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CHAPTER 3

At the Margins of Italy

Celts and Ligurians in North-West Italy
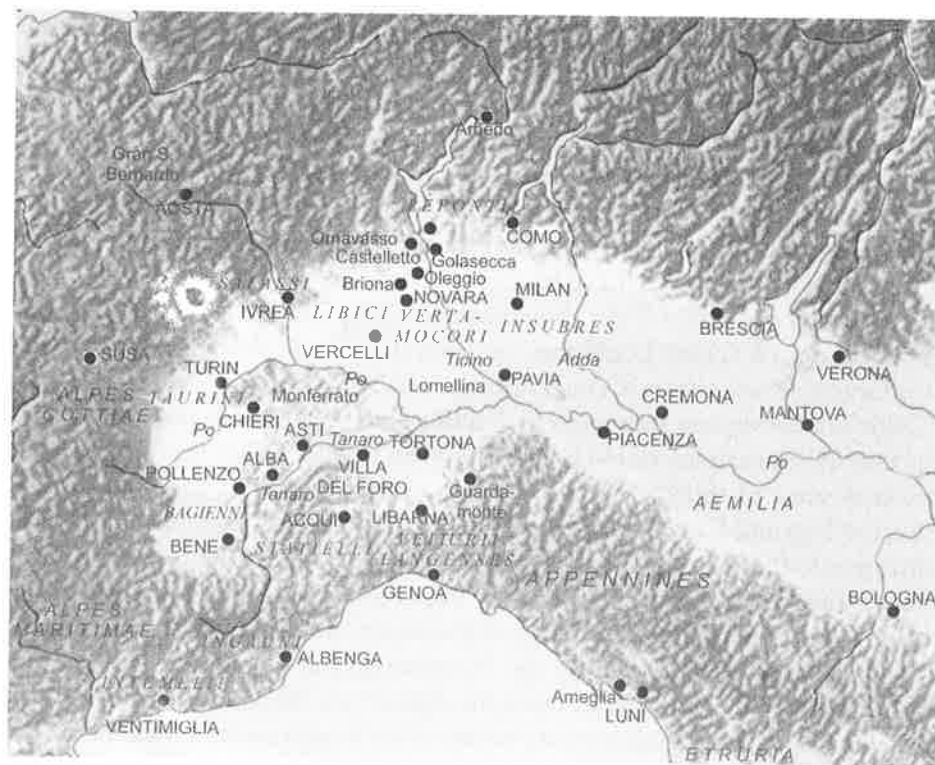
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Introduction

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

Roman landscape, consisting of numerous Roman *coloniae* and *municipia* inserted in a supporting infrastructure and, wherever geographically feasible, a rigidly centuriated countryside. As we shall see, this was not the immediate result of the Roman conquest, which was officially achieved in 222 BC (Clastidium) and, after the defection during Hannibal's invasion, in the re-conquest of 196 BC (battle of Como). Subsequently there were isolated campaigns, especially in the Apennines, such as against the Ilvates in 197 BC, Statielli in 179–172 BC, and Apuani in 181–180 BC (cf. Bersani 1994; Iasbez 2000, 247ff.). If our knowledge were exclusively based on archaeological evidence, a Roman conquest would be hardly recognizable. Though there were gradual developments taking place in communities in north-west Italy, these were embedded in existing cultural patterns, reflecting a persistence of indigenous art and artefacts (Golasecca, Ligurian, La Tène) and the use of the Celtic language in writing.

This chapter can only provide a rough overview of four of the major issues with which we are faced with in the period between the sixth and the first centuries BC. First, we need to explore the role of the Etruscans in the Golasecca period when there were large urban centres. Secondly, we need to understand

9   North-west Italy: sites mentioned

the nature of the so-called Celtic invasion, which caused a break in the use of settlements and cemeteries, plunging most of the area into an archaeological dark age (i.e. there are only a small number of datable artefacts and sites). This leads to issues of persistence and interaction between La Tène and local culture. Thirdly, there are state formation processes in the third and second centuries BC. New polities emerged that expressed a strong sense of identity. This period is characterized by an increase in trade, writing, coinage and the reoccupation of settlements in the plain. Fourthly, in the first century BC Rome's domination can finally be recognized archaeologically in north-west Italy, allowing us to build up a chronology of change, plotting the way towards 'Romanization'. This controversial term may be understood as a process of self-assimilation, i.e. people aspire to a Roman lifestyle and internalize Roman values, which then motivate their actions. This contrasts with other definitions, like the common Italian usage of the term to denote Roman expansion and consolidation. In this chapter, 'Romanization' is consequently only one of many socio-cultural developments that were taking place simultaneously and does not seem to be relevant prior to the first century BC, since up to that time it is very difficult to see what could have constituted Romanness for a provincial.

The role of external influences in catalysing socio-cultural change in north-west Italy needs to be explored. Conventionally the 'native' population is considered to be at the receiving end of core–periphery relations, merely reacting to Etruscan colonizers, Celtic invaders and Roman conquerors. Perhaps we ought to put the core–periphery relationships upside down and focus on the perspective of the local population and its role in changing its own society and culture, and the way in which its made use of the opportunities provided by changing political and economic patterns.

Table 1   Some key dates (all dates BC)

c.525	Foundation of Genoa
c.388	'Celtic invasion'(?)
233	Rome defeats Apuani
222	Battle of Clastidium
218	Foundation of Cremona and Piacenza
218–201	2nd Punic War
196	Battle of Como
177	Foundation of colony of Luna
155	Submission of 'Liguri'
148	Via Postumia
125–123	Via Fulvia founded117 Sententia Minuciorum
117	Sententia Minuciorum
c.120	Dertona founded
101	Cimbri defeated at Vercelli
100	Roman colony of Eporedia founded

91–89   Ius Latii granted to the Transpadani
58–52   Caesar: governor of Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul
58   Novum Comum founded
49   Roman citizenship granted to the Transpadani
41   End of provincial status of Cisalpine Gaul
43–14   Triumviral/Augustan colonies (Turin, Aosta, …)
24-15   Conquest of Alpine peoples: Salassi, Lepontii, etc.

Table 2   Chronological overview of north-west Italy. Dates are approximate.

