

Why Italy?

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Introduction

From an aerial vantage point the Italian peninsula, with its spine-like Apennine range, stretches into the centre of the Mediterranean from the Alpine mountains. Such a perspective has become so natural to us now that we need to make a conscious effort to view the landscape at eye level, and to recognize that its illusory cohesiveness is partly a superimposed overlay used to aid narrative construction. This is somewhat paradoxical, since much of the attraction of researching Italy, especially its earlier periods, is fuelled by the sheer multiplicity of co-existing community forms and networks, often reaching far beyond the frame of the shoreline. On those occasions when the peninsula does become a crucible for unified action and governance, the underlying context of diversity serves to highlight the fragile and transient nature of any resulting organism. Evidence for this dynamic atmosphere is plentiful, and becoming ever more accessible, not only because of numerous archaeological projects, using increasingly advanced methods of recovery and interpretation, but also as a result of new paradigms that inform our thinking about society and the historical process.

The essence of this volume lies in the combination of these factors. It is therefore not a comprehensive study of all the areas of the peninsula. Rather, regions are used as case studies from which to explore both the history of communities that inhabited them and much broader themes, relevant not only to the study of the Mediterranean but also in providing long-term perspectives for issues at the heart of contemporary debate. We have deliberately excluded those regions that have received significant attention in recent English-language scholarship, and which are easily accessible, such as for example Umbria (Bradley 2000) and Lucania (Horsnaes 2002; Isayev 2007). The aim of this chapter is primarily to contextualize the different research trends and to highlight some of the ongoing debates that the contributions to this volume address.

If the above is an initial answer to the question 'why Italy?' then it could be summarized as 'why not Italy?' This apparently frivolous response embodies the extent to which the nature of scholarship of the peninsula has changed. Only ten years ago there would have been an expectation of a particular emphasis, which is reflected in the opening paragraph of the landmark review by Curti,

Dench and Patterson in the *Journal of Roman Studies*: 'For the historian of the Roman period, the archaeology of central and southern Italy raises . . . a fascinating variety of questions . . . it was here that Romans tested and perfected the techniques of organization and control of territory that were to be used with such success elsewhere . . .' (1996, 171). While the fundamental overview provided by this article reaches well beyond the interest in Rome, still the impetus of the research is presented as the city's rise to power, and the contextual expansion of the better-known narratives centred on Greece and Rome. Frustration with this agenda is partly expressed in the final section of the review: 'the problem remains that "Hellenization" and "Romanization" are concepts that cover, and sometimes conceal many different phenomena, and interpretations of these phenomena. What we really need now are further attempts to integrate the intricacies of individual cultural situations with explicitly theoretical treatments' (Curti et al. 1996, 181).

That appeal has been answered and its results are incorporated in the discussions here, but with different aims in mind. Many of the questions addressed in this volume are far removed from the specific historical circumstances of the two better-known civilizations, although they help to provide the context for the myriad of other, equally significant, processes witnessed on the peninsula. Notwithstanding the numerous works published since the 1996 *JRS* review, it remains one of the most well-used summaries for activity in Italy. While fundamental reports on new findings continue to expand the regional sections of library shelves, there has been little attempt to provide an integrated overview of the impact of new approaches, especially in English. Key recent syntheses and collected papers are cited in the 'Further Reading' section at the end of this chapter.

An underlying structure that persists through many of the studies of Italy, and indeed through this one, is regionalism, here organized geographically from north to south. The extent to which this categorization is more than an administrative or narrative packaging tool is a concern raised in the chapters of this volume, even if not explicitly. There are a number of key contexts where the issue is highlighted, particularly in discussions of identity, conquest, colonialism and cultural interaction. What is clear from the evidence is that it is in fact hard to keep to the boundaries. Either the phenomena being described reach beyond them, or there is such internal diversity that it is difficult to argue for the coherence of the area within. In the same way that the nation-state is not a natural unit but, as suggested by Anderson (1991), only one form of imagined community, neither is the region. One of the challenges is to understand the circumstances that may cause the imagined community to function regionally, rather than on the level of an individual settlement, the peninsula, or indeed the empire. Even Cicero questioned his own allegiances in *De Legibus* 2.5 (cf. Bradley, this volume). Was it to Rome or Arpinum that he looked for a definition of home? What are the causal factors and where does agency lie in

the transformation of an abstract sense of belonging into a geographical reality? To access this type of information—the self-perception of ancient peoples at a given moment in time—we need to recognize the limits and opportunities offered by the evidence base.

In interpreting and integrating remains of material culture and ancient written sources, often compiled by outside observers, it is, therefore, crucial to have an awareness of the theoretical frameworks and distinct methodological tools that are being employed. Implicitly or explicitly, the contributors in this collection provide a wide range of approaches to the material, determined by the main focus of their inquiry and the types of evidence available to address it. The region therefore acts as a physical and mental space to test existing models and explore the impact of divergent forces on individual communities and broader societal forms. While each regional package is distinct, a number of overlapping themes are shared in common. The most prominent among them are urbanization, identity, state-formation, economy and cultural contact. Other subjects, such as gender and cult, are presented as areas of future opportunity and development, with discussions here only as starting points.

Landscape as Agent

Italy inspires a passion for landscape (Figures 1 and 2), which must be at least a subconscious reason for most authors beginning with a description of the topography. Mountains, valleys, coast and plains are all cited for their potential to aid or inhibit interaction and to provide an appealing environment in which to settle. The tone is on the whole positive; where previously mountain ranges were perceived as barriers, it is now accepted that such physical obstruction did not inhibit cultural interaction (Riva, in this volume). Instead, the landscape is described in terms of the opportunities it provides, with river valleys and passes seen as important routes and meeting points, not just gateways into hostile territory. The ridge of a mountain range can make as good a track as the bottom of a valley (Buck 1975, 101–7), depending on what is being transported, the purpose of the journey, and one's destination.

This change in outlook may be partly attributed to a shift from a Roman-centred to an Italian perspective. It need only be subtle, as demonstrated at the start of Bispham's chapter on Samnium, where he positions the reader's historical gaze to look out from within the Apennine-based community by altering the traditional role of the adversary: 'The Romans, their enemy in the "Samnite Wars" . . .'. This refocusing owes its existence, in part, to such interdisciplinary studies as Horden and Purcell's *Corrupting Sea* (2000), which, through an integration of anthropological findings with geographic models, shows the wide-ranging possibilities of landscape use and adaptability in the ancient world, even in seemingly harsh environments. In so doing, it calls into question



1 Abruzzo, Montagna della Maiella (photograph: Elena Isayev)

scenarios, partly fuelled by modernist 'fetishization' of the urban variable, that imply a universal preference for lowlands and plains, with the use of highlands primarily in times of threat.

Such views are closely tied to urbanization and colonization in the Graeco-Roman context, movements which do require vast, preferably flat, lands for expansion and division of territory. But such an image ignores the kind of wealthy settlements that thrive along river valleys, such as Matelica, deep in the heartland of Picenum, or those such as Albenga in Liguria, whose inhabitants consciously chose to remain on high ground rather than move to a coastal position until well into the first century BC. At the moment most of our inquiry is concerned with mono-directional movement from either highlands or non-centralized settlements to more urban environments and territories around newly established communication routes, especially roads and harbours. Such changes are usually associated with conquest and colonial scenarios and have the advantage of leaving a significant footprint in the material record, especially in the period of Roman hegemony.

