.

34 The results were presented in Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970 and 1978 respectively.

35 Ambrosini 2016; 2018.

36 The results from the surveys were published in 2000 as part of the papers of the Swedish Institute at Rome: see Hemphill 2000.

37 Andreussi 1977.

38 See Bibliography.

However, no attempts at a thorough and all-encompassing analysis of all types of data on a small-scale level, in order to recreate a historical narrative, have been carried out; the need for such a synthesis is still indeed required.

1.6 Area of investigation

The hinterland of Blera is in its nature a borderland ajoining the territories of the great Etruscan cities of Tarquinii and Caere. Basically a modern concept, the Biedano valley was archaeologically defined as an economic and cultural centre in 1967 by Giovanni Colonna, and was subsequently labelled the *ager Bleranus* by Luciano Santella.[39] The definition of the borders of the area in a specific period of time is of course hypothetical and it depends further on a deeper discussion of the borders of the territories of the afore-mentioned Tarquinii and Caere. The territory of Tarquinii is, in the 4th–3rd centuries BC, traditionally considered to have been delimited by the Arrone stream to the north, which acted as border between the territories of Tarquinii and Vulci; the town of Axia acted as a fortified outpost and would have controlled the area towards Volsinii. To the east the Cimini Mountains and forest served as natural frontiers towards the Latin *colonia* of Sutrium. The border with Caere to the south was most probably marked by the Mignone river.[40] In general, the approach of defining ancient borders based entirely on geographical formations in the landscape calls for caution. As pointed out by Ingrid Edlund-Berry, it can seem rather easy for us to view the rivers and mountains as natural boundaries between the territories of cities such as Tarquinii, Caere, and Veii, and the endeavours to define the borders are often based on the acknowledgement that some types of artefacts and architectural features such as tombs seem to identify an area or settlement as culturally or politically dependent on one city or another. However, in the case of the Mignone we are aided by ancient literature, with Servius informing us that it was a river running in the lands of Caere.[41] Settlements on either side of the Mignone are seen today as either Caeretan or Tarquinian based on what is perceived as the political status of either city, in particular in relation to Rome. In reality, the borders were probably not very well defined and floating in character. But occasionally the need rose to define the borders more accurately. Such need could have been sparked by a sudden increase in habitations and burials, or marked by the

[39] Colonna 1967c, 13–15; Santella 1986, 6; 1988, 3; 2014, 29.
[40] Serv. *ad Aen.*, 8.597; 10.183; Bourdin 2012, 486–495; Santella 1988, 6–10; Colonna 1967c, 11–16.
[41] Serv. *ad Aen.*, 8.597; 10.183.

coming of more politically unstable times, when people felt the need to defend themselves with fortified settlements.[42] The area of investigation for this study centres around the town of Blera and the Biedano valley, with the south-eastern parts of what in the 4th–3rd centuries BC constituted the territory of Tarquinii, the *ager Tarquiniensis*, and adjacent areas.

The zone of influence of the town of Blera, at least in the 5th to 3rd centuries BC, would hypothetically have stretched to the Mignone and the Tolfa Mountains to the south, the Cimini and Sabatini Mountains to the east, the towns of Axia and Norchia with hinterlands to the north, and the hilly terrain west of the Biedano valley, an area of *c*. 750 square kilometres. The extent of this region, which henceforth will be denominated the Biedano region, will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 2.4.

In Villanovan times the area seems to have been much autonomous, albeit the Tarquinian influence is strong. Beginning in the 7th century BC, the area seems to have come under the influence of Caere, only returning to the sphere of Tarquinii in the early 4th century.[43] However, vast surrounding necropoleis, as well as being the hub in a road network connecting Tarquinii, Caere, Sutrium, and Volsinii, are strong indications of the Biedano region being an administrative and economic centre of its own in Archaic times. The importance of the Biedano river is crucial for understanding Blera's influence: it can be seen as an artery running between the Tolfa, Cimini and Sabatini Mountains, crossing the landscape on its way north where it eventually joins the Rigomero on that stream's route towards the coast.

As mentioned, the political and economic centre of the area seems to have shifted from the southern Biedano valley to the northern towns of Norchia and Axia in the Subarchaic period, as indicated both by funerary architecture and the epigraphic material. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to hold that Blera remained an important town even in later periods. It does not seem to have lost all of its former importance, becoming *municipium* in the late Republican period, and much later, in late Antiquity, it became a diocese.

[42] Edlund-Berry 2016, 17. On the Mignone as the northern boundary of Caere, see more in Ch. 2.4 below. See also Rendeli 1993, 310–329; Enei 1995; Riva & Stoddart 1996, 100; Cerasuolo 2008.
[43] Colonna 1967c, 11–16.

Fig. 1. Area of investigation and important cities in south Etruria and central Italy.

In the following chapter an introduction to the region will be given, with a presentation of the geography, and the most important of the settlements, monuments and roads. I will also set out to define the cultural and political nature of the region, and to estimate its extent with relevant borders.

2 THE BIEDANO REGION—THE TERRITORY

Is it correct to speak of Blera as a political, economic, or cultural entity during any period in antiquity? Blera and its territory are never spoken of as such in the few ancient sources that mention it. The term *ager Bleranus* is, as already mentioned in Chapter 1.6, based on modern convention. The area was archaeologically defined by Giovanni Colonna in 1967, and the name *ager Bleranus* was subsequently coined by Luciano Santella in the 1980s.[44] Albeit convenient, the term *ager Bleranus* is somewhat problematic; it connotes that Blera and its surroundings indeed formed a political unit on the same level as e.g. the neighbouring much more powerful cities of Tarquinii, Caere, and Vulci, for the territories of which the term *ager* is attested in ancient sources. This would be an inaccurate assertion. Even though some evidence does point to some sort of cultural and economic territory, and thereby also a common cultural identity for the inhabitants of the area as *Blerani*, it does not mean that Blera is to be put on a par, at a political level, with these above-mentioned cities.[45] For these reasons I find that a more suitable term to refer to Blera and its territory is simply the Biedano region, conferring to this an area extending well beyond the immediate Biedano river valley.

The Biedano valley can be seen as a corridor situated between the Tolfa, Cimini, and Sabatini Mountains, as well as the dense forests at its eastern edges, the Silva Ciminia. Vast surrounding necropoleis as well as a most strategic position on the Via Clodia, which most certainly had an Etruscan predecessor, testify to the importance of the area. As will be discussed in Chapters 2.2 and 2.4, Blera controlled the Biedano valley towards Norchia and Tuscana with connecting roads to Tarquinii and the coast, Caere to the south, Sutrium to the east, and Volsinii to the north. These are strong indications of Blera being an administrative and economic centre, at least in the Archaic period.

In the Archaic period the area was densely populated, more so than many other Etruscan regions.[46] As will be seen later in the study, in Chapter 3, this is also attested

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[44] Colonna 1967c, 13–15; Santella 1986, 6; 1988, 3; 2014, 29.

[45] For a more thorough discussion on the power relations between cities and towns in the area, see Ch. 5.4 below.

[46] Colonna 1967c, 13; Santella 2014, 29–30.

by the field surveys conducted in the area. This very favourable position would certainly have affected, and influenced, Blera's immediate surroundings and neighbouring towns. That Blera was regarded as one of the urban centres of inland Etruria is attested in written sources, by Strabo (*c.* 63 BC–AD 23) as well as Pliny the Elder (*c.* AD 23–79) and Ptolemy (*fl. c.* AD 130–170). Strabo includes Blera among the small towns of the area, in the group of the πολίχναι συχναί, Ptolemy includes it when listing the towns of inland Etruria, and Pliny mentions the *Blerani* when listing the various peoples of inland Etruria. These will be presented more in detail in Chapter 2.2.

In Villanovan times the area seems to have been somewhat autonomous, albeit the Tarquinian material influence is strong. Beginning in the 7th century BC, at least the southern parts of the area seem to have come under the influence of Caere, which is notable in the funerary architecture of the Archaic-period tombs, and in the ceramic material, especially the strong influence of Caeretan White-on-red pottery, visible at San Giovenale and occurring northwards all the way to Acquarossa. Subsequently the area most probably returned to the sphere of Tarquinii no later than the early 4th century BC.[47] The reasons for this will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 4, but one contributing factor could possibly have been that Caere supposedly received the *civitas sine suffragio*, when becoming a Roman ally in the wake of the Gallic sack of Rome in 390 BC.[48]

In the 4th century BC, the economic and political centre of the area seems to have shifted from the southern Biedano valley to the northern towns of Norchia and Axia, as indicated by the substantial necropoleis with monumental rock-cut façade tombs, a funerary architectural type which is unique to the study area and dated to the 5th–2nd centuries BC. This type of tomb is also present at Blera and San Giuliano, but its most important representatives are to be found at Norchia and Axia. The northern tendency is also supported by the inscriptions: while the Archaic-period inscriptions are concentrated to the southern part of the area, to San Giuliano, San Giovenale, and Blera, the concentration of the more recent ones is to be found in the north, at Norchia and Axia.[49] The inscriptions will be further investigated in Chapter 4.2. Nevertheless, since Blera became a *municipium* in the mid-1st century BC, it is reasonable to hold that it remained an important town also in the 4th–2nd centuries BC.

[47] Colonna 1967c, 11–16.

[48] There is an ongoing discussion on when Caere actually received the *civitas sine suffragio*. The ancient sources tell us that Caere was rewarded with a form of alliance as a token of gratitude for providing asylum for the Vestal virgins: see Strabo 5.2.3; Livy 5.50.3; Gellius *Noct. Att.* 16.13.7. Although many scholars (e.g. Colivicchi 2015, 178) find this information plausible, it is strongly rejected by Oakley, who fixes the date to 274/273 BC, when Caere became a Roman *praefectura*: see Oakley 1998, 199–202.

[49] Benelli 2014a, 84–85.

2.1 Geology and topography

The landscape of south Etruria is one which was once rich in active volcanoes, the craters of which have become lakes over time. This volcanic character has had an enormous impact for the formation of the landscape of the historic period. The underlying solid geology of the area consists of limestone which was created from the late Cretaceous to the early Eocene periods.[50] Above the limestone lays a thick layer of tuff, a pyroclastic rock which has been created by volcanic activity in the Pliocene to Pleistocene periods. Very easily eroded, it has been shaped by rivers and torrents which for hundreds of thousands of years have carved their way through the tuff layer. All this gives the landscape an exceptional character with hilltop plateaux surrounded by steep ravines. Etruscan settlements were most often constructed on these natural plateaux, easily defensible and surrounded by watercourses. The tuff rock also has characteristics which make the area very desirable for human occupation: flat, easily ploughed, and since the rock crumbles under the plough, it not only provides a continuous supply of soil, but also a soil which carries all the important nutrients necessary for plant life. The soil is permeable and well drained, and the tuff rock from which it is formed is also very easy to work with: its soft characteristics make it easy to cut, and it thus provides a good source for building material.[51] The southern parts of ancient Etruria and all of central Lazio is formed of this type of landscape,[52] and the territory here under investigation is no different. Blera, which we find in the middle of this extraordinary landscape, is situated on one of these tuff plateaux.

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[50] Hemphill 2000, 19; Bengtsson 2001, 9; Backe-Forsberg 2005, 44–45; Judson 2013, 34–40.

[51] Hemphill 2000, 22.

[52] Fries 1962, 233; Judson 2013, 34.

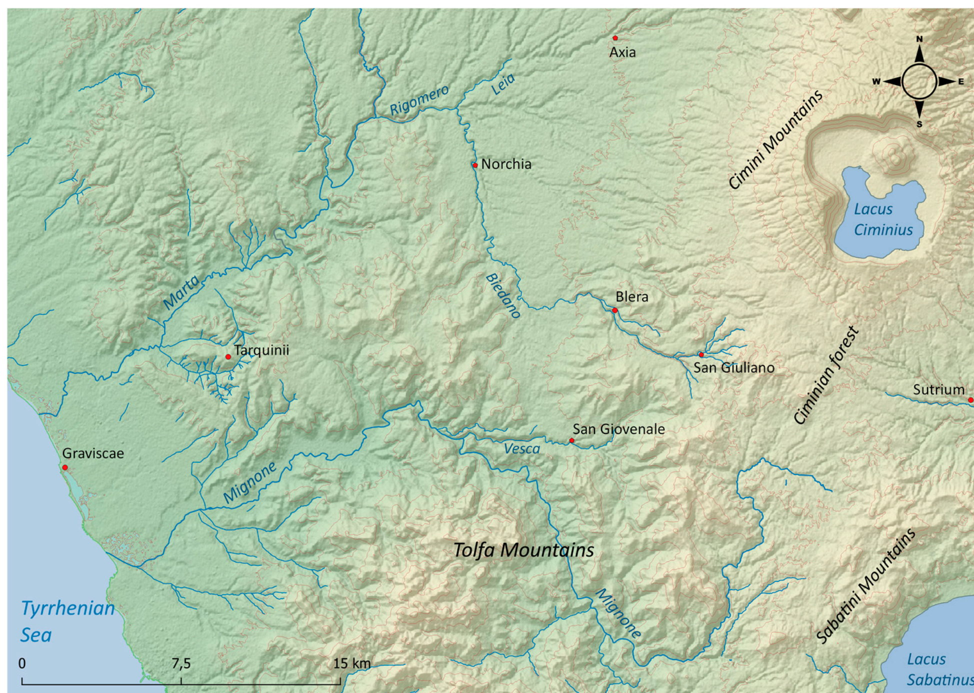

Fig. 2. Map of central south Etruria.

In the south-western parts of the area tower the bluish Tolfa Mountains, spreading on both sides of the Mignone. These tuff mountains and hills were created by volcanic activity dating from the late Pliocene to the early Pleistocene periods. To the east of Blera there are two other ranges of mountains and hills formed during the early Pleistocene, the Cimini Mountains, formed by volcanic activity by the Vico volcano, with the Lago di Vico later forming in its caldera, and to the south the Sabatini Mountains which in turn were created by volcanic activity, including the depression now filled by the Lago di Bracciano.[53] Also to the west, in the surroundings of the medieval town of Monte Romano, one encounters tufa hills, forming a natural western border of the region towards Tarquinii. The northern parts of the area have the same characteristics of hilltop plateaux and ravines, although not showing as impressive mountain ranges as the south.

Thus, the morphology of the landscape is a creation of the changing forces of nature where tectonic activity, and the subsequent wind and water erosion have all played their part. But of course, human activity has also contributed to this process, especially from

[53] Hemphill 2000, 19; Judson 2013, 34; Pulcinelli 2016, 10.

the time of the introduction of agriculture.[54] Climatic changes have affected Europe several times during the *c*. 50,000 years it has been inhabited by modern humans, and naturally the area under study was also affected. The climate changed from hot and dry in the Bronze Age, to a more humid one around the beginning of the historical period, a climate which is reminiscent of the hot summers and mild winters of today. In fact, no substantial climatic change has occurred in the area in the last 2,500 years,[55] although there are data suggesting a slight climate change in the Mediterranean in the period *c*. 300 BC to *c*. AD 300, the so-called "Roman Warm Period". It is however difficult to draw any general conclusions based on the data at our disposal, and even if the climate during the Republican period seems to have been warmer compared to previous periods, it does not seem to have been warmer than the other period in recent history showing rising temperatures, "The Medieval Warm Period", and it is much less pronounced than the current warm period.[56] Consequently it is a reasonable assumption that the preconditions for plant life of Etruscan and Roman times was similar to that of today. Deciduous forests of oak, ash, hornbeam, and chestnut are all common, while alder and hazel are common along riversides. In conclusion one can assume that the potential for farming and land use in central Italy in ancient times was more or less the same as it is today.[57]

Another feature of the area, which has already been touched upon, is the many watercourses that cut through the landscape (*Fig. 2*). Although not to be considered navigable, they served both as itineraries and natural borders. The most important waterway is the Mignone in the southern part of the area, which has its source to the east, close to the town of Vejano, subsequently cutting the Tolfa Mountains. It then passes to the south of Tarquinii, and eventually empties into the Tyrrhenian Sea. One of its tributaries, the Vesca, emerges in the Tolfa mountains, south of Barbarano Romano, and passes the small town of San Giovenale, joining the Mignone in the vicinity of Luni sul Mignone. In the central parts of the territory, the most important watercourse is most definitely the Biedano stream which emerges in the surroundings of San Giuliano, after which it passes Blera and then Norchia. To the north of Norchia it joins with the Rigomero, which emerges further to the east in the surroundings of Axia, and then they merge into the Marta river, passing to the north of Tarquinii on its way to the Tyrrhenian Sea.

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[54] Bengtsson 2001, 11.
[55] Hemphill 2000, 21; Bengtsson 2001, 12.
[56] Hin 2013, 74–79, n. 34.
[57] Hemphill 2000, 21.

2.2 Urban centres

In the area of investigation several larger settlements are to be found. These have been divided into two categories: urban centres, or towns, and villages. The towns of the Biedano region will be described in this section. The definition of a settlement as either a town or a village will be discussed more in detail in Chapter 3.2, but it is still necessary to mention here the factors on which such a definition depends. For a settlement to be defined as a town it has to meet certain criteria. These include the size of the settlement; the presence of sacred structures such as altars or shrines; and if there are remains of other monumental buildings such as bridges, surrounding necropoleis, or hydraulic works and remains or indicia of fortification works. I identify five towns in the area as a whole: Blera, Norchia, Axia, San Giovenale, and San Giuliano. All of these larger settlements have datable material going back to the Archaic period.[58] Whether they are to be considered as towns continuously through all periods is of course difficult to say, but at least the material record suggests continuity, going well into the medieval period. The exceptions are San Giuliano and San Giovenale which seem to have been abandoned, or at least very much reduced in importance and size; San Giovenale already in the late 5th–early 4th centuries and San Giuliano in the late 3rd–2nd centuries BC. In the case of Blera there is continuity to the present day. Occupation at the village sites is less constant. While some of the villages show continuity in all periods, others disappear, and new ones are established.

[58] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970; Quilici Gigli 1976; Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978; Hemphill 2000.

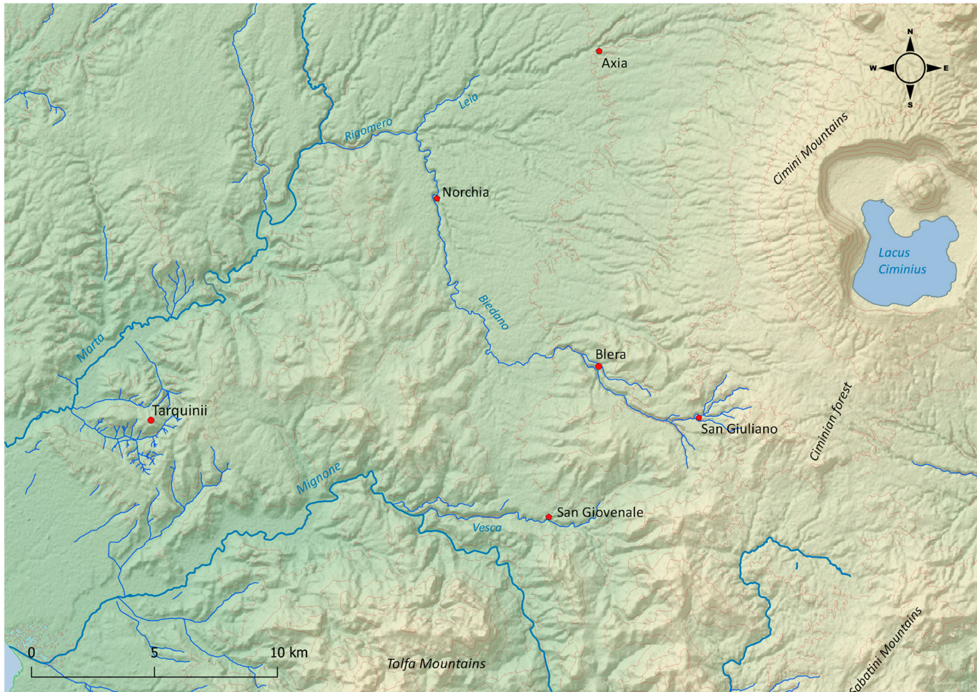

Fig. 3. Distribution of urban centres in the Biedano region from the Archaic to the late Republican periods. Notable watercourses are shown.

Impressive necropoleis, separated from the inhabited area by deep ravines, surround practically all larger settlements in Etruria, and it is the case in the area here under investigation.[59] In this section the grand necropoleis of Blera, Norchia, Axia, San Giovenale, and San Giuliano will be presented under each town respectively. The monumental rock-cut façade tombs are unique to these centres; a new architectural type developed from the more ancient cube tombs. They are characterised by a high façade with decorative mouldings and false doors, *sottofacciata* level beneath, and underlying hypogeum, where the burial chamber is to be found. This specific architectural type emerged in the interior independently of any cultural influence from the larger cities (either on the coast or in the interior) and is concentrated in the valleys of the Biedano and Leia streams: Norchia, Blera, and San Giuliano in the Biedano valley, and Axia in the Leia valley.[60]

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Blera is listed by the ancient geographers. It also appears in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*. In contrast, none of the other

[59] Fries 1962, 235.

[60] Pallottino 1937, 581, 588; Santella 1988, 8.

towns in the region is ever mentioned, with the exception of Axia, which is only mentioned once as a *castellum* by Cicero.[61] However, let us take a look on the lists provided by the ancient geographers, starting with Strabo.

> In the interior there are still other cities besides those already mentioned—Arretium, Perusia, Volsinii, and Sutrium; and, besides these, numerous small towns—Blera, Ferentinum, Falerii, Faliscum, Nepeta, Statonia, and several others; some of them are constituted as of old, while others the Romans have colonised, or else have brought low, as they did Veii, which had oftentimes gone to war with them, and as they did Fidenae. Some, however, call the Falerii, not "Tyrrheni," but "Falisci," a special and distinct tribe; again, others call Faliscum a city with a special language all its own; and others mean by Faliscum "Aequum Faliscum" which is situated on the Flaminian Way between Ocricli and Rome.[62]

Blera is listed here among the smaller towns, which Strabo refers to as πολίχναι συχναί, putting it on a par with Falerii, Faliscum, Nepet, Statonia, and Ferentinum, while he designates as πόλεις Arretium, Perusia, Volsinii, and Sutrium. Now, while the first three of his cities are completely unproblematic, it is interesting that he puts Sutrium in this larger category. According to Judson and Hemphill, Sutrium occupied an area of 7.5 ha, considerably smaller than the others in the same category; for example, Volsinii occupied 82 ha. But it is even more interesting if we consider that some what Strabo called πολίχναι συχναί are actually larger than Sutrium, with Falerii measuring 26 ha and Nepet 17.5 ha.[63] We must however take into consideration that the figures of Judson and Hemphill refer to the 6th–5th centuries BC; Strabo, writing his *Geography* in the early 1st century AD, most probably referred to the situation in his own time, furthermore referring to Falerii Novi while Judson and Hemphill refer to the older settlement at today's Civita Castellana. The most interesting aspect to note, however, is the total absence of any of the other towns in these parts of the *ager Tarquiniensis*; Strabo includes Blera, but completely omits both Norchia and Axia, as well as two other important Etruscan towns to the north of these, Tuscana and Musarna.

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[61] Cic. *Pro Caec.* 7.20.

[62] Strabo *Geo.* 5.2.9. "Ἐν δὲ τῇ μεσογαίᾳ πόλεις πρὸς ταῖς εἰρημέναις Ἀρρήτιόν τε καὶ Περουσία καὶ Οὐολσίνιοι καὶ Σούτριον· πρὸς δὲ ταύταις πολίχναι συχναί, Βλήρα τε καὶ Φερεντῖνον καὶ Φαλέριοι καὶ Φαλίσκον καὶ Νεπήτα καὶ Στατωνία καὶ ἄλλαι πλείους, αἱ μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς συνεστῶσαι, τινὲς δὲ τῶν Ῥωμαίων οἰκισάντων ἢ ταπεινωσάντων, καθάπερ τοὺς Οὐηίους πολεμήσαντας πολλάκις καὶ τὰς Φιδήνας. ἔνιοι δ᾽ οὐ Τυρρηνούς φασι τοὺς Φαλερίους, ἀλλὰ Φαλίσκους, ἴδιον ἔθνος· τινὲς δὲ καὶ τοὺς Φαλίσκους πόλιν ἰδιόγλωσσον· οἱ δὲ Αἰκουουμφαλίσκον λέγουσιν ἐπὶ τῇ Φλαμινίᾳ ὁδῷ κείμενον μεταξὺ Ὀκρίκλων καὶ Ῥώμης." Transl. by H.L. Jones 1923.

[63] Judson & Hemphill 1981, table 1, 195–196.

Moving on to the list of Pliny the Elder, when listing the different peoples of Etruria, we can perceive a similar pattern:

> In the interior are the colonies of Falisca, founded by the Argives according to Cato, and surnamed Falisci Etruscorum, Lucus Feroniae, Rusellae, Saena, and Sutrium. The remaining peoples are the Arretini Veteres, the Arretini Fidentiores, the Arretini Julienses, the Amitinenses, the Aquenses, surnamed Taurini, the Blerani, the Cortonenses, the Capenates, the Clusini Novi, the Clusini Veteres, the Florentini, situated on the bank of the Arno, running past it, Faesulae, Ferentinum, Fescennia, Hortanum, Herbanum, Nepeta, Novem Pagi, the Claudian prefecture of Foroclodium, Pistorium, Perusia, the Suanenses, the Saturnini, formerly called the Aurini, the Subertani, the Statonenses, the Tarquinienses, the Tuscanienses, the Vetulonienses, the Veientani, the Vesentini, the Volaterrani, the Volcentani, surnamed Etrusci, and the Volsinienses. In the same area the *agri* Crustuminus and Caletranus retain the names of the ancient towns.[64]

As seen, all the cities and towns listed by Strabo are also mentioned by Pliny, and the only people in the Biedano region who are mentioned are the *Blerani*. Pliny, also writing in the 1st century AD, did not of course have first-hand knowledge of the situation in the periods in focus for this study, i.e. the 5th to the 1st centuries BC, but the fact that Blera apparently is the only town worth noting is still of great interest. Ptolemy, in his *Geographica*, also follows the same pattern. When listing the towns and cities of interior Etruria, he mentions only Blera among the larger settlements. The other towns he mentions in the vicinity are Sutrium, Tarquinii, Forum Clodii (near Lago di Bracciano), Nepeta, Falerium, and Caere. The ports of Caere and Tarquinii, Pyrgi and Graviscae, are also mentioned, though in the section dealing with towns close to the Tyrrhenian Sea.[65]

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[64] Pliny 3.52. "Intus coloniae Falisca Argis orta (ut auctor est Cato) quae cognominatur Etruscorum, Lucus Feroniae, Rusellana, Seniensis, Sutrina. de cetero Arretini Veteres, Arretini Fidentiores, Arretini Iulienses, Amitinenses, Aquenses cognomine Taurini, Blerani, Cortonenses, Capenates, Clusini Novi, Clusini Veteres, Florentini praefluenti Arno adpositi, Faesulae, Ferentinum, Fescennia, Hortanum, Herbanum, Nepeta, Novem Pagi, Praefectura Claudia Foroclodi, Pistorium, Perusia, Suanenses, Saturnini qui antea Aurini vocabantur, Subertani, Statonenses, Tarquinienses, Tuscanienses, Vetulonienses, Veientani, Vesentini, Volaterrani, Volcentani cognomine Etrusci, Volsinienses. in eadem parte oppidorum veterum nomina retinent agri Crustuminus, Caletranus." Transl. by author.

[65] Ptolemy *Geo*. 3.1.4, 3.1.50.

2.2.1 Blera

Fig. 4. View from the north-west of modern Blera. Photograph by R. Rönnlund.

Blera, the principal focus of this study, is situated on a hilltop plateau in the Biedano valley some 55 km north-west of Rome. Blera has attracted the interest of scholars and intellectual adventurers since the mid-19th century, beginning with George Dennis's very influential and important *The cities and cemeteries of Etruria*, first published in 1848. Compared to other Etruscan towns in the Viterbese region, the turning of scholarly attention to Blera must be regarded as relatively late. In the early 20th century, the German Archaeological Institute thoroughly surveyed the necropoleis surrounding the city plateau, contributing to the wider interest in the necropoleis of the area. Although it was supposed to be part of a much larger project, covering the rock-cut necropoleis of south Etruria, their investigation resulted in the, to this day, only major publication of the necropoleis of Blera.[66] Subsequent studies by Gino Rosi and Augusto Gargana provided further knowledge of the architectural funerary typology.[67] The latest

[66] Koch *et al.* 1915, 161–310; Pulcinelli 2016, 188.

[67] Rosi 1925, 3, 10, 19; Gargana & Romanelli 1932, 485–506.

major contribution to the study of Blera and its territory is the already mentioned 1976 publication of Stefania Quilici Gigli, *Blera. Topografia antica della città e del territorio*.

There is no direct epigraphic testimony of the Etruscan name of the town. It is however clear that the present form Blera was already in use in the Roman period, as testified by the works of the ancient authors discussed in the preceding subchapter and in Latin inscriptions.[68] Colonna has attempted a reconstruction of the Etruscan toponym, with the personal name *Plaise* as point of departure. This is deduced from the Volsinian *gentilicium Plaisena*, to which family belonged three cube tombs, dated to the second half of the 6th century BC, in the Crocifisso del Tufo necropolis at Orvieto. In accordance with other Etruscan toponyms ending in *-ra*, it would be possible to reconstruct the name in the Archaic period as **Plaise-ra*, with the meaning "City of *Plaise*". Subsequently, during the 5th century BC, when the Etruscan language underwent a process of syncopation, the name would have corrupted into **Plaisra*, and then **Plaira*. Finally, with the closing of the diphthong *ai*, it would have arrived at the form **Plera*, which in Latin would, according to the common standard where Etruscan *pl-* changes into *bl-*, result in the attested *Blera*.[69] According to another hypothesis, it is suggested that the toponym derived from the Greek Βλῆραι, referring to a type of stinging nettle.[70] Other suggestions include Phoenician *Bel er*, meaning custodian; Hebrew *Beera*, meaning well; a derivation from the Latin verb *fluere*, to flow or to stream; and Etruscan *Φlera*, with no known meaning.[71]

In the Middle Ages the name was again corrupted, first into *Bleda*, and then *Bieda*, a form the town kept until 1952, when it was officially reverted to its ancient form. However, the form Bieda is common in local speech to this day.[72]

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[68] *CIL* XI, 3337–3338; also the form *Blaera* is attested, *CIL* VI, 3645.

[69] Colonna 2014, 91–92.

[70] Alessio 1962, 111.

[71] Santella 1981, 7; Steingräber 1983, 325. Santella also suggests a derivation from a supposed Greek "Filera", which according to him means fortified site, but there does not seem to exist a Greek word corresponding to that with this meaning.

[72] Santella 1981, 7.

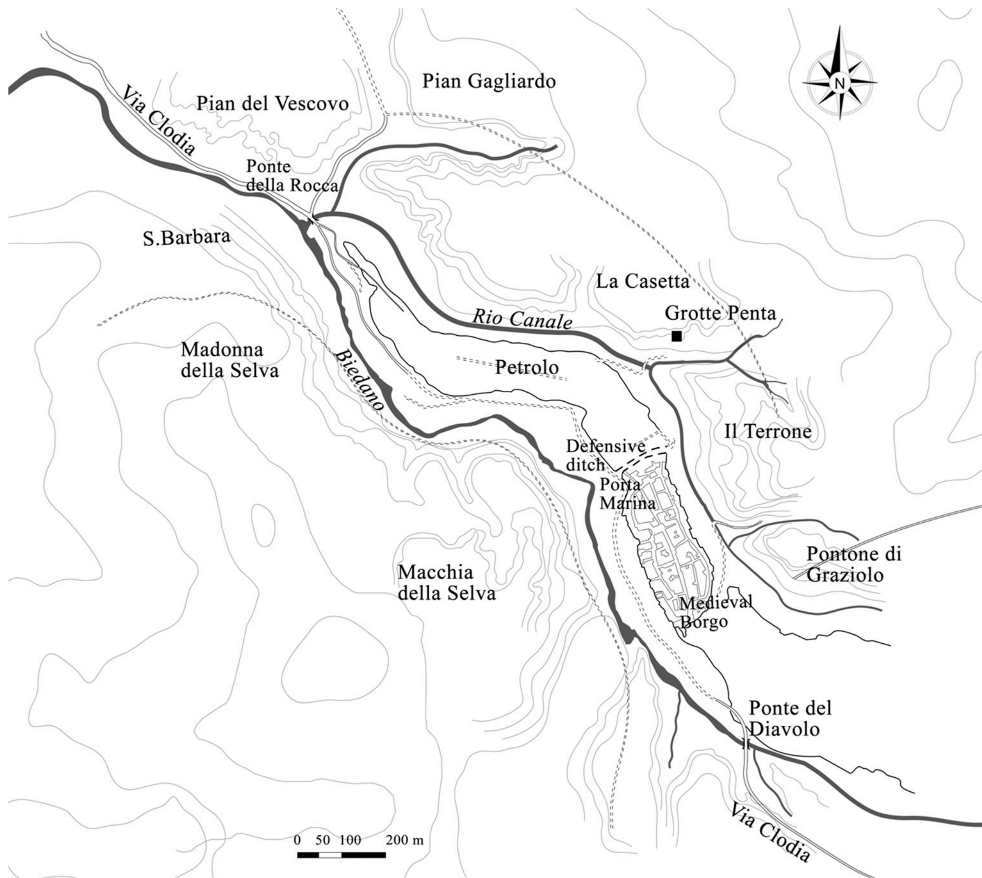

Fig. 5. Reconstructed plan of Blera. Plan by R. Abedi. After Quilici Gigli 1976, tables 3, 9.

The site of Blera was already inhabited in the Bronze Age, while there are fewer signs of activity in the Villanovan period (9th–8th centuries BC).[73] From the study of archaeological material found on the plateau, it is possible to establish the formation of the town to around the 8th–7th centuries BC. The Archaic-period material is abundant, according to Quilici Gigli particularly if we take into consideration the continuity of the settlement into the subsequent periods.[74] The Hellenistic period, the last phase of the Etruscan town, has been less documented, both with reference to architectural studies of the necropoleis, and documentation of finds from archaeological excavations and investigations.[75] Blera flourished during the Archaic

[73] Ricciardi 1987a, 42.
[74] Quilici Gigli 1976, 160.
[75] Barbieri *et al.* 2004, 90.

period, to a large degree thanks to its geographical position on the road that connected Caere and the Tyrrhenian coast with inland Etruria. Together with San Giuliano, Blera was the most important town of the region in-between Caere, Tarquinii, Veii, and the *ager Faliscus*. After the south Etruscan crisis of the 5th century BC, when the economic, political, and cultural centre of the region seems to have shifted towards the north, to the area between Norchia and Axia, Blera was reduced to a secondary role.[76] However, Blera seems to have somewhat regained its former position in the Roman Republican period, as indicated by the fact that it became a *municipium* after the Social War, and to references in Imperial-period written sources. Furthermore, in late Antiquity Blera was elevated to a diocese in AD 457, a status the town retained until AD 1093 when it merged with the diocese of Toscanella (Tuscana), present Tuscania. In the early 7th century AD Blera belonged to the Byzantine territories in Italy, but was subsequently conquered by the Langobard king Liutprand in AD 738, only to be donated to the Church in AD 742. In AD 772 Blera was besieged and destroyed by Desiderius, the last king of the Langobards, but was handed back to the Church two years later by Charlemagne. In the High Middle Ages, Blera belonged to the fiefdoms of various powerful families, in particular the De Vico family of Viterbo who held Blera in the 13th to the 15th centuries. Thereafter Blera entered the dominions of the Papal States, where it remained until the unification of Italy in 1870.[77]

The ancient town of Blera was situated on a plateau with the tip overlooking the intersection of the Biedano and Rio Canale streams. The steep slopes of the plateau were reinforced by walls or terraces, which together with the absence of ceramic material and the presence of late Republican tombs, makes it likely that the slopes were never inhabited. The north-west part of the plateau, today called the Petrolo, is separated from the remainder by a defensive ditch, running east–west, just outside the Porta Marina. Another ditch, now partly filled in, is to be found further to the south, in the vicinity of the now destroyed Porta Romana. Since the southern parts of the plateau lack any natural boundary, the northern ditch was probably part of a defensive structure, and thus marked the limits of the Etruscan town. Although the ditch, in its present form, is most likely referable to the medieval period, it is not impossible that it was originally much more ancient; it seems to have been enlarged at some point in time.[78] The defensive character of the ditch is very important since it is connected to the extent of the settlement. Based on this Quilici Gigli estimates the size of the Etruscan town to 6–7 ha, a rather restricted area, and considerably inferior for example to the estimated inhabited area of Axia, measuring 14 ha, the necropoleis of which cover

[76] Barbieri *et al.* 2004, 89–90.
[77] Santella 1981, 8–9; Steingräber 1983, 327.
[78] Quilici Gigli 1976, 157–160.

a more limited area.[79] This is consistent with the estimation of Judson and Hemphill who give the area as only 6.7 ha.[80] The figures in question can only be referred to the Petrolo, which according to my own measurements extends over *c.* 7.4 ha.[81]

However, Quilici Gigli argues that although the inhabited area in Roman times probably did not occupy the extreme tip of the plateau, which was also uninhabited in preceding periods, it now probably stretched beyond the ditch, even if it did not cover the entire area later to be occupied in medieval times.[82] According to Santella, buildings dated earlier than the 12th century AD are very rare in the *Centro storico*, and therefore it would be safe to assume that at least the most important part of the ancient, and early medieval, town was situated on the Petrolo plateau, where many such structures are present.[83] However, according to Luca Pulcinelli recent studies would instead indicate that the Etruscan-period settlement would have incorporated all of the later medieval *borgo*.[84]

The study of the medieval walls of the town has also been important for the study of the preceding Etruscan defensive walls, which according to Pulcinelli are to be dated to the second half of the 4th century BC. The construction of defensive walls reflects the wartime situation in which the region found itself in this period, and it is plausible that the walls were constructed as a response to that.[85] Since traces of the ancient walls have been recognised, and which correspond to the limits of the modern settlement, it is plausible that all of the southern parts of the plateau are to be considered as incorporated in the Etruscan settlement, which would render the town much larger before the Roman period,[86] covering an area of roughly 12 ha. Regarding the size of the population, there are several ways to make an estimation. But if we consider a density of 150 inhabitants per ha, which tends to be attributed to Etruscan cities,[87] the population of Blera would have amounted to roughly 1,800 inhabitants.

There were great changes to the topography of the town contemporaneous with the construction of the Ponte della Rocca, dated to the 2nd century BC. A road was constructed on the tip of the plateau, and this was accompanied by *loculi* and *arcosolia*.

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[79] Quilici Gigli 1976, 157–158.

[80] Judson & Hemphill 1981, table 1, 195–196.

[81] I have calculated the inhabited area of the towns using Google maps.

[82] Quilici Gigli 1976, 22, 160. Quilici Gigli bases this assertion on the fact that a *peperino cippus* with a funerary inscription has been found in this area, close to an ancient Roman road which divided the town into a western and an eastern part; *CIL* XI, 3353.

[83] Santella 1981, 71–72.

[84] Quilici Gigli estimates the inhabited area to 6–7 ha, but this reconstruction is very doubtful, see Quilici Gigli 1976, 158; cf. also Santella 1993, 46–56; Pulcinelli 2016, 188, 316, n. 1279.

[85] Pulcinelli 2016, 189; a 4th-century BC dating is also supported by Corzani (2010, 35).

[86] Pulcinelli 2016, 189–190.

[87] Nogara 1933, 46; Heurgon 1961, 176–180; Evans 1976, 510.

These probably formed a monumental aspect, completely new compared to the more ancient necropoleis. The recognised remains on the plateau are in general those of terraces or private buildings.[88]

Blera was always a relatively small settlement, but a dense system of hydraulic structures, such as *cuniculi*, wells, and cisterns, remains of walls and substructures, fortifications and streets all attest the intensity of life in the town. Blera was also well connected to other cities, towns, and villages in the surrounding countryside. A complex network of roads and trails, often deeply worn into the tuff, connected Blera to the neighbouring centres.[89]

Monumental architecture, including bridges such as the Ponte del Diavolo (dated to the 1st century BC) and the earlier-mentioned Ponte della Rocca, are further indications of Blera's ancient importance. However, the most spectacular architectural feature of Blera, and perhaps the most indicative of its prominence, is its surrounding necropoleis. The most important of these are situated on four hilltop localities surrounding the city plateau: Il Terrone, La Casetta with Grotta Penta, Pian del Vescovo, and Madonna della Selva/S. Barbara. As already mentioned, the necropoleis of Blera were studied by a German expedition in the beginning of the 20th century, and for a detailed account I refer to their publication.[90] The importance of the German publication cannot be emphasised enough. Apart from the very detailed and thorough study carried out, the conditions for this kind of survey have changed; because of the much sparser vegetation encountered at the beginning of the 20th century, a consequence of the more extensive keeping of sheep and other livestock, the preconditions for studying the necropoleis of Blera were much more favourable then compared to the situation in the 1970s and to that of today, when the vegetation has grown very thick.[91]

The majority of the tombs are so-called chamber tombs, hewn directly from the rock, and referable to the Archaic period, the 6th and early 5th centuries BC. However, there are tombs dating as far back as the 9th century BC, to the Villanovan period, as well as tumulus-type tombs dating to the 7th–6th centuries. The earliest chamber tombs are of the *fenditura superiore* type and suggest a Tarquinian cultural influence. From the late 7th century, and continuing through all of the 6th, the style shows Caeretan traits. The tumulus and cube tombs for instance, are very Caeretan in style.[92] In addition to these there are also more recent *arcosolia*, *loculi*, and *fossa* types. Some tombs have been used for many generations, also being modified in later periods. These are facts that all

[88] Quilici Gigli 1976, 22.
[89] Santella 1981, 8.
[90] Koch *et al.* 1915.
[91] Quilici Gigli 1976, 221.
[92] Ricciardi 1987a, 42.

attest to the continuity and longevity of the settlement. The most ancient necropoleis are situated on the plateaux, while the Subarchaic and Hellenistic rock-cut necropoleis are generally situated at a lower level, on parallel lines along the ridges of the valleys of the Biedano and the Rio Canale.[93]

In the Il Terrone locality, to the east of the town, there is a concentration of tumuli, chamber tombs, and cube tombs, both semi-cube and true cubes, most of which date to the 7th–5th centuries.[94] Some of these show portals with Doric-style frames. These monuments may contain one or two distinct tombs, some even with two chambers.

In the north-east necropolis, in the La Casetta locality, one finds the most ancient tombs, some dating as far back as to the Villanovan period, to the 9th–8th centuries BC. The most common type are chamber tombs dated to the 7th century BC, but there are also tumuli and chamber tombs dated to the 6th century. On the southern slopes we find the rock-cut necropolis dating to the 6th and 4th centuries, among the tombs of which is a particularly well-preserved semi-cube tomb, with an external staircase leading up to a platform on the top of the tomb (*Fig. 6*).

[93] Santella 1981, 7–8.

[94] Quilici Gigli 1976, 211–212.

Fig. 6. Semi-cube tomb 5th/4th centuries BC. Blera, necropolis of La Casetta. Photograph by R. Abedi.

In the same area is the the *Grotte Penta* complex, two painted tombs dating to the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. Amongst the sepulchres there are also *fossa* and *pozzetto* tombs from the Subarchaic to the Roman Republican periods (dating to the 4th–2nd centuries BC). Furthermore, there are signs of reutilisation of a chamber tomb in the later Roman period.

Immediately to the north of the Petrolo promontory is the necropolis of Pian del Vescovo. In addition to the survey conducted by the German expedition in 1914, excavations were carried out here by the Soprintendenza Archeologica per l'Etruria

Meridionale in 1925, and in 1930. Further excavations were also carried out by the Soprintendenza in 1988. The situation here, with Archaic-period chamber tombs and late Archaic cube tombs, is similar to the one in the eastern necropoleis. The more recent tombs, dated to the 4th–3rd centuries BC, are situated on a lower level than the Archaic ones found on the highest points of the plateau. In this locality one also finds the same type of Doric frames around some of the cube tomb doors. There are also *fossa* type tombs dated to the Roman period.[95]

To the west of the Petrolo lies the fourth of the major necropoleis, in the Madonna della Selva/S. Barbara locality. The tombs here are of tumulus and chamber types and are rather early in date, with tombs typically dated to the 8th–6th centuries BC. There are however also later tombs, e.g. one chamber tomb discovered following illegal clandestine (tomb-robbing) excavations in 1969, in the Pariano locality, which is dated to the 5th–4th centuries, and was later modified in the 3rd century BC. In this tomb five sarcophagi were found, one of which had an Etruscan inscription on the front, dated to the 3rd century BC.[96] The inscription in question will be discussed further in Chapter 4.4, but it is interesting to mention here that it records the epitaph of a person of the noble Tarquinian *gens Spurina*, and thus attests to the presence of this family in the territory of Blera in the late 4th and early 3rd centuries BC, and furthermore sheds light on the ties between Blera and Tarquinii during this period of wars between the latter and Rome. The epitaph most probably belonged to the proprietor of the reutilised version of this tomb, and it was inscribed on the most ancient of the sarcophagi.[97]

In addition, a small Hellenistic-period necropolis in the le Casacce locality was revealed and excavated in 1982 by the Soprintendenza Archeologica per l'Etruria Meridionale together with the Centro di Catalogazione Beni Culturali della Provincia di Viterbo.[98] Le Casacce is situated to the north-east of the modern town, on the tuff cliff on which the medieval town later developed. The position is quite exceptional, since it occupies the slopes of the inhabited tuff plateau along the side towards the Rio Canale, in an area where no tombs had been known previously, even if Quilici Gigli briefly considers the possibility of a necropolis in this area.[99] A total of nine chamber tombs were revealed. These are dated to the 3rd–2nd centuries BC. Unfortunately, centuries of erosion have destroyed the façades, seemingly of monumental aspect, of these tombs. Scarce traces of the architectonic façade, with a porticoed sublevel, have

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[95] Koch *et al.* 1915; Quilici Gigli 1976, 225–226. Quilici Gigli refers to the Arch. Sopr. Etr. Merid., vecchie pratiche, s.v. Blera, 19 mar. 1925, see Quilici Gigli 1976, 225, n. 742; Santella 1981, 50; Ricciardi 1991, 32.

[96] Colonna 1971, 338–339; 1972, 462; Quilici Gigli 1976, 155, n. 569.

[97] See Ch. 4.4 below, s.v. *Spuri(a)na/Spuriena*.

[98] The results were published in Barbieri *et al.* 2004.

[99] Quilici Gigli 1976, no. 317; Barbieri *et al.* 2004, 90–92.

been preserved in only one of the tombs. Most importantly however, this architectural feature suggests a close relationship between Blera and Norchia in the Hellenistic period; the architectural type is limited to Norchia alone and leads one to believe that it represents a local creation of this town, a creation which has also found a following at Blera.[100]

On all the plateaux where we find the Archaic necropoleis, there are also sepulchres from later periods. Especially among the monumental Archaic tombs, we can see numerous inhumations in *fossa* tombs and cremation burials in niches, or new chambers created inside existing tombs, the latter ones presumably belonging to persons of the more elevated classes.[101]

[100] Barbieri *et al.* 2004, 95, 170.
[101] Barbieri *et al.* 2004, 171.