BC	Transalpine area	Piedmont/ Lombardy	Liguria and south Piedmont	Central Italy / Etruria
1300–1200	Urnfield culture Bz D 2/Ha A 1	Canigrate		Recent Bronze Age
1200–900	Hallstatt A	Protogolasecca		Final Bronze Age Proto-Villanovan
900- 750	Ha B	Golasecca I		Early Iron Age Villanovan Period
750-575	Ha C			Orientalizing Period
600-489	Ha D 1	Golasecca II A-B		Archaic Period
500- 400	Ha D 2-3 La Tène A	Golasecca III A 1 Golasecca III A 2	Ligurian III A	
400-375	LT A	Golasecca III A 3		Classical Period
375-300	LT B 1		Ligurian III B 1	
300-250	LT B 2		Ligurian III B 2	
250-200	LT C 1			Hellenistic Period/ Roman Republic
200-100	LT C 2		Ligurian III C	
120-70	LT D 1			
70–27	LT D 2			
27 BC– AD 300	Principate			

The Golasecca Phenomenon

The Golasecca phenomenon is used to describe the period when Etruscan cities dominated the Po Valley in the sixth to fifth centuries BC. Conventionally the bearers of the Golasecca culture are assumed to be merely reacting to Etruscan trade and cultural propositions, but it is our aim to put the local people at the centre of the debate. The Piedmontese village of Golasecca gave its name to the ninth- to fourth-century BC culture around Lago Maggiore and Lago di Como, in eastern Piedmont and western Lombardy; there are particular cultural traits that suggest a certain cultural identity in this area that is usually attributed to the Lepontii—a name first mentioned in the second century BC, together with Salassi and Tauriscae for a people that is said to have extended as far north as to the source of the Rhine (Cato, *Orig.* fr. 2.7 Ch; Caesar, *BG* 4.10; Pliny, *HN* 3.211.132–35). Although the term is anachronistic it seems nonetheless more appropriate to talk about Lepontii than to use a term like 'Golasecchiani'.

Already from the twelfth century BC much of north-west Italy's archaeological culture was quite distinct from the rest of Italy, deriving from the so called transalpine Urnfield culture. The earliest written texts from the area (seventh/ sixth centuries BC) are Celtic, which in turn may suggest that the spread of Urnfield culture relates to the immigration of transalpine people who spoke a Celtic language. The terms 'Lepontic' and 'Golasecca' culture therefore describe a form of Celticity prior to the 'Celtic invasion' of 400 BC.

In the seventh to sixth centuries BC Etruscan urban agglomerations can be found in the Po Valley at Spina, Felsina (Bologna), Marzabotto and as far north as Mantova (De Marinis 1988b). On the Ligurian coast Genoa was founded around 525 BC as an Etruscan trading place, apparently to open up trade across the Appenines (Melli 2004). Some scholars have even talked about the Etruscanization of Ligurians: the prehistoric stelai of the Lunigiana, for example, use the Etruscan alphabet and Etruscan language while preserving local (Celtic) onomastics, encouraging us to rethink issues of (Ligurian) ethnicity and (Celtic) invasion (Colonna 2004, 11; cf. Celtic names from the Etruscan period at Genoa: Morandi 2003, 44). In inner Liguria (the area between the Apennines and Monferrato) there are indications of Etruscan activities at Villa del Foro, which was probably an Etruscan *emporion* (cf. Gambari and Venturino Gambari 1982, 144–45), reflecting Etruscan trade interests across the Apennines and the Alps.

This is very different from the development in the Lepontic region, where cultural contact and an intensifying commerce reinvigorated the local Golasecca culture (cf. Pauli 1971; 1980; Ridgway 1979; De Marinis 1977; 1981; 1986b–c; 1991a; De Marinis and Biaggio Simona 2000). This resulted in the creation of proto-urban centres, such as Como, Castelletto Ticino and Sesto Calende, conspicuous forms of funerary display and an unprecedented spread of Golasecca artefacts far beyond the Lepontic area. The typology of urban centres and funerary mounds

may have been influenced by Etruscan paradigms (Gambari 1982; 1994a–b; 2000), but socio-cultural change took place within the autochthonous mechanisms of the indigenous society. Consequently Etruscan elements were transformed in order to suit indigenous perceptions, so that a foreign cultural trait was adopted into the indigenous cultural repertoire by modifying its original meaning. The presence of Etruscan merchants is not certain: Etruscan graffiti on two seventh- to sixth-century vessels, for example, are not evidence for the physical presence of Etruscan speakers in the area, as such objects could have been traded (*contra* Casini 2000, 75–76).

Large settlement agglomerations were at the core of a highly stratified society. They are a particular phenomenon of the Lepontic area. We conventionally label Golasecca towns as 'proto-urban'. This does not imply that such towns merely evolved out of a number of villages, as has often been suggested, but that they were deliberate, planned foundations. Moreover, towns such as Como and Castelletto Ticino had clearly acquired the dimensions and characteristics of urban centres in the fifth century BC, namely a rectangular street grid and sewers (De Marinis 1986a, 32; Gambari 1993, 263). One may assume that Golasecca urbanism was inspired by Etruscan paradigms. But in trying to adopt a 'bottom-up' perspective we may also consider the contemporary development of transalpine *oppida*, like the Heuneburg (c.600–400 BC). As Garcia (2004) has convincingly shown, the *oppida* of southern France (also with a rectangular street grid and standardized house sizes) had already developed their urban characteristics long before the foundation of Marseille. Furthermore, on both sides of the Alps indigenous towns lack religious and administrative centres and any associated monumental architecture; they are therefore fundamentally different from the Graeco-Etruscan 'model'. Consequently, Golasecca urbanism must have primarily resulted from the socio-economic requirements of the local society.

The urban centres relied on surplus production and conspicuous consumption. The evidence suggests wide-ranging trade relations. Sites like Castelletto Ticino seem to have been well integrated into pan-Italian exchange mechanisms, especially with the domain of Etruscan Felsina, but also with north-east Italy (Cristofani 1976; Malnati and Manfredi 1991). At the same time, exchange with transalpine regions flourished (cf. Kaenel 2000) and we find transalpine Hallstatt and La Tène artefacts side by side with Etruscan and Golaseccan objects in the funerary context.

Large-scale cemeteries indicate relatively stable societies and permanent settlements (especially when compared to later La Tène cemeteries). They also show the development of a highly stratified society (cf. Gambari 2000, 198): besides the wealth of grave goods, tumuli served as status display for local elites, who acquired their rank by birth or through wealth (e.g. at San Bernardino di Briona: Gambari 1982; 1994a). Prestigious objects from both sides of the Alps form part of the burial assemblage. Tombs, such as those at Castelletto Ticino, for example, which are are enclosed in a stone box (*cassetta litica*) of 120cm by

90cm within a 20–30m long tumulus (Gambari 1986; 1987), form part of funerary rituals that were widely diffused in the Italian Iron Age.

One important case of cultural transformation is the adoption of writing in the Golasecca region, the so-called Lepontic (or Gallo-Etruscan) epigraphy (Figure 10) (for Lepontic cf. Lejeune 1971; 1988; Solinas 1992/3; Motta 2000). Graffiti from Sesto Calende and Castelletto Ticino may suggest the adoption of writing in the sixth or perhaps even in the seventh century BC (Gambari and Colonna 1986, 119–64). The Lepontic/Lugano alphabet (named after the geographical location of the majority of inscriptions) is no mere adoption of the

10 Fragment of a Lepontic funerary stele of Kual(os), son of Terom(os) from Vira Gambarogno, c.500-400 BC (after Biaggio Simona 2001, 128, fig. 97)

Etruscan alphabet since there are a number of modifications in order to adapt it for a Celtic language. Writing reflects a new phase for Golasecca societies. Considering the number of hands who produced graffiti, we seem to be dealing with a rather literate elite. This is nowhere more apparent than at Como, where more than one hundred fragments of Lepontic inscriptions from the Golasecca IIIA period have been found (De Marinis 1991b: 73–74). This trend may have had an impact on people's self-esteem and on social organization (cf. Goody 1986; Häussler 2000).

