

REVIEW

Review of the Accordia Lectures 2014–2015

Silvia Amicone* and Oliver J. Lown*

Accordia is an independent research institute that operates in association with the UCL Institute of Archaeology and with the Institute of Classical Studies, the School of Advanced Study, and the University of London. It is dedicated to the promotion and co-ordination of research in all aspects of Italy, from the earliest settlements to the recent past.

Accordia organises lectures, research seminars, conferences and exhibitions on aspects of Italian archaeology and history, and publishes a journal, *Accordia Research Papers*, as well as research publications including specialist volumes, conference papers and excavation reports. A subscription is charged for those who want the journal, but all Accordia events are free and open to the public (for more information see the Accordia website: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/accordia/index.htm>).

The annual lecture series, now in its 27th year, is a regular feature of the academic calendar. Seven lectures take place between October and May, each held at either the UCL Institute of Archaeology or the Institute of Classical Studies (Senate House). The lecturers include both early career and established scholars, and their topics range widely across Italian archaeology, history and art history. The lectures are aimed at both Italian specialists and the general public.

This paper offers a review of the 2014–2015 Accordia Lectures. The series was particularly

interesting, and covered a wide range of topics related to the archaeology and history of Italy, from prehistoric settlements to the reception of the Etruscan world.

Ruth Whitehouse
Emeritus Professor
of Prehistoric Archaeology
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Lecture 1. 21 October 2014
'The columns are unfinished to this day!' – New Excavations in the Forum of Pompeii
Christoph Rummel, German Archaeological Institute

Pompeii's Forum was the subject of the first Accordia Lecture of the 2014–2015 series, delivered by Christoph Rummel. In his lecture, Dr Rummel presented some of the results of the *Augsburg Pompeii Forum Project* (2003–), the full publication of which is currently in preparation. As Dr Rummel demonstrated, the project has shed new light on Pompeii's Forum in the late Republic and early Empire, revealing it to have had a more complex architectural development than was previously thought.

The Forum of Pompeii has been the focus of numerous investigations since at least the early 19th century (see e.g. Dobbins and Foss 2007, esp. p. 28ff.), and scholars continue to debate its layout and sequence of development. It was within the context of this ongoing debate that the *Augsburg Pompeii Forum Project* was conceived. The project can be

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seen as in keeping with the traditional orientation of Roman archaeology in Germany, which, in studies of Roman cities, has tended to focus on public space (see e.g. works by Paul Zanker on the Augustan period), in contrast with, for example, British scholarship, which has traditionally maintained a stronger focus on domestic space (e.g. Wallace-Hadrill 1994).

The initial aim of the *Augsburg Pompeii Forum Project* was to conduct a photogrammetric analysis of the Forum. Following this, work was extended to include a more detailed analysis of the Forum's honorific arches and its environs, and excavations in the southern part of the Forum (2006–2009). The results of the latter were the main focus of Dr Rummel's lecture. Numerous obstacles associated with working in a popular archaeological park meant that the excavations in the southern part of the Forum could only be small-scale. Nevertheless, the archaeologists made a number of important discoveries. In particular, their excavations clarified the layout of the southern part of the Forum in the late Republic, revealing that the Forum's south end at this time was delimited by a wall, which was linked to the Basilica. Immediately to the south of the wall ran a road, which was lined with a series of domestic structures, possibly belonging to Pompeii's Samnite phase. In the 1st century BC the wall was replaced by columns, and the road and the domestic structures were built over by the predecessors of the administrative buildings that are illustrated in the well-known plans of the Forum (e.g. Mau 1898). Also in the southern part of the Forum, the archaeologists discovered a ditch, which was full of *lapilli* from the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79. This was taken as evidence that the colonnade at the south end of the Forum was, at the time of the city's destruction, uncovered and presumably unfinished – hence, the title of the lecture.

