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INVISIBLE CITIES:  
THE BEGINNINGS OF ETRUSCAN URBANIZATION

*in memory of John Ward-Perkins*

The set of historical problems which I refer to under this title is currently in a confused state. There seem to be two main reasons for this. One is that though a great deal has recently been written about the emergence of cities in the Mediterranean world, very little in the way of satisfying theory has been produced. The material is so extensive, the difficulties of terminology and conceptualization are so great. The second reason is that the archaeological evidence – which in the case of the Etruscan cities means practically all the *direct* evidence – is in flux, and it might possibly, before long, lead to conclusions different from those which at present seem most reasonable<sup>1</sup>.

Cities were not a universal natural phenomenon in the ancient world, certainly not in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. How, then, and why, did the first Etruscan cities come into being? Was it in essence an indigenous development, or was it as a result of Greek influence? And if it was the latter, why were the Etruscans susceptible to Greek influence in this respect?

It might be wondered whether these problems are truly historical problems at all. There are few ancient texts (there are some, as we shall see) which bear directly on the reasons why Etruscan, or indeed Greek, cities first came into being. But cities are naturally a prime target of historical inquiry, and the subject of the origins of cities should not be left exclusively to prehistorians. This is not to belittle a discipline, still less the detailed knowledge of those who are better acquainted with the archaeological remains of the late bronze and early iron age in Italy than I am; but cities are not primarily a prehistoric phenomenon.

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<sup>1</sup> I sincerely thank A. M. Bietti Sestieri, O.-H. Frey, A. Guidi and S. Stoddart for giving me copies of recent publications which it would otherwise have been impossible or difficult to obtain soon enough to use in writing this paper; and I.E.M. Edlund for commenting on what I have written.

What will be examined in this paper will be the coming-into-being of the city, or rather of a specific set of cities; functions which they came to serve later on will not be my concern. I confess that I am not much in sympathy with neo-Weberian attempts to discover the « ideal type » of the Greek city or of the ancient city; the indifference of their authors to the mundane, concrete and often awkward evidence about the functions which ancient cities fulfilled is all too plain. What is under discussion in any case is a change, a dynamic process: why a certain social institution was invented or introduced at a certain date. An « ideal type » is too static to be useful. We need generalizations certainly, but generalizations which take a large body of untidy evidence into account and which deal with the major historical changes, such as the emergence of the city undoubtedly was.

The terminological difficulties of dealing with the city are serious and perhaps insurmountable. How do we recognize a city? At best there is a some artificiality about the way in which ancient historians and archaeologists use the term, for the great majority of the cities of antiquity would be considered too small to deserve the title in any modern context. The cause of this strange usage of ours is obviously that a place could be extremely small by modern standards and yet be counted by the Greeks as a *polis*; for instance Amorgos, a poor enough Aegean island, had three of them in the Hellenistic era. The extreme inadequacy of our terminology is illustrated by the fact that a few years ago a highly competent prehistorian consciously employed the words « urban » and « town » to refer to those little habitation sites of the thirteenth and twelfth centuries B.C. on the southernmost section of the Adriatic coast – Scoglio del Tonno and others – which are usually under one hectare in extent<sup>2</sup>. This, in a Mediterranean context, is too odd to be permissible. It is true that in other contexts, for example ancient India, such a usage seems to be accepted<sup>3</sup>; in the Mediterranean, however, it is bound to produce serious confusion.

To improve the available terminology a number of scholars, especially in Italy, have recently been turning to « centri protourbani » and similar expressions. It has been realized that in a number of places in central Italy – at Veii, for example – cities were preceded by collections of settlements which differed notably from villages completely isolated from one another. However none of this alters the fact that a radical change takes place between the « centro protourbano » in this sense and the city (and it is this change which is the topic at hand).

We must have a definition of some sort. The despair experienced by Ampolo when he recently surveyed some of the definitions which have been proposed

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<sup>2</sup> WHITEHOUSE 1973.

<sup>3</sup> THAPAR 1982.

is understandable<sup>4</sup>, but part of the trouble arises simply from mistaken notions about the concept « definition » itself. It makes little sense, for example, to say that the inhabitants of a city must *by definition* use writing, as has sometimes been asserted<sup>5</sup>. The populations of most ancient cities used writing, and the development of a culture of cities in Greece was strongly influenced from an early date by the existence of writing<sup>6</sup>; but whether, for instance, Rome was a city in 700 B.C. cannot reasonably be thought to depend on whether its inhabitants could write.

A fundamental problem which requires attention at once is whether we ought to be discussing state formation as well as the growth of population centres. In an ancient Mediterranean context it would seem strange to speak of a city unless there were some political authority there – but this means something less than the formation of a state. And in this paper the real formation of states will not play an important part. The character of the evidence makes this inevitable, for we know far less about the coming-into-being of states in Etruria than we do about the formation of the Athenian or Roman state; and about Athens and Rome we know little enough that is definite. We have no clear evidence of any kind as to when the inhabitants of early Veii, Tarquinia or Vulci started to believe that their cities had some extension or continuity beyond particular families. None of the legends of Etruscan kings takes us back to any date which is interestingly early from this point of view.