Brun (1997) understands the changes in north Italy by focusing on production centres that created a demand for Mediterranean objects in Gaul, but the finds of Etruscan Schnabelkannen and similar luxury objects north of the Alps are not significant enough to explain societal developments. The Golasecca phenomenon is not primarily an economic phenomenon and the Lepontii were not merely passively imitating Etruscan culture, considering the continuing strong emphasis on their own customs (cf. Häussler 2000). Rather than seeing the Etruscans as major protagonists in opening up transalpine markets, one could alternatively emphasize the active role of the Lepontii. The archaeological evidence suggests that the Simplon Pass was one of the major trade routes over the Alps, to such an extent that the people of Como and the Ticino Valley almost monopolized this trade. Similarly, Golasecca artefacts plot the route along the Scrivia Valley to the port of Genoa. In the sixth and fifth centuries BC we also find a number of Golasecca cemeteries in the Lomellina (cf. Vannacci Lunazzi 1981): was this an 'expansion' into the agriculturally rich Po Valley in order to stabilize food supply for the Lepontic consumer cities? In this respect Casini's (2000) theory that Golasecca women were married to men from Alpine tribes in order to consolidate transalpine trade-relations is very attractive, although mainly based on rather isolated finds of brooches that were part of female Golasecca costume. We also should not ignore other local resources in the Golasecca region, such as mining.

Etruscan settlements, like Felsina, may have provided the model for the Lepontii, but pre-existing cultural perceptions clearly survived and adoptions mainly took place within autochthonous socio-cultural patterns, adapted to be understood by a local audience and not as a sign of adherence or submission to Etruscan cultural dominance. Wealth accumulation and status display are factors that would have needed to be restrained in order not to unbalance the existing socio-political structure. By the fifth century BC, inter-elite competition stimulated surplus production to fulfil the elites' increased demand for prestige goods. Eventually the elites of the Golasecca region may have made themselves increasingly dependent on the steady import of luxury objects, until, after two centuries, there is a relatively abrupt end in the use of Golasecca cemeteries and settlements.

The Celtic Invasion—Facts and Fiction!

The literary sources report a large-scale invasion of Celts into Italy *c.*388 BC (Livy 5.33), settling in the area that the Romans called Cisalpine Gaul. As a result, Etruscan and Lepontic urbanism largely collapsed and typically La Tène artefacts and funerary practices became increasingly common. But just how radical was the change? Was there a large-scale movement of people? It has become commonplace to take Livy's statement on the Celtic invasion as an accepted hypothesis and then argue about local variations. For example, De Marinis focuses our attention on the year 388 BC as marking 'l'invasione dell'Italia' (De Marinis 1988b, 183), only to conclude that its impact was hardly felt in the case of the Etruscan city of Mantova. Similarly, a more recent study shows that Etruscans and Celts lived together at Monte Bibele (Guidi 2002). Hence we need to re-examine the evidence for the Celtic invasion. Artefacts associated with the Celts (i.e. Hallstatt and La Tène objects of transalpine origin) were already present in north Italy during the previous period. For example, in a fifth-century tomb at Como-Ca'Morta, the status of the deceased is reflected by grave goods of local production: a typically La Tène iron sword with an anthropoid handle and a bronze helmet of Negau type (based on the fifth-century BC Italo-Etruscan helmet) (De Marinis 1986c, 155–70).

In the fifth century BC there was not only cultural interaction, but also a gradual immigration of people from Transalpine Gaul, which may be recognized by the presence of La Tène artefacts and typically transalpine funerary rituals (cf. Gambari 1995). From *c.*400 BC changes are much more far-reaching, especially for Lombardy and the Po Valley. Transalpine La Tène artefacts in inhumation burial rites indicate the presence of people that do not adhere to the existing cultural traditions. Also the treasure hoards of Abdero and Menaggio-Plesio and the sudden disruption of large cemeteries at the southern end of Lago Maggiore may suggest a larger incursion.[1]

This resulted in a rupture across north Italy: the abandonment of urban sites (De Marinis 1977), the regression of the Golasecca culture (De Marinis 1977, fig. 2), and the impoverishment of sites along major trade routes, like Guardamonte, Montaldo da Mondovì, Serravalle Scrivia and many more (Venturino Gambari 1987). But this need not be the result of a large-scale invasion. Golasecca society may have been so fragile, perhaps due to inner-elite competition and the destruction of their own resources—for instance through deforestation—that disruption to the trade network might have been sufficient to end its urban culture. In addition, south of the Po settlements such as the Villa del Foro were abandoned while people increasingly moved to small hilltop sites such as Rossiglione, Vigana or Cassine, sometimes with fortifications, suggesting that these were socially and

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1 For evidence of the 'invasion', cf. Pauli 1971; 1980, 231ff; Wernicke 1991; for Arbedo, Crirelli 1946; Primas 1972; Frey 1971.

politically unstable times and probably that there was a lack of overall political control.

But La Tène culture, with its brooches, swords, armour and funerary rituals, specifically inhumation, does not dominate the archaeology of north-west Italy. Are these objects markers of an ethnic identity or symbols of status and rank in the society of the fourth to first century BC? Local material culture generally seems to be made up of different cultural horizons whereby artefacts and rituals (e.g. cremation) of the Golasecca period continued to have a strong motivational force for local people. In addition, we can also recognize a certain Ligurian culture that continued to evolve during the La Tène period: Gambari and Venturino Gambari (1987) have established common features, such as funerary habits (cremations, *cassetta litica*), pottery styles and a particular type of conic button that formed part of female dress. We should remember that the archaeological definition of culture does not mean 'ethnos', there is no Ligurian ethnicity. There is, however, a major difference in the archaeology of the two regions: in Liguria we mainly have settlement evidence and in the Transpadana funerary evidence.

In this respect there is an interesting transition in the third-century BC cemetery of Dormelletto, which is situated in close vicinity to the then abandoned proto-urban site of Castelletto Ticino. In the early phase it was a typical La Tène cemetery with regard to grave goods and funerary ritual. For Spagnolo Garzoli (1988) this reflects *'un rito funerario totalmente estraneo all'ambiente golasecchiano locale'* ('a completely foreign funerary rite in the context of local Golasecca culture'). La Tène-style inhumations continue down to the first century BC at Dormelletto, but by the end of the second century BC Golasecca-style cremations have become increasingly common at Dormeletto (also in the Lomellina, see below). Interestingly, weaponry is only attested in these cremation tombs and the development of a 'bi-ritual' does not seem unlikely: at the risk of oversimplification, cremation for men, inhumation for women and children (for the *biritualismo* in the area of the Cenomani see De Marinis 1977; 1986b, 134–5). Together with many other examples, we can recognize the forging of a new cultural identity in north-west Italy, taking up its substance from La Tène and local cultures.

