
Boundaries of the State in Time and Space: Transitions and Tipping Points

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ABSTRACT

State formation in the pre-Roman Mediterranean has been considered untheorised by many state theorists, particularly anthropologically trained scholars from North America. This paper seeks to show the inherent interest of the Mediterranean by taking a comparative approach to the study of state formation, focused on transitions in time and space.

Pre-eminently the situation in first millennium BC pre-Roman Etruria is compared with the New World (e.g., the Valley of Oaxaca) and Mesopotamia. For the transitions in time, the paper investigates the utility of the term tipping point, assessing the need for speed in political transformation to achieve a long-term outcome. For the transitions in space, the paper looks at the relative formality of state boundaries, addressing the questions of fuzziness and permeability. The paper concludes that ‘secondary’ state formation in the Mediterranean has much to contribute, illustrating issues of complexity derived from historical contingencies that were not present in so called primary states.

INTRODUCTION

There is an impression amongst many state theorists that the Mediterranean lingers in some isolated classical world bereft of big questions and late to grasp the importance of the North American regional approach (Blanton 2001). This article makes one small attempt to bridge this Atlantic Divide, by taking a comparative approach to boundaries in time and space (cf. the pleas of Smith 2003: 270ff.). Some comparisons have been made between the Mediterranean and other studies of state formation (Guidi 2008;

Marcus and Flannery 1996) and others have explicitly addressed secondary state formation with the language of other state formation theorists (Parkinson and Galaty 2007), but it is suggested here that alternative comparisons may enrich this experience. It is appropriate that Russia should be the place to make this statement, in a free space outside the two regional traditions of North America and the Mediterranean.

States engage with boundaries in their organization of time and space. In part, this may be an ideological construct which is later historicized by the fully formed state. Early states celebrate foundations and are concerned to define frontiers which, in practice, may be difficult to fix materially on the ground. However, in part, there may be a real component to sudden political change through time and across space. This paper seeks to investigate these two dimensions of space and time, primarily by reference to Central Italy, but also by reference to a wider debate in the Mediterranean and beyond.

The first key issue is the study of political transitions through time. One long-standing approach to state formation is that a rapid transition is fundamental to consolidated political success. This position claims that the burden of the state will only be accepted if it takes place under particular conditions of shock therapy (Jacobsen 1957). This raises the question of the precise nature of the conditions under which a rapid transition could have been introduced, particularly since there is a counter argument that a state needs to be built on a substantial political platform (Blanton *et al.* 1982: 21). This paper will thus concentrate on the issues surrounding the induction of rapid political change. One particular focus is whether the populist term of *tipping point* can have validity in addressing this phase of rapid change.

The second key issue is the study of transitions across space (Stoddart 2007–2008 [2009]). The nature of transitions across space may be linked to the nature of power at centre, and thus be related to a process or tipping point by which that power is formed. At its most developed, this transition is considered to be a frontier, in other words a rapid transition across space from one well defined political status to another. However, more recent anthropological analysis suggests that the stark and demarcated transition suggested by such a term is inappropriate even in the modern pe-

riod, except under very particular circumstances (Donnan and Wilson 1999; Wilson and Donnan 1998).

BOUNDARIES OF TIME

The popular term ‘tipping point’ (Gladwell 2000) provides a general context in which to situate rapid political change. Three factors can be distilled from this populist account of the term ‘tipping point’. Firstly, the context of rapid change is often a situation of instability and uncertainty in the physical, economic and by extension political environment of the time. More controversially, this may be accompanied by high interaction between individuals and communities. Secondly, there is a dynamic relationship between the individual and the collective. Gladwell draws on mathematical sociology which puts this succinctly as ‘the dynamic relationship between individual behavio[u]r and collective results’ (Schelling 1971: 186). Thirdly, Gladwell develops this line of argument to suggest that small effects (sometimes entitled agency) suddenly gather collective momentum to produce rapid change. The approach is strongly related to forms of innovation theory since many of his examples are related to the spread of a technology rather than to political change. He proposes that certain individuals have a disproportionate transformative effect in creating sudden change, but that the circumstances also need to be right to permit receptivity. Do these ideas transfer to political change?

