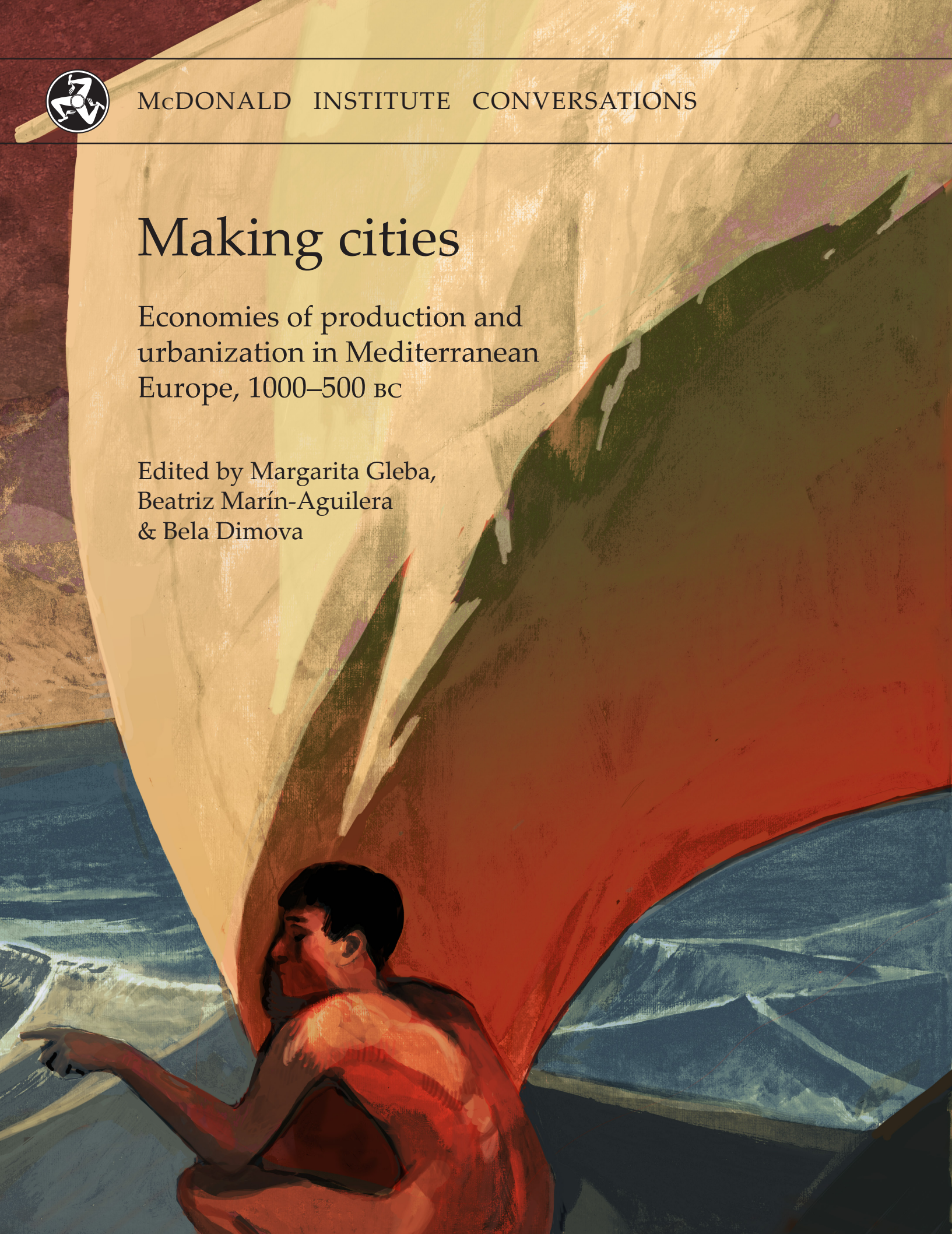

McDONALD INSTITUTE CONVERSATIONS

Making cities

Economies of production and urbanization in Mediterranean Europe, 1000–500 BC

Edited by Margarita Gleba,
Beatriz Marín-Aguilera
& Bela Dimova

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with contributions from
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Chapter 15

Defining space, making the city: urbanism in Archaic Rome

Jeffrey A. Becker

Roman realities can be frustrating. The city has long been treated as a paradigmatic example of Mediterranean urbanism and, as a result, has become the ultimate laboratory for pontificating about the urban phenomena in the Mediterranean world of the first millennium BC. Rome is treated as *urbs perfecta*, while the poorly concealed reality is that she, like all other urban centres, can only ever be *urbs imperfecta*. When did the city of Rome become a Roman city? Too often we treat Rome differently than other ancient cities and, sometimes, that rarefied status can become an impediment to discussing fundamental issues related to the development of the city. At times, we might get the sense that Augustan Rome, for instance, appeared fully formed and was in effect a sort of urban monolith. Similarly, we tend to lump cities together in ways that might prove less than helpful. Nicholas Purcell declared that Rome is just like Greek cities – but of which Rome does he speak (Purcell 2010, 579)? There are innumerable instances of the city of Rome, real and imagined, but it is in an awareness of this versioning that one might observe fundamental elements that play a role in shaping the city that goes on to receive, even if not always deservedly, the aforementioned treatment.

The archaic iteration of the urban *locus classicus* is one of the most fraught of all, sandwiched as it is between the vagaries of archaeology, history and mythology. The intellectual battles over the reading of early Rome and the sequences of significant events in the early centuries of the city's existence continue to be fierce. This is not to say that a consideration of the Archaic city is without merit. Indeed, it seems as though the archaeology of Archaic Rome is constantly in need of reassessment. Rome during the Archaic period remains a notoriously challenging subject to approach, as the Archaic phase of the city exists at an evidentiary intersection that is permanently entangled in debates about how scholarship ought to best approach a place like Rome, with its deeply embedded mytho-historical backstory. This tangle of sources results in the formation of rather dogmatic intellectual camps that can alternately call for the wholesale abandonment of misleading textual sources to being persuaded to admit that the texts might contain some kernel of historical fact (see Claridge 2018 for comments on adopting what seems to be a radical, archaeology-driven approach to Roman topography). Discussions of urbanism are not immune from this debate and can benefit from a consideration of the viewpoints offered by both the textual and the archaeological record. This intersection of source material calls attention to the importance of place and the definition of space in the earliest phases of the city. A consideration of space in the city – its use, delimitation and allocation – provides an opportunity to consider the dynamics of the life of the settlement all the while examining the means by which familiar nodes of activity come into being as they contribute to the making of Rome.