The Celtic invasion probably did not imply a massive, overwhelming influx of people and transalpine La Tène culture did not always dominate local cultural representations. Especially in Piedmont, La Tène artefacts remain more isolated than anywhere else in north Italy (Agostinetti 1990). This implies not only a lack of demand and exchange, but also that the ideological meaning behind La Tène objects was not internalised, so that artefacts did not relate to any cultural models with which people in Piedmont could associate.

South of the Po La Tène culture was hardly an issue. Genoa continued to be occupied and we recognize adaptations to the new political and economic situation that probably prompted the re-orientation towards other production

centres like Marseille. While Etruscan imports heavily declined in the fourth century BC, Massaliote amphorae dominate the archaeological record from *c.*300 BC and Italo-Greek amphorae only seem to start appearing from the third century BC (Milanese 1987, 111–320). Pottery was also increasingly produced in workshops around Genoa and Liguria from the fourth century BC (Gambari and Venturino Gambari 1987; Milanese 1987, 304–5). In other words, Genoa presents itself archaeologically as the 'emporion of the Ligurians' (Strabo 4.6.1; 5.1.3).

East of Genoa, the necropolis of Ameglia is the only well-excavated Late Iron Age cemetery from Liguria, which is otherwise almost devoid of funerary evidence (Durante and Massari 1984, 67). Unlike in other parts of Liguria, numerous La Tène weaponry sets have been found at the site, the typology and decoration of which are well known from transalpine La Tène areas (e.g. the Waldalgesheim style). But how did they come to Ameglia? Did the inhabitants of Ameglia see themselves as part of the 'Celtic world' that dominated the Po Valley? Perhaps we should rather think about the role of Ameglia: it may have been of political and economic importance in providing an alternative access to a Mediterranean port for the elites and polities of the Po Valley, allowing them to avoid trading with Genoa. The strategic importance of a natural harbour may also explain why the Romans founded the colony of Luna nearby in 177 BC.

Despite the alleged invasion, Genoa continued to have strong relations to the Scrivia Valley, whose inhabitants acted as mediators between the Mediterranean and the Po Valley. At Serravalle Scrivia, for example, we find Etruscan *oinochoe* of the second half of the fourth century BC (Venturino Gambari 1987, 19, fig. 4), contemporaneously with a brooch, the decoration of which mirrors the ongoing cultural debate with La Tène art in Liguria, by putting a schematic representation of a human face on the actual arch of the fibula (Venturino Gambari 1987, 24, fig. 1).

In this period small-scale hilltop sites dominate the Ligurian Apennines. But the assumption that the 'Celtic invasion' has caused the construction of such defensive *castelli* is mistaken, since their chronologies are not clear cut and some sites were already occupied prior to the fourth century BC (cf. Gambari and Venturino Gambari 1987). This settlement pattern implies very different forms of socio-economic organization compared to Golaseccan/Etruscan urbanism. The material culture in these Apennine sites is of local origin, consisting of the typical Ligurian conic buttons and the locally produced *unghiate*-pottery, though there are some isolated La Tène artefacts, like arm-rings (otherwise very rare in Italy), that reveal the importance of these sites for the west–east transalpine trade (cf. Venturino Gambari 1987, 22, 23, fig. 8).
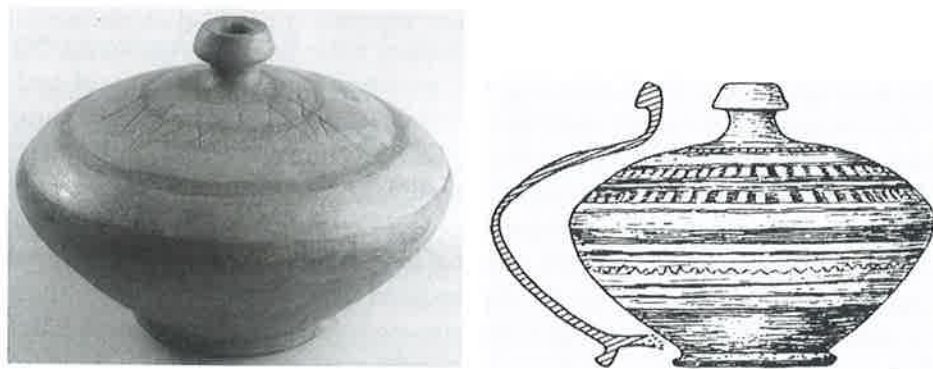
One of these hilltop sites is Guardamonte, occupied from the Early Iron Age to the Principate (Lo Porto 1957). In the sixth century BC, the material culture of the inhabitants not only shows aspects of both the Golasecca culture of the Ticino Valley and those of other Ligurian sites in the Appenines (such as Bec Bercissa), but also shows that people profited from long-distance trade, as

seen by finds of Etruscan bucchero and Certosa-type fibulae. From the fourth century BC the evidence is very scarce; defences were built in the first half of the third century BC. Trade continued, as shown for example by a Campanian skyphos. But interestingly for our study, apart from a La Tène silver spiral ring, the people at Guardamonte seem to have remained relatively untouched by La Tène objects, despite their proximity to the Po Valley.

In conclusion we should not overemphasize the importance of the Celtic invasion. West of Lombardy and south of the Po, La Tène artefacts remained relatively marginal in shaping people's aspirations in the fourth to third centuries BC, hardly representing any comprehensive concept of cultural or ethnic identity. People did not aspire to belong to a 'Celtic' *koiné*. Instead new syncretic cultures evolved out of La Tène, Ligurian and Golaseccan cultures.

Emerging State Societies

During the subsequent centuries north-west Italian societies underwent enormous changes. New artefacts became common from the second century BC, such as locally produced prestige goods, like the *vaso a trottola* (Figure 11), a typical wine vessel (more than a hundred of which were found at the cemetery of Ornavasso-S. Bernardo), or imported artefacts, such as black gloss ware (*vernice nera*). Coinage, writing and the re-emergence of proto-urban centres, most prominently Milan (Arslan 1982), suggest forms of organization across Cisalpine Gaul that are typical for state societies.[2] This created an awareness of otherness that went hand in hand with the forging of more visible local identities.

11   Second-century *vasi a trottola*
left a   from Como-Ca'Morta with Lepontic graffito (Arslan 1991, 465)
right b   'vaso a trottola' from Ornavasso (Martin-Kilcher, 1998, 202)

2   In anthropological terms, the communities of the previous period could rather be described as chiefdom societies, cf. Häussler 2000.