A number of issues arise when this suite of ideas is transferred to early state formation although not all of these will be fully addressed in this short paper. A long standing issue is the recognition of the individual as the force behind the agency of change. However, although people are ultimately the creators of change, they are not entirely free agents. An equally pressing, more methodological, problem is the calibration of rapid change when archaeological chronologies may not be sufficiently precise to define the passing of a generation, leaving the effect of an individual difficult to assess. A further problem is the definition of the context of instability in the environment and economy, not only for reasons of chronological calibration. Mediterranean states are generally considered secondary states and the degree of interaction has become an important focus of the rhetoric of Mediterranean state formation theory. Moreover, the presence of exchange products in the ar-

chaeological record is frequently filtered by practices of deposition, challenging the account that these data are a direct proxy of exchange practice. These are all issues which need to be assessed and investigated.

Boundaries of time in archaeological and anthropological research

A first essential stage of any detection of a tipping point in ancient state formation is to assess the clouds of ideology that may mask our detection of such a tipping point. The political masters of states regularly orchestrated time for purposes of their own legitimation, focusing on founders and key annalistic moments of fundamental political change. Some scholars, including distinguished representatives from Central Italy (Carandini 1997; Prosdocimi 1984) have apparently been taken in by these political strategies and report them to modern scholarship as the ancient political masters would have wanted their apparently naïve subjects to have received them. The contrast between material reality and epigraphic projection is a constant interpretative issue in the study of states (cf. Marcus 1992a; 1998: 93–94). Recent anthropological research points out the multivalent qualities of these native political markers. For instance, Navaro-Yashin (2002) has demonstrated how different communities within a modern state can point to different significant dates of foundation, while professing – fantasizing – allegiance to the same state, albeit with different interpretations and participations.

In these circumstances, it is essential to search for material evidence of political change, even if this is at the risk of not detecting all instances of dramatic political change. Settlement change is the most reliable evidence of this type. This may take the form of dramatic shifts from dispersed to nucleated settlement, or clear evidence of internal reorganization (such as change in size, layout of public areas and elite structures). Furthermore, these shifts may be formative in leading to other sectors of change. Other material evidence from burial, monumentalisation and other forms of materialization may strengthen the case, although there is always the risk that a lingering egalitarian ideology may shroud underlying political changes.

The role of the individual agent, even if shrouded in later political ideology, has nevertheless formed a substantial tradition. Jacobsen (1957; Stoddart 1999) has sustained from textual evidence that the *lugal* or king in Mesopotamia may have been institutionalized out of a temporary emergency role. This approach has been taken further by Flannery in both his early (1972) and later (1999) work, combining fieldwork with the documentary research of ethnohistory. In the former, he deploys the idea that the headman might be *promoted* to a more formal position in conditions of crisis. In the latter, he envisages the presence of alpha males drawn from a range of ethnohistoric examples distributed between the North West Frontier, the Ashanti and the Zulu, and applied to the archaeological evidence of the Valley of Oaxaca. Such an alpha male, by a process of charisma and military prowess, exploiting a political crisis, might have the opportunity to create and sustain a new political constitution. In the ethnohistoric cases these figures are not just products of ideological false consciousness but draw on attested realities. In the archaeological case of Valley of Oaxaca the evidence is more tentatively provided by a particular glyph of jaguar. In the Mediterranean, ancestral figures are mentioned in later ethnohistorical accounts, but their presence on the ground is more difficult to assess (cf. Cifani *et al.* 2010).

The Valley of Oaxaca provides an important instance of a political tipping point, because it is very visible in the settlement record, involving the movement of population, and thus cannot be reduced simply to an ideological construct of some latter day political necessity. Two main alternative models have surfaced in the academic literature to explain the foundation of Monte Alban in what was the spatially central but agriculturally marginal centre of the valley (Balkansky 2002: 89). Blanton (1978: 39–40) prefers to emphasize a confederacy approach, a collective decision of all power brokers in the valley, whereas Flannery prefers individual agency based on San Jose Mogote, one original power centre (Marcus and Flannery 1996). It is interesting to note that Blanton identifies three spatially distinct ceramic types (even employing the term ‘ethnic’) within the settlement in the early stages, and contends that the choice of site was a response to external military threat (Blanton 1978: 37). Blanton and colleagues (1999: 47), fur-