2.2.2 *Norchia*

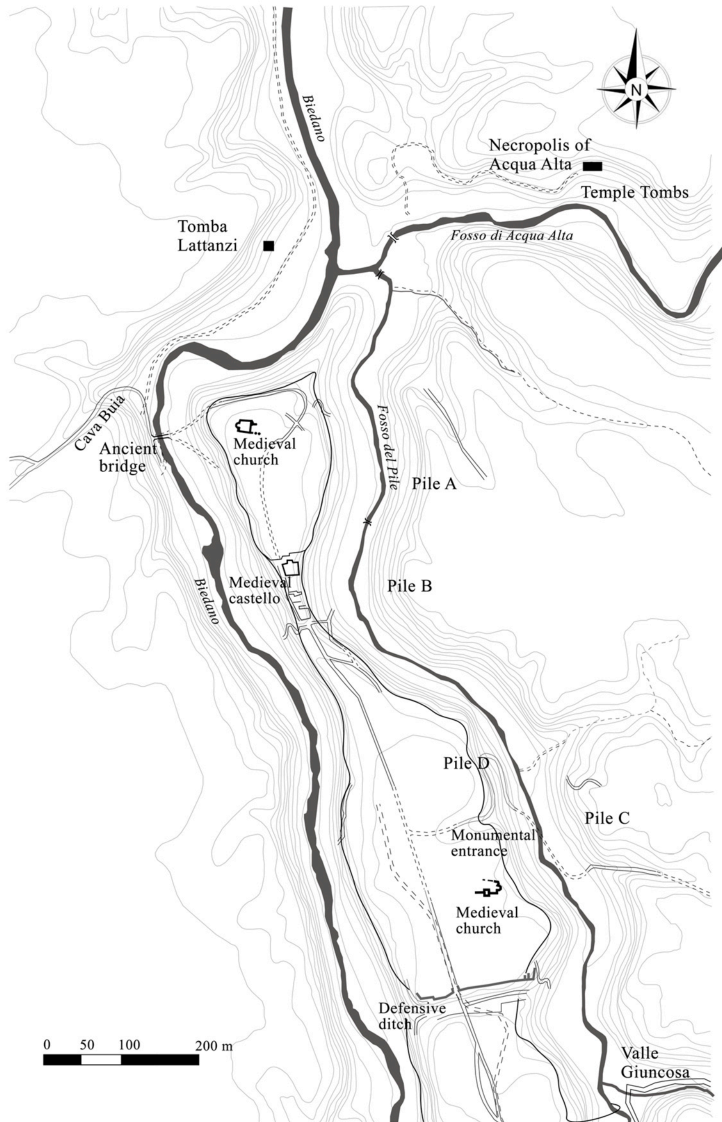

Fig. 7. Reconstructed plan of Norchia. Plan by R. Abedi. After Colonna di Paolo and Colonna 1978, table 29.

The site of the ancient town at Norchia is situated about 9.5 km north-west of Blera. It is to be found on a plateau measuring roughly 850 m in length by 200 m in width at its widest point, and it is delimited by the Biedano stream running below its west side, and its two tributaries the Fosso di Acqua Alta and the Fosso del Pile to the north-

east and east respectively. The northern side overlooks a vast open area created by the waterways. The southern part lacks in any natural boundary separating the hill from the rest of the plateau.[102] The plateau is divided into a northern and a southern hill, connected by a narrow isthmus. The southern hill was probably the site of the main settlement, while most civic and religious activities were presumably concentrated at the northern hill.[103]

Interest in the site, on the part of scholars, began some decades after its abandonment, when it was mentioned by Annio da Viterbo in his *Antiquitatum variarum volumina XVII*, published in 1498. However, it was only "rediscovered" in the early 19th century by Padre Pio Semeria and Francesco Orioli.[104] Thereafter excavations were carried out in 1830, and it was also visited by Dennis, who provided us with a first map, however incomplete, of the settlement, and by Luigi Canina.[105] In the late 19th century the site was then visited by the editors of the *Carta Archeologica d'Italia*.[106] In the early 20th century new excavations were carried out by Luigi Rossi Danielli and Andrea Scriattoli,[107] and subsequently further studies and excavations were made by Rosi and Gargana in 1911.[108] Gargana further led excavations in the sectors Pile A-B-C-D of the eastern necropolis in 1934.[109] After the Second World War the site was unfortunately subject to quite substantial illegal clandestine (tomb-robbing and looting) interventions, both in the necropoleis and on the site of the settlement.[110] The most extensive and first systematic exploration of the site was however begun in 1970, with the works of Elena Colonna di Paolo and Giovanni Colonna, subsequently continued by Laura Ambrosini. For a more detailed analysis I refer to their work.[111]

The Etruscan town is not mentioned in ancient literature or inscriptions, neither by authors, nor by the itineraries, a fact that would suggest that it had lost most of its importance by the late 1st century BC. The first mention of the site stems from medieval documents from the early 9th century AD, where it is called *Orcla* or *Orclae*.[112] The ancient name, both its original Etruscan and its later Roman one, is unfortunately unknown to us, even if Colonna di Paolo and Colonna provide us with the reconstructed Etruscan names **urc*(*u*)*l* and **urclna*, based on the *gentilicia*

[102] Pulcinelli 2016, 178–179.
[103] Pulcinelli 2016, 181.
[104] See Orioli 1825 and 1826.
[105] Canina 1846, vol. II, tables XCI–XCIV; Dennis 1883 (1848), vol. I, 193–205.
[106] Rosi 1925; 1927; Gamurrini *et al.* 1972, 116, fig. 69.
[107] Rossi Danielli 1962, 270.
[108] Rosi 1925, 1927.
[109] Gargana 1936.
[110] Pulcinelli 2016, 178.
[111] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978; Ambrosini 2016; 2018.
[112] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 19, 33, 94.

**Orculae*/ *Urgulanius* and *Orculnius* : *Orgolnius* respectively.[113] Given the obscurity of the ancient name, the modern name Norchia has been preferred for this study, which is also the one conventionally used in archaeological publications.

The site of the settlement, as well as the surrounding countryside, seems to have been frequented in the Upper Palaeolithic period (*c.* 40,000–10,000 BC), and from the Late Chalcolithic there is continuity stretching into the Late Bronze Age. The site prospered in the Late Bronze Age but was subsequently abandoned. With its population it probably contributed to the birth of the Villanovan-period Tarquinii, but there are in fact very few testimonies from the Villanovan and Orientalising periods.[114] Sporadic examples of ceramic material dated to the 6th century BC indicate that the site was reinhabited in the Archaic period,[115] but its peak came a few centuries later. Ceramic material on the city plateau, in addition to the most extraordinary example of rock-cut façade tombs, arguably the most impressive of all in south Etruria, tell of a very important and prosperous settlement here which flourished in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. Although the surrounding hinterland of Norchia has not been subject to any intensive investigations, smaller inhabited sites have been noted.[116] After the middle of the 4th century BC, Norchia, in a short period of time, seems to have assumed the role of administrative centre of the central parts of the Tarquinian territory. However, in the late 2nd century BC it appears to have lost much of its privileged role and was now semi-rural but still populous, as attested by plentiful ceramic material dating to this period. In the 1st century BC with the inauguration of Blera and Tuscana as *municipia*, Norchia's days as an important centre were long gone, and the site seems to have been more or less abandoned by the early Imperial period.[117] There is a lacuna in the material records which covers the period from the 1st century BC up to the 12th century AD, but judging by the written records, the site regained some of its former status in the early medieval period, when it is mentioned as a *civitas*.[118] It was abandoned again in the 10th century, only to be refounded once more in the 12th century when a fortified *castello* was constructed on the earlier city plateau, possibly by Pope Hadrian IV. The site was definitely destroyed and abandoned in 1435.[119] The connection to S. Vivenzio (d. AD 484), first bishop and venerated patron saint of Blera, who according to legend lived as an eremite in a cave in the surroundings of medieval *Orcla*, as well as the name of the stream, the *Biedano* (*Bledanum*), which runs below the city plateau, provide,

[113] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 34.
[114] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 78, 403–404; Ambrosini 2016, 486.
[115] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 405; Ambrosini 2016, 486–487; Pulcinelli 2016, 181.
[116] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 117–120.
[117] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 405, 412; Ambrosini 2016, 439, 486–487.
[118] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 19, 99.
[119] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 27; Ambrosini 2016, 439; Pulcinelli 2016, 178.

according to Colonna di Paolo and Colonna, a clear testimony of the historic relationship between the two towns.[120]

The massive work begun by Colonna di Paolo and Colonna in 1970, which still has to be published in its entirety, focused on the surrounding necropoleis, but also confronted the emergence of the settlement.[121] The inhabited area has never been studied scientifically, and even considering the settlement's long continuity, there are very few visible remains attributable with certainty to the Etruscan settlement.[122] The absence of systematic excavations in the inhabited area makes a precise interpretation of the various chronological phases of the town very difficult, although there are visible remains of structures which most probably are of ancient origins, such as a bridge to the north of the plateau crossing the Biedano, stretches of walls, and a network of *cuniculi*, wells, and cisterns carved out of the tuff. The material recovered from the study of the necropoleis compensates this lacuna to a large extent.[123]

The central parts of the southern plateau are relatively abundant in scattered fragmentary ceramic material which, albeit difficult to date, indicates that this was the site of the most ancient nucleus of the Etruscan settlement, while the northern plateau was probably the most important sector, in ancient as well as in medieval times. To the south the southern plateau is delimited by a defensive ditch, the only part of the settlement devoid of any natural defences.[124] The ditch is considered one of the major works of this kind in Etruria.[125] The eastern entrance of the town seems to have had a monumental character, according to Colonna di Paolo and Colonna a unique complex. Unfortunately, the complex has collapsed, and the dense vegetation has done its part in further obscuring the structures. The street leading up to the gate was flanked on both sides by façade tombs, which must have had a most impressive effect to the visitor.[126] The remains of fortification walls and ditches seem to have been constructed in the early 3rd century BC; plausibly the construction of these can be seen in conjunction with the last phase of Tarquinii's military struggles with Rome, before its surrender. According to Colonna di Paolo and Colonna the ancient settlement measures roughly 9.5 ha, but according to my own measurements the size is closer to 11–12 ha, thus equalling that of Blera.[127] Considering the hypothesis for population

[120] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 23.
[121] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978; Ambrosini 2016; 2018.
[122] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 72–73; Pulcinelli 2016, 181.
[123] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 100–101; Pulcinelli 2016, 181.
[124] Giuliani 1966, 7.
[125] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 58; Ambrosini 2016, 487.
[126] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 74.
[127] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 406.

estimations used for Blera, at its peak Norchia would have had a population of *c.* 1,800 inhabitants, and in any case no more than 2,000.[128]

The necropoleis of Norchia are the most monumental and elaborated of the Hellenistic rock-cut façade necropoleis found in the region. The activity in the necropoleis reached its height in the 4th to the 2nd centuries BC, but the earliest tombs can be dated to the 6th century BC.

The most important sectors, Pile A and Pile B, are situated directly to the east of the settlement, on the other side of the Fosso del Pile. Pile A is the northernmost part of the eastern necropolis, while Pile B forms the central part, facing the isthmus which connects the two heights of the city plateau. Other important sectors are the valley of the Acqua Alta, where the so-called Temple Tombs are to be found, and directly to the north of the settlement, in the Biedano valley, where we find the monumental Tomba Lattanzi. The different sectors are all laid out in evident relation to the roads leading to the town.[129] The funerary types in the necropoleis include cube tombs, semi-cubes, false cubes, with simple or *sottofacciata* façade, hypogean chambers with or without façade, temple tombs, tombs with vestibule, *fossa* tombs, and cinerary niches.[130]

The tombs in the Pile A and Pile B sectors are mainly semi-cube tombs with either a single or two façades in one or two levels, false doors, hypogean funerary chambers, and porticoes.[131] There are traces of white plaster with details in red and black on some of the tombs, which suggests that the façades were originally covered.[132] In the necropolis of the Acqua Alta valley we find two of the most monumental tombs in Norchia, the so-called Temple Tombs, or Doric Tombs (*Fig. 8*). This architectural style, with a temple façade, is very rare in Etruria, but very common in Anatolia, in Lycia and Caria. The style of the two tombs can be described as "eclectic" Doric, and they probably belonged to members of the same *gens*.[133]

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[128] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 406–407.
[129] Pulcinelli 2016, 183.
[130] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 390–398; Ambrosini 2016, 71.
[131] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 398; Ambrosini 2016, 58–59.
[132] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 398; Ambrosini 2016, 437.
[133] Ambrosini 2018, 37–38, 74, 151.

Fig. 8. The so-called Temple Tombs in the necropolis of Acqua Alta, Norchia. Photograph by author.

The study of the sarcophagi found in some of the tombs has concluded that, from the last quarter of the 4th century BC, there existed workshops of sculptors, which perhaps at least partly were also responsible for sculpting the façades of the tombs, and the close resemblance of the tomb architecture at Norchia and Axia makes it plausible that the same master stoneworkers worked in both towns. The typological variety of the tombs at Norchia, compared to the ones at Axia, with external porticoed storeys and false doors among other features, is according to Colonna di Paolo proof of Norchia being ahead in local architectural innovations, and that these innovations were later exported to Axia, through the above-mentioned master stoneworkers.[134] Furthermore, the tombs have yielded a large amount of funerary inscriptions, exceptionally more than in the other towns in the area, and this has provided important information on the leading families and citizens in Norchia during its period as an important centre.[135]

[134] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 247; 1978, 410; Cignini 2014, 249; Ambrosini 2016, 432, 438.
[135] The inscriptions are discussed in more depth in Ch. 4.2 below.

Fig. 9. Necropolis of Norchia, Pile B sector, with semi-cube façade tombs. Photograph by R. Abedi.

The most ancient phase of the Pile A and Pile B sectors can be dated to the second half of the 4th century BC, while the most elaborated and grandiose tombs with porticoes stem from the 3rd century BC. The final phase of the necropoleis is datable from the end of the 3rd century to the end of the 2nd century BC, with a sporadic recovery in the Augustan and Julio-Claudian periods. However, new tombs were not being constructed in this late phase; instead, the norm was to enlarge the funerary chambers

of already existing tombs, or rarely, to cut *loculi*, or niches on the exterior. After this, all activity at the necropoleis ceases, an unambiguous indication of the abandonment of the site.[136]

The articulation of the necropolis shows a distinction between the most monumental tombs, belonging to the élite class of townspeople who were involved in the political life of the town, and who were certainly also the proprietors of large parts of the countryside, and the smaller cube tombs of a prosperous middle class of townspeople, who were probably dedicated to agriculture, and commercial activities.[137]

2.2.3 Axia

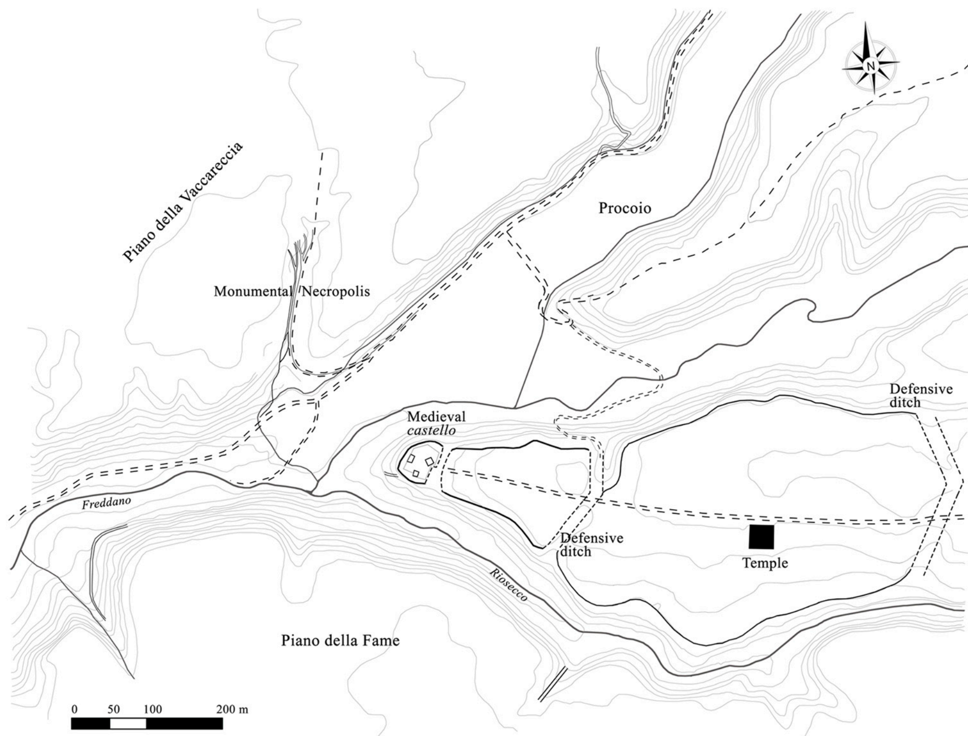

Fig. 10. Reconstructed plan of Axia. Plan by R. Abedi. After Colonna di Paolo and Colonna 1970, table 23.

[136] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 400, 412; Ambrosini 2016, 438–439.
[137] Ambrosini 2016, 484.

Castel d'Asso, the site of ancient Axia, is situated approximately 13 km north of Blera. It occupies a large tuff plateau, somewhat triangular in form, and it is embraced by the Freddano stream to the north and the Riosecco stream to the south. The plateau is naturally defended by slopes and ravines on all sides except for the eastern one, which was reinforced by a complex series of fortifications. The central-west part is dominated by the ruins of a medieval-period *castello*. Axia was connected by roads leading to the west, to Papàla and the Viterbo plain to the north, and to Norchia and thereafter Blera by a road running south.[138]

The site first came to the general knowledge of the scholarly community in 1817, when the *Biblioteca Italiana* of Milan published a short article on the investigations of Orioli and Semeria.[139] At this time nothing was yet published on Norchia or Blera (or Sovana and San Giuliano), which absence contributed to giving Castel d'Asso a disproportionate standing. With the first publications on Sovana, Blera, and Norchia, its importance was gradually reduced to a more appropriate level.[140] The investigations of the necropolis had started before 1817, by Luigi Anselmi, proprietor of the territory. Anselmi then communicated his findings to Orioli and Semeria. However, the site had been identified as early as 1728, by the exiled Viterbese Francesco Mariani. It was also visited by Dennis, who drew the first map of the site. Further investigations took place in the second quarter of the 19th century. Giosafat Bazzicchelli initiated excavations on the plateau in 1870. However, the only published excavation took place in 1873. Except for a clearing project in 1921, which included the restoration of some of the most-damaged tombs, no investigations were carried out until Rosi published two volumes, in 1925 and in 1927. Rosi also traced and improved the map previously drawn by Dennis. The next large excavation was directed by the Soprintendenza in 1955. The Soprintendenza again conducted investigations in 1961, after an episode of illegal excavation/looting.[141] The latest major investigations were conducted by Colonna di Paolo and Colonna who initiated excavations in March 1966, which continued in October of the same year, and in October 1967. Furthermore, minor interventions were carried out in 1967–1968 by a small team of two to three workers in the sectors of the necropolis outside the area that was previously investigated systematically. In the 1980s and 1990s there have been further investigations, albeit of minor character.[142]

[138] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 54–55, 58; Pulcinell 2016, 172.

[139] Orioli & Semeria 1817, 260–274.

[140] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 19–23; Pulcinelli 2016, 171–172, with bibliography.

[141] For the history of the investigations in the area see Milioni 2002, 15–16 with bibliography; Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 19–28; 1978, 413–414.

[142] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 245–246; Barbieri 1999; Pulcinelli 2016, 172.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Axia is only mentioned once in a contemporary source, by M. Tullius Cicero in his defence of Aulus Caecina, of Volaterran origins, who had come into a dispute with another man, Sextus Aebutius, regarding the inheritance of an estate. According to Cicero, the two parties met at a small fort called *Castellum Axia* close to the estate the ownership of which was disputed by Caecina and Aebutius. This estate was said to lie 50 Roman miles from Rome in the territory of Tarquinii,[143] which fits perfectly with the distance from Rome to present-day Castel d'Asso. The 6th-century AD writer Stephanus of Byzantium mentions an 'Αξία πόλις which most definitely is to be identified with the *castellum* discussed by Cicero.[144]

The locality was previously known as *Castellaccio*, and was first called Castel d'Asso by Annio da Viterbo, referring to the *Castellum Axia* mentioned by Cicero.[145] The identification of the site was, as earlier mentioned, first made by Francesco Mariani in his book *De Etruria metropoli, quae Turrhena, Tursenia, Tuscania, atque etiam Beterbon dicta est, in varios auctores castigationes*, published in 1728.[146] This identification was later alternately advocated and rejected by Orioli during the first half of the 19th century.[147] According to Colonna di Paolo and Colonna the identification of Castel d'Asso with the *Axia* mentioned by Cicero and Stephanus of Byzantium is clear for several reasons. It is situated at the distance from Rome given by Cicero, it is described as lying in the *ager Tarquiniensis*, and its extent is quite limited, as for a *castellum*, not a *vicus*. But most important is the name. The site of Castel d'Asso was already in medieval times known by this toponym, in the form *Assi*. The most ancient document mentioning the site as *Assi* is a statute from Viterbo, dated to 1251, but it seems to have been known by this name in 1187.[148] From the form *Assi*, we can easily reach *Axia* by phonetic order. The Etruscan name of the town is not known, and it is not possible to give other than hypotheses. For example, Dennis suggests a connection with the *gentilicium acsi*, documented at Perugia.[149] Accordingly, it is sensible to not speculate any further, at least for now. However, given the high plausibility of an identification with the *Axia* found in Cicero's speech, I have decided to refer to the site by this name.

The picture, given by the finds from the few investigations carried out on the site of the inhabited area, but which unfortunately to a large extent is full of lacunae, indicates that the settlement, in contrast with nearby Norchia, already had seen a considerable

[143] Cic. *Pro Caec.* 7.20, 10.28.
[144] Steph. Byz. *Ethnica*. (ed. A. Meineke, 1849, 102).
[145] Steingräber 1983, 357.
[146] Mariani 1728, 45, 98.
[147] Orioli 1833, 24; Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 29–30.
[148] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 32, nos. 3–5, 37.
[149] Dennis 1883 (1848), vol. I, 185; Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 29–31.

development during the Archaic period, perhaps initiated towards the end of the 7th century BC.[150]

The city plateau was cut off north to south by two almost parallel defensive ditches. Both sets of ditches have been laid out at an obtuse angle, as can be seen on the plan above (*Fig. 10*). In addition to these two ditches, which most certainly are Etruscan, there is a third one which is most probably medieval. According to Colonna di Paolo and Colonna, it is necessary to determine the eastern boundary of the settlement in order to establish its extent. Many authors who have worked on Castel d'Asso have expressed a conviction that the eastern limit of the town was the central ditch. However, if this was the case, the town's area would have been rather limited, little more than 2 ha. It is more probable that the eastern boundary was constituted by the eastern ditch.[151]

The two ditches define with sufficient certainty a partition of the settlement in two main areas of different extent. The larger one, to the east, could be identified as the main inhabited area; the minor, to the west can be comparable to an acropolis, and was perhaps the place for civic and religious buildings. The eastern area measures little more than 12 ha, and the western part *c*. 2 ha, which makes the total area of the settlement *c*. 14 ha. This would suggest a population of about 2,100, using the same model as for Blera and Norchia.

Interestingly, the two parts differ regarding the types of ceramic material found. In the eastern area, the Archaic material is most abundant, while Hellenistic material is prevalent in the western area. Furthermore, the density of the material is much higher in the latter. This is important since it precludes the consideration of the eastern area as an extension of the western one. On the contrary, it is plausible that the inhabited area suffered a contraction in the 4th century BC, even if the analysis of the necropolis indicates that the 4th and 3rd centuries BC was a period of expansion, when the town flourished. This process was completed in the Middle Ages with the construction of the *castello*. However, until the plateau is the subject of intensive and accurate excavations, the exact chronology of the settlement cannot be constructed.[152]

The plateau is crossed east–west by a road, connecting the angled parts of the two ditches, which probably constituted the central street of the town. Its route is still in use today. Amongst the most important finds are some Archaic-period architectural terracottas, found in 1966 in the eastern part of the plateau. Some could possibly represent Hercules and may be connected to an Archaic-period sanctuary situated near the centre of the eastern part of the town, close to the central street.[153]

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[150] Pulcinelli 2016, 173.

[151] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 51; Pulcinelli 2016, 173.

[152] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 52; Pulcinelli 2016, 173.

[153] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 53; Pulcinelli 2016, 172–173.

From Cicero's account, it can be understood that Tarquinian families, such as the *Ceisinie*-Caesennii and the Fulcinii, owned *fundi* in the area in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC. However, the greatest landowner in the time of Cicero seems to have been a non-Etruscan: his adversary the senator C. Fidiculanius Falcula. The land of the area is very fertile, and it was certainly intensively exploited. The social situation in the 1st century BC was surely conditioned by the emergence of *latifundia*.[154]

The conservation of the toponym makes a continuation into the early Middle Ages probable, even if it has not been confirmed by any testimonies. The medieval *castello* situated on the tip of the plateau, close to the western defensive ditch, was probably constructed in the 9th or the 10th century AD, but the ruins seen today date to the 12th century AD. The earliest notice of medieval *Assi* is recorded for the year 1187, as indicated by the *Cronaca di Viterbo* of Niccola della Tuccia and the *Cronica di Viterbo* of Francesco d'Andrea, both published in the 15th century, which inform that in this year *Assi* came into the hands of the Viterbesi.[155] In the 16th century the *castello*, with surrounding territory, was bought by Gualterio, the Bishop of Viterbo, and it later passed to his son Giulio in 1566.[156] It is not known when the *castello* was finally abandoned, but it is described by Mariani as being in a ruinous state in 1730.[157]

As in the case of Norchia, the inhabited area has never been subject to systematic investigations, and the only visible remains of the Etruscan settlement are wells and *cuniculi* connected to the settlement's drainage system, and an *opus quadratum* defensive wall. According to Orioli there was also a gate, perhaps with a tower, connected to the wall. Dennis and Rosi also mention walls. Nothing of this is visible today.[158]

Together with Norchia, Castel d'Asso constitutes the most characteristic and striking example of the Hellenistic-period rock-cut funerary architecture in this area.[159] However, unlike the other Etruscan rock-cut necropoleis, which usually are spread out over several localities, the one at Castel d'Asso presents a neat concentration of façade tombs in a single topographic sector which has a rather limited extent compared to the total of the necropolis. This sector occupies the northern side of the Freddano valley for *c*. 250 m, facing the city plateau, where we find the tombs disposed on three levels. This isolation of the area of the sepulchres of the town, as well as its internal

[154] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 36–37.
[155] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 32, nos. 4–5, 37.
[156] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 37–38; Steingräber 1983, 358.
[157] Mariani 1730, 36.
[158] For bibliography see Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 52, n. 5; Pulcinelli 2016, 172–173.
[159] Steingräber 1983, 357.

compactness, seems to denote a precise choice of urbanistic character, in the domain of a sort of territorial systematic planning.[160]

The majority of the tombs in the necropolis are semi-cube or false cube tombs with façades. Of these, cube tombs with *sottofacciata* constitute *c*. 40% of the total, and simple cube tombs as much as 30%. The tombs with vestibule form a lesser class, while tombs with uncovered vestibule and tumuli are both represented by only one example each. False doors are very common on the façades and the *sottofacciate*. Architectural moulding features present at Axia, as cornices, have corresponding examples at Norchia, Blera, and San Giuliano.[161] Most tombs are equipped with a platform on the top, often accessed by stairs hewn out at the sides of the façades. Unlike the tombs at Norchia, the façades of the tombs at Axia do not seem to have been plastered to the same degree, since we find inscriptions cut directly into the tuff. There are however remains of plaster on some of the *sottofacciata* compartments. The inscriptions, written in Etruscan, are generally to be found on the *fascia* of the cornice, or above the false doors. The inscriptions are either composed of the name of the proprietor of the tomb in question, given in either oblique or direct case, in the instance of the latter preceded by *θui*, or they consist of the phrase *eca śuθi neśl*, used either without a proper name, or followed by the gentilitial name of the proprietor. The inscriptions reveal the gentilitial names of five *gentes*,[162] three of which can be connected to certain rock-cut tombs, which they probably commissioned. These are the *Cae*, the *Ceise* (tomb 53), the *Setume*, the *Tetnie* (tomb 21), and the *Urinate Salvie* (tomb 20).[163] Other, and more numerous inscriptions, are made up by numerals. These are inscribed on the façades or the *sottofacciate*, or on the back wall. According to Orioli, these numerals would refer to the extent of the area in front of, or surrounding the tomb, as in the Roman usage, a hypothesis that Colonna di Paolo and Colonna find plausible.[164]

[160] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 73–74; Pulcinelli 2016, 174.
[161] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 246–248; Pulcinell 2016, 175.
[162] A possible sixth family, the *Mencna*, has been found on a sarcophagus which has been connected to Axia by Morandi Tarabella. However, the reading is very uncertain: Torelli reads it as *mencars*, while the reading *mencnas* is attributed to Rix. The *gentes* of the area will be discussed further in Ch. 4.4 below, s.v. *Mencna*.
[163] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 36.
[164] Orioli 1826, 74–76; Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 250.

Fig. 11. Funerary inscription reading Ceises, showing the property of the tomb of the gens Ceise. Necropolis of Castel d'Asso. Photograph by R. Abedi.

Fig. 12. 3rd century BC façade tomb with sottofacciata compartment and false doors. Necropolis of Castel d'Asso. Photograph by R. Abedi.

A rough chronology for the tombs at the necropolis could be set up accordingly: a pre-monumental phase, with a few isolated tombs, such as the only tumulus, datable to the 6th–5th centuries BC, is then followed by a monumental, early phase. The tombs from this period are of simple cube type with chambers with beds or are of vestibule type. This phase can roughly be dated to the 4th century or maybe only the second half of the 4th century BC. Thereupon follows a middle phase. New tombs were constructed here and there in the necropolis. These tombs can be dated to the first half of the 3rd century BC and are of a simple cube type with chambers with *fossae*, or *sottofacciata* with chambers with beds or sarcophagi. The late phase, dated to the mid-3rd–mid-2nd centuries BC, presents tombs of *sottofacciata* or vestibule type with chambers with *fossae*, and the same mouldings as the preceding period. The final phase, dated to the mid-2nd century BC–mid-1st century AD, demonstrates a more modest use of the necropolis. In this phase the *sottofacciata* compartments were also used for burials. The walls of the *sottofacciata* and the false doors were defaced with niches and *loculi*, and there is a widespread use of *colonnetta cippi*, also with Latin inscriptions. Although it is difficult to be precise, it seems like activity at the necropolis ceased around the middle of the 1st century AD. The final phase of the necropolis sees a similar development to that noted at Norchia. The monumental tombs did not hold any more sepulchres after the Caesarian age. The material datable to the Augustan and Julio-Claudian periods is to be found outside the large tombs, in the *sottofacciata* compartments or in the vicinity.[165] The material from the excavations is almost exclusively datable to the last phases of the usage of the sepulchres. The late phase of the necropolis, when the majority of the *sottofacciata* and vestibule-type tombs were constructed, can be securely dated based on the finds of black-gloss pottery close to the production of the *Atelier des petites estampilles*, and thin-walled pottery. For the preceding phases, the early and middle, datable between the 4th and the first half of the 3rd centuries BC, we can only rely on a few scattered fragments of red-figure pottery, predominantly of late Faliscan production, approachable to the *Gruppo fluido*.[166]

There are interesting similarities and differences with the other necropoleis here under investigation which are important to note. As has been argued in the previous section, the architectural style of the tomb façades at Norchia and Castel d'Asso makes it very plausible that we are dealing with the same master stoneworkers, or at least stoneworkers from the same workshops, in both locations. The interiors of the tombs also demonstrate similarities. The chambers with *fossa* beds represent without question a late innovation; they are absent at Blera and San Giuliano, but typical of Norchia and

[165] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 253.
[166] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 186–245, 253; Pulcinelli 2016, 174.

Tuscana. This type is connected to the tombs with *sottofacciata*, a type which, most interestingly, is also almost unknown at Blera and San Giuliano.[167]

2.2.4 San Giovenale

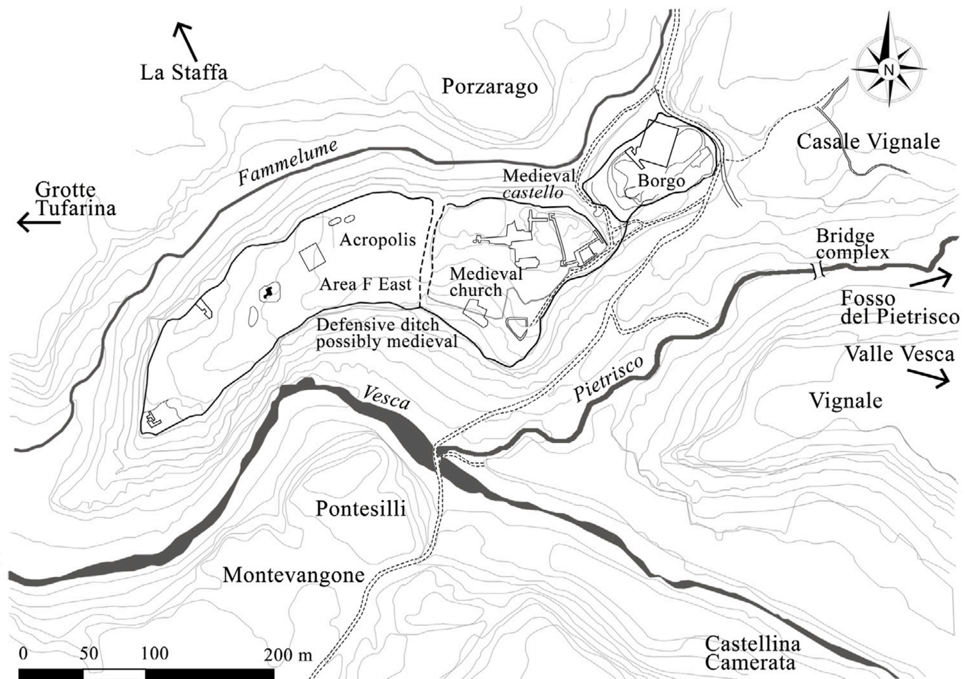

Fig. 13. Reconstructed plan of San Giovenale. Plan by R. Abedi. After Nylander et al. 2013, 31, fig. 10.

San Giovenale is situated on a tuff plateau *c*. 6 km south-west of Blera. On its southern side the Pietrisco stream joins the Vesca on its way westwards to its subsequent confluence with the Mignone. The site has been occupied since the Middle Neolithic and there is evidence for continued usage up until the medieval period. In ancient times San Giovenale was connected by a road system to other Etruscan settlements in its vicinity, including Blera, San Giuliano, and Luni, but also with far-more important settlements such as Caere and Tarquinii, as well as the Faliscan lands to the east.[168] The site has yielded widely contrasting finds, such as Mycenaean pottery sherds, evidence

[167] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 251; Pulcinelli 2016, 176.
[168] Nylander *et al*. 2013, 29.

of a Bronze Age hut village, an Egyptian scarab, luxury goods from Corinth and Athens, and evidence for Roman agricultural activity.

The remains of walls, possibly of a defensive character, have also been observed. In general, many of the fortifications of the towns and cities of south Etruria are considered to have been constructed during the 5th and 4th centuries BC. But this is clearly not the case on every site. Ingrid Pohl has argued convincingly that the dating of the fortification walls at San Giovenale, traditionally dated to around 300 BC, when the conflict between Tarquinii and Rome was at its height, has been based entirely on probable historical events and analogies with other centres in the territory. Pohl argues that, based on the material and the architectural features, the walls cannot be dated earlier than the 3rd century BC, since they were built in blocks with *cyma reversa* profile, an architectural feature which did not appear in central Italy before the 3rd century.[169] Furthermore, the material found in the walls is early medieval, which follows directly on the Protovillanovan and Apenninic material. There is no material securely dated to the Archaic period and no material from the 5th, 4th, and 3rd centuries BC.[170]

During the early medieval period a chapel was constructed which has been connected to the alleged first Bishop of Narni, Saint Juvenal (d. AD 369/377), subsequently giving the site its present name. Finally, it is worth mentioning the ruins of a, probably unfinished, *castello* constructed by the powerful de Vico family of Viterbo, dated to the middle of the 13th century AD.[171] We do not know the ancient name of San Giovenale, neither the Etruscan nor the Latin one, despite Colonna's attempt at a reconstruction based on the Vesca stream.[172] Furthermore it has been suggested that San Giovenale could be identified with one of two minor towns on Tarquinian territory, *Contenebra* and *Cortuosa*, captured by the Romans under M. Furius Camillus in 388 BC, and mentioned by Livy. Albeit the archaeological evidence does not contradict such an identification, the issue is yet to be resolved.[173]

The first archaeological investigations carried out at San Giovenale were conducted by Odoardo Rispoli, who undertook excavations in the surrounding necropoleis.[174] Although it was not mentioned by Dennis, it was always known to locals for its impressive rock-cut tombs present on the hills and plateaux surrounding the site of the ancient settlement. However, it was not until 1955, when the site was "rediscovered"

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169 Shoe Meritt & Edlund-Berry 2000, 32, 143. According to Shoe Meritt the *cyma reversa* was never adopted in Etruria, but this later turned out to be incorrect.
170 Pohl 1985, 55–58.
171 Thordeman 1962, 336–340; Nylander *et al.* 2013, 29.
172 Colonna 2014, 100–101.
173 Livy 6.4.9–11; Karlsson 2006, 164; Pulcinelli 2012, 69–70, n. 3; Tobin 2015, 9. This suggestion was made in 1882 (Gamurrini *et al.* 1972, 148; for a bibliography of the discussion see Naso 1999, 73, n. 17). The anecdote is also discussed in Ch. 4.1 below.
174 Bazzichelli 1877, 151–154.

by Swedish amateur archaeologist Erik Wetter that the site became subject to intensive investigations.[175] San Giovenale is the smallest of the towns in our area of investigation, measuring approximately 3.6 ha, but definitely the one about which we are able to tell the most, since it is also the one of the five which has been the subject of the most intensive archaeological investigations, with regards to its inhabited area. The Swedish Institute of Classical Studies in Rome carried out field excavations here between 1956 and 1965. In the 1970s and 1980s, excavations were carried out under the direction of Laura Ricciardi.[176] Additional investigations were conducted in the 1990s by the Swedish Institute of Classical Studies in Rome, and between 2006 and 2011 fieldwork was conducted at the Vignale plateau, to the south-east of the settlement, by the Vignale Archaeological Project and Vignale Aerial Project.[177] The latest contribution to the study of San Giovenale is Fredrik Tobin's *The chamber tombs of San Giovenale and the funerary landscapes of* south *Etruria*, which thoroughly investigates the surrounding necropoleis.[178]

The settlement at San Giovenale was divided between two plateaux: the main plateau called the Acropolis by the Swedish scholars, and a smaller one situated to the north-east, the so-called Borgo. The Acropolis, where the main settlement was situated, has been occupied at least since the Late Bronze Age; remains of oval huts and ceramic material attest to an important Protovillanova phase (*c.* 1200–900 BC). Thereafter it appears to have been abandoned until it was resettled in the second half of the 8th century BC.[179] The Borgo seems to have been developed sometime in the late 8th or in the beginning of the 7th century BC, even if there are traces of earlier activity here as well. Carl Nylander, who was the responsible archaeologist for the excavations at the Borgo NW, is of the opinion that the plateau was settled due to a population growth.[180]

The Acropolis, the larger of the two plateaux, measures roughly 400 by 80–90 m. Based on its size and the finds made here, it was most probably the site of the main settlement of the Etruscan town.[181] Before the excavations started in 1957, the whole area was used for cultivation.[182] The settlement at the Acropolis flourished from the late 7th to the middle of the 6th centuries BC.[183] In Area F East, excavated by Arne Furumark and subsequently published by Lars Karlsson in 2006, two houses were

[175] Tobin-Dodd 2020, 225–230.
[176] Ricciardi 1983; 1984; 1985; 1986; 1987a; 1987b; 1991; 1992a.
[177] Karlsson 2006; Nylander *et al.* 2013. The Vignale project will be published as *San Giovenale* VI:2–3. For preliminary results, see Backe-Forsberg *et al.* 2008 and Lasaponara *et al.* 2012.
[178] Tobin 2015.
[179] Karlsson 2006, 140.
[180] Nylander *et al.* 2013, 30, 58.
[181] Karlsson 2013, 11.
[182] Karlsson 2006, 21.
[183] Period 3 according to the chronology established by Karlsson: see Karlsson 2006, 21.

erected during the last quarter of the 7th century BC, joining a house from the preceding period.[184] It is possible that these buildings were destroyed in an earthquake in 550/530 BC, as attested by cracks in the bedrock and in the remains of still-standing walls. A large amount of crushed roof tiles and pottery is dated to this period. Signs of a probable earthquake are also seen on the Borgo. After the earthquake the houses in Area F East were rebuilt.[185] Unfortunately the post-Archaic periods have not yielded much material, and therefore it has been difficult to adequately outline the later phases of the settlement.[186] Pohl argued persuasively for a continuation of life in the Roman period for the settlement, which up to that point was considered to have been abandoned around 500 BC. As two main reasons for this she put forward the general lack of interest, on the behalf of scholars, for the post-Archaic phases of the Etruscan culture, and the very slow publication process of the material from the Swedish excavations. This interpretation differed from the opinion of other Swedish scholars such as Erik Berggren and Carl Erik Östenberg. Berggren argued that the Roman material was scant and poor,[187] but according to Pohl, the ceramic material attests to a continuation of the settlement until the end of the 5th century BC for the Borgo and until *c.* 200 BC for the Acropolis. Other evidence for this is provided by tombs dated to later periods.[188] However, by the 2nd century BC the Acropolis seems to have been abandoned, when farms and villas dominated the surrounding countryside.[189]

The Borgo, north-east of the Acropolis, measures roughly 100 by 55 m.[190] As mentioned earlier, the Borgo seems to have been settled in the late 8th–early 7th centuries BC. However, there are also remains of a palisade, possibly datable to the Protovillanovan period, traces of Protovillanovan huts, and Archaic-period fortifications and houses, partly cut into the rock.[191] In addition there are also remains of structures which could have constituted a small shrine, to which we will return later.

The Archaic house walls on the Borgo at San Giovenale are the best-preserved ones in Etruria. Some of the preserved walls are still standing to 2 m in height, which is very unusual. According to Nylander, the reason for this may be attributed to its location on an inconvenient slope, ill-suited for cultivation.[192] The excavations at the north-western side of the Borgo, begun in 1957, show a continuity of activity of 300 years,

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[184] Karlsson 2006, 158–159.
[185] Karlsson 2006, 162–163.
[186] Pohl 1984; 1985.
[187] Also Östenberg 1972, 10, and n. 79 for the word "Roman".
[188] Pohl 1985, 44–45.
[189] Hemphill 2000, 43.
[190] Nylander *et al.* 2013, 30.
[191] Nylander *et al.* 2013, 30–34, 58.
[192] Nylander *et al.* 2013, 42. However, from the drawings by Börje Blomé in the same publication, it is clear that there are walls that are even higher; see pls. 8–11.

from the late 8th century to the late 5th century BC. In the middle of this 300-year period, the area was affected by the above-mentioned earthquake, which evidently caused destruction and subsequent change at the site.[193] As a result of the sloping character of the area, as well as heavy annual rains during the period from October to November, the chronology has proved difficult to establish, and consequently the dating of the site has been challenging. However, it is possible to reconstruct a general chronology of five phases and periods.[194]

Nylander's periods 1 and 2 (late 7th–mid 6th centuries BC), constitute a period of intensive building activity, when a total of five houses were constructed.[195] An abundance of finds of burnt tuff fragments, and small fragments of metal in the area surrounding a large, oval hearth with a wall about 7 cm thick, burnt to a strong red, hard surface, suggest that the area was used for metallurgy. Based on this among other things, it has been suggested that the Borgo was used as an "industrial" area with workshops, while the living area was concentrated at the Acropolis.[196] After the possible earthquake in 550/530 BC, the buildings on the Borgo seem to have been reconstructed, and pottery in some of the houses can be dated down to the late 5th century BC.

South of the Borgo NW, structures which could be the foundations of a small temple or shrine have been found. Among the remains to be mentioned are a large quantity of ashlar blocks, and finds of crushed roof tiles, and terracottas. Nylander proposes that the shrine may have been destroyed or robbed-out following the Roman takeover of the area.[197] Apart from two late burials, which have been dated by the presence of the grave gift of a simple monochrome jug roughly datable from the late 5th to the early 6th centuries AD, very little can be said of the activity following the 5th century BC.[198] Consequently, Nylander concludes that life and activity on the Borgo seems to have ended some time towards the end of the 5th century BC, an opinion also held by Pohl.[199]

The necropoleis of San Giovenale are spread out over six localities situated on hilltops surrounding the settlement plateau: Pontesilli, Ponton Paoletto, Camerata, Casale Vignale, Porzarago, and Grotte Tufarina. In addition to these there are three other, more peripheral localities: Valle Vesca, Fosso del Pietrisco, and La Staffa. The oldest tombs are dated to the 7th century BC and are found in several of the locations

[193] Karlsson 2006, 162; 2013, 50.
[194] Nylander *et al.* 2013, 42; Karlsson 2013, 12, 51–52.
[195] Karlsson *et al.* 2013, 152.
[196] Nylander *et al.* 2013, 72, 96.
[197] Nylander *et al.* 2013, 34.
[198] Karlsson 2013, 153.
[199] Pohl 1985, 44–45; Nylander *et al.* 2013, 147.

which later developed into the necropoleis surrounding the site. However, there are, according to Bazzichelli and later Tobin, reasons to believe that there were already tombs present in the 8th century BC, at Casale Vignale, where two large tumuli are also located.[200] The majority of the tombs are rock-cut chamber tombs of Caeretan type with hewn beds, datable to the 7th, 6th, and 5th centuries BC. The only locality with a majority of Hellenistic-period tombs is to be found at Casale Vignale, which also seems to have been the principal necropolis together with Porzarago.[201] In the locality one finds numerous sepulchres, a "piazzetta" around which there are rock-cut façade tombs with hypogean chambers, a funerary road with false cube tombs, and a ditch where material datable to the second half of the 4th century BC has been found.[202] In general, tombs datable to the 5th century BC or later are relatively rare, which could suggest that the settlement had gone into decline by this period, with the consequence that the population had decreased. However, although the Borgo seems to have been abandoned some time after 400 BC, evidence from the Acropolis and the tombs suggests that human activity continued in the Hellenistic period, albeit on a minor scale.[203]

[200] Bazzichelli 1877; see Tobin 2015, 63, and App. 3.
[201] Colonna 1997, 65; Tobin 2015, 75–76; Pulcinelli 2016, 215.
[202] Tobin 2015, 68–69; Pulcinelli 2016, 214–215.
[203] Tobin 2015, 74.

2.2.5 San Giuliano

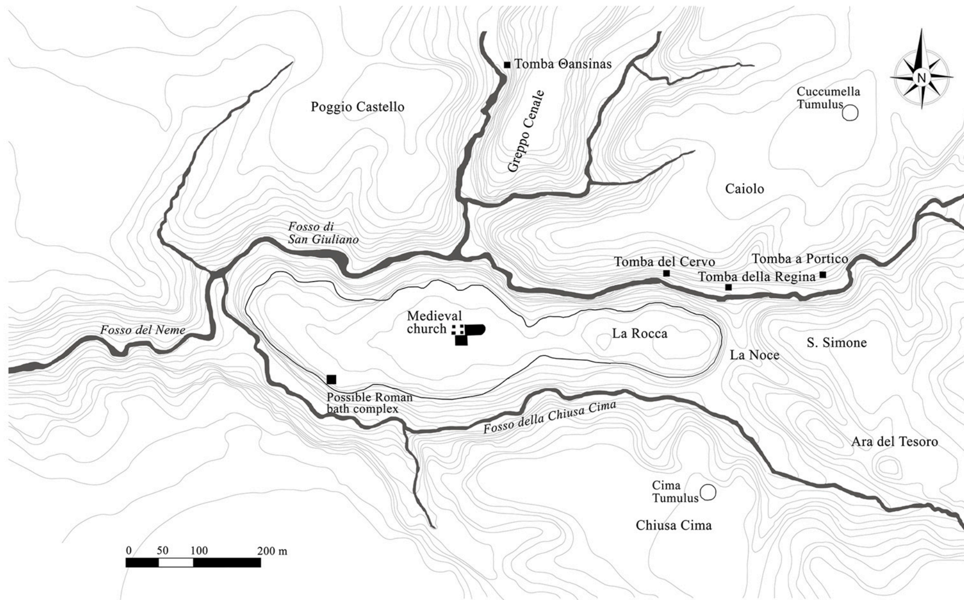

Fig. 14. Reconstructed plan of San Giuliano. Plan by R. Abedi. After Zori et al. 2017, 4, fig. 3.

The site of San Giuliano, located some 4.5 km to the south-east of Blera, occupies an elongated tuff plateau, orientated east–west, isolated by steep cliffs on all sides. It is surrounded by deep valleys, which today are covered with dense vegetation. The plateau is embraced by two streams, the Fosso di San Giuliano on its northern side, and the Fosso della Chiusa Cima on its southern. These two converge beneath the plateau's western tip into the Biedano. The plateau is divided by a cleft into two parts: the larger to the west and the smaller, the so-called "Rocca", to the east. The plateau is, in turn, surrounded by other plateaux.[204]

As with the other settlements in the area, San Giuliano came to the interest of scholars during the mid-19th century. The first testimonies are however very scant, comprising some archival documents regarding excavation permits. It was visited by the authors of the *Carta Archeologica d'Italia*, who noted several sepulchres.[205] The first excavations on the necropoleis, which were begun at the turn of the last century by

[204] Steingräber 1983, 333.
[205] Gamurrini *et al.* 1972, 142; Quilici Gigli 1974, 35–37.