We might look in the first place to see whether the material itself will guide us towards a definition of the city. It is possible after all that there is something not yet noticed, or at least not yet clearly formulated, about ancient population centres and their functions which dictates that, in terms of size, they are definitely cities or definitely not cities. Is there in fact a radical difference in scale between the small insignificant settlement or village, and the settlement which has grown into – something else? I leave aside here the other discontinuity which seems to exist between the « ordinary » Greek or Roman city and the metropolis of the type of Rome or Alexandria. For the settlements of southern and central Etruria, the list drawn up by Judson and Hemphill is of great interest<sup>7</sup>, though of course the northern sites also have to be considered. The list simply comprises the areas of all known habitation sites of the sixth and fifth centuries in descending order of magnitude. Now it is obvious that such information might be misleading, and it must not be treated as a completely reliable guide to relative popu-

<sup>4</sup> AMPOLO 1983, 425-427. For another survey of definitions, from a different standpoint, see HODGES 1982, 20-28.

<sup>5</sup> For example by CHILDE 1950-1951, 14 (for some comments on this paper cf. WHEATLEY 1972, 612), G. SJOBERG in DAVIS 1973, 20. Against « the tight association of urbanism with writing systems »: BLANTON 1981-1982, 428.

<sup>6</sup> This theme will be developed in a forthcoming study of Greek and Roman literacy.

<sup>7</sup> JUDSON & HEMPHILL 1981. For the areas of various Greek cities cf. AMPOLO 1980, 168.

lation figures. Within the perimeter of some of the larger habitation sites – Veii, for instance, and eventually Volterra – there were almost certainly areas which were sparsely settled<sup>8</sup>. Sites were not selected for intensive settlement just because they were of exactly the right size but also because of unusual defensive and economic advantages. Also extremely important is the size of the territory which the city controlled; Arezzo, for example, always seems to have had a fairly small urban nucleus in comparison with other Etruscan cities, but its territory was of considerable size by the standards of most ancient city-states. Still the area of the central settlement must have at least a rough correlation with its population, which is one important element in the population of the territory as a whole.

In the Judson-Hemphill list there is a marked discontinuity of size between the cities which are obviously such (Veii, Cerveteri, Tarquinia, Vulci and Orvieto), all with areas above eighty hectares, and the smaller centres, of less than twenty-five hectares. In the north, Volterra falls into the former group, but all the other well-known towns fall into a band between roughly forty-one hectares (Roselle) and roughly twenty-five<sup>9</sup>. The settlements in this latter group are also entitled to be called cities; this will include Acquarossa, where the central site is 24.5 ha. in extent (clearly the place would have had some history in the literary sources if it had survived into the Roman period instead of perishing for good about 500 B.C.).

Taking care not to force the evidence, I would suggest that for Etruria in general there is a discontinuity below this level, with very few habitation sites between twenty-four and ten hectares. The only Etruscan sites which seem to fall between these limits are Castel d'Asso, Nepi and Narce, the last two actually on the edge of Faliscan territory<sup>10</sup>. But quite apart from other difficulties<sup>11</sup>, none of these places is known to have maintained its independence once a culture of cities had come into existence; Nepi's subordination, first to Falerii and then to the Romans and Latins, is especially clear. At and just below the ten-hectare level, by contrast, settlements are numerous: thirteen, for example, with six hectares or more in the Judson-Hemphill list. None of the habitation sites smaller than twenty-five hectares is ever known from literary sources to have enjoyed political independence, with the one possible exception of Capena

<sup>8</sup> For the area of Volterra see CRISTOFANI 1978, 15.

<sup>9</sup> Roselle: 41 ha., CRISTOFANI 1984b, 31. Vetulonia: 31.5 ha., CURRI 1975, 179. Cortona: 30 ha., TORELLI 1980, 302. Chiusi: 26 ha., CRISTOFANI 1978, 13.

<sup>10</sup> The sizes of these sites are given by JUDSON & HEMPHILL 1981, 195, as 14 ha., 17.5 and 12.5. In bronze-age Etruria there had been other settlements of roughly this size, at least Sorgenti della Nova (near Pitigliano) and Elceto (near Allumiere) (A. M. BRETTI SESTIERI, in CRISTOFANI 1985, 27); cf. below.

<sup>11</sup> The size of Castel d'Asso is given by COLONNA DI PAOLO & COLONNA 1970, 51, as in effect between ten and eleven ha. Narce in its most populous period was unusual in that it seems to have occupied two nearby but separate hills: POTTER 1976.

(which had a habitat of five hectares). It might be objected that this is simply a fact about the politics of the classical and Hellenistic periods in Etruria (all small settlements came under the control of one of the dozen or so larger ones), not about what constitutes a city. But it looks *prima facie* as if there were two separate kinds of settlement.