thermore, recognize a chaotic political scene which precipitated the sudden change of location. The result was a disembedded capital which stood above the local differences; however, their analogies are drawn from rather later examples of a globalized colonial world such as Washington, Ottawa and Canberra (Blanton 1983; Blanton *et al.* 1999: 65–66). Joyce (2000) appears to favor the spatial emphasis of Flannery's approach, but gives less weight to individual agency, and sees the political developments as unintended consequences of elite commoner relations in pursuit of a sacred covenant. In his view, this sacred covenant had its first steps in San Jose Mogote, and was reworked and later intensified at Monte Alban, by a voluntary participation of commoners in unknowing pursuit of their own subordination.

Students of Oaxaca (Blanton *et al.* 1999; Marcus and Flannery 1996) have drawn on Mediterranean research through the classic instance of Greek synoecism (the combination of smaller communities into a larger community) to explain the situation in the Valley of Oaxaca, even though the situation of Oaxaca is in some respects more comparable to that of Etruria (see below). The synoecism tradition goes back to the time of Theseus in Athens (Thucydides 2.15) where no movement of population was involved (Ehrenberg and Rhodes 1998), but the case of Oaxaca, accompanied by clear movement of population, is more comparable to that of later Hellenistic times when external threat was a clearly visible factor in the equation (Demand 1990). In earlier periods, synoecism has been variously explained, but commercial activity (that is intense interaction) is certainly one of the leading causes (Diamant 1982) with the addition of population pressure and production. In the case of Sicily, Holloway (1985) appeals explicitly to militaristic political agency, drawing on the local mythical accounts of Hyblon and Kokolos with further references to Plutarch for the example of Theseus from Greece.

Another aspect of Mesoamerican research is the dynamic cyclicity of states, tipping between different levels of complexity (Marcus 1992b, 1998). States were not static, but could have had fluctuating levels and extents of power. Marcus' work on the Maya region suggests the presence of strategic manoeuvring by elites within a stable core of secondary provincial centres where the power

of the primary centers fluctuated. This recognition has immense implications for the dynamic development of their boundaries (see below). The implementation of these cycles of power will obviously have varied in individual cases, but the presence of this dynamic quality of states is of considerable importance in correctly understanding their development, and can be assessed in comparison with mathematically based spatial models (Redhouse and Stoddart 2010; Renfrew and Level 1979; Stoddart 2010 in preparation). A key issue is the degree to which elites behind states managed to develop a maximum political territory early in their history, and how that control developed over time. Furthermore, there is the issue of how much stability these states maintained, and whether that was related to their initial formation by subjugation or incorporation, where the first was likely to be the more instable (Marcus 1998: 93).

Boundaries of time in Central Italy

The preoccupation in central Italian research has been to remove external pressure (measured by the proxy of trade) as a cause of the dramatic settlement transition between the Final Bronze Age and the Iron Age, but the challenge is to replace this simplistic cause with an alternative. A similar preoccupation is detectable in temperate Europe (Ralston 2010). Guidi (1998, 2006) reports the tendency in English literature for the Greeks to be accredited with the cause of social change, supposedly by importing the idea of political complexity, but there is not always an explicit attempt to explain the tipping point to state formation by the means of an alternative framework. External danger is excluded (Guidi 1998: 143). The explanation devolves to an implicit response to a punctuation following slow growth, in contrast to other parts of the contemporary Mediterranean (cf. Mathers and Stoddart 1994). Guidi appears to draw on Adams (1966: 170–173) who points out that a ramp trajectory can be seen over a long period in social and economic sectors, whereas a step can be seen in terms of monumentality and style. Even before scholarship had developed the more sophisticated interpretations of Monte Alban, Adams pointed out that Mesoamerica had greater evidence of sudden shifts of development than Mesopotamia, suggesting a greater importance of a step

(or tipping point) trajectory. Elsewhere Guidi refers to the ‘careful direction of elites’ (Guidi 1998: 147). This broadly agrees with Peroni’s earlier model of ‘new forms of political power ... strong enough to compel different groups and tribes to live together’ (Peroni 1969; 1979: 25), supported by a platform of economic change and a new type of private property. Bartoloni (1992: 135) finds it inconceivable that the ‘movement of population’ could have taken place without ‘political organisms capable of imposing their decisions on individual village communities’ and she goes on to say that apparent equality appears more formal than substantial (*Ibid.*: 136). Pacciarelli (2000: 271), by contrast, envisages the replacement of Bronze Age elites by some form of Iron Age military collective. Other contributions depend on demography, presumably relating to the issues of scale implied by population increase (Barker 1981).