The story of any urban centre is by necessity concerned with space. Cities are dependent upon the allocation and tasking of space, the creation of boundaries and plot divisions, the enforcement of ownership, the regulation of land – in short, the creation of an enforced sense of order that is meant to prevail over natural chaos. For this reason, one tends to think of the *urbs perfecta* as orderly, neat, regular – conditions that most city dwellers – both ancient and modern – will concede are illusory. Rome offers no such pretence. The Archaic city is a disorderly settlement that grows organically, and thus is neither neat nor orderly. Later writers and historians will attempt to convince us that various founder figures, Servius Tullius for instance, created order; all of these attempts build upon the original claim that Romulus himself created divinely sanctioned order by laying out the boundaries of the Palatine city, later encoded in Roman memory as *Roma*

quadrata (Tacitus *Ann.* 12.24). Livy tells us that marauding Gauls are indirectly to blame for Rome's disorderly spatial composition, as eager Romans were too hasty in their zeal to rebuild following the Gallic sack (Liv. 5.55). These spatial concerns lie at the heart not only of the city's topographic identity, but also influence in a significant way the lifeways of those living at the site of Rome. The practices of creating boundaries and designated use areas, in fact, colour many elements of the city's foundational folklore, and we must admit that the designation and tasking of space is an important aspect of making any Archaic city (see Bagnasco Gianni *et al*. in this volume). Throughout, we should beware of anachronistic projection and should be cautious in the assumptions we form about the nature and use of the Archaic city and its spaces. An examination of several classes of evidence, as well as sites peripheral to the *urbs*, is instructive in terms of exploring the ways in which Archaic settlements in the *ager Romanus* are developing and the ways in which those sites demarcate space, exploit resources and engage in economic activity in both short- and long-range senses.

Making civic space – the *Forum Romanum* and its environs

Establishing the centre and appropriately sign-posting its social and cultural valence is an objective for elites in a complex society. In Rome's case, the nearly kilometre-long valley stretching between the Capitoline and Palatine hills represented a central focus, given its proximity to the river Tiber and its fluvial harbour in the area of the Forum Boarium (Fig. 15.1). Ancient voices offer us a variety of visions of this frequently

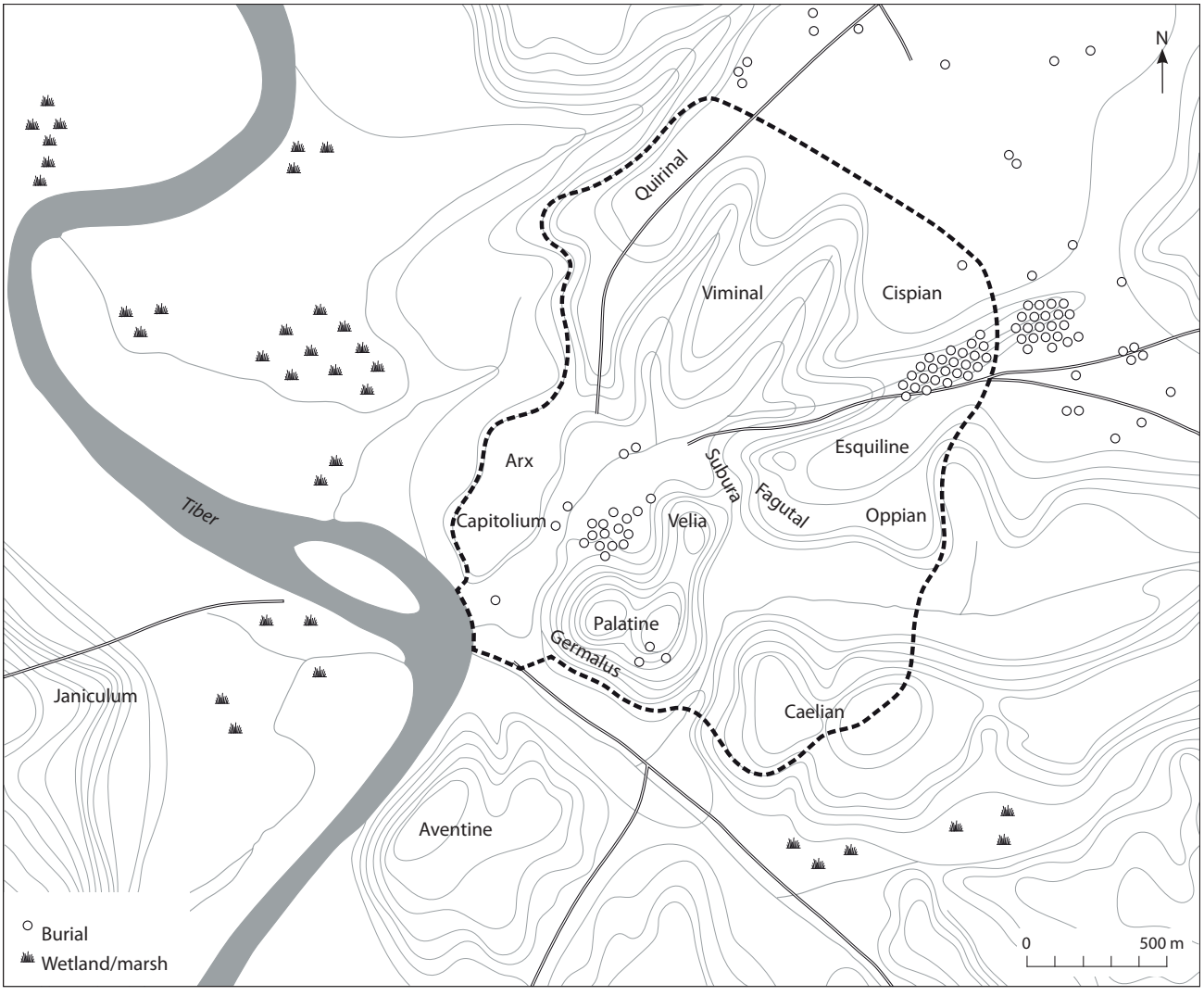

Figure 15.1. *Plan of Rome's territory in the Archaic period (V. Herring, after Coarelli 2008, fig. 1).*