What then are the essential characteristics of an ancient Mediterranean city? Scholars are understandably vague about the size of population which we should require; Peroni has written of the thousands of inhabitants which the first cities must have had, in contrast with the hundreds of inhabitants of earlier settlements<sup>12</sup>. I will simply note that a twenty-five hectare settlement, densely populated in so far as the simple domestic architecture of early Etruria or Greece would permit, might be expected to have no less than 1,250 inhabitants (fifty per ha.)<sup>13</sup>.

A city must have at least some rudimentary means of defending itself. This observation raises questions about primitive warfare, and especially about Villanovan warfare. It has been claimed – with how much truth it is hard to tell – that primitive warfare is not usually very destructive, and the remains of Villanovan villages in proximity to each other but without apparent fortifications may suggest that this is applicable to Etruria. (Not that fortifications were unknown in Etruria, even in the second millennium). A tendency to fight in more destructive ways presumably went hand in hand with greater efforts to fortify habitation sites. And the organized defence of a collection of dwellings plainly implies the existence of authority, if not of continuing authority or of anything which could be called a state.

Organized effort to maintain one's at least partial independence, that is a key factor. Pausanias says something similar in the well-known passage where he lists the essential features of a Greek city. This is in the context of Phocian Panopeus, which lacked various of the normal features of a respectable Greek city of Pausanias' time: official archives, a gymnasium, a theatre, an agora and a public fountain; « they live in bare shelters just like mountain cabins, right on a ravine » (X.4.1). In these circumstances Pausanias hesitated to call the place a *polis*. What tipped the balance in favour of calling Panopeus a city, in his opinion, was that it maintained frontiers with other cities and was recognized as a distinct political entity by the other Phocians. In other words what matters

<sup>12</sup> PERONI 1979, 25.

<sup>13</sup> The shortage of usable information about urban population density in antiquity is well indicated by the discussion of DUNCAN-JONES 1974, 276-277. The most useful figure he gives (and it is subject to various provisos which need not be repeated here) concerns Saturnia in the third century A.D., and is 51-94 inhabitants per ha. Most scholars would probably regard 50 per ha. as a low density for an ancient city. KOLB (1984, 15), attempting to define the minimum population of an ancient city, suggests that places with about 1,000 inhabitants are fringe cases.

most, in Pausanias' eyes, is the independence of a city, even if it is only partial or symbolic.

However it is generally held, I think, that we should be able to distinguish a pre-urban settlement from a city in terms of economic functions. The city has sometimes been defined in such terms, for example as « a unit of settlement which performs specialized functions in relationship to a broader hinterland . . . it is agreed that the specialized functions of a city are not agricultural in nature »<sup>14</sup>. This is unobjectionable as far as it goes. In fact we can take it for granted that one structural economic change, and probably another, accompanied the emergence of cities in Etruria. First there must have been a very marked increase in the number of specialized workers in the communities in question (though some probably existed before): workers in metal, workers in leather and wood, potters, holy men, midwives – the most essential specialists of a simple town. A second likely change is a marked increase in differences of wealth within the community, as the most powerful families benefited from their ability to exploit a wider territory and a more complex economy. Such disparities of wealth are already visible in the cemeteries of Villanovan Etruria, in the tenth and ninth centuries<sup>15</sup>, but the richest burials of the Orientalizing period suggest that they were then on the increase<sup>16</sup>.

It is hard to imagine an ancient city without common religious rites. At least it will be agreed that they were a normal feature, and that more or less public cults are likely to have been organized very early in the existence of each city. But in any case we possess no hard information, so it seems, about public cults in the very earliest years of the Etruscan cities.

What then is current doctrine about the genesis of the Etruscan city<sup>17</sup>? All informed persons undoubtedly recognize the profound inadequacy of our archaeological information for answering the questions at hand. In Latium, as has recently been pointed out, we have « not a single large house or 'palace' . . . to match the rich tumuli graves of the 7th century B.C. »<sup>18</sup>. In Etruria we are not much better off, though at least we have the first phase of Murlo from the mid-seventh century onwards. However it is difficult to avoid drawing tentative conclusions, and these have a natural tendency to become less tentative as soon as they are formulated in print. The principal tendency in recent writing

<sup>14</sup> TRIGGER 1972, 577, referring to A. L. MABOGUNJE, *Yoruba Towns* (Ibadan, 1962), 3-4. In fact Trigger was careful not to put this forward as a full-dress definition.

<sup>15</sup> BARKER 1981, 197.

<sup>16</sup> On the grandest Orientalizing tombs in Etruria see for example Brendel 1978, 49-73. On the parallel phenomenon in Latium see BIETTI SESTIERI in ANZIDEI, etc., 1985, 186-190.