As reported above, Mesoamerican theorists would do well to compare Oaxaca specifically to Etruria rather than with other parts of the Mediterranean. The examples followed by Flannery are too late in the socio-political sequence, since population tipping points can be characterized as responses to the external pressures of contemporary empires, not contemporary states. The case of (South) Etruria will be explored in more detail here, but both Etruria and neighboring Latium had relevant comparative elements whose developments are considered in more detail elsewhere in this volume (Guidi 2010). South Etruria shared the profound transformation of settlement, but it was a process that took place amongst five distinctive competitive peer polities. Latium shared a pre-eminent settlement (Rome), but the process was generally more gradual and more deeply seated in the Bronze Age than the Etruscan situation north of the Tiber.

In the South Etruscan sequence we can trace (within the uncertainties of the current chronology [Bartoloni and Delpino 2005]) an interesting disjuncture of tipping points among different sectors of the socio-political sequence. Changes in demographic distribution preceded internal organization, which was, only later, taken up by descent group materialization, witnessed in funerary sequences. The order suggests the underlying political mobilization of population as the crucial first stage in the process. These three stages can be outlined in more detail.

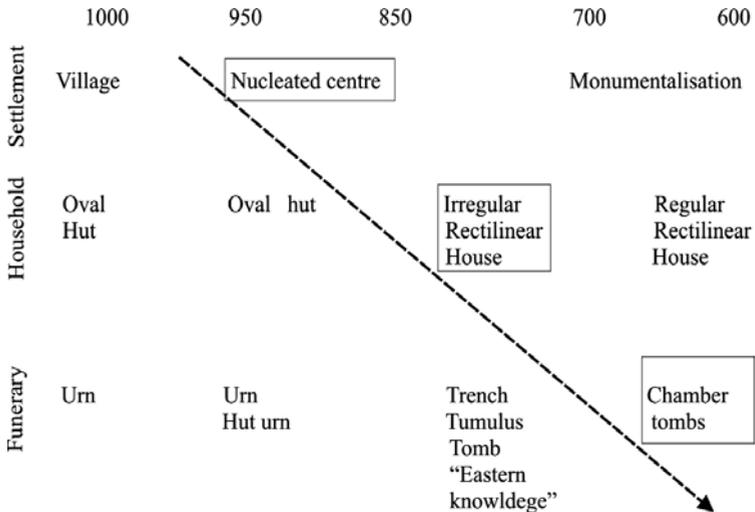


Fig. 1. Progress of tipping points across sectors of material change in South Etruscan society (1000–600 BC). The arrow shows the lag in time by which tipping points occur in the three broad sectors of materialization of political process. The settlement evidence is outlined by Pacciarelli (2000), the household evidence by Izzet (2001) and Bartoloni (2009) and the funerary evidence by Naso (2001)

The redistribution of population (registered in settlement) appears to have led the dynamics, moving from a dispersed village distribution in the Final Bronze Age to a set of nucleated centers in the early Iron Age (di Gennaro 1986; Pacciarelli 2000). In a number of recorded cases (*e.g.*, Tarquinia and Veii) small scale adjuncts (*e.g.*, small spurs) of the main plateau attracted population densities even in the Final Bronze Age. This suggests that, in an interesting comparison to the Valley of Oaxaca, one of the subscribing villages, pre-positioned close to a larger plateau, may have had a leading role in generating the tipping point towards full nucleation. However, unlike in the Valley of Oaxaca, this was a multiple, competitive process. Furthermore, it has been difficult to identify through burial analysis or other means such as inscriptions (which only follow later), the agent of this change. Some data of elite burials previously attributed to the immediately preceding period of the Final Bronze Age at Pian Sultano and Crostolotto di Lamone are now, at best, dubious since the dating may relate to

residual material (di Gennaro 2009). On the other hand, some recent discoveries of the very early Iron Age may have changed this picture (Bartoloni 2007–2008). Protagonists of radical political development have suggested that there was a residual egalitarian ideology which masked differences (Guidi 1998, 2008). Indeed, the presence of cremation requiring considerable mobilization of wood resources and dramatic combustion, and the relatively low number of individuals offered formal memorialization at death also generated the opportunity for conspicuous consumption attached to a select few.