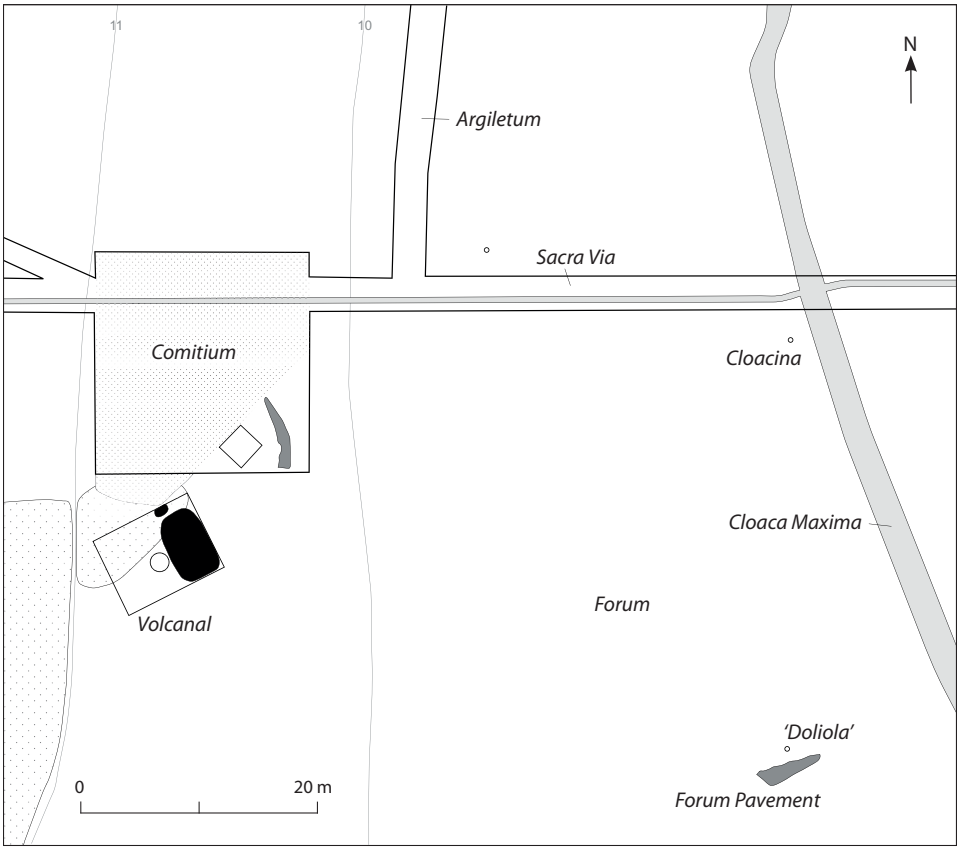

Figure 15.2. *Plan of the area of the Volcanal and the Comitium in the seventh and sixth centuries* BC *(V. Herring, after Carafa 2005, fig. 6).*

damp space that plays an outsize role in making the city of Rome. The pragmatic Plautus paints the picture of a *forum* square that is filled with the paragons of high and low culture, while the Ovidian version offers a pastoral reminder of the time before the *forum* was a bustling centre of civic and commercial activity (see Plautus *Curculio* 470–82 and Ovid *Fasti* 6.401–14). In considering the processes by which Rome becomes an urban centre in the Archaic period, these voices are useful in that they demonstrate for us the various ways in which the vital functions of the space of the *forum* are encoded in the Roman consciousness. But these later Republican voices can mislead us, as the Forum valley of the early city was a radically different place than its later iterations. One of the valley's earliest nodes offers a glimpse, albeit enigmatic, of these earlier days.

In the narrative of Rome's foundation, the shrine of Vulcan, commonly referred to as the Volcanal (Fig. 15.2), plays a prominent role (Camassa 1984). The textual sources identify the Volcanal as a place of assembly and a location for conducting public business (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 6.67.2, 7.17.2, 11.39.1). Dionysius of Halicarnassus discusses the accord between Romulus and Titus Tatius and the activities they engaged in to both organize and expand the space of the city of Rome (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.50.2). Central in this narrative is the process by which Romans deforested the slopes of the Capitoline hill in order to fill the valley to make a plain on which the *forum* could be built and establishing the shrine of Vulcan upslope from that plain. The area of the shrine of Vulcan remained important in the sacred topography of the city, even though the last recorded public assembly occurred there under the *decemvir* Appius Claudius Sabinus in the middle of the fifth century BC (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 11.39.1-2). The sacred area maintained its character, as Livy reports the observation of a rain of blood there as late as 181 BC (Liv. 40.19.2).

The *area Vulcani* seems to lie in close proximity to the *area Concordiae* and ritual activity links these sacred areas early on, although they remained spatially distinct (the *aedile* Cn. Flavius dedicated an *aedicula Concordiae* in 303 BC). There is an argument to be made, in fact, that the *area Vulcani* and the archaic Comitium may have coincided. The exact relationship between Volcanal and Comitium is debated, with both Coarelli and Carafa taking up different elements of the argument (Coarelli 1999; Carafa 2005). If Coarelli's interpretation is followed, there is reason to believe that the Volcanal is effectively the shrine of the Comitium, thus making Vulcan the tutelary divinity of the popular assembly.

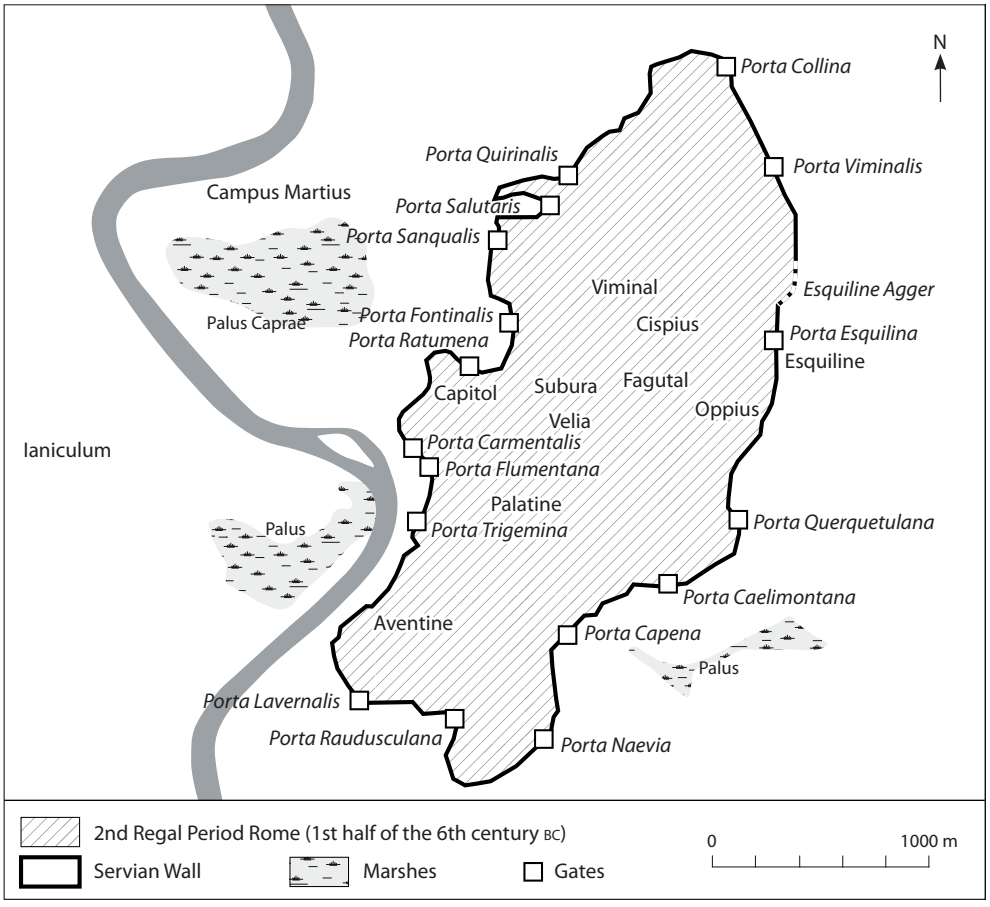

Figure 15.3. *Reconstructed plan of Rome within the so-called 'Servian Wall' (V. Herring, after Cifani 1997).*

There are interesting implications to such a reading, in both the short and long term. The northwest corner of the Forum valley experienced radical transformations in the later Republican period, such that remains of the Archaic landscape would have been scarce (Fig. 15.3). Dionysius confirms the position of the Volcanal itself, argues Coarelli, and it should be placed to the south of the Comitium along with the Rostra and the Graecostasis (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 5.25.2; Coarelli 1999, 210). This key node of the early city would disappear in the Sullan period (*c.* 80 BC), as a project to re-pave the Forum would obliterate the sanctuary and cover the spot with black paving stones, yielding the famed *Lapis Niger*. It is interesting, then, that the memory of Vulcan and his cult's contribution to the formation of the city centre was not forgotten. Augustus would dedicate an inscribed base to Vulcan in 9 BC (*CIL* 6, 457 = *ILS* 93), preserving the memory of this early and important locus of activity.