For periods that precede such upheaval, and in order to provide a wider context, we can turn to the work of landscape archaeology. Some of the most



2 Molise, Monte Mileto (photograph: Elena Isayev)

recent projects include the ambitious Tiber Valley collaboration (Patterson 2004), investigations in south-east Italy focusing on urban landscapes (Attema et al. 2002) and workshops that test the application of theoretical models to the Italian peninsula (Camassa et al. 2000). These may include the use of systematic geophysics and LiDAR for mapping ancient sites, which is discussed by Ceccarelli and Stoddart. In the Treia catchment of the Faliscan area these demonstrate the shifts in intensity of occupation, both in terms of higher densities and nucleation. The methods used by such investigations are unparalleled in providing a long-term perspective for transformations in the settlement pattern over large areas, making them an important interpretative tool as long as there is a continuing decrease in the levels of uncertainty within their modelling scenarios. These projects, coupled with excavations, now provide sufficient evidence of sophisticated and thriving settlements in the highlands, occupied by powerful groups, such as, for example, those discussed in Häussler's chapter on north-west Italy, and Bispham's on Samnium, with similar patterns stretching from Umbria (Bradley 2000) into Lucania (Isayev 2007; forthcoming). In our aim to understand what informs an ancient community's sense of homeland, and the role of landscape in the selection of a settlement location, we need to

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- Tagliamonte, G. 1994. *I Figli di Marte: mobilità, mercenari e mercenariato italici in Magna Grecia e Sicilia*. Rome.
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CHAPTER 2

The Ancient Veneti

Community and State in Northern Italy

Kathryn Lomas

Introduction

Northern Italy poses an interesting series of problems for the historian and archaeologist. The area north of the river Po was regarded in the ancient world as not forming part of Italy at all,¹ yet this region was one with a number of rich and distinctive cultures. It had close contacts with both continental Europe and the Mediterranean world, and played a significant role in the economic and cultural development of Italy. Ancient sources name the principal groups of inhabitants as the Veneti (or Henetoi, in Greek), who occupied an area corresponding to the modern Veneto,² the Raeti, who were concentrated in the area to the north and west of this corresponding to modern Trentino, and the Celts and Ligurians of north-west Italy (Map 1). What these peoples called themselves, how they defined themselves, and whether they possessed an ethnic consciousness corresponding to these Greek and Latin sources, is much less clear, but the archaeology of the region indicates that the populations of these regions developed a rich and dynamic culture during the period between the Iron Age and the Roman conquest. The aim of this chapter is to examine how the culture and society of one area of northern Italy—the Veneto—developed and how the population may have defined their own identity between the emergence of urban societies in the seventh century BC and the Roman conquest of the region.

Greek and Roman writers provide a considerable amount of evidence for the Veneti and their development, and clearly had considerable interest in them, but this must be treated with caution for several reasons. First, most of this evidence is written much later than the high point of Venetic culture in the sixth to second centuries BC, which raises questions about exactly how accurate it was and what sources it came from. Greek authors from Hesiod onwards, for instance, incorporated the Veneti and their region into Greek myths and

¹ Dionysios of Halicarnassus 1.35; Aristotle, *Politics* B296; Thucydides 6.34, 44, 7.3; Herodotos 3.137; Pallottino 1991, 41–45.

² Homer, *Iliad* 2.851–52; Herodotos 1.196; Ps-Skylax 19; Polybius 2.17–18 and 23–24; Livy 1.1, 10.2.1–14; Pliny, *Natural History* 3.130–31; a full set of ancient sources for the regions is collected in Voltan 1989.

ascribed Greek mythological origins to them, such as supposed descent from the Homeric heroes Antenor and Diomedes (Livy 1.1.1–3, Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.242–52; Strabo, *Geography* 13.3.2), but this type of mythologizing tells us little about the actual history of the Veneti. Writers such as Strabo, writing in the Augustan period (Strabo, *Geography* 5.1.4), describe the Veneti as a people organized on tribal lines, whose wealth was mainly derived from horse-rearing; and much Greek interest in the region derives from the fact that it was a rich source of race-horses. Polybius, who was a near contemporary of the events described in his histories, further muddies the waters by stating that the Veneti and the Celts were in many ways culturally indistinguishable from each other, but for the fact that they spoke different languages (Polybius 1.17.5–6).

For the modern historian or archaeologist, the problem is that all of this information is generated from outside the society it describes, written by people who may have had limited first-hand knowledge of the region, and who had their own prejudices and preconceptions. Even some ancient authors (Polybius 2.16.1–17.6, 9.1–2) denied that earlier writers had much real knowledge of the region. What ancient writers offer us, therefore, is an externally constructed view of the culture and development of the Veneti, which was inevitably coloured by Greek, and later Roman, views (Williams 2001, 19–35). Reconstructing how the Veneti defined their own cultural and ethnic identity is a much more difficult task, and can only be undertaken by examining the archaeology of the region, and also inscriptions in the local language, which are the only written records left by the Veneti themselves.

This in turn poses problems of method and approach. How, for instance, are we to reconcile ancient evidence, which portrays the Veneti as a tribal society, with archaeological evidence that suggests the development of a number of cities, each with their own distinctive culture, economy, ritual life, and possibly their own political autonomy? The differences between the southern Veneto, where settlements such as Padua, Este and Vicenza develop urban characteristics at an early date, and the northern part of the region, which remains non-urbanized until after the Roman conquest, must also be explored, as must the question of whether the Veneti defined themselves as having a common ethnicity, or whether this was an external construct that appears only in the eyes of Greek or Roman observers. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an examination of the impact of the Roman conquest and the cultural changes that resulted from this.

Settlements and Urbanization

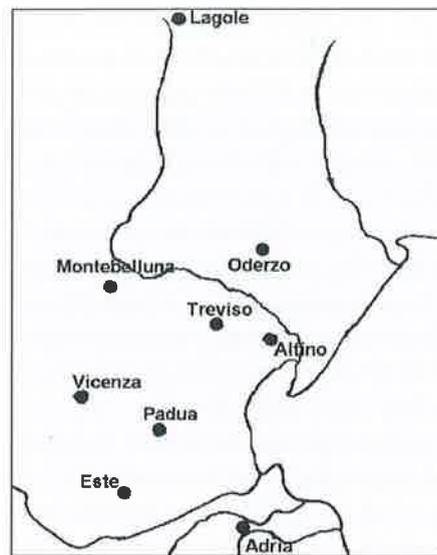
One of the key features of the Veneto is that urbanization begins at a relatively early date in the south of the region. But there is a major difference between this area and the settlement development of the northern Veneto. The southern Veneto, comprising the low-lying regions of the Po plain and the area around

the head of the Adriatic, the Euganean hills and the foothills of the Alps, begins to acquire urban-type settlements from the sixth century BC,³ although of a rather different type from the Greek polis or the Roman city. The alpine areas of the Veneto, in contrast, do not acquire large and complex settlements of this type until Roman colonies were settled there in the first century AD, and much of the communal activity that is elsewhere associated with the city-state takes place at isolated cult centres (Pensaventa Mattioli 2001). The underlying reason for this may be that the mountainous areas of the north of the region do not readily support large concentrations of population in any one place, and are better suited to a dispersed settlement pattern in which the inhabitants live on individual farms or in small villages, but it may also reflect wider cultural differences between the two parts of the Veneto.

