

## **Preface and organization of volume**

This volume represents an updated version of the PhD research titled ‘Living in Villages, Ploughing Fields Before Cities’, conducted between November 2018 and July 2022 at the University of Groningen and Sapienza - University of Rome. Throughout this study, a series of techniques were developed to analyse and reconstruct aspects of the primary economy of ancient human communities, focusing on those in Southern Etruria between the Final Bronze and the Early Iron Ages. This volume consolidates the results achieved, proposed interpretations, as well as the approaches and methodologies employed to attain them.

In Chapter 1, the objectives of the research and the research questions are outlined (1.1) to develop the investigative approach, termed ‘agro-economistic’. The primary theoretical references are also indicated (1.2), alongside the rationale for selecting Southern Etruria and its human communities between 1150 and 850 BC as a case study (1.3).

Chapter 2 presents the data utilized in the research, along with the methodologies and analysis techniques employed. It begins with descriptions of both the physical (2.2.1) and cultural (2.2.2) landscapes of Southern Etruria. Subsequently, the land-evaluation analyses conducted (2.3.1) are introduced, along with the data used to generate a reconstructed model of the ancient agro-pastoral landscape within a GIS platform. Each cultivated species of plant is discussed (2.3.2-5), detailing the agronomic studies considered, factors analysed, and their impact on defining suitable areas for agricultural exploitation. A slightly different approach is taken for stockbreeding (2.3.6), which, however, integrates smoothly into the final agro-pastoral model (2.3.7). Following the assessment of the varying degrees of suitability for agricultural or pastoral exploitation across Southern Etruria, the land use by different settlements is simulated to reconstruct the primary economy of the communities present. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the simulation, both from a general organizational standpoint (2.4.1) and in detail, explaining the chosen operating rules and each step (2.4.2).

Chapter 3 details the results and outcomes of the simulation. The analysis is conducted not by treating the sample as a singular entity, but by examining it within different macro-areas (3.1) and within the two chronological periods of the Final Bronze Age (FBA) (3.2) and the Early Iron Age (EIA) (3.3).

In Chapter 4, using the data, especially demographic, obtained from the simulation (4.2), the various trajectories of the transition from villages to towns are interpreted (4.3). A comparison is made between existing literature and the insights derived from the specific analysis of the primary economy of various centres. The chapter concludes with a section that, starting from the case of the settlement of Tarquinia (4.4)—the likely epicentre of the proto-urban phenomenon—articulates initial conclusive answers to the initial research questions.

Further conclusions are drawn in Chapter 5, which also addresses the merits and limitations of the agro-economic approach, additional attempts to apply land-evaluation techniques within archaeological research and contexts, and prospects for further development and utilization of the GIS model developed for other cultural and chronological contexts.