The lecture was clearly delivered and well illustrated. It would have been interesting to hear more about the discoveries made

in other parts of the Forum, such as the Comitium (Dr Rummel focused primarily on the investigations in the southern part), but time constraints did not allow for this. Particularly refreshing was the caution exercised by Dr Rummel in his assessment of the project's results. All too often archaeologists are guilty of constructing grand narratives on the back of small scraps of evidence. The excavations conducted in the southern part of the Forum were necessarily limited in scope, and, as Dr Rummel insisted, the conclusions drawn from them can only be tentative. Despite the obstacles, the archaeologists succeeded in providing important new insights into the development of Pompeii's Forum. In doing so, they also demonstrated how much there is still to be learnt about Pompeii, and it was somewhat to the disappointment of the audience on 21 October that there are no immediate plans for further excavations.

In recent years Pompeii has been in the news for unfortunate reasons: collapsed buildings and cultural mismanagement. It was encouraging, then, to hear that archaeologists are still conducting valuable research at this most famous of Italian sites.

Oliver J. Lown

Lecture 2. 4 November 2014
Art and Death in Neolithic Sardinia:
the Decorated 'Domus de Janas'
Rock-Cut Tombs
Guillaume Robin, University of Edinburgh

The second Accordia Lecture was presented by Guillaume Robin, who spoke about the 'Domus de Janas.' *Domus de Janas* (Sardinian for 'House of the Fairies' or 'House of the Witches') are a type of pre-historic chamber-tomb found in Sardinia, which were used from the late Neolithic to the Bronze Age. They are ipogeic structures, consisting of several rooms: a *dromos*, antechambers, a central chamber, and usually a series of cellars in which burial remains are often found. They were quarried out of rocks and probably

resemble prehistoric Sardinian houses in their layout. There are thousands of these monuments all over Sardinia, but only a few hundred are characterised by the presence of decorative motives, engraved or painted on different parts of the structure. Such motives may include architectural elements, *bucrania*, zig-zag designs and schematic human figures.

The *Domus de Janas* tombs came to the attention of academics in 1904, when the important necropolis of Anghelu Ruju was discovered and excavated by the archaeologist Antonio Taramelli (1909). The structures also caught the attention of the Greek archaeologist, Christian Zervos. He and Taramelli were both influenced by Arthur Evans' ideas concerning the importance in early Greek religion of the so-called 'bull-god.' Consequently, the *bucrania* found in the *Domus de Janas* were initially interpreted as depictions of a bull's head, and were thought to mark a possible connection with the Minoan religion of Crete.

Since then, these tombs have been the subject of ongoing investigation by Italian scholars, such as Giovanni Lilliu (1967) and Ercole Contu (1997), both of whom accepted the theory that the *bucrania* were meant to represent the bull-god. However, the first systematic study of the decoration of the *Domus de Janas* tombs was not carried out until the 1980s, when Giuseppe Tanda (1985) catalogued every type of decoration found in these monuments, and developed an extensive typo-chronological classification. His work was very important, but it was limited by the fact that Tanda did not take into consideration the overall context in which the motives were created and used. The research of Dr Robin thus aims to fill that gap, and attempts to understand the complexity and dynamics of the use of these ritual spaces. An important objective of the research is to understand why these motives are systematically repeated in the tombs. In doing so, Dr Robin hopes to shed light on the connection that exists between art and architecture in these ritual contexts.

In order to address his research questions, Dr Robin carried out a comprehensive survey of the decoration. During his lecture, he guided us through the different kinds of ornament, dividing the motives into 'architectural' and 'decorative,' and pointing out their respective occurrence in different parts of the *Domus de Janas* tombs. He highlighted some interesting patterns, such as the particular emphasis placed on the decoration of doorways, where zigzag motives and *bucrania* are often found. He concluded that these motives were not placed randomly, but were intentionally located in specific parts of the tombs, suggesting that art played an important role in creating and structuring ritual space. Dr Robin also suggested that the special emphasis on doorways could be related to the importance of the transition from a door to another space, and that this could symbolise the passage from the world of the living to the world of the dead.