Foundation themes and spaces connected to them are vital to the Augustan program and Vulcan becomes a recurrent theme in Roman ktistic legends. This role is not insignificant in terms of considering the socio-economic valence of the space of the *forum*, the Comitium and the Volcanal. Literary sources link Augustus to both Numa and Servius Tullius, and thereby to Aeneas, in repeating the theme of sacred fire as well as in the discussion of Servius' miraculous birth from the hearthplace phallus of Vulcan (Littlewood 2002, 208; Flower 2017, 20). In this light, we might also consider that the Regia and the sanctuary of Vesta might be seen as pendant to the Archaic Volcanal, as they occupy the downward slope of the *clivus Palatinus* at the opposite end of the valley, at a position that would place them above typical flood maximums. These pendant Archaic shrines serve to frame the emergent *forum* square.

The Comitium itself is an important nodal point in the urban landscape.[1] Taken together with the institution of the *curiae*, the Comitium embodies the integrative forces that help to make the city coalesce. *Curia* refers both to Archaic civic groupings and to assembly points at which those groups could meet. The Comitium also facilitates the communal meeting

of citizens, an institution that the sources ascribe to the Regal period. The physical Comitium located at the northwest corner of the Forum valley, adjacent to the Volcanal, becomes one of the key civic institutions of the city, as well as one of the most difficult of topographic problems (Carafa 1997). Indeed, this building type is often viewed as canonically Roman, in spite of the poor preservation of the Republican Comitium at Rome and the relatively small number of derivative examples attested elsewhere. The process of civic gathering in this space is read as a fundamental element of Roman political identity (Humm 2005).

Questions about the Forum valley and the earliest activity there are practically as old as the discipline of Roman archaeology. The data produced by the excavations undertaken by Giacomo Boni (1903–1904) and continued by Einar Gjerstad in the late 1940s and early 1950s remain important to the debate that focuses on the origins of the *forum* space (Gjerstad 1966, 358–63). Those excavations demonstrated that at least 29 anthropic horizons could be identified in the Forum basin as sampled in the vicinity of the *Equus Domitiani*, indicating that at least part of the valley had been deliberately filled.

The filling of the Forum valley has been the focus of renewed and informed discussion since deep soundings and cores were carried out by Albert Ammerman in the late 1980s. Ammerman's environmental evidence also proved useful for the reconstruction of the original relief of the terrain stretching from the Capitoline hill to the Palatine. The work conducted by Ammerman allowed not only for a reappraisal of the stratigraphic situation, but also for an investigation of the relief of the terrain prior to the landfill operations. This reconstruction demonstrated that a narrow shelf surrounded the basin and this shelf may have provided the location for early urban activity, notably at sites like the Volcanal (Ammerman 1990). This study of the basin also addressed the claims advanced by Boni and Gjerstad about a habitation stratum in the Forum valley, showing convincingly that what had been read as a habitation horizon was in fact another stratum of anthropic landfill (Ammerman 1990). The landfill project represents a serious investment in the central, collective space of the Archaic city. It is likely that this activity takes place at some point between 650 and 575 BC, a period that is coincident with other significant activity on the Capitoline hill, in the Velabrum, and in the Forum Boarium (Ammerman 1990, 643). The Velabrum is of particular interest and has been the focus of recent fieldwork that continues to reshape our knowledge of the history of this key sector of the city (Ammerman 1998). Since the east bank of the Tiber served as an important node of ancient communication, both in terms of transportation and commerce, an understanding of this area of the city from both the archaeological and geological perspectives is important. It is worthy of note that the manipulation of the physical landscape at the site of Rome finds an interesting parallel in the urbanism of other central Italian centres, notably the Etruscan city of Veii and its extensive system of rock-cut cuniculi (Judson & Kahane 1963, 87-8). These deliberate and programmatic campaigns of landscape intervention serve as important indicators of the processes of centralization by means of which these Archaic centres coalesced.

Scholarly opinion is mixed in terms of the timeline of human settlement and activity in the area of the Velabrum and the Forum Boarium from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age (Brock & Terrenato 2016; Ammerman 2018). What is clear is that the reclaiming of land in the area of the Forum Boarium and Velabrum represents another part of the Archaic operations to make usable spaces in valleys and floodplains. The activities connected with the build-up of the sacred area of Sant'Omobono and the Forum Boarium (Fig. 15.4) are impressive in their scale and would continue beyond the Archaic period, reclaiming a significant area along the eastern bank of the Tiber (Ammerman 2018, 407–8).

The Velabrum itself may also be connected to the emergence of terracotta rooftiles at Rome. A tile fabric (labelled as Fabric A) that dates earlier than 600 BC has been identified in all of the samples studied from Rome during that period, and petrographic analysis of the Fabric A samples has linked them to a clay source in the Velabrum (Ammerman *et al*. 2008, 25–7). The emergence of tile-making and the sourcing of the raw materials locally in the seventh century BC has significant implications for questions of technology and economy, especially since Rome is keeping pace with best practices in Etruria and elsewhere. The adoption of tile roofs would necessitate different architectural technology and materials, namely stone-built foundations, at a time when the centre of Rome is achieving better definition in terms of architecture and the zoning of space. This required more local resource exploitation, namely the quarrying of squared blocks of tuff to use in foundation courses. These shifts in architectural and roofing technology at the end of the seventh century BC are extremely important for the developments that are to come in the sixth century, namely the monumentalization of key sites in the urban centre of Rome. The fact that these environmental results suggest the early exploitation of local materials is exciting in terms of Rome's own urbanism and the developmental arc of technical sophistication among Romans.

