

Ancient Rome and the *Transpadana*



Acculturation Processes, Infrastructure, Systems of Territorial and Administrative Organization

A two-year research project sponsored by the Italian Ministry for Education, University, and Research
Project coordinator: Giovannella Cresci (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia)

This project aims to examine the major historical processes that affected the geographical area between the Alps and the Po river from the end of the Roman Republican period to Late Antiquity. From the age of Augustus, this area corresponded to the two northernmost regions of Italy: *Venetia et Histria* (X regio) and *Transpadana* (XI regio). Our specific interest focuses on the territorial structures that defined this area as an integrated system. We take a diachronic approach that pays particular attention to two transitional moments: the beginning and the end of Roman rule over these territories.

Our analysis is based on well-established markers of Romanization, whose features have long been the object of critical assessment:

- 1) Culture. This marker is represented on the one hand by the penetration of Roman culture in indigenous areas during the late Republican period (e.g. the learning and diffusion of Latin graphic characters; the embracement of new systems for measuring time and space; the adoption of Roman standard weights and currency; and the introduction of new cults and rituals) and, on the other hand, by the persistence of local elements during the Roman Imperial age.
- 2) Infrastructure. This included road systems (e.g. major transalpine routes connecting the Danube to the Adriatic coasts; local roads on valley-bottoms, across mountain ridges, and through uplands; pedestrian pathways; and water routes), settlement patterns (e.g. *municipia* and *coloniae*; *pagi*, *vici* and minor sites; and scattered settlements on high or low ground), as well as strategies of managing and controlling water as a primary resource.
- 3) Political and administrative systems. We study the agents, the chronology and the processes of municipalization. Specific focus is given to the transition from the pre-Roman territorial organization to the direct government of Cisalpine Gaul, which was first a province and later became two regions of Italy, as well as to the administrative changes of the post-Diocletianic period.

Our project began with a comprehensive reassessment of the major ancient sources related to the territory that we intended to investigate. These sources included geographical and historiographical texts, inscriptions and archaeological data. We have now proceeded to a comparative study of the different geographical areas that formed this territory. Each area was characterised by distinctive environmental features and a different ethnic composition, which might include Celts, Rhaetians, Veneti, and residual groups of Ligures and Etruscans. We also examine the forms of juridical and administrative organization, the patterns of land-ownership and land-use, and the government management of economic and natural resources. Finally, we will extend our analysis to Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, in order to investigate: the extent of the homogeneity of, and changes in, material culture as a consequence of population movements; the continuities and disruptions with respect to the Roman organization of the area; the partial revival of the road network and the administrative and military control of the Alpine passes; and the establishment of the boundaries of civil and ecclesiastical administrative districts.

Our project comprises five research units, which cover the entire area of ancient *Transpadana*, and include all five principal modern regions of Northern Italy: the Veneto (Venice), Friuli - Venezia Giulia (Udine), Trentino - Alto Adige (Trent), Lombardy (Pavia), and Piedmont (Turin).

Each of these units has already established strong links with local museums and *Soprintendenze archeologiche*, whose staff often actively participate in the project. Each unit has decided to use the majority of its funding to offer contracts and research fellowships to young post-doctoral scholars with proven track records of accomplishment.

(1) Section of the *Tabula Peutingeriana* showing Northern Italy.
4th century AD.
Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 324.



(2) Sandstone cippus from *Altinum* bearing the funerary inscription of a 'Venetized Roman' written backwards. Late 2nd – Early 1st century BC.
Altino, Museo Archeologico Nazionale.



(3) Schist stone stele from *Vercellae* reporting in Latin and Celtic the dedication of a piece of land. Early 1st century BC.
Vercelli, Museo Civico Camillo Leone.

Research Units	Local Coordinators	Research Topics	Post-doctoral Research Grants
Università Ca' Foscari Venezia	Giovannella Cresci	Processes of Romanization in the «Venetorum angulus»: Chronologies, Protagonists, and Dynamics of Acculturation.	1) Managing the Territory from Romanization to Romanity: "Secondary" Administrative Structures and Rural Settlements in the X Regio. 2) A Prosopography of the Agents of Acculturation Processes in the X regio on the Basis of a Systematic Survey of Literary Texts and Epigraphic Documents: Towards a Census of the Inhabitants of Roman <i>Venetia</i> in the Late Republic.
Università di Udine	Stefano Magnani	The Forms and Development of Territorial Organization and Management of Infrastructure Networks in the Eastern X Regio.	Italic Elites and Indigenous Communities in the Eastern X regio and in the Neighbouring Territories: Relationships, Economic Contacts, and Cultural Effects.
Università di Trento	Elvira Migliario	The Formation and Development of Romanization in the Eastern Alpine Areas: Territorial Structures and Administrative Frameworks (1st Century BC – 6th Century AD).	A Commentary of the Ancient Literary, Epigraphic, Topographical, and Archeological Sources dealing with the Geography and Ethnography of the Alpine and Cisalpine Area.
Università di Pavia	Rita Scuderi	Romanization in Central Cisalpine Gaul: Comum, Bergomum, Mediolanum, Laus Pompeia, Ticinum, Cremona.	The Process of Romanization in Central Cisalpine Gaul as Seen through Epigraphic Documents: Comum, Bergomum, Mediolanum, Laus Pompeia, Ticinum, Cremona (with a database built according to the EpiDoc guidelines).
Università di Torino	Sergio Roda	The Western Region <i>Transpadana</i> : From the Roman Conquest to the Transformation of the Later Roman Empire.	The Chronology and Dynamics of the Romanization Process in Western <i>Transpadana</i> from the 2nd Century BC to the 1st Century AD.