Dr Robin's research also aims to understand the agency of the motives – in other words, how their presence might have affected people. To address this, Dr Robin adopted a comparative approach. Focusing specifically on the *bucrania*, he looked at the role that such motives play in communities in modern South East Asia, where *bucrania* are also present in monumental tombs. He noticed that in these contexts the buffalo is a symbol of prosperity, used for sacrifice during feasts, and that these sacrifices are normally performed in connection with a funeral. The horns of the dead buffalo are kept and displayed in front of the houses to show off the wealth of the families that can afford to sacrifice such an animal. Interestingly, in some cases, it is not the original horns that are displayed, but a reproduction in the form of a *bucrania*. Dr Robin pointed out that in these contexts *bucrania* are used for commemoration purposes, providing a context for competitive display, which is aimed at the promotion of social status. They are also used to protect doorways against evil spirits and to attract social prosperity. While careful to avoid an uncritical comparison between

prehistoric Sardinia and modern South East Asia, Dr Robin raised the interesting possibility that the Sardinian *bucrania* motive could have functioned as a sign of prestige rather than as a representation of a god, as has been argued in previous studies. Unfortunately, relevant archaeological evidence for the use of cattle in prehistoric Sardinia is limited, making it difficult to know what role these animals played in Sardinian culture.

Dr Robin's lecture was very positively received, it offered interesting insights into the art of the *Domus de Janas* tombs and stimulated an interesting discussion. His division between 'architectural' and 'decorative' motives was thought by some members of the audience to be artificial, since no compelling reason was given for why both types of motive could not have played the same symbolic role. Certain members of the audience also felt that the interpretation of the impact of these art motives would have benefitted from a more careful consideration of how the *Domus de Janas* were used by the living, and of the sensorial aspects connected to this use. In other words, it is important to understand if these structures were accessed by the living for different kinds of rituals, apart from the disposal of the corpses – for example, feasts conducted during or after a funeral, or acts of commemoration carried out perhaps years after a burial had taken place. Therefore, the debate prompted by this lecture gave the speaker some valuable inputs for his future research on the *Domus de Janas*.

Silvia Amicone

Lecture 3. 2 December 2014
Frattesina: an Entrepôt in the
Prehistoric Mediterranean World
Anna Maria Bietti Sestieri, Università
del Salento

The third Accordia Lecture of 2014–2015 marked the 27th anniversary of the Accordia series. It was fitting, then, that the lecture was delivered by Anna Maria Bietti Sestieri, one of Italy's most distinguished archaeologists. The

subject of her presentation was Frattesina, a protohistoric site in Veneto (near modern Fratta Polesine), with which Professor Sestieri has been involved since the 1970s. Frattesina reached the height of its prosperity in the late Bronze Age, but continued to be inhabited down to the early Iron Age (for a general overview of the site and the region, see e.g. Bellintani 2000).

Professor Sestieri divided her lecture into two parts, first setting out a 'model' for interpreting Frattesina (what it was in the late Bronze Age and what it became in the transition to the Iron Age), and then giving an overview of the archaeological material that she and her colleagues have recovered from the site over the last four decades of scientific investigation.

As Professor Sestieri demonstrated, Frattesina in the late Bronze Age was a major centre of production, importing raw and semi-worked materials from a range of sources, both local (e.g. antler) and further afield (e.g. amber from the Baltic region, glass from the Levant, and ivory from North Africa). Much of this material was re-worked on site to produce a wide range of luxury objects. Of particular interest among the material discussed by Sestieri were the bronze hoards ('Phase 2', or late Bronze Age), the contents of which has been analysed using an array of archaeometric techniques. The items discovered in the hoards included both semi-finished products (e.g. pick ingots) and finished products (e.g. specialized tools for metalworking). On the basis of such objects, Sestieri painted a picture of a site that was devoted to industry – a major centre of manufacture with highly specialized levels of production. Moreover, Frattesina was part of (perhaps at the centre of?) a complex territorial system involving many neighbouring sites (e.g. Campestrin), and had 'international' contacts with centres in the Aegean, Cyprus and the Levant.