There is a tendency among period specialists to envisage precocious political differentiation even in the Final Bronze Age as a means of understanding the political momentum that followed in the Iron Age. Was there a hierarchy in the organization of Final Bronze Age villages? Some scholars have doubted the accumulation of evidence (Barker and Stoddart 1994). Other scholars have emphasized the potential based on increasingly defensive locations, the association of cemeteries with defended settlements, some distinctive buildings, smaller numbers of more concentrated populations, groupings of villages and some tentative differentiation of size between an average of 5–6 ha under a larger centre of a maximum of 15 ha (Bartoloni 1992; di Gennaro and Barbaro 2008). The area of Monte Sasso, near Cerveteri, is potentially a relatively well preserved and researchable example of this phenomenon in micro-format where a substantial settlement was surrounded by smaller settlements and funerary areas. Further fieldwork is required to investigate the alternative interpretations by investigating an area such as Monte Sasso.

In spite of these uncertainties, the actions of the Early Iron Age can be considered a response to an uncertain political climate in the Mediterranean, where interaction appears to have been more local than Mediterranean wide (Spivey and Stoddart 1990: 83). In this context, a corporate decision was taken to bring previously separated communities together in locations familiar to one pre-existing smaller local community. In the subsequent Iron Age, the reorganization of the internal structure of the settlement appears to have lagged behind the nucleation of settlement, but the nature of the transformation is not without controversy. Three lines of evidence are key: house structures, internal settlement organization and cemeteries.

Firstly, there is a structure of the component parts. Large oval domestic structures appear to have continued for many generations after the act of grouping population together. This can be shown on the basis of evidence that is now available from at least three Iron Age nucleations: Tarquinia (Linington 1982), Cerveteri (Izzet 2000) and Veii (Ward-Perkins 1959). These same data show a lag in the transition from wooden to stone construction of foundations with a concomitant rectilinear form, and the introduction of tiles rather than wattle and daub. Fractal theory (Wagner 1991) suggests that social patterns at a micro-scale are representative of patterns at a macro-scale. On these grounds, the evidence is very suggestive that these early nucleations were not politically integrated. The lack of clear integration at the smaller scale, is likely to be representative of the lack of integration at the corporate scale.

Secondly, and building on the previous discussion, there is the issue of the nature of the mode of association of the nucleated settlement. Ward-Perkins (1961), supported by some Italian scholars (Bartoloni 1992: 108–109), emphasized the continued village identity of the component parts of the new nucleation of Veii, whereas Guidi (1991) and more recently Vanzetti (2004) have claimed the immediate unity of the identity of the newly nucleated centre in the context of later surveys at Vulci (Pacciarelli 1991) and Tarquinia (Mandolesi 1999). The distinction between these two alternatives, if they should indeed be characterised as strongly opposed alternatives, depends on the interpretation of a sequence of surface surveys of the city of Veii (Gwaitoli 1981; Patterson *et al.* 2000; Ward-Perkins 1961), whose evidence is, at best, equivocal without excavation, a set of problems emphasized by Pacciarelli (2000: 165). Spatial sub-groupings can be seen in all phases of the research, even without explicitly recognizing self-referential identities of material culture.

Pacciarelli (2000: 131–133) addresses this issue by incorporating new evidence from the more northerly city of Chiusi. Originally, the standard interpretation was to consider the area of this city to be that enclosed by the later Hellenistic walls, about 25 ha. More recently, with increasing urban research and recognition of the Early Iron Age domestic phases, there has been a tendency to group together the Early Iron Age find spots into one coherent settlement area of 120 ha comparable to South Etruria. However, Pacciarelli himself admits that the occupation was ‘certainly, in a broad sense, of discontinuous type, as at Vulci, Tarquinia or Veii’ to which he adds ‘but in the context of a communal organisational

unity'. How one judges that 'communal organization unity' is difficult to assess, particularly when distinct identities appear to continue not only in topographical discontinuity of settlement, but also in the form of distinct cemeteries.