<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately efforts to find a plausible etymology for Etr. *spur* (= city) (ALESSIO 1970) have had no historically useful result. If Lat. *oppidum* is an archaic word and derives from Gk. *empedon* (cf. DREWS 1981 [1984], 155), that would be at least a faint indication of Greek influence on the development of settlements in Latium.

<sup>18</sup> MAASKANT-KLEIBRINK & OLDE DUBBELINK 1985, 203.

about the Etruscan city, a tendency which is presumably linked to the now main-line doctrine that Etruscan culture is essentially an indigenous development, is to see it as the result of a long gradual process<sup>19</sup>. In the eighth century, or even in the ninth, little groups of Villanovan villages were evolving into « protourban centres », at Veii for instance; the same kind of thing was taking place in Rome.

We shall return shortly to the chronological problem, but first we should consider the most forthright challenge which has been offered to the « gradualism » of the official doctrine; this challenge comes from R. Drews<sup>20</sup>. What distinguishes the first Etruscan and Latian cities from the earlier settlements is, according to him, a matter of domestic architecture; where there had previously been wattle-and-daub huts of non-rectangular plan there were now rectangular houses of stone or brick. In the seventh century more or less organized decisions were taken in favour of this kind of construction, so that at Bologna, Veii, Roselle, Tarquinia and elsewhere there appeared groups of rectangular houses with common walls aligned along real streets. The concept of the rectangular house made of more durable material came from the Greeks, via some such coastal centre as Pyrgi or Graviscae; the durability and solidity of the Greek house probably converted many Etruscans on sight.

Though clear and sensible argumentation is offered in its favour<sup>21</sup>, this theory rests on too limited a concept of the city. Houses are not enough<sup>22</sup>. The simplification which Drews offers is excessive<sup>23</sup>. It is obviously true that if a site suddenly sprouts numerous coordinated dwellings, something like a city is in the offing; but a few durable rectangular houses will not do on their own. Drews himself may feel this, for he attempts to show, against the usual view, that the rectangular buildings of many centuries earlier which are known from Luni sul Mignone were not for living in; he thus seeks to avoid the embarrassment of calling second-millennium Luni a city, which would obviously go against the grain<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. for example MÜLLER-KARPE 1962, TORELLI 1981a, 105.

<sup>20</sup> DREWS 1981 [1984].

<sup>21</sup> However his account of Villanovan and Etruscan Bologna (137-140) deserves no such compliment. On the obscurity of the Etruscan phase there see, e.g., GUALANDI 1969.

<sup>22</sup> « Les maisons font la ville, mais . . . les Citoyens font la Cité », « according to Rousseau (I owe the quotation to Carmine Ampolo). Do houses even make a town? ».

<sup>23</sup> As is already apparent when, bemused by the problem of defining a city, he decides that it is merely « a compact settlement of streets and houses » (137); in practice he requires more than this. It must also be said that his attempt to prove that the early Etruscan cities were planned enterprises is almost all fantasy.

<sup>24</sup> DREWS on Luni sul Mignone: 146-147. It was 5.3 ha. in extent according to JUDSON & HEMPHILL 1981, 196. These are not the only rectangular constructions known in bronze-age central Italy; on the evidence from Etruria (Sorgenti della Nova, Monte Rovello) see A. M. BIETTI SESTIERI, in CRISTOFANI 1985, 27; and on Tufariello near Buccino (provincia di Salerno) see HOLLOWAY 1975, BARKER 1981, 190-192.

I would agree, however, that there are likely to have been key moments in the urbanization of each city. In particular the decision to fortify a city such as Roselle (to mention a place which was fortified at a relatively early date) makes no sense unless the entire site is to be involved. Although some of the sites in question, Veii for example, have a lot of natural defences, still the manpower and the organization needed to build and use fortifications of the kind which Roselle acquired in the seventh century are both very considerable. What brought such events to pass?

It is time to consider the impact of Greek expansion on this aspect of Etruscan history. Much has been written in recent times about the encounter between Greeks and indigenous peoples, including Etruscans, in eighth-century Italy<sup>25</sup>, but some key questions remain without agreed answers. In fact sharply divergent views have been expressed about the influence of the Greeks on the formation of Etruscan cities<sup>26</sup>.

Some might say that at least one city had already come into existence in Etruria in the eleventh century, at that very interesting site which is Sorgenti della Nova near Pitigliano. The habitation site is said to cover some fifteen hectares, with «every square metre intensely urbanized»<sup>27</sup>. We might well want to call this place a city, and against this it is not enough to mention the absence of writing and the consequences of this<sup>28</sup>. More simply, we should say of this site that while its size makes it marginal as a city, it was an abortive movement in the direction of urbanization – one which shows clearly that Etruria had by the second half of the eighth century possessed for a considerable time some potential for true urbanization<sup>29</sup>.