Professor Sestieri also discussed political dynamics, noting a probable transformation in the organizational structure of Frattesina and its neighbours in the course of the late Bronze Age, towards an increasingly

centralized system (the rise to power of a local aristocracy?). According to Sestieri, this change, which may have been connected with the decline of the so-called ‘Terramare’ technology complex, as documented elsewhere, is evident above all in the burial record of Frattesina’s necropolis, specifically in the widespread adoption of cremation and, in contrast with earlier periods, the very limited use (prohibition?) of weapons as grave goods (Sestieri pointed out that so far only two of the ‘Phase 2’, or late Bronze Age, burials have yielded weapons, all of which were broken).

Frattesina and its associated territorial system seem to have declined between the late Bronze Age and the early Iron Age. Professor Sestieri concluded her lecture by arguing that this decline may have been linked to the emergence in northern Italy of the Villanovan culture, suggesting that sites such as Iron Age Bologna could be viewed as Frattesina’s ‘heir.’

The lecture was well received and prompted a number of interesting questions. In particular, certain members of the audience expressed reservations over whether the adoption of cremation should necessarily be connected with a shift towards a centralized political system. Audience members were also interested to know whether Frattesina was unique in Bronze Age northern Italy in being a manufacturing centre with such wide-ranging Aegean and Near Eastern contacts (no other examples were offered), and whether there was any evidence at Frattesina to suggest that the manufacture of metal had a cultic significance, as has been suggested for other Bronze Age sites (Sestieri explained that the evidence from Frattesina does not allow us to draw any conclusions about this).

Frattesina, it seems, is an unusual and complex site. It has occupied the attention of Professor Sestieri and other archaeologists for many decades, and will no doubt continue to be a source of interest for many decades to come.

Lecture 4. 13 January 2015
Getting the Bigger Picture from a Minor Site: the Roman and Late Antique *Mansio* of Vignale (Tuscany)
Enrico Zanini, *Università degli Studi di Siena*

In the fourth Accordia Lecture, Enrico Zanini spoke about the Roman and Late Antique *mansio* at Vignale (Tuscany), and its importance within the broader historical dynamics of the area.

Archaeological research at Vignale started in 1830, when, on the occasion of the building of the Via Regina Grossetana, several rooms decorated with mosaics were found. A small archaeological park was created, but after a number of years the area became neglected and forgotten. It was subsequently rediscovered in 1968, when the building of a vineyard caused damage to the site’s underlying structures. Since then, the site has been protected and has been the object of a number of surveys, including those carried out by the University of Siena (2003). The results of these surveys led to the start of excavations in 2005, which are ongoing (Zanini and Giorgi in press; Zanini and Giorgi 2010)

Professor Zanini explained how the different archaeological explorations in the area enabled him and his colleagues to reconstruct the history of the Vignale site. The oldest settlement traces in the area are associated with a farm of the Etrusco-Padano period, which, on the basis of coins found during the excavations, has been dated to the mid 2nd century BC. The archaeological evidence for the Roman period is more consistent, and the excavated structures are thought to relate to a *mansio* (a station along the Via Aemilia Scauri) or a villa. During the Augustan-Tiberian period, the structures of the farm and villa were unified to create a *mansio*. This was built with bricks produced at a nearby factory, owned by Marco Fulvio Antioco, as revealed by the brick stamps. Relating to the Late Antique period (5th–6th century AD) is a necropolis, which suggests the existence of a settlement in the area, the function of which is still under debate. The site continued to

be inhabited during Medieval times, when, according to historical sources, the Pieve S. Vito 'in Cornino' and the tower (which later developed into a castle) were present.

Professor Zanini also introduced us to the discovery of one of the most important mosaics in Tuscany. This exceptional find was possible thanks to the memory of the ninety-year-old Lino Tani, who remembered that in the area there was a tool shed with traces of mosaic over the floor. Thanks to Tani's indications, along with aerial photographs taken in 1944, it was possible to identify the exact location of the shed, a few centimetres below which were the mosaics. As Professor Zanini explained, the mosaics have several phases, running from the 1st century BC to the 5th century AD. There is a simple base belonging to the 1st century BC, followed by a middle phase, depicting the god Aion, the arc of time, and the seasons. A makeover followed in the 5th–6th century AD, in which can be observed some 'corrections' attributed to Christian intervention. The mosaics are still under investigation, and will be fully evaluated, taking into account the local context, the Roman villa and other elements.