Rossi Danielli and Balestra, unfortunately remain unpublished.[206] The most extensive studies of the necropoleis were carried out after the First World War by Rosi and Gargana, and the 1931 publication by the latter remains the most significant to this day.[207] Excavations of the necropoleis were conducted 1957–1959, and are of great importance, particularly for the knowledge of the Subarchaic and Hellenistic phases.[208] Another study worth mentioning is Paolo Brocato's Ph.D. thesis from 1997.[209] After this, no substantial investigations were carried out until 2015, when the San Giuliano Archaeological Research Project was initiated, which is operated as a collaboration between Virgil Academy of Rome, Baylor University, Texas, the Province of Viterbo, the Italian Soprintendenza Archeologica, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per l'Area Metropolitana di Roma, la Provincia di Viterbo e Etruria Meridionale, and the Municipality of Barbarano Romano.[210] Until these recent excavations, the city plateau had never been subjected to systematic investigations, but unfortunately the results are yet to be fully published.

The ancient name of San Giuliano is still unknown to us. Gargana mentions *Contenebra* and *Cortuosa*, the two Etruscan towns on Tarquinian territory that according to Livy fell to the Romans in 388 BC, during the wars with Rome.[211] Gargana argues that San Giuliano cannot be identified with either of these towns, which according to him should be looked for in some of the sites situated on the Mignone.[212] Instead he brings forward the possibility that San Giuliano could have been the site of the early medieval *Manturanum*, or *Marturanum*, which he partially bases on a local tradition at the modern nearby town of Barbarano Romano, situated little more than 1 km to the south-west. However, our ancient written sources do not tell us anything of a town with such a name; the oldest mention of *Manturanum* is from AD 649. But Gargana argues that since this is very close in time to the fall of the Western Roman Empire, it is likely that the name dates to Roman and perhaps also to Etruscan times. The town of *Manturanum* was then supposed to have been moved at some time in the early medieval period to present Barbarano Romano, which subsequently would have retained the ancient name until at least the 12th century.[213] The find of a dedicatory inscription on a *dolium* in the San Simone locality, mentioning one *Larθ Manθureie*,

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[206] Steingräber 1983, 334; Pulcinelli 2016, 194. However, in 1901 Rossi Danielli found a temple and a well in a locality between San Giuliano and San Simone. The finds from this excavation were published in 1974 by Adriana Emiliozzi: see Emiliozzi 1974, 83–88, tavv. XXXVIII-XLVI.

[207] Gargana 1931.

[208] Villa d'Amelio 1963; Steingräber 1983, 334; Pulcinelli 2016, 194.

[209] Brocato 1997.

[210] Zori *et al.* 2017; 2018.

[211] See Ch. 4.1. below for further details.

[212] Gargana 1931, 311–312.

[213] Gargana 1931, 312–315.

has also been put forward as a confirmation of this hypothesis.[214] This was however later contested, and very persuasively dismantled, by Giovanni Colonna, who argues that the episcopal see of *Manturanum* could not have been located at the site of San Giuliano because of the close distance to nearby Blera, an episcopal see in its own right in the same period.[215] According to Colonna it is much more plausible that *Manturanum* is to be looked for at present-day Monterano in the Tolfa Mountains, a town which has a long history, with occupation going back to the 7th century BC.[216] More probable seems an identification with one of the towns mentioned by Livy. In that case an identification with *Contenebra* seems more likely, rather than with *Cortuosa*, as is also stressed by Gargana.[217] Following Livy's account of the events, *Cortuosa* would have fallen immediately after having been taken by surprise, while *Contenebra* would have held out for a few days before it surrendered.[218] The possibility that San Giuliano, which is a formidable natural fortress, would have failed to thwart a surprise attack seems rather unlikely. San Giuliano was probably the first Etruscan town the Roman soldiers had to face, when they first set foot on Etruscan soil. The location, close to the Ciminian forest and the border with Rome, could well have made San Giuliano the major southern stronghold of the Tarquinian state in the 4th century BC.

The site of San Giuliano rose into prominence from the 8th century BC, but stray finds suggest the site was probably already occupied in the Late Bronze Age (1350–900 BC), and occupation continued to the first half of the 2nd century BC. It prospered in the 6th century, and after a period of decline in the 5th and 4th centuries, enjoyed a resurgence in the early Hellenistic period. The Archaic-period finds, as well as funerary architecture, show a strong Caeretan influence, which suggests that the settlement lay in the political and cultural sphere of interest of Caere. Similar to the situation at Blera and San Giovenale, the archaeological record suggests that San Giuliano from the 4th century BC onwards was part of the Tarquinian inland territory. In the 3rd century BC, the settlement lost much of its importance, even if habitation seems to have continued in a much-reduced form. The area belonged to the *municipium* of Blera in Roman times, but there are very few traces from this period. The major testimonies from the medieval period consist of the ruins of two small Romanesque churches, dedicated to San Giuliano and San Simone, and a small *castello*. The site seems to have been finally abandoned sometime around AD 1300. The church to San Giuliano was constructed with reused columns from Roman buildings. In the surroundings, there

[214] De Simone 1993, 198. See Ch. 4.3 below, *s.v. Manθureie* for further information.
[215] The distance is only 4.5 km.
[216] Colonna 2014, 92.
[217] Gargana 1931, 311–312.
[218] Gargana 1931, 311–312; Livy 6.4.9–11.

seem to have existed small, rural settlements, at least in the Archaic period, as suggested by small necropoleis.[219]

Because of the lack of archaeological investigations, we know very little of the Etruscan town at San Giuliano, but it was probably concentrated on the western part of the plateau. There are very few visible ancient structures; no grandiose ruins testify that this is the site of what was once a prosperous Etruscan city, and only the necropoleis give an idea of its former splendour. However, the existence of a settlement here is testified by the presence of a complex drainage system, and short stretches of an *opus quadratum* wall on the northern side of the plateau which, according to Pulcinelli, could have been part of a defensive structure.[220] Material recovered during the excavation of four tombs on the southern slopes of the city plateau, close to the Fosso della Chiusa Cima, helps to reconstruct the chronology and the knowledge of the pottery in use during the early Hellenistic period. The material consists mainly of Tarquinian and Faliscan red-figure ware, achromic and black-gloss pottery, and a group of bronzes, datable to the late 4th–beginning of the 3rd centuries BC.[221] Other important finds worth mentioning are the stone sarcophagi recovered from the necropoleis. The majority of these can be fitted into the *Holztruhentypus* of Herbig, with displuviate lids, and some examples of human figures. They show a considerable stylistic coherence, even if characterised by a noticeable variety of influences. The sarcophagi can be attributed to a workshop active between the last decades of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd centuries BC. The resemblance to works from Tarquinii makes it likely that the sculptors responsible were trained at this city. However, the sculptural production of San Giuliano also shows several similarities with other centres in inland south Etruria, such as Norchia.[222]

Approximately 200 m south-west of the Romanesque church of San Giuliano are the remains of the best-preserved ancient structure at the site: a single hypogean complex composed of a large quadrangular compartment hewn from the tuff and covered with plaster. Inside one finds rock-hewn benches and a tub with stairs leading down to it. The tub is connected to a well and is accessible through a corridor. The complex is commonly interpreted as a bath, or a thermal installation, probably constructed in the Roman period, from a previous cistern or well.[223] South-east of the settlement, on Poggio Castello in the La Noce locality, in the valley separating San Giuliano from San Simone, remains of sanctuaries have been located. At La Noce, excavations in the early 20th century uncovered a tuff-block structure and a 20 m-deep

[219] Steingräber 1983, 334–335; Zori *et al.* 2017, 2.

[220] Gargana 1931, 304; Steingräber 1983, 334; Pulcinelli 2016, 194.

[221] Pulcinelli 2016, 195–196.

[222] Gentili 2005; Pulcinelli 2016, 196.

[223] Steingräber 1983, 334; Pulcinelli 2016, 195.

well, containing a large amount of anatomical *ex voto* terracotta figurines, datable to the 3rd–2nd centuries BC. More material was found during subsequent excavations in 1957, 1968, and 1982–1983. One of the notable finds is a *peperino* base with a dedicatory inscription to Apollo, datable to the 3rd century BC. The finds of Attic red-figure pottery also suggest earlier activity in the Archaic period. The finds point to a small suburban sanctuary dedicated to a salutary cult to Apollo.[224] In the countryside there are traces of roads connecting San Giuliano with the Via Clodia. The size of the settlement can be estimated at roughly 8.3 ha and it is thus smaller than Blera, Norchia, and Axia. Following the model used for the other towns, the population could be estimated at *c.* 1,250.

There are four nuclei of necropoleis occupying the hilltops surrounding the city plateau at San Giuliano: Chiusa Cima, San Simone, Ara del Tesoro, and Caiolo. Additionally, there are the somewhat-peripheral zones of Greppo Cenale and Poggio Castello, as well as the even-more distant Chiuse Vallerrane, Macchia, San Quirico, San Antonio, Sorignano, and Valle Cappellana, which probably belonged to other, smaller, settlements in the countryside.[225] The tomb types at San Giuliano are represented by tumuli with chambers, rock-cut chamber tombs, cube tombs (semi-cubes, false cubes and true cubes) with façades and false doors, tombs with hypogean chambers without façades, tombs with porticoes, *aedicula* tombs, tombs with displuviate roof, *fossae*, loculi, *pozzetto* tombs, and niches for cremation burials. The cube tombs represent the most numerous tomb type. Activity in the necropoleis covers a period spanning from the late Villanovan (late 8th century BC) to the early Hellenistic period (3rd century BC). The most intensive phase of the necropoleis occurs in the late 7th–6th centuries BC, and with some *lacunae*, the late 5th–4th centuries BC.[226] The majority of the Archaic-period tombs are to be found at Chiusa Cima, the southern slopes of San Simone, and the Caiolo plateau, while the more recent tombs are to be found on the northern slopes of San Simone, Ara del Tesoro, the southern slopes of the Caiolo, the western parts of Chiusa Cima, Greppo Cenale, and Poggio Castello. After the 6th century BC, activity on the necropoleis seem to be less intense, and the 5th century BC sepulchres are less numerous. A revival can be noted in the 4th century BC, which continues into the 3rd century, with activity in all nuclei, albeit on a minor scale. Thereafter activity apparently ceases. The numerous cube tombs are a characteristic feature at San Giuliano. They emerged in the first half of the 6th century BC and were constructed until the early Hellenistic period. In the late 6th and 5th centuries BC, the funerary chambers were situated in the cube itself, but from the 4th century onwards,

[224] Steingräber 1983, 335; Pulcinelli 2016, 195.
[225] Gargana 1931, 334; Steingräber 1983, 335.
[226] Steingräber 1983, 335.

they were constructed beneath them, and the cube becomes merely a façade with a false door, a development we have also seen in the other localities in the region. Tombs with porticoes were constructed as early as the Archaic period, and the only two tombs with displuviate roofs are datable from the 5th century to the early Hellenistic period. The chambers of the Archaic-period tombs are clearly Caeretan in type, which would suggest San Giuliano having close ties to Caere in this period. The 4th- and the 3rd-century BC tombs are composed of cube tombs, both semi-cubes and true cubes, consequently constituting the most common type, while tombs with displuviate roof, tombs with porticoes, and hypogean chambers are less numerous. Additionally, there are also *fossae* tombs and cinerary niches dating to this period.[227]

One of the most notable monuments from the later phase is to be found on the west slopes of Greppo Cenale, north-east of the settlement, a peripheral part of the necropolis. Construction began in the mid-4th century BC, and it is composed of a complex of three semi-cube tombs with hypogean chambers belonging to the *gens Θansina*, one of the most distinguished families of San Giuliano in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC.[228] The complex was excavated by Rossi Danielli in 1906 but still remains unpublished.[229] The tomb has yielded important material in the form of inscriptions and elaborate sarcophagi, one of which is made of Greek marble, with painted floral and figurative decorations, indicating the wealth of the *gens*. The sarcophagi are dated to the last decades of the 4th century BC. Other tombs with rock-hewn façades and false doors found in the area had material datable to the second half of the 4th and the first decades of the 3rd centuries BC.[230]

The Caiolo plateau, to the north-east of the settlement, is the site of one of the main nuclei of the necropolis. Tumuli are situated on the edges and on the plateau. The two most important cube tombs on the southern slope of the Caiolo are the 5th-century BC Tomba della Regina, and another which stands out in particular amongst the Hellenistic-period sepulchres, the Tomba del Cervo, the only true cube tomb at San Giuliano (*Fig. 15*). The surrounding rock has been completely cut away, isolating the tomb, it has stairs on both sides of the façade, with further steps on the back side leading up to a platform on the top of the tomb. It features a façade with a false door on the front with *proiecturae* in the form of *becco di civetta*, and a large hypogean funerary chamber. The chamber does not contain any furniture hewn from the rock, which suggests a late date.

[227] Gargana 1931, 334, and chart on 419–420; Steingräber 1983, 335–336.
[228] For more information on the *gens Θansina* see Ch. 4.4 below.
[229] Rosi 1927, 64; Gargana 1931, 350–355, 417; Martelli 1975, 9–12 (with bibliography).
[230] Villa d'Amelio 1963, 31–38; Pianu 1980, 55–56, 63; 1982, 125, no. 248; Steingräber 1983, 341; Pulcinelli 2016, 196–197.

Fig. 15. Tomba del Cervo, San Giuliano. Photograph by R. Abedi.

A relief on one of the side walls, visible from the left staircase, depicting a stag being attacked by a dog, has given the tomb its name, although the relief is most probably of a much later date (*Fig. 16*). The Tomba del Cervo has been dated to the late 4th or early 3rd century BC. During excavations in 1957, a nearby tumulus tomb was also investigated, with material datable to the 4th–3rd centuries BC.[231]

[231] Gargana 1931, 349–350; Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 26; Steingräber 1983, 339–341; Gentili 2005, 645; Pulcinelli 2016, 197.

Fig. 16. The relief depicting a fight between a stag and a dog, Tomba del Cervo, San Giuliano. Photograph by R. Abedi.

Another interesting nucleus with Hellenistic sepulchres is to be found on the San Simone plateau to the east of the settlement. Material from this locality includes sarcophagi, pottery, and bronzes which date to the late 4th century BC. Another extended nucleus, mostly in use in the Archaic period, but also active in the Hellenistic period, occupies the northern hillsides and part of the top of the Chiusa Cima plateau, to the south of the settlement. The most ancient cube tombs are to be found here, with chambers reflecting a Caeretan influence with sloping ceilings and funerary beds.[232] Furthermore, the hillsides of the city plateau itself, particularly along the southern side facing Chiusa Cima, were also used for sepulchres in the Hellenistic period.[233]

The material found in the tombs include impasto, *bucchero sottile*, and *bucchero denso*, Corinthian and Etrusco-corinthian pottery, Attic black-figure, but no Attic red-figure pottery, the complete absence of which could suggest that the settlement was in decline in the 5th century BC. The 4th- and 3rd-century BC tombs have yielded black-

[232] Steingräber 1983, 336, 338.

[233] See Naso 1996, 112–118, with preceding bibliography; Pulcinelli 2016, 197–198.

gloss pottery, Faliscan red-figure pottery, Etrusco-campanian vases, achromic pottery, bronze utensils, and coins.[234]

All the towns in the region have a documented Bronze Age phase but were all subsequently abandoned, and their foundation as Etruscan towns took place only several centuries later. Blera, as well as San Giuliano and San Giovenale, was founded in the 8th–7th centuries BC. All three enjoyed a first prosperous period in the 6th century BC, after which time they seem to have gone into some kind of decline that lasted for the entire 5th century BC. From this point on, San Giovenale demonstrates a steady decline until the town was definitely abandoned by the early 2nd century BC. San Giuliano experienced a resurgence in the mid-4th–3rd centuries BC, only to fall into decline again in the 2nd century BC, being more or less abandoned in the middle of this century. In the case of Blera we can note a discrete resurgence in the mid–late 3rd century, with the construction of the Via Clodia, and subsequently the Ponte della Rocca bridge in the 2nd century BC and the Ponte del Diavolo bridge in the 1st century BC. The status of *municipium* confirms Blera's importance in the area in the Imperial period.

The two northern towns of Axia and Norchia demonstrate a development history that stands in sharp contrast to the other three. The foundation of Axia can be set to the end of the 7th century BC, while Norchia seems to have been settled in the 6th century BC, but only shows evidence of sporadic activity for another century. Both towns floursished in the 4th–3rd centuries BC, as is confirmed by the funerary architecture, even if finds from the city plateau suggest some kind of decline at Axia in the 4th century BC. The flourishing of Norchia and Axia coincides with a period of decline in the other three towns, also confirmed by the activity at the necropoleis. During the course of the 2nd century BC both towns went into decline; Norchia was abandoned by the 1st century BC, and Axia reduced to a *castellum*, as recorded by Cicero.

All five towns are equipped with impressive necropoleis, situated on plateaux surrounding the settlements. They also demonstrate a unique type of funerary architecture where tombs have been hewn directly from the rock. The necropoleis at Blera, San Giuliano, and San Giovenale enjoyed their maximum activity in the 6th century BC, even if there are also impressive 7th- to 6th-century BC tumulus tombs in all three localities. The most common funerary type at Blera and San Giovenale is the rock-cut chamber tomb, widely diffused here in the 6th–5th centuries BC. The most characteristic feature of the funerary architecture at San Giuliano is the numerous cube

[234] Steingräber 1983, 336; Pulcinelli 2016, 197–198.

tombs, continuing in vigour well into the 3rd century BC. The rock-cut chamber tomb is less prominent. The interiors of all the tombs from this period demonstrate strong Caeretan stylistic influences. At San Giovenale tombs dated later than 400 BC are rare, and at Blera also there is a clear decline in number of sepulchres, even if there are some examples of 4th- to 3rd-century BC burials, and also some fine examples, as the *Grotte Penta* complex, and the late 5th-/early 4th-century BC cube tomb in the vicinity. Activity continues here also in the Roman period. At San Giuliano a drop in the number of sepulchres can be noted in the 5th century BC, while there is a resurgence in the 4th century which continues into the 3rd century BC. Thereafter activity in the necropoleis seems to have ceased.

At Norchia and Axia the earliest tombs can be dated to the 6th century BC, but in this period there is no large-scale activity in the necropoleis. However, from the 4th century BC the activity at the necropoleis increases dramatically, and enjoys a flourishing period down to the 2nd century BC, with the construction of monumental cube-style tombs hewn from the rock. After this period the activity in the necropoleis comes to an abrupt halt, with only a sporadic usage thereafter. Activity ceases around AD 50 in both localities.

The monumental cube tomb, whether semi-, false, or true cube, with rock-hewn façades, is present in all five localities. The façades, with hewn decorative architectural features, show a unique, local character with features such as staircases on the sides, leading to a platform on the top, "Doric" door frames, and from the late 4th and 3rd centuries BC, false doors, porticoes, *sottofacciate*, and hypogean funerary chambers. The cube-style tomb is most common at Norchia, Axia, and San Giuliano, with the monumental 4th- to 3rd-century type most common at Norchia and Axia. The unique funerary architecture of the cube tombs at Norchia suggests that the style was developed by master stoneworkers based here, who subsequently spread the style to Axia. Most interestingly, the decline in the necropoleis at Blera, San Giovenale, and also to a certain degree at San Giuliano, coincides with the emergence of the monumental necropoleis at Norchia and Axia.

Having presented the urban centres of the region, it is natural to proceed with a brief presentation of the road network in the area.

2.3 Road network

Quilici Gigli states that the essential and determinant part of her study is, apart from the population, the road network, which is testified by remaining traces or by the relocation of settlements.[235] The region was already equipped with an extensive road network before the Romans made their entry in the 3rd century BC, traces of which can still be found in the landscape today. In the Archaic period, Blera was situated on the crossroads of one road running in a south–north direction from Caere towards the northern inland, and one coming from the *ager Faliscus* in the east, running west towards Tarquinii and the coast. The old road network probably remained in use, and formed the basis for local communications, well into the Roman period.[236] With the arrival of the Romans, the need for constructing new roads arose, in order to connect the various parts of Etruria with Rome. The Roman road network was more extensive than the earlier Etruscan one, and of solid construction; some of the roads have remained in use up until the present day. Often, the Roman roads incorporated parts of the routes of already existing Etruscan ones. It appears they were laid out with as a straight route as possible, thus bypassing many earlier important Etruscan urban centres. In their place, small road stations, *fora*, eventually emerged at many important junctions, and situated at fairly regular intervals.[237] In these parts of south Etruria, the two most important *fora* would have been Forum Clodii, on the western edge of the Lago di Bracciano, and Forum Cassii, situated on the Via Cassia *c.* 2 km north-east of modern Vetralla.[238] According to Quilici Gigli the fundamental directions of the traffic in the region in the Hellenistic period seem to answer to two needs: the connections with the coast and with Tarquinii, and also a route that runs through the territory in a south-east–north-west direction, joining various known villages with the major centres in the south and in the north. Here Blera would have been an important hub, connecting Norchia and Tuscana with Rome, as well as Tarquinii with the inland. Blera and San Giuliano seem to have been connected by several alternative routes.[239]

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[235] Quilici Gigli 1976, 16.

[236] Duncan 1958, 77–78; Potter 1979, 102–103, 106.

[237] Potter 1979, 108–109.

[238] Both probably founded in the 1st century BC. Forum Clodii later became the administrative centre of the Roman *praefectura Clodia*, and was a diocese between the 4th and the 6th centuries BC, when the see was moved to Manturanum. Forum Cassii is only known from the itineraries (*Itin. Ant. 286*; *Tab. Peut.*), but the location can be placed securely by the remains of ancient structures and the medieval church of Santa Maria in Forcassi, still retaining the name of the ancient town. It was subsequently abandoned during the late Empire, probably in favour of the site of nearby medieval Vetralla. See Bunbury 1852, 907; Dennis 1883 (1848), vol I, 194; Quilici Gigli 1976, 23–32.

[239] Quilici Gigli 1976, 16–17.

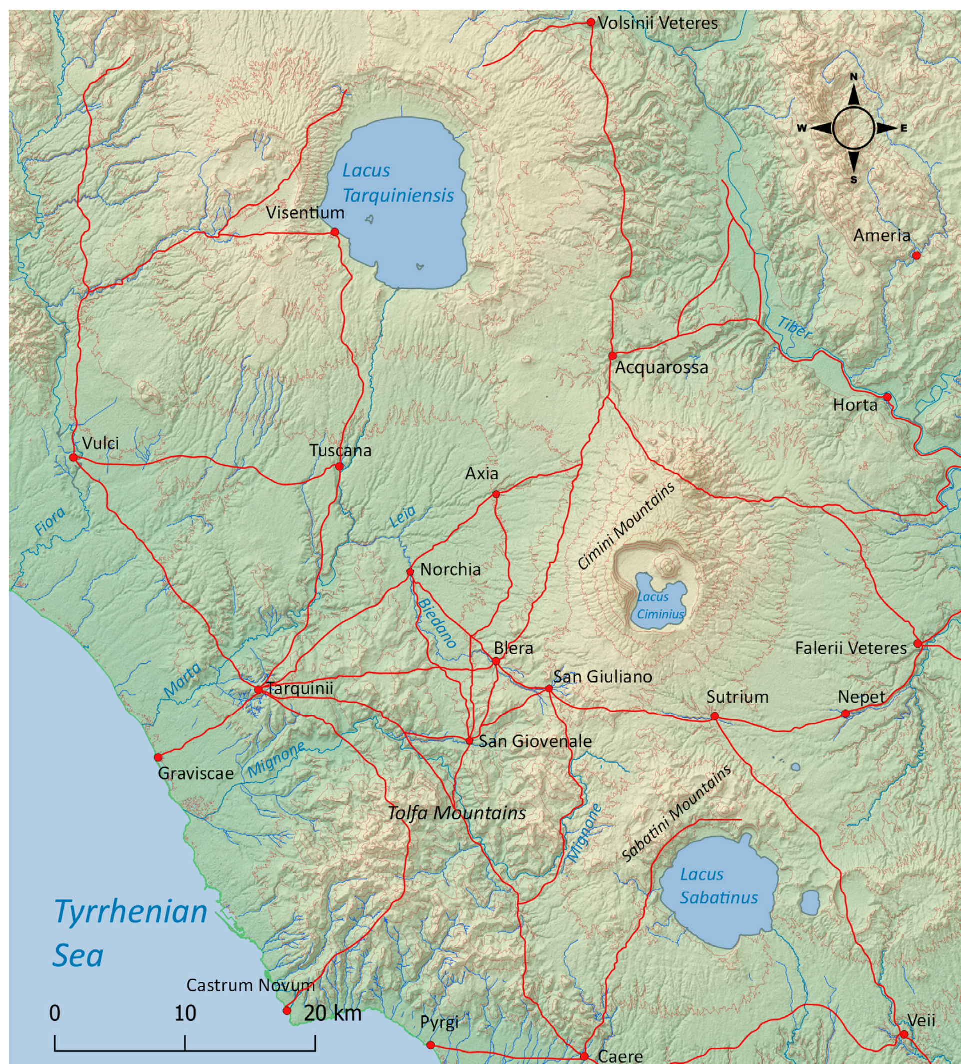

Fig. 17. South Etruria with major Etruscan roads. After Architettura etrusca nel Viterbese, 28, fig. 1.

Fig. 18. South Etruria with major Roman roads. After Åhlfeldt 2019.

The two most important Roman roads in the area are the Via Clodia and the "consular" Via Cassia. Although not a consular road, the Via Clodia is still of considerable importance. There are differing views regarding the date of construction of the Clodia. Harris for example, suggests that its construction is connected to the foundation of the *colonia* of Saturnia, and sets the date to 183 BC.[240] However, large portions of the Clodia probably existed in pre-Roman times, and it was more likely constructed in the

[240] Harris 1971, 166–167.

early 3rd century BC, soon after the region had come under Roman control.[241] The Via Clodia originates in Rome, at Pons Milvius, and diverges from the Via Cassia south-west of Veii, running along the western edge of the Lago di Bracciano, where it passes Forum Clodii, and enters the Biedano region *c.* 1 km east of modern Vejano, and then turns and runs almost straight towards Blera. Thereafter it continues past Norchia and Tuscana on its route to its final destination, the *colonia* of Saturnia. There are uncertainties regarding the Clodia, because the area had a rich road system in the late Republican and early Imperial periods. Thus, many minor roads have variously also been interpreted as the Clodia. There have also been differing opinions on where it passed urban centres. While it is clear that the Via Clodia passes beneath the city plateau of Blera, its route at Norchia has been somewhat controversial since it is uncertain as to exactly where the Clodia passed here. While Quilici Gigli is of the opinion that the road took a route beneath the town, as is the situation in Blera, and did not pass through the settlement, Colonna is of the opposite opinion.[242] Four bridges, all connected to the Via Clodia, were probably constructed in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, in the immediate hinterland of Blera: the Ponte Piro, over which the Via Clodia crosses the Petrola stream *c.* 12 km south-east of Blera, the unnamed one over the Serisia stream, Ponte del Diavolo, and Ponte della Rocca. At the same time as the Ponte Piro was constructed, a large public building, perhaps a *mansio*, was built in the Petrola locality.[243]

[241] Hemphill 1975, 129, 149–150; Quilici Gigli 1976, 16–17; Potter 1979, 102–103.
[242] Quilici Gigli 1974, 32; Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 120–122.
[243] Quilici Gigli 1976, 287-290, nos. 456, 457; Corzani 2010, 35.

Fig. 19. Blera, Ponte del Diavolo (1st century BC). Photograph by R. Abedi.

Via Cassia was one of the most important roads together with the other consular roads connecting Rome with central and northern Italy, the Via Flaminia, and the Via Aurelia, and the most important one in inland south Etruria. It was constructed around 150 BC, and possibly named after C. Cassius Longinus, censor in 154 BC. It runs from Pons Milvius in Rome, passing Baccanae, Sutrium, Vicus Matrini, and Forum Cassii on the eastern edge of the area here under investigation, Volsinii Novi, Clusium, Arretium, Florentia, and Pistoria on its route to Luna. According to Solari, Blera was connected to the Cassia via an intersecting road which ran in a north-easterly direction towards Forum Cassii, possibly to be identified with the road running in that direction from the Ponte della Rocca.[244] Potter speculates that the Cassia was constructed on the course of an earlier Etruscan road, a Via Veientana, which also connected Veii to Rome and further on to central Etruria. With the construction of the Cassia, the course would have been altered to intentionally bypass Veii. On the other hand, Potter points out that the course was obviously chosen with precision and efficiency in mind, given its easy gradients and straight course.[245] Benelli is inclined towards a similar point of view discussing the Roman subjugation of Volsinii (Veteres) and ensuing foundation of

[244] Solari 1918 (1976), 223; Hemphill 1975, 145–146; Quilici Gigli 1976, 223–225, no. 334.
[245] Potter 1979, 102–103.

Volsinii Novi, which according to him inverted the axis of the Volsinian territory, thereby flipping the economic and political centre to the interior of the region. The construction of the Via Cassia then sealed the deal.[246] Considering the case of Veii, even if a course which also included it would not have meant a hefty deviation, since the Cassia passes only 1.5 km west of Veii, it could still be argued that the course was laid out on pragmatic grounds, since the landscape here facilitates a more direct course. However, it is of course plausible that a contributing factor to Veii's bypassing was that by the 2nd century BC it was reduced to a comparably small community. Veii only regained some fractions of its importance during the early Empire as the *Municipium Augustum Veiens*. The case of Volsinii seems even more logical. To also include Volsinii on the route would have entailed a considerable deviation from the course, and it is also reasonable to think that the Romans preferred to include, and promote, Volsinii Novi. The construction of the Cassia probably accelerated the decline of Volsinii, already in progress. The Cassia seems to have had a great influence on the area through the various roads connected to it, which also connected it with the Clodia.[247]

As noted, the reasoning behind the routes of the roads is not exactly clear, and it depends on how we interpret the general Roman intentions behind the construction of a road network. According to Potter, the reason for constructing the roads in this region, and above all the consular ones, was to get a comfortable access to central and northern Etruria, both for the purpose of trade communications, and for military movements. At the same time, Potter continues, the construction of the road network represents a deliberate policy to avoid previously important urban centres and aiming at destroying what was possibly left of resistance in these centres. This was the case with Veii for the Via Cassia, and with San Giuliano, for the Via Clodia.[248] Potter's point of view is somewhat ambivalent; on the one hand he stresses the Roman pragmatic stance of taking the traveller from point A to point B as quickly as possible, on the other he underlines the Roman intention to deliberately bypass earlier important Etruscan centres, to cause them to lose importance. Qulici Gigli notes that San Giuliano is left out from the course of the Clodia, which she considers very telling; the site was declining in the 3rd century BC and was possibly almost uninhabited by the middle of it.[249] It would seem logical to assume that San Giuliano was intentionally bypassed, in order to weaken its importance. On the other hand, Roman roads do not tend to take short detours along their routes, and perhaps San Giuliano's position to the east of the Forum Clodii–Blera–Norchia alignment was considered too out of place and so was subsequently sacrificed; avoiding San Giuliano provided a considerably straighter route.

246 Benelli 2014b, 29.
247 Quilici Gigli 1976, 18.
248 Potter 1979, 93–95, 102–103.
249 Quilici Gigli 1976, 17.

Consequently, this bypassing would have contributed to the town's decline. The Via Clodia probably assisted in Blera's growing importance in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, as exemplified by the bestowal of the status of *municipium* at the end of the Republican period. According to Santella, the Clodia contributed to a population increase as attested by a myriad of new rural settlements.[250]

2.4 Borders and territory

There is little evidence in written sources for the borders of the Etruscan cities in our area of interest. Except for some clues in Livy and Diodorus Siculus, there is very little to guide us. Traditionally, different types of artefacts such as pottery, and architectural features such as tomb types, have been seen as evidence, or at least indicia, for a certain town or territory being culturally or politically dependent on one city or another, in our case the important cities of Tarquinii or Caere. But defining the borders based on ceramic finds is rather unreliable; production had since long been standardised and integrated in a general cultural and commercial koiné. Pulcinelli points out other elements, such as the distribution of sanctuaries and cult places as more fruitful for research purposes, but above all he accentuates funerary architecture, as this is more strictly influenced by conservatism of traditions and local customs.[251] However, the distribution of specific artistic features, and traditions such as tomb architecture, could be the result of itinerant artisans who could have offered their services to communities belonging to different cities' political spheres, in this particular case to settlements situated on both sides of the Tolfa Mountains.[252] Thus artistic features may not be that strong an indicator for political or cultural dependence in a certain period.

Consequently, the identification of the borders of the territory of the Biedano region in a certain period is hypothetical, and it depends further on a discussion on the borders between the territories of the two most influential Etruscan cities in the area, Tarquinii and Caere. It is also important to keep in mind that the borders were most probably never static and shifted slightly from period to period, and they should not be seen as strict as in the modern sense. Some areas probably had the character of transition, and were not very populated, a kind of "no man's land"; as such whole areas would have functioned as natural borders. The watercourses too could be regarded as borders but

[250] Santella 1988, 9.
[251] Pulcinelli 2012, 74–75.
[252] Tobin 2015, 84–85; Edlund-Berry 2016, 17.

that does not imply that they hindered commerce and movement. Also, while the watercourses could indeed have been political borders, it does not imply that they also served as ethnic barriers.[253] A hypothetical definition of the borders, based on the information at our disposal, is only executable for the Etrusco-Roman period, roughly the 4th–1st centuries BC. As pointed out by Massimo Pallottino, there were possibly changes to the territories before that period, but unfortunately, the material keeps us in ignorance regarding these.[254] The available material consists of both direct and indirect references from the ancient sources, information regarding the possible survival of the ancient division in the medieval jurisdiction, and indications given by the material remains, such as tomb architecture; in addition, the consideration of the area's topography, road networks, and the later Roman *tribus* division are all of value.[255]

The southern border of the Tarquinian territory was certainly the most important and vulnerable one, especially during the first phase of the conflicts with Rome. It bordered both the Roman-controlled territory of Veii but also that of Caere. The conflict character of the area has led scholars such as Pulcinelli to assert that this border was heavily fortified with *castella*.[256] The late 4th- toearly 5th-century AD grammarian Servius, in writing his commentary on the *Aeneid* of Virgil, tells us that the border of Caere was constituted by the *Caeritis amnis*, the Mignone river.

> PROPE CAERITIS AMNEM Agylla civitas est Tusciae, a conditore Agella appellata, cui ex inscitia Romana aliud est inditum nomen. nam cum Romani euntes per Tusciam interrogarent Agyllinos quae diceretur civitas, illi, utpote Graeci, quid audirent ignorantes et optimum ducentes si prius eos salutarent, dixerunt *χαῖρε*: quam salutationem Romani nomen civitatis esse putaverunt, et detracta aspiratione eam Caere nominarunt, ut dicit Hyginus in urbibus Italicis. "amnis" autem aut tacuit nomen, aut, ut quidam volunt, Minio dicitur, ut "qui Caerete domo qui sunt Minionis in arvis". alii Caere montem putabant, ab hoc oppidum dictum.[257]

[253] Pulcinelli 2012, 75.

[254] Pallottino 1937, 569; Andreussi 1977, 15.

[255] The *tribus* division will be discussed more thoroughly in Ch. 4.3 below.

[256] Pulcinelli 2012, 78.

[257] Serv. *ad Aen*. 8.597, 10.183. "In the vicinity of the Caerite stream, lies the Etruscan city of Agylla, called Agella after the founder, but which as a result of Roman ignorance has been bestowed a different name. For when the Romans were advancing through Etruria, they asked the Agyllines what the name of the city was, they, since they were Greeks, did not understand what they had heard and considering it best to first salute them, said *χαῖρε*: but rather than a greeting the Romans thought it was the name of the city, and with the aspiration removed they named it Caere, as Hyginus says in *Italian Cities*. Moreover, regarding the "stream", the name is either not mentioned, or, as some prefer, it is called Minio, as in 'those who

Fig. 20. Hypothetical maximum extent of the Biedano region within the ager Tarquiniensis.

While the Mignone has for long been generally accepted as the natural border between these two cities, and at a first glance this seems a sound assumption—the Mignone cuts through the landscape from the Tolfa Mountains in the interior to its mouth at the Tyrrhenian Sea, naturally dividing the landscape into a southern and a northern part—there are however factors which call for caution here. Parts of the river certainly constituted the demarcation line between the two Etruscan peoples, but it is implausible that its entire course had this function.[258] Near the coast, the river seems to run too close to the city of Tarquinii and its surrounding necropoleis to be considered Caeretan; the distance is roughly 5 km from the city plateau. Pallottino, together with

originate in Caere and the fields of Minio'. Others thought Caere was a mountain, and that the town was named after this." Transl. by author.

[258] Pallottino 1937, 570.

Andreussi, argues that it is more plausible that the territory of Tarquinii extended south of the river, subsequently joining the Tolfa Mountains in the inland. In consequence, it is only from its path through these mountains that the Mignone could be considered a border.[259] Pulcinelli however, in his outstanding 2016 opus *L'Etruria meridionale e Roma. Insediamenti e territorio tra IV e III secolo a.C.*, argues that the southern border did not follow the Mignone even at this point. In his interpretation the sites of Luni sul Mignone, San Giovenale, and San Giuliano, described by Pulcinelli as showing a military character, all should be considered fortified frontier towns that protected the Tarquinian border towards the south. Consequently, the southern border would have cut through the Tolfa Mountains only joining the Mignone in the vicinity of modern Vejano.[260] The same interpretation seems also to have been made by Maria Pia Donato and Vincent Jolivet, although they only provide us with a map, without discussing or arguing for where they have drawn the borders.[261]

However, the presence of fortifications at these particular sites is not a strong enough indicium for drawing the border further to the north, as proposed by Pulcinelli; these fortifications have all been dated to the Hellenistic period (although a later date could be argued for at least some of them) which, as has already been mentioned, was a period of great turmoil in this region, and therefore it would not be entirely surprising to find fortifications from this period in the settlements of the territory. Thus, the presence of fortifications does not prove that these towns are to be considered frontier towns controlling the immediate border, because even if we were to consider the Mignone the southern border, these towns would have been the first a possible invader would have encountered anyway. Consequently, it wouldn't be strange if they were fortified. Lastly, in considering the border character of the Mignone, it is also worth keeping in mind that the river, in late Antiquity, formed a border between the dioceses of Tarquinii and Centumcellae (modern Civitavecchia, in Etruscan times a small settlement in the territory of Caere), and later, in early medieval times between Langobard Tuscia and Roman (Byzantine) Tuscia.[262]

The definition of the eastern border of the territory is also difficult to determine and has produced conflicting hypotheses. According to Pallottino, who leans on medieval records on the diocese of Blera, the eastern border ran from the Mignone, continuing through the Cucco, Paganello, Coccia, and Stefano Hills, and probably reached the Via Cassia in the vicinity of the Roman *mansio* of Vicus Matrini, which he considers lying

[259] Pallottino 1937, 571–573; Andreussi 1977, 15. See also Bourdin 2012, 486.

[260] Pulcinelli 2016, 205–206, 209–215, 359–360, 364–365; also Pulcinelli 2012, 79.

[261] Donato & Jolivet 2018, 29, fig. 4.

[262] Pallottino 1937, 572–573.

within the territory of Blera.[263] However, such a boundary is still difficult to verify.[264] It seems that the dependency of Vicus Matrini could provide clues to determine the eastern borders of the Biedano region. Vicus Matrini has been identified at a locality called *le Capannaccie* by a funerary inscription indicating the family tomb of the *Matrini* family,[265] from which the *vicus* most certainly took its name. According to Arturo Solari, the *vicus* was always quite modest, and it is mentioned in the *Tabula Peutingeriana* and indirectly in connection to the Matrini family.[266]

Andreussi states that defining the border towards the Latin *colonia* of Sutrium is not an easy task, but she argues that Vicus Matrini most probably belonged to the territory of this town. An indicium for this being so would be that the family of the Matrini appears in an inscription on a plaque from Sutrium, dated to the early Julio-Claudian period, containing a list of the *pontifices* of the town.[267] The same family is also attested at other places in the territory, as for example on a tile stamp probably found close to Viterbo, with a *bollo di fabbrica* reading *figlinae Matrinianae*, and a stamp on a handle from an amphora reading *P. MATRIN*, and found by Pasqui in Blera.[268] The Matrini family was apparently running a successful ceramic workshop at Vicus Matrini, with its products found in the surrounding territories. This workshop later became imperial property in the 2nd century AD. Solari agrees with Pallottino in regarding Vicus Marini as being a dependency of Blera rather than of Sutrium, although Solari states that it is difficult to determine such.[269] Solari seems to base his opinion on the archaeological record, arguing that other villages existed on the route from the site of modern Capranica, north-west of Sutrium, all the way to Vetralla. According to Solari, these hamlets all probably belonged to the *municipium* of Blera. He claims that this conclusion is supported by archaeological remains, a good part of which would be Etruscan, but he does not cite any specific archaeological work supporting this claim.[270] A thorough archaeological investigation was only carried out much later, with Andreussi's field survey.[271] Solari's view is also shared by Pulcinelli, who draws the border of the territory of Tarquinii, of which Blera was a part, to the east of Capranica, and by Santella, who also incorporates it within Blera's territory.[272] Santella bases this assertion on the fact that this town, from late Antiquity into the Byzantine times of the

[263] Pallottino 1937, 573–575.
[264] See also Andreussi 1977, 15.
[265] *CIL* XI, 3331.
[266] Solari 1918 (1976), 220–221; Andreussi 1977, 15–16.
[267] *CIL* XI, 3254; Andreussi 1977, 15; Keppie 1985, 169–170; Wypijewski 2013, 192–193.
[268] *CIL* XI, p. 505; *CIL* XI, 3331, 8106; Gamurrini *et al.* 1972, 81.
[269] Solari 1918 (1976), 220.
[270] Solari 1918 (1976), 222.
[271] Andreussi 1977.
[272] Santella 2014, 29–30; Pulcinelli 2016, tav. I.

Middle Ages, belonged to the diocese of Blera. To Santella, this could be seen as a relic of the ancient Roman territorial organisation.[273]

If we are to follow Livy, the entire Ciminian forest seems to be a plausible candidate for acting as eastern border of the Biedano region. This is also the opinion of Ward-Perkins, as well as of Gianfranco Gazzetti. The Ciminian forest was a feared wilderness where nobody dared to enter.[274] A dense woodland of primarily oak and beech, it formed a natural barrier between Rome and Etruria.[275] To the Romans the forest evoked fear and uncertainty and Livy tells us that after the decisive defeat of the Etruscans at Sutrium in 310 BC, the Senate ordered the commanding general, the consul Q. Fabius Maximus Rullianus, not to pursue the Etruscans into the forest.[276]

The Ciminian forest, at least in the 4th–3rd centuries BC, seems to have formed a natural border, a "no man's land", between the land belonging to the Roman sphere of interest, and the independent Etruria, more precisely between the Romans and the independent Tarquinii. Thus it is only natural to also argue for it forming the eastern border of the Biedano region, which another statement of Livy's seems to confirm, namely that the *colonia* of Sutrium, whose importance is thus explained, was situated on the Via Cassia, on the outskirts of the forest, and formed both the locks and gates (*velut claustra inde portaeque*) of Etruria.[277] The narrow valleys between Sutrium and Capranica were probably for a long time the natural access road through the forest from Rome into independent Etruria, later partly overlapped by the Via Cassia after the complete conquest of the southern part of the Etruscan territory.[278] Enrico Benelli offers an alternative view, arguing that the Ciminian forest made the borders of the territories indefinite and very much uncontrollable—so much that Tarquinii in the 4th century BC decided to fix a ring of border fortifications around its territory.[279] The tight vegetation would also have made it possible for the Romans to enter it with an army unobserved, a possibility that was met with terror in all Etruscan cities.[280] This is in stark contrast to what is stated by Livy, who argues that the Romans did not dare to enter the forest whatsoever.[281]

To establish a definite eastern border seems an almost impossible task. Benelli's argument for the Ciminian forest rendering the borders of the territories uncertain, together with Livy's statement of it being a borderland in itself, which was followed by

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[273] Santella 2014, 29, n. 6.
[274] Livy 9.36.1.
[275] Ward-Perkins 1962, 399; 1964; Gazzetti 1990, 101.
[276] Livy 9.36.14, 9.38.4.
[277] Livy 6.9.4.
[278] Gazzetti 1990, 101.
[279] Benelli 2014b, 29. Cf. Naso 1999 and Pulcinelli 2012.
[280] Benelli 2014b, 29.
[281] Livy 6.9.4.

Ward-Perkins, seems to be the soundest interpretation. Regarding whether Vicus Matrini, in Roman times, was a dependency of Blera or of Sutrium, as argued by Andreussi, one could of course discuss whether members of one certain family could hold office in a nearby town, if they were registered there, or if the family originated there. Unfortunately, at the present state of knowledge we cannot know for sure, but all things considered, the presence of the Matrini family in the *pontifices* list of Sutrium makes a strong indicium for Vicus Matrini being dependent on Sutrium rather than on Blera. In consequence it seems most probable that the border, however indefinite due to the thick Ciminian forest, ran through the hills as suggested by Pallottino, with the site of the future Vicus Matrini belonging to Sutrium rather than to Blera. However, as mentioned earlier, the borders in Etruscan times between the *ager Tarquiniensis* and Roman occupied territory should not be seen as definite and certain.

The Ciminian forest probably extended to the south side of the Lago di Vico in antiquity, making the entire area little used in Etruscan times. The area surveyed by Andreussi is relatively poor in Etruscan remains.[282] The survey seems to confirm the conclusions reached in the study of Sutrium by Guy Duncan, who rewards the Romans of early Imperial times with the achievement of having opened up the forest and subsequently making it available for habitation and cultivation.[283] Agreeing with Duncan, Andreussi argues that it was only with the Roman expansion that the dense forest was chopped down little by little and consequently the area was populated. Andreussi, further agreeing with Duncan, states that there was probably a road penetrating the forest, which connected Sutrium with Blera in Etruscan times. Its route has been partly localised.[284] In Roman times a new country road was laid out, running up and over the Cimini Mountains. However, if this road running across, or over, the mountains is to be identified as the ancient Via Ciminia is not clear, but according to Duncan it is probable. It is the only known Roman paved road to cross these hills.[285] The section of the road beyond Lago di Vico had not been explored when Duncan was writing in 1958, but it is presumed to have continued to Viterbo. The date of construction is uncertain. Black-gloss ware is to be found on one or two of the sites along its line. But this gives no indication of when the road was paved as there may

[282] One inscription on a sandstone block, reused in Roman times, probably refers to a magistrate and seems datable to the 4th century BC. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine its provenance: Andreussi 1977, 15, no. 102.
[283] Andreussi 1977, 15; Duncan 1958, 91.
[284] Andreussi 1977, 50, no. 126.
[285] Duncan 1958, 77, 84–86; Potter 1979, 105–106.

have already been a track in existence along the same route, which was later formalised and permanently paved.[286]

Regarding the dependency of the northern towns of Norchia and Axia, there are several possibilities. Hypothetically it could be argued that they were both dependent on Tuscana, itself situated in the territory of Tarquinii, or that they were dependencies of Blera. However, it is also necessary to take into consideration the possibility that they were not dependent on either, but constituted administrative centres on their own, only dependent on Tarquinii, and therefore were on the same status level as Tuscana and Blera. Even if they consider the Marta river a likely border between Tuscana and Norchia, Graeme Barker and Tom Rasmussen state that the precise nature of "control", whether it be political, social, economic, or ideological, of a major Etruscan centre over a minor one is extremely unclear.[287] A sounder piece of evidence for Norchia not being a dependency of Tuscana is the fact that excavations suggest a settlement shift, contraction, or even abandonment of this city's area in the 5th and 4th centuries BC. The studies by Giovanni Colonna and Anna Maria Sgubini Moretti of the necropoleis in the hinterland of Tuscana also suggest discontinuity from the late 6th or early 5th centuries BC.[288] Tuscana seems to have become important once again in Hellenistic times. If Tuscana was abandoned or anyway reduced in size and importance in the 5th and 4th centuries, it would suggest that Norchia was not a Tuscanian dependency in this period. Both the archaeological record and the necropoleis from this town suggest a peak in the 4th to the 2nd centuries BC. In fact, the importance of Norchia is, in the interpretation of Pulcinelli, primary; it is the most important centre in the area in the 4th–3rd centuries BC and would be considered the administrative centre of the south-eastern parts of the *ager Tarquiniensis*.[289]

Pallottino stresses the importance of the smaller streams in the area, arguing that these were natural itineraries surrounded by thick vegetation. By looking at a map one can see that all inhabited centres lie in the vicinities of the most important waterways. Tarquinii and Tuscana lie in the Marta valley; Norchia, Blera, and San Guiliano in the Biedano valley; and Axia and Sorrina (Viterbo) in the Leia valley.[290] Furthermore there are other connections between Norchia and Blera to take into consideration. S. Vivenzio, first bishop and venerated patron saint of Blera, lived according to legend as

[286] Duncan 1958, 84–86, n. 47; Later, in the 2nd century AD, the Via Ciminia was supervised by *curatores viarum* together with the Viae Cassia, Clodia, Amerina, Annia, and Nova Traiana. *CIL* IX, 5833; *CIL* VI, 41229. For a full list of relevant inscriptions regarding the Via Ciminia, see Frederiksen & Ward-Perkins 1957, 192.

