

wall (*Holzkastenmauer*) has been discovered and dated to the ninth century BC (Fernández-Gotz and Krausse, p. 280).

If the connection of the fortification at Colle Rotondo and possibly other sites in central and northern Italy with this technique and with central European and Atlantic Europe fortifications will be confirmed, maybe it will be possible to investigate further connections between craftsmanship of Eastern and Western Mediterranean and Continental Europe, in which central Italy seems to be a central node of transmission.

To conclude, the book by F. and H. is an important contribution both in terms of new data and theoretical framework, which has the potential to answer fundamental historical questions on the development of early cities and the relationship between eastern and Western Mediterranean people especially if set up within a more comprehensive study of fortifications in the whole Italian peninsula with a long-term perspective.

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## RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS IN EARLY ITALY

POTTS (C.R.) *Religious Architecture in Latium and Etruria, c. 900–500 BC*. Pp. xxx + 178, ills, maps, pls. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Cased, £75, US\$125. ISBN: 978-0-19-872207-6.

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P.'s book is a long-awaited reconsideration of the archaeological evidence for religious architecture in Latium and Etruria during the Iron Age and Archaic periods. Based on P.'s 2011 D. Phil. thesis (*Accommodating the Divine: the Form and Function of Religious Buildings in Latial and Etruscan Settlements c. 900–500 B.C.*, Oxford), the book provides a systematic overview and comprehensive analysis of the development of religious buildings in central Italy, thereby challenging existing hypotheses over their identification. In doing so, P. offers a novel way of conceptualising the emergence and role of monumental Latial and Etruscan cult buildings. Instead of regarding all early central Italic architecture as a unified body of Etruscan, or Etruscan-dominated, data, P. treats the cultural variants of Latium and Etruria as distinct – thus following fairly recent studies on early Italy that favour regional approaches placed within the wider context of the early Mediterranean.

After a brief introduction (Chapter 1) that argues for the need of a re-evaluation of the evidence as well as the existing criteria for the categorisation of religious buildings in view of recent significant discoveries, the book is organised in two parts and is followed by an appendix that collates information about the most commonly cited and relevant examples of early Latial and Etruscan religious buildings (the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus is excluded due to the little definitive evidence for its Archaic appearance). Part 1 (Chapters 2–4) assesses the evidence – architectural and decorative contexts – for cult buildings in central Italy between approximately 900 and 500 BCE in comparison to other contemporary structures, underlining that the monumentality of a building can only be assessed with reference to its own time and place. The second part (Chapters 5–7) contextualises religious monumentalisation in Etruria and Latium, tackling ritual, topographical and functional conditions.

Chapter 2 addresses the evidence of early religious structures in central Italy, the so-called sacred huts, to conclude that there is no evidence that sacred huts were common

in Latium or Etruria. P. contests the idea of topographical continuity, which has been employed to identify huts beneath temples as early religious structures. She concedes that topographical continuity may point to a functional continuity, and some of these huts indeed seem to have had a primarily religious function, but she also stresses that artefacts are more trustworthy as indicators of ritual activity. Huts that had a religious function, however, were not architecturally differentiated from other buildings in a settlement. It seems therefore that there was no need to develop distinctive markers for religious architecture at this time.

Chapter 3 traces the development of distinctive architectural markers in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE – from huts to structures with regularised plans – and notes that the construction of podia in religious buildings from the sixth century BCE onwards shows that these buildings were perceived as idiosyncratic structures and there was a desire to differentiate them from their surrounding built environment. The fact that podia were incorporated into religious buildings in Latium first (S. Omobono complex in the Forum Boarium, c. 580 BCE; temple of Mater Matuta at Satricum, *terminus post quem* of c. 590–580 BCE; Temple of Juno Regina at Ardea, c. 540 BCE) and then Etruria suggests that the distinctive form of temple architecture was the result of more than Etruscan mentality – a point to which P. returns to in the last chapter.

