3.3.4 The Tiber and Rome Through Two Millennia

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3.3.4.1 General information on the Tiber Valley Project

The British School at Rome's Tiber Valley Project is a collaborative research initiative involving 12 British universities and institutions and a number of Italian scholars. The project is concerned to treat the Tiber Valley as the hinterland of Rome, aiming to trace the impact of Rome's development, success and decline on the history of its settlement economy and cultural identity from 1000 BC to AD 1300. Despite the vast amount of work carried out in this area, resulting in a large and rich database, research has tended to concentrate on one or the other side of the valley and no study has ever examined the Tiber valley as a historical entity through time. Concentrating on the middle river valley from the territory of Ocriculum to Rome (see figure 1), the Project analyses the archaeological (including textual) material to review critically the growing database provided by previous and on-going work, both to interpret the significance of that material and guide current field projects towards an understanding of the evolving hinterland of Rome.

The project is considering three broad data sets: field walking collections, published sources (excavation and survey) and the results of on-going geophysical survey focusing on urban settlements. Within these data sets specific studies are being undertaken on aspects of the landscape.

The structure of the project operates on three levels: At the BSR two Leverhulme funded research fellows, under the direction of Helen Patterson, are collating, assessing and analyzing the various data sets to model settlement, landscape and communication history through time. Helga di Giuseppe is collating and assessing the published material and Rob Witcher is developing the database structures and the GIS system for the integration and analysis of the material.

The core data consists of published material, the information from the re-evaluation of the South Etruria survey being carried out by a team of specialists at the BSR, the unpublished data from the Farfa survey and the information from the on-going studies of specific aspects of landscape history (see below).

Studies of specific aspects of the landscape are being carried out by various British and Italian scholars and are being fed into the BSR Tiber valley GIS and database system to form an integral part of the final interpretation. For the pre-Roman and Roman period, at present these include roads, epigraphy, building materials, ornamental stone, ceramics, water management and sanctuaries. Another series of studies are focusing on the post-Roman period.

New field projects aimed at extending our knowledge of settlement organization are a further integral part of the broader project. At present these projects focus on the theme of urbanism - results shown in poster presentation.

The size of the Tiber Valley research area means that large-scale patterns of change and continuity, diversity and similarity can be explored. However the sheer quantity of the archaeological data and the size of the research area exclude the possibility of investigating the whole region in detail; as a result case studies have been identified for more in-depth analysis. These have been chosen on the basis of particular historical and methodological issues. We will focus our discussion on two of these case studies Veio and Cures and their respective territories.

The first phase of the work has focused on data collection and analysis. This has established a preliminary history of landscape formation from the Iron Age to the Roman period and has clarified the research program in terms of scale and strategy. Essential to the creation of the GIS/database structure has been a critical assessment of the nature of the data and its compatibility, which has permitted strategies to be formulated for the integration of the data. This first phase of the analysis has also set the stage for the next phase of investigation - interpretation.

Therefore although we are able to discuss the problems involved in integrating the evidence from different surveys and diverse data sets and the methodologies used to approach these problems, the interpretation of the data is still at an initial stage.

3.3.4.2 Settlement trends in the Tiber valley

The preliminary synthesis presented here is based largely on the review of the published evidence relating to both survey and excavation and, until the reassessment of this material has been completed, must be viewed with caution. On the west

