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CONTEXTUALISING FREGELLAE: LOCAL INTERESTS IN A “GLOBALISED” MEDITERRANEAN

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Abstract: The article employs the Latin colony of Fregellae as a case study to overcome the *communis opinio* that colonial settlements were *parva simulacra Urbis* (Gell. XVI.13.9). In particular, the colony, initially founded by Rome in the context of the Second Samnite War, could move away from the *Urbs* and develop localised interests. Such interests could be explained through a dynamic contact between colonists and local populations, thus forming a variegated social landscape which did not necessarily display cultural similarity with Rome. Similarly, the cityscape could be employed to ascertain how certain colonies chose architectural solutions which took into account localised needs. It is in this context that the article will examine the alliance between Fregellae and Rome in light of the Second Punic War. Traditionally interpreted as a demonstration of blind loyalty, the article will put forth the idea that the colony could decide its alliances in view of potential benefits, which, in the case of Fregellae, were manifested in the economic and military advantages reaped in the eastern Mediterranean. Interestingly, these benefits affected the colony and, more specifically, its architectural facade, as seen in the building activity carried out in the period immediately after the endeavours in the East.

Keywords: colonisation; Fregellae; Roman imperialism; globalisation

It was usually thought that colonisation attested Rome’s undiscussed hegemony. And Fregellae was no exception to that. When Coarelli first published its excavations reports, the central role of the *Urbs* and its *longue durée* permeated, unquestioned, the whole publication. In a nutshell, Rome founded the colony with three features: 1) military function, 2) equal distribution of land and 3) copy of Rome’s architectural and cultural landscape. More recently, such view has been questioned, leading Stek to move away from a one-fit-all explanation, instead seeing numerous and co-existing motivations for the colonisation phenomenon.¹ Along this line, Termeer has emphasised the localised development of colonies. It is following such academic debate that I write this paper, where I show that, despite being founded in light of Rome’s interests, Fregellae could move away from the *Urbs*’ influence: localised elements permeate the town, both at an institutional and architectural level. At the same time, the colony recognised Rome’s

¹ Stek 2018, 154.

significant role within the Mediterranean as guarantor of economic opportunities. While the colony's alliance with Rome has been explained through cultural similarity, I argue that Fregellae was interested in accessing the plethora of economic opportunities, which manifested in the Eastern Mediterranean, and which provided a more substantial income than the localised economy. The Fregellan cityscape shows how the involvement in the East brought about an increased prosperity, as seen in the construction of public buildings.

The foundation(s) of Fregellae: securing Rome's interests

Fregellae's foundation (328 BC) occupies a paramount position within the geo-political development of Southern Latium in the late fourth century BC. The Romans established their hegemony over Latium, with the renewal of the Latin League (358 BC) and with victories over the Etruscans and the Gauls between 354 BC and 348 BC (Livy VII 12.7; VII 19–26; Polybius I 6.4; II 18.5). This phase ended with a series of treaties: apart from the aforementioned renewal of the Latin League, Rome signed a *foedus* with Caere (353 BC), Tarquinia and Falerii (351 BC), Carthage (348 BC), the Falisci (343 BC) and with the Samnites (354 BC) (Livy VII 19.4, 19.6–20.9, 22.5, 27.3, 38.1; Diod. XVI 45.8, 69.1; Polybius III 24).

The last treaty, in particular, set the premise for the consolidation of Roman power into the Liris Valley (Livy VII 15.9, 19.4). Although the terms are unknown, we can infer them from the behaviour of the two powers after 354 BC. The Samnites protested against the foundation of the Latin colony of Fregellae *in Samnitium agro* on the left side of the Liris river, which must have acted as a boundary between Rome and Samnium (Livy VIII 23.6; Dion. Hal. XV 8.5, 10.1). This is further understood in light of their movements after the *foedus*. Rome captured Sora, winning against the Volscians (Livy VII 28.6). Similarly, Samnium conquered Casinum and Aquinum on the opposite side of the river.² As Salmon argued, the acquiescence of the two powers indicated the righteousness of their actions.³

The first foundation of Fregellae represents the *casus belli* against the Samnites (Livy VIII 23.6; Dion. Hal. XV 8.4; App. *Samn* I.4). In the period between the Latin War and the Second Samnite War, Rome experienced a favourable increase in population – and, consequently, military units – with the conquest of Capua and of the Latins.⁴ The *Urbs* was in need of territorial expansion. At the same time, the Samnites had found themselves involved in the wars against Alexander of Epirus (Livy VIII 17.9). Thus, they were forced to release their control of the Liris Valley.

² Coarelli 1998, 30.

³ Salmon 1967, 194.

⁴ Salmon 1967, 215.

Such an action was perceived as a symptom of weakness by the Romans, who chose to further provoke their enemies by violating the *foedus*. Within Southern Latium, the Romans showed great military activity. Not only did they found Fregellae, but they also intervened in the war between the Aurunci and the Sidicini: between 337 BC and 334 BC, the Romans besieged and conquered Cales, an Auruncan city, allied to the Sidicini (Livy VIII 15.1–5, 16.1–11). In this sense, the Romans violated the treaty, by indirectly harming the Samnites.