The third element of importance is the presence of distinct cemeteries encircling the city, a point emphasized by Ward-Perkins (1961). The discreteness of these locations seems to indicate a discreteness of multiple identities in the newly formed nucleated structure even if, as pointed out by Iaia (1999; Pacciarelli 2000: 178), the funerary style appears to have been broadly held in common. This third area of materialization, namely that of funerary activity, seems further to have lagged behind other developments, permitting an interpretation that burial represented some idealized ancestral situation which was no longer current (cf. Bloch 1971). As already discussed, burial of the first phase of the Iron Age, perhaps for ideological reasons, illustrated a retained egalitarianism, although recent evidence suggests that these apparent rules may have been broken in significant cases (Guidi 2010). Burial activity in general, nevertheless, seems to have retained an inherent conservatism, and only switched to chambered tombs (at a different rate in different cities) at a relatively late stage. The very prominence of the descent group at death also shows the retention of a sub-identity, a sub-communal power structure, even when the state's power was fully formed. As has been discussed with varying degrees of generalization, this points to a profoundly heterarchical power structure in the Etruscan state (Guidi 2008; Patterson and Rendeli 2010; Stoddart 2009), that also implied a fractal quality (Wagner 1991) where, for instance, the relations between the constituent descent groups forming the community had a comparable fractal relationship to the relations between the communities themselves. A point of dispute is the extent to which this atavistic heterarchy in death was represented in the layout and political organization of the city itself. This heterarchical tendency of the Etruscan state also has implications for the extent of political power at the territorial boundary of the state and it is to this that we must now turn. If power relations took time to form, and were never definitively hierarchical, it is likely that territorial boundaries only became relatively formalised in later periods of development and were contested and fluid in earlier periods.

BOUNDARIES OF SPACE

Boundaries of Space in archaeological and anthropological research

Modern conceptions of political boundaries tend to emphasize the concreteness and clarity of the territorial limits of political power. However, even in relatively recent case studies, anthropologists have pointed out a considerable degree of autonomy and permeability at the frontier (Donnan and Wilson 1999; Wilson and Donnan 1998) which must be a lesson to any study of earlier periods. Furthermore boundaries imply in modern thinking an 'ambiguous marginality, a focus on ... fluidity, ... lack of boundaries, and the inability to pin ... down ...' (Green 2005: 4). The implications are that in the same way that power at the centre might be dynamic and flexible, so must territorial strategies. This gives the opportunity for different types of expression at boundaries. Some boundaries may be very clear in terms of the demarcation of political difference, but others may be characterized by an 'ambiguous *sameness* that made the difference, not the differences, as it were' (*Ibid.*: 14). These same studies emphasize the complex inter-relationship of geometry, geography and temporality. Green develops this in terms of her study of the term 'Greek' which has three formulations of alternative ethnicity (*Ibid.*: 84–85). The root 'Ellinas' refers to Classical Greekness, the term 'Romios' to the Byzantine and Ottoman overlay, whereas 'Greki' is a residual category (interestingly of Latin usage) for the marginal Balkan region. Similar fluidity of ethnicity might be expected in groups of ancient states.

Mesoamerican research which combines archaeological and anthropological input has emphasized the dynamic quality of political boundaries (Marcus 1992b; Marcus and Feinman 1998). These studies suggest that boundaries did not remain static and that there could have been a differential investment at the centre and in the governance of territory. This differential investment could have led to the expansion and contraction of territorial boundaries, and the implementation of buffer zones unoccupied by political control. A key question is whether states uniformly extended their political control at the threshold of their first implementation (the point, it should be noted, supported by Marcus) or whether such territorial boundaries fluctuated as political control at the centre was consolidated, disputed and developed. A further point is that many developments may be truncated by imperial action (in the case of Cen-

tral Italy by the arrival of Rome). It is for this reason that the premature application of territorial-hegemonic models (*e.g.*, D'Altroy 1992) to early states should be avoided and restricted to imperial scales of operation

By dint of this analysis, attempts to typologize state organization into neat categories of the state must end in failure, most particularly in a case such as Etruria where varied identity (quantitatively and qualitatively) of the community was a key characteristic. A flavour of this diversity at a peninsular scale can be seen in another contribution to this volume (Guidi 2010). At first glance, the south Etruscan primate cities form a classic set of peer polities (Renfrew 1975), but increasingly detailed research on settlement organisation has shown the inbuilt variation and fluidity (Redhouse and Stoddart 2010). Subsequent studies, following Trigger (1993, 2003), which try to break down the territorial character of the state into territorial states and city states, equally simplify the implicit complexity in the characterization of cities and their relationship to state boundaries (Cifani 2010). There are grades of political development at the centre and equally nuanced grades of political development at the boundary which must be incorporated into any explanatory model.