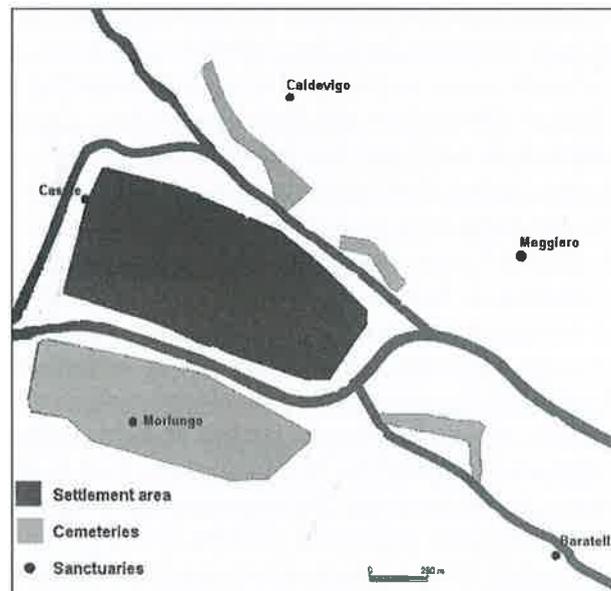
In the southern part of the region, a number of significant population centres were already established by the eighth and seventh centuries BC, but by the end of the seventh century, some significant new developments were taking place. Established centres began to grow in size and a much larger number of rural settlements appeared for the first time, indicating a growth in both population and settlement density. Alongside this increase in the number of sites, there is a significant growth in both the size and the complexity of internal structure and organization of space in a number of the larger settlements of the region, notably those at Padua, Este and Vicenza. This is accompanied by the first signs of activity on many of the major ritual sites, richer burials, more complex layouts of cemeteries and settlements, and a material culture indicating an increasingly wealthy and dominant elite (Balista and Ruta Serafini 1992; Capuis 1993, 114–39; Boaro 2001; Balista et al. 2002; see also below). These changes are all features associated with proto-urban developments with a move towards urbanization, and also suggest that these sites were establishing themselves as the dominant sites in the area, on which many others were dependent (Figure 3).

Despite the Greek and Roman implications that the Veneti were a tribal society, this archaeological evidence for an increasingly complicated settlement pattern and steep site hierarchy, suggests that urban settlements (not usually associated with tribal/ethnic organization) developed early in southern Veneto. By the sixth century, the major Venetic centres at Este, Padua and Vicenza began to show features characteristic of urbanization, such as the existence of an organized street layout, evidence for economic complexity and a defined social hierarchy, and complex settlement patterns in the surrounding territory (Bianchin Citton 2002). Unfortunately, we do not have complete data on the urban development of any of these because they have all been continuously occupied since antiquity, but they seem to have been important centres. However, they all appear to have developed their own distinctive local identities

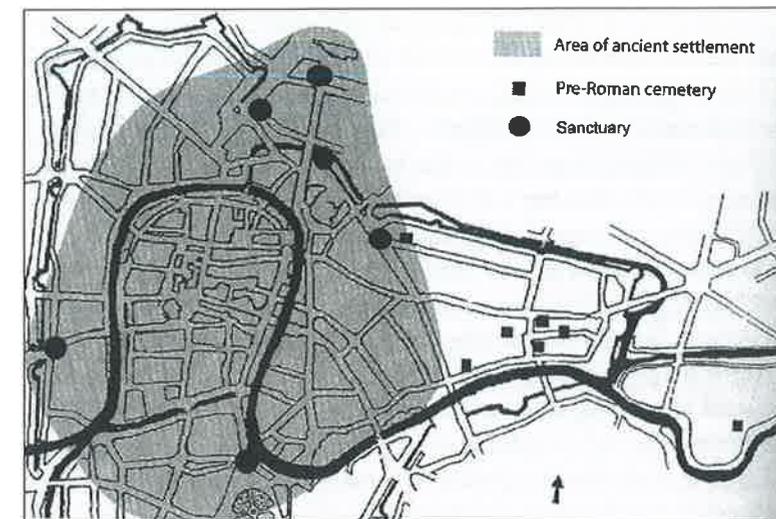
³ See discussion in Chieco Bianchi 1981, 49–53; Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 1992, 45–51; Capuis 1993, 114–21, 163–65; Balista et al. 2002, 105–26.



3 The ancient Veneto: key sites



4 Este: plan of the Venetic settlement (after Balista et al. 2002)



5 Padua: plan of the Venetic settlement (after Pascucci 1990)

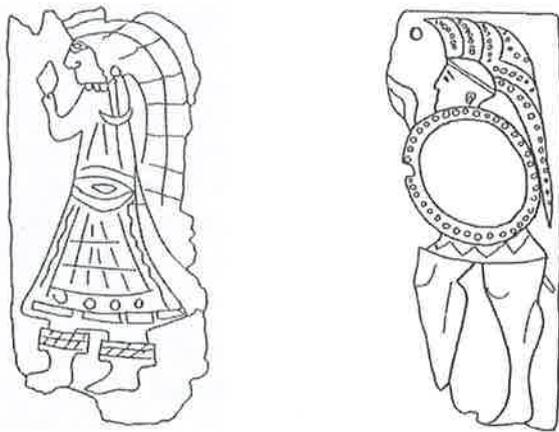
within the region, with a lively degree of competition for regional influence, especially between Este and Padua. These developed into the two largest and most powerful settlements of the southern Veneto but are located only thirty kilometres apart and shared a territorial boundary. Each had its own distinctive variation of local culture and urban development. Both settlements have a similar basic structure, with clusters of houses dating to the sixth to fourth centuries, ringed by areas of burials and strategically-placed religious sanctuaries that mark the urban area and the boundaries of the territory controlled by these settlements, but there are significant variations in the details of their layout and in other aspects of their culture, which will be explored throughout this chapter (Figures 4 and 5) (Chieco Bianchi 1981, 49–53; Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 1992; Boaro 2001, 154–64). The processes of urban growth continued at all the sites in the south of the region during the fourth to second centuries BC. This is marked by the development of fully nucleated settlements with complex street layouts and public buildings during the course of the third century, and then by the adoption of Hellenistic and Roman-style architecture and public buildings in the late second and first century (Bosio 1981a, 231–37; Baggio Bernardoni 1992, 305–20; Tosi 1992b, 400–18).

Sanctuaries and Ritual

The study of religious sanctuaries is particularly important for our understanding of the development of the ancient Veneto, partly because a significant number

of sites have been excavated and have yielded a large quantity of votive objects, and partly because the location of these sites points to an important social and political role in addition to their religious function. The larger settlements like Este and Padua established sanctuaries around the edge of the inhabited area to mark the limits of the urban area, or out in the countryside to mark boundaries of the territory controlled by the community (Figures 4 and 5). Each seems to have developed its own variation on this same basic structure. At Padua, for instance, cult sites were established on the north side of the city, and along the territorial border with Este. Este, in contrast, developed a complex ritual geography with a ring of five sanctuaries on the edge of the city, dividing urban space from the city's territory (Maggiani 2002). Each of these was dedicated to a different deity and produced embossed bronze votive tablets with a distinctive iconography suggesting cults relating to different groups in society (Pascucci 1990; Maggiani 2002). Meggiaro, for instance, produced a majority of warrior figures suggesting a male cult, while another had a high number of votives depicting mature women and another had a predominance of groups of young girls (Figure 6) (Pascucci 1990, 59–92; Zagheretto 2002). Further north, in the mountainous areas of the northern Veneto, sanctuaries were usually established in rural areas away from population centres and in locations marked by significant geographical features such as a water source (Lagole) or a distinctively shaped mountain (Monte Altare, near Vittorio Veneto), rather than in association with a particular settlement. In many cases, these seem to have been located on major routes of communication, and probably acted as a focus of communal activity for the people living in the surrounding area (Pensaventa Mattioli 2001).

In all cases, each sanctuary seems to have been dedicated to a cult with a set of votive offerings and associated iconography specific to the individual



6 Este: votive bronze plaques from Caldevigo and Baratella (after Pascucci 1990)

sanctuary. For instance, votives dedicated to Reitia at Este take the form of figurines, anatomical votives, bronze lamina stamped with female figures, or writing implements. At San Pietro Montagnon, on the border between Este and Padua, the predominant form of votive is miniature pots, whereas at Lagole, in the northern Veneto, the main forms of votive are plain 'ox-hide' bronze tablets, warrior figurines, or bronze ladles. Deities also seem to be specific to individual sanctuaries, and we do not find much evidence of worship of the same deity in different parts of the region. In some cases, this may reflect a strong link between the deity and the state. For instance, a god called Altnos, named on a dedication from Altinum, has a name that indicates a close link with the name of the community (Marinetti 2002, 317–18; Tirelli 2002).