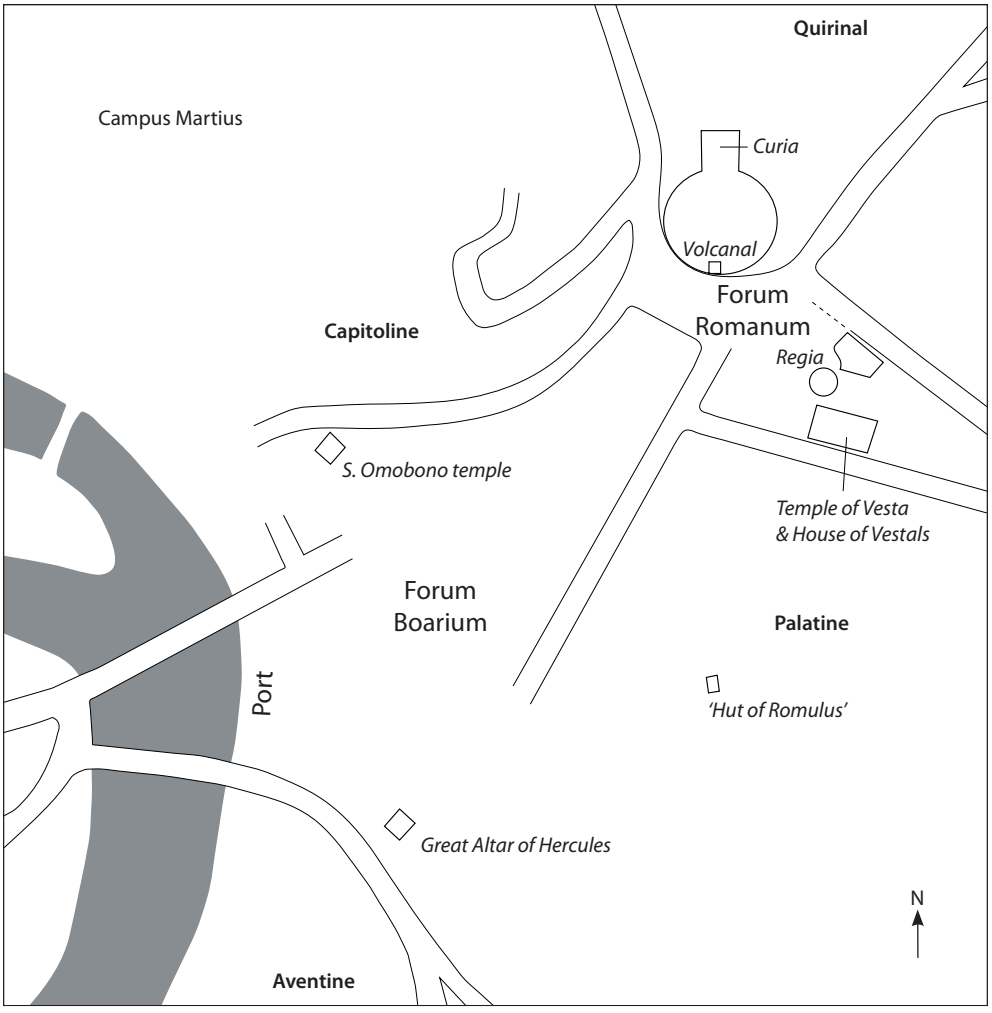

Figure 15.4. *Sketch plan of the area of the Forum Boarium and Velabrum in the seventh century* BC *(V. Herring, after Lomas 2018, fig. 16).*

Monumentality

Making the city in a sense required the Romans to make it larger. The scale of sixth-century BC achievements at Rome is striking, especially in a comparative sense. The achievements at Rome outpace other contemporary programs in central Italy. Many architectural complexes reportedly receive significant renovation and restoration at the same time that landfill operations and the creation of the *Cloaca maxima* were transforming the usable space of the Forum valley. These works were deemed virtually without equal, but the labour itself was viewed as odious (Liv. 1.56.3). Livy relates the plebeian lamentations of *cives Romani* compelled to excavate the great *Cloaca maxima* in the valley of the Forum Romanum and, in so doing, provides an oft-cited indication of the Archaic workforce in early Rome and, not surprisingly, this Livian remark reflects more about Rome's struggles with class boundaries and social hierarchy than it does about the actual industry of construction as part of the productive economy (Liv. 1.56.2). Whether Livy's commentary reflects Archaic or Republican realities, it is significant that the plebeian laments focus on the role of elites in tasking labour and material in order to fashion the monumental elements of the city of Rome (Palombi 2013). It is without doubt or contention that sixth-century BC Rome experienced a massive wave of monumentalization that produced key ritual centres, in addition to birthing the civic heart of the city. The Forum Romanum is treated rightly as a *locus classicus* when addressing any topic related to Roman urbanism but the development of this key space in its earliest stages should be scrutinized not just for its own purposes, but also as an index of the nascent urbanism at the site of Rome. These investments in urban infrastructure, including a series of stone-built fortifications, serve as key indicators of the collective power of the Roman tribes and their willingness to project that power through the urban centre (Cifani 1998; Bernard 2012). The implications of these collective actions are transformative and far-reaching. Even though the continuum of development is not smooth

and uninterrupted, the establishment of key institutions in the Archaic period plays a significant role in shaping Roman identity.

The fluvial harbour on the banks of the Tiber served as a vital economic hub and thus can be considered as another key node in the making of the Archaic city. As with the Forum valley, this area was subject to regular inundation, a circumstance that would have likely complicated trade and other regular activities that occurred there, including the ritual activity that mediated trade activities (Brock 2017, 168). This mediation is evident in that the Archaic sanctuary located in the sacred area of Sant'Omobono faced the harbour, helping to welcome outsiders to Rome (Brocato & Terrenato 2017, 105).

The development of the Sant'Omobono sanctuary is doubly important in considering the fashioning of the early city. The early phase of the sanctuary consisted of a mudbrick structure atop a stone podium, which is considered to be the earliest temple known in the city (Brocato & Terrenato 2017, 104; Diffendale *et al*. 2016, 13–14 suggest a date of *c*. 580–570 BC). As this sanctuary developed during the course of the sixth century BC, it became increasingly more elaborate and more resistant to its flood-prone location (Diffendale *et al*. 2016, 11–12; Brock 2016, 15). These developments continued into the later sixth and early fifth centuries BC with more extensive landfill activity. This reminds us that these activities were not restricted to the Forum valley and underscores the fact that flood-prone areas were deemed worthy locations in which to invest both labour and material. Fieldwork at Sant'Omobono has demonstrated that some fills likely originate on the Capitoline hill where other massive Archaic works were underway (Diffendale *et al.* 2016, 24–5). The possible presence of these fills and sediments from the Capitoline hill could even cause one to consider the coordinated nature of such projects to realize the sanctuary at Rome's fluvial harbour while simultaneously building the poliadic temple on the hilltop.

Atop the Capitoline hill, the construction of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus is perhaps the clearest statement of Rome's urban image. This temple would become Rome's poliadic cult place and sets new trends for architectural scale in the Italian peninsula. The structure is so massive that it has been suggested that its inspirations are not to be found in the Italic world, but rather in the monumental sanctuaries of Ionia (Carafa 1996, 40). The temple is realized during the sixth century BC, a fact that both the literary tradition and archaeological evidence seem to confirm. Beyond the particulars of its plan, the Capitoline temple as the embodiment of the city and its collective sacro-civic identity arrives at an important time when the Romans are in the process of defining themselves by means of their institutions. That these institutions survive political transformations that take place at the close of the so-called Regal period is telling in that it demonstrates the degree to which early spaces and their attached functions are at the basis of identity construction for people at the site of Rome.