The Greek background, in any case, is now clear enough. After a period of active but limited Greek commerce in Italy in the Geometric period, the third decade of the eighth century saw the arrival there of a wave of foreign traders, most of them Greeks and most of these Greeks Euboeans. Their aim

<sup>25</sup> See especially RATHJE 1979; TORELLI 1981b; FREDERIKSEN 1984, 54-84; the definitive publication of Ischia by G. BUCHNER & D. RIDGWAY will no doubt add greatly to our understanding of this question. The contribution of HARTMANN 1985, which I saw when this paper was practically finished, will need careful evaluation.

<sup>26</sup> The idea that the Etruscans may have taken over the concept of the city from Greeks or Carthaginians is not especially new. Cf. PALLOTTINO 1968, 213 – carefully phrased, however: «la coesistenza di diversi centri di grande importanza a poca distanza l'uno dall'altro... sembra effettivamente ispirarsi al sistema della città-stato proprio delle contemporanee colonie greche e fenicie...» (the same wording in PALLOTTINO 1984, 307). Drews' article represents a recent variation on this theme. See also MARTÍNEZ-PINNA 1984, 365. For contrary opinions, see below.

<sup>27</sup> NEGRONI CATACCHIO 1983, 331. The date is given as eleventh to early ninth century.

<sup>28</sup> This is Negroni Catacchio's way out (1983, 332). I do not see how we can know whether the inhabitants had private ownership of land or division of labour.

<sup>29</sup> I know nothing yet of Elceto, the other site referred to by A. M. BIETTI SESTIERI in this connection (in CRISTOFANI 1985, 27).



was to enrich themselves by whatever means were available, but above all by the exportation of metal ores, especially copper, iron and tin, which came from Etruria<sup>30</sup>. They established Pithecusae – significantly placing this first Greek settlement in Italy further north, that is nearer to the Etruscans, than any other they built in Italy –, and later Cumae. By 725 at the very latest these were permanent centres of considerable importance, with commercial ties stretching up the Tyrrhenian coast (and behind it) and backwards to the Near East.

What fails to happen can be highly informative. The Greeks did not found colonies on the Tyrrhenian coast of Italy north of the Bay of Naples in the eighth century. Considerably later some of them did indeed establish a strong Greek presence at Pyrgi and Graviscae, but that was only from about 630 onwards or even slightly later<sup>31</sup>. Is it not remarkable that there are no Greek colonies at all near to the ore deposits of Etruria<sup>32</sup>? The only reasonable explanation of this fact is that the Greeks encountered or anticipated enough resistance on the part of the indigenous population to make colonization unrealistic<sup>33</sup>. It seems somewhat surprising at first that late Villanovans can have protected their territory so effectively. We have to remember that the early Greek colonies were by no means the work of a great military power, but often rather of small bands of adventurers. And from Latium northwards most of the Villanovan settlements along the litoral were set back some distance from the shore itself and thus were hard for a small force to attack.

How then is the arrival of Greeks in Italy likely to have affected the social organization of the Etruscans? It was in my view the direct cause of the emergence of the city in Etruria, but not by means of a simple borrowing or imitation on the part of one population of something devised by another. Rather, the Greeks almost forced the Etruscans to create rudimentary cities, and at the same time both stimulated their economic life and showed them something worth imitating so that they were able to create such cities.

It is to be presumed that the Greeks made a strong impression on the inhabitants of coastal Latium and Etruria from the time of their first arrival. They brought strange goods and possessed strange skills (writing and long-distance navigation). But, contrary to what has been suggested<sup>34</sup>, their relations with the Etruscans they encountered must often have been difficult. In this context we usually think of «trade». Thucydides of course, with a more precise idea of traditional Greek behaviour, discourses at length in his «*Archaeology*»

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<sup>30</sup> For the archaeological evidence to back up the plain fact that metals were the primary attraction on the Tyrrhenian coast see FREDERIKSEN 1984, 56-57.

<sup>31</sup> GIULIANO 1981, 180, argues that Graviscae was in being about 630.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. TORELLI 1981a, 96-97, 158.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. RATHJE 1979, 179.

<sup>34</sup> MURRAY 1980, 75.

about *ληστεία*, piracy<sup>35</sup>. Much earlier, in the second reference to the Etruscans in Greek literature, which occurs in the seventh-century Homeric Hymn to Dionysus, the Etruscans are pirates, and it does not take too much ingenuity to see this as a reflection of the reality of Greek behaviour in western seas (which is not to say that the Etruscans did not practice piracy too)<sup>36</sup>. In the very first chapter of Herodotus the merchants (Phoenicians in this case), having sold their goods at Argos, use their ships to kidnap the daughters of the citizens.

Such events cannot have been unknown on the Tyrrhenian coast of Italy in the eighth century. They must greatly have increased the need for organized self-defence on the part of the local populations. And it seems likely that increased external demand for Etruscan metals made them seem more valuable in the eyes of the Etruscans themselves; indeed it is hard to imagine that there was no armed conflict between, for instance, Cerveteri and Tarquinia (whatever form those cities now had) over the Tolfa minerals by the late eighth century. And thanks to increased exploitation of mineral resources, and perhaps also for other reasons, the free populations were now better-off and hence were able to make the places where they lived more defensible.