There is, however, one possible exception to this pattern of localization of cults. The goddess Reitia is found most prominently at Este where the sanctuary at Baratella, south-east of the city, was dedicated to her, but possible dedications to Reitia are found at several other locations, notably the Raetic settlements of Magrè and Trissino, although there is some argument about whether inscriptions naming 'Ritia' from these sites are recording the name of a deity or of the person making the offering (Pellegrini 1918; Mancini 1995; Rix 1998). In most cases, however, the gods worshipped seem to be localized and the names suggest they are closely associated with the community and communal identity.

Unlike Greek sanctuaries, most Venetic sanctuaries were open enclosures with few—if any—standing structures, apart from a wall or set of boundary markers to delimit the sacred area and a small altar or enclosure within it (Maggiani 2002; Ruta Serafini and Sainati 2002). Stone temples were added to some of those which remained in use after the Roman conquest (e.g. Baratella) and shelters may have been set up at some to protect offerings, but there is little evidence that any of them were marked by Greek- or Roman-style monumental architecture in the pre-Roman period. High levels of activity at sacred sites are demonstrated by the large number of votive offerings found at many of them—fourteen thousand in the case of Baratella, the most extensively excavated ritual site, but numbers running into several thousand are not unusual (Pascucci 1990, 53; on Baratella specifically, see Ghirardini 1888; Dämmer 1990).

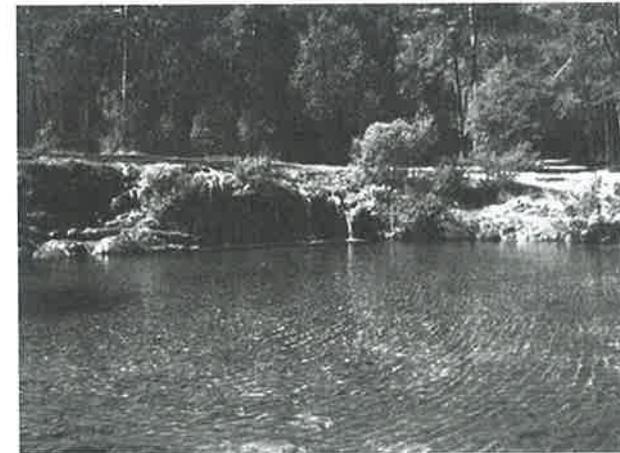
Three specific sites that bear examining in detail are Meggiaro, located on the east side of Este; Baratella, south-east of Este and the best-documented part of the city, and Lagole, a rural sanctuary in the mountains near modern Pieve di Cadore. The most recently and systematically excavated example, Meggiaro, was an open enclosure surrounded by a wall, with smaller internal enclosure marking the site of some earlier eighth- to seventh-century BC ritual finds. It also contained a square platform that may have been for augurs to take auspices by observing the sky for flights of birds (Ruta Serafini and Sainati 2002). Several pits were found, which contained a large number of votive objects. There is no sign of any permanent stone buildings on the site, but many of the votives are punched with holes for hanging and may have been displayed in some form—

possibly in structures of perishable materials such as wood—before they were ritually buried. A large amount of bone was found, indicating that animal sacrifice was part of the ritual (Maggiani 2002). The votive deposits included a substantial number of embossed bronze plaques all depicting young men wearing armour or carrying weapons, which may indicate that the cult was associated with a warrior god or used for initiation or coming-of-age ceremonies for young men (Zaghetto 2002). One of the bronze votives was inscribed in the local script (see below) with the names of the dedicators of the object and the name of the god—Hene[—]tos—although it only survives in a fragmentary state (Marinetti 2002).

The sanctuary of Reitia at Baratella, located on the south-east edge of the city, was perhaps the most important of the Este sanctuaries. It was first excavated in the nineteenth century, but has recently been reinvestigated (Ghirardini 1888; Dämmer 1990). The earliest cult activity on the site dates to the eighth century BC, and by the end of the seventh century it was a major ritual centre. It continued in use until the second century AD, by which time it was rededicated to a number of Roman deities, including Minerva, Vesta and the Dioscuri rather than Reitia (Baggio Bernardoni 1992, 321–24). During the early part of its history, it was an open enclosure similar to that at Meggiaro, but it acquired some stone structures, including a temple of Castor and Pollux, in the Roman period (Baggio Bernardoni 1992, 323–30). It is possible that it may have had some structures during the pre-Roman period, but it has not been possible to establish exactly what these were. Fragments of stone Doric columns were found, and it is probable that the inscribed stone plinths on which some of the votive figurines were displayed were located under some sort of shelter, as the soft-textured stone of which these were made shows no sign of weathering (Pellegrini and Prosdocimi 1967, 168–88).

The cult was primarily dedicated to the Venetic goddess Reitia, although, as mentioned above, her cult was later replaced by a number of Roman deities. The cult seems to have had a number of functions. Votives of body-parts cut from sheet bronze, and the use of the epithet *Sainate* (thought to mean ‘health-giving’—Pellegrini and Prosdocimi 1967, 96–100) in some inscriptions from the sanctuary may indicate that it was a healing cult. But a wide variety of votive types have been found there, including pottery, small bronze figurines and other bronze objects, loom weights, and plaques depicting richly dressed adult females—possibly an indication that the rites practised there particularly involved adult women (Pascucci 1990; Zaghetto 2002). One notable feature is that an unusually high number of votives carry inscriptions in the language and script of the region, giving the name of the donor and a dedication to Reitia (Pellegrini and Prosdocimi 1967, 94–188; Prosdocimi 1988, 262–82). This still only accounts for a very small proportion overall—some three hundred out of around fourteen thousand votives—but it is still a much higher concentration of inscribed and personalized objects than has been found elsewhere.

Not all ritual sites were tied to urban development, however. In the northern Veneto (as in parts of the Apennines), religious sanctuaries seem to have been a substitute for urban development, providing a focus for state and communal activity in areas where the population lived in small villages rather than towns or cities. Many of this type of sanctuary were centred on particular natural features such as woods, water-sources (Lagole) or mountains (Monte Altare), and many of them also marked routes through the mountains (Lagole, Auronzo, Gurina). The best investigated of these is Lagole, near modern Pieve di Cadore, which was in use from the fourth century BC until the Roman Empire (Figure 7) (Pensaventa Mattioli 2001). It was located at a lake, well away from any large settlement although close to a major route up into the Alps. No structures survive and it seems to have been an open sanctuary with a delimited boundary but few buildings. It was dedicated to a deity called Trumusiatius (or Trumusiata, the gender is unclear), but it became a sanctuary of Apollo after the Roman conquest of the region. The amount of bone found indicates that animal sacrifice was practised, but water seems to have been a key element in the rituals at this site. Many objects found—ladles, pans, bowls and similar vessels—are connected with ritual libations, and the votives from the site were found along one side of the lake (Fogolari 2001). These votives (approximately one thousand in total) include bronze figurines, often of warriors, bronze plaques (mostly undecorated) and bronze ladles and other vessels. A significant percentage of these items were inscribed with dedications to Trumusiatius/Trumusiata, written in Venetic script and language (Marinetti 2001, 66–71). Most were offered by individuals, but a small number are inscribed ‘*teuta toler*’, a phrase that may indicate an offering by the *teuta*—the state or community—rather than an individual (Pellegrini and Prosdocimi 1967, 494–96, 512–14, 551).



7 Lagole: sacred lake and site of the ancient sanctuary (photograph: Kathryn Lomas)

Ritual sites in the Veneto could therefore serve a number of functions, either acting as a centre for dispersed populations, or as part of the processes of defining a city, its boundaries, and its territory. Deities and rites seem to be very localized, although all sanctuaries share some characteristics, such as the lack of monumental buildings. In the urbanized southern Veneto, the nature of some of the votives allows us to explore the role of particular sanctuaries within the community in more detail, and here we can conjecture that they had a very specific function as a focus for specific age and gender groups, an in integrating these groups into society.