Peri-urban evidence

The understandable impulse to focus on the centre of the city of Rome must be balanced by an awareness of the peri-urban evidence that pertains to key phases of Rome's political and economic development. The role of peri-urban spaces must also be considered as the relationship between centre and hinterland is of utmost importance in Rome's case from at least the Archaic period onward. While it is lamentable that the archaeological evidence for early peri-urban activity is scanty, the extant fragments do suggest the nature of this landscape during the Archaic and early Republican periods. One likely scenario involves landed elites who control large parcels of rural and peri-urban land. These landowners may have relied upon processes of clientage or dependency whereby tenant farmers occupied rural *fattorie* supplied to them by their patron (cf. Perkins in this volume). The small-scale rural farmsteads dating from the Archaic period suggest that those working the land lived modest lives while landowners may have enjoyed a higher standard of living. Indeed, it is also true in Etruria that elites project their power in extra-urban contexts, as seems to be the case at sites like Poggio Civitate di Murlo (see Tuck in this volume). Modest farm sites such as Acqua Acetosa Laurentina and Torrino, both along the Via Laurentina in Latium, conform to fairly standard types for non-elite Archaic buildings and are comparable to other contemporary rural architecture in the Italian peninsula, including examples from south Etruria (Bedini 1980; 1981; 1984).

While sites like Acqua Acetosa and Torrino represent an expected pattern of rural habitation in the Archaic period, the presence of hierarchy within settlement patterns and site types marks Rome's peri-urban landscape as even more interesting, since the rural landscape seems to correspond to the emergent social developments in the nascent urban centre. A small number of prestige sites in the rural hinterland of the city has thus far been identified, with the most important of these being the so-called 'Auditorium site' located within the Parco della Musica in the Parioli district of Rome (Figs. 15.5–15.6). The unexpected discovery of this multi-phase archaeological site indicates that the likelihood of rural seats for Archaic social

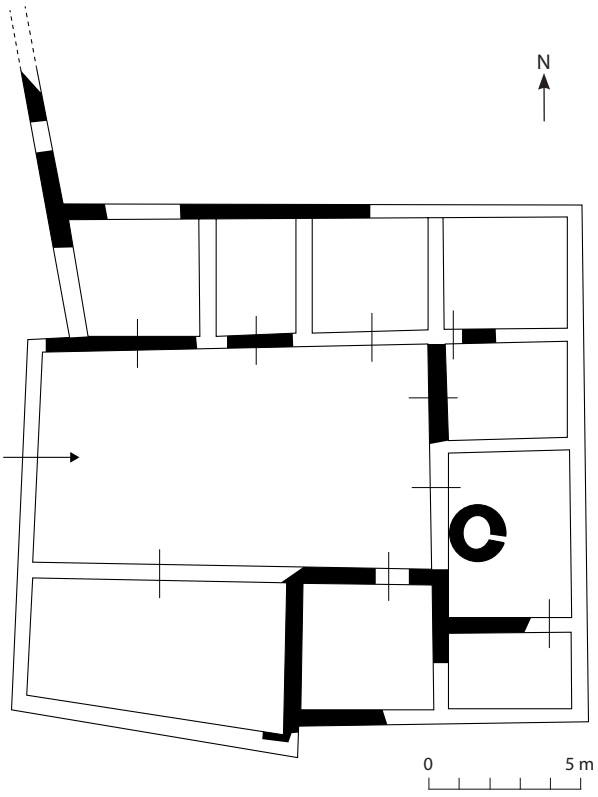

Figure 15.5. *Plan of phase 1 of the so-called 'Auditorium site' villa (V. Herring, after Carandini* et al. *1997).*

elites in the peri-urban spaces of the city of Rome is high and that these prestige sites should be considered alongside evidence for political centralization at the site of Rome.

The Auditorium site has been interpreted as being among the earliest examples of *villa* architecture, as well as being considered as a prototype of the slave-run Republican estate (on the Auditorium site as a prototype of the *villa*, see Terrenato 2001; for other readings of the site, see Carandini *et al*. 2006). It is notable for the quality of its construction and appointments, as well as for its longevity. The fact that it endures for centuries as a peri-urban prestige site is itself notable, especially since a great many of the villas documented in Rome's hinterland belong to the late Republican period or later (see Becker & Terrenato 2012; Volpe 2012). While the Auditorium site is the best preserved and thus far most comprehensively studied of these early peri-urban prestige sites, there may be others in this category. The re-evaluation of other sites, particularly the Villa delle Grotte at Grottarossa (Fig. 15.7), suggests that the Auditorium site is not a singleton and that Archaic urban elites used rural power as an asset in their participation in the political organization of Archaic Rome, as Terrenato has argued (Terrenato 2011, 241–2). The Grottarossa *villa* is similar to the Auditorium site in having a multi-phase occupational sequence and an early origin, although the preservation of its earliest phases is poor (Becker 2006).

The status of these early prestige sites and their location along axes of overland communication also call to mind the evidence that pertains to territorial integration of Roman rural tribes as part of Rome's state formation process, particularly during the Republican period. Lily Ross Taylor's pioneering work on Rome's tribal structure during the Republic attempts to understand and outline the nature of the tribes and the location (and limits) of their respective territories (Taylor 2013). The lay of the land in the Archaic period is perhaps less clear and is limited by evidentiary problems, but certainly issues of territorial integration were present. Christopher Smith argues that, in principle, there is a plausible argument to be made for the creation of rural tribes during the sixth century BC

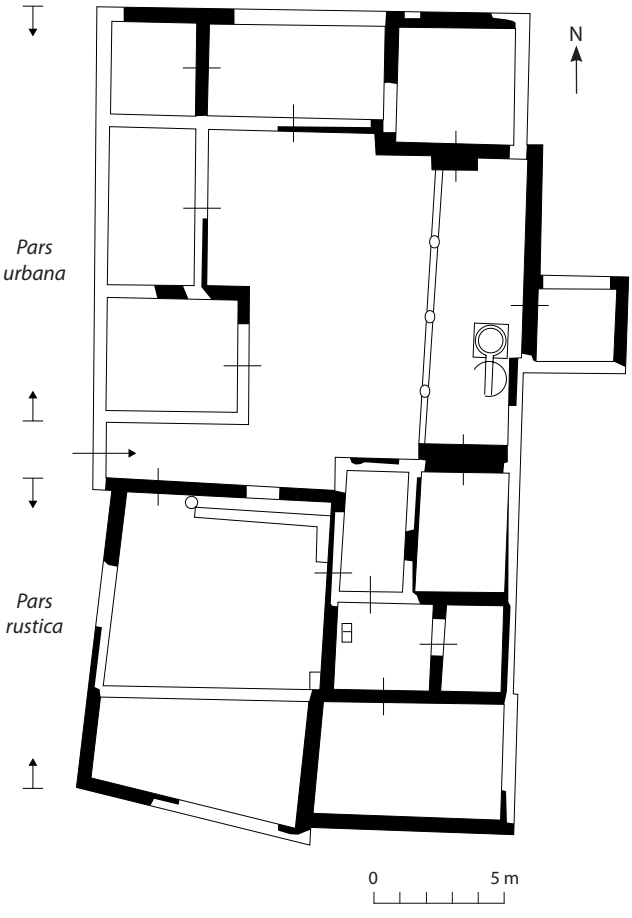

Figure 15.6. *Plan of phase 2 of the so-called 'Auditorium site' villa (V. Herring, after Carandini* et al. *1997).*