The lecture drew a positive reaction from the audience. In particular, audience members appreciated the interest that the project has aroused in the local community, which has actively supported the project, and enthusiastically participated in promoting Vignale to the wider public.

Silvia Amicone

Lecture 5. 17 February 2015
Perfume, Flowers and Deities in
the Western Greek World: the Case
Study of Gela

Claudia Lambrugo, Università degli studi di Milano

The intriguing connection between perfume and deities was at the centre of the lecture delivered by Claudia Lambrugo. Through numerous examples from literary and

iconographic sources, Dr Lambrugo demonstrated that a close relationship existed in the Greek world between perfume and divine epiphany, which, especially in the case of female deities, was usually associated with a detailed description of the deity's toilette (Lambrugo 2013, 2012). Following this, Dr Lambrugo introduced the notion of perfume as a vector between the mortal and the immortal spheres, the fragrant scent being a tangible sign of a deity's presence, and something that allows mortals to perceive the divine. At the same time, the seductive power of perfume played an important role at a human level, bringing men and women together. Dr Lambrugo also presented an overview of the kinds of perfume that were probably used in the Greek world, and highlighted what she saw as a 'democratization' of the use of perfumes in the proto-Archaic and Archaic periods, when perfume started to dominate every aspect of the sacred sphere, ceasing to be the reserve of the deities and heroes of the Homeric epics.

Having introduced the topic, Dr Lambrugo focused on a case study: Predio Sola, a sanctuary at the Greek colony of Gela in Sicily (Orlandini 1963, Ismaelli 2011). The site's original excavator, Piero Orlandini (1963), believed that Predio Sola was dedicated to the goddess Demeter. However, the abundant presence in the earliest phase of the sanctuary (Stratum I = 640/630–550 BC) of oil lamps and miniature vessels for perfume and fragrant oils led Dr Lambrugo to draw different conclusions. This abundance of perfumes is unusual for Demeter, who is normally associated with procreation and child rearing, and whose main place of worship at Gela, as proved by epigraphic evidence, was the Bitalemi Thesmophorion, where very few perfume containers have been found (Orlandini 1966). With these considerations in mind, Dr Lambrugo raised the possibility that the sanctuary of Predio Sola could have been functionally related to the community of young girls in transition to adulthood, and that the perfume bottles and oil lamps could have been connected with odorous epiphany rituals of seduction, and the transition from adolescence

to adulthood through marriage (Lambrugo 2008). This led her to conclude that the sanctuary of Predio Sola was probably dedicated to Kore, the daughter of Demeter, although Dr Lambrugo conceded that it is not possible to rule out a connection with Aphrodite, a goddess for which there is still no secure evidence at Gela. If the association with Kore is valid, then we are faced with an interesting scenario in which the sanctuary of Predio Sola and the Bitalemi Thesmophorion were poles representing two religious spheres, each relating to phases of a young woman's life.

The lecture was very well received and prompted an interesting discussion about rituals and the expression of religiosity at Gela and beyond, and about how we can make inferences about these important aspects of social life through a careful interpretation of the archaeological record. It also highlighted the importance of reassessing material from old excavations in the light of new theoretical developments.

Silvia Amicone

Lecture 6. 3 March 2015
Advertisement, Marketing and
Competition: Performing Auctions in
Roman Italy
Marta García Morcillo, University of
Roehampton

Roman auctions were the focus of the sixth Accordia Lecture of the 2014–2015 series, which was delivered by Marta García Morcillo. Dr Morcillo has published widely on various aspects of the Roman economy (e.g. 2014), as well as on the reception of the ancient world.