Cemeteries and Burials

Since the settlement areas of many Venetic sites have been relatively unexplored until recently, the other primary source of evidence for Venetic society is funerary. The layout and positioning of cemeteries can tell us a lot about the process of urbanization and the structures of society, while the contents of the richer tombs gives us an insight into the lives, culture and activities of the elite.

At both Este and Padua, several cemeteries have been excavated, containing burials from the seventh century BC to the era of the Roman conquest. At Altino, the process of urban development began later and the earliest burials therefore date from the fourth century. In all cases, burials are concentrated into clusters with a well-defined relationship to the rest of the settlement. At Este, there were several key cemeteries, containing a significant proportion of wealthy elite burials, which were located outside each of the concentrations of houses, and seem to have served sub-groups within the community, which lived together and buried their dead in the same areas. At Padua, in contrast, there is a single well-defined area of burial on the east side of the city (Figures 4 and 5) (Chieco Bianchi 1981, 49–53; Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 1992, 51–52).

Early burials (of the sixth to fourth centuries BC) were a mixture of inhumations or cremations placed in *dolia* (large urns or amphorae) and burials in stone-lined trenches (*cassette*). Different types of burial with different levels of grave goods, indicating different social status, are often found grouped together in ways that suggest a family group, with an elite family buried alongside lower-ranking members of their household. The Ricovero cemetery at Este, for instance, consisted of clusters of burials either in individual tombs or interred in communal burials under earth tumuli (Balista and Ruta Serafini 1992, 115–20). Each tumulus or group of tombs seem to have been set within its own area, with a boundary demarcated by stone slabs (Balista and Ruta Serafini 1992). It is possible that the inscribed grave markers that are found in this period mark these groups rather than individual burials. Some also appear to have had a stone grave marker placed by the entrance to the tomb or enclosure, taking the form of a carved stone stele at Padua, a plain stele at Altino, and an obelisk-

shaped cippus at Este, which were inscribed with the name of the main owner of the tomb (Scarfi 1972; Fogolari 1988, 99–105; Prosdocimi 1988, 247–49). From the end of the fourth century, there was a trend towards less outwardly impressive burials and large-scale tombs intended for an entire clan or extended family, which were replaced by smaller-scale tombs for individuals or a nuclear family (Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 1992, 87–90). Most burials were cremations with the ashes interred in pottery urns, sometimes inscribed with the name of the deceased (Pellegrini and Prosdocimi 1967, 193–234), and accompanied by substantial quantities of grave goods.

Grave goods also indicate a shift from a society dominated by a small and very dominant aristocracy to one in which social and political power rested with a wider and more modest, although still wealthy, ruling elite. In the sixth to fourth centuries BC, grave good assemblages were often very wealthy. Tombs typically contained significant quantities of bronze vessels and other objects, jewellery and fine pottery of types frequently geared to drinking and feasting. In some cases, they also contained chariots and even the horses that pulled them, presumably sacrificed as part of the funerary rituals (Scarfi and Tombolani 1985, 55–63). From the late seventh century, males are typically buried with serpent fibulae, knives, pins, arm-rings, and drinking vessels similar to the Greek kylix in bronze or fine pottery, while female tombs contain bronze and bead jewellery, bronze discs and other ornaments, spindles, and drinking vessels of a skyphos shape (Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 1992, 71–85). From the fifth century onwards, many women were also buried with a large bronze belt clasp or plate, an item of female dress that is depicted on many of the votive plaques discussed above. Some of the richer burials also contain a bronze vessel known as a *situla*, sometimes richly decorated, in which the ossuary was placed.

From the fourth century, most tombs had more modest, but still substantial, assemblages of grave goods, including fine pottery, bronze vessels and personal ornaments and possessions. Some, however, still contained notable rich assemblages. Two, the tomb of the Pannarioi at Altino (Fornasotti cemetery, Tomb 1) and the tomb of Nerka Trostaia (Casa di Ricovero, Tomb 23) at Este, illustrate the fact that although the elite of the Hellenistic period may have been less ostentatiously rich than their predecessors, they were still wealthy and powerful. The Altino tomb was in use in the second and first centuries BC and had a vast quantity of fine black gloss pottery of types used for feasting, some inscribed with the name of Ianta Pannaria or Pletuvios Pannarios, the apparent occupants of the tomb (Scarfi and Tombolani 1985). The tomb of Nerka Trostaia at Este dates to the third century BC, also identified from inscriptions on grave goods, and had a very rich assemblage of objects that included an inscribed bronze *situla* holding the ossuary; jewellery and items of dress, including a bronze belt; and two complete banqueting sets of imported pottery and bronze vessels, one of which was probably made specially for deposition in the grave, while the other may have been used at the funerary banquet. The tomb itself was

laid out elaborately, with one corner set out as part of a house, with model loom and work-bench, also in bronze (Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 1992, 90–91).

This funerary evidence may suggest a possible shift from a small and very dominant aristocracy with a clan-based social structure to a wider, but still restricted and wealthy, elite organized around the nuclear family at some point in the early fourth century BC, a process that may be perceptible in other Italian societies at this same period. It also suggests a change in the nature of the way in which members of the elite displayed their status and importance in the funerary behaviour, with a move from an emphasis on visually impressive tombs highlighting the communal identity of the group to tombs in which the main form of display lay in the grave goods. It also suggests that although there was a shared language and material culture throughout the Veneto from at least the seventh century BC, there were significant cultural differences between the major urban centres, which may indicate the emergence of increasingly strong city-state identities. The urban development of Este and Padua proceeded on rather different lines, although with the same imperative of defining and organizing urban space and establishing territorial boundaries. These differences can be seen in the variations of laying out the space allocated to the dead, and also in the major differences in the forms of external grave markers and epitaphs.

Economy and Society in the Ancient Veneto

Venetic society was clearly dominated by a wealthy elite class, whether the clan-based and probably very restricted elite of the Archaic period or the broader based elite of the late fifth century onwards. As noted above, the layout of cemeteries suggests that family/clan groupings were important elements of social structure, and rich families seem to have been buried alongside their relatives, retainers and servants as a group. Funerary inscriptions from several urban settlements, but notably from Este and Padua, contain the term '*ekupetaris*'. This has variously been interpreted as a reference to the grave marker itself, or to the status or occupation of the person commemorated (Brewer 1985). The word has a close etymological connection to the Venetic word for a horse (*ekvos*) and it is possible that if *ekupetaris* is a reference to a social status, as seems likely, it may denote an elite class equivalent to the Equestrian Order in Rome (Marinetti 2003). Whether or not society was formally divided into one or more privileged classes, the evidence indicates that the aristocracy enjoyed a lifestyle marked by feasting, games, rituals and processions, and also warfare. The frequent finds of weapons and armour in burials indicates that these were important status symbols, and the prevalence of dinner services and drinking sets in most rich burials all point to a society in which ritual dining was an important social practice. Lack of investigation of settlement sites means that we know relatively little about private houses and domestic life. Remains of houses, where we have them, indicate that

the Veneti lived in stone-built dwellings, sometimes of considerable size and complexity, but much of this evidence dates from the third to first centuries, and we know much less about the domestic architecture of the Archaic period.