The reason for the Roman dispatch of a colony to Fregellae (328 BC) related to its strategic geographical position. The Latin colony, in fact, allowed a more secure control of 1) the crossing over the Liris river, 2) the Trerus (Sacco) Valley road (coinciding with the Via Latina) and, 3) an easier connection over the Auruncan Mountains to the Tyrrhenian Sea.⁵ The Samnites, too, were aware of Fregellae's strategic placement. However, in order to counteract Rome's movements, they had to wait for the Romans' military loss after the *clades Caudina*, when the *status quo* of the 354 BC treaty was reinstated. They recaptured the old territory, destroying Fregellae. As Coarelli notes,⁶ the colony must have been empty for six or seven years, during which the entire Liris Valley was under Samnite dominance. Nevertheless, the place's strategic importance acted as an incentive for the Romans' counterattack. After recapturing Sora (315 BC) and Terracina (314 BC), they re-occupied Fregellae in 313 BC (Livy IX 25; Diod. XIX 76.2).

The second foundation of Fregellae throws light on the intense militaristic interests of Roman colonisation in Southern Latium. The archaeological remains of Latin colonies in the Liris Valley and the Fucine area show colonies with impressive fortifications. At Alba Fucens (303 BC), for instance, the fortifications were built throughout a long process, which began immediately after its foundation. The size of the constructions emphasises the importance of the "cinta muraria," thus hinting at a paramount defensive role. The defensive role is also ascertained by the presence of an *agger* behind the wall itself, providing more stability to the construction.⁷ Ramparts represent another element that reinforces the military overtone of Central Italian colonies. At Alba Fucens, a rampart is inserted in the western wall of the town. Apart from the grand frontal dimensions (7.70 m), the dating of the structure points to the first years of the colony, as inferred from Campanian ceramics.⁸ At Fregellae, the excavations have not revealed a defensive wall. However, the accounts of a travelling Frenchman, Chaupy, might throw some light on this. At the end of the eighteenth century, he wrote:

⁵ Salmon 1967, 212.

⁶ Coarelli 1998, 31.

⁷ Mertens 1969, 51.

⁸ Mertens 1969, 52.

Ce quartier est composé d'un grand emplacement formé par le Liris d'un côté, et par d'enfoncements du terrain de toutes les autres parts de plus de six milles de circuit, tout rempli de fondations qui sont la seule carrière que Ceprano connoit, et dont celles de tour, que j'ai vues creuser en un endroit, se montrent par leur épaisseur extraordinaire, pour avoir été de ces murs, à l'abri desquels on crut pouvoir couper les ponts du Liris à Hannibal meme.⁹

What transpires from this passage is that Fregellae, indeed, had wide walls. As we infer from Colasanti, a trait of the walls on the northern side survived up to the twentieth century.¹⁰ The defensive purpose must have been enhanced by Fregellae's elevated position on the Opri plateau. The Romans employed the geomorphology for military purposes also for Cales, a nearby Latin colony slightly older than Fregellae.¹¹

In this light, after the reconquest of Fregellae in 313 BC, Roman policy aimed at strengthening the *Urbs'* territorial advance. In order to do so, not only were old centres, like Fregellae and Cales, rebuilt, but the construction of new colonies intensified.¹² Suessa Aurunca, for instance, closed off the access to coastal Latium and northern Campania, which were often threatened by Samnite incursions (Livy IX 28.7; Strabo V 3.5, 4.11). The following year, Interamna Lirenas was built, controlling the Samnite centre of Casinum (Livy IX 28.8). Finally, the access routes into Southern Latium, coming from the Apennines, was placed under Roman control with the foundation of Sora, Alba Fucens and Carseoli (Livy X 1.1, 3.2, 13.1).

The system of colonies in the Middle Liris Valley proved solid and functional in light of subsequent events. In the aftermath of the Samnite Wars, the area was not taken away from the Romans, although it was severely threatened.¹³ In fact, Pyrrhus and Hannibal were capable of endangering – without success – the defensive system, geographically and strategically hinged around Fregellae. While the colony's role is not directly mentioned, Florus (I 13.24) tells us that Pyrrhus could only ravage its territory, without capturing the settlement itself. Although the invader approached Rome, he left behind him a series of colonies, acting as fortifications, which cut off all supplies and possibility to escape. It is with Hannibal's march toward Rome that Fregellae's strategic position proved of the utmost importance. According to Livy, the Fregellani were responsible for cutting off the bridge on the Liris (Livy XXVI 9.3). The result of such an action was

⁹ Chaupy 1779, 475.

¹⁰ Colasanti 1906, 101.

¹¹ Coarelli 1998, 53.

¹² Coarelli 1998, 32.

¹³ Coarelli 1998, 33.

favourable for Rome. Hannibal, in fact, had to follow a longer route, allowing Fulvius Flaccus to defend the *Urbs* (Livy XXVI 9.11).