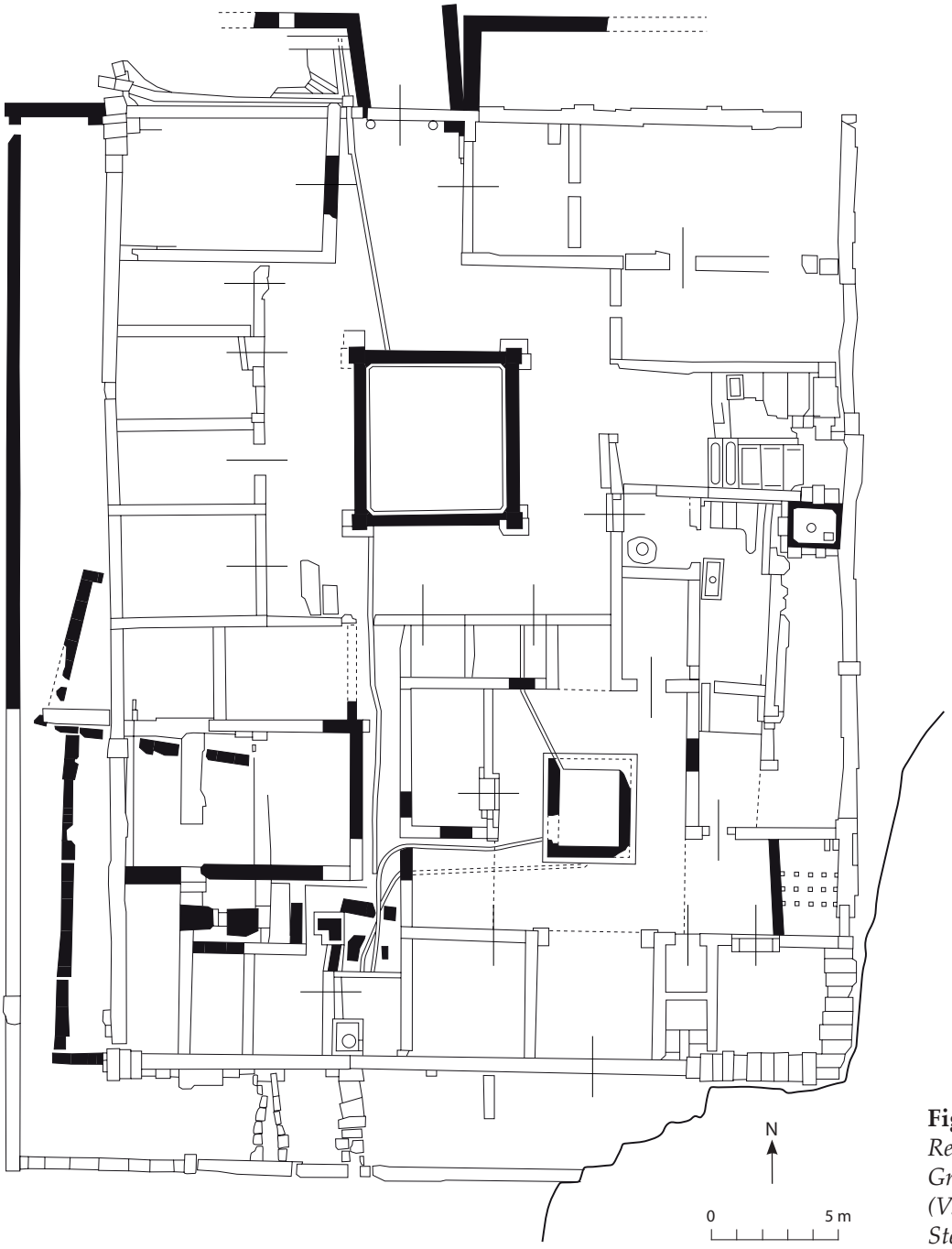

Figure 15.7. *Plan of the Republican 'Villa delle Grotte' at Grottarossa (V. Herring, after Stefani 1944).*

(Smith 2006, 236–7). One factor that could have motivated the organization of these tribes was Rome's expansionist tendencies. The Regal period witnesses the establishment of councils and assemblies whereby the monarch could summon civic gatherings for political and ritual purposes.

Recent analyses of territorial catchments for sites in Latium highlight the unusual nature of Rome's territory. Scholars have long sought to analyse the landscape of central Italy in terms of catchment size, employing models like Thiessen polygons. Recent work at Crustumerium demonstrates that Rome's territory outstrips that of its nearest Latin neighbours (Seubers 2016). Marco Pacciarelli observes that the major centres of Latium are distributed in a reasonably even way in the landscape, averaging about 13 km distance between centres (Pacciarelli 2001, 120–8). Rome is the outlier here, in that it is about 20 to 25 km distant from other primary centres in Latium. Attempts at territorial reconstruction vary, often being influenced by the

particular scholar's stance on when the *ager Romanus* came into existence and what its extent might have been. Tim Cornell suggests that the average city-state in *Latium Vetus* had a territory of approximately 200 sq. km (20,000 ha), while Rome had a territory of 350 sq. km (35,000 ha) (Cornell 2000, 215). Francesca Fulminante, on the other hand, points out that on the basis of literary evidence alone, the *ager Romanus antiquus* should be measured at *c*. 191 sq. km (Fulminante 2014, 131). While the notion of the Romulean frontier marked by boundary sanctuaries has been largely debunked as not passing scrutiny (Ziółkowski 2009), there is evidence that Rome is projecting culture trends beyond its territory, as well as assuming a leading role in central Italy (Edlund-Berry 2008).

The early date for and extent of this territory is significant in terms of making the city of Rome come about. If the idea of the Roman territory that has its beginnings in the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age is supported, then it underscores the significance of the cooperative decision to establish the urban centre in the middle of the eighth century BC, as an act not only of territorial integration but also one that underscores the importance of the site of Rome as a space that plays an important role in terms of mediation. The dynamics of human interchange within these landscapes informs urban institutions and rituals, from civic bodies, to sacred locations, to urban foundation ritual.

Discussion

The making of the city of Rome is part of an ongoing continuum of human activity that realizes key accomplishments during the Archaic period. These accomplishments centre around two main categories: those that are related to the physical transformation of space so as to enable the daily life, commerce and activity of the city to transpire, and then those that are related to the institutional activity that centres around certain key nodes within that transformed landscape. The engagement, by means of ephemeral activity, with these nodes further aids and abets the processes of identity construction and other mechanisms of collectivity. These engagements, although fleeting, establish a deep undercurrent of place-based identity that abides in the long term. The centralizing force of Rome as a place is a formidable one, whether confronted through the archaeological record or by means of literary and epigraphic sources. Among the challenges of confronting the Archaic period are corpora of evidence that are either incomplete or distorted by transmission and reception. From the standpoint of making the city of Rome, however, these challenges can still serve to be advantageous.