For there was an economic stimulus as well as a threat. Exactly how this stimulus worked is a question which still requires a great deal of careful work, with attention to what has been written about the rise of central places and « regional nodes » in other areas and other periods<sup>37</sup>; with attention, also, to the likelihood that in the new economy unfree labour, in some form or other, played a larger part (it is probable that there were more prisoners of war and better opportunities for buying slaves).

The archaeological evidence for the adoption of city forms in Etruria is admittedly quite slow in appearing in relation to the arrival of the Greeks in Campania. This should not cause dismay, however, since it is in the nature of such evidence to provide only « dates before which » for urbanistic and architectural innovations – a fact which it is difficult but important to bear in mind. However the system is clearly beginning to change when, for instance, habitation ceases on minor peripheral sites such as the Monterozzi at Tarquinia and is concentrated in central locations, in that case the spur of La Civita further from the sea<sup>38</sup>. This kind of concentration probably happened at a number of

<sup>35</sup> I.4-5, 7-8, 10.4, 13.5. Particularly significant is his remark about the pirates' preference for attacking unwallled *poleis* and those which were made up of village settlements (5.1). Consider also such Homeric texts ad *Od.* VII.32-33. The significance of the Greek and Roman traditions about Etruscan piracy has been discussed by several scholars, most recently Cristofani 1984a.

<sup>36</sup> *Hymn. Dion.* 7-8. The date: JANKO 1982, 184.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. BLANTON 1981-1982, 429. A particularly interesting comparison might be made with the limited growth of towns in the ore-producing regions of southern Spain.

<sup>38</sup> For the eighth-century habitation site on the Monterozzi see LININGTON, etc., 1978. It was only occupied for a short period: Linington 1982. For a map showing how the known

places before the end of the eighth century. The first archaeologically known fortification of an Etruscan city is on the north hill of Roselle and it dates from the middle years of the seventh century<sup>39</sup>. At about the same time constructions in masonry at the secondary centre San Giovenale show the new kind of architecture in use<sup>40</sup>. So too, further north and further inland, does Murlo<sup>41</sup>.

What I am saying about Greek influence on the creation of the city in Etruria is not that the Etruscans simply borrowed it from the Greeks, but that they borrowed some or all of its essential features, under both the stimulus and the pressure caused by the arrival of the Greeks in Italy. These borrowings came to include the essentials of house construction: mud-brick walls and roof-tiles<sup>42</sup>. This does not prove by itself that outside influence was crucial, but it does give substance to the obvious truth that in this era Etruscans were capable of adopting Greek innovations.

The extension of hoplite armour from Greece to Etruria may be a roughly parallel case. But even the first stage of that process, involving the Tomba del Guerriero at Tarquinia, would lead us far from the present topic<sup>43</sup>.

The estimate of Greek influence on the emergence of the Etruscan city which is given in this paper will certainly be unpalatable to some, for example to Alessandro Guidi. He has recently written (to put it in English) that «it is difficult to make historians understand that the Greeks did not, together with vases and the alphabet, bring us [sic] cities and a thousand other characteristics of a stratified society»<sup>44</sup>. Let us be dispassionate: if clear evidence emerges that the Etruscans possessed cities before the arrival of the Greeks, then a different historical reconstruction will be necessary; but at present such evidence does not exist, and some such sequence of events as is outlined above seems more likely than a purely indigenous birth for the Etruscan city.

Such a position cannot be invalidated simply by being labelled «diffusionist», as if, Gordon Childe having been recognized as an exaggerated diffusionist, it is always and of necessity an error to detect any diffusion of institutions.

Asserting that the Etruscan city was the result of a long process of evolution, Guidi claims that the extensive occupation of certain sites means that they

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habitation and cemetery sites were distributed in the area just around the later city site during the Villanovan period see BURANELLI 1983, 120 (fig. 100).

<sup>39</sup> CANOCCHI 1980, 31-45, supersedes previous accounts of this.

<sup>40</sup> For the chronology see POHL 1980.

<sup>41</sup> For the early chronology of Murlo see NIELSEN & PHILLIPS 1977, esp. 99 (650 is tentative date).

<sup>42</sup> DREWS (1981) 154-155.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. TORELLI 1974-1975, 13-17.

<sup>44</sup> GUIDI 1981, 325. It is clearly true that the importation of urbanism was a vastly more complex matter than the importation of any single technical innovation.

already deserved the title of city in the ninth century. Similarly he has offered an extremely early date for the emergence of the city of Rome. What is the evidence which is supposed to establish these claims? Three main sites are in question at the present time, Vulci, Veii and Rome; Tarquinia and Cerveteri also come into the matter.