Although we have Latin to thank for our modern word 'auction' (from *augere*, 'to increase'), auctions were not invented by the Romans. One only has to think of Herodotus' account of the Babylonian practice of auctioning off young women to prospective husbands for an earlier, pre-Roman example (*Histories* 1.196.1–5). Nevertheless, it is the Roman world that offers some of the best evidence for the role that auctions played in an ancient context.

In the course of her lecture, Dr Morcillo presented an overview of that evidence, focusing primarily on the literary sources (above all, Cicero), and combining those with epigraphic and archaeological material where available (e.g. the Archive of the Sulpicii from Puteoli). From this body of evidence, she demonstrated that there were certain expectations – laws, in fact – regulating almost every aspect of auctions in ancient Rome: how they were advertised, where and when they were held, how they were conducted, etc.

Dr Morcillo also discussed the function that auctions served. They were, of course, one of the principal means through which commodities (art, food, slaves, etc) were sold, and wealth and property re-distributed. They also provided a useful way of measuring the supply and demand of certain products. As Dr Morcillo showed, however, auctions were potentially about more than just commercial transactions. Auctions could be used for overtly political ends – to undermine political opponents, for example, as Sulla did during the Proscription of 82 BC when he auctioned off his enemies' property. Furthermore, they were a stage on which reputations could be made or broken. For example, Cicero (*Pro Quinctio*) makes it clear that the humiliation suffered by a debtor whose property is auctioned off publicly is as bad as that of a citizen condemned by the state, while it is obvious from his letters to Atticus that Cicero's desire to outbid a rival named Otto in a property auction was as much about upholding his honour as about securing the prize.

Dr Morcillo presented a wealth of evidence in a lecture that was very engaging. Clearly, there were many people in the audience who knew the subject well, judging from the nature of the questions, which touched on a range of topics, from the procedures for auctioning licenses to *publicani* (tax collectors) to the relationship between auctions and banking, and the specific role played in auctions by the so-called *sectores*.

Oliver J. Lown

Lecture 7. 5 May 2015
Interpreting the Etruscans: between
Republicanism and Princely Rule
(12th to 16th Centuries)

Corinna Riva, UCL Institute of
Archaeology

In the last Accordia lecture of the 2014–2015 series, Corinna Riva spoke about the reception of the Etruscan world in late Medieval and early Renaissance Florence. As Dr Riva explained, the lecture's theme is part of a larger project, in which she plans to explore the interpretation of the Etruscans through time, from the 13th to the 20th century. This marks an interesting change of direction in Dr Riva's research, which has so far focused on the archaeology of Etruria (e.g. 2010) and, more broadly, the Iron Age Mediterranean.

In recent decades there have been a number of publications on the reception of the Etruscans, a subject that is linked to the broader field of Classical Reception Studies. Dr Riva herself cited the book by Giovanni Cipriani, *Il mito etrusco nel Rinascimento fiorentino* (1980), while recent volumes on the Etruscans have tended to include at least a chapter on reception (e.g. Turfa 2013). In her talk, Dr Riva sought to build on the work of Cipriani and others, arguing that interpretations of the Etruscans in late Medieval and early Renaissance Florence – in particular, of their identity as either an autochthonous people or as descendants of the Romans – were shaped by contemporary political events, and by changing ideas regarding political authority. At the same time, she argued that such interpretations must also be viewed within the broader cultural and artistic context of the period.

Although we have reports of Etruscan artefacts being unearthed in the late 13th century, it is not until the 14th century that the Etruscans appear in written sources. For example, in his *Nuova Cronica*, the Florentine merchant and chronicler, Giovanni Villani (ca. 1280–1348), mentions the deeds of the Etruscan king, Porsenna. As Dr Riva explained, Villani used antiquity to assert

the independence of the Tuscan region, and of Florence in particular, yet he did so by emphasising the city's ancient Roman past – namely, the tradition that Florence had been founded by Julius Caesar. Interestingly, the words 'Etruria' and 'Etruscan' are absent from Villani's work. For Villani and his contemporaries, then, what mattered was Florence's Roman origins, while the Etruscans at this time were not yet regarded as a historically and politically relevant entity. Dr Riva also suggested that the use of antiquity to shape an ancient Roman heritage was connected with the growing interest at this time in ancient literature, which was at the basis of the development of political thought from the end of the 13th century onwards.