Asserting local interests and acquiring power: Fregellae and Rome

By the time of Hannibal's descent, in the late third century BC, the nature of colonies in Southern Latium had changed: while Rome's interests had determined their initial phases, with time colonies could assert their own local interests. Growing tired of providing levies and tributes, a group of twelve Latin colonies refused to contribute to Rome's military efforts in the Second Punic War. At the same time, Fregellae, as a representative of eighteen colonies, declared full loyalty to Rome (Livy XXVII 10.3), later distinguishing itself in delaying Hannibal. The delegation, led by a Fregellanus, M. Sextilius, was not a casual choice, but it had an official significance: the colonies had a form of organised consultation since they seemed to act as a cohesive body (Livy XXVII 9.2). This was not the only time when a Fregellanus acted as a representative of a wider group of colonies: a few years later, Lucius Papirius Fregellanus acted as an official orator to Rome on behalf of the Latin colonies (Cic. *Brut.* 170). In this setting, the association among these colonies has a twofold significance: firstly, it shows Fregellae's pre-eminent role among the colonies; secondly, it proves that they could come together and decide whether to go to Rome's aid, thus weighing their own interests against those of the *Urbs*. Even though the Romans reminded the twelve dissident colonies of their Roman foundation, such an argument did not persuade them. In this sense, we begin to understand that cultural similarity was not a sufficient reason to determine alliance between Rome and its colonies. At the same time, we must beware not to confuse the colonies' actions with pro- or anti-Roman sentiments. The twelve "dissident" colonies, after all, did not join Hannibal's forces when he was near. Thus, they were not displaying a reaction against Rome's power, but simply asserting their own local needs over Rome's belligerent efforts.

The development of local interests can be understood also in light of Rome's action in the aftermath of the Punic War. The Roman senate's and consuls' surprise at the colonies' defection has led scholars to believe that the interaction between Rome and its colonies was minimal.¹⁴ In this setting, it would be expected that colonies focused on their own interests before concentrating on those of Rome, seen as a distant entity. As a reaction to this, the *Urbs* opted to reassert its own power over them, using Fregellae, which had been loyal, as a supervisor.

¹⁴ Pfeilschifter 2006, 126-127.

According to Strabo, Fregellae held control over the neighbouring colonies along the Via Latina: Ferentinum, Frusino, Fabrateria, Aquinum, Interamna, Casinum, Teanum, Cales, Setia, Signia, Privernum, Cora, Suessa, Trapontium, Velitrae, Aletrium (Strabo V 3.10). Interestingly, Strabo specifies that the towns under Fregellae were characterised by their Roman foundation. Hence, they were Latin colonies. If we examine the list of the aforementioned twelve dissident colonies,¹⁵ eight of them (except for Ardea, Nepes, Sutrium and Narnia) presented Roman foundations. It is possible, as Coarelli suggested,¹⁶ that Rome placed the twelve “rebellious” colonies under the control of Fregellae for its great loyalty and military distinction in the Hannibalic War. That the colonies were not really rebellious is a blatant fact: they did not rise against the *Urbs*. Nevertheless, their submission to Fregellae should make us realise that not only was Rome trying to bring them under its own sphere of influence, but that it wanted to create a coincidence of interests with its colonies.

Was Fregellae Roman? A varied ethno-cultural background and architectural display.

How can we explain the emergence of these local interests? First of all, they could result from an ethno-culturally varied population, which shifted away from Roman culture into a more localised identity. After all, communities are made up of people who interact with one another. At Fregellae, the first clear attestation dates to 177 BC, when a large group of 4000 families moved from Samnium and the Paeligni and took residence in the colony (Livy XXXIX 3.4–6). While this event occurred after the Second Punic War, we can also postulate that local indigenous people might have lived in the area since its foundation. In fact, although Fregellae had been founded on a new site, it still occupied indigenous territory. The situation in other neighbouring colonies might offer some clarity. Certain presence of indigenous people can be seen at Cales, where several *nomina gentilicia*, of Oscan origin, were present in the colony soon after its foundation: according to Roselaar, they might have formed the indigenous population of the wider area, under Samnite rule.¹⁷ It is often believed that these indigenous people lived in *vici*, nucleated settlements detached from the main colonial centre. A clear example comes from Alba Fucens, where inscriptions record the existence of *vici* on the shores of the

¹⁵ Ardea, Nepes, Sutrium, Alba, Carseoli, Sora, Suessa, Circeii, Setia, Cales, Narnia, Interamna.

¹⁶ Coarelli 1998, 37.

¹⁷ Roselaar 2011, 534–535.

Fucino lake between the third and second century BC. According to Stek, the *duumviri* and the *queistores*, attested on the inscriptions, were Romanising; yet, they displayed local variations, as seen from the lack of linguistic confidence on the epigraphic evidence.¹⁸ In the territory of Fregellae, similar nucleated sites have been found north of modern-day Ceprano and near the Monticelli del Carmine.¹⁹ Despite the lack of epigraphic material, these settlements, like the ones at Alba Fucens, could have hosted indigenous people.