A further relevant debate is the Mesopotamian one. The work of Algaze has emphasized the World Systems Theory approach with a strong outreach of the state in imposing power through trade over substantial distances (1,000 km) (Algaze 1993a, 1993b). Under this model, distant settlements may be subordinate to the centre through substantial political control. This approach has, however, been challenged (Stein 1999) and alternative models have been presented to interpret the same evidence. The 'distance parity' model suggests that the friction of distance (as also maintained here) does have an important effect, and that the centre could not always be effective at the periphery. The 'trade diaspora' model emphasizes that the role of trade must not simply be seen from the perspective of the centre, but also understood from the viewpoint of the so-called periphery. Entanglement may be a better term than dominance, once again drawing on more recent anthropological treatment of these issues (Thomas 1991).

The critique of the assumption of dominance by the World Systems approach at a macro scale needs to be transferred to the study of dominance by a state of its own immediate periphery. If core dominance can be challenged at the macro level, so can core

dominance of a nucleated centre be challenged. As a result, we can raise a series of questions. To what extent did a state achieve dominance throughout its putative territory? What were the conditions of control at the edge of its territory? Early nucleated centers did not necessarily have widespread control over intervening territory and this control may have fluctuated, sometimes yielding control to local autonomy. Once again the temptation must be resisted to apply territorial hegemonic models (*e.g.*, D'Altroy 1992) to early states where their implementation is more appropriate to the substantially larger scale of early empires.

Boundaries of Space in Central Italy

Most models of boundary development in Central Italy, based on a long tradition emphasizing colonization (Torelli 1981), assume the full development of frontiers from the very foundation of the primate centre (di Gennaro 1986; Guidi 1998: 149), where smaller politically dependent settlements were placed at the margins (Bartoloni 1992: 106) to extract resources such as salt (Pacciarelli 2000: 176). This has explicitly assumed one interpretation of Mesopotamian political development (Algaze 1993a, 1993b) which is underwritten by an extraction of resources by politically subordinate colonies at the periphery. In these explicit assumptions not only have the critiques of World Systems Theory not been addressed, but also the mismatch of scale (large Mesopotamian; small Etrurian) has, perhaps, not been properly considered.

A number of assumptions are made in this interpretation of the Italian evidence. The first is that the smaller peripheral settlements are indeed subordinate, set within the context of the World Systems Theory approach. Paradoxically the original model adopted as a comparison by many scholars assumes a high level of interaction across considerable distance which is denied by the very same scholars in the central Italian context. In the local context of Central Italy the assumption that smaller settlements were necessarily colonies is challenged by the fact that one centre, Bisenzio, has been considered sufficiently distinctive stylistically to have had an independent power structure (*e.g.*, Bartoloni 1992: 108; Pacciarelli 2000: 179). It remains a distinct possibility that this independence was extended to other small settlements, particularly since they were located close to the potential geographical limits of political power. Secondly, there is the assumption that the state was sufficiently strong to enable this achievement, not taking into account

distance parity as discussed above. Thirdly, stylistic similarities may have reflected ideological rather than economic concerns, a point also raised in terms of the Mesopotamian evidence by Stein (1999).

An alternative is that political power structures take longer to develop, and that – as can be modeled and explored mathematically, albeit not dogmatically, but in comparison with archaeological evidence (Redhouse and Stoddart 2010: Fig. 2) – political boundaries may extend, fluctuate and collapse over time. This is much closer to the interpretation presented by Stoddart (1987, 1990) and Rendeli (1993), and furthermore takes account of the staggered tipping points in materialization already indicated above.