In Chapter 4, P. reviews the relationship between decoration and religious buildings in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE in central Italy, to point out that gradually architectural terracottas were exclusively used as distinguishing decorative features in early religious buildings. She plays down the importance of Greek influence in the gradual restriction of architectural terracotta decoration to religious buildings and proposes to view this development as parallel to the use of distinguishing architectural features (podia) for temple architecture. Just as podia were used to differentiate religious buildings within settlements, the gradual restriction of terracotta roof decorations to these buildings came to reinforce the distinctiveness of these structures through art. Latium and Rome seem to have been again forerunners in the use of ceramic architectural decoration as a means to distinguish specific and possibly religious buildings, as architectural terracottas were employed there from the beginning as distinguishing decorative markers, while in Etruria this type of decoration was originally widespread and was later confined to cult buildings.

Chapter 5 opens up the contextual analysis of religious monumentalisation in central Italy by challenging the assumption that altars and statues were integral components in the construction of monumental temples. P.'s overview shows that altars, statues and temples were independent of ritual activity in Latium and Etruria prior to the fifth century BCE. Altars were often built as separate ritual elements without any architectural setting and those that were placed near a cult building were often oriented in a different direction. She further tackles the problematic identification of pre-Republican cult statues to argue that the role of anthropomorphic cult statues in early Italic religion has been overstated. The absence of evidence for cult statues within temples certainly challenges the idea that temples were built to house them.

Chapter 6 addresses the ways in which monumental temples were related to their setting. Criticising the typological identification of cult sites as urban, extra-urban or rural and, in general, the role that urbanism has played in the conceptualisation of the form and location of monumental religious architecture, P. proposes that the defining element in the design of early cult sites in central Italy was a desire to be accessible and visible to visitors and travellers. For instance, Rome's first podium temple in the Forum Boarium in c. 580 BCE was located by the river; the settlement was thus welcoming and attracted water-borne visitors to Rome's first international market. Similarly, at Veii,

Pyrgi and Vulci lowland accessibility shows that interaction with external contacts played a decisive role for the location of the cult sites.

Chapter 7 reviews the heterogeneous explanations for the appearance of religious monumental architecture in central Italy in the Archaic period and seeks to establish a connection between cross-cultural contact, cult and architectural investment in the wider context of the Mediterranean. P. provides a broad overview of early temples across the Mediterranean to stress that the monumentalisation of religious buildings took place in locations that were associated with trade. In Italy, the Archaic relationship between monumentalisation, trade and ritual seems to have been built upon earlier trends of architectural investments in courtyard complexes as centres of large-scale commercial exchange (e.g. at Poggio Civitate). P. suggests that the decline of such complexes in the sixth century BCE may be related to the increasing investment in the construction of monumental temples. She convincingly argues that the monumentalisation of religious structures put their primary function to a different use: to the pursuit of international business. The symbiotic relationship between religion and trade has been widely recognised in studies of sanctuaries across the Mediterranean (e.g. the Samian Heraion), as the generally standardised behavioural patterns that religious rituals required operated as a lingua franca fostering cross-cultural interaction. P.'s analysis contextualises the development of religious monumentality in Archaic Italy in this wider context.

The final chapter reiterates the arguments put forth in the book to highlight that Archaic Latium, and particularly Rome, played a significant role in establishing a distinguishing architectural idiom (podia, architectural terracotta decoration) for religious structures by the sixth century BCE in central Italy. Building on the work of G. Cifani, and more recently J. Hopkins, P. stresses the differences in buildings south and north of the Tiber. The developments of early religious architecture taking place in Rome seem to have been a result of the outward-looking character of the city. In this context, monumental religious architecture was a means of attracting and managing beneficial encounters in Mediterranean-wide trade networks.

This book is an important contribution to the understanding of the development of religious architecture in early central Italy. P.'s comprehensive discussion addresses the role of early Rome in pan-Mediterranean trade networks and, in doing so, exemplifies recent approaches that endorse the use of comparative frameworks to understand changes around the whole Archaic Mediterranean.

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## THE DYNAMICS OF ANCIENT ANATOMICAL VOTIVES

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