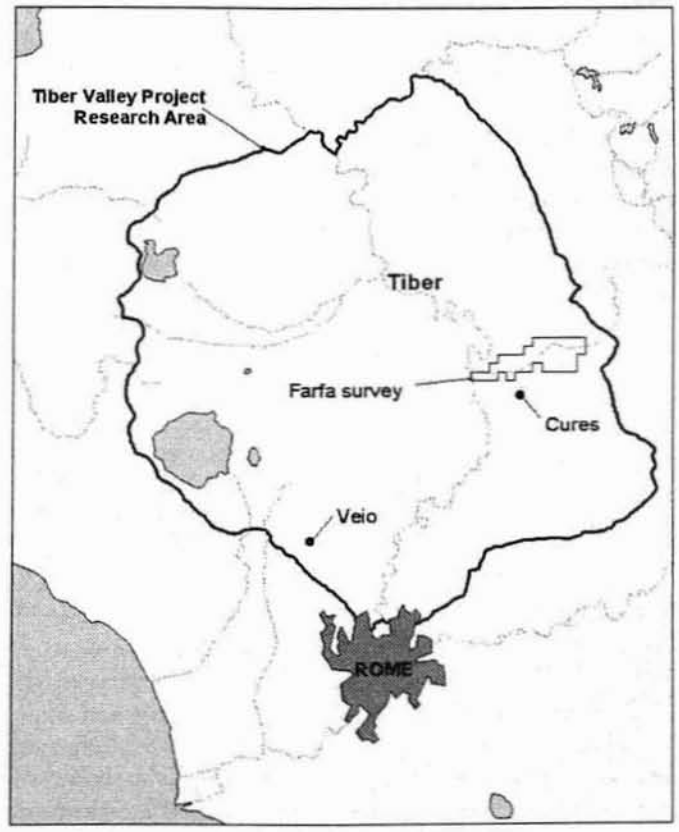

Figure 1: The Tiber Valley Project study area.

bank of the Tiber (Etruria) our main source of information is the South Etruria survey carried out in the 1950s to 70s, the results of which were synthesized by Tim Potter (1979). On the east bank of the Tiber (Sabina) systematic field survey has been much less common, however, Maria Pia Muzzioli's *Cures Sabini* survey, and John Moreland's Farfa survey represent important contributions to our understanding of settlement. The Tiber Valley Project is assessing the different strengths and weaknesses of these data sets through the re-evaluation of the South Etruria and Farfa surveys, a critical review of the published evidence and new field projects.

The preliminary results of this re-assessment suggest that the Project will result in the substantial modification of current interpretations of settlement history in the region. This has potential implications beyond the Tiber valley, as much research – for example, on the nature of the Roman economy in Italy – is based upon evidence from this region. On the basis of currently published information, settlement in the valley can be summarized as follows (see also table 1):

Iron Age (10th – late 8th century BC)
Emergence of nucleated settlements, which can be defined as 'proto-urban'. The landscape is characterized by settlements of diverse dimensions situated on plains, of which Rome represents one of many examples. On the west bank of the Tiber, there is a concentration of population in large nucleated settlements that can reach up to 150 hectares (e.g. Veio). There is still debate as to the organization of these settlements – whether they were continuous or comprised of separate 'villages'. The Sabina, on the east bank, shows a slightly different development. Here settlement hierarchy develops only from the late Iron Age (8th century BC); nucleated centers are located closer to the Tiber and are much smaller (*ca.* 1-5 hectares) than the Etruscan examples.

Orientalizing / Archaic period (end of 8th – 5th century BC)
In Etruria, rural organization becomes more extensive and diverse – small settlements on plains and near communication routes, small 'aristocratic' sites with tumuli. The urban centers were also becoming more clearly defined, for example, with regularized layouts, roads, etc. In Sabina, there was an increase in the size of nucleated centers (up to 25-30ha), though they remained smaller than the Etruscan centers. Rural organization also became more complex, with clearer settlement hierarchies.

Roman period (4th century BC – 3rd century AD)
Following the Roman conquest, there were major changes in the urban organization of both banks of the Tiber. Several pre-existing centers in Etruria received colonies (e.g. Nepi); others centers were forcibly abandoned (e.g. Falerii Veteres) or significantly declined in size (e.g. Eretum); new formal urban foundations were established (e.g. Falerii Novi and Forum Novum) and a number of road stations developed on the consular roads. In the countryside, the density of rural settlement continued to increase; villas became widespread, though there was substantial variation in date and distribution. The diverse development of urban centers continued into the imperial period and the density of rural settlement reached its peak during the first two centuries AD.