[287] Barker & Rasmussen 1988, 26–28.

[288] Colonna 1967b; Sgubini Moretti & Ricciardi 1982; Barker & Rasmussen 1988, 26.

[289] Pulcinelli 2016, 362.

[290] Pallottino 1937, 576. The importance of the waterways has also been argued more recently by Luca Pulcinelli: Pulcinelli 2016, 206.

an eremite in a cave in the surroundings of Norchia. Another is the name of the river, the *Biedano* (*Bledanum*), which runs beneath the city plateau of Norchia. According to Colonna, these provide a clear testimony of the relationship between the two centres.[291]

Proceeding from this it is arguable that at least in some periods Norchia is to be considered a dependency of Blera. This is also the opinion of Bormann (*CIL* XI, 3342). However, that the political and economic centre of the region shifted to Norchia in the 4th century is suggested by the archaeological record; the extent of the urban area, as well as the surrounding monumental necropoleis, indicate that this town flourished in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC, a period when the evidence from Blera points to a decline. Other evidence pointing to the importance of Norchia in this period is the presence of local magistrates, recorded in funerary inscriptions found in tombs in the surrounding necropoleis.[292] This would make it possible to assign to Norchia an at least partly administrative autonomy inside the Tarquinian territory.[293] However, this assumption is only valid for the 4th to 2nd centuries BC; both before and after this period, the settlement does not show any significant evidence for any greater importance. Furthermore, it would not necessarily mean that Norchia no longer belonged to the area here described as the Biedano region; what we see could well be that the centre of power merely moved northwards in the Hellenistic period, with the extent of the territory remaining roughly the same.

Regarding Axia, it is clear from the only ancient source at our disposal, the passage in Cicero's *Pro Caecina*, that Axia was a *castellum* in the *ager Tarquiniensis*.[294] Nevertheless, Colonna argues that Axia, for topographical reasons, belonged to the *ager* of Sorrina.[295] According to Colonna it is not plausible that the later Roman *municipium* of Tarquinii would have extended to also include Axia, since it then would have wedged in-between the territories of Tuscana and Blera, Roman *municipia* of their own. However, Colonna cannot claim to have better knowledge of the municipal divisions than Cicero had, and he consequently states that Cicero must have been referring to the situation before the trial of Caecina in 69 or 68 BC. Therefore, Colonna concludes, Sorrina must have been given its municipal autonomy after 69/68 BC, and before 44 BC (or perhaps 51 BC), due to the *quattuorvirate*. In addition, Sorrina and Tuscana seem to have been filiation *municipia* to Tarquinii before becoming *municipia* of their own, since they all, in contrast to Blera, belonged to the same *tribus*, the *Stellatina*.

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[291] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 23.

[292] The importance of these magistrates is discussed in Ch. 4 below.

[293] Pulcinelli 2016, 362.

[294] Cic. *Pro Caec.* 7.20.

[295] The location of the Etruscan city of Sorrina is yet to be determined, but it possibly lay on the site of modern Viterbo.

Before 87 BC, it is plausible that Axia belonged to the nominally independent Tarquinian state, perhaps constituting a small semi-autonomous community.[296]

Sorrina has been identified with the later medieval city of Viterbo, and this seems the most plausible interpretation. However, the information at our disposal on Sorrina is extremely scarce; it is not mentioned in any ancient documents, neither in the lists of the earlier-mentioned ancient authors nor in the itineraries. The only testimony we have of the existence of an Etruscan city with this name is in five Latin inscriptions recording the derivative nouns *Surrinenses* and *Sorrinenses*.[297] Even if Sorrina is to be identified with Viterbo, this argument of Colonna's still halters considerably. With the same logic one could argue that Tuscana and Blera also did not belong to the *ager Tarquiniensis*, which they apparently did. Furthermore, even if Axia was not part of the later *municipium* of Tarquinii it is very probable that it belonged to the earlier *ager Tarquiniensis*. According to Pulcinelli, who often speaks in terms of "military control", Axia contributed to the control of the eastern parts of the internal district of the territory of Tarquinii. Its position on the crossroads of important ancient itineraries, which connected this centre to other important settlements in the area, such as Norchia, Tuscana, and Musarna, was surely of great strategic importance.[298] In conjunction with the proximity to Norchia, both in distance and in tomb architecture, the most plausible solution is to place Axia in the same region as the latter.

The western border of the territory of Blera seems the most difficult to determine. If one follows the borders of the medieval diocese of Orcla (Norchia), as hypothesised by Colonna, it extends as far as the bend of the Marta river, where it turns south-westwards towards the coast.[299] Taking into consideration the reduced importance of Tarquinii in medieval times, the borders of the diocese, provided by Colonna, seem likely enough. However, while it is plausible, and also probable, that the northern border of the medieval diocese was marked by the Rigomero stream, a tributary of the Marta, it seems improbable that the border also extended as far west as to this point in ancient times. It would have reduced and infringed on the immediate territory of Tarquinii. It would be more probable that the border turned south at an earlier point, running through the hilly terrain where one today finds the town of Monte Romano, eventually joining the Mignone in the vicinity of Luni.

The borders here presented have been reconstructed based on the geography of the landscape, information from literary passages, inscriptions, later medieval records, and archaeological evidence, above all in the form of funerary architecture and the extensive road network. The borders must be regarded as hypothetical and not constant, or

[296] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 34–35.
[297] *CIL* XI, 3009, 3010, 3012, 3014, 3017.
[298] Pulcinelli 2016, 148–149.
[299] Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1978, tav. XX.

definite, from period to period. However, all things considered, the evidence indicates an area which is a cultural and economic entity, to a certain degree also political, which is enough to justify the definition of a region with a sense of belonging, perhaps also with some sort of local identity, as indicated by the information given by the literary sources.

3 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The changes in settlement patterns over time are highly interesting since these provide clues to the economic and demographic development in a territory. By studying these patterns, it is possible to understand the basis of rural economy, use of the landscape, demography, and the relationship between urban centres and the countryside. Furthermore, it can also reflect other circumstances such as periods of war. The appearance of large villas in southern Etruria in, particularly, the last two centuries BC, has been seen both as a shift in the agricultural economy of Italy, moving from small- to large-scale usage of the farmland, but also as an indicium of an influx of Roman colonists settling in the territory.[300]

Most scholars today would recognise the importance of field survey as a method for understanding the rural settlement patterns and thus giving information on the agricultural economy. However, the application of field surveys as evidence calls for caution. The problems principally concern the comparison and interpretation of field survey data, since no systematic method for comparing data from different surveys has been created. The reasons for this being so have to do with the varying circumstances in which the archaeological evidence has been recovered and documented, and thus it has not been easy to come up with any standardised classification. Nonetheless, in order to understand the ancient agrarian economy, such standardisation is needed.

In the following, these problems are confronted further, and a classification designed solve the problems is presented, in order to analyse the archaeological data provided by three field surveys conducted in the area of investigation for this study. Thus, the results are presented providing us with a picture of the shifting settlement patterns in the territory of Blera from the Subarchaic to the late Roman Republican period.

[300] Ikeguchi 2006, 148.

3.1 The surveys

The investigation of the settlement pattern for this study relies on field surveys carried out in the second half of the 20th century. The two major field surveys, which together cover the central part of the area of investigation, were, as already mentioned in Chapter 1.5, carried out in the 1960s–1970s and the 1980s respectively.[301] The earlier survey centres on the territory closest to Blera and was carried out under the direction of Stefania Quilici Gigli from 1969 to 1973; the later, by Pamela Hemphill, over the period 1981–1989. This later survey covers an equally large area and focuses on the area immediately to the south of the area of the previous survey. Another survey was carried out around the site of Luni sul Mignone in 1987–1992 by Johnny Bengtsson, and partly overlaps Hemphill's survey area.[302] The results of Bengtsson's survey have also been studied for this thesis, where the sites are to be found inside the defined Biedano region. Unfortunately, the surrounding territories of Norchia and Axia respectively remain unknown to us to a large degree, since no intensive field surveys have yet been carried out. The results of such surveys would of course have made highly important contributions to the interpretations of this study.

3.2 Methodological considerations

As many scholars working with data from different field surveys have experienced, synchronising and comparing them can be quite a tricky task. Numerous problems arise as soon as the data have been compiled. The ambiguity of field survey data, as discussed by Mamoru Ikeguchi, has meant that very few criteria agreed on by different scholars have been established, particularly regarding classification and dating of sites.[303] Ikeguchi presents a method for overcoming these issues, based on the criteria for classification created by Timothy Potter.[304] Potter, in his highly influencial *The changing landscape of south Etruria*, divided rural sites into three basic categories: villas, small farms, and huts and shacks.[305] The classification and dating of the sites has hence

[301] Quilici Gigli 1976, 3; Hemphill 2000, 22.
[302] Bengtsson 2001.
[303] Ikeguchi 2000; 2006.
[304] Ikeguchi 2006, 137–144.
[305] Potter 1979, 122–123. This classification was also adopted by the South Etruria Survey Project: see Patterson *et al.* 2020, 41, table 2.6.

also been the main issue for this study; to adequately create a common categorisation of the sites presented in the different surveys.

Quilici Gigli differentiates between *villa rustica*, *casa rustica*, and *frammenti fittili*. Hemphill, for her part, divides her rural settlements into *villa*, *villa rustica*, and pottery concentration, not recognising the category called *casa rustica* by Quilici Gigli. Furthermore, Bengtsson uses the categories *lantgård*, *skärvansamling*, *byggnadsrester*, *bosättning*, and *bebyggelsespår*.[306] The problem has been to differentiate between the various categories in order to compare them with each other. Therefore, it was necessary to break down the categories of the respective surveys, in order to construct a common classification. Since I have not had access to the survey material, nor have I participated in the actual surveys, I have had to rely on the information given in the publications. It is of course impossible to come up with a perfect and foolproof system, and I have not followed the categorisation of Potter slavishly, but I have focused on what was possible to do with the categories used by the authors of the various studies, rather than making things up based on guesswork. Thus, Potter's category "huts and shacks" has not been applied, since I did not find any category corresponding to it. In my synchronised categorisation I have chosen to combine the *villas*, and *villae rusticae* of Hemphill's survey into one category, *villa rustica*. There is no clear difference that I am able to detect in the descriptions of Hemphill, nor is there any obvious reason for making the differentiation in the first place, since all rural villas can be categorised *villa rustica*, regardless of their size. Furthermore, Quilici Gigli does not draw a difference between *villa* and *villa rustica*. Consequently, it was only logical to treat them as one category. In this category I have also included what Bengtsson classifies as a *lantgård*.

The toughest problem to solve however, has been what to do with the *case rustiche* of Quilici Gigli, and how to correspond those with the other categories of Hemphill and Bengtsson. In order to do so it was necessary to look for common features in all those categories. In the category called *casa rustica* by Quilici Gigli, counting in total 56 sites datable from the Archaic to the late Republican period, 40 sites, or 71% of the total number, record the presence of tiles or bricks, and pottery. Hemphill, as already pointed out, does not categorise any site as a *casa rustica*. However, in her category *pottery concentration*, which counts a total of 81 sites datable to the same period as mentioned above, 64 sites, or 79%, record the same accumulation of tiles or bricks, and pottery. Going on to Bengtsson, his categories *skärvansamling*, *byggnadsrester*, *bebyggelsespår*, and *bosättning* provide a rather modest number of sites in comparison to the two other surveys, with the total here consisting of only eight sites, all recording tiles or bricks, and pottery.

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306 Roughly translated to *villa rustica*, pottery concentration, remains of buildings, settlement, and traces of settlement.

A common term for a site with a concentration of finds consisting of these three find types, tiles, bricks, and pottery, is the farmstead, often used to signify small, isolated rural sites featuring finds of e.g. roof tiles, and a concentration of artefacts which would indicate farming activity, including household pottery, amphorae, and in some cases also querns.[307] A farmstead could have been used as a permanent dwelling, but it could also have been used only seasonally, or daily but not for living. Since the correspondence of above-mentioned find types is relatively high in all the publications, all these sites have been assembled into one, consequently termed "Farmstead".

Another difficulty concerns the larger settlements and which ones can be considered either towns or villages. This has already been mentioned in Chapter 2.2. However, further explanation is useful. This study reckons with five towns in the area of investigation. This because of several factors: the size of the settlement, hydraulic works, monumental buildings such as bridges, vast surrounding necropoleis, the presence of sacred structures such as altars and/or temples/sanctuaries, and remains or indicia of fortification works. These five settlements here defined as towns are to be found on the sites of Castel d'Asso (Axia), Norchia, Blera, San Giuliano, and San Giovenale.[308] All other larger settlements, where it is plausible from the archaeological record to suppose the presence of several dwellings and sometimes surrounding necropoleis or tombs, will be called villages. In this category are to be found settlements recorded as *insediamento*, *abitato*, *aggregato*, and *villaggio* by Quilici Gigli, as well as those recorded as *pagus* or village by Hemphill. There are a small number of sites categorised as *pottery concentration* by Hemphill, but where remains of walls and cisterns have also been recorded. These sites have also been categorised as villages here. Also, one site recorded by Bengtsson as *bosättning*, the site of Luni, has been categorised here as a village. Another exception is the site of San Giuliano, recorded as an *insediamento* by Quilici Gigli, but which I find to have qualities that meet the definition of town: the sheer size of the settlement, its vast surrounding necropoleis, the presence of hydraulic works, and remains of monumental buildings.

[307] Foxhall 1997, 257; Forsell 2001, 28.

[308] See below, *Fig. 21*.

Survey	*Town*	*Village*	*Villa rustica*	*Farmstead*
Quilici Gigli	Città Insediamento	Insediamento Abitato Aggregato Villaggio	Villa rustica	Casa rustica
Hemphill	City	Pagus Village Pottery concentration Walls, cisterns, and pottery	Villa rustica Villa	Pottery concentration
Bengtsson		Bosättning	Lantgård	Skärvansamling Byggnadsrester Bebyggelsespår Bosättning

Table 1. Comparison of site categories.

A very taxing methodological issue has been the chronology of the sites. Here both Quilici Gigli and Hemphill lack consistency; while Quilici Gigli mostly dates the sites by periods, Hemphill mixes periods and year intervals. For this study the most intricate part has been the Hellenistic period and the Roman Republican period, since these two overlap. The basis for dating a site to the Roman Republican period has conventionally been the presence of black-gloss ware, which has a long period of usage, ranging from the early 4th century to the mid-late 1st century BC. Recently, advances in the study of pottery have enabled the more precise dating of different pottery types, especially Republican fine wares and coarse wares. Hence it has been possible to narrow time spans, with the result of revealing distribution patterns different to those previously identified. For example, Helen Patterson, Robert Witcher, and Helga Di Giuseppe's reinterpretation of the British School at Rome's influential South Etruria Survey and the Tiber Valley Project, has revealed a completely different picture of the distribution of rural settlements in the *ager Veientanus* in the Roman Republican period to the original one presented by Potter. Where the earlier results indicated a steady increase in rural settlements from the late 4th century BC into the Imperial period, the results from the restudy show a considerable decline between the second half of the 3rd and

the first half of the 2nd centuries BC. The trend endures to the end of the 2nd century BC when rural settlements begin to increase again.[309]

Unfortunately, to undertake a similar enterprise for this study has not been possible. The information on which the chronology and the categorisation of sites have been based in the publications of Quilici Gigli and Hemphill in particular is often scant and does not allow for a more precise dating. Nor would a completely new field survey of the territory yield any new information, given the now dense vegetation, new settlements often constructed on top of sites, and the destructive long-term practice of deep ploughing, which activity triggered the undertaking of the original surveys in the first place. Hence, this study has had to rely on the dating and categorisation given by these publications. As mentioned, the dating of Republican Roman sites has conventionally been based on black-gloss pottery, the usage of which spans from the late 4th to the mid- to late 1st centuries BC, thus covering the Hellenistic and Roman Republican periods. To solve this issue these two periods are being treated as one, even if this means that the last period of investigation spans a considerably longer period of time than the previous two.

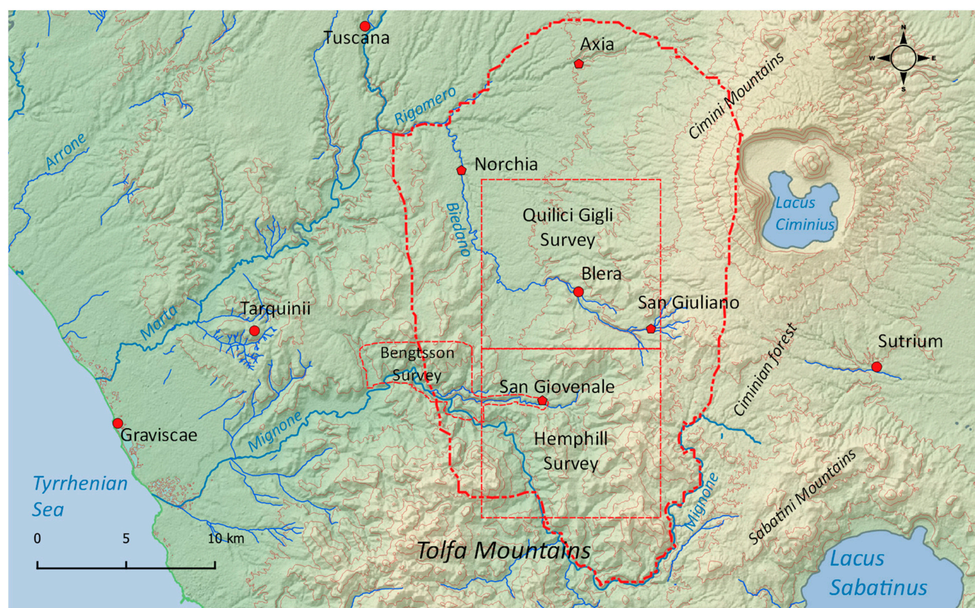

Fig. 21. Hypothetical extent of the Biedano region with the three intensively surveyed areas marked.

[309] Patterson *et al.* 2020, 96–98. Cf. Potter 1979.

In the following, the settlement patterns from the Archaic to the Roman Republican period will be presented. The basis for the compilation has been the synchronised field surveys of Quilici Gigli, Hemphill, and Bengtsson, as presented above.

Since the towns of Axia and Norchia lay outside the areas covered by the field surveys which constitute the basis for this and following distribution maps, they are not included here. The towns shown here are only those which lay inside the surveyed areas, and they are Blera, San Giuliano, and San Giovenale. The sites here shown as *villa rustica* are not to be considered as such during the Archaic period, but are later villa sites which show a continuous material record from the Archaic period onwards. Their classification during this period has not been determined, and this would not even be possible without further examination on site. As for the farmstead sites, the *villa rustica* sites are not necessarily single house sites but could contain one or more houses. They are to be considered farmstead and *villa rustica* sites and not single farmsteads or villas.

3.3 The Archaic period (580–480 BC)

The Archaic period demonstrates a landscape quite densely populated with rural settlements, both farmsteads and villages, which tend to partly cluster around the larger urban centres. In this period the area covered by the surveys most probably belonged to the political and cultural sphere of Caere. The surveys present a total of 66 sites consisting of three towns, ten villages, seven sites which will later on house the sites of *villae rusticae*, and 46 farmstead sites. Even if settlements are dispersed in the landscape, three main settlement clusters may be discerned, surrounding the towns of Blera, San Giuliano, and San Giovenale.

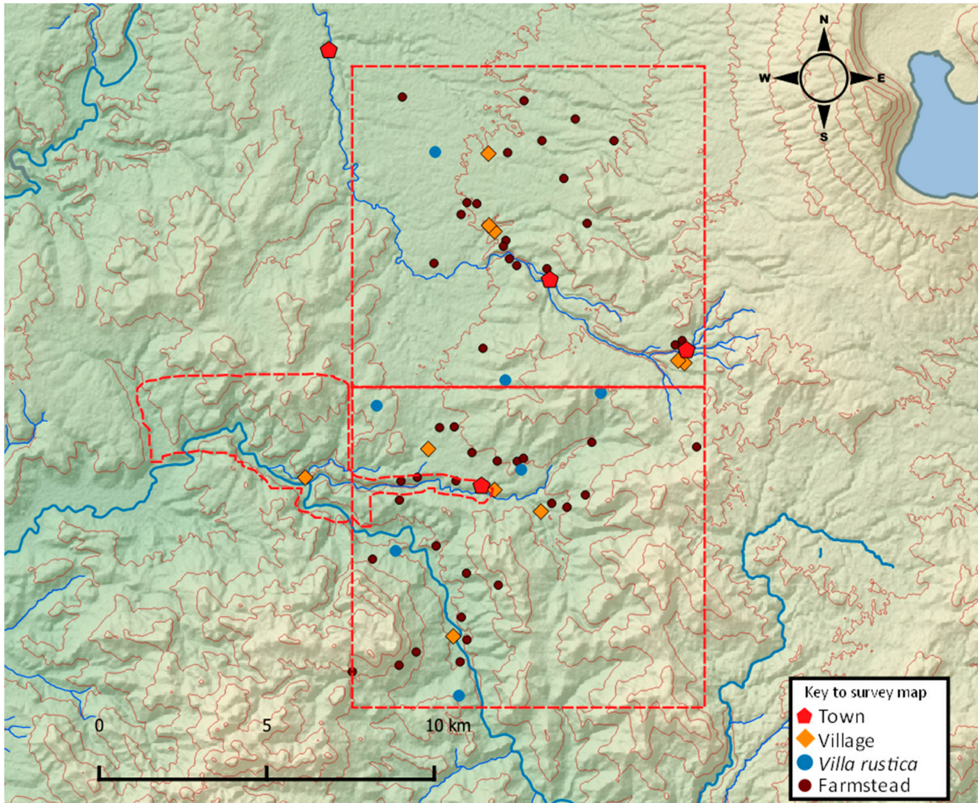

Fig. 22. Distribution of settlements in the Archaic period.

3.4 The Subarchaic period (480–320 BC)

Going into the Subarchaic period, we can notice some changes in the settlement pattern. These changes will be discussed in greater depth later on in the chapter, and also in Chapter 5; in this section the changes will only be presented and accounted for.

In the Subarchaic period, in many ways one of great turmoil in Etruria, and during which the Biedano region probably came under the influence of Tarquinii, we can discern a decrease in the number of settlements in the area. The total number of sites is 47, a decrease by 19 sites or 28.8%, divided in the following way: as in the preceding period there are three towns, the same three towns as before. The number of villages has decreased to nine, three have disappeared from the preceding period while two are new foundations. The *villa rustica* sites count a total of eight, and here one has

disappeared and two new ones have been added. The farmstead sites show a total of 27 sites, a considerable drop from the 46 sites recorded in the preceding period. However, the most interesting feature here is that 32 sites have disappeared, while 13 new ones have been added, making the sites with continuity only 14 in number, a modest tally. The majority of the settlements that have disappeared are those scattered in the countryside, while the remaining ones tend to cluster around the towns.

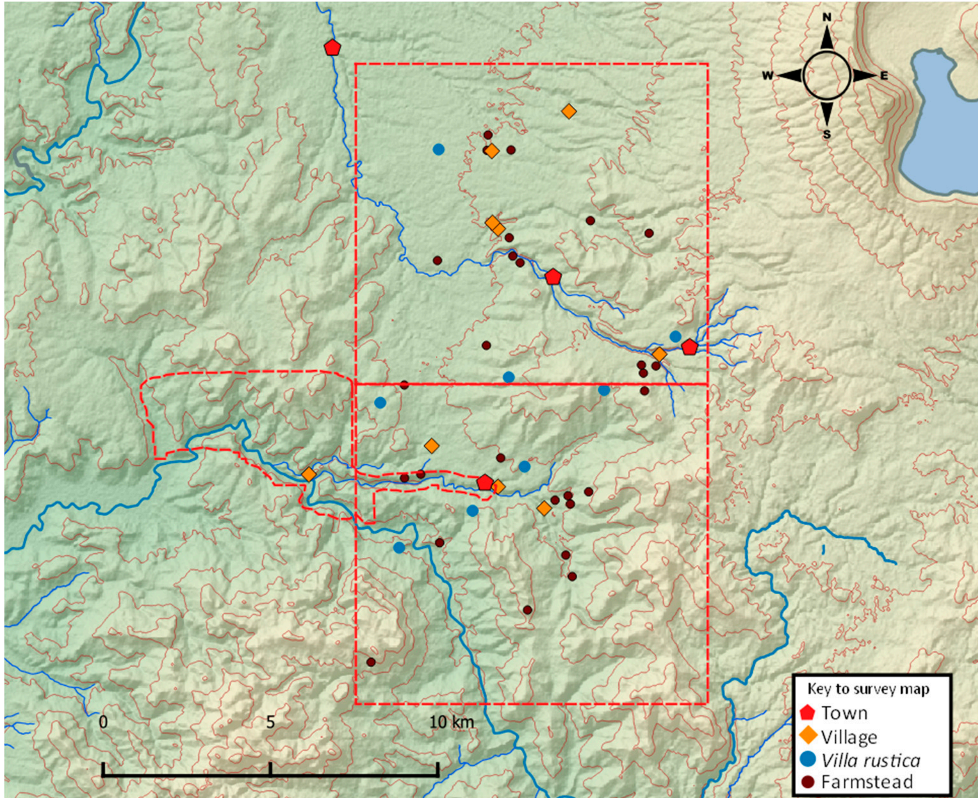

Fig. 23. Distribution of settlements in the Subarchaic period.

3.5 The Hellenistic and Roman Republican period (320–50 BC)

As already mentioned, the Hellenistic and Roman Republican periods, as employed in this study, overlap, and are here presented as one period. This period shows a

remarkable increase in rural settlements over the Subarchaic period. The tendency is a slight increase in the beginning of the period, with an explosion of rural settlements from the 2nd century BC. While the towns are the same three as before in the beginning of the period, the site of San Giuliano loses importance in the 3rd century BC and is possibly almost abandoned in the 2nd century BC.[310] The town at San Giovenale is also much reduced, and definitely abandoned by the 2nd century BC. Regarding the village sites, the survey record points to a slight decrease; while the total number is seven villages, five have disappeared and three are new foundations. However, one of the sites, the village at the Vignale plateau, a sort of suburb village to San Giovenale, shows activity in the 6th and 5th centuries BC, after which time it seems to have been abandoned, while the material points to a re-establishment in the 2nd century BC.

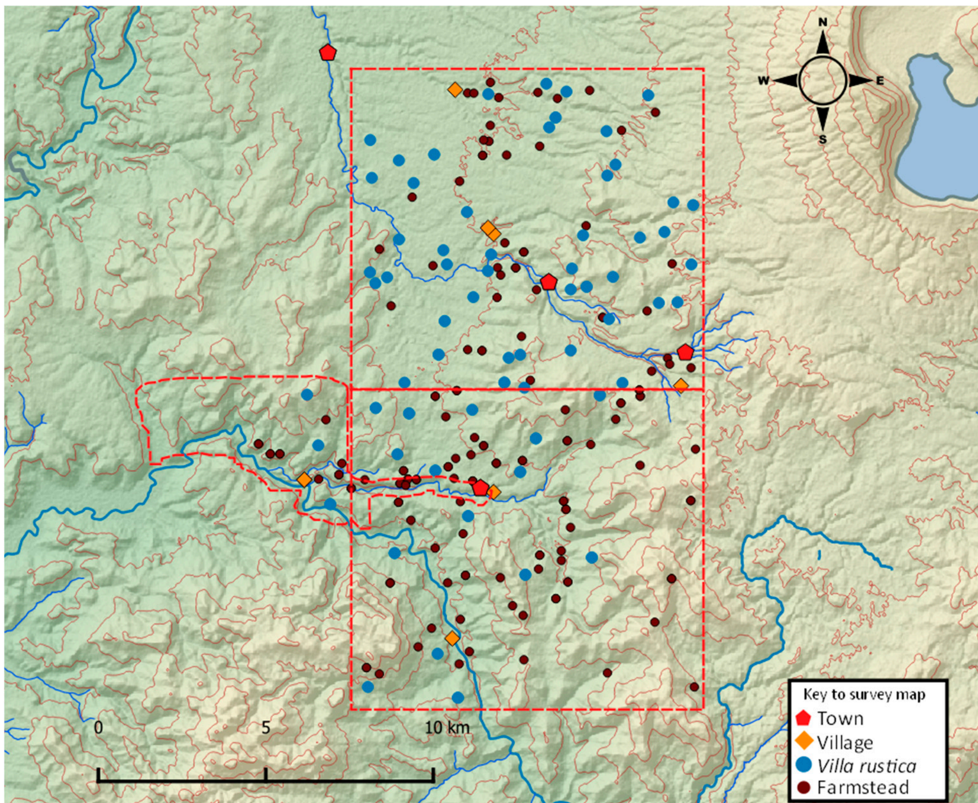

Fig. 24. Distribution of settlements in the Hellenistic/Roman Republican period.

[310] Gargana 1931, 419–420; Steingräber 1983, 334–336.

This is a period that sees a strong increase in rural settlements, and this is not a feature exclusive to the Biedano region but a general development which can be noted in the central parts of the peninsula as a whole. The impact and importance of the *villa* culture on the socio-economic and cultural development will be discussed further on in Chapter 5.2. The number of *villa rustica* sites sees a remarkable increase. The total number is 64, of these only one has disappeared from the Subarchaic period and 57 are new foundations, an increase by 56 sites, or 700%. The number of farmstead sites also shows a significant increase. The total number is 107: seven of 27 recorded for the preceding period have disappeared, while 87 are new foundations, accounting for an increase by 80 sites, or 296%. The total amount of sites is 179, an increase over the 47 sites of the Subarchaic period by 132, or 280.9%.

3.6 Comparison of settlement patterns

Analysing the material from the surveys we can observe the following development in settlement patterns, demonstrated by the diagram below:

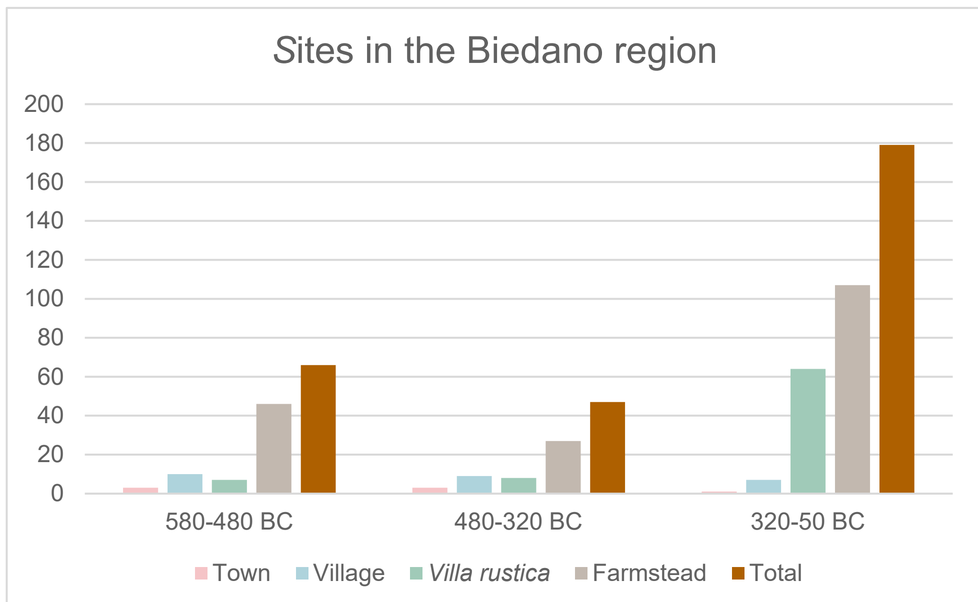

Table 2. Development of sites in the Biedano region by type.

In the Subarchaic period (480–320 BC) there is a significant decrease in regards of rural settlements,[311] while the number of larger settlements (towns and villages) is almost the same as in the preceding Archaic period (580–480 BC): three villages have disappeared, and two new ones have been established. Of the total of 66 sites recorded in the Archaic period, 36 had been abandoned by the Subarchaic period. While 17 new sites have been established, 30 sites show continuity.

In the following Hellenistic and Roman Republican period (320–50 BC), the number of new sites rises substantially. The number of larger settlements, i.e. towns and villages, has been slightly reduced, while the most significant changes can be seen in the countryside, where the number of rural settlements increases by 136. The great majority of the rural settlements are new foundations, 57 out of 64 *villa rustica* sites, and 87 out of 107 farmsteads, an increase by 56 and 80 respectively. The development perhaps reflects a reorganisation of the rural economy, with the progressive growth of specialised farming, and the complex politics of grain procurements.[312] This causes a shift in the socio-economic situation in the territory; the rural economy becomes more diverse, and towns partly lose the importance they had hitherto enjoyed in favour of rural villas and farmsteads.

Period	*Archaic*	*Subarchaic*	*Hellenistic/Roman Republican*
Town	3	3 (+/-0)	1 (-2)
Village	10	9 (-1)	7 (-2)
Villa rustica	7	8 (+1)	64 (+56)
Farmstead	46	27 (-19)	107 (+80)
Total	66	47 (-19)	179 (+132)
Abandoned	N/A	36	15
New	N/A	17	147
Continuity	N/A	30	32

Table 3. Types and number of settlements in the Biedano region.

[311] I.e. settlements in the countryside outside the towns or villages.

[312] Cifani 2015, 435.

Comparing the data from the Biedano region with those from other areas surveyed in central Italy, we detect both differences and similarities. The survey data from the northern parts of the *Suburbium Romanum*, collected from various surveys carried out from the 1970s onwards, denote a vast increase and diffusion of small rural sites in the Archaic period, with a transition from *c.* 60 sites in the Orientalising period to over 150 sites in the 6th century BC. This situation seems to remain constant, albeit with some local decrease, for the whole 5th century BC, after which there is a continued steady increase from the 4th to the 1st centuries BC.[313]

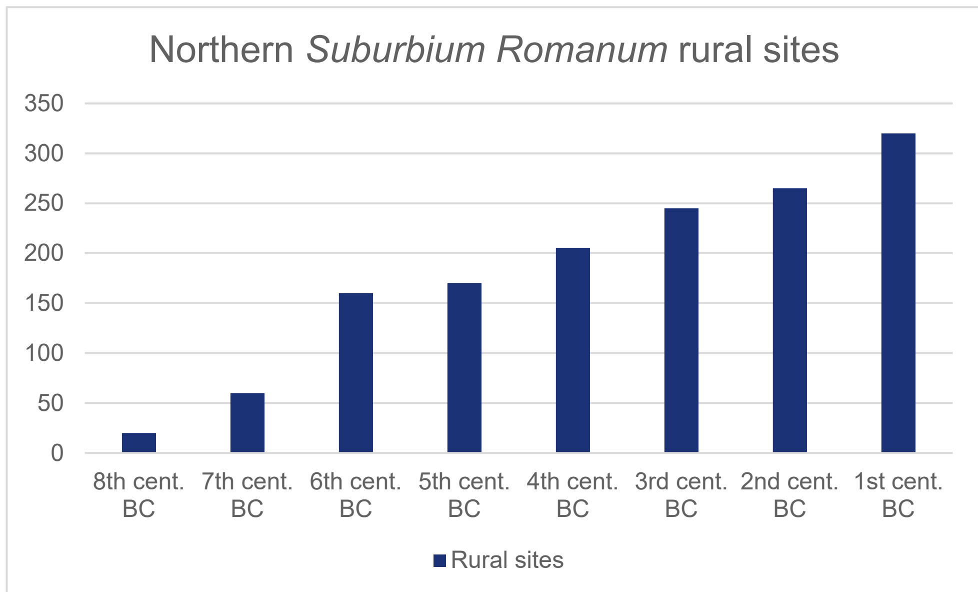

Table 4. Rural sites in the northern Suburbium Romanum. After Carafa 2000, 189, fig. 4 (complemented with data from Carandini et al. 2007).

Similar dynamics are to be seen in nearby Caere, where the investigations, in the face of *c.* 21 sites for the 8th–7th centuries, have revealed a strong increase of small rural settlements in the late Archaic period, with a total of *c.* 330 sites. Thereafter the data show a slight decrease in sites beginning in the 5th century BC and continuing until the 1st century BC, with a total of 298 sites.[314]

[313] Quilici 1974, 27–33; Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1980, 281–285; 1986, 378–388 with bibliography; 1993, 464–473; Carafa 2000; Carandini *et al.* 2007; Cifani 2015, 432.
[314] Tartara 1999; Enei 2001; Cifani 2015, 433.

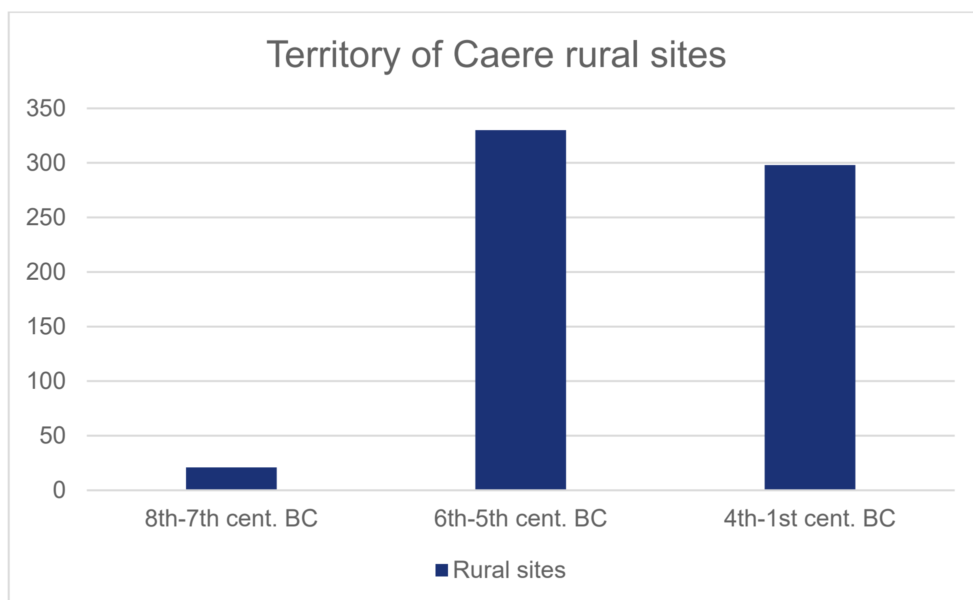

Table 5. Rural sites in the territory of Caere. After Cifani 2015, fig. 3; complemented with data from Tartara 1999 and Enei 2001.

The development in the 8th–6th centuries BC in the territories of Tarquinii and Vulci is analogous with the situation in the territory of Caere and in the northern *Suburbium Romanum*, while there seems to be a different situation in the internal Tiber valley area, such as in the Sabine and Umbrian territories, where the data point to a much more modest increase in rural sites compared to southern coastal Etruria, and the middle Tiber valley.[315]

According to Cifani these survey data, albeit not completely comparable to each other, emphasise, on a macroscopic level, a reorganisation of the settlements in the countryside in the territory of Rome, and in that of the principal cities of south Etruria during the 6th and the early 5th centuries BC. Complementary to the new rural settlement pattern is the development of a detailed road network, while the first drainage systems of the tuff plateaux were also developed at this time.[316]

The analysis of the territory of Veii is indebted to the above-mentioned large-scale survey project run by the British School at Rome under Ward-Perkins in the 1950s. The final results were published by Patterson, Witcher, and Di Giuseppe in 2020. One

[315] Barker and Rasmussen 1988, 33; Rendeli 1993, 260–270; Perkins 1999, 29, 167; Cifani 2002 with bibliography.
[316] Cifani 2015, 433.

can observe a drastic reduction in rural sites from the period 580–480 BC, to which just under 600 sites have been attributed, to the period 480–350 BC, in which the number of sites has dropped to *c*. 180. This is then followed by a noticeable recovery to *c*. 500 sites recorded for the period 350–250 BC, of which at least 200 are new foundations. Therafter follows a substantial dip before the second half of the 3rd century going into the early 2nd century BC, upon which a remarkable increase is followed again in the second half of the 2nd and first half of the 1st centuries BC, for which period just over 500 sites have been recorded.[317]

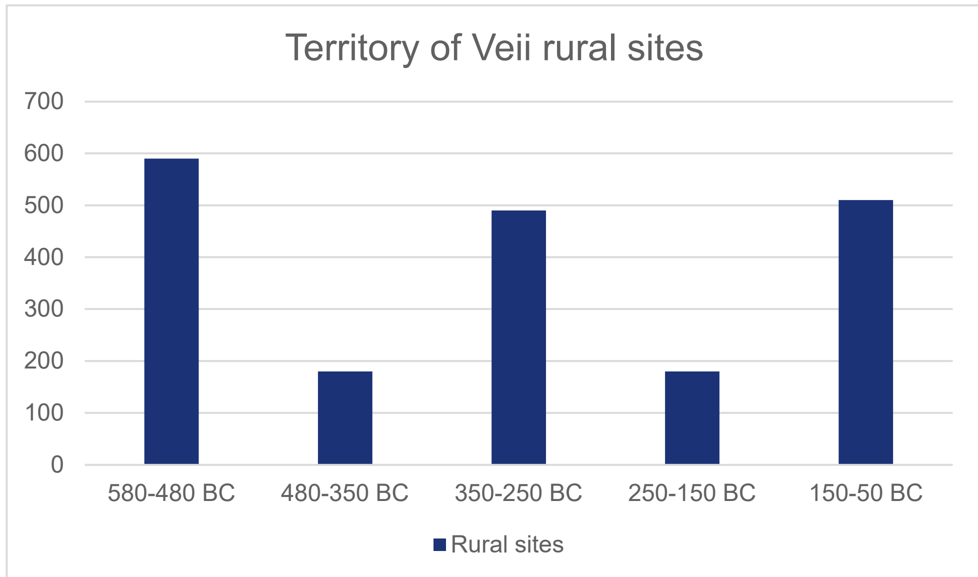

Table 6. Rural sites in the territory of Veii. After Di Giuseppe 2020, 84–112.

The pattern is similar to the development in neighbouring areas such as Narce in the *ager Faliscus*, the Tolfa Mountains and the Mignone valley, the *ager Caeretanus*,[318] Crustumerium, Fidenae, and Ficulea, which all show a steady increase in settlements beginning in the 7th century BC, continuing in the 6th upon which the development halters or decreases in the 5th and 4th centuries BC.[319] Helga Di Giuseppe, involved in

[317] Di Giuseppe 2012, 359–366; 2020, 84, 94, 96–98, 112, figs. 3.8, 3.19; Cifani 2015, 435.
[318] *Table 5* above.
[319] For Narce, see Camilli 1993. For the Tolfa Mountains and the Mignone valley, see Coccia *et al.* 1985, 522. For the *ager Caeretanus*, see Naso *et al.* 1989; Enei 1992, 76; 1993. For Crustumerium, see Quilici

the restudy of the South Etruria Survey data, and Gabriele Cifani, in discussing the archaeological data of the Archaic rural landscape in the modern suburbs of Rome, both speculate that the sudden decrease in rural sites shown by the archaeological data for the second half of the 5th and the first half of the 4th centuries BC can be connected to the Roman expansion, and subsequent land expropriation in favour of Roman citizens, as described in the literary tradition.[320] According to Cifani, it is logical to connect the variations in the settlement pattern at Veii with the historical events in the Veientan territory. The situation with a vast agricultural population of the 6th and the early 5th centuries BC connected to the Etruscan metropolis, and analogous with that observable at Rome and Caere, would have been followed by an abrupt demographic collapse referable to the conquest of Veii in 396 BC, to the selling into slavery a large part of the inhabitants, and to the allotment of land to Roman citizens.[321] However, the decline had already started in the beginning of the 5th century BC, and therefore cannot be explained entirely on these grounds. Furthermore, there are yet other factors which could have contributed; for example, the literary sources tell of famines and plagues, or epidemics, that befell Latium in the 5th and early 4th centuries BC.[322] Consequently a combination of events seems the more likely explanation. The start of the decline in rural settlements in the territory of Veii is more likely connected to the general crisis of the 5th century BC, but was later amplified by the Roman conquest, and subsequent developments. This situation was then followed by a repopulation in the second half of the 4th and the first half of the 3rd centuries BC, likely indebted to a redistribution of Veientan lands to Roman citizens and to those locals who had defected to Rome before or after the conquest.[323]

& Quilici Gigli 1980, 281–285. For Fidenae, see Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1986, 382–383; Barbina *et al.* 2009, figs. 9–10. For Ficulea, see Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1993, 464–469. See also Di Giuseppe 2018, 63–70; 2020, 94–95.

[320] Cifani 2015, 435. Cf. Di Giuseppe 2012, 359; 2020, 96–96.

[321] Livy 5.22.1, 6.4.1–4; Cifani 2015, 435.

[322] Livy mentions plagues in 453–452, 433, 412–411, 392, and 384 BC, and famines in the years 492, 453–452, 440, and 412–411 BC, the last one partly as a consequence of the epidemic, with further famines in 392, 390 (as a consequence of the Gallic sack of Rome), and 384 BC. See Livy 2.34, 4.12, 3.32, 4.25–26, 4.52, 5.31, 5.39–48, 6.20.15, 6.21.1–6. Cf. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 10.53–54, 12.1–4, 13.4; Plut. *Cam.* 23.1. See also Liverani 1984, 37; Garnsey 1988, 168–181.

[323] Livy 6.4.1–6. Cf. Cifani 2015, 435; Di Giuseppe 2012, 359–360.

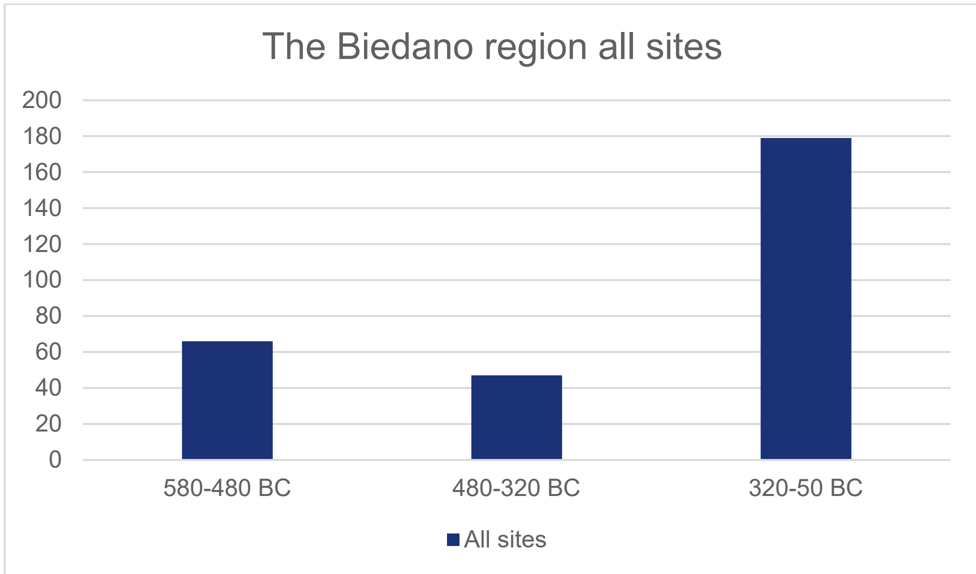

Table 7. Number of sites in the Biedano region during the 6th–1st centuries BC.

Interestingly, the variations seen in the Biedano region do not seem to resemble the situation in the 5th and 4th centuries BC at either Tarquinii or Caere, but do resemble that of the territory of Veii. The data suggest a clear, albeit not as drastic, decrease in rural sites beginning in the early 5th century BC, which endured to at least the last quarter of the 4th century BC, after which it was followed by a noticeable increase of rural sites in the subsequent centuries. If we were to accept the opinion of Di Giuseppe and Cifani, that the reduction in sites in the 4th century BC is connected to the Roman takeover, then perhaps the hostile Roman presence in the area could also partly explain the situation in the Biedano region in the same period. However, here too the decrease begins in the early 5th century BC, and it is likely that also the Biedano region was affected by the above-mentioned famines and epidemics that according to the ancient sources affected Latium in the 5th and 4th centuries BC. This, together with the consequences of the general Etruscan crisis of the 5th century, likely contributed to the development.