Of course, the co-existence of colonists and indigenous people is only the starting point to explain the colonies' localised interests. In order to understand how these interests could come about, we need to examine how the two aforementioned social sectors could interact. There is evidence, although not in Fregellae, that shows how indigenous settlers could become part of the colonial communities as magistrates. Gabba goes even further to say that indigenous upper classes could find a place among the colonial elite from the beginning.²⁰ Despite this, third-century Caes included a certain Vibius, of Oscan origins, among its *quaestores*.²¹ A single incidence, however, should not lead us to a generalised view over this topic. Pelgrom postulates that the indigenous and colonial communities were separate at a juridical level during the early colonising phase. He also concedes that, with time, they could intermingle and unify.²² The interaction between colonists and indigenous people would bring about a localised cultural milieu. If Rome was not heavily present in the life of its colonies, the cultural environment would move away from the *Urbs*, resulting in the formation of localised interests.

If we shift the attention to the urban cityscape, in its infrastructural and architectural components, colonists adopted localised features, away from the influence of the *Urbs*. Traditionally, in fact, scholarship has seen Rome determine not only the ethno-cultural background of colonies, but also the infrastructural and institutional setting. More detailed examinations of the urban layout show that these could be altered after the colony's foundation. At Fregellae, Crawford's excavations identified two layouts.²³ The oldest is probably the one around the Forum. However, not every street in the colony follows the same pattern as this old layer: as attested from a coin, one dates either to the late third century BC or early second century BC.²⁴ Similarly, the north-western part of the settlement

¹⁸ Stek 2009, 167.

¹⁹ Hayes & Martini 1994, 181–82; Coarelli 1998, 97.

²⁰ Gabba 1994, 51.

²¹ Termeer 2015, 104.

²² Pelgrom 2012, 178.

²³ Crawford 1984.

²⁴ Crawford 1985, 113.

presents a different orientation as the central layout.²⁵ These pieces of evidence tell us that the colony was reshaped after its foundation, taking into consideration local developments. As Termeer points out,²⁶ the different orientation in layout could be connected to a new reshaping of the colony, caused by the increase in population during the second century BC.

At an institutional level, traditional scholarship has seen public buildings as copies of those in the *Urbs*. The *comitium*, a square enclosing a circular stepped amphitheatre-like structure, can be employed as a study case since it was thought that it propagated from Rome,²⁷ both architecturally and institutionally, to its colonies. Such a structure is not only visible in Fregellae,²⁸ but also in other settlements, such as Cosa, Alba Fucens and Paestum.²⁹ Still within the context of urban infrastructure, Fregellae presents what scholars have identified as an area destined for the provisory *saepta* during the *comitia*. As Coarelli notes, “l’elemento più significativo è costituito da due serie di doppi pozzetti, ognuna delle quali si allinea al margine dei lati corti.”³⁰ Such elements were also present at Cosa, at Alba Fucens and at Paestum.³¹ These “pozzetti” were meant to host poles, creating a series of corridors separated by cords, which were only used during the *comitia* in order to not disrupt the daily activities in the Forum. Similar structures were also present in Rome, around the ancient *comitium* and near the arch of Augustus.³² Thus, as for the *comitium*, these holes were seen as indicators of emulation of Roman practices.

Nevertheless, if we examine the archaeological evidence in detail, the similarities denote strong local adaptations. For instance, although Rome played an inspirational role, the *comitia* did not display uniformity. As Lackner and Termeer note, they have different capacities and dimensions across the four colonies.³³ In this sense, it seems that each colony had a degree of independence in adapting architectural forms. Such independence could also extend to later construction phases. Although *comitia* generally date to the early years of colonies,³⁴ fragments of Campanian ceramics from Alba Fucens allow us to date the building to the second half or the last two thirds of the third century BC. Therefore,

²⁵ Crawford 1987, 76–77.

²⁶ Termeer 2015, 145.

²⁷ Coarelli 1985, 11–21.

²⁸ Coarelli 1998, 59.

²⁹ Scott 1988, 75; Greco 1988, 83.

³⁰ Coarelli 1998, 56.

³¹ Mertens 1969, 93–96; Scott 1988, 75; Torelli 1991, 39–40.

³² Mertens 1969, 96.

³³ Lackner 2008, 265; Termeer 2015, 120.

³⁴ Termeer 2015, 117.

the building was erected later. Mertens postulated either the first half of the second century BC or the end of the third century BC.³⁵ If Rome had such a pervading power, we would expect the *comitium* to date from the foundation period. A similar scenario can be envisioned for the holes in the Forum. While past scholarship postulated their use during elections, Sewell points out that they presented neither uniform dimensions nor dispositions.³⁶ He further argues that such differences represented instances in which local realities were allowed to adapt Roman models.³⁷ Mouritsen, too, suggests that the discrepancies in the numbers, forms and layouts of the pits relate to local situations, noting that the dissimilarities make each colony unique.³⁸ Thus, although colonies might have been influenced by Rome, both at an institutional and architectural level, they could mutate such influences and adapt them to localised instances. Given that Rome was not an imposing presence, the localised architecture could also indicate that colonies were capable of developing their own interests.

The localised economy of Fregellae: attracting foreigners, the wealth of the land and manufacture.