At Vulci there certainly does not seem to be anything new in the published evidence which should lead us to regard it as a city in the period prior to 750. Since 1971, when Hus' monograph gave a reasonably convincing description of the unification of the pre-urban settlements during the second half of the eighth century<sup>45</sup>, some new material has naturally been published<sup>46</sup>, but the essential facts seem little changed. The most striking aspect of the eighth-century material from the site is the close contact which it proves that Vulci had with Greeks. In the same period as the wave of Greek imports comes a much more extensive use of metals and (to judge from the number of tombs) a population increase; by the end of the eighth century « Vulci was a city rapidly unifying itself »<sup>47</sup>. Some minor adjustment in the chronology of this account would not of course be troublesome.

With regard to Veii, it has not been established with the necessary concrete details that the « entire area » of the habitation site was « already occupied at the beginning of the iron age »<sup>48</sup>. Such claims are not acceptable without a clear description of the evidence and the methods used to interpret it<sup>49</sup>. It looks as if some unspecified surface finds have been interpreted quite optimistically<sup>50</sup>. In fact the early progress of urbanization at Veii, which very probably goes back to the seventh century and perhaps to the eighth, cannot be traced in the published archaeological evidence from the habitation site.

As for Rome, it would be impractical to give here even a sketch of all the problems raised by the first stages of urbanization. A central question is the date of the physical unification of the Palatine, Capitoline and Forum Romanum areas. Guidi has written that they were already « ben collegati » in Phase III,

<sup>45</sup> Hus 1971, 58-62. The book was severely treated by RICCIONI 1979. See further COLONNA 1977, 196-198.

<sup>46</sup> See inter alia FALCONI AMORELLI 1983.

<sup>47</sup> Hus 62.

<sup>48</sup> GUIDI 1982, 282-283; cf. 1985, 222. This is based on GUAITOLI 1981, 79-80, whose conclusions were more cautious. It is a pity that we are not told what was found which established the twenty five habitation areas (no burials . . .) on the plateau of Veii in the Villanovan period. On the interpretation of surface-survey evidence cf. the remarks of HOPE-SIMPSON 1984.

<sup>49</sup> In fact the best account of the site in the ninth and eighth centuries is now given briefly by BARTOLONI 1983.

<sup>50</sup> This goes beyond the mistake which Bietti Sestieri sensibly warns against (in ANZIDEI, etc., 1985, 180) of supposing that the whole area where a surface survey finds *frammenti fittili* was inhabited at some given moment; she in fact regards it as unlikely that in Phase III (c. 770-720 B.C.) Lazio had habitation sites of several hectares' uninterrupted extent.

c. 770-720<sup>51</sup>, a date which should not in principle cause any astonishment. But are we to believe in an extensive habitation site in the upper valley of the Forum (to the east of the site of the Arch of Augustus) in this period? The ordinary Latian and Etruscan city of the archaic period is much more defensible than this area. But what matters is what can be inferred from the actual remains on which this early chronology for the urbanization of the Forum is based. The material which was described by Gjerstad provides, as far as I can see, no secure basis for any such inference. It may be that this area was part of a unified city as early as the mid-eighth century, but it is not clear until Phase IVA, if then. A « date before which » may be provided by the earliest *capanne* on the Regia site, not published in detail, but apparently thought by Brown to date from around 700<sup>52</sup>; and another by the earliest paving of the Via Sacra about 650<sup>53</sup>.

Still more hypothetical is the notion, maintained a few years ago by Colonna – the last scholar, frankly, whom I would want to contradict over such a matter – that in the first half of the eighth century there already existed a « comprensorio urbano, in pratica prefigurante la città delle quattro regioni » (without the Caelian)<sup>54</sup>. This is based on the reasonable argument that settlements on the Quirinal and the Esquiline, coming after the one on the Palatine, could not have lived outside « a system hinged on the Palatine ». Which is probably true, but does not make a city as distinct from a group of villages. To say otherwise is to drain the word « city » of its meaning.

Let it be firmly said, by the way, that the literary texts do practically nothing to help us fix the absolute chronology of the first emergence of Rome as a city<sup>55</sup>, for the very obvious reason that none of their authors had any means of knowing whether the key events took place about 814 (Timaeus' date for the foundation) or, say, about 650. The current tendency of some scholars to revalue the literary sources for monarchical and even early-monarchical Rome may or may not be excessive (in my view, it is), but there has yet to appear any explicit claim that one chronology or another can be based on these sources.

At Tarquinia and Cerveteri, rather as at Veii, the results of surface surveys within the habitation sites have been said to support some back-dating of the first stage of urbanization. Evidence to support this is not currently available, however. It will not in any case difficulty if Tarquinia could be shown to have

<sup>51</sup> GUIDI 1982, 282.

<sup>52</sup> « BROWN 1974-1975, 19. The evidence cited is a C-14 date for some wood which was used to make one of the *capanne*; this is given as 679 B.C., with a margin of error of  $\pm 50$  (the latter information was kindly supplied by R.T. Scott).

<sup>53</sup> For this date see BIETTI SESTIERI, in ANZIDEI, etc., 1985, 196.