4 POLITICAL ENTITIES IN THE BIEDANO REGION

The purpose of this chapter is to illuminate the main political entities discernible in the Biedano region. These are found on three different levels of society: at the top are the most influential entities, i.e., hegemonic city-states, large urban centres such as Tarquinii, Caere, and Rome, which appear as principal actors in the works of ancient writers. Below that level we find the minor urban centres in the region. These are visible as economic centra and political entities in the archaeological and epigraphic material. Lastly, we have the élite families of the area, who emerge as powerful political and economic actors in funerary inscriptions and associated monumental tombs.

In order to understand the situation in the Biedano region, be it cultural, demographic, economic, or political, it is necessary to take a look at the socio-political development in Etruria, and in south Etruria in particular, from the Villanovan down to the Roman Republican period.

In the late 8th and early 7th centuries BC, the élite families in Etruria grew stronger. This can be seen in connection to the urbanisation process and the socio-political development already in progress.[324] With the urbanisation, begun in the 8th century BC, and increasing diversity, economic differentiation inevitably became more intricate. Heredity of rank seems to have become an established principle, and family units became increasingly more important. This led to the development of the *duo-nomina* nomenclature system and the emergence of gentilitial families, which in time evolved into the aristocratic *gentes* of Etruria.[325] The prestige of these *gentes* was probably based on the possession of land, goods, and means of production. As the influence of the élite grew further, they gradually seem to have assumed the role of local *principes*. This process sparks the first wave of monumental tomb building, as exemplified by the great tumuli of the Etruscan cities. The presence of *principes* is also consistent with the information given in literary sources, which describe Etruria's most ancient historical periods as monarchical. In south Etruria, the institution of monarchy

[324] On urbanisation see e.g. Izzet, 2007, 165–207; Bruni 2010; Riva 2010.

[325] According to Arnaldo Momigliano it would not be implausible that the *duo-nomina* system developed prior to the urbanisation of the Archaic period: see Momigliano 1984, 420.

seems to be more specifically associated with some of the cities where, albeit in later periods, the literary sources tell of monarchical, or perhaps "tyrannical", rulers.[326]

Etruria never constituted a unified state, Etruscan cities of the 7th and 6th centuries BC formed autonomous entities comprising an urban centre and a surrounding hinterland and can best be described as city-states. However, the cities were united in a confederation consisting of twelve cities, which is usually called the Etruscan League.[327]

The urbanisation process continued in the Archaic period, during which the larger cities expanded their control over vaster areas, at the expense of smaller settlements in their hinterlands. The destruction in the last half of the 6th century BC of minor centres as Acquarossa, Poggio Buco, and Murlo, is likely to be connected to this development.[328] Furthermore, structural and functional differentiation of local social systems, and increasing importance of long-distance trade, brought about the emergence of an urban middle class which became increasingly wealthy and presumably more powerful. This in turn seems to have weakened and reduced the pre-eminence of the old aristocratic families, previously so powerful in the Orientalising period (*c*. 730–580 BC). While not being wiped out altogether, they now had to accept being part of a much broader social, political, and economic élite class. With the urbanisation process consolidated, the Etruscan city-states flourished in the 6th and early 5th centuries BC, especially in the south and coastal regions. The prosperity of this new, leading social class can be detected in changing funerary customs, with tombs taking much more egalitarian, simple, almost functionalistic form, such as the cube tombs at the Banditaccia necropolis in Caere, and the Crocifisso del Tufo necropolis in Orvieto (Volsinii).[329]

In 474 BC an Etruscan fleet lost a naval battle against powerful Syracuse in the waters off the coast of Cumae, an event that has traditionally been viewed as instigating the so-called Etruscan crisis of the 5th century BC, even if processes leading towards this crisis were already in motion in the late 6th century BC. It was a period of extensive changes, which brought about a somewhat remodelled society. Different factors led up to the crisis, but the increasing urbanisation, together with a growth in population and a diversification of professions contributed to the old aristocracy gradually losing power, when the wider community became more important than the status of the *gentes*. The

[326] Amann 2017a, 179, 183–184, 186–187; Cerchiai 2017, 617–618; Naso 2017, 870; Tagliamonte 2017, 121–124.
[327] E.g. Pallottino 1955, 129–135. The confederation is discussed by ancient authors, e.g. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 6.75; Livy 1.8.2, 4.23, 5.1, 10.16; Serv. *ad Aen.* 8.475.
[328] Cerchiai 2017, 637–638.
[329] Amann 2017a, 187; 2017b, 985–987; Cerchiai 2017, 635–637, 640.

development generated conditions for social conflict which would later reach crisis point.[330]

The direct consequence of the naval defeat in 474 BC was the loss of influence over the cities in Campania where the Etruscans had earlier expanded in the Orientalising period, which in turn had a negative impact on long-distance trade. At the same period, Gauls and various Italic peoples were pushing against the Etruscan areas in central northern Italy. The crisis brought about a power struggle in Etruria, probably not unlike the "Conflict of the Orders" in Rome. But contrary to the development in Rome, the Etruscan élite families seem to have closed ranks, effectively ruling out the type of democratic reforms which in Rome eventually led to a more or less political and legal equality between patricians and plebeians. The economic stagnation following the consequences of diminishing trade brought about by this development probably affected the southern urban middle class in particular, who earned their living as merchants and craftsmen, but as pointed out by Petra Amann, the social impact of this is very unclear.[331] It is possible that the democratic tendencies regarding possession of land, influence, and power in the city-states were seen as threatening by the élite, and subsequently led to experimentation with new forms of government. In some cities this included forms of "democratic" oligarchies, but in others it led to forms of tyranny, as described by the accounts of ancient authors treating this period. It can be assumed that the leaders of city-states of the period were either tyrants, or tyrant-kings, such as Lars Porsenna of Clusium (*fl.* late 6th century BC), Thefarie Velianas of Caere (mentioned in the Pyrgi tablets, dated to around 500 BC), and Lars Tolumnius in Veii (d. 437 or 428 BC).[332]

By the 4th century BC, the south Etruscan cities had overcome the crisis, and the aristocracy had managed to get a firm grip of the political and economic power in the city-states, which were dominated by a small, oligarchic, and prosperous élite class during the entire Hellenistic period. Unfortunately, the information about the lower social classes is very scarce.[333]

The method of overcoming the crisis seems to have been a complete reorganisation of the surrounding territory. Larger cities again started to expand their influence over minor, previously autonomous, urban centres in their vicinity, whose local aristocracy also appears to have become wealthier and more influential. Tarquinii is especially

[330] The years around the middle of the 5th century BC have even been considered "the most critical moment of the entire history of the Etruscan World", as very dramatically put by Stefano Bruni. See Bruni 2017, 1141, and also Cerchiai 2017, 635.
[331] Amann 2017c, 1101–1102.
[332] Torelli 1981, 183–214; 1990, 193–194; Colonna 1990a, 21; Cerchiai 2017, 634, 640–641; Tagliamonte 2017, 129.
[333] Amann 2017a, 179, 188.

noticeable where the development seems to have involved a kind of "internal colonisation", which meant the re-establishment of smaller urban centres which had declined or been abandoned in the late 6th century BC, as was the case with Tuscana and Sovana. There are also examples of the foundation of new centres such as Ghiaccio Forte and Musarna, or of centres that moved, as may have been the case of Ferentium, which had possibly been moved from the site of Archaic Acquarossa, destroyed sometime in the penultimate quarter of the 6th century BC.[334] This development is testified, inter alia, by a re-emergence of monumental tombs in south Etruria, which is already exemplified in the Biedano region at the end of the 5th century BC by isolated façade tombs at Blera and close to Vetralla: an early testimony to the resurrection of influential aristocratic *gentes* in the region.[335]

The development seems to have brought about a shift in power relations among the urban centres; while the two most important towns in the Archaic period had been Blera and San Giuliano, the political and economic centre of the area seems to have moved northwards in the 4th century BC, as indicated by the emergence of impressive monumental rock-cut necropoleis at the previously insignificant settlements at Norchia and Axia. The causes for this development will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 5 below.

In order to investigate the situation in the Biedano region it is necessary to take into consideration the development of the dominant Etruscan cities in its immediate vicinity, as well as their respective relationship to Rome. After the fall of Veii in 396 BC, the leading cities of southern Etruria were the two coastal cities of Caere and Tarquinii, and the inland city of Volsinii (Veteres). Caere seems to have been amicable towards Rome at an early stage, and Volsinii did not have any direct military conflicts with Rome before the early 3rd century BC, when the territory of Tarquinii probably had come within the direct sphere of interest of Rome. Volsinii is also situated to the north of our area of investigation. Tarquinian-controlled territory on the other hand, which from the late 5th or early 4th century included the Biedano region, was bordering Roman-controlled, or allied territory, and appears to have been engaged in hostilities with Rome for large portions of the 4th century BC. Consequently, the development at Tarquinii and its hinterland in the late 5th to 3rd centuries BC is of greatest concern, regarding the Biedano region.

[334] Colonna 1990a, 11–12; Torelli 1990, 193; 1995, 114; Amann 2017c, 1102. For the dating of the abandonment of Acquarossa, see Rystedt 1986, 32–33, n. 62; Strandberg Olofsson & Wikander 1986, 133. Cf. Östenberg 1974, 76.

[335] Colonna 1990a, 19.

4.1 The sources

The historical sources for early Roman history are sparse. Our main source for the period, so crucial for the developments in south Etruria, which spans from the 5th century to the early 3rd century BC, is Livy (59 BC–AD 17), Books 5–10. Livy, as other writers, wrote his account long after the events he describes had taken place, a circumstance which is obviously problematic. Scholarship is generally divided into two opposing standpoints regarding the reliability of Livy: a conservative one, represented by Tim Cornell among others, and a more sceptical one, where we find, for example, Gary Forsythe.[336] Many other scholars of course express views which are to be found on various positions on this wide spectrum.[337] The use of Livy for the period in question indeed poses several problems. For a start, the aim of Livy is primarily to glorify the Romans, i.e., the Tarquinienses or any other people who did not fight together with the Romans will not be described favourably in general. And when they are described favourably, the purpose is to glorify the Romans even more. Similarly, some events are probably described twice, numbers of opponents being slain are exaggerated, and some events are obviously pure fiction.

As a complement to Livy, Diodorus Siculus' (*fl.* 1st century BC) *Biblioteca historica* is very relevant, but he shows a general lack of interest in early Roman history, which according to Stephen Oakley, is indicated by the uniform character of his account. This would imply that he consulted very few sources, possibly favouring one source in particular. For the narrative of the 4th century BC, Diodorus probably obtained his information from at least two sources, a chronographer, and an annalist. Through the eminent authority of Theodor Mommsen, it has long been held that Diodorus' main sources were Fabius Pictor, and the antiquarian Cincius, but this has been contested by Karl Julius Beloch and Alfred Klotz among others.[338] Since Diodorus' narrative often diverges from that of Livy, it is plausible that he drew on a source not used by Livy, or at least consulted sparsely.[339] In comparison, Diodorus is often more limited regarding details in his account of the 4th century. He provides notices for the years 396–390, 386–385, 382, 357–356, 354, 340, 318, 316–308, and 306–304. But these are very brief excerpts. In addition, his lists of magistrates are unreliable compared to the consensus of Livy and other writers, and the *fasti*. This fact strengthens the authenticity

[336] Cornell 1995; Forsythe 2005.

[337] Such as Fronda who describes his standpoint as a "middle path", see Fronda 2010, 7, and to a certain degree Oakley 1997–2005, who is generally conservative albeit with some reservations.

[338] Beloch 1926, 107–132; Klotz 1937, 211–212; Oakley 1997, 107–108.

[339] Oakley 1997, 108.

of the lists and the general reliability of Livy, also giving weight to the possibility of the names of magistrates being in some way recorded in an official manner.[340]

Another important writer of the period is Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*fl.* 30–7 BC). Unfortunately, he is of little help here, since the fragments of his *Roman Antiquities* covering the 4th and early 3rd centuries BC (Books 14–20) do not mention any hostilities between Rome and the Etruscans. Interestingly however, in a section where the Senate is discussing whether to take action against the Tarantines in 281 BC, as a response to the insult suffered by L. Postumius Megellus, Dionysius mentions that Etruria had still not been conquered by Rome.[341]

Livy's own sources for the period probably consisted of earlier writers of the annalistic tradition, together with whatever official records existed in his own day, such as the *fasti consulares*, *fasti triumphales*, and the *annales maximi*, as well as the family records of the Roman aristocratic *gentes*.[342] Unfortunately, Livy only informs on rare occasions of the specific sources he has consulted. However, sometimes it is possible to determine the source he has followed. For example, Oakley notes that there are passages where it has been established that Livy has followed Claudius Quadrigarius and Calpurnius Piso Frugi (Livy 7.9–10, 9.46) but where he does not mention either of them.[343] Livy names six writers that he has consulted for the period in question: C. Licinius Macer (d. after 66 BC), Q. Claudius Quadrigarius (*fl.* early 1st century BC), Q. Fabius Pictor (*fl.* late 3rd century BC), L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi (consul in 133 BC, censor in 120 BC), Q. Aelius Tubero (*fl.* mid–late 1st century BC), and L. Cincius Alimentus (*fl.* 200 BC). Of these, only one, Cincius, is an antiquarian, while all the others can be considered annalists. In addition, Livy probably also consulted Valerius Antias (*fl.* 1st century BC) for this period.[344] He does not mention Antias, but uses him regularly for other periods of his narrative.[345] Of the writers Livy mentions, Fabius Pictor and Piso are surely the most important, since they flourished in a time not too far away from the one discussed here. In particular, Fabius Pictor, who was born in the mid-3rd century BC, probably knew people who had direct experience of the wars in the beginning of that century and perhaps even of events before that. He probably also met people whose fathers or grandfathers had lived in the mid-4th century BC, who could provide him with information.[346]

[340] Oakley 1997, 39–40; 106–108.
[341] Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 16.6.
[342] For a more thorough discussion on the reliability of Livy's sources, I refer to Beloch 1926; Walsh 1961; Ogilvie 1965; Burck 1971; Cornell 1995; Oakley 1997; 1998; 2005a; 2005b.
[343] Oakley 1997, 16.
[344] Walsh 1961, 114–116; Cornell 1995, 5–6; Oakley 1997, 16–17; Forsythe 2005, 63–66.
[345] Particularly from Book 21 and onwards: Oakley 1997, 16–17.
[346] Oakley 1997, 22.

Aristocratic *gentes* had a strong tradition of keeping family records, which were most likely consulted by the early historians.[347] Even if their anecdotes without doubt were largely embellished, they probably contained a basic narrative which was broadly accurate. It is highly improbable that the exaggerations and inventions, which undeniably existed in the records of aristocratic families, might have perverted the annalistic tradition completely. I agree with Oakley in that it is not very likely that an altogether fictitious narrative would have been accepted by the majority of the Roman aristocratic families, who all had ancestors who had taken part in the described events, and for whom the competition for prestige was so essential, and dependent on the public recognition of their ancestors' accomplishments. Furthermore, as Oakley points out, the promotion of ancestral achievements had probably already been established in the ideology of the Roman aristocratic families before the time of Fabius Pictor.[348] However, as stated by Cornell, it is difficult to separate the traditions of the aristocratic families from the broader contribution made by oral tradition in a wider sense.[349] The Romans doubtlessly had an extensive knowledge of their past, and Pictor's narrative most likely drew on the collective, and generally accepted, oral tradition of the Roman élite. Accordingly, although the family records contained exaggerations, and even pure fiction, regarding details, there is no reason to believe that this would utterly undermine the credibility of Livy's basic narrative.[350]

Besides the oral tradition, and the records of the aristocratic families, Fabius Pictor and the early writers probably got their information from official records such as the *fasti*, the *libri lintei,* and the *annales maximi* (or the Pontifical tables), recording annual magistrates, treaties, triumphs, and major political, judicial, and religious events. The very existence of such records has been called into question, but references to them by Cato, Cicero, and Livy himself, put their existence, at least in the middle Republic, beyond doubt.[351] Beloch held the view that the custom of recording events in the Pontifical tables could go back no further than the reorganisation of the priesthoods through the *lex Ogulnia* in 300 BC.[352] However, there is no ancient testimony supporting this view; the evidence suggests that records were kept from at least this time, but this does not rule out that records were already being kept in the 4th century

[347] Cornell 1995, 9.
[348] Oakley 1997, 23.
[349] Cornell 1995, 10.
[350] Oakley 1997, 22–23, 28–33, 72. For an opposite view I refer to Smith 2017, who is of the opinion that there was no generally accepted, collective narrative, but in fact there would have existed a plentitude of opposing narratives simultaneously: see Smith 2017, 229.
[351] Cato, fr. 77 (Gell. 2.28.6); Cic. *De Or.* 2.52; Livy 6.1.2; see also Serv. *Auct.* Virg. *Aen.* 1.373.
[352] Beloch 1926, 94–95.

BC.[353] While we cannot be sure of exactly when the records were started, we know for a fact that the *annales maximi* stopped being written in the 130s BC,[354] and they may subsequently have been published by P. Mucius Scaevola, pontifex maximus 130–115 BC.[355] Even if the existence of official records seems secure, it is not certain to what extent Livy actually consulted these. Patrick G. Walsh, together with Forsythe, goes so far as to claim that in fact Livy did not conduct any original research of official documents at all, but merely made a synthesis of the works of earlier writers.[356]

According to Cornell, a major portion of the information given by the literary sources derives from oral tradition.[357] However, it seems very improbable that the basic framework of the early writers' narrative derives entirely from this; it is more probable that the information on magistrates, treaties, triumphs, etc., mentioned above, indeed derived from some kind of state records. Oakley argues that the oral tradition is central for the formation of the historical record only to the period down to 450 BC; thereafter it should be considered of much less consequence.[358] While I agree with Oakley on the existence of official state records, I nonetheless hold that the oral tradition probably formed a significant part of the historians' narrative at least until the first quarter of the 3rd century BC, when the sources available to the historians were much more numerous, and generally more reliable. Moreover, Livy himself considered the period down to the middle of the 4th century obscure and uncertain, given the lack of reliable sources.[359]

Several scholars have questioned whether Livy consulted Fabius Pictor and Piso directly, or if he merely had indirect knowledge of their accounts, through the works of the later annalists.[360] However, it is hard to believe that Livy would have refrained from consulting them, if he had direct access to them. Comments Livy makes suggest that he recognised the greater authority of older narratives,[361] a fact Oakley stresses as indicative of Livy being well acquainted with these two writers, a view also shared by Cornell.[362]

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353 Cic. *De Rep*. 1.25; Walsh 1961, 110–111; Frier 1979, 119; Oakley 1997, 25. For a thorough discussion I refer to Beloch 1926, 86–95.

354 Cic. *De Or*. 2.52–53.

355 This was for long the general opinion among scholars, e.g. Walsh 1961, 110; Badian 1966, 15. But it has since been convincingly contested by Frier, who suggests that they were instead published in the Augustan age by Verrius Flaccus: see Frier 1979, 27–67, 179–200; Oakley 1997, 26.

356 Walsh 1961, 110–111; Forsythe 2005, 66–67.

357 Cornell 1995, 10.

358 Oakley 1997, 24.

359 Livy 6.1.2–3.

360 Walsh 1961, 115, 119; Ogilvie 1965, 7, 14; Burck 1971, 43, n. 13.

361 E.g. Livy 6.12.2, 10.46.7, 25.11.20, 29.14.9.

362 Cornell 1995, 4–5; Oakley 1997, 17–18.

Another problem is that parts of Livy's account have gone missing during the centuries separating us from him; the loss of the Books 11–20 covering the period 292 BC down to 219 BC and recounting the Pyrrhic War (280–275 BC) as well as the First Punic War (264–241 BC), is particularly unfortunate since it makes a reconstruction of the last decades of the conflicts between Romans and Etruscans difficult.

The issue of the reliability of the narrative cannot be solved convincingly, but as a background, a synthesis of Livy's account is given. Livy provides us with the backbone of events in central Italy during the period in question, and although caution is needed regarding details, there is little reason for dismissing the basic outline of the narrative as fictitious or unreliable. Oakley's opinion on Livy's account of the conflicts between Rome and Etruria is that it is comparably more reliable than his account of Rome's wars with other peoples on the peninsula, such as the conflicts on the eastern frontiers.[363]

In addition to the historical development provided by the ancient writers, the epigraphic funerary record of the Biedano region is an important source of information, being only one of two primary sources available (the archaeological evidence being the other). Investigating this enables a reconstruction of the political development, and the status, political offices, wealth, and family connections of the élite families in the area. Accordingly, it is necessary to undertake a survey of this evidence. However, we will start with an examination of the history of the, for the present study, most important centre in the area, the great city of Tarquinii.

4.2 Tarquinii: competitor of Rome

Concerning the study of Blera and its hinterland, it is crucial to take into consideration the history of Caere and in particular Tarquinii. Since parts of the Biedano region shifted allegiance between the one and the other several times in antiquity, it is important to observe their respective roles in politics, culture, and interstate relations, in order to understand the developments in the Biedano region, which was naturally affected by what was happening in its nearby surroundings. I do not intend to give a full account of their respective histories in this study, but rather to discuss their role in politics and culture, their relations with other states as well as with each other during our period of interest, i.e., the 5th to the 1st centuries BC.

[363] Oakley 1997, 347–349.

The two cities followed two fundamentally different paths in regard to their relation to the expanding power of Rome. While Caere from a relatively early stage showed a quite philo-Roman attitude, Tarquinii on the contrary was one of Rome's fiercest and most important adversaries in the struggles for power and dominion in the 4th century BC. Whatever the reasons for their respective strategies, it all ended more or less in the same way, as both Caere and Tarquinii lost their effective autonomy a few years apart in the early 3rd century BC. Since the 4th century, according to our main written sources, was one of particularly intense struggles in south Etruria between Etruscans and Romans, and the main opponent of Rome in the area is described as Tarquinii, particular attention is given here to that city.

The ancient city of Tarquinii, situated 19 km to the west of Blera, is most famous today for its spectacular painted tombs in the necropolis of Monterozzi, a plateau to the south of the city plateau, as well as the so-called Ara della Regina, the largest Etruscan temple known. In the late 5th century BC, Tarquinii emerged as one of the leading cities in south Etruria, and at the beginning of the 4th century, with the Roman conquest of Veii in 396 BC, and with its southern rival Caere allying itself with Rome, Tarquinii established itself in a dominant position, and seems to have been the only city in these parts of Etruria able to rival Rome.

The foundation of Tarquinii was probably part of a larger process of the Final Bronze Age when village communities transitioned into protourban societies, and south Etruria appears to have been the epicentre of this transformation. The development probably occurred rapidly with most pre-existing villages disappearing in a short time, while at the same time four much larger protourban centres took form which occupied plateaux thirty times larger than the average Bronze Age village.[364] Together with Caere, Veii, and Vulci, Tarquinii was one of these centres. It was a radical restructuring of society in the central Mediterranean, the beginning of the "Urban Revolution", as coined by Vere Gordon Childe.[365] Rather than being founded spontaneously, through accretion of pre-existing Bronze Age villages, Tarquinii, and the other large cities of south Etruria, seem to have been founded more or less *ex novo*, as a consequence of a specific political project, which in turn was the result of a reorganisation of the territory taking place in the 10th century BC, in the Final Bronze Age. According to Marco Pacciarelli, the size of the plateaux is indicative of this, and they seem to have been chosen for being specifically suitable for large settlements.[366]

The historical record is, as in the case of all Etruscan cities, very scant and relies on later Latin texts, but through the archaeological data it is possible to make observations

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[364] According to Pacciarelli as much as 90% of the pre-existing villages disappeared: Pacciarelli 2017, 561–567.

[365] Childe 1936, 1950.

[366] Pacciarelli 2017, 573.

on the development of Tarquinii. This proud Etruscan city was situated in a very favourable position on a plateau close to the coast, where we find its port at Graviscae, but it also had strong connections to peer cities and towns in the inland through centuries-old established networks. Interstate relations extended far into the interior, and Italian élites, both Etruscan and other, had well-established relations based on intermarriage, lineage friendship, and political and religious alliances, stretching back many centuries.[367] Whether the 6th-century Tarquin kings of Rome should be seen as a sign of Tarquinii exercising control over this city is a question open for debate, but as pointed out by Terrenato, the presence of Tarquinian aristocrats at the very apex of Roman society is indicative of its status.[368]

The 4th century was, as already mentioned, one of great turmoil with increasing conflicts between Rome and Tarquinii, as well as with the neighbouring Faliscans and the Volsci.[369] The first recorded incidents of Tarquinii showing anti-Roman tendencies happened during the hostilities that would eventually bring about the fall of Veii in 396 BC. In 397 BC, according to Livy's account, the Tarquinienses wanted to exploit the fact that Rome was simultaneously involved in several military conflicts; besides the war with Veii, the Romans were also at war with the Volsci, the Aequi, Falerii, and with Capena. In addition, Livy continues, the Tarquinienses were well-informed of the ongoing internal conflicts of the city, referred to as the "Conflict of the Orders" between the patricians and the plebeians. Accordingly, they saw a golden opportunity to harm the Romans. They sent out an army but were eventually defeated by the Romans under the consular tribunes A. Postumius Albinus Regillensis and L. Julius Julus, who surprised the Tarquinienses when they were returning home with their booty. Interestingly the Romans passed the territory of Caere, an indication that Caere already at this point was, if not an ally, at least well-disposed towards Rome. Livy does not mention which route the Tarquinienses took, but if Caere was allied to Rome at this point, the most likely route would have been through the Ciminian forest and subsequently through the territory of Veii, which was probably well-disposed towards the Tarquinienses given its ongoing conflict with Rome.[370]

After the Roman victory over Veii in 396 BC, the Romans continued to expand, both within the newly conquered territory, as indicated by the foundations of the *coloniae* at Sutrium (383 BC) and Nepet (373 BC),[371] but they also expanded towards

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[367] Benelli 2001, 7–8.

[368] Terrenato 2019, 98 and n. 68. The Tarquinian origin of the Tarquin kings is not accepted universally, albeit the similarity of the names is striking, but the fact that the historical narrative tells us precisely this is indicative of the status of Tarquinii.

[369] Our main sources are Livy, Diodorus Siculus, *fasti consulares*, *fasti triumphales*, and the *annales maximi*.

[370] Livy 5.16–17.

[371] Livy 6.21.4–6; Vell. Pat. 1.14.2. Cf. note 6 above.

neighbouring territories, such as the territory of Capena, situated to the north-east of Veii, which was subdued in 395 BC.[372]

The next incident reported by Livy occurred in 388 BC, when the Romans invaded the territory of Tarquinii at the same time as they were raiding the territory of the Aequi. It is in this account that Livy provides us with the story of the two small Tarquinian towns *Contenebra* and *Cortuosa* (previously discussed in Chapter 2). According to Livy the Romans captured these towns by assault. *Cortuosa* was taken in a surprise attack and was subsequently sacked and burnt. *Contenebra,* on the other hand, held out for a few days but was then given up by its townsmen, upon which the Romans entered it. Interestingly Livy first calls both towns *oppida*, which would be expected, but then refers to *Contenebra* as *urbs* when recounting the Romans entering it.[373] Livy does not, however, give any reason for these sudden hostilities between the Romans and the Tarquinienses, seemingly started by the former without any provocation; however raiding was probably common in this particular period. Apparently, no retaliation was ever made on the part of the Tarquinienses, at least not that we know about. The successive period seems to have been relatively quiet and Livy does not report of any hostilities between the Romans and the Tarquinienses for the next two decades.

However, the ongoing Roman expansion inevitably generated an increased level of conflict with the Faliscans, allied to the Etruscans, with whom Rome was now in direct contact. Among the main motives for conflict was surely the Roman control over the strategically important towns of Sutrium and Nepet, the so-called *claustra Etruriae*, which controlled the southern parts of the Cimini Mountains.[374]

The Roman presence on the south side of the Cimini certainly constituted a severe obstacle and a threat to the relations between Tarquinienses and Faliscans, who formed a solid alliance at this time based on commercial relations. Mario Torelli individuates the principal aspects of this alliance, based on ceramic production and control over the traffic in the Tiber valley and the "colonial" appropriation of the area, which seems to develop parallel to the Roman colonisation of the Veientan territory, and perhaps also as a response to this.[375]

In 359 BC, almost 30 years after the previous reported hostilities, Tarquinii re-emerges in Livy's account. In this year the Tarquinienses invaded and plundered the Roman countryside, and in particular the parts adjoining Etruria.[376] This event sparks the beginning of a new series of military hostilities which went on for most of the

[372] Livy 5.24.1–3.
[373] Livy 6.4.7–10.
[374] Livy 6.9.4.
[375] Torelli 1981, 218; Pulcinelli 2012, 70.
[376] Livy 7.12.5–6.

following decade. Diodorus' account of the period from the Gallic sack of Rome, in 390 BC, and down to 318 BC, records only three events concerning Etruria or the Faliscans, taking place in 357, 356, and 354 BC. Since the decade in question seems to have been one of particularly intense conflicts between Rome and the Tarquinienses, it is proper to here pay this particular attention.

In 358 BC an event which would have later repercussions occurred, when the Tarquinienses crossed into Roman territory and defeated the consul C. Fabius Ambustus. According to Livy, the defeat itself was overshadowed by the fact that the Tarquinienses took 307 Roman prisoners whom they later sacrificed to the gods in the forum of Tarquinii. Apart from being a cruel and savage act, this was a humiliation of great proportion of the Roman people, and as we shall see it was not to go unavenged.[377]

In 357 BC the Faliscans also rose up as an enemy of Rome and an ally of Tarquinii. Even if Livy only reports that youngsters from Falerii had fought on the side of the Tarquinienses, the Faliscans seem to have sided with Tarquinii on many following occasions.[378] The conflicts with the Tarquinienses continued in the following year. And it was not the only war the Romans had to fight: in this year they also fought the Tiburtes. The consul M. Fabius Ambustus led an army against a combined force of Tarquinienses and Faliscans. According to Livy the first encounter resulted in a Roman defeat, since the Roman soldiers were frightened by Etruscan priests who bore serpents and blazing torches, which caused panic amongst the soldiers. However, after being mocked by their officers, the Romans mustered courage and managed to defeat their enemy. This victory, according to Livy, had the effect that all Etruscans raised arms against Rome.[379] It is not clear what Livy means by all Etruscans or "all who bore the Etruscan name", and it can hardly have implied every city or town in Etruria.[380] The absence of Caere in this part of Livy's account suggests that at least the Caerites were not involved. However, the coalition of which Livy speaks seems to have been under the command of men from Tarquinii and Falerii. According to Livy, the Romans appointed a dictator, C. Marcius Rutilus, to meet the danger. Rutilus, who was also the first plebeian to be appointed to the dictatorship, also faced difficulties back home, since the patricians were not in favour of having a plebeian appointed to this office. They deliberately tried to stall and to sabotage the actions of Rutilus in order to hinder him from carrying on the war.[381] Nevertheless, Rutilus was able to capture the Etruscans' camp, and to slay or drive them out of Roman territory. Diodorus holds that

[377] Livy 7.12.6–7, 7.15.9–12.

[378] Livy 7.16.2–7. Cf. Diod. Sic. 16.31.7.

[379] Livy 7.17.2–9.

[380] Oakley finds this notion improbable, even if it may have been rumoured in Rome: see Oakley 1998, 11, n. 23.

[381] Livy 7.17.1–7.

the Etruscans plundered Roman territory all the way to the Tiber, but then turned back home, not mentioning the victory of Rutilus. The dictatorship of Rutilus was rejected by Beloch, but according to Oakley it is likely true, since such a major event as the first plebeian dictatorship could hardly have been invented. Rutilus' victory is also recorded in the *fasti triumphales*, providing additional supporting evidence.[382]

In 354 BC the retaliation came for the Tarquinian insult that had taken place four years earlier. And if we are to believe the account of Livy, the Tarquinienses were shown no mercy. The Romans, after having defeated the Tarquinienses in a decisive battle, and having killed all the common prisoners, brought 358 of the most noble of them to Rome where they were subsequently flagellated and decapitated in the Forum.[383] However, this act of vengeance does not seem to have halted the war, but only to have intensified it. According to Livy, sentiments were stirred up in the long-time Roman allied city of Caere out of compassion for their kinsmen; in 353 BC the Caerites joined the Tarquinienses. Since at the time Rome was also at war with the Volscians, the consuls had to draw lot between the two commands, and the Etruscan war fell on C. Sulpicius Peticus. When the war against the Etruscans turned out to be the most pressing concern, the Senate soon called for the other consul, M. Valerius Poplicola, to come to the aid of his colleague. The Etruscans pillaged the Roman countryside as far as the Roman *salinae*, the salt-works, close to the Tiber. Part of the booty was thereafter carried into the territory of Caere. T. Manlius Imperiosus Torquatus was appointed dictator and declared war on Caere.[384] Apparently the Caerites had second thoughts about their involvement in the war; according to Livy they turned to the Romans to beg for forgiveness. The Caerite ambassadors, when addressing the Roman people, reminded the Romans of Caere's assistance against the Gauls in 390 BC, and blamed the Tarquinienses for having deceived them. They called Caere the sanctuary of the Roman people, and the hostel of its priests, and refuge of Roman religion. Caere was indeed pardoned, Livy continues, and *indutiae*, a truce, for one hundred years was granted.[385]

Livy's account of the events of the 350s BC between the Romans and the Tarquinienses has long been called into question by scholars. While there is a general agreement regarding the reliability of the basic outline of Livy's narrative, there are several details that are in doubt: for example, the execution of the 307 Roman soldiers, the Etruscan priests carrying serpents and torches, the dictatorship and the victory of Rutilus, and the Roman vengeance on the Tarquinian nobles in the Forum. According to Beloch, the execution of 307 Romans is nothing more than another version of the

[382] Beloch 1926, 361–362; Oakley 1998, 188.
[383] Livy 7.19.1–4; Diodorus Siculus gives only 260 decapitated Tarquinian nobles: Diod. Sic. 16.45.7–9.
[384] Livy 7.19.6–10.
[385] Livy 7.20.1–8.

legendary massacre of the 306 Fabii at Cremera in 477 BC (Livy 2.50).[386] Furthermore, the chronology of the war has been doubted; compared to the account given by Diodorus, there seem to have been too many battles. Diodorus only mentions the war during the years 357, 356, and 354 BC,[387] and it has been suggested that the battles have been duplicated in order to further glorify the Romans; the Roman annalists surely wanted to aggrandize Rome's successes in the war, and all Roman victories are probably greatly exaggerated. This is also the position of Beloch, who favours Diodorus' account over Livy's.[388] However, as discussed above, Diodorus' reliability poses its own questions. It has also been suggested that the conflict in fact resulted in a substantial Tarquinian victory, later partially masked by Roman annalists.[389] There are however objections to these doubts. For example, Livy mentions with precision both the declaration of war in 358 BC and the truce in 351, but there is no mention of a suspension, or a sudden recommencement of the hostilities, that would justify the acknowledgement of two distinct periods of war. The position of Oakley is that each notice given by Livy probably has some basis in truth, with the exception of the account for the year 356.[390] To give a definite answer to these questions is of course a very complicated task and lies beyond the aims of this study. However, regardless of the exact details, Livy's account indicates that there were indeed military hostilities between Tarquinii and Rome in this period, which in turn imply that Tarquinii was a major opponent to Rome's bid for expansion in the mid-4th century BC.

The war raged on until 351 BC when, according to Livy, both the Tarquinienses and the Faliscans sued for peace. The Romans granted both peoples *indutiae* for 40 years, which seems to have been respected by all concerned parties.[391] Oakley, together with Harris, highlights the *indutiae* as the most solid evidence presented by Livy, which then provides a secure *terminus* for the hostilities ended in 351.[392] Interestingly, the hostilities seem to have commenced when the common threats from Gauls and Syracusans, with whom both cities had earlier been in conflict, were no longer imminent. And the expansionist activities on the part of Rome must have made the Tarquinienses suspicious.[393] Nevertheless, there are reasons to approach Livy's narrative with a great deal of caution. Livy treats the outcome of the hostilities as a Roman victory, but he does not report of any territorial gains on the part of the Romans; rather,

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[386] Beloch 1926, 361. This is also the view of Smith: see Smith 2017, 231.
[387] Diod. Sic. 16.31.7, 16.36.4–5. In his chronology 354, 353, and 351 BC.
[388] Beloch 1926, 361–362; Oakley 1998, 11.
[389] Beloch 1926, 361–362; Oakley 1998, 10–11; Pulcinelli 2012, 71.
[390] See e.g. De Sanctis 1907, 255; Pais 1928, 103, 342; Pallottino 1937, 535–536; Oakley 1998, 10–11.
[391] Livy 7.22.1–6.
[392] Harris 1971, 48; Oakley 1998, 10.
[393] Torelli 1974, 62–65; Pulcinelli 2012, 71.

it seems like the war resulted in a *status quo,* where each party defended its previous position. As also stated by Oakley, the true conquest of Etruria began a few decades later.[394]

The truce between Rome and Tarquinii ended in 311 BC, upon which new hostilities followed. According to Livy, all the peoples of Etruria, except for the Arretini, rose up against Rome.[395] The Etruscans laid siege to the Latin colony of Sutrium, situated on the edge of the Ciminian forest, and mentioned by Livy as the key to Etruria (*claustra Etruriae erat*). Sutrium was strategically placed as a last outpost fronting the territory of Tarquinii, and as has been discussed earlier in this study, in Chapter 2.4, the forest formed a natural border between Rome and south Etruria.[396] Following Livy, the Etruscans, of which the Tarquinienses certainly made up a significant part, were superior in number, albeit the Romans were superior in bravery. Livy describes bloody battles, with many casualties on both sides. However, the war was not drawn to an end, and fighting continued around Sutrium until 308 BC, when the Romans were finally victorious.[397] The situation of substantial equilibrium which had characterised the preceding decades now changed in favour of the Romans, who assumed more aggressive politics. A new 40-year truce with Tarquinii was signed. According to Diodorus the truce was renewed at the end of the conflict, when the Romans with the conquest of two fortresses called *Καστόλα* and *Καίριον* gained control of the roads crossing the Cimini Mountains.[398] The identification of these two fortresses remains unfortunately extremely uncertain.[399]

The war was finally ended with the Roman triumph in the battle of Sentinum in 295 BC, fought in the Third Samnite War (298–290 BC) against a coalition including Samnites, Etruscans, Gauls, Umbrians, and others. This victory paved the way for the submission of the entire central-northern Italy to Rome.[400]

Our knowledge of the subsequent decades is complicated by the most unfortunate loss of Livy's text. However, it is possible to reconstruct a series of battles in the Tiber valley. The culminating event was the Second Battle of Lago Vadimone in 283 BC, which constituted a decisive defeat for the troops who opposed Rome.[401] The recorded

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[394] Oakley 1998, 13.

[395] It is difficult to understand what Livy means by "all the peoples of Etruria", but Caere seems to have learnt the lesson. In any case the Caerites are not mentioned by name in Livy's account.

[396] Livy 9.32.1–4; cf. Livy 6.9.4.

[397] Livy 9.32.6–10.

[398] Diod. Sic. 20.35.5, 20.44.9.

[399] Pulcinelli 2012, 72. Scholars such as Augusto Fraschetti and Silvio Cataldi have made valiant attempts to locate the fortresses: see Fraschetti 1980, 147–155; Cataldi 1985, 63–67.

[400] Livy 10.28–29; Pulcinelli 2012, 72.

[401] The host was probably a combined Etrusco-Gallic force: see Appian 2.13; Polyb. 2.19.7–13, 2.20.1–5; Frontin. *Strat.* 1.2.7. The episode is discussed by Harris: see Harris 1971, 79–82.

triumphs celebrated by the consuls over the Vulcenti, Volsinienses, and Tarquinienses in 281 and 280 BC reveal the Etruscan cities involved in this war.[402]

Tarquinii was offered a new truce, and when the Romans under Tiberius Coruncanius defeated Vulci and Volsinii in 280 BC, after which the Roman *colonia* of Cosa was founded on Vulcian territory (273 BC), they almost inevitably must have passed through Tarquinian lands, making it very plausible that Tarquinii at this point no longer was considered hostile, but more probably an ally of Rome.[403] From here on the Livian accounts on Tarquinii are only sporadic but friendly, even if it is also necessary to take into account that the loss of Livy's text after 293 BC together with a lacuna in the *fasti triumphales*, until the year 282 BC, makes the knowledge of the last phase of independent south Etruria extremely fragmentary.[404] In 205 BC, during the Hannibalic War, which did not affect south Etruria in any significant way, Tarquinii supplied the Roman navy with linen for sails, and in 181 BC, a *colonia* at Graviscae was founded on earlier Tarquinian territory,[405] indicating either that Tarquinii had surrendered territory, or that Rome had confiscated the same, prior to this year.

The newly founded peaceful relations between Rome and the city of Tarquinii could possibly be one of the reasons why rural settlements reappear in large numbers in the Biedano region from the Hellenistic period onwards. Indeed, the results from the combined field surveys presented in Chapter 3 above are indicative of this being so.

4.3 Political organisation

At the end of the Archaic period, most Etruscan cities had probably abandoned the institution of monarchy, if they had ever had it, in favour of some oligarchic republican system.[406] The literary sources unfortunately do not reveal much on how the Etruscan cities were politically organised, especially not for the 7th and 6th centuries BC, and thus must be consulted with caution. But archaeological evidence, and above all funerary inscriptions dating to the 4th to 2nd centuries BC, enable us to reconstruct

[402] Pulcinelli 2012, 73. The city of Volsinii Veteres seems to have been the focal point, or leading city, around which the last coalition of the southern Etruscan cities was assembled. The total absence of Vulci in the historical record does not make it possible to analyse its position in any greater depth. However, there are many known ancient relations which tied it to the other two cities.

[403] Livy *Per.* 11, 14; Vell. Pat. 1.14.7; Strabo 5.2.8.

[404] Pulcinelli 2016, 27.

[405] Livy 28.45.14–15, 40.29.1.

[406] Tagliamonte 2017, 128.

some aspects of the Etruscan magisterial system of this period.[407] However, since Etruscan cities were autonomous and individual political entities, each with its own institutional development, it is important to take into consideration the local context when reconstructing the political structures and organisation of individual communities.[408]

In addition to a magisterial terminology, the inscriptions have yielded an institutional lexicon, which reveals clues to the urban organisation, and the territorial limits of a city's or a town's jurisdiction. For instance, it is possible to determine the terminology regarding political and cultural components of Etruscan society. By interpreting the inscriptions, we can deduce that the term *spura* means "community" or *polis*, equivalent to Latin *civitas*, and *meθlum* "city" or urban space, corresponding to Latin *urbs*, the city in its physical aspect, as opposed to *spura*. *Tuθnia* denotes a "village", or the area within its territorial jurisdiction, *cilθ* the "arx" or "acropolis", and *rasna* the "people", roughly corresponding to the Latin *populus*.[409] Most importantly however, the inscriptions give information that enables a reconstruction of the magisterial system in the Etruscan settlements.

The epigraphic material has only yielded sufficient information regarding Tarquinii and its associated settlements, which is of course very fortunate for the scope of the present study. In the Biedano region, the funerary inscriptions from Norchia are particularly abundant. The existence of public magistrates, as evidenced by inscriptions, attest to a shift from a monarchical to a republican system. However, some cities, like Tarquinii, have no known traditions of a monarchical governance, while others, like Veii, seem never to have abandoned the institution, except for a short period in the 5th century BC, after the death of the earlier-mentioned Lars Tolumnius.[410]

We are obviously dealing with a fairly complex system; we do not know the exact responsibilities or functions of each magistrate, or for how long a term lasted, even if it is plausible to assume that public offices were held on a one-year basis, as in Rome.[411] However, it is clear from the epigraphic evidence that a person could hold the same office more than once.[412] It can also be assumed with some certainty that collegiate

[407] For a thorough analysis of the Etruscan magisterial system I refer to Lambrechts 1970; Rix 1984; Colonna 1988; Agostiniani 1997; Cristofani 1997; Cerchiai 2000; De Simone 2004; Tagliamonte 2017.
[408] Tagliamonte 2017, 121–122.
[409] Lambrechts 1970; Colonna 1988, 17; 1991, 231–232; Bonfante 2002, 203–204; Cerchiai 2017, 633–634; Tagliamonte 2017, 130.
[410] Tagliamonte 2017, 131.
[411] Tagliamonte 2017, 131.
[412] See Ch. 4.4 below, s.v. *Velisina*.

bodies, such as local assemblies or senates, composed of members of the nobility, existed in both cities and minor urban centres.[413]

It is reasonable to assume that some kind of *cursus honorum* existed, similar to the one existing in Rome; however, the exact order of the steps, and meaning of the offices in this *cursus* may have differed from one town to another. In addition, as already mentioned, the only area where the epigraphic record is sufficiently abundant to make a reconstruction of the *cursus honorum* possible is that of Tarquinii and its hinterland. According to Gianluca Tagliamonte, the scant evidence yielded by other sites may not be a coincidence; the comparative abundance could be connected to Tarquinii's ancient republican traditions. For example, there are no epigraphic attestations of local magistrates at Veii, which was a city with strong monarchical traditions. However, as also pointed out by Tagliamonte, the absence of these attestations could also have been the result of the relatively early conquest of Veii by Rome, which most probably ended Veii's institutional history as an autonomous city.[414]

The lowest level on the *cursus* ladder was probably the magistrature of the *marunuχ*, which has also been attested among the Umbrians. The suffix *–uχ* indicates the abstract form of the magistrature, while the holder of the office was called a *maru*, indicating the individual magistrate. Etruscan magistratures are usually characterised by the suffixes *–uχ* and *–uc*. The *maru* seems to have been concerned with religious and building spheres and corresponded roughly to the Roman magistrate aedile, and it probably existed as both an individual and as a collegiate office.[415] The *marunuχ* is often followed by an attribute or an appellative, indicating the designated functions associated with it, e.g. *marunuχ spurana*, *marunuχ spurana cepen*, the latter of which there is an example at Norchia, as will be seen in Chapter 4.4. The position as *maru* led to the office of *eisnevc*, which is linked to the adjective *aisna/eisna* with the meaning of "sacred action" and had probably priestly functions. The next step on the magisterial ladder seems to have been the *macstrevc*, corresponding to a *macstre*. The office is believed to be connected to the name *Macstrna/Mastarna* found in the François tomb at Vulci (last quarter of the 4th century BC), which has, on occasion, also been identified with the Roman king Servius Tullius. It is probable that *macstre* was a magistrate of military nature, which corresponds to Latin *magister*.[416] The highest office to attain in the various communities was that of *zilach*, with the office holder named a *zilaθ*. The office is usually correlated with the Roman praetor and was both an individual and a collegiate office, probably with a duration of one year. However, it was

[413] Dionysius of Hallicarnassus mentions *ekklesia* and *tele* in Tarquinii, in reference to the events of 509 BC, when Tarquinius Superbus was deposed as king of Rome: Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 5.3.2.
[414] Tagliamonte 2017, 132.
[415] Tagliamonte 2017, 132; For an in-depth discussion see Maggiani 1996; 2000; 2005.
[416] Tagliamonte 2017, 133.

possible to hold it on more than one occasion, and it has been argued that the office could also be awarded for life.[417] According to Tagliamonte the available evidence shows that it could be held as many as eleven times, but evidence from Norchia suggests that it could in fact be held many more times than that, with *Vel Velisinas* holding the position of *zilaθ* possibly as many as 27 times. The office was eponymous and often accompanied by attributes, e.g. *zilaθ parχis*, *zilaθ seleita*, or *zilaθ meχl rasnal*, specifying areas of responsibility, or referring to some form of hierarchy connected to the office. In some cases, it is possible to attempt a more precise definition. For example, by the 5th century BC, *zilaθ meχl rasnal* is believed to denote the highest magistrate of an individual city-state and its people, the "praetor of the people (*rasna*) of the city"; this office was probably not annual, perhaps it could even be held for life. The annual magistrate of the urban community would probably have held the title of *zilaθ spurana*, relating to the *spura*, while the supreme magistrate for the Etruscan League was perhaps the *zilaθ cechaneri*.[418] In addition, there are a couple of magistrates who, according to Tagliamonte, do not seem to have been part of the *cursus honorum*, such as *cepen*, usually understood as *sacerdos*, and *ep*(*u*)*rθnevc*, which is believed to have been a highly important office, albeit not included in the *cursus*.[419]

The internal political apparatus of the Etruscan cities appears to have continued unchanged, albeit nominally, after the Roman entry in the 3rd century BC, as demonstrated by funerary inscriptions, which still recorded political offices the deceased had held during his lifetime.[420]

To clarify the form of internal government of a small Etruscan town such as Blera is not an easy task, but there are clues that could make possible an attempt for the situation in the Roman period. To understand how Blera was governed in Roman times is also interesting because it sheds light on its previous status as an Etruscan town, before its incorporation into the Roman state as a *municipium*. The incorporation as a *municipium* is an indicium of Blera being considered an already established urban centre of its own, prior to the Social War (91–88 BC).