Most of these developments must have been slow and incremental and perhaps hardly visible to contemporary people. Throughout this period, north-west Italy remained, as in previous centuries, oriented towards both the Italian peninsula and Transalpine Gaul. Cultural identities were largely embedded in existing local cultural representations so that La Tène and Ligurian artefacts continued to be prominent symbols of status display and group identity. In other words, socio-cultural developments must be considered to have taken place within the mechanisms of local societies and consequently we should not overemphasize the extent to which exogenous factors (like the Roman conquest of Cisalpine Gaul) could have initiated these social developments.

The Padane Drachma

The development of the Padane drachma reflects one of the most intriguing changes in this period. This coin is modelled on the heavy Massallia drachma, which reflects Marseilles's economic importance in the third century BC, which may be also ascertained by the import of Massaliote amphorae to Genoa and some of the small hilltop sites in Piedmont and Liguria (cf. Venturino Gambari et al. 1994, 288–90). The development of this coinage reveals new forms of social, political and economic organization in Cisalpine Gaul. The dating, however, is controversial. It has been argued that it was implausible to expect the minting of Padane drachmas before the Second Punic War when the Romans started to mint their own silver denarius coinage. But the fact that the drachma stylistically derives from a fourth-century BC model favours an earlier date for its creation, probably around 300 BC (cf. Brenot 1994). This dating can be supported by coin finds from stratigraphic contexts, for example in fourth- to third-century levels in Milan (Arslan 1994, 73). There are two coin types with legends in Etruscan letters (*anarekartos* and *seghedu*), that date no later than the third century BC, which might be predecessors to the Padane drachma (Solinas 1995). The main periods of circulation of the Padane drachma were the second and the early first centuries BC (cf. Pautasso 1962; Arslan 2000; 2007).

The standardized weight, silver content, size and iconography of the drachma indicate communication and common reckoning throughout north Italy, but this is hardly a marker of political unity. Coin distribution suggests a number of minting authorities, such as Milan of the Insubres in the west, and another in the east, in the Veneto, where drachmas of Pautasso-type 8 mainly circulated. Similar to Golasecca artefacts in the fifth century BC, the distribution of Padane drachmas may be used to plot trade-routes south to Genoa and north to the Simplon Pass. The Padane drachma can also be found in Transalpine Gaul, for example in the *oppida* of Alésia and Manching, and even in Penzance (cf. Arslan).

The iconography follows that of the Marseilles drachma (Figure 12) with a head of Artemis Ephesia on the obverse and a lion and the legend ΜΑΣΣΑ on the reverse. In the course of the second century BC—a nominally Roman period—the iconography was changing in a way that was very different from other contemporary Italic and Greek societies: the lion of the original Massaliote drachma acquired more and more abstract forms comparable to transalpine La Tène art imagery, resulting in what Pautasso described as a 'scorpion'. At the same time the ΜΑΣΣΑ legend degenerated into indecipherable vertical strokes, suggesting that there may have been a different attitude to the use of writing, which was to change again within just a few generations.

At the end of the second century BC this relatively standardized iconography was broken up by the introduction of legends in the western half of Cisalpine Gaul: *toutiopouos, pirakos* and *rikos* (Pautasso 1962, types 9, 10, 12), it is possible that Milan could have been one of the mints in this period (Arslan 1982). Following the Roman example, these legends have been frequently interpreted as personal names of the issuer. But, like other non-personal names on Celtic coins (cf. De Bernardo-Stempel 1998), it seems equally feasible to relate *rikos* (Lambert 1994 suggests *rikos*; for plural *rikoi* cf. Morandi 1984; Marinetti and Prosdocimi 1994, 40–41) and *toutiopouos* (Delamarre 2003, 295–96) to titles of magistracies, like *rix* ('rex/reguli') and *touta* ('populus'), attested by contemporary Lepontic inscriptions.

12   Padane drachmae (after Arslan 1994, figs 1, 9, 8 and 11)
top left a   Early Padane drachma with ΜΑΣΣΑ legend
top right b   'Insubrian' Padane drachma with PIRAKOS legend
bottom left c   Padane drachma with TOUTIOPOUOS legend
bottom right d   Late Padane drachma with RIKOI/RIKOS legend

It is generally assumed that the production of the Padane drachma must have ceased after the Social War (91–88 BC), to be replaced by Roman coinage. Hoards with *rikos*-drachmas and Republican coins dating to 90–81 BC are typical for this last phase (e.g. at Gerenzago, Ornavasso-S. Bernardo and Ornavasso-Persona). However, during the first century BC the weight standard and Lepontic legends of the drachma were adopted on coinage in Switzerland, Savoie and the upper Rhône Valley (Pautasso 1980; Bocca and Centini 1995). Some Padane drachmas even continued to circulate down to the beginning of the first century AD (for example at Como and Ornavasso, Pautasso 1962, 128, no. 25). The Romans did not introduce the denarius in north Italy, but they specially minted the victoriatus whose weight and silver content already seem to have been linked with the Padane drachma from the second century BC (Arslan 1994, 81). The victoriatus also suggests the persistence of indigenous socio-economic structures down to the Augustan period, with merely the issuing body changing (primarily reflecting changes in military organization).

Epigraphy

By the end of the second century BC there appears to have been a revival of Lepontic epigraphy, which had almost disappeared after the 'Celtic invasion'. In the third century BC there are only few inscriptions, mainly short texts, like the *anarekartos/sekedu* coin legends. By around 100 BC Lepontic epigraphy had spread far beyond the original Lepontic area: we find inscriptions in the Po Valley, Umbria, the Aosta Valley and across the Alps. This has often been considered to be of ideological relevance. Marinetti and Prosdocimi (1994) even suggest that the Lepontic alphabet became a 'national' Celtic alphabet, which may signify rejection of the Latin alphabet (Prosdocimi 1991, 56–57). Rather than necessarily being evidence of self-conscious cultural resistance, such trends may represent the prominence of key centres for north-west Italy in the Late Republic, that is, not Rome, but sites such as Genoa and Milan. The latter was not only an economic hub for the region, but also a cultural centre. Already Caecilius Statius, Cicero's '*malus auctor Latinitatis*' (Cicero, *Att.* 7.3.10), was of Insubrian origin, and by the first century BC Milan had become an important place for rhetoric where even Virgil went to for his studies (Pliny, *Ep.* 4.13.3; Donatus, *Vit. Verg.* 7).