By the early second century BC, the economic situation at Fregellae must have been prosperous, as we infer from the waves of migrants seeking residence in the town. Already by the end of the Hannibalic War, the Carthaginian *obsides* asked to be shifted to Fregellae, where the living conditions must have been better (Corn. Nep. *Hann.* 7.1–3). Similarly, in 177 BC, 4000 families migrated from the Paeligni and Samnium to Fregellae (Livy XXXIX 3.4–6). This movement belongs to the migration of Italians toward the colonies and of Latins toward Rome. Although Coarelli postulates an interest in Roman citizenship,³⁹ I believe that such a notion is untenable: first of all, Fregellae was a Latin colony. Thus, it could not grant Roman citizenship. Even if they were using a Latin colony as a stepping-stone toward Roman citizenship, the migrants would have had to wait for a long period of time before reaching such a goal. A more suitable explanation should emphasise

³⁵ Mertens 1969, 101.

³⁶ Sewell 2010, 77–78.

³⁷ Sewell 2010, 80–81.

³⁸ Mouritsen 2004, 64.

³⁹ Coarelli 1998, 35–36.

the economic character of the town: the migrants chose an economically prosperous location. In fact, even though migratory movements occurred elsewhere,⁴⁰ Fregellae can be seen as the epicentre for this phenomenon.⁴¹

It should be noted, first of all, that Fregellae derived a conspicuous income from its pastoral resources. Strabo, in fact, identified the colony as an important market, most likely a *forum pecuarium*. The nature of this economic system can be understood in relation to the expansion of the *ager publicus*, which bore witness to the creation of intense livestock farming. Cato mentions a pasture permit during the winter months on villas in the territory of Southern Latium, Campania and Samnium.⁴² While it was not the only *forum pecuarium* in the region,⁴³ pastoral economy would have been more intense at Fregellae. The colony occupied a strategic location, which, through Sora, connected various *tratturi*, especially the ones leading from the Adriatic coast to Alba Fucens,⁴⁴ under Fregellae's control. In this context, the colony acted as a catalyst for the wide network of transhumance roads. It would not be difficult to imagine that, at an economic level, the *forum pecuarium* attracted very high numbers, who used Fregellae's land for pastoral purposes.

Nevertheless, the wealth, acquired from land rental, would have only benefited the local landowners. This local economic significance can be understood in light of the migrants' influx in the early second century BC. The foreign upper classes could become part of the local aristocracy, wielding control over the land employed in pastoral economy. As Coarelli argued, the Italic *gentes* were interested in controlling such activity, especially in relation to the *fora pecuaria* near transhumance routes.⁴⁵ For instance, the Valgii, a non-Latin family, are mentioned by Cicero as owning land within the territory of the colony (Cic. *Fam.* XIII 76). Similarly, the Trebellii, non-Latin by origin, were a prominent family in the 170s. Epigraphic evidence confirms the large scale of new Sabellian families into the Fregellan aristocracy: Alfii, Atreii, Aufidii, Caerellii, Gennii, Herennii, Pontii, Pontilii, Vibii.⁴⁶ A piece of evidence for the presence of Sabellian *gentes* in Fregellae comes the Oscan origin of the names Pontilius and Pontus.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Significantly, the association of *Samnites iniquolae* (CIL I² 3201) in corporations at the nearby Isernia shows how common the migration toward Latin colonies might have been.

⁴¹ Coarelli 1998, 36.

⁴² Cato, *Agr.* 149.

⁴³ Similar cases can be found in neighbouring locations: Atina (CIL X 5074), Ferentinum (CIL X 5850), Alba Fucens (Torelli 1993, 114).

⁴⁴ Coarelli 1981, 12–13.

⁴⁵ Coarelli 1998, 38.

⁴⁶ Coarelli 1998, 73.

⁴⁷ Coarelli 1998, 76.

In this context, the pastoral economy of Fregellae could only benefit local aristocrats, who owned and administered the lands. The newcomers were interested in taking part in such a system since, given the strategic position of the colony, granted an increased profit, compared to the neighbouring *fora pecuaria*.

Manufacture at Fregellae, like pastoral economy, presented a degree of localisation. In the fourth and third centuries BC, there was a degree of exchange. The *Urbs* imported pottery, although in small quantities, from the main centres of production: Cales, but also Tarentum, Capua, Teanum and Volterra.⁴⁸ In a slightly later period, the situation, as presented by Cato, changed. The items, chosen to furnish a villa in Central Italy, came from Rome as much as from Capua, Casinum, Venafrum, while Roman and Latin colonies, such as Cales, Minturnae and Suessa, came in a subaltern position (Cato, *Agr.* 135). If we focus on luxury goods, such as the Genucilia ceramics, Rome acted as an intermediary. However, local colonies added their own characteristics to the production, as in Fregellae, Cales and Teanum.⁴⁹ Thus, colonies focused on their own production. The techniques also differed according to localised characters: ceramics from Fregellae, for example, present similarities to those of Cales and Interamna Lirenas, but are strikingly different from that of Capua and Teanum.⁵⁰ The localisation of production is also perceived in the potters' signatures from Fregellae, Alba Fucens, Interamna Lirenas, Minturnae and Cales.⁵¹ What transpires from these signatures is a strong sense of local belonging, inferred from the mention of the artisans and specialists. Similarly, these signatures also propounded an idea of proud citizenship.⁵² At an economic level, the regional production reflected specific interests of the local inhabitants. In Morel's view, the *coloni*, had needs that could be fulfilled only by local production already in the third century BC, with the introduction of the new tastes of the clientele.⁵³