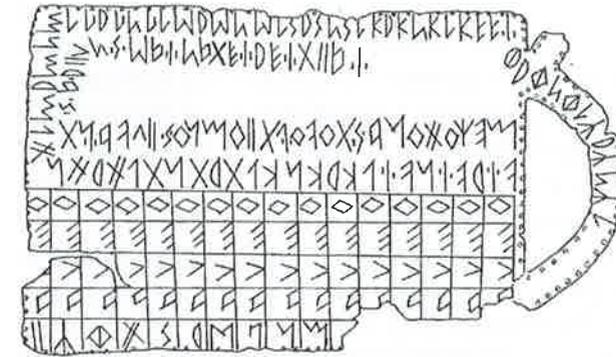
However, we do have an invaluable non-funerary source for early Venetic society in the form of a rich body of iconographic evidence, which includes embossed votive plaques, decorated bronze vessels and the carved tombstones found at Padua. Most of these date to a fairly early stage in the development of the Veneto, from the sixth to fourth centuries, although some of the Paduan gravestones are as late as the first century BC. The bronze vessels are decorated in the style of *situla* art, which was current throughout northern Italy and parts of continental Europe in the seventh to sixth centuries and which frequently presents complex narrative scenes. Examples from the Veneto present a consistent picture of an elite involved in activities such as feasting, games, processions and ceremonial meetings between various groups of nobles. The famous Benvenuti *situla*, a large bronze vessel dating to c.600 BC, gives a vivid insight into the world of the Archaic elite. Its various registers of decoration depict processions of armed men and animals, a sequence showing victorious warriors leading a group of prisoners, and an elaborate feast at which groups of nobles drink and toast each other. The social rank of the figures is clearly differentiated by dress and prominence in the scene. Groups of armed men are shown with various different types of armour and weapons, possibly to indicate the retinues of different nobles, or even different ethnic groups. Lower social ranks and servants are depicted bareheaded and in plain dress, while the nobles wear large wide-brimmed hats and decorated robes and are seated in high-backed ceremonial chairs (Frey 1986).

There is another major source of iconographic representations of the Venetic elite, namely the embossed bronze laminae offered as votives in many sanctuaries in the sixth to fourth centuries. These are harder to interpret as they are more formulaic and the iconography is more closely tied to the ritual of the specific sanctuaries concerned. For instance, the sanctuary at Meggiaro on the eastern edge of Este has produced a deposit of laminae depicting young warriors, perhaps indicating some sort of initiation rite. It seems to have housed a cult whose rituals involved young armed men (Zaghetto 2002), and provides a further demonstration of the importance of arms bearing and warfare in Venetic society. Other sanctuaries have produced deposits of votives depicting groups of young women, or single adult women, usually richly dressed in a style that seems to have remained fairly constant over quite a long period of time. Typical garments include a long tunic, a shawl covering the head and upper body, a heavy belt and a disc-shaped headdress. In the case of these very stylized votives, there has been considerable debate over whether they represent the deity to whom they were dedicated, or are meant to be representations of the dedicators. The fact that there are a significant number of shared features in representation of dress and activity in different contexts such as votives, funerary art and prestige

goods suggests that these are representations of real people, however stylized, rather than deities. The other factor that limits studies of visual representations of the Venetic elite is that these become much less common from the fourth century onwards, except in the highly formalized context of some later votives. Later grave goods continue to suggest that although there were changes in material culture in response to the changing nature of Venetic society and its contacts with other regions, the underlying social structure remained one of elite domination.

One very striking feature of the Veneti is the prominence that seems to have been enjoyed by women, at least in the higher echelons of society. Women are represented on many votive plaques, and a large number of probable female graves have been identified by their grave goods, many of them with rich contents such as the graves of Nerka Trostaia, and of Ianta Pannaria and her husband, cited above. A higher proportion of female names occurs in the pre-Roman inscriptions of the region than is the case in many other areas of Italy, indicating that commemoration of high-status women was socially acceptable and added to a family's prestige. Women are also well represented in so-called 'situla art': figured scenes on bronze vessels and other objects produced during the sixth to fifth centuries BC. However, it is noticeable that women are portrayed in a very limited number of roles compared to their male counterparts—as participants in religious rites, in domestic scenes, and in erotic scenes—and are much less individualized or differentiated into social groups by dress and activities than the male figures (Barfield 1997, 153–56; Lomas forthcoming a). Women also seem to have had a close link to the adoption of literacy in the region. The votive deposits at Baratella include a number of votive replicas of writing tablets and styli with dedicatory inscriptions. These are discussed in more detail in the next section, but it is worth noting here that most of the styli and at least one of the writing tablets were dedicated by women.

A further valuable source for the Veneti is a body of around four hundred inscriptions in the local language. The Veneti adopted writing in the late seventh century BC, acquiring the alphabet from the Etruscans but adapting it into a distinctive local form, and use of the Venetic script and language persisted until the first century BC (Prosdocimi 1988, 328–51; Pandolfini and Prosdocimi 1990, 244–89). Several regional scripts, unique to specific areas of the Veneto, developed, and all but the earliest inscriptions used a syllabic punctuation system which seems to be a local invention, although based on one used in south Etruria (Pandolfini and Prosdocimi 1990, 181–87; Whitehouse and Wilkins 2006). Writing was only used in restricted contexts, for funerary commemorations and ritual inscriptions, or marks of ownership on portable items such as pottery or bronze objects. Many of the inscriptions are short and restricted to personal names (although a few longer ones have survived), but even these can provide an invaluable tool for studying changing structures of families and family relationships. There is no evidence for the extent of literacy,



8 Este: votive writing tablet from Baratella (John Wilkins, after Prosdocimi 1983)

or for the development of literature in the local language, but there are some features that point to writing as an important feature of Venetic culture. Votive inscriptions are concentrated at particular locations, particularly at Baratella and Lagole, which suggests that writing had a particular significance at these sites. In addition, bronze models of writing equipment, including styli and writing tablets inscribed with an alphabet, syllabary and dedication (Figure 8), are found at Baratella. This reification of writing implements suggests that the cult of Reitia was particularly associated with writing, and has led to suggestions that there was a school for scribes there (Whitehouse and Wilkins 2006; Lomas forthcoming b). The fact that the writing tablets were inscribed with an alphabet and rudimentary syllabary suggests that they may have been used as teaching aids in the teaching of writing and in particular the syllabic punctuation system used in the Veneto.

The economic basis of all this elite wealth was primarily the land. Like most of ancient Italy, the cities of the Veneto were primarily agrarian societies, living off the produce of their territories. The southern Veneto is a fertile area and communities such as Este and Padua controlled productive territories yielding wine, olive oil, fruit and grains. However, it also had a lucrative addition to these items in that it was a noted horse-breeding area famed throughout the Mediterranean, and Venetic horses were in high demand as chariot horses and race-horses (Strabo, *Geography* 5.1.4). It is no accident that horses feature highly as a status symbol in the art of the region and sacrificed horses are found in high-status burials and in sanctuaries (Tirelli 2002). The region also lies on some major trade routes, and was thus well placed to export these and other items for which the region was noted, such as amber (Braccisi 2004). Both Padua and Este were situated on navigable rivers, and important land routes across the Alps ran through the valleys of the northern Veneto (Pliny, *HN* 20, 119–20;

Capuis 1993, 188–97) In addition, Venetic contacts with the ports of Adria and Spina, both of which had substantial numbers of Greek settlers, were strong, providing contexts for trade with the Greek world and with the Etruscans. As well as the export of goods and livestock to Greece, there was a healthy trade in Greek imports into the Veneto, and Attic pottery is found in significant quantity at most major centres, but particularly at Padua, from the fifth century onwards (Capuis 1993, 197–209).

These contacts with other peoples were not only important to the economy of the Veneto, but they also had a major impact on the culture of the region. The Etruscans, for instance, had a strong presence in the Po Valley and had close trading contacts with the Veneti, but their presence is also reflected in the derivation of the Venetic alphabet from Etruscan sources, and in Etruscan influence on the visual arts (Capuis 2001). Contact with Greek culture was also an influential feature, particularly in the Hellenistic period. The substantial quantities of Greek imports found at major Venetic centres attest to both economic and cultural contact, and historical sources described Greek contacts with the region. The Spartan king Cleonymus is said to have travelled to the head of the Adriatic during an expedition to Italy in 302 BC (Livy 10.2.5–6) and there is strong evidence of contact with Greek settlers at Adria and Spina. Greek influence can be seen in the artistic and material culture of the region from the late fourth century BC onwards, but is particularly important at Padua, where a phase of Hellenization is perceptible in the material culture of the city (Bandelli 2004). In particular, there are examples of locally produced sculpture, including some of the local funerary stelai, which adopt Hellenistic conventions at this date (Fogolari 1988, 99–105).