In the early first century BC a number of Lepontic inscriptions give us an insight in socio-cultural developments. Let us focus on two features from a dedication from Briona (Figure 13) (Campanile 1981; Lejeune 1988, 11–25; Häussler 2002). First, the phrase *takos toutas* 'by order of the people', with *touta* meaning '*populus*', a term resembling the *toutiopouos* from the Padane drachma (Delamarre 2003, 295-6). Secondly, the name *Kuitos lekatos* in a list of otherwise typically Celtic names: *Kuitos* appears to be a Celtic rendering of the Latin name *Quintus* and *lekatos* derives from the Latin word *legatus*. This
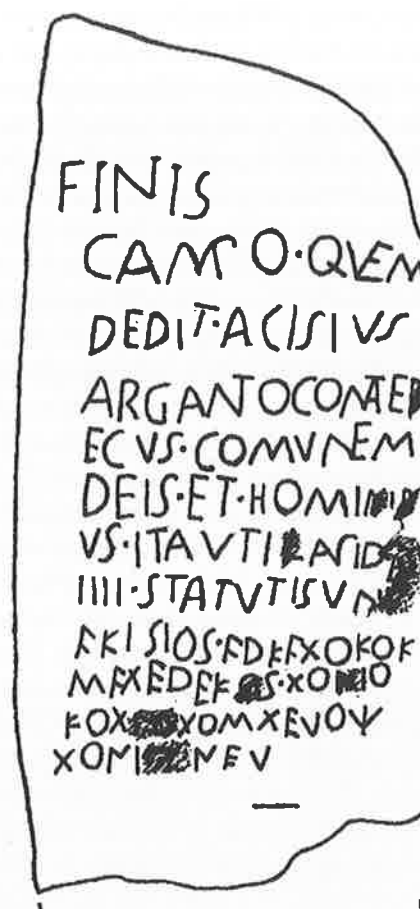
shows to what extent contacts with Rome may have had already influenced local society, more than we would expect from the material culture, which was still dominated by La Tène artefacts. The adoption of Italic and Latin names merely enlarged the local onomastic repertoire, and is unlikely to have been a conscious cultural statement. On the other hand, local governing elites redefined existing institutions as a result of the changing relationship with Rome, as indicated for example by the use of the term *legatus*. Other local titles may be the *rix/rigani* ('king'/'queen') and the *argantocomatercus* ('moneyer', 'quaestor') (Delamarre 2003, 53–54; 258).

Interaction with Rome is particularly evident in the bilingual inscription from Vercelli (Figure 14), which was set up by a local dignitary, Akisios/ Acisius (Lejeune 1988; Lambert 1994). The Latin text is more prominent, while the Lepontic appears as a mere annexe in smaller letters. Considering the comparatively late date (first century BC), the Latin text is relatively clumsy and unconventional. The context of the inscription—the *fines* of a *campus*—was 'Celtic' and the Latin translation therefore needed many additional explanations and many Celtic terms had to be paraphrased into Latin: for example *tevotom* was paraphrased as *deis et hominibus* (cf. De Bernardo-Stempel 1998), just as the word *karnitu* was paraphrased as *locavit et statuit* on the bilingual inscription from Todi (Umbria) (Lejeune 1988, 35–38; Delamarre 2003, 106).

In the corpus of Lepontic texts, the Vercelli inscription is among the most complex and innovative. It also shows the extent of interaction that took place between the local community and the Roman world, which motivated the

13   The Lepontic inscription from Briona (after Lambert 1994; Lejeune 1988, E-1)

14   The bilingual inscription from Vercelli (after Lambert 1994; Lejeune 1988, E-2)

dedicant Akisios to put up an inscription in both Latin and Lepontic. Motta (2000, 182) assumes that the Latin text is aimed for a Latin-speaking audience, while the Celtic one is a statement of ethnic identity. But this inscription above all reflects Akisios' ambiguous self-identity. On one hand his actions are still embedded in local traditions as seen by his choice of Lepontic, the Celtic title of his magistracy (*argantocomaterecus*) and the religious context of a *campus* defined by four stelai, probably a place consecrated for particular seasonal ceremonies (e.g. Samhain; Lejeune 1988, 33). On the other hand, he is also part of the Italy-wide political landscape of his time. As the case of the Vercelli inscription demonstrates, the direction of writing in the latest Lepontic epigraphy, was now from left to right, as in Latin, whether on stone, pot-sherds or coins.

Urbanism

Writing and coinage are just two indicators that reveal underlying socio-political developments. Another indicator is the precocious process of urbanization (cf. Chrzanovski 2006). The evidence is scarce and the dating is problematic. But the archaeological record shows a gradual increase in the density of human activity at many settlements in north-west Italy during the La Tène period. The process was already underway in the third century BC, prior to the Roman conquest, and culminated in the first century. Many sites, which appear to have been abandoned during the alleged Celtic invasion, were now reoccupied, like Serravalle Scrivia and Villa del Foro. This is less a question of 'Romanization', that is an aspiration for a Roman-style urban lifestyle, but more to do with an economic situation, similar to the Golasecca period, as people were drawn into the socio-economic structures of late Republican Italy. Settlements on the plain were consequently more appropriate for the intensifying trade contacts, while hilltop sites were now poorly situated and thus largely abandoned.
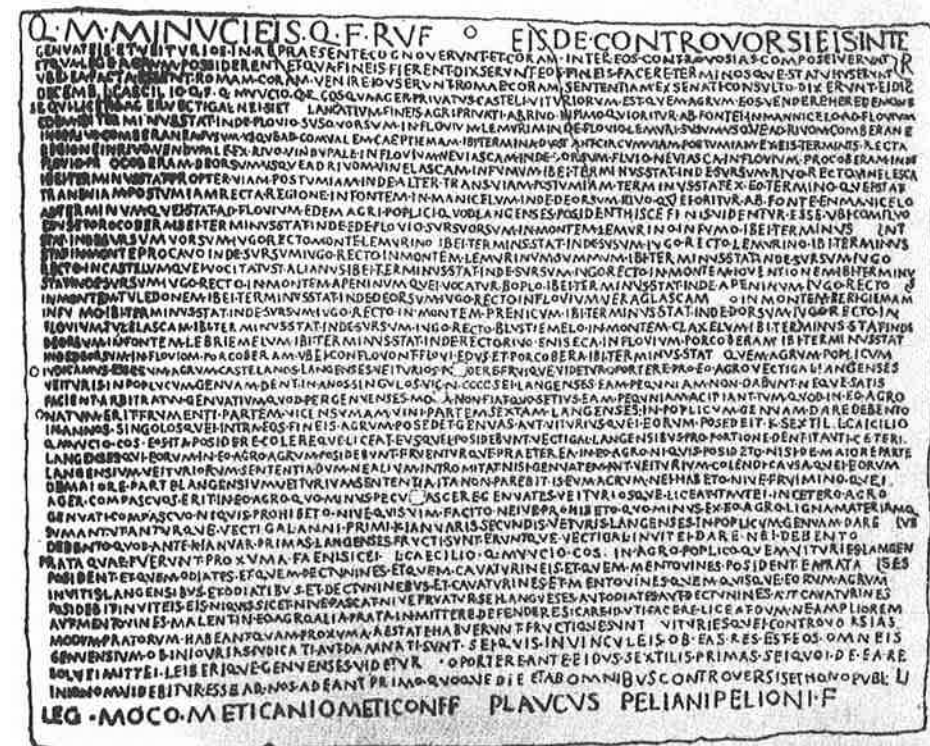
In this respect Vercelli ('the town of the Libici', Pliny, *HN* 3.21) provides an interesting case study. Funerary evidence from the Golasecca IIB and Middle La Tène period indicate early phases of occupation (Vannacci Lunazzi 1981), but in the third century BC the neighbouring cemeteries of Borgovercelli and Vinzaglio suggest the existence of an important nearby settlement (Gambari 1985; 1988). From stratigraphic contexts on the site of the later urban centre of Vercelli, coins, oil lamps and black gloss ware of Emilian and central Italian production indicate occupation since the third century BC. Excavations have also revealed the restructuring of the site during the first half of the first century BC, the time of the bilingual inscription, perhaps in a deliberate move towards Graeco-Roman urbanism (Gambari and Gabutti 1993; Chrzanovski 2006, 323–51).