According to Colonna di Paolo and Colonna, Blera was one of four *municipia* in the area surrounding Axia in late Republican and early Imperial times, the other three being Tuscana, Tarquinii, and Sorrina. The authors claim that all of these were governed by *quattuorviri* and therefore were founded in pre-Augustan times.[421] It is however possible to give a more certain date for the institution of *municipia* governed by a *quattuorvirat*.

417 Cerchiai 2017, 634.
418 Cerchiai 2017, 634; Tagliamonte 2017, 132–134. For more information on *Vel Velisinas* of Norchia, see Ch. 4.4. below, under *Velisina*.
419 Tagliamonte 2017, 132–133.
420 E.g. the above-mentioned *Vel Velisinas*: see more in Ch. 4.4 below.
421 Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 34.

As convincingly argued by Hans Rudolph, those towns which received citizen rights, and were established as *municipia* after the Social War, were governed by *quattuorviri*, while those *municipia* which were established by Caesar after 51 BC were all governed by *duoviri*.[422] Accordingly it is most plausible that Blera was instituted as a *municipium* sometime between 87 and 51 BC. The evidence for the presence of a *quattuorvir* in Blera is supported by an inscription recording a local magistrate, a C. Julius Julianus, who held the office in the reign of Hadrian (AD 117–138) or Antoninus Pius (AD 138–161), recorded by de Rossi:

C. IULIO C.F.
PAL. IULIANO
PRAETORI QUAEST
PROVINC. BAETICI *sic*
ADLECTO
A. DIVO. HADRIANO
INTER. AEDILICIOS
PRAEF. EQ. TRIB. MIL
PRAEF. CHO. IIII. VIR
QUINQUENNALI
IUR. DIC. *m*UNICIPII[423]

After the Roman victory in the Social War, Italy was reorganised into regions, and the various peoples, who were now newly made Roman citizens, were enrolled into the census lists, and juridically designated accordingly. Roman citizens were from the beginning organised into four (possibly three) *tribus*, or tribes. In the beginning, the tribes were possibly based on ethnic grounds, at least that is what the Romans themselves seem to have believed: *Ramnes* (Latins), *Tities* (Sabines), *Luceres* (Etruscans), the three ethnic components originally comprising the Roman people.[424] The tribes

[422] Rudolph 1935, 90, 207; Degrassi 1950, 323–324.
[423] *CIL* XI, 3337.
[424] Florus. 2.6.1–15.

were divided into ten *curiae* each, and the citizens voted within the tribe and the tribe then voted as one unit in elections. During the later regal period, the system was reorganised to be based on territory and property. A total of four urban tribes, corresponding to four areas in the city of Rome, the *Palatina, Esquilina, Collina,* and *Suburana*, and ten rural tribes, representing Rome's territory, the *ager Romanus*, were created. As Rome's territory expanded, so did the number of tribes.

Around 495 BC the tribes were organised into voting districts and in 471 BC they were given the right to elect plebeian magistrates through the *Lex Publilia*. Through the *Leges Valeriae et Horatiae* of 449 BC they became an important legislative body. In 447 BC the tribes became an elective body for quaestors and were given juridical functions.

As territories in central Italy were incorporated into the Roman state, on gaining Roman citizenship their inhabitants were enrolled in the tribes. As more and vaster territories were incorporated, the need to create new tribes arose, in order to enrol the new citizens more efficiently. This was of course also the case with Etruria, and the Biedano region. By the middle of the 3rd century BC the number of tribes had expanded to 31.

Blera was most probably enrolled in the *tribus Arnensis*; which is attested by three funerary inscriptions recording soldiers hailing from Blera.[425] However, its neighbouring larger towns, Tarquinii and Tuscana, were enrolled in the *tribus Stellatina*. These tribes, together with the *Tromentina* and the *Sabatina* had all been organised in 387 BC. This means that they all had existed for approximately a century when Tarquinii and its territory was becoming a Roman ally in the early 3rd century BC. After the Social War the towns in the territory of Tarquinii were, together with all other free Italian cities, organised into the tribal system of the Roman state. This has repercussions for our understanding of the later socio-political development in the area, with the establishment of the borders of the new *municipia*, and its subsequent influence on a social level, such as the relationship between the élite and their less-prosperous peers, as well as local identity.

An essential component that has not yet been discussed is the leading families of the region. To investigate who they were and what ambitions they held is pivotal in understanding the political, economic, and cultural structures in the region. In the following a thorough inquiry of these families will be presented.

[425] *CIL* VI, 221, 2608, 32519 (*a* = Eph. IV no. 887; 2378).

4.4 Élite families

The basic unit of Etruscan society was the family. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the importance of the extended family, or *gens*, changed over time. The *gens* first rose to a prominent position in the Orientalising period (*c*. 730–580 BC), after which it lost importance in the Archaic period (*c*. 580–480 BC), only to regain significance in the late Subarchaic and early Hellenistic periods (*c*. 400–250 BC).[426]

In this section the families of the Biedano region are examined in order to reveal their position in society as well as their place of origin. But before plunging into these families, it could be proper to give a short introduction to the Etruscan name system.

The Etruscan and Roman nomenclatures mirror each other to a large extent. Both introduced at a quite early stage the so-called *duo-nomina* system, consisting of a personal name, a *praenomen*, and a hereditary *nomen gentilicium*.[427] This system, which with time would become rather complex as more names were added, derived from a prehistoric system in which a person only used one personal name. The origins of the system which later emerged, consisting of two names, one personal and one family name, could be linked to the urbanisation process in central Italy in the 8th century BC. When societies expanded and became more complex, and families and clans grew larger, the need to differentiate between various members of families or clans arose. The *nomen gentilicium* developed through the adjectivised *patronymicon* of the *pater familias*. This ceased to denominate the father of the person in question, and instead came to designate a family, a *gens*. The old *patronymicon*, now turned into the name of the family, and was inherited by all free children who were born into it. For instance, *Laris Larecenas*, "*Laris*, (son) of *Larece*", now came to be interpreted as "*Laris*, (member of the) *Larecena* (family)". This shift probably occurred early on in Etruscan history, perhaps as early as before 700 BC.[428] Thereafter it spread through the Apennine peninsula, eventually being adopted by Etruscans, Umbrians, Romans, and other Latin-speaking communities, Faliscans, South Picenes, and Oscans.[429] In fact, as pointed out by Alessandro Naso, family names are exclusive to Italy in this period; in Greek and other Mediterranean societies, the custom was to use a nomenclature consisting of a personal name and the father's name. The adoption of a nomenclature where a distinct family name is included made it possible to declare loyalty to a specific group and to state the right to the inheritance connected to its name, in the form of

[426] Amann 2017a, 179, 183.

[427] Kaimio 1972, 27.

[428] Momigliano 1984, 401–402, 420; Wallace 2008, 79; Cerchiai 2017, 617.

[429] Kaimio 1972, 71–72; Wallace 2008, 79; Cerchiai 2017, 617–618. According to Wallace, the development might first have started among the Faliscans.

property, land, and livestock. But the family name also filled another important role in enabling self-awareness of one's own rank and belonging to a certain social class.[430]

The Etruscan inscriptions are mainly gathered in the *CIE* (*Corpus Inscriptionum Etruscarum*), the first volume of which was issued in 1893–1901. The aim of the *CIE* is to provide a corpus of Etruscan inscriptions, equivalent to the *CIL* (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*), where the main body of Latin inscriptions is to be found. The publication of the *CIE* was supplemented in the *REE* (*Rivista di Epigrafia Etrusca*) through the *Studi Etruschi* scientific journal. In addition, Etruscan inscriptions, both those already or later published in the *CIE*, as well as those inscriptions which had been published elsewhere, are gathered in the *ET* (*Etruskische Texte*) by Helmut Rix. A small number of inscriptions are also to be found in the *TLE* (*Testimonia Linguae Etruscae*) by Massimo Pallottino.

The Etruscan inscriptions hailing from the area of investigation have been published in the *CIE*, II, I, 4 and the *CIE*, III, I, (119 inscriptions), the *ET* (94 inscriptions[431]), and the *TLE* (11 inscriptions also published in the *CIE*) additionally, with a total of 163 inscriptions.[432] Of the inscriptions published in the *CIE*, 51 derive from stone monuments such as tombs, sarcophagi, or *cippi*. These are funerary in type and comprise names of the deceased as well as often the formula *eca śuθi*, this (is the) tomb. In some cases, the funerary inscriptions have also yielded the names of the relatives of the deceased. A total of 68 of the inscriptions from the *CIE* derive from *instrumenta*. These can consist of full sentences or only one letter or a sign. They often indicate the owner of the object in question, e.g. *mi v*[*e*]*nelus vefunas*, inscribed on a fragment of a ring-foot of a bucchero cup which was found in House III, Area F East, San Giovenale in 1963, and dated to the late 7th–mid-6th centuries BC.[433] Additionally, 44 of the inscriptions published in the *ET* have not been published in the *CIE*: the majority of these derive from *instrumenta*. The Latin inscriptions have been published in *CIL* XI, 1–2, with the vast majority of the inscriptions deriving from Blera and Forum Cassii, from where 64 inscriptions have been recorded, of which the great majority consists of funerary and honorary dedications. Chronologically they range from the late Republican period to the early Middle Ages, with some of Christian character.

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430 Naso 2017, 871–872.

431 In addition, the *ET* lists a total of 108 inscriptions, consisting of both longer sentences and single letters, as deriving from *loci incerti*. However, the origin of the majority of these inscriptions is often given in the *CIE*, the *REE*, or elsewhere.

432 Of the 94 inscriptions listed in the *ET*, 44 have not been published in the *CIE*, hence the combined total amount of inscriptions is 163.

433 Karlsson 2006, 101–102, fig. 194, no. 253, pl. 12; Colonna 2003, 302–303. See further Ch. 4.4 below, s.v. *Vefuna*.

Determining who composed the local élite is essential in understanding the hierarchical social structures in the area, as well as providing clues to the connectivity between different sites, the inter- and intrastate relations between different towns and cities. There are essentially two contrasting views regarding the composition of the local élite in southern Etruria and in the Tarquinian hinterland in particular. While one side argues that the local élite in the hinterland of Tarquinii, to which the Biedano region most probably belonged from the 4th century BC onwards, consisted of a substantial Tarquinian contingent,[434] the other argues that the élite is to be considered predominantly local, or having more connections with other Etruscan sites than with Tarquinii.[435]

In order to approach these questions and, if possible, to provide some answers to them, it is necessary to survey the epigraphic material from the Biedano region, individuating the families, examining their connections to other families and cities, and also investigating any changes in the body of families from the Archaic to later periods.

The epigraphic material reveals some 30 *gentes* active and living in the Biedano region in the period stretching from the 7th to the 1st centuries BC. None of the families is represented in the whole period, and the majority of the inscriptions hail from the late 4th to the 2nd centuries BC, thus making it possible to have an idea of who constituted the body of the most important and flourishing families of the region in this particular period. The funerary inscriptions derive, in the form of epitaphs, from the monumental rock-cut tombs of the necropoleis of the towns in the area. They appear either as inscribed directly on the inner chamber walls, on the façade above or beside the entrance, on sarcophagi originally placed in the chambers, or on funerary *cippi* placed in conjunction with the tomb. I presuppose that the material is a testimony to the presence of some kind of élite, given the context in which it has been found. The *gentes* of the Biedano region are presented below (in alphabetical order, following the order of the Etruscan alphabet), where their places of activity, as well as their connections to other *gentes*, are examined.

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[434] Bourdin 2012, 491–492. The same view is also held by Federica Chiesa: see Chiesa 2005, 204.

[435] Benelli 2014a, 86–87.

AVHIRCINA

A male individual, *Hanφina Avhircina*, is recorded in an inscription from a single chamber tomb at San Giovenale; *mi Hanφina Avhircinasi muluvana* is inscribed on one of the inner walls of the tomb.[436] The tomb has been dated to the end of the 7th century BC. The *praenomen Hanφina*, with variants, is common in north Etruria as a *gentilicium*, e.g. in the syncopated form *Hamφna*, in Perugia.[437] In Sovana it also appears as a *gentilicium* in the 4th century BC, as *Hanuφne*.[438] The *gentilicium Avhircina*, documented in neo-Etruscan at Chiusi as *Afrcna* (*ET* Cl 1.2593), could possibly be an Etruscan borrowing of an Italic word, related to the Latin adjective *africus*.[439]

AVLNA / AULNA

The *gens Avlna* is documented in the Biedano region by one inscription found on a modest false cube tomb at Norchia, dated to the late 4th–middle of the 2nd centuries BC. The inscription reads *ca śuθi tites avlnas*, "this (is) the tomb of *Tite Avlnas*"; a male person who is the proprietor of the tomb.[440] The *gens* is also attested outside the Biedano region, but still within its vicinity, by two inscriptions from the *ager Volsiniensis* (Bolsena), both dated to the 3rd–1st centuries BC. However, the name is also widely spread in the northern parts of Etruria, being extensively represented at Perugia (*CIE* 4254, 3680, 3681, 4246), Chiusi (*CIE* 1742, 1798, 911), and in the territory of Siena (*ET* AS 1.474, 476). According to Massimo Morandi Tarabella the origin of the name is a *patronymicon* formed from the *praenomen Avle*, corresponding to Latin *Aulnius*.[441] Other variants documented are *Avulna*, on a plate now conserved at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Chiusi, and *Avalnies* on a 6th-century amphora deriving from Blera.[442]

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[436] *ET* AT 3.2; *REE* 52:15.
[437] *ET* Pe 1.413, 619, 1217.
[438] *CIE* 5231; *TLE* 349; *ET* AV 1.14; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 227.
[439] Colonna 1984, 291; Hadas-Lebel 2004, 207, n. 381; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 36–37; Marchesini 2007, 28; Tobin 2015, 90.
[440] *ET* AT 1.178; *REE* 41:117.
[441] *CIE* 6125, Cerveteri; *CIL* XI, 2013, Perugia; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 38.
[442] *ET* AT 2.50; *REE* 59:19; Maggiani 1972, 451, no. 64; Pandolfini Angeletti 1994, 258, no. 19; Bernardini 2001, 141, no. 79.

ALEθNA

The *gens Aleθna* of Musarna is represented in the Biedano region by one female individual, *Θanχvil Aleθnei*, revealed in the epitaph of her daughter, datable to the 3rd century BC. She had married into the Orclan *gens Smurina* as she is attested as the wife of a *Velθur Smurinas* and mother to *Smurinei Ramθa*.[443] The *gens Aleθna* was in possession of a monumental funerary complex at Macchia del Conte at Musarna which was used from *c*. 320/300 until the 1st century BC. The *gens* seems to have been at the pinnacle of public life in Musarna for a period of around 200 years. It also seems to have had importance in the "capital" city of Tarquinii, where an *Arnθ Aleθnas* was *zilaθ* in the mid-3rd century BC.[444] The family is also documented at other centres, both close and remote.

ALŚI

One inscription reading *mi fasθiia alśiia*, from San Giovenale, is the only attestation of the family name in this form; a later variant, *Alśina*, is known from two tombs at Tarquinii, but it is also attested in Musarna, Volsinii, Bolsena, and Vulci. The inscription derives from a buccero vessel found by the bridge complex at Casale Vignale, San Giovenale. According to Colonna, the *praenomen Fasθi* means "she who is in *fas*".[445] It is also recorded with the spelling with *θ* in the north, in Perugia and Arezzo, although the spelling *Fasti* is more common.[446] The bucchero vessel would suggest a dating to the 7th–6th centuries BC.

ANCNA

A now lost *cippus* in nenfro was illegally excavated by tomb robbers in the Pile B necropolis of Norchia around 1970–1971. The *cippus*, which has been dated to the 3rd century BC by Colonna from a photograph, bore an inscription. The reading is very uncertain according to Colonna, who interprets it as *ancanas : a*(*rnθ*),[447] connecting it to the *gens Ancinie*, known from Veii in the 6th century BC,[448] and to the *gens Ancna*,

[443] *CIE* 5873; *ET* AT 1.170; see Ch. 4.4 below s.v. *Smurina*.
[444] *CIE* 5811; *TLE* 174; *ET* AT 1.100; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 40–47, 468–469.
[445] Colonna & Backe-Forsberg 1999, 66.
[446] *ET* AT 2.41; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 53–54; Tobin 2015, 92.
[447] *ET* AT 1.179; *REE* 49:21.
[448] Colonna 2002, 359, 373; *CIE* 6449; *ET* Ve 3.47.

known from Tuscana in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC.[449] *Ancna* is most probably the neo-Etruscan form of *Ancinie*. However, Rix favours the reading *ancaris : a*, which has comparisons with the *gens Ancar*(*i*)*e* (*CIE* 5823, 5824, 10940; *ET* AT 1.112–113, *ET* AH 1.77), attested in the 3rd–2nd centuries BC at Volsinii and Musarna. Documented as *Anχarie* (*ET* Ta 1.92–93, 1.210; *CIE* 5561) it flourished in Tarquinii in the 4th–2nd centuries BC. The *Ancarie* of Musarna had also established connections with the illustrious *gens Aleθna*; a *Θana Ancarui* had married a *Vel Aleθnas*, as attested by the epitaph of their daughter *Θana Aleθnei*, who died at the age of eight. *Θana Ancarui* was buried in the same tomb as the daughter, the Tomba II 'di Ponente'.[450] Another version is *Anχe*, documented in one inscription from Volsinii, dated to the late 6th century BC.[451] In any case, all these variants probably derive from a Sabine-Latin *praenomen* **Ance/Anχe*.[452] Members of a branch of the *gens* seem to have become prosperous in Rome in the 1st century BC, perhaps already before the Social War. A Q. Ancharius was praetor in *c*. 88 BC, and his son of the same name was later proconsul of Macedonia in 55–54 BC. The first wife of C. Octavius (*c*. 100–59 BC), the father of the future Augustus, was called Ancharia, mother of his half-sister Octavia maior.[453] An Ancharius Priscus was senator in the reign of Tiberius (AD 14–37), and a Q. Manlius Ancharius Tarquitius Saturninus held the same rank in the Flavian period (AD 69–96). The *gens* is also represented in the early Imperial period in Tarquinii through a Sex. Ancarius Sex. f., and at Castel d'Asso, where three individuals can be attested. The name M. Ancharius Anencieius is inscribed on a *cippus* found east of the Via Cassia, in the vicinity of the locality Le Farine. A stone slab now kept in Viterbo, but said to originate in Castel d'Asso, records a funerary inscription remembering one Q. Ancharius Pudens, who was a soldier in the 3rd praetorian cohort, and who died at the age of 17 (or 18, or possibly 19). The dedication is made by the father, Q. Ancharius Restitutus.[454] It is worth noting the extensive usage of the *praenomen* Quintus, which was not among the most common Latin ones; in Latin inscriptions from Etruria it appears in only 7.3%, in the Roman Senate from the Age of Augustus up to AD 217, in 10.4–10.5%, and among late Republican *homines novi* it occurs in 10.5%. The predominance of Quintus

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[449] *CIE* 5709; *ET* AT 1.27; Torelli 1965, 497, no. 3.

[450] *CIE* 5824; *ET* AT 1.113; Emiliozzi 1993, 122–146, nos. 19–20; Wikander & Wikander 2003, 118, fig. 26; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 42.

[451] *CIE* 4981; *ET* Vs 1.91; De Simone 1980, 39; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 70.

[452] Torelli 1965, 497; Colonna 1981, 252, no. 21; Wikander & Wikander 2003, 118, fig. 25; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 58–59, 69–70.

[453] Suet. *Aug.* 4.

[454] *CIL* XI, 3005; *RE* I, 2, col. 2102, nn. 1–3, 5; Broughton 1952, 529; Torelli 1969, 323–324, s.v. "incertae originis"; Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 37, n. 17; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 70.

among Roman as well as Etruscan Ancharii makes it probable that these belonged to the same *gens*.[455]

ANIE

The *gens* is represented by only one inscription, in Blera. It records a female individual by the name *Ramθa Aniaś* or *Anieś*, buried in a hypogean chamber tomb dated to the second half of the 4th century BC, in the vicinity of the so-called Grotta Penta. The *gentilicium* has been documented at Volsinii and Vulci, but also in the area around Chiusi and at Perugia.[456]

ANUTAIE

The *gens Anutaie* is only represented by one inscription hailing from a chamber tomb at Norchia, dated to the 4th–2nd centuries BC.[457] Neither the *praenomen*, nor any other part of the person's name is present. Furthermore, the reading as *Anutaie* is uncertain: Rosi and Colonna Di Paolo and Colonna have it as *Anuteies*, while Rix reads *Amtnies* which was also later accepted by Colonna.[458] According to Morandi Tarabella the inscription would indicate the proprietor *gens* of the chamber tomb in question and he puts forward the possibility that from the beginning the epitaph lacked any other name form than the family name.[459] A family with a similar name is attested in the Biedano region in the early Imperial period. A funerary inscription from Blera records one C. Anteius who had held the office of *quattuorvir*. The epitaph is dedicated to him and his wife, Vomania, by their son or daughter.[460] Other *Anteii* held high military and political offices in the Early Empire; P. Anteius Rufus, legate of Roman Syria, and governor of Dalmatia under Nero, is probably the best known to posterity.[461] However, whether the Biedano *Anteii* are kin to this Anteius cannot be determined.

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[455] Figures from Salomies 1987, 155, 158.

[456] *ET* AT 1.225; Ricciardi 1992b; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 61–62, n. 83. See also Ch. 4.4 below, s.v. *Tetnie*.

[457] *CIE* 5863; *ET* AT 1.160.

[458] Rosi 1927, 64; Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 407; Rix 1991.

[459] Morandi Tarabella 2004, 68–69.

[460] *CIL* XI, 3338.

[461] Levick 2013, 630.

ARHUS

Inscription of possession on a bucchero patera, found at San Giuliano.[462] The *gentilicium* can possibly be referred to the Caerite *Aruzina*, or the *Aruna* from Volsinii, attested in the 7th and 6th centuries BC respectively. The individual name from which *Aruna* derives is connected to **Aru*, by De Simone, with connection to the hodiernal Arrone river.[463]

CAE

The *gens Cae* appears to have been rather widespread in the *ager Tarquiniensis*, documented also at Tarquinii proper, Monte Romano, Tuscana, and in the *ager Volsiniensis*. In south Etruria there is only one attested inscription hailing from outside the area, from Vulci (*ET* VC 1.16). In the Biedano region it is represented by two inscriptions, from Axia and Norchia. The inscription from Axia records the name of a male individual, *Caes Velus*, on a *cippus* deriving from a rock-cut chamber tomb dated to the mid-3rd–mid-2nd centuries BC.[464] The other, from Norchia, is a funerary inscription hailing from a nenfro sarcophagus of the "*Holztruhe*" type, with a recumbent male figure on the lid.[465] It has been dated to the second half of the 4th century BC.[466] The inscription reads *cae l*(*arθ*?) and judging by the artistic level of the sarcophagus, the *gens* seems to have been quite prosperous and elevated in Norchia in the 4th century BC. The name *Cae* is originally a *praenomen* of origins not exclusively Etruscan (Etruscan *Cae*(i)*es* = Latin *Gaius*) and according to Morandi Tarabella it seems to have developed into a "*Vornamengentile*"[467] as late as in the first half of the 4th century. In north Etruria, the name is very common at Chiusi, Perugia, and Arezzo.[468]

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[462] *CIE* 10450; *ET* AT 2.7; *REE* 50:48.
[463] De Simone 1978, 50, tav. 9; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 89.
[464] *CIE* 5853; *REE* 35:5.
[465] *CIE* 5869; *ET* AT 1.166; Cristofani 1963, 205; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 100–101.
[466] Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 374, no. 4, tav. CCCCXVII, 1–3.
[467] On "*Vornamengentile*", see Rix 1963, 349–356.
[468] Morandi Tarabella 2004, 101.

CAVENA

The *gens Cavena* is only attested by one inscription: *Arnθ Cavenas*, noted in the epitaph of his son *Vel*[---], from a now lost rock-cut inscription at Blera, dated to the 3rd–1st centuries BC.[469] Morandi Tarabella proposes a connection to the *gens Cavina*, noted at Caere (*ET* Cr 2.136), Volterra (*ET* Vt 1.42), and Arezzo (*ET* Ar 1.94, from a female burial). The name is also recorded in Archaic times as *Kaviena*, at both Vulci and Tarquinii.[470] The *praenomen* from which both *nomina* derive is according to Vetter *Cavie*, cognate with Latin *Gavius*.[471]

CEISE

The *gens Ceise* is documented at several places in south Etruria, at Tarquinii, Monte Romano, Ferentium, Sovana, and Corchiano on Faliscan land. The *Ceise* also married into the *gens Uple* of Tuscana as attested by a *Larθi Ceisi*, buried in a now lost sarcophagus (*CII* 2104; *TLE* 193; *CIE* 5760; *ET* AT 1.67), dated to the 3rd–1st centuries BC, and had links to the *Velisina* at Norchia, as attested by the *metronymicon* of the same *Larθi Ceisi*.[472] In the Biedano region its only testimony is as the proprietor of a false cube tomb at Axia, dated to the second half of the 4th century BC, to be referred to the ancient phase of the necropolis.[473] An *Arnθ Ceises* is here recognised by the *genitive Arnθal*.[474] The *gentilicium* is also documented in Hellenistic times at Perugia. It is derived from the individual name *Ceis*(i)*e* and it seems quite close to the Latin "*Vornamegentile*" *Ceisus*.[475]

[469] *CIE* 5877; *ET* AT 1.188; *TLE* 162.
[470] Morandi Tarabella 2004, 101.
[471] Vetter 1953, s.v. *Gavius*
[472] See Ch. 4.4 below, s.v. *Velisina*.
[473] Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna, 1970, 139–141, 252–253; Wikander & Wikander 2003, 130, fig. 29; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 118. See Ch. 2.2.3 and *Fig. 10* above.
[474] *CIE* 5855; *CII* 2076; *ET* AT 1.145; Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 139–141, 252–253, tavv. 269, 400.
[475] Ricciardi 1986, 225–226, no. 14; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 118–119, 124–125.

CLEIINA

An inscription on the carved tuff wall of a part of the Via Cava, referable to the ancient Via Clodia, Blera, records the name *Cleiina*.[476] According to Colonna the double *ii* attest to a date before the 4th–3rd centuries BC.[477] The *gens* is not recorded elsewhere.

CRACIE

The *gens Cracie* is only represented by two female individuals, at Tuscana and at Norchia respectively. Both women are attested in the *metronymicon* of their sons. Both inscriptions can be dated to the middle of the 3rd century BC. At Tuscana, the woman, who is only known by her family name, *Craci*, married a member of the illustrious *gens Vipinana*, which prospered in the 4th–2nd centuries BC and which is also documented at Tarquinii.[478] At Norchia, *Θanχvil Craci* married into one of the most important families of the 4th and 3rd centuries, the *gens Xurcle*.[479] From the epitaph of her son, *Larθ Xurχles*, we know that she was married to an *Arnθ Xurcles*, who had held the offices of *zilc parχis* and *marunuχ spurana cepen*.[480] Both offices are, as far as we know, almost exclusively connected to the territory of Tarquinii.[481] Unfortunately the tomb of the *gens Cracie* is yet to be found, but the matrimonial bonds, established through two of its female members, with two of the most prominent families in the region of that period, suggest the elevated status of the family.

CREPU

The *gens Crepu* is only documented in the Biedano region in the 6th century BC, by stamps on several braziers in red impasto from the Pontesilli necropolis at San Giovenale.[482] *Larice Crepu* possibly ran a pottery workshop in San Giovenale which had its greatest period of activity in the second quarter of the 6th century BC. The *gentilicium Crepu*, which is quite rare, is only attested at San Giovenale in Archaic times; however it is represented by two male persons at Caere in a more recent period (3rd–

476 *CIE* 5878; *ET* AT 0.12.
477 Colonna 1966, 325–326.
478 *CIE* 5699; *ET* AT 1.17; Colonna 1978a, 106, no. J6; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 139, 207.
479 Morandi Tarabella 2004, 139.
480 *CIE* 5875; *TLE* 166; *ET* AT 1.172.
481 See Ch. 4.4 below, s.v. *Xurcle*.
482 *CIE* 10455, 10486; *ET* AT 2.16, 2.17; *REE* 51:169–170.

1st centuries BC).[483] This is according to Morandi Tarabella an attestation of the influence of Caere on San Giovenale in the Archaic period.[484] *Crepu* derives from the Latin *Creppus*, an appellation referable to the *lupercus*, with the possible meaning of "billy-goat". According to a hypothesis of Colonna, the potter *Larice Crepu* could have been a Roman originally named *Creppus*, maybe a member of the *sodales luperci*, who emigrated to Caere, received his Etruscan *praenomen*, and thereafter moved to San Giovenale to set up his workshop.[485]

CUTNA

The *gens Cutna* or *Cuθna* was prominent at Tarquinii in the 4th–2nd centuries BC. A *bucchero pesante* vase said to have been found at San Giovenale bears the inscription *mi qutunas*.[486] This is one of only two known testimonies of the name spelled with a koppa.[487] However, it is plausible that we are dealing with an Archaic form of *Cutna*, having not yet undergone the process of syncopation. According to Pandolfini Angeletti a dating to the 6th century BC would be the most likely, based on the similarities with other finds from San Giovenale, which have been securely dated to this period.[488] The dating would also be supported by the *bucchero pesante*, the latest phase of bucchero production, which ended in the early 5th century BC. Variants of the name are also found in Tarquinii, Vulci, Chiusi, and Perugia.[489]

ELNA

The only documentation of the *gens Elna* is the mentioning of an *Elnei Ramθa*, mother of *Avle Θansinas*, and wife of *Vel Θansinas*.[490] The inscription, which is to be found in the interior of one of the tombs belonging to the *gens Θansina*, in the necropolis of

[483] *CIE* 6120; *ET* Cr 1.126; *CIE* 6167*; ET* Cr 1.141.
[484] Morandi Tarabella 2004, 142–143.
[485] Colonna 1997, 61–76.
[486] *ET* AT 2.13; *REE* 50:87.
[487] The other one being of uncertain origin, but according to Briquel it could possibly be connected to Caere, based on the the final letter *s* being spelled *ś*: Briquel 2009, 58; *ET* OA 2.12; *REE* 48:118.
[488] E.g. Berggren & Berggren 1972, tav. XXXVII, n. 7.
[489] Pandolfini Angeletti 1984, 336, no. 87; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 153–154; Briquel 2009, 58–59; Tobin 2015, 89–92.
[490] See further Ch. 4.4 below, s.v. *Θansina*.

Greppo Cenale, north of San Giuliano, and dated to the second half of the 4th century BC, is given the following reading:[491]

elnei : ramθa clθ śuθiθ

sacniśa θui huts teta

avlesi velus θansinas

ati θuta[492]

According to Alessandro Morandi, the inscription informs us that this *Ramθa* held a title called *ati θuta*, meaning "mother priestess".[493] Since the *Θansina* were a very prominent family at San Giuliano between the 4th and 3rd centuries BC, it would not be too unlikely that members of the *gens Elna* were also to be found at the upper level of society.[494] The only other plausible attestation of the *gens* is the incomplete text [---]*nie eln*[---], inscribed on an impasto bowl from Sasso di Furbara, in the vicinity of Caere.[495]

VEΘNA

Veθnei Ramθa, from Norchia, a woman who died at the venerable age of 66 years, is the only attested member of this *gens* in the Biedano region. She was buried in a sarcophagus with a recumbent figure on the lid, dated to the late 3rd–mid-2nd centuries BC.[496] Unfortunately the sarcophagus is now lost.[497] However, even if the esteemed *Ramθa* represents the only attestation of the *gens* in this area, it seems to have been quite widespread in northern Etruria, albeit with a slightly different spelling, as *Vetna/Vetni*. With the spelling *Veθna* it only occurs once, as a *metronymicon*, at Perugia.[498]

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[491] Facchetti 2002, 60; Wikander & Wikander 2003, 138, fig. 30. tav. X, 1; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 159–160.
[492] *CIE* 5881; *ET* AT 1.193; *TLE* 159.
[493] Morandi 1992, 67–68.
[494] According to Morandi Tarabella the *gens Θansina* is even to be considered the most important family of San Giuliano in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC: see Morandi Tarabella 2004, 251.
[495] Colonna 1972, 442, n. 52; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 160.
[496] *CIE* 5867; *ET* AT 1.164.
[497] Gargana 1936, 280–281, no. 5; Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 386, n. 62; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 165.
[498] At Chiusi and at Perugia; *CIE* 970, 1576, 1946, 2671, 3047, 4076, 4185, 4340, etc.

VEIE

The *Veie* family is attested by two inscriptions in total in south Etruria, one at Musarna and one at Norchia. The latter is documented as [---] *veies* on the façade of a semi-cube tomb, constructed between the end of the 4th and the first half of the 3rd centuries BC.[499] According to Morandi Tarabella the individual is to be considered the constructor of the tomb.[500] The inscription from Musarna is to be found on a funerary nenfro *cippus*, dated to the 3rd–2nd centuries BC.[501] The *nomen Veie* is considered a theophoric *gentilicium*, based on the goddess *Vei*, possibly a name for the mother earth, *Cel*.[502]

VELISINA

The *gens Velisina* is to be considered one of the most influential and important families in the town of Norchia in the 3rd–2nd centuries BC. Their family tomb, which records the names of five, or possibly six, individuals, does not appear to have been overwhelmingly rich, but the exterior in a semi-cube form, the sarcophagi, unfortunately purloined by grave robbers, as well as the very long tenure as *zilaθ*, equivalent of Latin praetor, by one of the members of the *gens*, attest to the high social standing the family enjoyed in Norchia in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. Of these individuals, two, *Vel Velisinas* and *Velθur Velisinas*, are sons of a *Cae*, either one, or two different individuals, otherwise not documented. *Vel* is buried in a quite modest sarcophagus dated to the first quarter of the 3rd century BC and *Velθur* is interred in a sarcophagus made of red tuff, dated to the second half of the 3rd century BC.[503] According to Morandi Tarabella they are to be considered brothers, while Colonna has *Velθur* as the grandson of *Vel*.[504] In my opinion, grandson seems the more likely if one is to accept the dating of the two sarcophagi. The remaining two individuals present in this tomb are *Larz*, who shows the unusual genitive form *larizl*; the *praenomen's* nominative form is, according to Colonna *Larz*, attested at Spina. The other individual is the above-mentioned *zilaθ*, a second *Vel Velisinas*.[505] The latter seems to have held a particularly high position since he was, according to his epitaph, either *zilaθ* at the age of 27, or 27 times, that is for 27 consecutive years. Colonna argues that the latter

[499] *CIE* 5861; *REE* 49:64; Colonna 1981, 279, no. 64; *ET* AT 1.158.
[500] Morandi Tarabella 2004, 168.
[501] *CIE* 5747; *ET* AT 1.136.
[502] Torelli 1977, 439; Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 408, n. 38; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 168.
[503] *ET* AT 1.181–182; *REE* 49:23–24.
[504] Colonna 1981, 254, nos. 23–24; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 176.
[505] *ET* AT 1.183; *REE* 49:25; Colonna 1981, 255, no. 25.

interpretation is more likely, since to invest the magistrature of *zilaθ* at the age of 27 is to be considered rather normal in the smaller south Etruscan communities, and thus not worth mentioning in the epitaph. He was interred in a grey tuff sarcophagus dated to the second half of the 2nd century BC.[506]

ec[a] : mutna : vel(us) velisin(as)

an · zilχn(u) cience[507]

The *Velisina* seem to have had connections with aristocratic groups in the area between Norchia and Tuscana. At Norchia, two women from the family have married a *Peina* and a *Śemnie* respectively.[508] At Tuscana the sarcophagus of a *Velisinas Arnθ* (*CIE* 5767; *TLE* 731; *ET* AT 1.72), attests to a probable second gentilitial tomb belonging to another branch of the family. At Tuscana there is also evidence for matrimonial bonds between the *Velisina* and the earlier-discussed *Ceises* family; in the *metronymicon* of *Larθi Ceisi*, daughter of a *Ceises Vel*, we find *Velisinas Ravnθu*, apparently the wife of *Ceises Vel*.[509] The *metronymicon Velisinal* (*CIE* 5411) found in the Tomba del Tifone at Tarquinii may suggest some connections to this city. *Velis*(*i*)*na* is a *gentilicium* of more recent creation, ultimately deriving from a possible *praenomen Velie*.[510]

VELNA

The *gens Velna* is documented in the Biedano region in one single funerary inscription, datable to the 4th–2nd centuries BC. The inscription records the tomb of one *Tite Velnas*.[511] The *gens* is also attested at Volsinii, albeit it is significantly more widespread in the north, at Chiusi, Perugia, Volterra, Cortona, and Felsina.[512]

[506] Colonna 1981, 256, no. 27; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 177.
[507] *ET* AT 1.180, 1.185; *REE* 49:22, 49:27.
[508] See further Ch. 4.4 below, s.v. *Peina* and *Semnie*, respectively.
[509] See Ch. 4.4 above, s.v. *Ceise*.
[510] Morandi Tarabella 2004, 176–178.
[511] *ET* AT 1.178; *REE* 41:117.
[512] *CIE* 747, 749, 2122, 3012, 3461; *CII Appendix*, 905; Rix 1963, 226; *NRIE* 112.

VEFARŚIIANA

Ramaθa Vefarśiianai.[513] A female individual, recognised in the inscriptions on a bowl, possibly in bucchero, a so-called speaking object, found in Blera, but now lost. The onomastic formula is not registered as one inscription, making the presence of two individuals possible, albeit more unplausible. The outside of the bowl was inscribed with the *gentilicium* given in the genitive case, *mi Vefarśiianaia*, while the *praenomen* was inscribed under the base, *mi Ramaθas*. The name is clearly Archaic in style, and a dating to the 7th–6th centuries BC seems the most plausible. The *gens* is not attested elsewhere, and it appears to have no known parallel, either to the Archaic or the neo-Etruscan *onomasticon*. It is a Caeretan feature, according to Morandi Tarabella, as is the case with all Archaic evidence in Blera.[514]

VEFUNA

The *gentilicium* is attested in an inscription recording a male individual, *mi v[e]nelus vefunas*.[515] It is a possessive inscription on a bucchero bowl which was found in Area F East on the so-called acropolis at San Giovenale. The *praenomen Venel* is common in Etruria as a whole, but the *gentilicium* seems to be a hapax. The cup could be dated to the late 7th–mid-6th centuries BC.[516]

ZILUSE

The *gens Ziluse* is represented by only two individuals. In a two-*cellae* chamber tomb at Norchia, dated between the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 2nd centuries BC, an inscription recalls the owner of the complex: *eca : Ziluses / Velus / Larθal*, this (is the tomb) of *Velus Ziluses,* (the son) of *Larθ*.[517] The name is otherwise unattested, although there could be a possible affinity to the *cognomen Zilu*, documented in the north Etruscan city of Felsina (modern Bologna) in the 5th century BC.[518]

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513 *CII* I, 384; *TLE* 163; *CIE* 10443; *ET* AT 2.10–11.
514 Morandi Tarabella 2004, 197–198.
515 *ET* AT 2.38; *REE* 69:15.
516 Karlsson 2006, 101–102, fig. 194, no. 253, pl. 12; Colonna 2003, 302–303; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 198; Tobin 2015, 90.
517 *ET* AT 1.176; *REE* 40:28; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 219.
518 *ET* Fe 1.2; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 219.

ZIXANA

An inscription found on the outside of a 7th- to 6th-century BC chamber tomb at San Giovenale could possibly attest the *nomen* of a *gens*, not attested elsewhere. The inscription reads [*m*]*i larusi ziχan*[---].[519] While *Larusi* is the pertinentive form of the *praenomen Lar* or *Laru*, common throughout all Etruria, the interpretation of the latter part is more uncertain.[520] Santella has interpreted it as a *nomen gentilicium*, *Ziχanas*, while Colonna argues that it should be interpreted as a form of the verb *ziχ-*, to write or inscribe.[521] The complete lack of any attestations of the name elsewhere would possibly favour the interpretation of Colonna.

HAVASIANN(A)

Velelia Havasiann(*a*)*s*, Blera, late 7th century BC, 630 BC.[522] Female individual. An inscription on a calyx/goblet from an unspecified context in the centre of Blera. It reads *mi velelias havasiann*(*a*)*s*. The *gentilicium* is a hapax.[523]

HUSICINA

Vene[*l*] *Husicinas*, 6th century BC. Male individual, noted in an inscription of possession on an oinochoe in bucchero, which according to Colonna is said to have been found at Norchia, later circulated on the Swiss market. However, the definitive origin of the oinochoe cannot be asserted. The *gens* is not attested elsewhere but according to Colonna it could be connected to *Huzcna*, a notable *gens* from Tarquinii, which in turn maybe is to be identified with the archaic *Huzecena* of Caere.[524]

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[519] *ET* AT 3.5; *REE* 59:20.
[520] Tobin 2015, 91, 131.
[521] Santella 1993; 1996; Colonna 2003, 303.
[522] *CIE* 10441; *ET* AT 2.1; *REE* 46:138.
[523] Cristofani 1978, 378, no. 138; De Simone 1991, 191–192; Naso 1993, 305, no. 31; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 223.
[524] Colonna 1980, 170–171, n. 45; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 240–241, 247.

HUŚUNA

Avile Huśunas, Blera, late 6th century BC.[525] Inscription of possession under the foot of a bucchero goblet of uncertain provenance, but found in 1976 in the vicinity of Blera, according to its then owner. The *gentilicium* is documented as *Huśanas* on a bucchero bowl from Tolfa, dated by Marchesini to 520–480 BC. It probably has common origins with the Campanian *nomen Husinie* and the Oscan *Húsidiis*.[526]

ΘANSINA

Judging by the monumental nature of their rock-cut façade tombs, which dominate a large area of the necropolis at Greppo Cenale, San Giuliano, the presence of impressive stone sarcophagi, of which one in marble deriving from the Greek islands, as well as their apparent connections to many towns in Etruria, the *gens Θansina* is surely to be considered one of the most, if not the most, important families of San Giuliano in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. Three tombs at San Giuliano have been ascribed to the family, all located at Greppo Cenale, where the final phase of the necropolis is to be found. On the right side of the entrance of one of the tombs we find an inscription in large letters: *ta śuθi avles θansinas*, "this (is) the tomb of *Avle Θansinas*".[527] Avle is the son of *Elnei Ramθa* and *Vel Θansinas*, as attested by the epitaph of *Elnei Ramθa*.[528] To *Vel Θansinas*, the husband and father, belongs a nenfro sarcophagus in the same sepulchre.[529] The sepulchres have been dated to the middle/second half of the 4th century BC. The connection with the *gens Elna* represents the only documented bond to another *gens* at San Giuliano, but testimonies from other places record the presence of members of the family at Volsinii, Chiusi, Bolsena, Asciano, and Chiusi-Poggio al Moro. The *gentilicium* derives from the *praenomen Θansi*, attested in the later period as a name of some freedmen and as a "*Bürgerpraenomen*".[530]

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[525] *CIE* 10442; *ET* AT 2.9; *REE* 46:109.
[526] Roncalli 1978, 356–358; Marchesini 1997, 61, 142, 152; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 247.
[527] *NRIE* 753; *CIE* 5880; *TLE* 158; *ET* AT 1.192.
[528] See also Ch. 4.4. above, s.v. *Elna.*
[529] *CIE* 5882; *ET* AT 1.194.
[530] *ET* Cl 1.491, 882, 883, 1.1522, 1768; Gargana 1931, 350–357; Herbig 1952, no. 90; cf. De Simone 1970, 230, 350; Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 379–380; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 250–253.

MANΘUREIE

The *gens Manθureie* is known from a dedicatory inscription on a *dolium* found at the San Simone locality, San Giuliano, dated to 540–530 BC.[531] The inscription reads [*min*]*i turuce larθ manθureie*, meaning "*Larθ Manθureie* dedicated (m)e".[532] The *gentilicium* is not attested elsewhere in Etruria, but has been connected by De Simone to the Etruscan name of the city at San Giuliano, as first suggested by Gargana to have been *Manθura*, thence *Manturanum* in Latin.[533]

MENCNA

In the Biedano region the *gens Mencna* is represented by one male person, *Mencnas* (*Mencars*) *Arnθ*, proprietor of a nenfro sarcophagus of uncertain origin, dated to the 3rd century BC.[534] Morandi Tarabella connects it with Axia. The inscription in question is read *mencars* by Torelli, and as *mencnas* by Rix. However, such variations are not uncommon, and do not necessarily make the connection uncertain (cf. *CIE* 5822: *alecans* for *aleθnas*). The *gentilicium Mencna* appears to be limited to Tarquinii, where the other known inscription is to be found (*CIE* 5590; *ET* Ta 1.239), and to Axia, if one accepts the amendment of Rix.[535]

NEVTNA

The *gens* is documented by only two inscriptions. There is one testimony at Tuscana, and one at Norchia: a *Ramθa Nevtni*, a woman attested in a *metronymicon* on the sarcophagus of her son, *Arnθ Xurcles*.[536] The *gens Nevtna* seems to have been a quite prominent family in the Tarquinian inland from the second half of the 4th to the first half of the 3rd centuries BC. They show marital bonds with the *Xurcle* of Norchia and

[531] Caruso 1986, 136; De Simone 1993; Cristofani 1991, 360, no. 77, tav. LXV; Marchesini 1997, 55, no. 109; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 298–299.
[532] *ET* AT 3.4; *REE* 56:77.
[533] De Simone 1993, 198; Gargana 1931, 312–315. For a more thorough discussion of the Etruscan name of San Giuliano, see Ch. 2.2.5 above.
[534] *CIE* 5886; *ET* AT 1.202.
[535] Torelli 1963, 227; Rix 1991; *ET* AT 1.202; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 311.
[536] *CIE* 5874; *CII* 2070; *TLE* 165; *ET* AT 1.171. See further Ch. 4.4. below, s.v. *Xurcle.*

seem to have been well established within the gentilitial circuit in the Norchia-Tuscania(-Musarna) area.[537]

NINU

In the Le Pozza locality, *c*. 2.5 km north-east of San Giovenale, is a monumental inscription on a carved side wall which was part of an ancient road system. The letters measure 15 to 25 cm in height. The inscription has been dated by Santella to the second half of the 6th century BC, based on the palaeographic characteristics of the letters. The inscription reads *mi larθ ninu turace*, interpreted as "I, *Larθ Ninu*, have given", and thus refers to some kind of dedication on behalf of this individual. While *Larθ* is a very common Etruscan masculine *praenomen*, the *gentilicium Ninu* is not attested elsewhere, although the form *ninieś* occurs in the north, and the two probably derive from the same root. According to Santella the inscription testifies to the public work of a person belonging to the leading class of society, who probably held a public office.[538]

PEINA

The *gens Peina* is represented by two individuals, a father and his daughter, through the epitaph of a girl who died at the age of five, *Peinei Θania*.[539] By the inscription we know that she was the daughter of a *Laris* and a woman from the *Velisina* family.[540] She was interred in a nenfro sarcophagus in a chamber tomb at Norchia, dated to the 2nd century BC. Furthermore, there is a testimony from Tarquinii, the inscription on a *cippus* of a 63-year-old woman named *Peinei Ravnθu*, dated to the 3rd century.[541] The *gentilicium Peina* is connected to the Archaic Volsinian *nomen Paienaies*; the Latin equivalent is *Paenius*.[542] It is a gentilitial patronymic derived from *Paie*, an individual name already attested at Caere in the 5th century BC.[543]

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[537] *CIE* 5718, 5874; *ET* AT 1.30, 1.171; *TLE* 165, 198; Wikander & Wikander 2003, 75, fig. 17; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 330–331.
[538] Santella 2012, 253–255; 2019, 19–20; *REE* 75:70.
[539] *CIE* 5868; *ET* AT 1.165.
[540] See Ch. 4.4 above, s.v. *Velisina*.
[541] *CIE* 5591; *ET* Ta 1.240.
[542] Colonna 1967a, 526–527.
[543] Colonna 1978b, 349, no. 101; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 362.