<sup>54</sup> COLONNA 1974, 302-303. However he recognized the importance of the Greek arrival in Italy in moving the Latins beyond « organismi protourbani » (305). For a more recent statement cf. COLONNA 1983.

<sup>55</sup> Contrary to the view of GUIDI 1982, 283.

reached something like the condition of a city by about 750. At Cerveteri the relevant published evidence consists practically of the orientaling burials in the cemetery around the city, and it does not yet lead to any very clear conclusion about urbanization. It is hard to believe that by the time of the princely Regolini-Galassi Tomb (675-650) there was not at least a rudimentary city; but the proof is not complete.

The area of uncertainty extends to the three cities of north-western Etruria, Vetulonia, Populonia and Volterra, all of which had become considerable centres during the Orientalizing period<sup>56</sup>.

Some possible objections which might be made against this version of the Greek role in the rise of the Etruscan city now deserve to be considered<sup>57</sup>.

It has been pointed out by Gras that only towards the very end of the eighth century is Greek pottery (Protocorinthian) found north of Monte Argentario, that is north of the territory of Vulci<sup>58</sup>. It is therefore possible, even likely, that the earlier contacts of most of the northern Etruscans, including those of the area of Roselle, with Greeks had been superficial. This should cause no anxiety, however, for (apart from other considerations) we have no reason to think that the Etruscans of this northern region were living in cities before 700; in fact the absence of earlier material from the habitation site of Roselle suggests that they were not.

It might also be claimed that the Greek city itself was still so rudimentary in the eighth century that it can hardly have taught anything to the Etruscans<sup>59</sup>. It was undoubtedly a simple affair by the standards of later times, but an accumulating archaeological dossier shows that from the ninth century onwards some important advances were being made. Before 800, for example, Smyrna already had a fortification wall<sup>60</sup>. In spite of the problems associated with the archaeology of early Eretria, it is clear that by the mid-eighth century it was emerging as a sizeable settlement which we can without discomfort call a city<sup>61</sup>.

<sup>56</sup> On the earliest important material from these sites cf. *inter alii* CURRI 1978 (Vetulonia), FEDELI 1983 (Populonia), CATENI 1981 (Volterra).

<sup>57</sup> The argument is in any case not just *post hoc, propter hoc*; it can be seen why the arrival of the Greeks was likely to lead to the rise of cities.

<sup>58</sup> GRAS 1981, 320, with the comment of G. COLONNA (372).

<sup>59</sup> It has been argued recently, for instance, that the Greek city properly so called did not emerge until after 750 (WASOWICZ 1982, a book which is known to me only through GIULIANO 1984, 5-8). On the other hand KAHIL 1981 [1983], for example, tends to push the date of Eretria back further. GIULIANO 8-22 gives a useful bibliography of recent work on the very early Greek city, including the colonies; on the western cities cf. especially DI VITA 1981 [1983].

<sup>60</sup> According to COLDSTREAM 1977, 303, « the eighth-century [Greek] city still consisted of a group of detached and unfortified villages », but his own detailed account (303-315) shows that this is somewhat too negative. On the date of the walls of Smyrna see NICHOLLS 1958-1959, 122.

<sup>61</sup> What happened in Euboea, at Lefkandi and later at Eretria (on which see, for instance,

The fairly extensive evidence from Megara Hyblaea for the conversion to rectilinear house plans<sup>62</sup> is probably to be associated with the foundation of the city<sup>63</sup>. Thucydides (VI.4.1-2) dates this event to the 720s, and though some of his modern critics have wanted to put it a generation earlier he should probably be believed. The fact that we are not able to show in minute detail the relationship of the earliest Etruscan city-building to these and other such developments is unfortunate, but it should not prevent us from seeing their relevance to what happened in Etruria.

The initial phase of Etruscan urbanization is probably to be dated to the late eighth century. By 650 not only had Vulci and Tarquinia taken on a somewhat urban form, so in all likelihood had Veii, Cerveteri, Roselle, and also possibly Vetulonia and Populonia. All of course had more or less easy access to the coast<sup>64</sup>, and their development must always be interpreted in the light of that fact<sup>65</sup>.

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KAHL 1981 [1983]), is obviously important for developments in the west. So is Zagora (on Andros), if it is really an Eretrian settlement.

<sup>62</sup> See VALLET, VILLARD & AUBERSON 1976, 404-413, with plan 11; the latter is reproduced by DI VITA 1981 [1983], 67.

<sup>63</sup> The rectilinear houses in question are the earliest level on the site (apart from material of much earlier date). But the excavators do not seem to have hazarded the common-sense conclusion that they date from the very beginning of the colony's life.

<sup>64</sup> Chiusi is the first Etruscan city far inland; it probably emerged in urban form in the early sixth century (cf. TORELLI 1980, 310).

<sup>65</sup> FREY 1984 offers a stimulating study of a phenomenon parallel to the one studied in this paper, the rise of the *oppidum* in north continental Europe.

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