3.3.4.3 Evaluation of research biases
As stressed above, one of the principal sources of data for the project is surface survey. Within the Tiber valley, but in South Etruria especially, these stretch back to the 1950s. There have obviously been major changes in the methodologies used, and results achieved, over this time. Brief examples are provided by two of our case study areas:

Cures Sabini / Farfa
The area has been the focus of much 'systematic' archaeological research, starting during the 19th century (Gamurrini *et al.* 1972) focusing particularly on Roman roads and villas and Etruscan tombs. During the late 1950s, Barri Jones' *Ager Capenas* survey, part of the wider South Etruria Survey, shifted attention towards scatters of material, increasing site density, though the strong relationship between sites and roads/ridges suggest that the survey did not systematically cover the whole landscape (Jones 1963).

	Proto-Villanovan / Villanovan	Early Etruscan / Faliscan	Late Etruscan / Faliscan	Republican	Roman Imperial (1st century)	Roman Imperial (2nd century – includes all ARS)
Ager Faliscus	27	72	104	142	207	199
Ager Veientanus	16	137	127	242	327	307
Ager Capenas	4	39	22	90	100	124
Sutrium	0	1	1	32	50	67
Via Flaminia (unpub)	6	34	59	66	70	71
Cassia-Clodia	26	31	32	63	71	57
Eretum	‡	‡	‡	53	57	56

Table 1: South Etruria and Eretum, settlement by period (based on Potter 1979, tables 2-5). ‡ denotes no data provided.

Period	Number
Prehistoric	2
Iron Age	13
Archaic	55
Republican	29
Early Republican	4
Mid Republican	1
Late Republican	15
Late Republican/Early Imperial	184
Roman	36
Early Imperial	25
Late Imperial	28
Imperial	10
Early Medieval	1
Medieval	11
Iron Age – Archaic	1
Pre-Roman – Roman	1
Roman - Early Medieval	1
Undated	41
Total	**458**

Table 2: Cures Sabini, site numbers by period (based on Muzzioli 1980).

During the 1970s, the area was surveyed for a volume of the *Forma Italiae* series (Muzzioli 1980). This collated previously known evidence and increased significantly both the number of known sites and their distribution across the landscape, but is strongly biased towards structural remains such as villa platforms. Most recently, John Moreland's Farfa survey of the mid 1980s adopted a very different approach to survey – off-site methodology – to identify a new level of detail (Moreland 1987). It is particularly important for the evidence it provides for the medieval period. The results of this survey have not yet been published and the Project is currently working with John Moreland to achieve this.

Veio

The evidence from this major Etruscan and Roman center comprises both excavation (focusing almost exclusively on the plain of Veio itself and the surrounding necropoleis) and surface survey. The immediate 100 km² around Veio has been covered by several different surveys from the 1950s to 1970s. The precise methodologies adopted are not always clear, though significant differences can be discerned from their results, for example, the highly diverse number of settlements (i.e. density). 'Metadata' about the nature of these surveys are gradually being pieced together from publications and archive material, as well as the integration of these results with other information, for example, satellite data, contemporary aerial photographs, etc. It is clear, for example, that the area to the northeast of the city is particularly well known (see Kahane *et al.* 1968), in terms of extent of coverage, number of revisits, etc., whilst the area to the west is comparatively poorly-known. This work does not necessarily allow us to calibrate or weight our figures in a formal or statistical sense, but allows us to take these biases into account when we use these data.

Summary

Dealing with recovery biases requires us to treat our data in their methodological contexts. In other words, we are assuming that sites collected by a survey have been 'filtered' through more similar processes (e.g. collection strategies, etc.), than sites from another survey. This includes repeat surveys of the same area, where changes in the nature of the archaeological record itself interact with the different methodologies used.

A central means of approaching these different data sets is to characterize them through the comparison of their results. This allows us to understand individual data sets more clearly by highlighting their particular strengths and weaknesses – which type of sites do surveys recognize or not recognize, which aspects of these sites were recorded or not recorded? The next stage is to use our knowledge of one survey to shed light on another; in this respect we are particularly fortunate as we have a number of sites, which have been recorded by more than one survey. For example, amphora may only have been collected by the Farfa survey, but this evidence may allow us to understand better the mere observation of the presence of amphora by the other surveys.