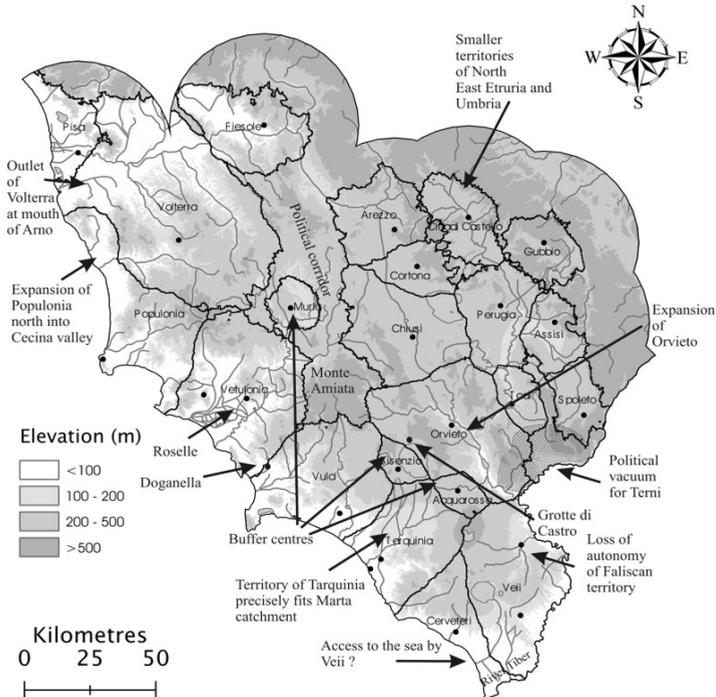


Fig. 2. Differential development of Etruscan territories employing the XTENT model with commentary illustrating quantitative vs. qualitative debates (Redhouse and Stoddart 2010). The boundaries can also be debated in terms of contextualized ethnicity. The boundary between Veii and Rome/Crustumerium (off map) may have been more formalized although perhaps that with Crustumerium more fluid. The boundary between Gubbio and Perugia was substantially more fuzzy

There is a good case to be made that the staged transformations of nucleated centers from concentrations of population to structured spaces of housing for the living and the dead, was linked to a parallel capacity to control with relative ease the political limits of the territory. Recent studies of boundaries have assessed the capacity of the mature state to control boundaries, the end point of stages of development (Riva and Stoddart 1996; Zifferero 1995, 2002). However, even at this endpoint, boundaries were fluid and variable in their permeability ranging from the more consolidated, demarcated boundaries of South Etruria and Latium Vetus to the more permeable, fuzzy boundaries of Northern Etruria and Umbria, and the many permutations that relate to these relative extremes (Fig. 2). Furthermore, we can bring to bear the fluid conceptions of ethnicity identified in the Balkans by Green (2005) approaching the crisp categories provided by ancient textual sources with an appropriate scepticism. This discourse is, however, the context of other research (Cifani *et al.* 2010).

CONCLUSIONS

The study of state formation in Central Italy suggests caution in inserting secondary state formation into the idealized, crisp typologies that have marked some recent approaches. The varied range of development of Etruscan cities does not fit easily into the structures of territorial or city states defined for primary states by Trigger (1993, 2003). Equally the internal structure and external relations do not fall easily into the heterarchical *vs.* hierarchical *cum* indirect *vs.* direct interaction of Parkinson and Galaty (2007) defined for the purpose of secondary states. Indeed secondary states appear to offer a greater degree of variation because of factors of historical contingency. This was in no small measure dependent on the nature of the multiple tipping points towards state formation. State formation was by no means inevitable, but once the demographic tipping point of nucleation has been agreed or orchestrated, a series of secondary tipping points in internal organization, burial ideology and boundary control were important consequences. A further important consideration is that the intervention of more successful states in the form of empires truncated later development and models from these later phases of development should not be uncritically imposed on the earlier forms of states.

As Marcus (1992b, 1998) pointed out, the trajectories of states were dynamic, but we should add that they were also multiple, leading to different levels of power both at the centre and at the uneasily defined margin. Comparison is important, particularly since it allows us to elucidate the quantitative and the qualitative, to look at rates of change and the fluidity of states. However, it is the very variability that provides an interesting focus of study and is most easily illustrated by so called secondary states because of the greater complexity of their historical context.

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