SAΘRNA

On the façade of a semi-cube tomb with *sottofacciata* at Norchia, PA sector, dated to the late 4th–3rd centuries BC,[544] there is a funerary inscription recording two individuals: *Velθur* and *Aule*. The first part of the inscription reads, according to Colonna, *eca : śuθi velθurus sac*(or *θ*)[*n*]*as*.[545] The second part contains the *praenomen Aule*, and probably also a different *nomen gentilicium*, executed at a later stage, which has subsequently been erased. According to Colonna's interpretation this would suggest that the tomb had belonged in turn to three different *gentes*. Originally the sepulchre would have been constructed for the *Velθur Sacnas* in the first part of the epitaph. In the second phase, the name *Aule* was added, along with a new *nomen gentilicium*, while the complete name of the original family was respected and kept. In a third phase, when the tomb belonged to yet another family, the *nomen gentilicium* of the second family was erased. The reading of the *nomen gentilicium* in the original inscription is very uncertain, due to its state of preservation. Morandi Tarabella has recorded it as *saθrna*, Colonna favours the reading *sacnas*, connecting the name to the *Saternas* or *Sasunas* of Volsinii,[546] attested in the 6th century BC, while Rix prefers *cacnies*, connecting it to the Tarquinian *gens Cacnie*, and active there in the 3rd century BC.[547]

SEMNIE

Śemnies Laris shared a burial together with his wife *Velisinei Θana*.[548] The inscription derives from a *cippus* found in the *dromos* of a chamber tomb at Norchia, dated to the late 4th–3rd centuries BC.[549] The *gens Semnie* seems to have been quite elevated, as is confirmed by the connections to the *gens Velisina* and also by its presence at Tarquinii.[550] Furthermore the *gentilicium* is attested in north Etruria, at Castellina in Chianti and at Chiusi.[551]

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[544] Tomb PA 3.
[545] *CIE* 5862; *ET* AT 1.159; *TLE* 164.
[546] *CIE* 4984.
[547] Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 167–169; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 99, 441.
[548] See Ch. 4.4 above, s.v. *Velisina*.
[549] *REE* 49:22; *ET* AT 1.180; Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, Tomb PA 19.
[550] *CIE* 5485; *ET* Ta 1.173.
[551] *CIE* 279–283; 591.

SENATA

The *gens Senata* is only attested by one inscription in the *ager Tarquiniensis*. On a *kylix* found in the vicinities of the *dromoi* of Tombs PA 4 and PA 5 at Norchia, an inscription reading *Arnθial Senatas* can be seen.[552] It is an inscription of possession, testified by the genitive-ending *–ial*, dated to the 3rd century BC.[553] However the reading *Senatas* is uncertain: Rix interprets the penultimate letter as an *e*, thus *Senates*. The *gentilicium* is derived from a name of ethnic origin, *Senate*, widespread at Chiusi and Perugia.[554]

SETUME

At Axia, the *gens Setume* is represented by two individuals, *Setumi Ramθa*, the daughter of *Śeθre*, the second individual.[555] The inscription was found on a *cippus* near two tombs (Tomb nos. 38 and 39), together with numerous other *cippi* without inscriptions. The inscription has been dated to the 3rd century BC. Colonna gives the name as *setuini* while Morandi Tarabella gives it as *setumi*.[556] Furthermore it is known through the inscription of one individual at Tarquinii, dated to the 3rd–1st centuries BC.[557] The *gentilicium Setume* is a "*Vornamegentile*" and is derived from an analogous *praenomen* of Latino-Italic origin, *Septimus*, already attested in 580/570 BC.[558] The name is also represented in northern Etruria, at Chiusi, Perugia, and Monte Corneo.[559]

SVEITU

The *gentilicium* is documented in several localities in south Etruria, at Caere, Tarquinii, Volsinii, and Vulci, all datable to the Late Etruscan period. An inscription on a *cippus* in the form of a bust without a head, kept in the Museo Gregoriano Etrusco in the Vatican, bears the inscription *Sveitui Larθ*[*i*].[560] Outside south Etruria, the *gentilicium* has also been attested at Volterra, Populonia, Chiusi, Asciano, Montepulciano, and

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552 *CIE* 10431; *ET* AT 2.28.
553 Colonna 1972, 416, no. 22; Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 285, no. 36; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 458.
554 Rix 1963, 233.
555 *CIE* 5854; *ET* AT 1.144.
556 Colonna 1968, 220; Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 230, tavv. 402, 409; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 463.
557 *CIE* 5515; *ET* Ta 1.99.
558 Colonna & De Simone 1985; Morandi 1999.
559 *CIE* 1245, 1884, 3741, 4012, 4080.
560 *CIE* 5893; *ET* AT 1.205; *REE* 49:65.

Spina. There is no documented Archaic evidence for the *gens*, nor are there any records of liaisions with other *gentes*. The provenance of the *cippus* is unknown, but the style is similar to *cippi* found at Norchia, and according to Colonna its origin is plausibly to be looked for in this area.[561]

SMURINA

The *gens Smurina* is together with *Xurχle* and *Tetatru* one of the most prominent families of Norchia in the late 4th and 3rd centuries BC. The *Smurina* were proprietors of a large funerary complex in a section of the necropolis designated Pile B by Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna.[562] The *gens* is represented by five individuals, reconstructed through the epitaphs on the sarcophagi found in two chamber tombs, apparently property of the family.[563] Judging by the two tombs, two branches of the family could possibly be reconstructed. From the larger tomb it is possible to deduce three persons, a grandfather, a father, and a son. The father, *Arnθ Smurinas*, appears to have held the title of *zilaθ*, probably in the first half of the 3rd century BC. *Arnθ Smurinas*' father, *Velθur*, is considered by Colonna the one who constructed the tomb and whose sarcophagus is dated to the end of the 4th century BC. *Arnθ Smurinas* is the father of *Velθuriu Smurinas*, where the ending in *–iu* is a diminutive; *Velθuriu* died very young, at the age of eight. The sarcophagus of *Arnθ Smurinas* is dated to the middle of the 3rd century BC while that of *Velθuriu* is dated to the second quarter of the 3rd century.[564]

In the smaller tomb, situated some seven metres from the larger one, three persons are attested. One woman, *Θanχvil Aleθnei*, of the *gens Aleθna* of Musarna, wife of another *Velθur Smurinas* and mother of a second woman, *Ramθa Smurinei*, who is the person buried in the tomb. She died at a very young age, judging by the small dimensions of her nenfro sarcophagus. The sepulchre cannot be dated more precisely than to the 3rd century BC.[565] The *patronymicon* of *Ramθa Smurinei* is identical to that of the earlier mentioned *zilaθ*, *Arnθ Smurinas* in the major tomb. It is possible that the

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[561] Colonna 1981, 280–281, no. 65; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 464–466.

[562] Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 38, 47.

[563] The larger of the two tombs, nos. 27 and 28 according to the 1911 excavations by Cassani and Balestra, contained twelve sarcophagi at the time of the excavations, unfortunately at least two of them, that of *Arnθ Smurinas*, and that of his son *Velθuriu*, are now lost. See Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, tavv. CCCCXXI, CCCCXXII, 1.

[564] *CIE* 5870–5871; *ET* AT 1.167–168; Herbig 1952, nos. 240–244; Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 383–384, nn. 47, 51; Wikander & Wikander 2003, 133–134; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 468.

[565] *CIE* 5873; *ET* AT 1.170; Morandi 1994, tav. XXV, 2.

two were siblings, but *Ramθa's* supposed young age and the fact that she was interred in another tomb makes it unlikely, rather indicating a different branch of the *gens*.[566]

SPURI(A)NA / SPURIENA

The *gens Spurina*, one of the oldest and most important families of Tarquinii, is represented at Blera by the epitaph of *Marce Spurinas*, inscribed on a nenfro sarcophagus, unfortunately now lost, which was found in a chamber tomb in the Pariano/S. Barbara locality, illegally excavated by tomb robbers in 1969.[567] The tomb could be dated to the 5th–4th centuries BC, but according to Colonna, the sarcophagus of *Marce Spurinas* is considerably later, dating it to the 4th–3rd centuries BC. This sepulchre marks the first inscription on a sarcophagus found at Blera and one of the few inscriptions from this town.[568] Another possible attestation derives from a now lost inscription on a pottery fragment found in the Tomba Ciarlanti at San Giuliano, and dated to the 5th century BC.[569] The inscription reads *sp*[---]*s*, interpreted as *spurinas* by Maristella Pandolfini Angeletti. However, given the high uncertainty of the reading it has not been included here. The epitaph of *Marce Spurinas*, which dates to the 3rd century BC, attests to the ties, on epigraphic and onomastic levels, that Blera had with Tarquinii, and the presence of members of the *gens Spurina* at Blera in the late 4th and early 3rd centuries BC, during the period of wars with Rome.[570]

At Tarquinii the *gens* is very well documented and it seems to have been already prosperous in a wider region in Archaic times, as documented by attestations on pottery from Vulci and possibly San Giuliano. There are also inscriptions of funerary type at Tuscana, Volsinii, and Rome. The ancestral home of the *gens* is however clearly to be looked for at Tarquinii where the majority of the evidence is to be found; it is also at Tarquinii where the *gens* seems to have been active for the longest period, with a time span from the 6th century BC to the 1st century AD. Members of the family gained recognition even in Rome where some of its members held political and military positions. One of these "Roman" *Spurinas* is T. Vestricius Spurinna, who *inter alia* was *legatus* under the short-termed emperor M. Salvius Otho (AD 69), consul under Vespasian, and governor of *Germania Inferior* and again consul in AD 98 under Domitian. Vestricius Spurinna is also the one who, according to Torelli, possibly erected the *elogia* of members of the family, to celebrate the deeds of some of his

[566] Morandi Tarabella 2004, 468–469.
[567] See Ch. 2.2.1 above.
[568] *ET* AT 1.190; *REE* 39:9, 40:77.
[569] *ET* AT 2.20; *CIE* 10449.
[570] Colonna 1971, 338–339; 1972, 462, no. 77; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 478–479.

ancestors. The *elogia* were found close to the Ara della Regina, the grand temple at Tarquinii.[571] Furthermore the *haruspex* who warned Caesar of the Ides of March is identified as a Spurinna by Suetonius.[572]

The *gens Spurina* is known from the late 6th century BC, but the origins of the name are to be looked for in a more distant past. The base of the name is *spur-,* which is very ancient and also used in productive ways: for example, it is used to form the word *spura*, the Etruscan equivalent to Latin *civitas*.[573] From the middle of the 7th century the *praenomina Spurie* and *Spuriaza* are attested at Caere, as well as *Spuriiaza* at Tarquinii. From the late 6th century *Spurie* is also documented at Volsinii, at the necropolis of Crocifisso del Tufo in Orvieto, and in the same necropolis we also find *Spuriena*, used as a *nomen gentilicium*.[574] *Spurie* is also generally assumed to be the origin of the Roman *praenomen* Spurius.[575]

TETATRU

A funerary inscription from Norchia, of a male person on a sarcophagus in nenfro, lost since the Second World War, attests to the only two known individuals of the *gens Tetatru*, *Tetatrus Laris*, son of *Laris*. The epitaph shows part of a *cursus honorum* attesting that the deceased had held the office of *marunuχ*.[576] It is however impossible to determine if the functions as *maru* were carried out in the home community of Norchia or in the "capital" city of Tarquinii. The *gentilicium Tetatru* is not attested outside Norchia which would suggest that the *gens* is to be considered local. It was active in the same period as the *Smurina* and *Xurχle*, the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC.[577] The *gentilicium Tetatru* is a later formation, derived from the masculine *praenomen Teta* which is broadly documented as a "*Vornamegentile*" in northern Etruria.[578]

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[571] *RE* VIII, A–2, c. 1791; *PIR* III, 409, no. 308; Torelli 1975, 97; 2019; Zevi 1979, 190, n. 25; Syme 1991; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 481. However, Torelli later reconsidered this, stating that for chronological reasons, the erection of the *elogia* should perhaps be attributed to Vestricius' father: see Torelli 2019, 98. See also Ch. 5.4 below.

[572] Suet. *Div. Iul.* 81; Plut. *Caes*. 63.3.

[573] Colonna 1988, 17; 1991, 231–232; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 486.

[574] *TLE* 90a–d, 112, 941, 482; *CIE* 4950, 5429; *ET* Ta 1.1; *ET* Cr 3.15; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 486–487. On the *praenomen Spurie*, see Devoto 1929, 264; Watmough 1997, 29–30.

[575] Salomies 1987, 50–52, with references.

[576] *CIE* 5872; *ET* AT 1.169; cf. Maggiani 1996, 112, 135, no. 47.

[577] Herbig 1952, no. 189; Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 408; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 534.

[578] *CIE* 1236, 1553, 1556, 1560, 2820, 4705.

TETNIE

The *gens Tetnie* was undoubtedly an important family in south Etruria in the 4th to 2nd centuries BC with several attestations at Vulci, and there is also a testimony from Caere. In the Biedano region the *gens* is represented by two inscriptions, of which one at Axia reads, *eca śuθi neśl Te*[*tnie* ---], "This (is) the tomb of the *gens Tetnie*". It is not possible to connect this to a specific gender since no *praenomen* is recorded, even if Morandi Tarabella suggests that the inscription likely refers to a male individual.[579] The inscription derives from a semi-cube tomb with *sottofacciata*, dated by Colonna Di Paolo and Colonna to the first half of the 3rd century BC.[580] According to Morandi Tarabella the inscription probably denotes the family owning the monument; it was to be found on the cornice on the exterior, but has now completely vanished. Morandi Tarabella attributes the entire complex to the *Tetnie* family.[581] The other inscription derives from Blera, where an originally lengthy painted inscription located in a hypogeum close to the Grotta Penta reads the letters *tetn*[---], which can possibly be interpreted as part of the name *Tetnie*.[582] The same tomb, which is datable to the second half of the 4th century BC, has yielded an inscription recording a female individual, the *Ramθa Aniaś*, or *Anieś*, presented above.[583]

TRESELE

Two cube tombs were discovered by chance at Pian del Vescovo, Blera, in 1988. Close to the *dromos* of one of them, a bucchero bowl with an inscription was found. The bowl dates to the late 6th–early 5th centuries BC. The inscription, which is possessive in type, records the name of a female individual. It reads: *mi ramaθas treseles* (I (am) of *Ramaθa Tresele*).[584] The feminine *praenomen Ramaθa*, the Archaic variant of *Ramθa*, is a very common name widespread in the region in more recent periods, while the *gentilicium Tresele* is not attested elsewhere.[585] Interestingly, the feminine *praenomen*, given in the genitive case, is followed by *Treseles*, the masculine form given in the genitive. According to Cristofani, the preservation of the *gentilicium* in its masculine form is to be considered a Caeretan phenomenon, not uncommon in the 6th and 5th

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579 *CIE* 5849; *ET* AT 1.140; *CII* 2089; *TLE* 167.
580 Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 104, tav. CCCC.
581 Wikander & Wikander 2003, 130, fig. 29; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 536.
582 *ET* AT 1.226; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 536–539.
583 See Ch. 4.4 above, s.v. *Anie*.
584 *ET* AT 2.43; *REE* 58:21.
585 Ricciardi 1992a, 291.

centuries BC.[586] Thus it can be considered an indicium of the Caeretan influence in Blera in the Archaic period.

UNA

The only attestation of the *gens Una* in the Biedano region derives from the Borgo at San Giovenale. An inscription reading *mi una*[*s*] was found on a fragment from a bucchero vase, dated to the 6th century BC.[587] Outside the Biedano region *Una* is attested as a *gentilicium* at Volsinii, Vulci, and Perugia, but it probably derives from a personal name of Faliscan origin.[588] According to Colonna it is to be regarded as a *gentilicium* also here; the sole use of a *gentilicium* in possessive inscriptions is not uncommon at San Giovenale (cf. *Urqena* and *Utre* below).[589]

URINATE/SALVIE

The *gens Urinate* is represented in the Biedano region by one male individual, *V*(*el*?) *Urinates Salvies*,[590] where *Salvies* is probably used as a *cognomen*, but *patronymicon* could also be possible. His epitaph was found at Axia in a false cube tomb with a chamber of large dimensions, dated to the first half of the 3rd century BC by Colonna Di Paolo and Colonna. The *praenomen* as abbreviated in *V* and hypothesised as *Vel*, is only found in the interpretation of Colonna; Danielsson as well as Herbig, Cristofani (*CIE* 5848), and Rix (*ET* AT 1.139) have all not noticed it. However, judging by the drawing of the inscription in Colonna di Paolo & Colonna 1970, an initial *V* is not completely improbable.[591] The *gentilicium Urinates* belongs to the most important Etruscan *gens* in Bomarzo, but it is documented in several places in the territories of Tarquinii and Volsinii. At Bomarzo the *gens* seems to have prospered between the 4th and the 2nd centuries BC, and there are indicia for its presence as far as the 2nd century AD, with the attestation of a freedman, *C. Urinatius C. l. Dama*. The *gentilicium* is also attested outside south Etruria, at Volaterrae (*ET* Vt 1.159–161), and at Clusium (e.g. *ET* Cl 1.35, 1.37–41). The most ancient attestation was made during excavations in 1981–

[586] *REE* 1988, 19.
[587] *CIE* 10454; *ET* AT 2.14; *REE* 47:27.
[588] Pohl & Colonna 1979, 317; Colonna 1997, 65.
[589] Pohl & Colonna 1979, 317; Colonna 1997, 65; Colonna & Backe-Forsberg 1999, 64–65; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 568; cf. Tobin 2015, 92.
[590] *CIE* 5848; *ET* AT 1.139.
[591] Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 36, 102–103; tav. CCCC; Wikander & Wikander 2003, 130–131, fig. 29; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 433–434, 570–572.

1982 at Capua, when a fragment of a *kantharos* in *bucchero pesante* was found, dated to 520–470 BC. It carries the possessive inscription *mi manurces urinates*.[592] Etymologically *Urinate* likely derives from an ethnic which allude to a place name, the city of **Urina*, which has been identified both with Campanian Nola, and the Roman *colonia* of Saturnia in Etruria.[593] The above-mentioned inscription found at Capua would suggest that Nola is the more likely candidate.

The *gens Salvie/Zalvie* was important in the Viterbese region, with attestations at Tuscania, Bomarzo, Sorrina, and Ferentium, where it is known from the 7th century BC. However, the *gens* seems to have flourished here in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, when Ferentium became a Roman *municipium*.[594] The *gentilicium* was later Latinised as *Salvius*, and this family prospered in Rome during the early Imperial period. The most famous member is surely the short-termed emperor Otho, emperor in the turbulent year of AD 69.[595] The *gentilicium Salvius* has also been documented in the Imperial period in the vicinities of Viterbo.[596] Furthermore, Cristofani records six individuals who carry the Latin *cognomen Salvius*, all from Caere (*CIE* 6035, 6128, 6138, 6177, 6241, 6250). Interestingly, these individuals are all freedmen, and in the Late Republic a freedman's *cognomen* was constituted by the person's earlier slave name, i.e. a first name. This would possibly strengthen the hypothesis of *Salvies* here used as a *patronymicon*. On the other hand, if *Salvies* is here used as a *cognomen*, it may indicate connections between the *Urinate* and the *Salvie/Zalvie*.

URQENA

The *gentilicium* is attested in a graffito on a bucchero cup reading *mi urqenas*, found close to the bridge complex at Fosso Pietrisco, in the Casale Vignale locality at San Giovenale.[597] The inscription lacks a *praenomen*; the sole use of the *nomen gentilicium* has been favoured, a feature common to San Giovenale. The name could originally have formed from the patronymic of a supposed *praenomen* **Urce*. According to Colonna it could also be connected to the Caeretan family Orgolnius, which he suggests

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[592] *CIE* 8636; *REE* 52:30; *ET* Cm 2.24; Allegro 1986, 298, no. 30; Cristofani 1986b, 308–309; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 572.

[593] Berrendonner & Munzi 1998, 647–648; Vell. Pat. 1.7.2 (Nola); Pliny 3.52 (*Saturnini (…) antea aurini vocabantur*).

[594] Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1970, 36, 102, 252–253, no. 20; tavv. CXXXVI-CXLIX, CCCC; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 433–434, 571–572.

[595] On Otho see e.g. *Tacitus, Historiae* 2.50; Suet, *Otho* 1.1. On the history of the *Salvii*, see Degrassi 1961–1962, esp. 75–77; Torelli 1969, 311–312.

[596] *CIL* XI, 3033.

[597] *ET* AT 2.39.

could be a Latinised form of **Urcelnas / *Urclnas*), and linguistically to the Etruscan toponym *Orcla* (Norchia). The cup is dated to the first half of the 6th century BC.[598]

UTRE

Inscription on two bucchero fragments, reading *mi utres*, possibly from a kantharos from a tomb at the Porzarago necropolis at San Giovenale. The inscription would be referred to the proprietor of the tumulus in which the tomb is situated, but the *nomen gentilicium* has no comparisons elsewhere.[599] The tomb could be dated to the 7th–6th centuries BC.[600]

XURCLE

The *gens Xurcle* is represented by two male persons buried in the monumental Tomba Lattanzi at Norchia,[601] most likely the gentilitial tomb of the family. The first person, *Arnθ Xurcles*, died at the venerable age of 75 and seems to have been rather prominent in the city during his lifetime. He was the son of *Ramθa Nevtni*, discussed above.[602] He was interred in a nenfro sarcophagus which has been dated to the first quarter of the 3rd century BC.[603] Noted by the epitaph, *Arnθ Xurcles* had been the holder of both the *zilc parχis* and the *marunuχ spurana cepen*.[604] As already mentioned earlier in this section, these offices are almost exclusive to the minor towns in the territory of Tarquinii.[605] *Parχis* in conjunction with *zilc*, corresponding to the Roman praetorship, is believed to imply that the holder of this office was responsible for the small colonies in the Tarquinian territory. The second office held by our *Arnθ Xurcles*, the *marunuχ cepen* corresponds to *aedilis* and *sacerdos*. As stated by Torelli, it is very rare that offices of civic government are seen in conjunction with such of religious character; but in Etruscan inscriptions, *cepen* is always found in conjunction with *marunuχ*.[606] The

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[598] Colonna 1997, 65; Pohl & Colonna 1979, 317; Colonna & Backe-Forsberg 1999, 64–65; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 572; Tobin 2015, 92.
[599] *CIE* 10467; *ET* AT 2.4; *REE* 40:29; Colonna 1972, 420; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 576–577.
[600] Tobin 2015, 180.
[601] See Ch. 2.2.2 above.
[602] See Ch. 4.4 above, s.v. *Nevtna*.
[603] Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 382–383.
[604] *CIE* 5874; *CII* 2070; *TLE* 165; *ET* AT 1.171.
[605] See Ch. 4.4 above, s.v. *Cracie*.
[606] Torelli 2000a, 202.

adjective *spurana* is interpreted as meaning that he held the function in the *spura* of Tarquinii.[607]

Larθ Xurχles is the other person attested in the tomb. He died at a relatively young age, at the age of 18. From his epitaph we understand that he was the son of *Arnθ Xurcles*, and of *Φanχvil Craci*.[608] He has been interred in a nenfro sarcophagus which has been dated to 320/310 BC.[609] Judging by the monumental style of their family tomb, the fine artistry of the sarcophagi, the magistratures held by *Arnθ Xurcles* as well as the matrimonial bonds with the *gens Nevtna* and the *gens Cracie* of Tuscania, the *gens Xurcle* seems to have been of substantial standing at Norchia in the 4th–3rd centuries BC. According to Colonna the *gens* is probably of Faliscan origin; the name *Xurcle* would originally have derived from a Latino-Faliscan *cognomen*, *corculum*, also connected to the Faliscan town of Corchiano. According to Colonna, the progenitor of the family would have been a Faliscan who made his fortune at Norchia.[610]

As mentioned earlier, it is of essential interest to investigate if the epigraphic material can unveil information on which *gentes* were active in the region; with which families, and with which towns, they established networks through marriages, within the region, or outside it. Furthermore, it is also crucial to investigate which *gentes* were active during which periods, and if they are to be considered of local origin, or if they originated in the more politically influential leading cities in south Etruria, Tarquinii in particular. Additionally, it is necessary to inquire whatever further information the material can yield regarding civic and religious offices, and where such were held. In the following, the epigraphic material will be analysed.

Benelli stresses the importance to keep in mind the limited number of inscriptions that southern inland Etruria, the so-called *Etruria rupestre*, has yielded. The corpus is quite modest, but the inscriptions do mark a distinctive fracture between the two evolutionary phases noted in Etruscan epigraphy, between the Archaic phase and the more recent one, and according to Benelli this fracture is possibly stronger in this area than in any other.[611] The scripture does not follow the regularisations that took place in Caere and Volsinii, but rather follows the Tarquinian development. This is not surprising if we are to consider the area as being under Tarquinian political influence from the later 5th/early 4th centuries onwards. However, it does not necessarily mean

[607] Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 411; Maggiani 1996, 135, no. 48; Torelli 2000a, 201–202.
[608] *CIE* 5875; *TLE* 166; *ET* AT 1.172. See also Ch. 4.4 above, s.v. *Cracie*.
[609] Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 382–383.
[610] Herbig 1952, no. 3, 188; Colonna 1990b, 117–118; Agostiniani 1997, 11; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 584–587.
[611] Benelli 2014a, 84.

that the Biedano region was governed directly by Tarquinii, or that the local élite was made up of a major Tarquinian contingent. On the contrary, Benelli argues that the local ruling class would have been basically isolated and provincial, and that few *gentes* actually originated from the city of Tarquinii (although he mentions that the rate of unknown Tarquinian families is high). According to Benelli, the Biedano region must have been considered quite remote in the view of Tarquinii, who let the local ruling class continue to govern it.[612] This view stands in sharp contrast to the views of Stéphane Bourdin, who argues that the inscriptions from the Biedano region show the area as a satellite state to Tarquinii; that in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC there is a clear presence of Tarquinian aristocracy at Blera as well as at other sites that had declined in the 5th century, such as San Giuliano.[613]

[612] Benelli 2014a, 84–87.
[613] Bourdin 2012, 491–492.

Gentes	*Norchia*	*Axia*	*Blera*	*San Giuliano*	*San Giovenale*	*Total*
Avhircina	_	_	_	_	1	1
Avlna/Aulna (Avalnies)	_	_	1	_	_	1
Alśi	_	_	_	_	1	1
Arhus	_	_	_	1	_	1
Cleiina	_	_	1	_	_	1
Crepu	_	_	_	_	1	1
Cutna (Qutuna)	_	_	_	_	1	1
Vefarśiiana	_	_	1	_	_	1
Vefuna	_	_	_	_	1	1
Ziχana	_	_	_	_	1	1
Havasiann(a)	_	_	1	_	_	1
Husicina	1	_	_	_	_	1
Huśuna	_	_	1	_	_	1
Manϑureie	_	_	_	1	_	1
Ninu	_	_	_	_	1	1
Tresele	_	_	1	_	_	1
Una	_	_	_	_	1	1
Urqena	_	_	_	_	1	1
Utre	_	_	_	_	1	1
Total	1	0	6	2	10	19

Table 8. Attested individuals with ascribable gentilicia in the Biedano region, 7th to 5th centuries BC.

Gentes	*Norchia*	*Axia*	*Blera*	*San Giuliano*	*San Giovenale*	*Total*
Avlna/Aulna	1	_	_	_	_	1
Aleϑna	1	_	_	_	_	1
Ancna	1	_	_	_	_	1
Anie	_	_	1	_	_	1
Anutaie	1	_	_	_	_	1
Cae	1	1	_	_	_	2
Cavena	_	_	2	_	_	2
Ceise	_	1	_	_	_	1
Cracie	1	_	_	_	_	1
Elna	_	_	_	1	_	1
Veϑna	1	_	_	_	_	1
Veie	1	_	_	_	_	1
Velisina	7(8)	_	_	_	_	7(8)
Velna	1	_	_	_	_	1
Ziluse	2	_	_	_	_	2
Θansina	_	_	_	2	_	2
Mencna	_	1	_	_	_	1
Nevtna	1	_	_	_	_	1
Peina	2	_	_	_	_	2
Saϑrna	1	_	_	_	_	1
Semnie	1	_	_	_	_	1

Senata	1	_	_	_	_	1
Setume	_	2	_	_	_	2
Sveitu	1	_	_	_	_	1
Smurina	5	_	_	_	_	5
Spuri(a)na/ Spuriena	_	_	1	_	_	1
Tetatru	2	_	_	_	_	2
Tetnie	_	1	1	_	_	2
Urinate/ Salvie	_	1	_	_	_	1
Xurcle	2	_	_	_	_	2
Total	34(35)	7	5	3	0	48(49)

Table 9. Attested individuals with ascribable gentilicia in the Biedano region, 4th to 2nd centuries BC.

As already pointed out, what is important to keep in mind when interpreting the epigraphic material from the area is that we are in fact dealing with a very small number of inscriptions. That said, some interesting observations can still be made.

Of the inscriptions dated to the 7th–5th centuries BC,[614] the majority derive from the southern parts of the area of investigation, specifically from Blera and San Giovenale. The total number of attested individuals displaying a *nomen gentilicium* is 19, with six attested individuals from Blera, ten from San Giovenale,[615] one from Norchia, and none from Axia. Most interestingly, only two individuals are attested from San Giuliano, whose necropoleis point to a flourishing period in the 6th–5th centuries BC.

Furthermore, the Archaic inscriptions display a rather local character; only one name, *Una*, can surely be attested elsewhere, and six can possibly be connected to *gentes* attested in later periods, albeit not within the Biedano region. The names are only attested at one locality each, but this may be due to the scarcity of the material and should perhaps not be taken too conclusively. Interestingly, none of the *gentilicia*, with

[614] *Table* 8.

[615] If one accepts the interpretation of *ziχan*[---] as a *gentilicium*, see Ch. 4.4 above, s.v. *Ziχana*.

the possible exception of *Avalnies*, are attested in the Biedano region in the later periods.[616]

The epigraphic material from the later periods[617] is more abundant and enables a more profound analysis. What is immediately striking is that we see a quite different geographic distribution of the inscriptions. We can deduce from the survey here presented that the majority of the inscriptions dated between the 4th and 2nd centuries BC hail from Norchia in the northern parts of the Biedano region, with 34 attested individuals. From the same period there are seven attestations from Axia, five from Blera, three from San Giuliano, and none from San Giovenale. The total number of attested *gentes* is 30. A total of 20 *gentes* are attested at Norchia, six at Axia, four at Blera, and two at San Giuliano. Analogous to the situation in the Archaic period, the majority of the *gentes* are represented at one locality only, with only two exceptions in *Tetnie* (Blera and Axia) and *Cae* (Norchia and Axia). Of the attested *gentes*, only six can be considered exclusive to the Biedano region, and four of these hail from Norchia. A total of 15 *gentes* have also been attested in other parts of the *ager Tarquiniensis*. Of these, ten are attested at Tarquinii proper, the exception being *Ancna*, *Cracie*, *Veie*, *Velisina*, and *Nevtna*, of which four are attested also at Tuscana, and one at Musarna. In total six *gentes* attested in the Biedano region are also attested at Tuscana and two at Musarna. Additionally, it is interesting to observe that of the six *gentes* not attested elsewhere, two, *Xurcle* and *Smurina*, show marital bonds with *gentes* from Tuscana. Although Tuscana was also part of the territory of Tarquinii, it is situated so close to the towns of Axia and Norchia that a certain amount of connectivity between the families in the area would be considered probable in any case. Moreover, there are eleven *gentes* also attested at Volsinii and four at Vulci. In addition, eleven *gentilicia* are also attested in the northern parts of Etruria, predominantly at Chiusi and Perugia.

Whether the bulk of the leading families in the Biedano region from the 4th century BC onwards should be considered of Tarquinian origin, as proposed by Bourdin,[618] or if they are to be considered local, as proposed by Benelli,[619] is difficult to determine with absolute certainty. It is important to stress that the fact that the same *gentilicium* appears in different locations does not necessarily mean that we are dealing with people pertaining to the same *gens*, or who are related to each other. The same *gentilicium* could have been constructed independently from the same personal name at different locations, and it could have been borne by *clientes* of a large *gens*, or by freedmen. However, it is clear that the epigraphic material presents a predominantly new set of

[616] If one accepts the connection of this *gens* to the 4th- to 2nd-century BC Orclan *gens Aulna*: see Ch. 4.4 above, s.v. *Avlna/Aulna*.
[617] *Table* 9.
[618] Bourdin 2012, 491–492.
[619] Benelli 2014a, 86–87.

gentes making their entrance in the area in this period, and a large portion of these show connections with Tarquinii. None of the *gentes* attested in the 7th–5th centuries BC seem to have survived into the following period. Perhaps the pattern demonstrates indicia of a stronger Tarquinian presence in the area.

In the following Roman period, there is evidence for two *gentes* possibly having survived, the *Ancna* (*Ancharii*) and the *Anutaie* (*Anteii*). The Latin epigraphic material is scarce, so it is difficult to make any general interpretations based solely on this. There is also a possibility that more *gentes* survived than are discernible at first glance. A possible explanation to why so few Etruscan *gentes* are visible in the Latin inscriptions could be connected to how the *gentes* have Latinised their *gentilicia* upon receiving Roman citizenship. Apparently, there was no single, general procedure to follow, and the epigraphic material shows a remarkable ingenuity in how this was undertaken.

Bilingual funerary inscriptions provide glances into how the Etruscan *gentilicia* were Latinised.[620] In many cases, the Latin *gentilicium* seems to have been formed through a direct phonological transfer of the Etruscan *gentilicium*, e.g. *Mesi – Mesia* (*CIE* 4190), *Fapi – Fabius* (*CIE* 1290), *Senti – Sentia* (*CIE* 1060).[621] In cases when the Etruscan ending did not conform to Latin, a new ending in *–ius* was often adopted, e.g. *Scarpe – Scarpius* (*CIE* 3629), *Velimna – Volumnius* (*CIE* 3763). Other variants include new *gentilicia* beginning with the same initial letter as the old ones, but which are otherwise completely different, e.g. *Cupsnei – Coelia* (*CIE* 1729), *Velcśna – Vedi* (*CIE* 2106), or *gentilicia* which seem to resemble the old ones, as *Canzna – Caesius* (*CIE* 890) or *Arntni – Arrius* (*CIE* 1468-1469).[622] A weakening of the nasals has been suggested as explanation to this particular phenomenon, but according to Jorma Kaimio it is perhaps more plausible that Etruscan consonant clusters like these were simply too complicated to pronounce for a person speaking Latin as his first language.[623]

In yet other cases, the old *gentilicium* has been reused as a *cognomen*, and a completely new *gentilicium* has been invented. *Sex. Sertorius L.f. Sartages*, of a plausible Etruscan *gens* *Sartace serves as an example. Upon receiving Roman citizenship, the old *nomen gentilicium Sartace* has been slightly modified into *Sartages*, later a new *gentilicium*, *Sertorius*, has been invented, upon which the old *gentilicium* has been used as a *cognomen*.[624]

[620] For a more thorough discussion on the development of Etruscan names into Latin, I refer to Kaimio 1972.

[621] Some of these, as *Fapi*, have possibly Latin origins, which have influenced the ending of the Etruscan name, cf. Kaimio 1972, 90.

[622] Kaimio 1972, 91.

[623] Kaimio 1972, 91–93.

[624] *CIE* 1596, 1598, 2802; Kaimio 1972, 61, 93.

However, the absence of previously important *gentes* in the Roman period is a phenomenon characteristic of the entire *ager Tarquiniensis*, and could also be connected to the post-independent status of Tarquinii in the wake of the Roman takeover. As previously discussed, Caere on the other hand had developed friendly ties with Rome at an early stage, and probably already enjoyed the status of *civitas sine suffragio* in the 4th century BC. In comparison, the late-Republican Latin onomastics of Caere show a remarkable continuity with the preceding Etruscan ones. According to Torelli, this fact is important, since it demonstrates the solidity of property and of social structures in Caere, not interfered with by newcomers, external infiltrations, or land allotments, which are well attested at Tarquinii.[625]

In the next chapter we will try to comprehend what the investigated material really tells us of the political and cultural landscape and socio-economic structures in the Biedano region, and how these were affected, and developed, from the beginning of our time span in the early 5th century BC, to the very end of Etruscan independence, and the subsequent incorporation into the Roman world.

[625] Torelli 1975, 189–197; 1982, 278–279.

5 POLITICAL AND CULTURAL ACTORS—POWER RELATIONS

The Biedano region seems to have seen the competition between Romans, Tarquinienses, Faliscans, and others from the front row. As seen in Chapter 3, the settlement pattern, which has emerged from the study of the conducted field surveys, shows a development that somewhat diverges from some of the other studied territories in the vicinity, such as the northern *Suburbium Romanum*, the territory of Caere, and that of Tarquinii, while it resembles the situation at Veii. The number of rural settlements decreases in the 5th and 4th centuries but rises again in the Hellenistic period onwards, when we see a drastic increase of villas and farmsteads, while earlier aggregated settlements such as towns seem to dwindle. Monumental tombs reappear in the region in the 4th century, but contrary to the situation in previous centuries, the most notable examples are to be found in the north, in the towns of Norchia and Axia, which previously had been rather modest settlements. The epigraphic material has yielded information on the élite families of the Biedano region, their geographical distribution, public offices they held, their family connections and marriage bonds. Together with the re-emergent monumental tomb architecture, the epigraphic material points to a political and economic conversion in the region in the 4th century BC. In this chapter the results of the investigated material will be discussed.

5.1 Location of power in the Biedano region

From the early 4th century BC, the Biedano region constituted without doubt the heart of the south-eastern part of the Tarquinian territory. The two principal southern centres, Blera and San Giuliano, which had flourished in the Archaic period when the region was in the orbit of Caere, both seem to have been clearly structured, with

fortifications, and extensive necropoleis around the settlements. Beside these main settlements, and some interesting minor ones, is the presence of more modest rural settlements, as testified by ceramic fragments or of small groups of tombs.[626] From the processes described above, and other economic and political factors such as the Etruscan crisis of the 5th century BC, the subsequent decline of Caere, and the emergence of Tarquinii, follows the profound transformation which moves the political and economic power of the area northwards. Monumental rock-cut façade tombs in vast necropoleis surrounding the towns of Norchia and Axia emerge in the 4th century BC. Before this period there is nothing, or very little, suggesting the importance of these two towns. But from the 4th century these imposing necropoleis start to appear, and even if both Blera and San Giuliano display a similar tomb architecture, the most impressive examples are to be found in the two northern towns. The political and cultural pre-eminence of Norchia and Axia was to last for a period of approximately 300 years.

There are several indicia confirming this shift in power relations in the late 5th/early 4th centuries BC with the outcome that the location of power in the region moved from Blera to Norchia and Axia. That the southern parts of the area had been culturally orientated towards Caere in the Archaic period could partly explain the development. It is possible that the new élite that was installing itself in the region preferred the newly established centres of Norchia and Axia, as evidenced by the monumental necropoleis appearing here in the 4th century BC. Both towns are situated in close vicinity to other Tarquinian settlements, as Tuscana and Musarna, and seem to have had well-established contacts with each other. As discussed in Chapter 4.4, the epigraphic record indeed indicates rather substantial family connections between Norchia and Tuscana, and Musarna. In addition, the sheer number of inscriptions seems to indicate a shift in power relations in favour of Norchia and Axia, as the funerary record from the territory shows a disproportionately large number of inscriptions found here, especially at Norchia.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, a large part, around half, of the attested *gentes* in the region, in the 4th to 2nd centuries BC, show Tarquinian connections, implying that the Biedano region in this period was under strong influence from Tarquinii. However, the inscriptions also show the presence of local magistrates, which would either indicate the presence of a local town council or that representatives of the local élite held office in the capital city of Tarquinii. As stated in Chapter 4.3, the existence of political assemblies is suggested by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who mentions *ekklesia* and *tele* in the city of Tarquinii,[627] and it is plausible that these were mirrored

[626] Pulcinelli 2012, 81.
[627] Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 5.3.2.

by local councils in minor centres. As seen, the magistratures are sometimes followed by an appellative, like *spurana* or *parχis*, seemingly indicating a specific remit of the magistrature. At for example, Norchia, one *Arnθ Xurcles* had held the offices of *zilc parχis* and *marunuχ spurana cepen*. Considering that our *Arnθ Xurcles* lived to the venerable age of 75 years, and since his sarcophagus dates to the first quarter of the 3rd century BC, it is plausible that he held these offices on different occasions over a period of time spanning from the late 4th to the early 3rd centuries BC.[628] *Spurana* has been interpreted by Torelli, among others, as indicating an office held in the *spura* of Tarquinii,[629] and although there is the possibility that *spur*, in the meaning *civitas*, or "community", refers to the town of Norchia and its local assembly, a reference to the *polis* as a whole seems more likely. The meaning of *parχis* seems less clear, but it is plausible that it indicates responsibilities regarding the hinterland and the minor centres.[630] There is a somewhat similar example from another town in the vicinity, Musarna, where the epitaph of a person adhering to the influential *Aleθna* family, one *Arnθ Aleθnas*, states that he had been *zilaθ Tarχnalθi*, probably sometime in the mid-3rd century BC; the sarcophagus has been dated to the second quarter of that century.[631] The locative *Tarχnalθi* proves beyond doubt that the office was held in Tarquinii rather than in Musarna. Furthermore, it can be deduced from the epigraphic material that there was a high level of political connectivity between the northern towns and Tarquinii, which together with the monumental tomb architecture of the necropoleis, contributes to illustrate the prominence of Norchia and Axia in the region during the Hellenistic period.

However, our sources also suggest that this prominence only lasted until the late 2nd century BC, since the only town, or its inhabitants, in the territory mentioned by ancient authors, apart from the *castellum Axia* mentioned by Cicero, is Blera.[632] The mention by Pliny of the *Blerani*,[633] together with a type of funerary architecture, unique to the region, suggests the existence of some kind of communal, local, identity not only exclusive to the town of Blera and its immediate surroundings, but to a broader area; an identity which seems to have survived into the Roman period. Blera's status as a *municipium* from pre-Augustan times, as well as its later elevation to a diocese in late Antiquity, all suggest its influence over the neighbouring towns later in the history of the territory.

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[628] See Ch. 4.4 above, s.v. *Xurcle*.
[629] Colonna Di Paolo & Colonna 1978, 411; Maggiani 1996, 135, no. 48; Torelli 2000a, 201–202.
[630] Torelli 2000a, 202.
[631] *CIE* 5811; *TLE* 174; *ET* AT 1.100; Emiliozzi 1993, 120, no. 5; Wikander & Wikander 2003, 107; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 40–41, 468–469. See also Cha. 4.4 above, s.v. *Aleθna*.
[632] Cic. *Caecin.* 7.20.
[633] Pliny 3.52.

5.2 The countryside reorganised

As part of the 5th-century crisis following the Archaic period, the number of rural settlements decreases to the benefit of towns and villages. The progressive and ever-growing pressure exerted by the Tarquinian and Roman expansionism between the 4th and the 3rd centuries BC found south Etruria in a profound and complex reorganisational phase. The phenomenon appears generalised even if the social and territorial transformation varies from area to area.[634] As previously discussed in Chapter 4, the 4th century saw a profound reorganisation of the Tarquinian hinterland, with the establishment of new, or the resurgence of previously modest, urban settlements in the Tarquinian inland. In the Biedano region this is demonstrated by the emergence of Norchia and Axia.

The large coastal southern cities saw an extensive agricultural development after the crisis in the 5th century. This development, which logically brings with it a renewed interest in the vast internal regions which were sparsely populated following the crisis, as indicated by the surveys, is tied to the expansion of an aristocratic class whose members were proprietors of land, settling in the territory. According to Colonna, the tendency should be interpreted as a reconversion of the countryside to traditional ways of production, which restored the economic and political primacy of the aristocracy, perhaps earlier called into question.[635]

As shown by the epigraphic material, the 4th century saw the coming of a new aristocracy establishing itself in the Biedano region.[636] The new élite had developed from the influential upper class of the Archaic period, together with what had survived of the old aristocracy of the Orientalising period. In the 4th century BC this class became evermore powerful, tightening their grip and eventually developing into an elitist oligarchy which controlled the economic, political, and cultural life of the south Etruscan city-states.[637] They seem to have been particularly interested in the formation and revitalisation of the minor centres in the Tarquinian inland. The principal part of the new *gentes* have clear connections with Tarquinii, and what we see is likely the result of their expansionist ambitions; the establishment of the towns of Norchia and Axia is part of this development. Blera and San Giuliano are still clearly of great importance, and together these towns seem to have absorbed much of the rural population in the 5th and 4th centuries BC.

[634] Pulcinelli 2012, 95.
[635] Colonna 1990a, 19.
[636] Even if isolated façade tombs already testify to the presence of aristocratic *gentes* at the end of the 5th century BC: see Colonna 1990a, 19.
[637] Amann 2017c, 1101–1102.

Pulcinelli considers the inland centres the very backbone of the organisation of the territories of the larger southern cities in the 4th century BC.[638] As shown in Chapter 4.4, the funerary record enables us to reconstruct a certain degree of administrative autonomy for the minor centres, as indicated by the presence of local magistrates. From the data at our disposal, the territory of Tarquinii is characterised by diversity, with different settlement and environmental characters. Population started to rise in the area and the region seems to have been subject to detailed control by central authorities or by local administrations. According to Pulcinelli it is possible to discern traces of this control in the homogeneity of construction techniques, and in project details of fortification works. An example of this would be the presence of small settlements with specific military function alongside the larger centres, and real *castella* systematically positioned to protect the borders of the territory.[639] However, the most telling Tarquinian example of this strategy, Musarna, situated around 4.2 km north-west of Axia, lies outside our area of investigation, in the orbit of Tuscana, another major Tarquinian settlement, and is late and close in time to the definite defeat of Tarquinii; its defensive walls being dated to the early 3rd century BC. Furthermore, the defensive walls of many of these settlements cannot be securely dated to the period in question. Rather, some even tend to be given a later dating than the walls of Musarna.[640]

As observed from the study of the survey material, the Subarchaic period saw a drop in the number of rural settlements. The majority of the settlements that disappeared are those to be found scattered and unprotected in the countryside, while the majority of the ones remaining tend to cluster around towns. According to Pulcinelli the main underlying factor was probably for defensive reasons; the territory's character of a border area meant that it came under heavy and direct pressure, or threat, from Rome.[641] The closeness to a neighbouring town provided the settlements with some protection in troubled times, or it was at least felt to provide that. However, the results from the surveys show that the development began already in the 5th century BC, and is most likely connected to other causes, such as famines, epidemics, and the general crisis of the Etruscan cities. Nevertheless, the situation with a comparatively reduced number of rural settlements continues in the 4th century in the Biedano region, and this is most likely as a consequence of the military conflicts, and regardless of the fact that Tarquinii had overcome the 5th-century crisis.

Interpreting the decrease in rural settlements in the light of the troubled times in this period would also explain why the general pattern resembles the situation at Veii. Veii had found itself under strong pressure from Rome before its eventual submission in

[638] Pulcinelli 2012, 96.
[639] Pulcinelli 2012, 97.
[640] Cf. Ch. 2.2.4, and notes 169 and 170 above on the defensive walls of San Giovenale.
[641] Pulcinelli 2012, 97–98.

396 BC, and the Biedano region likely felt this pressure too. As stated, the situation perseveres for the most part of the 4th century, when Tarquinii and Rome were engaged in military conflicts. The southern parts of the Biedano region, being a border area, saw the war of the 350s BC from the front row. However, it is also plausible, as observed by Colonna, that the decrease of rural settlements is connected, at least partly, to the general crisis followed by the decline of Caere in the 5th century BC, and to the subsequent entry of these areas into the orbit of Tarquinii.[642] The most likely explanation however, is that the development is connected to, and thereby a result of, both. Although the initial decrease is surely connected to the 5th-century crisis, Caere's loss of importance following the crisis is probably one of the main contributing factors to the shift of the economic and political centre of the region from the south to the north. The decline of Caere opened up the road for Tarquinii, which took this opportunity to expand its influence further south to the Mignone. The shift in power relations in the Biedano region from south to north is partly a result of this. In turn the situation generated a decrease in rural settlements in the 5th century BC. However, although the decline of Caere in the 5th century BC partly caused this decrease in the Biedano region, by the 4th century BC the situation seems to have been stabilised and overcome in most parts of south Etruria, while in the Biedano region it lingered. The reason for this is most probably that the conflicts between Rome and Tarquinii impeded a recovery. In the succeeding period, when the military conflicts had ended, a period which according to our sources was relatively peaceful and which saw a general economic upsurge, there is rapid increase in the number of rural settlements, with no or very few signs of clustering.