In *The Changing Landscape of South Etruria* (Potter 1979), Potter treats the individual South Etruria surveys separately in order to identify patterning in the settlement of different parts of the region. Once re-assessment of the material from the surveys is complete, a central question of the Tiber Valley Project will concern the degree to which this patterning is a product of methodology.

In no case can we simply 'add' these results together to achieve an unbiased data set, or perfect data set – this is an impossible objective. Nor can simple laws or generalizations be made about the integration of these data. Work must proceed on a case-by-case basis. Nonetheless, despite the shifts in ways in which sites are manifested, recovered and defined, these different data sets complement one another and help us produce a more rounded impression of settlement history.

3.3.4.4 Explanation on the regional level

Archaeological evidence has always been used to map the effects of various political and economic processes on the landscape, such as the changing pattern of settlement. The Tiber Valley Project, with its emphasis on the production of a new materially based history of the valley, aims to prompt renewed consideration of the ways archaeological data are used to investigate historical processes.

The archaeology of the landscape of Rome's hinterland must do more than describe the changing form of the material record. It is true that archaeological materials result from the operation of certain historical processes, in the way that the changing pattern of surface material is partly the product of changing settlement organization. But the landscape of which these settlements were a part was built out of enormously complex relationships between people and their changing material conditions. In these relation-

ships the material world itself was a participant, acting as a 'technology' through which social and economic relationships could be built. The material can therefore be viewed from two perspectives:

1. as the means of achieving certain social, political and economic ends;
2. as the consequence of the operation of those strategies.

It is the first of these, which is often poorly developed in the discussion of landscape history. A reason for this is that analysis often begins with categories of material recovered rather than with the particular social strategies that those material conditions facilitated. In the context of a project concerning the Tiber valley as the hinterland of Rome, analysis involves exploring the particular social strategies by which Rome's growth and decline contributed to the evolving history of the valley.

The original project design offered guidance as to how the archaeological data could examine these issues under the headings of (i) settlement history, (ii) communication networks, (iii) artefact production and consumption, (iv) environment. These themes are useful categories for the organization of the data and will remain the focus of analysis, but it is the way in which these themes combined, and the strategies by which they operated, which give a period or region its historically specific character.

The Tiber valley project treats the changing material conditions of the period as being both created by evolving political, social and economic circumstances, but also as facilitating the history of those circumstances. The themes of analysis will therefore concentrate upon issues of changing political and social control over land, people and material resources (e.g. artefact production, brick stamps, settlement organization, land allocation) and the varying ways these became effective through the technologies of communication (e.g. roads, writing); how they achieved success or failure in capital accumulation (indicators of wealth investment in the land through agricultural activity and building programs); achieved the outward display of social authority and patronage (gifts, dedications and monuments) and drew upon various forms of ideological legitimacy (political and religious dedications). These themes will be traced from the protohistoric period through the classical period, late antiquity and into the medieval period.

3.3.4.5 Macro-regional trends

In many respects, the banks of the Tiber valley itself have been treated as two very different regions. Archaeological investigation has been strongly focused on South Etruria at the expense of Sabina, treating the river as boundary without critically assessing this assumption.

As outlined above, the impact of the growth of Rome forms a key theme for the Tiber Valley Project, though this framework has obvious importance beyond this area, as a means of assessing similarity and difference in regional settlement. Often the focus of this particular issue has been the economic impact of Rome – and the Tiber Valley Project intends to use the reassessment of the South Etruria surveys to assess some of these arguments. However, the development of Rome also affected the social and political organization of the valley.

Here, urbanisation is an important theme for the Project. The inadequacy of a single model, or even several regional models, of urbanism for the Roman period is increasingly obvious. The brief outline of urban development in the valley provided above demonstrates that there was immense diversity even within this comparatively small area of the Tiber valley. Fieldwork at Falerii Novi (S. Keay and M. Millett) and Forum Novum (V. Gaffney, H. Patterson and P. Roberts) on either side of the Tiber demonstrates two very different urban expressions and an initial impression is that the Roman period actually initiated more, not less, variety in the nature of urbanism in the area.

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