A persistent question in the archaeology of the city of Rome centres on what, if anything, makes Rome different from her Italic and Mediterranean contemporaries. The site of Rome itself must be counted among the factors contributing to Rome's rise during the latter part of the first millennium BC. More than the geography of the site itself, it is the intentional human intervention in the site that pays enormous dividends. Iron Age settlement patterns in central Italy generally dictate hilltop living as the most effective and strategic choice. Happily, the geology of the Italian peninsula offers landforms that suit this mentality and we thus find many of the key settlements in Etruria and Latium occupying hilltops and volcanic plateaus. The Etruscan cities of Veii and Tarquinia undergo the processes of *synoecism* on volcanic plateaus but remain relatively confined by that volcanic terrain (on Tarquinia, see Bagnasco Gianni *et al*. in this volume). The Latin city of Gabii occupies the rim of a dormant volcanic crater, choosing visibility and defensibility over convenience (Becker *et al*. 2009). Rome, of course, famously occupies a number of hilltops and these hilltops play an outsize role in the Romans' conscious construction of their own identity. It is in the valleys and margins, however, that Rome breaks the model. As Andrea L. Brock argues, the intent to modify floodplains and thereby transform the urban landscape is a key factor in Rome's development as an Italian city that would go on to reinvent the city in the Mediterranean (Brock 2017). Early archaeological fieldwork gravitated toward the monumental ruins that would tell Rome's story from a topographically oriented point of view, an urban narrative that relies on the *locus* as playing a key role in identity construction and the history of institutions. While this approach is valid, when the environmental history is added to the picture, the story is even more nuanced and interesting. Whether Boni had a conscious interest in environmental history or not is debatable, but his stratigraphic documentation of the deep soundings in the Forum valley proved revelatory – not just for his generation, but for all subsequent ones. Boni's work, added to that of Gjerstad, Ammerman, Brock and the latest project in the sacred area of Sant'Omobono (Diffendale *et al*. 2016), highlights the ways in which the active engagement with and transformation of the landscape of the city made Rome what it is. These interventions in filling the Forum valley, channelizing surface runoff and terraforming other parts of the city's floodplains enabled activity to continue on hilltops and hillsides, but also to move into the spaces in between.

This movement from hilltop to valley highlights one of the most important features of the landscape

and topography of the city of Rome, as the landscape itself is a factor in Rome's ritual and institutional history. Making spaces requires intent, and the earliest evidence for sacro-civic institutions at Rome reflects this theme of integration and mediation through public space. The institution of the Comitium and the various *curiae* echoes the diverse makeup of the Roman civic body. These intentionally made spaces provide the venues in which that diverse body can interact cooperatively while still maintaining some degree of autonomy.

These institutions do not simply serve to link hilltop and valley but also to advance territorial integration within the *ager Romanus*. Rome differs from her neighbours in this respect as well, in that Rome's territory is substantially larger than those of her peers. While the debate as to the precise chronological and geographical definition of the *ager Romanus* is a complicated discussion, it is clear that Rome's territorial catchment outpaces that of its peers (Fulminante 2014, 130–2 summarizes the debate). Even more important than sheer size is the projection of Roman hegemony and cultural influence into this territory, a circumstance that is measurable in the archaeological record.

The emergence of Rome's Archaic landscape, replete with its reminders of place-based identity and urban history, establishes a dynamic that links rural territory and urban centre, cementing social and political ties in the process. The processes of state formation echo these bonds and compromises. Beginning with agreements – whether tacit or explicit – about the zoning of space within the centre, Rome's elites orchestrate the formation of the city's landscape. This entails establishing conventions, for instance dictating where adult burials should be deposited, that dictate the course of events in the lived life of the city. The decisions made by elites to undertake the Forum landfill project, to create the Cloaca Maxima, to carry out work at the Forum Boarium, and so on, have effects that are of both immediate and long-range significance. In the short term these projects facilitate the city's commercial and ritual concerns, in addition to granting definition to the emergent public spaces that connect the disconnected hilltops. In the longer term, these decisions create the urban framework of the Roman state which will remain relatively consistent and stable, even as the political process and social processes experience the expected upheavals. The intentionally orchestrated urban nodes are so durable that some will live long enough to be arcane and poorly understood reminders of the venerated past of which Romans are so enamoured. In short, the making of the city enables and facilitates the construction of identity.

In Livy's history of Rome, Camillus delivers an impassioned speech as the Romans face the challenges of rebuilding their city following its sacking by marauding Gauls, even debating whether it might be more prudent to relocate the city to a more defensible location – the site of Veii, for instance (Liv. 5.53). In the arc of the Livian narrative it is possible that this episode from the early Republic mirrors contemporary Iulio-Claudian concerns about whether the centre of power should move elsewhere, perhaps to North Africa or Asia Minor (Cicero *ad Att.* 7.11.3; Horace *Odes* 3.3). Livy's Camillus claims that his commitment to rebuilding Rome is not simply derived from a love for her buildings and institutions, but from a profound attachment to the landscape itself (Liv. 5.54). These claims of attachment remind us that the ancestral institutions of the Archaic city, rooted in tradition and ritual, do not wish to be moved and would prefer to endure in the traditional place and in the traditional way.

The city of Rome occupies a venerable place in the archaeology of Mediterranean urbanism. The processes that form Rome are as much about institutionalization as they are about centralization. The decisions made during the Archaic period that result in concerted and coordinated efforts to create designated spaces within the urban landscape are momentous ones. The creation of these public spaces contributes much needed mechanisms of identity construction to the urban landscape, and the centralizing forces of ritual observance also hold significant implications for the Archaic centre of Rome. These spaces improve upon the natural terrain and many of them move, by stages, toward monumentality. This infrastructure and its scale sets Rome apart from other Archaic centres and the debate can continue about whether this is the result of ambition, genius or simply good fortune. Regardless, the urban achievements of the Archaic period establish sacro-civic places that are key nodes of both spatial and social mediation within Rome's urban landscape. In this way, it is easy to see why famous and ordinary Romans would, for centuries to come, work to make use of these storied spaces as each, in their own turn, worked to make Rome.

Note

1 The Comitium was the open-air space for public assembly in the city of Rome and hosted the Curiate assembly in the earliest phases of Rome's history. In terms of institutional history, the comitium represents an early and fundamental mechanism of state formation at Rome. Located at the northwest corner of the *Forum Romanum*, the form and orientation of the earliest phases of the Comitium remain elusive.

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Making cities

Large and complex settlements appeared across the north Mediterranean during the period 1000–500 BC, from the Aegean basin to Iberia, as well as north of the Alps. The region also became considerably more interconnected. Urban life and networks fostered new consumption practices, requiring different economic and social structures to sustain them. This book considers the emergence of cities in Mediterranean Europe, with a focus on the economy. What was distinctive about urban lifeways across the Mediterranean? How did different economic activities interact, and how did they transform power hierarchies? How was urbanism sustained by economic structures, social relations and mobility? The authors bring to the debate recently excavated sites and regions that may be unfamiliar to wider (especially Anglophone) scholarship, alongside fresh reappraisals of well-known cities. The variety of urban life, economy and local dynamics prompts us to reconsider ancient urbanism through a comparative perspective.

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