The Second Punic War had a paramount role in the intensification of local production. At Fregellae, this is reflected in the *fullonicae* that occupied the urban centre in the colony's last decades. Hydraulic installations had a clear manufacturing purpose: large basins, covered in *cocciopesto*, were connected through terracotta pipes, cutting through the decorated floors. Sometimes, walls were demolished in order to create larger spaces (*Domus 2*), where the *alae* and the *tablinum* were united. In other cases, rooms were further divided by walls (*Domus 7*). The *atria* were demolished and the cornices of the *impluvia* were used to

⁴⁸ Morel 1988, 51.

⁴⁹ Morel 1988, 52.

⁵⁰ Morel 1988, 52.

⁵¹ Morel 1988, 54.

⁵² Morel 1988, 55.

⁵³ Morel 1988, 53.

transform the central area of the house into a vat (*Domus* 5). Other pipes were employed to discard the residual waste (*Domus* 6). Given the vast scale of the works, the “industrial” remaking of the houses dates between 200 BC and 125 BC, more precisely between 170/160 BC and 140/130 BC.⁵⁴ Interestingly, the *terminus post quem* almost coincides with the arrival of the migrants from Samnium and the Paeligni. Yet, the production of the *fullonicae* was not typical of Fregellae. A similar system was present also in Arpinum and other settlements. While Coarelli suggests that the product could be marketed far and wide across the Mediterranean, it would not have been enticing enough to increase Fregellae’s wealth significantly. Moreover, the reason why the newcomers migrated to Fregellae must have related to an already existing state of economic prosperity. Thus, the employment of houses as *fullonicae* can be seen as a way for the local aristocracy to employ the low-class newcomers, while the members of the foreign elite were easily incorporated into the colony’s upper class and participated in land management and revenue. Indeed, the motivation behind the *fullonicae* could be related to the town’s presence on a transhumance road, as previously stated. The elite, involved in cattle and sheep livestock, could provide the raw material to their local fullers, thus increasing their profit.

The involvement in the East

As we have just seen, the economy of Fregellae displayed a strongly localised character. The colony’s loyalty to the *Urbs* should be interpreted in light of wider economic opportunities, granted by Rome, allowing the town to increase its own wealth. These opportunities materialised with the colony’s dealings in the Eastern Mediterranean. Fregellae began to be involved in the East through Rome’s military activities. Near one of the private houses, at the corner between the *cardo maximus* and the *decumanus* 3, a terracotta frieze was found, probably decorating the adjacent *domus*. Despite its fragmentary state, archaeologists have been able to reconstruct the figures, which are prevalently of a military nature. Roman soldiers are clearly attested from their helmets and their cuirasses. Similarly, next to them, it is possible to notice soldiers in Hellenistic attire with Phrygian helmets and round Macedonian shields. Apart from human figures, the frieze also contains fragments of animals (horses and elephants) and warships.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Coarelli 1998, 66.

⁵⁵ Coarelli 1998, 63.

What transpires from this find is its historical portrayal. The scene represented a battle: the Macedonian armours pointed to the wars against the Hellenistic kingdoms, between the first and the third Macedonian War.⁵⁶ As Scullard notes, the presence of elephants might indicate the Syrian War.⁵⁷ The ships also attest a naval battle. While this might appear as odd within an inland Latin colony, Livy mentions that Latins were enrolled in the navy during the war against Antiochus III (Livy XXXV 20.12). The events of the frieze could refer to a period between the battle of Magnesia and Myonnesos, thus dating after 190 BC.⁵⁸ In fact, the presence of the *turma fregellana* in the East is attested during the Syrian War against Antiochus III (Livy XXXVII 34.6).

At an economic level, the distribution of booty from the East must have been conspicuous. While they were fighting for Rome, the allied communities benefited from the war booty (Polybius X 15.4–16.9). As Sage states, the revenues allowed the Italians to recoup some of the war expenses and to increase their income.⁵⁹ In the case of a Latin colony, like Fregellae, this is even more significant. Since they were not Roman citizens, they could not have participated in the distribution of land.⁶⁰ Hence, booty represented the only source of profitable income. Apart from the prescribed division, each soldier could also loot.⁶¹ As Brunt argues, although these sums were often small, they might have had a greater value in a world less monetised than ours.⁶² A sense of the amount of revenue from the Eastern Wars is given by Livy: in 172 BC, volunteers rushed to enrol in the army for the Third Macedonian War, having seen that soldiers in previous wars had come home very rich (Livy XLII 33.6). As far as Fregellae goes, its involvement in Eastern wars since the early second century BC must have meant a great amount of income from those belligerent efforts.