In the later 14th century, the long-term conflict between Florence and Milan provided the context for a 're-making' of the Tuscan city's ancient history. As Dr Riva demonstrated, historical and political writing at this time emphasises the city's Roman republican past and ideas of civic virtue and freedom, in contrast with the tyrannical power of the Milanese dukes. It is also in this period, specifically in the letters of Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), the Chancellor of the Florentine Republic, that we find the first reference to the Etruscans as a relevant entity. In one letter, Salutati describes Florence as *Etruscan* as well as Roman, and it is clear that Salutati regarded Florence as a foundation of the Roman general Sulla, rather than of Julius Caesar – that is, a foundation of the late Republic, rather than of the early Empire. Dr Riva noted, however, that it is only with Salutati's successor to the chancellorship, Leonardo Bruni of Arezzo (ca. 1370–1444), that political freedom and republican values are seen as having originated in the independent Etruscan city-states and the government run by the city magistrates, the *Lucumones*. Dr Riva went on to point out that as soon as the Etruscans had entered into Florence's republican ideology, they started to attract the attention of humanists, providing the conditions in which the Etruscan myth was developed under the Medici, the

family that would dominate Florentine political life in the following centuries.

From the 15th century onwards, interest in the Etruscans was also stimulated by archaeological discoveries, which were themselves fuelled by the demand for antiquities on the part of aristocratic collectors. In turn, such discoveries inspired contemporary artists and architects. As Dr Riva pointed out, however, knowledge of Etruscan art and architecture was based less on an understanding of the ancient artefacts themselves than on knowledge of what Roman authors such as Vitruvius had written about the subject. She went on to suggest that the aim of contemporary artists was not to understand antiquity (Etruscan, and the Antique in general), but to use it for their own artistic ends, with ancient artefacts providing the raw material for developing new images in art and literature that fulfilled artists' desire to achieve naturalism.

Among the aristocratic collectors of antiquities, one of the most important in the 15th century was Lorenzo de Medici (1449–1492). His interest in antiquity was made manifest in his villa at Poggio a Caino, which was planned and built in collaboration with the sculptor and architect, Giuliano da Sangallo (ca. 1445–1516). This monument, featuring a temple façade with a maiolica frieze, has been interpreted by many scholars as harking back to an Etruscan past, the iconography of the frieze embodying an aristocratic ideology that drew on the Etruscans' kingly status. Dr Riva took issue with this interpretation, however, suggesting that the villa should instead be viewed as a combination of different artistic traditions, in which it would be misleading to identify a distinctive Etruscan element, given that scholars at the time had little idea of what an Etruscan temple really looked like. It was not until the 16th century that the Tuscan architectural order was codified, thanks to the work of the Bolognese theoretician, Sebastino Serlio (1475–1554). Moreover, Dr Riva argued that it was only in the 16th century, with the establishment of the Duchy of Florence (1530) that Etruscan kingship became politically relevant, and associated too with the

notion of Etruscan autochthony. The Tuscan architectural style, defined by Serlio as rustic and virile, adequately served the ideology of Cosimo I de Medici (1519–1574), the second Duke of Florence and the first Grand Duke of Tuscany, who abandoned any pretence of defending republicanism.

Dr Riva's lecture was wide-ranging and rich in ideas. It was very well received, and prompted an interesting discussion about the interpretation of the Etruscans in different political contexts, and about the issue of reception in general. As noted above, the lecture theme is only part of a larger project, in which Dr Riva plans to explore the interpretation of the Etruscans from the 13th to the 20th century. This is certainly an ambitious project, and one that will surely prove to be of great interest both to Etruscan archaeologists and to scholars of modern history.

Silvia Amicone and Oliver J. Lown

Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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