The development starting in the late 4th century BC, first with a slight increase in the beginning of the period, followed by an explosion of *villae rusticae* and farmsteads, can be explained as part of the leading families' reorganisation of the territory.[643] The defeat of Tarquinii, with the subsequent loss of independence in the beginning of the 3rd century BC, did not involve the complete and immediate dispossession of influence that the local *gentes* had enjoyed in the region. On the contrary, the situation remained more or less intact until the incorporation into the Roman state, after the Social War.[644] Small-scale landowners seem to have been numerous in inland Etruria; in the south the countryside was subject to extensive land confiscations on the part of Rome from the 3rd century BC onwards, which naturally affected the economic development, social relationships, and the peasantry.[645] Indicia from the survey material would suggest this

[642] Colonna 1967c, 13–16.
[643] As mentioned, this reorganisation of the territory had already begun in the beginning of that century as seen in the emergence of Norchia and Axia.
[644] Amann 2017c, 1103.
[645] Amann 2017a, 188–189; 2017c, 1101–1102; Marcone 2017, 1191.

not being the case in the Biedano region, which displays a sharp increase in farmsteads from the 3rd century BC onwards. This seemingly points to the presence of a flourishing peasantry, working land alongside the élite's properties. However, there is also a possibility that many of these farmsteads were owned by élite families, and worked by tenants, freedmen, or even slaves. As pointed out by Petra Amann, the terminology of ancient authors is often unclear, making it difficult to distinguish between these categories of people. The sharp increase of rural settlements could also point to a large number of newcomers settling in the countryside; Roman or Latin citizens who had been allotted land in the region. Nonetheless, it must be regarded as highly probable that slaveholding increased from the Hellenistic period onwards, given the sudden explosion of larger rural settlements.[646]

The economic basis of the leading *gentes* was primarily based on large-scale landowning, and it lay in their interests to promote the *status quo* in their home ground, in order to maintain the power relations between them and their lower-class countrymen. In general, the Etruscan nobility seems to have been hostile to the idea of distribution of land to the poor, as well as to the granting of full Roman citizenship to all free Italian inhabitants, as shown by their reaction to M. Livius Drusus the Younger's proposed reforms of these in 91 BC. According to Appian, Etruscan nobles even came to Rome to protest before the consuls.[647] A granting of full citizenship would likely have disturbed the balance in social relations in Etruscan society, to the possible benefit of the lower classes, who traditionally had been excluded from political power, and thereby to the disadvantage of the élite.[648] The situation was also favoured by Rome, which was above all anxious to preserve social and economic stability in the regions.[649] This seems to go hand in glove with an alleged conservatism on the part of the nobility also proposed by Benelli and Terrenato in discussing the situation in Clusium and Volaterrae respectively.[650]

The result of this development was a countryside evermore filled with larger farmsteads and villas, many probably managed by unfree labour, with their owners preferably residing elsewhere, enjoying the fruits of their investments. The situation described by Tiberius Gracchus, with a countryside almost devoid of free small-scale landowners, and dominated by slaves working the lands of the rich, is supported by the pattern displayed by the surveys.[651] In the following, we will turn our attention to the

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[646] E.g. Livy 10.5.13; Amann 2017a, 189.
[647] App. 1.35–36; Vell. Pat. 2.14.
[648] Marcone 2017, 1198. Cf. also Ch. 5.1 above, and the discussion by Benelli and Terrenato on the situation in Clusium and Volaterrae respectively: Benelli 2015, 78–79; Terrenato 1998b, 108–110.
[649] Marcone 2017, 1191, 1196.
[650] See Ch. 5.3 below.
[651] Plut. *Ti. Gracch.* 8.7–9.

driving mechanisms behind the political and economic development in the region from the late 5th–1st centuries BC.

5.3 4th- to 3rd-century expansionism and the role of the local élites

The Roman expansion over the Apennine peninsula has traditionally been described as a military subjugation on the part of Rome of the various independent Italian communities.[652] However, recent scholarship has begun to question and challenge this approach. For Terrenato and others, the expansion, rather than being understood on imperialistic grounds, is to be seen as a complex political and social game that in the end brought about a unification of the entire peninsula.[653] Rome was far from the only city-state with expansionist ambitions during this period: several other central Italian cities also competed in the same race. However, when the development is to be summed up, Rome turned out to be the only one left. By the late 3rd century BC, there was no real competitor remaining on the peninsula and it was more or less accepted by the other polities that Roman hegemony was there to stay. How this development came to be, and what factors and motivations lay behind it, will be discussed in this section.

As stated by other scholars, it is not easy to present a short synthesis of the complex series of events that led Rome to exert complete and definitive control over the cities of south Etruria.[654] The process began in the early 4th century BC and was brought to completion in the mid-3rd century BC. It is not linear but on the contrary, shows discontinuity and inversions, moments of stasis and abrupt accelerations.[655] It is important to keep in mind that the mechanisms behind the Roman conquest of Italy were not born solely of Rome. As already stated, other cities also showed expansionist tendencies, and Rome was for a long time merely part of an intrinsic, rolling programme of seasonal raiding warfare, disputes over resources, and interfering and meddling through conspiracies between leading families of the different cities, which activities had engaged the Italian communities for many centuries.[656]

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[652] See e.g. Coarelli 1988; 1992; Gabba 1989; 1990; 1994.
[653] See e.g. Fronda 2010; Roth 2007; Terrenato 1998a; 2005; 2008; 2019.
[654] E.g. Pulcinelli 2016.
[655] Pulcinelli 2016, 19.
[656] Terrenato 2019, 71, 73.

With the urbanisation process in the Orientalising period, the élite families gained in prestige, power, and wealth. In addition to the possession of land, their position relied heavily on personal networks and relations with other families, also spanning across borders, ethnicity, and religion. By the late 7th century BC, they had established themselves at the apex of society, and now the control of the Etruscan city-states was concentrated to a relatively small number of extremely wealthy and powerful families. However, as previously discussed in Chapter 4, with the urbanisation process continuing, new preconditions gradually created new social structures, and a differently assembled social class began to emerge, becoming increasingly more influential. This new urban middle class, mainly consisting of merchants, craftsmen, and artisans, as well as part of the old aristocracy who managed, and were willing, to adapt, weakened the pre-eminence of the old gentilitial families. Together they formed a broader élite, which gave the south Etruscan city-states a more egalitarian socio-political and economic character.[657] As discussed in Chapter 4, the supplantation of large, monumental tombs in favour of the simpler funerary customs of the 6th and 5th centuries BC is indicative of this new social order.

With new political institutions, and an overall more-developed civic body, the fortunes of the leading families became inevitably closer tied to the fortunes of their community or polity. Even if they did not cut their traditional ties with their peers in other parts of the peninsula altogether, it became clear that their own city-state was the vehicle through which they had the best opportunities to fulfil themselves. The economic crisis of the 5th century caused a general decline and political struggles probably erupted in the Etruscan city-states. The development following these struggles brought about a concentration of power in the hands of a smaller élite class once more. And it is only with the beginning of the 4th century BC, when the influence of the élite families had again grown stronger in the aftermath of the crisis, that any firm evidence of one major state permanently subjugating another appears. While earlier strategies tended to aim at submitting a rival city to tribute, or to place members of a friendly local family in power, Rome's destruction of Veii in 396 BC marked a substantial shift away from what had been the normal approach up to then.[658] In fact, Terrenato is sceptical of the story as it has been passed down to us, speculating on a possible fusion of the two cities.[659] However, the sharp decrease in rural settlements in the territory of Veii in the 5th and first half of the 4th centuries BC still suggests a period of turmoil, which would give credibility to the traditional Livian account. Furthermore, Terrenato points out that the political structures of central Italian city-states were unsuited to

[657] Amann 2017a, 187; 2017b, 985–987; Cerchiai 2017, 635–637, 640.
[658] Terrenato 2019, 71, 73, 114.
[659] Terrenato 2019, 116–117.

administer more than one primary urban centre, and therefore we should not see the expansion in the early 4th century as a natural development of already existing political collaboration, but rather as a radical turning point. This has to be explained at a more global scale, together with the socio-economic processes taking place in the region.[660]

As already mentioned, it has to be considered that Rome was not the only Italian state undergoing this radical shift in approach towards other cities, but other city-states as well started to show a more expansionist policy at roughly the same period, Tarquinii being an Etruscan example in the central region of the peninsula. In studying the actions and motivations of other cities, it is possible to get an idea of what started this expansionist development. In the view of Terrenato, all these changes which occurred at the same time are to be seen as different facets of the same global phenomenon.[661]

Not only the larger cities were involved in this development: it also affected minor urban centres. It is interesting to try to understand how and why certain smaller cities aided or sided with each other, while others made completely different choices; it seems obvious that élite family networks and relations played a significant role in the process, and perhaps more so than ethnicity. Naturally, there are differing views among scholars regarding the motivations, tactics, as well as sentiments of both the élite families and the common people during this period. Benelli, in discussing the social classes of Clusium, and the influx of newcomers to this northern Etruscan city, argues that the local élites were generally hostile to Roman enfranchisement, while the lower classes seem to have been more positive about embracing Rome. The lower classes seem to have chosen to identify themselves as Roman citizens much sooner. The élite, on the other hand, seem to have been the most eager in stressing their Etruscan ancestry. Apparently, the memory of the Etruscan past seemingly did not have the same appeal for the poor as it had for the rich. Benelli argues that what the rich remembered with nostalgia, the poor were happy to forget.[662]

Terrenato, when discussing the Romanisation of the northern Etruscan city of Volaterrae, argues that the reason why the nobles were more conservative regarding their Etruscan heritage may be that the prominence of the élite was based upon an unwritten set of rules and obligations, long since accepted by the local farmers, and that there was a potential risk that their position at the top of society would be threatened, should the Etruscan farmers side with Rome, or be replaced by Roman colonists.[663] The nobles needed to be conservative in order to preserve their power and status in society. Consequently, preserving the traditional social order and way of life in the Etruscan towns was of great concern. This attitude is exemplified by the Etruscan nobles' hostile

[660] Terrenato 2019, 73.
[661] Terrenato 2019, 76.
[662] Benelli 2015, 78–79.
[663] Terrenato 1998b, 108–110; 2019.

reaction to M. Livius Drusus the Younger's proposed reforms of 91 BC of distribution of land to the poor and the granting of full Roman citizenship to the Italians.[664]

There were many differences between north Etruria and south Etruria, as is also pointed out by Benelli, and Terrenato's discussion mainly concerns the north, and Volaterrae in particular. The southern élite families, even if they seem to have embraced the Roman expansion much earlier, were forced to take different approaches regarding Rome on the one hand, and their lower-class countrymen on the other.[665] Thus, the Etruscan aristocrats had to resort to code-switching, and to develop a two-sided position, or a "Janus-like quality", as put by Terrenato himself in a later study.[666]

As already mentioned, Italian élites had been establishing complex networks with each other across considerable distances for several centuries. As seen in both the epigraphic material and in literary sources, they formed alliances based on intermarriage, lineage friendship, and political and religious alliances. Livy provides us with a telling example in his account of the Roman conflict with Tarquinii in 311–308 BC. In previous chapters (2.4 and 4.2) we have discussed the nature of the Ciminian forest as a natural border between the Roman sphere of interest and that of Tarquinii, but the anecdote also offers some other interesting information. In 310 BC in the wake of a Roman victory over the Etruscans at Sutrium, the latter allegedly fled into the forest. While the Romans were discussing whether or not to pursue them, the brother of the consul,[667] Caeso Fabius[668] offered to venture into the forest with only the aid of a personal slave, to explore and to seek information. Now, whether this heroic enterprise ever took place or not is of course highly speculative. However, the veracity of the story is less interesting than the reason Livy gives for this Fabius to sign up as a volunteer. According to Livy, Fabius, as well as his slave, knew the Etruscan language well and was conversant in Etruscan writings: Fabius had been educated in Caere, among family friends. Livy also states that, during this time, it was common to send boys away to study Etruscan literature, as in his own day it was common to send them away to study Greek.[669] Most importantly, the anecdote also reveals indicia for élite family networks; apparently the Roman *gens* Fabia had well-established connections with families in Caere.

The position of the Etruscan élite families is not to be seen as a pro-Roman one *per se*, but more pragmatic. Their strategies reflect more the opportunity to achieve their

[664] See Ch. 5.2 above.
[665] Benelli 2015, 76–79.
[666] Terrenato 2019, 208.
[667] Q. Fabius Maximus Rullianus, consul in 310 BC.
[668] According to Livy the brother could have been Marcus Fabius, or as others claim, C. Claudius, the consul's half-brother: see Livy 9.36.2.
[669] Livy 9.36.1–7.

local political aims, than their supposed wish for "becoming Roman". By entering the political scene in Rome, their political position at home would become stronger and more solid.[670] Some élite families made their move to Rome more permanent, having junior branches taking care of their interests in their communities of origin, but others maintained their base where it always had been, at least for the first two centuries of Roman expansion. Terrenato argues that the Italian élite families were the main driving force behind the development: he envisages a grand bargaining between the élites of Italy, which he sees as the main catalyst for the unification of the peninsula. He argues that factional networks which spanned both cities and ethnic groups would have been more important for the development than the opposition between political entities. In the process, it was not only the Italian cities that underwent a transformation, but Rome itself changed drastically. It ceased to be a city-state and became a federal capital. The result was a political arena which was shared by élites hailing from the whole peninsula.[671]

Another interesting approach is Arthur Eckstein's ideas of Realist theory and interstate relations. In the view of Eckstein, the independent nature and the identity of each state is of great importance. The preservation of one's autonomy and independence, the survival of the political identity, is one of the major issues for the states, and to be able to do this in an interstate system based on power, you will need power to preserve independence and identity. Therefore, the objective for every state, Eckstein continues, is inevitably to gain power. This is, according to Eckstein, the only way to obtain security and to ensure the survival and independence of the state. But the states in this anarchic environment will not only settle for seeking power and influence, but to seek superiority of power over other states as well.[672]

Michael Fronda relies on a hypothesis based on Realist theory when trying to explain why Hannibal in the Second Punic War failed in his strategy to win over Italian cities to his cause during his war with Rome. Scholars have traditionally emphasised the aggressiveness and hostility of Rome, heroicising the Italians, or treating them as victims.[673] Fronda argues that the interstate relations in the 4th and 3rd centuries were more contingent and multipolar. Furthermore, he stresses that Rome is not to be seen as the only aggressive and hegemonic state in Italy in this period (he takes Tarquinii's and Volsinii's attack on Sutrium in 311 BC as an example), but it ended up the most dominant one at the time of the Pyrrhic War. Fronda takes the position that it would be more accurate to argue that the whole Apennine peninsula should be viewed as an

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[670] Fronda 2010, 319.
[671] Terrenato 2019, 33.
[672] Eckstein 2006, 14–16.
[673] See Harris 1979; 1990; which has influenced Oakley 1993; Raaflaub 1996; Cornell 2004. For a discussion on these tendencies see Dench 2004.

"international system", where all states are engaged in warfare competition, and where some of these states emerge as hegemons, thus being able to control other less-strong ones.[674] As mentioned, his approach draws heavily on so-called Realist theories of international relations, indebted to Eckstein's work which applies Realist paradigms of state behaviour to the ancient world.[675] Fronda states three assumptions for Realist theory:

1. International systems tend to be "anarchic"; there exist no effective policing mechanisms above the level of the individual state, no authority such as international law or world government controlling or regulating how states treat each other. The only instruments are the states themselves.
2. States behave more or less as rational, unitary actors.
3. The primary motivation behind state behaviour is security, which most states try to achieve through the protection and accumulation of resources. Accordingly, neighbouring states often fight over access to natural resources.[676]

This competitive environment would then produce hierarchies wherein the relative power of the states forges the relations between them. The major states compete at the top with each other, while smaller ones join in trying to balance the power against their more powerful neighbours. These alliances are driven by necessity and self-interest, and they are not meant to last indefinitely. When the perceived common threat ceases to exist, the necessity for an alliance fades. In extreme cases smaller states have to submit to more powerful ones in order to uphold their own independence. According to Fronda, the Realist approach to interstate relations applies well to Italy in the late 4th and early 3rd centuries BC.[677]

Fronda's and Eckstein's views are somewhat contrary to Terrenato's, although they share the view of a development driven by self-interest, in the search for increasing power and prestige; the principal difference being that the former two see the interests of the different city-states as the main factor behind this development while for Terrenato it is the interests of aristocratic families. Terrenato considers the development as driven by the personal interests of the Italian élites, their pursuit of power and self-fulfilment; the political survival and independence of different polities is, if anything at all, secondary to the prospect of gaining prestige, wealth, and power for the lineage.

[674] Fronda 2010, 16–17.
[675] See Eckstein 2006; 2008.
[676] Fronda 2010, 16–17.
[677] Fronda 2010, 17.

This trumps all sentiments of state belonging or ethnicity: only the prestige of the family is important.[678]

Both views have their pros and cons, however. Although I agree with Terrenato that the states in themselves are not to be seen as agents in the development, the élite families cannot pursue their goals entirely without them; they will still need the states as vehicles in order to realise their ambitions. While the main driving force in the development is indeed the élite families and their agendas, they cannot act independently without the backing of a state.

So, how can this approach assist in understanding the development in the Biedano region? The evidence at our disposal suggests that from the 4th century BC, the élite families of the area indeed took part in a larger political context than they had previously been involved with. The rise of Norchia and Axia in the beginning of the 4th century, suggested by the monumental necropoleis, is an indicator of the local élites in these towns gaining in wealth; they could now afford to construct monuments of this scale. The tombs likewise suggest that the élite felt a need to show off their power and wealth; it was a matter of prestige.[679] Furthermore, the funerary inscriptions show that the local élite were part of a larger political context than their immediate surroundings. The mentioning in epitaphs of the terms *parχis* and *spurana* discussed in the previous chapter could suggest that political offices were held in the hegemonic city of Tarquinii.[680] At the same time, this type of evidence also sheds light on Tarquinii itself, suggesting that in the 4th and early 3rd centuries BC, the city had established networks with local élites in the Biedano region. This is a strong indicium of the strategy of the Tarquinian élite families; as discussed in the previous chapter, a part of the strategy seems to have been a reorganisation of the territory, an internal colonisation where small centres in the interior were either founded *ex novo* or resurrected from a previous slumber. This is indicative of Tarquinii's expansionist ambitions, and its role as a competitor of Rome. Now, if we are to interpret the development along the lines of Terrenato, it would be more accurate to view the actions of Tarquinii, not necessarily as the actions of a state, but more as the actions of its leading families.

The majority of the Tarquinian families, or the most influential ones, saw the expansion of their own polity as the most successful way to gain wealth, influence, power, and prestige for their respective lineages. Their actions would then explain the more noticeable Tarquinian presence in the Biedano region. However, it is important to refrain from interpreting this presence as a military takeover; on the contrary, the leading families of the Biedano region would have cast their lot with Tarquinii, joining

[678] Terrenato 2019.
[679] Amann 2017c, 1104.
[680] See Chs. 4.3 and 4.4 above.

their expansionist bid. This would also have contributed to why these leading families apparently forsook Caere sometime in the late 5th–early 4th centuries BC, the aristocracy of which by the mid–late 4th century seems to have had well-established connections with the families of Rome. The military conflicts, spoken of by Livy, between Tarquinii and Rome during the mid-4th century seem to strengthen this possibility, reflecting a struggle for power between factions of leading families, those who had cast their lot with Rome or Tarquinii respectively.

As mentioned earlier in this study,[681] the hostilities between Rome and Tarquinii in the 350s BC did not result in a military takeover by either side, but in a truce in 351 BC. Even if Livy strives to present the outcome of these hostilities as a Roman victory, it is obvious that no territorial gains were accomplished. It is even possible that the Tarquinian successes in the conflict were considerable and consequently absent in the official records as the *fasti*, or even masked by Livy. Starting in 311 BC, and continuing in the early 3rd century, the ancient sources tell of new military conflicts, which, for the part of Tarquinii, seem to have ended with a second truce some decade following the Battle of Sentinum in 295 BC. The sources do not mention a military takeover, but the Roman army most probably passed through Tarquinian territory when subjugating the Etruscan city of Vulci in 280 BC.[682] Even if considering the lacuna in Livy's text for the period in question, this could hardly have been done without our sources mentioning skirmishes of some sort, had there still been hostilities between Rome and Tarquinii. Accordingly, the most plausible explanation seems to be that by the beginning of the 3rd century BC, Tarquinii was no longer in a position to rival Rome and consequently its élite families had to look elsewhere. They had come to the conclusion or had, more or less willingly, been convinced that Rome was the best available horse on which to bet, consequently joining the Roman expansionist bid.

5.4 Entering the Roman political scene

By the mid-3rd century BC, after Rome had defeated all the Etruscan cities, the Etruscan élites were looking for a new political arena. After all, their desire for glory, wealth, and power had not ceased in spite of their homeland's loss of sovereignty. The Etruscan cities were still nominally independent, and officially only allies of Rome; the cities continued to elect magistrates as before, judging by the epigraphic record. It was

[681] See Ch. 4.2 above.

[682] Livy 7.22.1–6; Livy *Per.* 11, 14; Vell. Pat. 1.14.7; Strabo 5.2.8.

nevertheless obvious that they were no longer able to rival Rome for the political and economic influence on the Appenine peninsula, and the Etruscan élite adapted to the new situation.[683] Rome, for its part, saw benefits in welcoming members of the élite of the newly subdued cities into its own sphere. After all, doing so was nothing new; it had been a successful strategy for centuries. One of the earliest examples is the Sabine Attus Clausus who, according to Livy, migrated to Rome with his clan and *clientes* in the late 6th century, and as Appius Claudius Sabinus Inregillensis held the consulship in 495 BC. He would become the founder of one of the most distinguished Roman families, the *gens* Claudia.[684] Furthermore, there seems to have been a general tendency of élite migration after the Social War, as the new political preconditions surely made migration easier. As shown by Benelli, evidence from Clusium suggests that newcomers established themselves through for example, intermarriage, and were eventually assimilated into the local society.[685]

Families of Etruscan descent, either claimed or genuine, were present in Rome at an early stage, in many cases long before the incorporation of the Etruscan cities into the Roman state. Three *gentes*, whose Etruscan origins are fairly certain, entered the Roman senate as early as the 4th–3rd centuries BC, and another ten or so *gentes* before the Social War. Interestingly, some cities seem to have provided more families than others. Among the most privileged cities we find Caere and Perusia, while Tarquinii, along with Vulci and Volsinii are disadvantaged. Torelli assigns this difference to the Gracchan allotments and its consequent redistribution of the rich landed properties.[686] However, the more privileged position of the Caeretan aristocracy is not surprising. As mentioned earlier on several occasions in this study, Caere had long-standing political and cultural relations with Rome, going back at least to the beginning of the 4th century.[687] Consequently, to find a relatively high number of Caeretan *gentes* who had gained Roman citizenship at an early stage is to be expected. As evidenced by the quantity of late Subarchaic and Hellenistic funerary *hypogea* of high quality found in the Caeretan area, the local aristocracy was still prosperous. There is also a continuity between the Etruscan and the late Republican Latin onomastics which points to a solidity of property patterns and social structures in Caere.[688] The situation at Tarquinii is strikingly different. Together with Vulci and Volsinii, Tarquinii seems to have provided very few *gentes* to the Roman senate. According to Torelli, the *ager Tarquiniensis* completely dissolves after the 3rd century BC into a plurality of

[683] Amann 2017a, 190.
[684] Livy 2.16.4–7, 2.21.5.
[685] Benelli 2012, 103.
[686] Torelli 1982, 275.
[687] See Chs. 2 and 4.2 above; also Torelli 1982, 279.
[688] Torelli 1982, 278.

independent cities and towns, from Forum Cassii to Tuscana, Blera, Axia, and Sorrina.[689] This development is very plausible, even if it probably did not happen overnight, especially since there is no reason to believe that Rome wanted to promote such a development. Rome seems to have been sensitive, and sceptical, to radical and swift changes to the organisation of the regions, and probably would have relied on the Tarquinienses themselves to administer their former territory, with as few changes as possible, at least for the time being. Furthermore, the manner in which Tarquinii is treated in ancient sources, for instance in Livy's account of the Hannibalic War, when Tarquinii is said to have contributed linen for sails to the Roman navy, suggests that it was still regarded as important, at least in this period.[690] However, with time Tarquinii naturally declined while other centres became more important in the eyes of Rome. For example, the impact of the Via Clodia, constructed in the early 3rd century BC, on the influence of the inland towns of Blera and Tuscana, likely contributed to elevating these two to the status of *municipium* in the 1st century BC.

A large quantity of data seems to demonstrate that the prevalent choice of many Etruscan aristocratic families was to abstain from the highest ranks of society and to enter Roman political life with the rank of *equites*. The equestrian status is extremely common among Etruscan aristocrats, as illustrated by persons such as Caecina and Maecenas, who were both descended from Etruscan high nobility. Torelli speculates that the internal bonds of the Etruscan aristocracy, mainly developed through frequent intermarriages, enabled them to find their political place in the religious sphere of Roman life, in the *haruspicina*.[691] The explanation for this approach could have been that while their presence in the religious sphere gave the local aristocracy a great importance and a certain political platform from which they could effectively intervene, it also provided the possibility of not taking too large risks in Roman politics. This would then, Torelli continues, also explain the relative indifference Etruscan aristocrats showed euergetic practices in their cities of origin between the 2nd and the 1st centuries BC. No Etruscan city can show monuments from the 2nd to the 1st centuries that have been constructed *ex novo* or reconstructed on a large scale. Mostly it comes to redecorations of temples, as in Tarquinii, Caere, Telamon, Vetulonia, Arretium, and Faesulae. In comparison, the Latin *colonia* at Cosa is very rich in monuments from the 2nd century BC. According to Torelli this would demonstrate how the socio-economic and political reality, very different between the Roman or Latin *coloniae* and the Etruscan cities, has provided different approaches of the local élites regarding public monuments, and more in general, euergetism.[692]

[689] Torelli 1982, 278–279.
[690] Livy 28.45.14–15, 40.29.1. Cf. Ch. 4.2 and note 405 above.
[691] Torelli 1982, 280–281.
[692] Torelli 1982, 280.

This is of course a very interesting notion. However, the Torelli's comparison is somewhat lacking. While Cosa was a new foundation, and the construction *ex novo* of monumental buildings consequently needed, the Etruscan cities had existed for centuries and were already equipped with grand edifices. Hence minor repairs of existing buildings would for the most part have been sufficient. Furthermore, the notion is not really true: there are a few, but telling, examples of euergetism in the old Etruscan cities.

Mainstream historiography emphasises discontinuity and has traditionally had a very pessimistic view of Roman Caere. It has been argued that Caere, which eventually was given the status of a Roman *praefectura* in 273 BC, would have experienced only recession and crisis after this particular year, with a short-lived resurgence in the Julio-Claudian period. This view has traditionally conditioned the interpretation of the archaeological record. As a result, scholars have been reluctant to date any important building projects to the period following the "catastrophe" of 273 BC. However, new evidence from excavations at Vigna Marini, conducted by the Queen's University at Kingston, Canada, which were initiated in 2012, indicates that the 3rd century BC was in fact a period of intense building activity. This would, according to Fabio Colivicchi, seriously question the traditional narrative. As Colivicchi correctly observes, it can hardly be considered the end of the city as such, since the evidence rather points to a vital period for at least five more centuries.[693] Colivicchi's standpoint is that Caere should not be seen as a passive victim of Roman aggression in 273 BC. While the Hellenistic and Roman republican periods are not marked by total continuity, great changes, challenges, and disruption did occur, and it is clear that this new landscape created new opportunities, both for the city as such and for its individual citizens. Furthermore, Colivicchi stresses Torelli's notion that it is worth considering the continuity of power of the local élites of Caere and the success many of them enjoyed. As mentioned, the aristocracy of Caere had been on good terms with its Roman counterpart for a long time and was now able to use its connections with it, making its way into the highest ranks of Roman society at a quite early stage, in many cases long before the Social War.[694]

[693] Colivicchi 2015, 178–179.
[694] Colivicchi 2015, 195.

A sound example of Etrusco-Roman euergetism in Etruria would be C. Genucius Clepsina, a Roman of partly Etruscan origin who held the Roman consulship in the years 276 and 270 BC.[695] Clepsina's name is found in a dedicatory inscription in a hypogeum excavated in 1983 by Mauro Cristofani, which has been dated to shortly after the institution of Caere as a *praefectura* in 273 BC.[696] The inscription reads:

C. GENUCIO(S) CLOUSINO(S) PRAI(FECTOS)[697]

The *cognomen* is here given as Clousinos, which is simply the Latin translation of the Etruscan *Clevsina*.[698] The *cognomen* is derived directly from the ethnic which draws its origins from the toponym **Clevsi-*, i.e. the name of the Etruscan city of Clusium. In Etruscan, *clevsina* corresponds to the modern Italian "Il Chiusino", the adjective adhering to the city of Chiusi, which is the exact same meaning of the Latin *clousinos*.[699]

Clepsina's connections with Caere have been debated. While Cristofani holds the view that he is to be considered of Caeretan origin, hence his presence in Caere, Torelli rightfully argues that the family was of Tarquinian origin, as attested by several funerary inscriptions.[700] Another confirmation of the family's Tarquinian origin is the presence of the *Clevsinas* also at Tuscana, as indicated by a sarcophagus found here belonging to a *cleusinas laris larisal clan*, a *laris cleusinas*, son of *laris*.[701] Torelli argues that Clepsina was sent to Caere as *praefectus iure dicundo*, in the aftermath of the rebellion in 273 BC which saw Caere lose its independence, and most of its surrounding territory incorporated into Roman territory.[702] Clepsina's Tarquinian origin could have played a major role when he was assigned this mission. Ancient aristocratic solidarities between Caeretan and Tarquinian *gentes* could well have been considered; sending a magistrate of Etruscan origin to this city, which had been dealt a heavy blow on the economic, social, political, and even emotional level, could be seen as a way to pour oil on troubled waters. The spirits and intentions of Clepsina with his assignment are reflected in the

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[695] Fasti consulares.
[696] Cristofani 1984, 55; 1986, 24–26.
[697] Torelli 2000b, 152–153.
[698] In the *fasti* the name is rendered as *Clepsina*, where the Etruscan *vs* has become *ps* in Latin.
[699] Torelli 2000b, 151.
[700] Cristofani 1986a, 24–26; Cristofani & Gregori 1987, 4; Torelli 2000b, 156; *CIE* 5474–5483; *ET* Ta. 1.186, 1.191.
[701] *REE* 59:45.
[702] Torelli 2000b, 157; Dio Cass. fr. 33; Zonar. 8.6.10.

hypogeum. Consequently, its construction could be seen as a kind of reinstitution of Caere as a *praefectura* in the Roman world.[703]

Another good example of the interest in Etruria on the part of Romans of Etruscan origin is demonstrated by the *elogia Tarquiniensia* in Tarquinii, which affirms that many seem to have shown great reverence for their cities of origin. The *elogia* display the deeds of the Tarquinian *gens Spurinna*, which subsequently also made its fortune under Roman flag.[704] The *elogia* were found at Tarquinii close to the great temple, the Ara della Regina. The majority of the fragments were found by Pietro Romanelli who published them in 1948, but additional fragments were found by Torelli during excavations in 1969.[705] From this document it is possible to partially reconstruct the activities of some of the members of the *gens Spurinna*, referred by scholars to the 6th and to the 5th–4th centuries BC.[706] The *elogia* were set up long after, in the early Imperial period, and are written in Latin, but they are considered reliable since they most probably are based on the family archives of the *gens*.[707] According to Torelli, the initiative to erect the *elogia* is to be attributed to a T. Vestricius Spurinna who, according to Pliny the Younger, lived in the 1st century AD and who was a legate of the emperor Otho in AD 69, consul for the first time under Vespasian, governor of *Germania Inferior* under Domitian, member of the committee of reduction of the public expenses in AD 97, and consul for the second time in AD 98.[708] Yet another example in the vicinity is the late 2nd-century BC public bath complex in Musarna, the construction of which was funded by the *gens Aleθna*.[709]

Connected to Rome's intentions regarding her Italian expansion, as well as the opinion of other peoples in the peninsula, is the idea of Italy as a unit, with some kind of sense of belonging supposedly shared by its inhabitants. P. Sempronius Sophus' map of Italy in the temple of Tellus, dedicated in the aftermath of the Roman triumph over the *Picentes* in Gallia Togata in 268 BC, may be the first attempt recorded to associate a representation of Italy with a geographical unit.[710] Edward Bispham argues that Rome from the 3rd century onwards tried to create new "others": Carthaginians, Gauls, Illyrians. Debate continued in the 2nd century. Cato the Elder's *Origines*, on the origins of the Italian communities, is an example. What was Italy and what was she not? By

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703 Torelli 2000b, 156–157, 173.
704 See Ch. 4.4 above, s.v. *Spuri*(*a*)*na*/*Spuriena*.
705 Romanelli 1948 238–240; Torelli 1975, 13–16.
706 Romanelli 1948; Morandi Tarabella 2004. On the *elogia* see Heurgon 1951; Pallottino 1951; Della Corte 1955–1956; Torelli 1975.
707 Torelli 1975, 56; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 481.
708 Torelli 1975, 97; Morandi Tarabella 2004, 481; Pliny the Younger, *Epist*., 2.7, 3.1, 3.10, 5.17.
709 De Cazanove & Jolivet 1984, 531, 533.
710 Williams 2001, 37, 129; Bispham 2007, 56; Florus 1.19.2, on Sempronius Sophus; Strabo 5.1.1, 209–10C.

the 2nd century BC Rome seems to refer to Italy in official documentation as *terra Italia*, as in the *lex Agraria* of 111 BC.[711]

Bispham tries to clarify what *Italia* meant in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. He asserts that the word *Italia* became of increasing interest to "ideologues", both Roman and Italian, but that they intended different things in their use of it. For the Romans, *Italia* was synonymous with Roman control, for the Italians it was the last chance for independence for the Italian allies. This opinion is contrary to the view of Wallace-Hadrill and Terrenato who both stress the unwillingness on the part of Rome to interfere directly and to impose total Roman control over the allies until at least the 1st century BC.[712] This latter is an opinion I share; there is nothing that would suggest that Rome would want to interfere with the internal political and social structures of the allies, if this was not considered truly necessary. On the contrary, for the administration of the allied territories, Rome relied entirely on the local élites, who continued to hold political and religious offices in their communities for a considerable time following the entry of Rome.

There are however examples of when it obviously was deemed necessary to intervene, but the motivation seems to be of a practical nature more than anything else. The events following the institution of Caere as a *praefectura* are a telling example of such an intervention. With the foundation of Latin *coloniae*, on territory earlier belonging to allied or hostile cities, these cities' autonomy became a problem. Torelli argues that the main reason for stripping Caere of its autonomy is connected to the foundation of the *colonia* of Cosa, on the territory of Vulci. If Caere had remained autonomous, there would not have been a continuous strip of land connecting Cosa with the *ager Romanus* proper. Since Veii had already been conquered in 396 BC, and Tarquinii and Vulci around 280 BC, keeping Caere as autonomous did probably not lie in the interests of Rome.[713] So the misstep of 273 BC was very convenient indeed.

After the Social War (91–88 BC), all allied peoples south of the Po were enrolled as Roman citizens, and subsequently allocated to one of the Roman *tribus*. As discussed in Chapter 4.3, Blera was assigned to the rural *tribus Arnensis*, while the rest of the *ager Tarquiniensis* was allocated to the *tribus Stellatina*. At a first glance this seems odd, but there are no overwhelmingly convincing indicia supporting a Roman policy of *divide et impera* here, that Rome deliberately tried to sow discord between the inhabitants of an earlier-united region. Again, more pragmatic reasons seem to lay behind such an undertaking. According to Lily Ross Taylor, the rural tribes constituted strips of continuous land that were organised counterclockwise, as was the order of the urban

[711] Bispham 2007, 56–60; *lex Agraria* 1.1–7, 11, 13, 21, 27–29, 33, 49–50, 2.15, 19, 22, 29.
[712] Bispham 2007, 73; Terrenato 2008, 239–240, 262–264; Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 80–81.
[713] Torelli 2000b, 155.

tribes, an arrangement that probably reflected the order of the census.[714] Ethnic groups seem to have been assigned to the same tribe to a large extent. This arrangement was advantageous for the different peoples, who were able to maintain old ethnic associations, and to vote in the Roman *comitia tributa* and the *concilium plebis* (the two Roman assemblies where citizens voted by tribe) as a unit.[715]

According to Ross Taylor, tribes had already been established here and there on the peninsula before the time of the Social War, and so formed pockets of land belonging to Latin colonies and allied peoples. Originally, they were created primarily for Roman citizens who owned land in the various regions of Italy, but there were certainly also several locals who had been enfranchised as a reward for supporting Rome.[716] In Etruria too, it seems that ethnic groups were taken into account, as had been the case with other enfranchised peoples. Blera's tribe, the *tribus Arnensis*, seems to have already contained Forum Clodii when Blera was included after the Social War, while the *tribus Stellatina*, to which Tarquinii and Tuscana, and also Nepet and Cortona were allocated, probably already included Graviscae on the coast, and Capena and Horta in the interior, where the original location of the tribe seems to have been. Caere was possibly assigned to the *tribus Voturia*, which also included Ostia and Placentia, but according to Ross Taylor, the evidence is not entirely reliable.[717]

The assignment of Blera to the *tribus Arnensis*, while other parts of the earlier *ager Tarquiniensis* were assigned to the *tribus Stellatina*, was probably a decision based on geographical grounds, and on the number of citizens distributed over the region; the *Stellatina* included the cities and towns closer to the Tyrrhenian coast, and in addition Capena and Horta in the interior, who already were registered in the tribe. As mentioned, the *Arnensis* already included Forum Clodii, located along the Via Clodia, close to the western bank of the *Lacus Sabatinus*,[718] some 20 km south-east of Blera. While the *Stellatina* seems to have been concentrated to the south Etruscan inland, the *Arnensis* was also the tribe for peoples living far away from Etruria, such as the Marrucini and the Frentani in present-day Abruzzo.[719] However, it was obviously the natural choice for the eastern areas of the earlier Tarquinian territory. It is probable that Rome strove to keep an equilibrium among the tribes, in order to maintain approximately the same number of citizens in each tribe. Since the tribes voted in the assembly as units, larger tribes would have had more citizens to distribute, but each

[714] Ross Taylor 1960, 153.
[715] Ross Taylor 1960, 111–113.
[716] Ross Taylor 1960, 151.
[717] Ross Taylor 1960, 115, with map in ch. 5.
[718] Today Lago di Bracciano.
[719] Ross Taylor 1960, 271.

citizen's individual vote would have counted less.[720] Rome probably divided the region accordingly, with the western parts allotted to the *Stellatina* and the central and south-eastern parts to the *Arnensis*.

The Roman presence seems to have eventually affected the composition of the local élite in the Biedano region. While many families seem to have prospered in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, very few *gentes* seem to have survived into the later Roman period. South Etruria seems to have suffered from extensive land confiscations; it is possible that local élite families were initially less affected than the mid-sized and small landowners, as they had the economy, and presumably also the right connections, to repossess available *ager publicus* for their own purposes.[721] But for some reason they are less present in the Latin epigraphic record compared to the preceding period. The situation can partly be explained in connection to the decline of Norchia and Axia, since the absolute majority of the *gentes* of the 4th–2nd centuries BC derive from the former. The scarce nature of the epigraphic material after the 2nd century BC coincides with the cessation of activity in the necropoleis. With few possible exceptions, such as the *Ancna/Ancharii* and possibly the *Anutaie/Anteii*, the old Etruscan aristocracy of the Biedano region seems to have disappeared in the 1st century BC, in favour of newcomers settling in the territory.

However, the Roman reorganisation of the former Tarquinian territories into *tribus* meant that Blera was separated from the other parts of the Biedano region, admitted as it was to the *tribus Arnensis*, while the other towns in the region were admitted to the *tribus Stellatina*. There was probably no direct intention on Rome's part of dividing the spirit of the population of the Tarquinian territory, but these developments likely brought about a new sense of identity and belonging, which was further enhanced when Blera was inaugurated as a *municipium* following the Social War.

[720] Ross Taylor 1960, 153.
[721] Amann 2017c, 1106.

6 SUMMARY

South Etruria displays two distinct periods of monumental tomb building, the first one corresponding to the Orientalising period (*c.* 730–580 BC). Thereafter, in the Archaic period, a more modest tomb architecture develops, an indicium of the emergence of a new, broader urban upper class which breaks the dominance of the old aristocracy. The second period of monumental tomb building starts in the late 5th/early 4th centuries and continues into the 2nd century BC, with a peak in the second half of the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. This second period of monumental tomb building is best represented at Norchia and Axia, two sites which in previous periods had been insignificant, if of any importance at all. Monumental tombs from this period (especially the early phase, the 4th century BC), are also found at Blera and San Giuliano, two towns with a high representation of monumental tombs in the Orientalising and early Archaic periods. The return of monumental tomb building in the Biedano region points to two things: 1. That once again a strong aristocracy had developed, possessing the means to build these monuments for the glory of their own lineages, and 2. That the economic and political centre of the region was now concentrated to the north, to Norchia and Axia, at the expense of Blera and San Giuliano, now apparently with reduced influence. The new situation was probably part of the reorganisation of the territory on the part of Tarquinii, as a part of the expansionist strategies of its élite families.

The analysis of the previously conducted field surveys in the southern parts of the region displays a decrease in the number of sites, and especially rural sites, in the Subarchaic period (480–320 BC). This decrease is probably partly connected to the 5th-century economic crisis of the large coastal cities. But in the Biedano region the situation perseveres into the 4th century BC, demonstrating a similar situation to the one at Veii. What we see is likely the consequence of troubled times, the fact that the area functioned as theatre of military conflicts during large parts of the 4th century BC, and perhaps not merely during the periods about which our written sources tell us, i.e., the early 380s and especially the 350s BC. The proximity to Roman-controlled territories may also be a reason why the southern towns lost much of their influence in the 4th century, to the benefit of Norchia and Axia. Their location on the edge of a conflict area probably made their position unsecure. Additionally, both Blera and San Giuliano show strong Caeretan cultural influences, as demonstrated by the Archaic-

period funerary architecture, and they had apparently both been important centres in the *ager Caeretanus* during the Archaic period. These are all factors that may have contributed to the region's new élite, well connected with Tarquinii and smaller urban centres on Tarquinian territory, favouring the northern towns of Norchia and Axia, which were both located on Tarquinian territory as of old. Unfortunately, we cannot know anything of the situation in the hinterlands of Norchia and Axia since their respective hinterlands have not yet been subject to any systematic field surveys.

From the late 4th century BC, the surveys show a sharp increase in rural settlements, probably connected to the emergence of the villa culture, which is not a phenomenon exclusive to south Etruria, but affected the whole of central Italy. However, the notable explosion in the numbers of of rural villas and farmsteads is most likely a 3rd- and 2nd-century BC phenomenon, connected to Roman economic influence. The villa economy constituted the most important economic basis for the local élites and is to be regarded as part of the ambitions of the new aristocracy which had emerged in the 4th century BC. Tiberius Gracchus' famous account of a land dominated by slave labour is probably not too far from reality.[722] The incorporation of Tarquinii into the Roman world as a Roman ally in the early 3rd century BC did by no means result in the local élite giving up their ambitions for prestige, influence, power, and wealth. On the contrary, for them it was crucial to maintain a *status quo* situation on their home ground. This situation was also promoted by Rome, which was not interested in absorbing the allies, and assimilating them into the Roman state, but instead relied heavily on the local élite for the administration of the allied territories.

The majority of the 7th- to 5th-century BC inscriptions derives from the southern parts of the region, specifically from Blera and San Giovenale. While it is not surprising, given other indicia, to find a concentration in these parts, what stands out is the relative abundance of attested gentilitial names at San Giovenale, which both based on its necropoleis and the modest size of the inhabited area, must have been considerably less significant than Blera and San Giuliano, where the attested *gentes* are fewer. Especially remarkable is San Giuliano, where only two *gentes* have been attested for. The reasons behind this are of course difficult to discern. Epitaphs could have been written on perishable material to a higher degree here than elsewhere, such as on the plaster covering the façades of the tombs, or on sarcophagi which have later been stolen through illegal, clandestine excavations or which have in other ways gone missing. It would be tempting to suggest that the relatively high number of names documented at San Giovenale is connected to the archaeological excavations of the urban areas, which have no parallel in the other towns, but the absolute majority of the inscriptions at San Giovenale has been found in, or in connection to, tombs. The grounds for giving a

[722] Plut. *Tib. Gracch.* 8.7–9.

conclusive answer are unfortunately not very solid, hence I will abstain from drawing any definite conclusions.

The inscriptions from the later periods show a different pattern. Firstly, they are much more abundant than previously, and they also demonstrate a different distribution, with the absolute majority hailing from Norchia. That the northern parts of the region contain the majority of the more-recent inscriptions is not remarkable *per se*; this is consistent with other evidence, such as the monumental rock-cut façade tombs from the 4th–2nd centuries BC. However, what is striking is the noticeable over-representation of Norchia, and the relative scarcity of inscriptions from Axia. The five individuals attested at Blera suggest that this town undoubtedly also retained some importance in the Hellenistic period. The reasons behind this over-representation at Norchia are most probably connected to the importance of the town. Norchia has the largest and most elaborated necropoleis of the towns in the Biedano region dated to this period. Together with information of family connections with Tuscana and Musarna and the presence of local magistrates recorded by the funerary inscriptions, these factors indicate that Norchia functioned as an administrative centre in the area in at least the 4th to 3rd centuries BC.

Regarding the nature of the local élites, it can be affirmed that a completely new set of *gentes* rose to prominence in the region in the early 4th century BC. None of the *gentes* attested for in the Archaic period seem to have survived the turmoils of the 5th-century BC crisis, and the ensuing rearrangement of the political, economic, and cultural centre from south to north. Half of these new *gentes* are also attested for in other parts of the *ager Tarquiniensis*, with the absolute majority in Tarquinii proper. This would strengthen the opinion of Bourdin, who suggests that the local élites in the Hellenistic period were predominantly of Tarquinian origin.[723] And even if it is not possible to prove beyond doubt that these *gentes* were indeed related to *gentes* of the same family name elsewhere, given the possibility that same *gentilicia* could have formed independently, it would be reasonable to assume that they were related or in other ways connected, either through *liberti*, *clientes*, or adoptions. The strong presence of Tarquinian *gentes* is, together with the shift in emphasis from old towns to new, and the presence of the monumental necropoleis, an indication of the reorganisation of the Tarquinian inland, and the expansionist ambitions of Tarquinii.

Going into the late Roman Republican period there seems to be another change in the composition of the élite class. Remarkably, no *gentes* seem to have survived into the 1st century BC, with the possible exception of the *Ancharii* (*Ancna*/*Anχarie*) and the

[723] Bourdin 2012, 491–492.

Anteii (*Anutaie*).[724] Now, as pointed out in Chapter 4.4, this could possibly have to do with the nature of the Latinisation process of the nomenclature. However, it seems more likely that the situation is connected to the demise of Norchia and Axia, where the vast majority of the 4th- to 2nd-century BC *gentes* have been attested. Certainly, another contributing factor was the fate of Tarquinii proper as an important political and economic centre. The general decline probably began in the early 3rd century BC, and eventually resulted in the loss of control over all its former territory. And although the local aristocracy apparently continued to prosper in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, it eventually succumbed in favour of new families establishing themselves in the region. A comparison with the territory of Caere shows a decisively different situation, with a great number of *gentes* surviving into the Roman period, and many *gentes* present in the Roman Senate. A comparison with other parts of what was earlier Tarquinian territory gives a similar situation to the one found in the Biedano region.[725]

However, the development also contributed to the later fortunes of Blera. With the new Roman administrative division, the areas of the earlier Tarquinian territory became administrative centres of their own under the jurisdiction of Rome, *municipia* with adhering territories, appertaining to one of 31 Roman *tribus*. The Biedano region was split up, and with this in time the character of the region as a cultural unit was also fragmented. However, the town of Blera became an important centre in the area in the Imperial period, largely due to its favourable position on the Via Clodia. The elevation to *municipium*, and the admission into a different *tribus* than the other towns in the area, likely contributed to the forging of a new local identity, that of the *Blerani* referred to by Pliny, which now applied to the inhabitants of the Roman *municipium* of Blera.

[724] The Etruscan origins for both families are controversial: see Torelli 1982, 278–279 for the *Ancna/Ancharii*. The *Anutaie* is also very uncertain. See further Ch. 4.4 above, s.v. *Ancna* and *Anutaie*.
[725] Torelli 1982, 278–279.

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