The involvement of Fregellani in the East did not concern only military actions. Rather, they also became involved in mercantile exchange. This was possible, I believe, because Fregellae and Rome held a strong relationship, through the colony's conscious support in the *Urbs'* military exploits. Thus, the starting point to understand trade in the Eastern Mediterranean is to analyse the role of Rome. Although Italians traded with the East already from the fifth century BC, Rome's successes in the Eastern Mediterranean brought about a shift in economic transactions: wealth, accumulated in private hands, caused an increase in

⁵⁶ Coarelli 1998, 63.

⁵⁷ Scullard 1974, 178–180.

⁵⁸ Coarelli 1987, 30.

⁵⁹ Sage 2008, 210.

⁶⁰ Sage 2008, 210.

⁶¹ Rosenstein 2012, 110.

⁶² Brunt 1971, 393–94.

demand for foreign commodities.⁶³ This also provided enough capital, further invested on foreign trade. The implications of this economic change can be seen in the increased number of traders, as we infer from the Italian presence on Delos (even in the Delian aristocracy).⁶⁴ The provenance of the merchants further shifted from the Italiote Greeks to the inhabitants of the coastal region from the Surrentine peninsula to the Volturnus (including also Latins and Romans, who participated in the administration of Delos).⁶⁵ Moreover, the merchants became settlers, shifting from trade to banking, moneylending and exploitation of lands.⁶⁶

But how would Fregellae benefit from trade? In order to answer, we should firstly understand Roman attitude to commerce. The Romans had ambivalent opinions about trade, depending on the type of activity. Moneylending and usury (*feneratio*) were morally condemnable because they were lucrative,⁶⁷ and punishable by law (Cato *Agr.*, Praefatio). On the other hand, *mercatura*, clearly separated from moneylending, was a noble activity: the *mercator*, unlike the *fenerator*, was regarded as an active man. The only negative connotation of *mercatura* was linked to foreign trade's risks. In 219–218 BC, the *plebiscitum Claudium*, vetoed the rights of senators and their children to engage in maritime trade, given its inherent risks and perils (Livy XXI 63.3–4).⁶⁸ The sudden loss of profit could have meant a weakening of the senatorial class.⁶⁹ Thus, agriculture represented the safest way to accumulate wealth.⁷⁰ Not only was this activity low-risk, but it also fostered Roman values, such as *frugalitas*.⁷¹ Commerce, on the contrary, was regarded as *invidiosus* since it could cause the hostility typical of sudden wealth.⁷² Despite the moralistic spite for commerce, senators found that trade was a very profitable activity.

Senators could be involved in mercantile actions through middlemen.⁷³ Plutarch's biography of Cato explains how the senatorial class overcame the restrictions on maritime commerce. In the light of the Eastern conquest, the opportunities for an easy profit had increased. Rather than being actively involved in maritime exchange, senators could support trade by financing ships:

⁶³ Wilson 1966, 88.

⁶⁴ Rauh 1993, 1, 4.

⁶⁵ Wilson 1966, 87; Rauh 1993, 9.

⁶⁶ Wilson 1966, 87.

⁶⁷ Garcia Brosa 1999, 175.

⁶⁸ Zalesskij 1983, 22.

⁶⁹ Gabba 1980, 92.

⁷⁰ Zalesskij 1983, 21.

⁷¹ Garcia Brosa 1999, 178.

⁷² Gabba 1980, 91.

⁷³ Keller 2007, 46.

ἐχρήσατο δὲ καὶ τῷ διαβεβλημένῳ μάλιστα τῶν δανεισμῶν ἐπὶ ναυτικοῖς τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον, ἐκέλευε τοὺς δανειζομένους ἐπὶ κοινονίᾳ πολλοὺς παρακαλεῖν, γενομένων δὲ πεντήκοντα καὶ πλοίων τοσοῦτων αὐτὸς εἶχε μίαν μερίδα διὰ Κορινθίωνος ἀπελευθέρου τοῖς δανειζομένοις συμπραγματῶν οὐ καὶ συμπλέοντος. ἦν δ' οὖν οὐκ εἰς ἅπαν ὁ κίνδυνος, ἀλλ' εἰς μέρος μικρὸν ἐπὶ κέρδεσι μεγάλοις (Plutarch *Cat. Mai.* XXI 6)

This economic involvement maximised the profits, reduced the losses and preserved the senators' *dignitas*.⁷⁴ Archaeological evidence shows senatorial involvement in trade. For instance, the seals SES or SEST on amphorae from Cosa can be linked to the Sestii, a senatorial family in Rome.⁷⁵

Fregellae, alas, does not produce a conspicuous amount of evidence for mercantile involvement in the East. However, even though the material might not be quantitative significant, it sheds light on the function of Fregellani as merchants and traders. First of all, the finding of Rhodian amphorae in Fregellae demonstrates a commercial exchange with the East, intermediated by the port of Minturnae.⁷⁶ In addition, there is also certain evidence for the settlement of Fregellani in the Eastern Mediterranean. An inscription mentions a M. Sestius Fregellanus at Delos.⁷⁷ His presence there at the end of the third century predates the more intense commercial links with the Italics, typical of the mid-second century BC. The document attests a decree of *proxenia*, thus showing that the individual had a certain social rank. In fact, he was a banker who had given a loan to the city with reasonable terms. In this setting, it is safe to surmise that Fregellan bankers were present at least on Delos immediately after the end of the Hannibalic War. It should not surprise us that this period coincides with the colony's phase of economic prosperity.⁷⁸ Fregellani, like Sestius, involved in mercantile and financial activities must have made great profits, which they then took home.