Serravalle Scrivia (Roman Libarna) was originally occupied in the Golasecca period. Libarna acquired important urban features, such as an orthogonal street grid, in the late first century BC, followed by a forum, amphitheatre and theatre in the first century AD. The evolution of Libarna should not surprise us since it was situated on the Via Postumia, which had connected Genoa via the Po Valley with the Adriatic Sea since 148 BC (Fraccaro 1957b). Other early indicators for occupation include Middle La Tène fibulae, Padane drachmas and black gloss ware of Cisalpine production, objects that were common from the second to the end of the first century BC (cf. Venturino Gambari 1987, 25; Banterla 1987, 133). In the first century AD, very different exchange patterns started to operate, as seen by South Gallic Samian ware and Dressel 6 amphorae.

Not far away, at Villa del Foro, a new settlement was founded next to the Etruscan site that had been abandoned in the fourth century BC. Together with Asti (Hasta), Chieri (Carreum-Potentia) and Pollenzia (Pollentia), Villa del Foro (Forum Fulvii) is assumed to have been founded during the construction of the Via Fulvia, which Fraccaro (1957a) convincingly attributes to Fulvius Flaccus

(125–122 BC). The few datable archaeological objects available can hardly confirm such an early date, but the question is, what constitutes a second-century *colonia*, forum or *conciliabulum* in such a remote region? Black gloss ware of Tuscan and Cisalpine production and Dressel 1 amphorae suggest an occupation from the first century BC (cf. Preacco Ancona 1989, 90), although there are black gloss oil lamps of Hellenistic traditions of the second half of the second century BC. Most finds belong to 'la grande floridezza' of Forum Fulvii between the late first century BC and the middle of the first century AD (Facchini 1995, 313).

We might assume that on the Ligurian coast urbanism took place much earlier since people were traditionally participating in coastal trade, hence profiting from a much more readily available exchange of goods and information. But it was only the beginning of the first century BC when the fourth- to second-century BC settlement of Albingaunum (Albenga) acquired characteristics of a Roman town, such as the city walls of 80–70 BC (Lamboglia 1992). Around the same time, the hilltop site of Albintimilium (Ventimiglia) was abandoned in order to found the Roman-style town of the late Republic (Lamboglia and Pallarés 1985).

15   The sentencia Minuciorum of 117 BC (*CIL* 5.7749; *ILLRP* 517)

Such urbanization processes may have created conflicts with the inhabitants in the hinterland. These are presented by the sources as struggles between farmers and pastoralists as is reported in the case of the Apennine peoples, the Langenses Veiturii and Genoa, whereby the Genuates expanded their economic interest in their hinterland. The *sententia Minuciorum* from 117 BC, preserved on a bronze tablet from Polcevera, provides a glimpse into such a conflict (Figure 15) (*ILLRP* 517; *CIL* 5.7749; cf. Bianchi 1996). The Roman arbitrators uncompromisingly applied Roman perceptions of property on the local inhabitants by defining properties and boundaries, imposing one-sided changes on property rights, taxation and land use. Precisely defined land was assigned to the indigenous occupants, for some of which they had to pay tribute to Genoa: '*Pro eo agro vectigal Langenses Veituris in poplicum Genuam dent in anos singulos vic[toriatos] n[ummos] CCCC*' (*CIL* 5.7749). Apart from creating bonds of dependence on Genoa, the internal mechanisms of the indigenous society were faced with new challenges, that unbalanced the existing socio-economic situation. These challenges included tribute and monetization: the need to pay an annual sum of money to Genoa would have forced local communities to produce a surplus that needed to be sold for money in order to pay the 400 victoriati per year.

Foedus and Exclusion

So far we have seen to what extent north-west Italian societies were developing between the third and first centuries BC. Besides coinage and writing we recognize an increase in trade and craft activities, the development of new central places and new forms of social organization. Considering that the archaeological evidence mainly consists of local artefacts, we may assume that much of the impetus must have come from internal motivations. But already since 222/196 BC we are nominally dealing with a Roman period. And although Bersani (1994, 174) speaks of 'a profound Romanization—quick and irreversible', the Roman conquest cannot have been an important watershed for north-west Italy in initiating socio-cultural change since many developments have a non-Roman appearance, such as the iconography of the drachma, while others appear to have started prior to the conquest, like coinage and urbanism.

In this respect the peace treaties *(foedera)* are essential to understanding the relationship between Rome and Cisalpine Gaul (Luraschi 1979, 25–40, wrongly assumes the existence of *foedera aequa* and *iniqua*). Genoa, for example, was a prominent ally of Rome and a federate city whose people loyally supported Rome's interests during the Hannibalic War (Livy 28.46 for 205 BC; Ammianus Marcellinus 15.10.10). Some Ligurian peoples, like the Apuani, must have already entered a *foedus* with Rome, since the Roman Senate felt obliged to defend them against the unrightful deportation by Aemilius Paulus in 181–180 BC (Livy 40, 25-28). The Taurini must have become allies prior to the Second Punic War since

they, unlike the Insubres, supported Rome when Hannibal crossed the Alps with his army into their territory in 225 BC (Polybius 3.60). But none of these places show evidence of any significant changes during the hundred years that followed the Roman conquest.

In this respect, a remark by Cicero (*Balb.* 14.32), in an argument about the extension of citizenship, provides us with vital information on the peace treaties between Rome and some of north Italy's peoples: 'But there are in existence certain treaties, such as those with the Cenomani, Insubres, Helvetii and Iapudes, and also with some of the barbarians in Gaul, and in these treaties there is a saving clause that none of their people may be admitted by us to citizenship.' If Cicero's information was correct, than the Insubres could not acquire Roman citizenship. This must have been a punitive measure against 'the most powerful tribe' and inspired by Rome's fear of the 'Gallic threat', and not a privilege that aimed to preserve their autonomy, as has been argued by Gabba (1984, 214), Luraschi (1979, 44–45, 96–98) and Bandelli (1992). Cicero must already have given us an anachronistic piece of information that recalls the situation of the second century BC, since the Transpadani had already acquired the *ius Latii* (Latin right) in Cicero's time. When talking about Insubres the term probably comprised the adjacent territories of Vercelli, Novara and Como, which are considered to have been Insubrian vassals in pre-Roman times (Gabba 1984, 214). The Romans thus also defended the interests of those who had probably obtained their independence from the Insubres, as may be demonstrated by a dispute between Libici and Salassi. An inferior legal status for the Insubres is probable, although the term *foedus iniquum* was avoided for diplomatic reasons to avoid impling any feelings of an 'unjust' treaty, which would contradict Roman ideology. The lack of armour in Insubrian graves (unlike west of the Ticino River) was perhaps less a question of style than an indication for their disarmament (certainly from La Tène D2, cf. Grassi 1990–91, 282–83; Arslan 1991).