As well as their connections with the Etruscans and with the Greek world, the Veneti had long and close connections with the Celts of continental Europe, but Celtic migration into Italy and settlement in northern Italy resulted in a significant Celtic population from the fifth century onwards (Capuis 1993, 218–36; Williams 2001, 100–38). Celtic names are attested, sometimes adapted or mixed with Venetic ones, a phenomenon that may indicate intermarriage between Venetic and Celtic families. Examples of possible Celtic or mixed Celtic and Venetic names may include Verkvalos, from Altino, Tivalos Bellenios, from Padua (Prosdocimi 1988, 288–92), Frema Boialna, from Este (Marinetti 1992, 156–60), and an inscription from Altino naming a deity called Belatukadriakos has been suggested as a possible Celtic cult (Scarfi and Tombolani 1985, 60–63; Prosdocimi 1988, 301–2). Some Celtic influence is also perceptible in sculpture, with the adoption of Celtic motifs in the iconography of the Paduan funerary stelai (Fogolari 1988, 102–3). By the second century, there was clearly a perception from outside that the Veneti and the Celts were culturally very similar. Polybius (2.16–18) refers to them as being difficult to distinguish but for the fact that they spoke very different languages. Despite the evidence for Celtic presence and culture, however, we should perhaps be cautious about proposing a phase

of large-scale ‘Celticization’ in the Veneto (Prosdocimi 1991; Williams 2001, 194–207). Venetic culture clearly changed to accommodate new populations and cultures, but it is difficult to assess how widespread Celtic influence was, and there is enough linguistic continuity and coherence of material culture to suggest that, although Celtic elements were undoubtedly absorbed into Venetic culture, the process did not undermine Venetic identity.

State and Ethnicity in the Veneto

Relatively little is known about political structures and forms of government and how these mapped onto the social structure described above. In the southern Veneto, where the primary form of organization seems to have been something analogous to a city-state, it is likely that each urban centre, such as Padua, Este, Vicenza and Altino, was an independent and self-determining community, but we know little or nothing about how they governed themselves. A boundary stone from Padua, probably marking the limits of a sanctuary, contains the term *teuter*, which may indicate an action or decision of the state (Pellegrini and Prosdocimi 1967, 264–68), and another carries a list of three names, which may be those of magistrates or officials (Pellegrini and Prosdocimi 1967, 360–64).

The extent to which the Veneti had any self-perceived communal ethnic identity over and above the level of the individual state, or any formal interstate links between communities such as may have existed in Latium or Etruria, is difficult to determine. Greek and Roman authors imply that the Veneti were a tribal, ethnically based society, but archaeological evidence contradicts this, pointing to states with strong local identities based on urban settlements, but gives little clue to over-arching ethnic identities. One piece of evidence that may provide a way into this problem is a stone found at Isola Vicentina, near Vicenza (Marinetti 1999, 400–12). It is a casual find with no archaeological context, and its function and dating are unclear, although it probably dates to some point in the fifth to third centuries BC and may have been some form of boundary marker. The inscription is in the Venetic language and the local form of the Venetic script, and reads: ‘*iats venetkens osts ke enogenes laions meu fasto*’ (‘Iats Venetkens, Osts and Enogenes laions, set me up’). The meaning of this is a matter of debate, but it is in the first person and records the setting up of the stone. It is fairly certain that Iats, who is identified by the adjective ‘venetkens’ is the name of the person responsible, but it is unclear whether Osts and Enogenes are also personal names (both are attested as such in the Veneto) or whether they have other meanings in this context. A more recent interpretation (Marinetti 1999, 400–12) suggests that the stone was set up by one individual—Iats—who is ‘osts Venetkens’ (an outsider to the Veneti) and ‘enogenes Laions’ (a native of the Laions). The crucial factor is that the inscription contains a term—*venetkens*—that may be the first attested ethnic for the Veneti as a group.

Roman Conquest and Romanization

The arrival of Rome in northern Italy in the early second century BC proved to be a major cultural turning point for the Veneti. Relations with Rome appear to have been mainly good. The Veneti had had contact with Rome since the third century, forming an *amicitia* with them against the Gauls in 238–6 BC (Polybius 2.23.3, 2.24.7; Strabo, *Geography* 5.1.9) and assisting them against Hannibal (Silius Italicus, *Punica* 8.602–4) during his invasion of Italy. Rome's wars against the Celts in the 190s BC placed northern Italy firmly in the line of Roman expansion, and a permanent Roman presence in the region was established with the foundation of a large colony founded at Aquileia in 181 BC and the construction of the Via Aemilia in the 170s. The Veneti remained independent allies of Rome during this period but there are increasing signs of Roman presence, including Latin inscriptions (*CIL* 1².636 = *CIL* 5.2492 = *ILS* 5944; cf. Livy 41.27.3–4), recording the role of Roman proconsuls in solving boundary disputes between Este and Padua in 141 and 135 BC. Following the Social War, the Veneti (along with all other inhabitants of Italy north of the Po) were awarded Latin rights and then received full Roman citizenship in 49 BC.⁴ A major Roman colonization programme between 49 BC and AD 14, which included settlements at Este, Concordia and Tergeste, followed by further settlement at Opitergium and Julium Carnicum during the reign of Claudius, established a substantial Roman presence in the region. Where colonies were founded, the territories of existing communities were divided into grids for allotment to new settlers, and urban centres were developed on a Roman model, with regular street grids, and Roman-style public buildings. From 49 BC onwards, communities were administratively reorganized on Roman lines, with municipal or colonial charters setting up a framework for how the city should be run.

However, the processes of cultural change in response to Rome began much earlier than the point at which the region was incorporated into Roman citizenship, and are perceptible as early as the second century BC (Bandelli 2004). The process was not one of a linear one-way progress towards Romanization, or an imposition by Rome, but one of adoption of selected aspects of Roman culture by the Venetic aristocracy as status symbols—a process of voluntary cultural dialogue and exchange, not imposition. Roman culture coexisted, and eventually merged with, local Venetic culture rather than displacing it entirely. The voluntary nature of the process is illustrated by the fact that even at a public level, Roman features began to be adopted well before 49 BC, or even the grant of Latin status in 89 BC.

At Padua, for instance, some studies have assumed that a sudden and radical restructuring of the city—marked by the appearance of a new and more regular

⁴ Asconius, *Pis* 2–3; Pliny, *HN* 3.20.138; Suetonius, *Iul* 8; Cassius Dio 37.9.3–5; on the transition to Roman citizenship, see Wiseman 1987, 328–31.

street plan, Roman forms of architecture and Roman building techniques—in the late second century BC was imposed by Rome. More recent examination, however, has suggested that this was a more gradual long-term process taking place over the last two centuries BC and reflecting the adoption of a Roman vision of urban topography as part of a process of assimilation by the local population (Bosio 1981a, 231–37). By the early empire, the city had acquired a forum, theatre and amphitheatre, and was said to have a large elite class that was highly Romanized (Cicero, *In Pisonem* fr. 10; Strabo, *Geography* 5.1.7; Wiseman 1987, 328–31).