The wealth of Fregellae and the urban structure

Fregellae's economic interests are reflected on the settlement's urban façade, both at a private and public level. Although *domus* had been converted into *ful-lonicae* by the mid-second century BC, they can be used to trace the various economic phases of the town. As previously said, Fregellae's pastoral economy would have primarily benefited the upper classes, who dwelled in these *domus*. Most of the houses in the first sector present floors in *opus signinum*, following

⁷⁴ D'Arms 1981, 46.

⁷⁵ Garcia Brosa 1999, 176.

⁷⁶ Coarelli 1998, 67.

⁷⁷ Hatzefeld 1912, 77–78.

⁷⁸ Coarelli 1987, 30.

geometric patterns with circular *emblemata*. That this prosperity was due to the local economy can be shown through dating. Most of the refined decorations date to the third century BC,⁷⁹ period in which the Fregellani had not yet been involved in Rome's eastward expansionism.

The second sector provides us with a glimpse into aristocratic houses just after the Second Punic War. It seems that private dwellings underwent a process of reconstruction, which was probably financed by the income from the Eastern ventures. Architecturally, the *domus* follow the standard canon: they have a Tuscanic *atrium*, with two *cubicula* on each side, *alae* and *tablinum*. The *vestibulum*, furthermore, indicates the aristocratic character of the building, pointing also at the existence of a clientele for the local upper classes. The decorations further corroborate the high status of the houses' owners: the floors are covered in white mosaics and *opus signinum* (not only in geometric patterns, but also with figures), the walls are decorated in first style and the architectonic terracottas show stylistic refinement.⁸⁰ Similar decorations have been found in suburban villas near the church of Sant'Antonio, where a mosaic was found in the 1960s,⁸¹ and in Via Boccaccio 20.⁸²

Within the public sector, the impact of the Eastern dealings was more visible. The *comitium*, for instance, witnessed a process of monumentalisation according to Hellenistic architectural schemes. Such Eastern influence can be noticed in other public buildings, especially that north of the circular *cavea*: the *curia*. While its first phase had been built modestly, the structure was later expanded, using a completely different material (local tufa stone from Pofi).⁸³ In this same phase, the Curia was also included into a larger construction, surrounded by a portico, characteristic element of the Hellenistic East.⁸⁴ Like the private houses, even this public area was rebuilt during the first years of the second century BC, thus fitting into the prosperous phase of the colony. A similar case is that of the thermal complex. The construction technique of the vault stops being used from the second quarter of the second century BC. Hence, even in this case, the baths can be dated to the early decades of the second century BC. A stratigraphic analysis, moreover, has attested the existence of a previous building. The complex had a portico, like the Comitium, hinting again at a use of the Eastern architectural typologies for public buildings.

⁷⁹ Coarelli 1998, 63.

⁸⁰ Coarelli 1998, 64.

⁸¹ Monti 1998, 92.

⁸² Monti 1998, 93.

⁸³ Coarelli 1998, 59.

⁸⁴ Coarelli 1998, 60.

Conclusions: a colony within the Mediterranean

Fregellae, as a Latin colony, did not display a static existence, whereby it was founded by Rome and it remained Roman. Rather, as I have shown, the colony could develop away from the *Urbs*. Indeed, its first years served Rome's expansionistic interests. With time, perhaps even two generations from its foundation, the colony could assert a sense of localisation, which contrasts the traditional approach of colonies as *simulacra Urbis*. A varied ethno-cultural society, where colonists and indigenous people were mixed together, fostered the creation of a local cultural environment. If we consider the urban development of colonies, the role of Rome has been overly emphasised. Public buildings, like the *comitium*, adopted localised forms, detaching from a standard Roman canon. It is in this localised setting that I have reinterpreted Fregellae's choice to help Rome. More specifically, colonies could come together and weigh their own interests against those of the *Urbs*. Fregellae chose to support Rome in dire straits because the *Urbs* could grant economic opportunities. These manifested in the East, where not only did the Fregellani make a profit from military activities, but also from mercantile and financial endeavours. The presence of Fregellani in the Aegean as merchants and traders in the late third century BC predates the more intense Italic dealings in the mid-second century BC. That the East was a source of wealth can be seen in the urban façade of Fregellae. Although *domus* displayed rich decoration from the third century BC, the early second century BC bore witness to another decorative phase. It is not a case that such phase coincides with the Fregellani's presence in the East. Similarly, public buildings underwent a process of reconstruction. The "new" *curia*, the bath-house and the *comitium* present elements which follow the style of the Hellenistic East, thus placing Fregellae in the "global" Mediterranean.

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