Linguistic change and changes to epigraphic practices also began in the second century BC. Latin was, of course, the main language of the new colonies, but it was also adopted for an increasing number of local funerary inscriptions from second century BC onwards (Buchi 2003). However, these inscriptions are on traditional Venetic urns, which were placed in typical Venetic burials (Pellegrini and Prosdocimi 1967, 235–83, 419–26; Manessi 2003). The process of transition can be charted through a number of inscriptions of this type which use the Latin alphabet, rather than the local one, to write inscriptions in the Venetic language (Pellegrini and Prosdocimi 1967, 221–34), and through occasional Latin inscriptions that use Venetic formulae of other types, such as the appearance of the Venetic term *ekupetaris* in a Latin funerary inscription of Augustan date from Padua (Lomas 2006). Ultimately, the Venetic language fell out of the written record in first century BC, although it is possible it may have continued to be spoken, and Latin (both as language and alphabet) became standard in all inscriptions.

Changes are also visible in other areas of Venetic culture. Some sanctuaries fell into disuse after the first century BC, to be replaced by cults of Roman gods with stone temples and placed at different locations. Some earlier cult places, however, did continue in use but with significant changes. The sanctuary at Baratella remained in use until the second century AD, but the addition of stone temples and buildings, the introduction of different types of votive and the shift away from dedications to Reitia in favour of offerings to Roman gods (including Minerva, Vesta and the Dioscuri) points to a major phase of Romanization and adoption of Roman cults and cult practices. During the transitional phase of the second to first centuries BC, some Venetic votives such as writing tablets were inscribed with Latin or transliterated dedications, including a bilingual Latin and Venetic dedication (Pellegrini and Prosdocimi 1967, 113–15) and a Venetic dedication written in the Latin alphabet (Pellegrini and Prosdocimi 1967, 117–18), but this phase seems to be short lived. A similar process can be seen at Lagole, where the sanctuary remained active into the Roman period, but with dedications to Apollo, not to the local god, and the use of Roman votive formulae (Pellegrini and Prosdocimi 1967, 554–63). Some continuity can be seen, however. At Baratella, the sanctuary still seems to have functioned as a healing cult, as many of the votives are anatomical models or medical instruments, while

Roman votives at Lagole still included a significant number of vessels for pouring or carrying liquid, suggesting that sacred libations remained an important part of the ritual.

Cultural change is also perceptible in funerary practices, as Roman types of grave marker were increasingly adopted, and new cemetery areas were established. At Este, for instance, new areas of burials were established after the foundation of the Roman colony, although the Venetic cemeteries continued in use for some time afterwards (Baggio Bernardoni 1992, 333–50). At Padua, however, new cemetery areas were established and usage of the earlier areas of burials declined. Burials became simpler, still using a pottery funerary urn, sometimes inscribed with the name of the deceased, but with fewer grave goods. Funerary monuments also changed. There are a small number of Paduan grave stelae of traditional type that date from the first century BC, including one that incorporates a male figure wearing a Roman toga into the traditional iconography of the deceased being driven off in a chariot (Lomas 2006). In this case, the cultural signals are even more complicated by the fact that he is accompanied by a female figure wearing traditional Venetic costume—a strong indication that there may have been gender differences in the ways in which Romanization was received. One particularly noticeable fact, however, is that both in forms of epitaph and in forms of grave marker, the Roman burials of the Veneto develop their own distinctive styles of commemoration even within the Roman tradition (Baggio Bernardoni 1992, 335–45; Milnes-Smith forthcoming).

Despite the fact that the independent history of the Veneti, in the political sense, came to an end in 49 BC, and their culture changed dramatically to accommodate Roman influences, the region remained a vibrant and important one. Ancient sources comment on the willingness of the inhabitants of the region to adopt Roman customs and to become in, some ways, more Roman than the Romans (Cicero, *In Pisonem* fr. 10). They also note the unusually high number of families with equestrian rank, estimated at five hundred in the reign of Augustus (Strabo, *Geography* 5.1.7), which provides a good index of the prosperity of the region. Este, despite its Roman colony, was eclipsed in importance by Padua, which established itself as one of the major cultural and economic centres of northern Italy, but most of the earlier Venetic communities continued to flourish under Roman rule, and enjoyed a significant role in Roman cultural life, producing the author Livy as well as some other important intellectual figures. Although the pre-Roman Venetic culture had largely disappeared by the reign of Augustus, the Veneto continued to play an important role in Italian history.

FURTHER READING

There is a vast amount of research on the archaeology of the Veneto and also recent excavation of many sites, but much of the material is not available in English. The best general account of the region is L. Capuis, *I Veneti* (1993), which gives an overview of the archaeological development of the region, and G. Fogolari and A.L. Prodocimi, *I Veneti antichi* (1988), which gives an overview of both the language and material culture. A collection of ancient sources on the region is available in C. Voltan, *Le fonti letterarie per la storia della Venetia et Histria* (1989), while the standard corpus of inscriptions in Venetic is G.B. Pellegrini and A.L. Prodocimi, *La lingua venetica* (1967). Publications on specific sites in the region include: G. Tosi (ed.), *Este antica* (1992); A. Ruta Serafini (ed.), *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari* (2002); L. Bosio (ed.), *Padova antica. Da comunità paleoveneta a città romano-cristiana* (1981); B.M. Scarfi and M. Tombolani, *Altino preromana e romana* (1985), and G. Fogolari and G. Gambacurta (eds), *Materiali veneti preromani e romani del santuario di Lagole di Calalzo al Museo di Pieve di Cadore* (2001). A new publication that will include an analysis of literacy in the Veneto (K. Lomas, R. Whitehouse and J.B. Wilkins, *Literacy in Pre-Roman Italy: New Approaches*) is in preparation.

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CHAPTER 3

At the Margins of Italy

Celts and Ligurians in North-West Italy

Ralph Häussler

Introduction

The central focus of this chapter is the western half of Cisalpine Gaul, comprising the modern regions of Piedmont, Liguria, Aosta and west Lombardy (Figure 9). This region was occupied by various peoples, some of which are attested in Graeco-Roman sources (especially Pliny, *HN* 3.133-34), largely reflecting ethnic identities and territories during the late Roman Republic. There are, for example, the Insubres around Milan, the Lepontii around Como and Lugano, the Salassi in the Aosta Valley, the Taurini around Turin, the Libici around Vercelli and the Vertamocori around Novara. There are also the Ligures, for some one of the great *ethnoi* of antiquity, 'la grande Liguria' between Etruria and the Iberian peninsula (Morandi 2003, 43; Colonna 2004). But Ligurian ethnos is as controversial a subject as Celtic ethnicity (cf. Iasbez 2000; Morandi 2003; Garcia 2004, 13-25): Arnaud (2001) suggests that '*ligures*' is not an indigenous name, but a Greek pejorative term equivalent to 'barbarian'.

Archaeologically and linguistically the distinction between Celts and Ligurians does not seem to be significant, since onomastic and toponomastic evidence in Liguria is Celtic (Delamarre 2003). The Taurini, for instance, have been equally defined as Celts (Polybius 2.15.8, 28.4, 30.6), Ligurians (Pliny, *HN* 3.128; Strabo 4.6.6; Livy 5.34.8) and Semigalli (Livy 21.38); this confusion explains the Graeco-Roman term 'Celto-Ligurian' (e.g. Strabo 4.6.3; cf. Garcia 2004, 22). 'Celtic' is a convenient shorthand to describe a range of artefacts and practices of (primarily) transalpine origin and people who write a Celtic language. Instead we may want to think in terms of the individually attested Ligurian peoples, like the Ingauni, Ilvates, Statiellae, Apuani and others. Geographically we can distinguish different regions, each showing distinct cultural patterns: the Aosta Valley and the Lepontic region were important passageways for transalpine trade. Compared to the western half of Piedmont, human activity is significantly more visible archaeologically in the Novarese and in Lombardy. Passes north of Genoa served to aid trade across the Apennines, while more 'cosmopolitan' settlements on the Ligurian coast profited from Mediterranean trade networks.

In the first century AD we are confronted with the closing stages of a long process at the end of which north-west Italy presents the typical image of a