Such *foedus* stipulations had consequences. Having been excluded from economic and social participation in the Imperium Romanum, the elites of Cisalpine Gaul had no incentive to 'Romanize'. And yet they needed to consolidate their authority, which was threatened in various ways. For example, under Roman hegemony there was less need for statesmanship, which undermined their political authority. In addition the economic threat was very significant. We can only speculate on the nature of the pre-Roman socio-economic situation, but if we were dealing with a kind of prestige-goods economy (Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978), then the access to new markets, as facilitated by Roman roads, fora and *coloniae*, could significantly unbalance existing social hierarchies. Cremona, one of the Roman foundations at the margin of Insubrian territory, was the place of an annual fair where 'a great part of Italy was gathered to attend a market' (Tacitus, *Hist.* 3.32.2; similarly the Campi Macri near Mantova: Strabo 5.1.11; Varro, *Rust.* 2. praef. 6; Gabba 1975). For Grassi, Cremona played an important role in integrating the Insubres into the Roman economy (1990–91; 1993). However, it seems that

the local elites successfully restricted access to these new markets. Otherwise north-west Italy would have been overwhelmed by Graeco-Roman products, but imports, such as Campanian black gloss ware, remain extremely rare in the second century BC. This may help to explain why La Tène artefacts continued to dominate the cultural expression of communities in north-west Italy down to the first century BC.

Gradual Change and Rupture

Societies in north-west Italy had undergone an exciting evolution from the third to the first centuries BC. Writing and coinage show to what extent local societies were capable of adapting to the changing socio-political patterns in late Republican Italy. It is therefore even more surprising that existing cultural patterns disappeared relatively quickly just at the climax of this socio-cultural process. La Tène cultural models, within which these societal processes were evolving, did not survive and were replaced by pan-Italian cultural expressions.

There are only few sites that allow us to investigate the transition from La Tène to Roman 'culture'. We are not looking for signs of 'Romanization' as this is hardly a suitable term. The changes in artefact assemblages primarily reveal economic developments, that is to say an intensifying exchange across Italy (and with other parts of the Roman Empire), and an isolated artefact of Campanian or Etruscan origin need not be a conscious choice to display someone's aspiration to a Graeco-Roman koiné. 'Romanization' is a question of self- and group identity and despite the adoption of foreign artefacts and customs this identity remains a local identity down to the end of the first century BC.

A number of artefacts have been identified as early signs of 'Romanization', but we have to be very careful about such a statement. Let us take for example the late second-century BC Celtic warrior grave from Misano di Gera d'Adda (Lombardy), whose grave goods contain prestigious Italo-Roman bronze objects, strigils, coins, black gloss table ware and a silver mirror. They are not 'l'adozione di usi estranei al mondo indigeno' (Grassi 1995, 78–79), since they were not consciously used to display adherence to a Roman group identity, but to show the individual's wealth. In the same context we also find typically 'Celtic' items (a La Tène sword, spear and Misano-type brooches); perhaps these objects are more revealing for the person's group identity. Imported luxury objects do not prove the adoption and internalization of a Roman way of life. And adaptations to contemporary fighting techniques, like the Etruscan Negau helmet or the Roman-style *gladius* (short sword), could be considered as technical necessities.

Strigils have also been considered an indicator for early 'Romanization'. They are an interesting item because they reflect changing attitudes to the body, suggesting a new lifestyle. This is in terms of the strigils identifying the bearer as participating 'in una società evoluta e raffinata' (Grassi 1995, 82), although

we are only dealing here with isolated objects and not complete sets of toilet equipment. They mirror cultural interaction within Hellenized Italy; existing traditions, however, dominate. Interestingly, with the further socio-political integration of the Transpadani, the strigils largely disappear from the funerary record by the first century BC.

The most apparent import to north-west Italy is Campanian black gloss ware—for some the 'fossil-guide of Romanization' (Grassi 1995, 88), in which there is a 'clear connection between the advance of Roman culture and the presence of black gloss pottery' (Frontini 1985, 160). Is this really the case? For example, with regard to the production and distribution of *vernice nera*, Volterra is one of the more important production centres exporting to the north-west in the second and first centuries BC (Frontini and Grassi 1998; Morel 1998). But this is no different from the import of Etruscan bucchero and black gloss ware throughout the pre-Roman period, as goods continue to move along well-established pre-Roman trade routes. Moreover, in order to assess the social significance behind imported *vernice nera*, we have to look at the context in which it was used. Campanian ware replaced other prestigious vessels as grave goods, being used side by side with La Tène artefacts. It is also surprising that, despite the foundation of so many Roman colonies (like Dertona, Cremona, Piacenza, Luna) and the construction of the Via Postumia, *vernice nera* remains relatively rare in the second century BC and limited to a small range of forms that were largely used for feasting and banqueting in the funerary context (Grassi 1995, 85–88). It is therefore unlikely that such trends should be linked with concepts of cultural identity or societal transformation.

Local workshops also produced a small range of black gloss ware, perhaps in order to fulfil an increasing demand based on the idea that *vernice nera* was meaningful not only as a symbol of rank and status, but due to a certain notion of cultural identity for local elites (Frontini 1985). But we could also consider that this was less a cultural than a technical transfer, that Italo-Roman techniques revitalized local pottery production (so already Grassi 1995).

We should not overestimate the importance of black gloss ware for local society, as such objects hardly reflect aspirations for a Roman lifestyle. After all, importation of pottery has been common for centuries. Only in the second half of the first century BC do we witness a significantly different process, namely the abandonment of local pottery styles and a noticeable rupture in archaeological assemblages across the north-west (the 'Umbruch' of Martin-Kilcher 1998).

If we want to explore the theme of socio-cultural change, we cannot focus on isolated objects, but we must take into account the whole picture: the numerous artefacts, their disposition and their usage, together with changes in cultural practices. A series of cemeteries along the Ticino Valley provide a good basis to build up a chronology of change of the Late Iron Age, namely the cemeteries of Ornavasso, Oleggio and those in the Lomellina (especially Valeggio-Cascina Tessera and Gambolò-Belcreda).

Although the cemeteries at Ornavasso are more marginal (if Ornavasso was part of Lepontic territory it would have only been conquered under Augustus), the chronology is comparable to other sites (Graue 1974; Martin-Kilcher 1998). From 100 BC we find a large variety of La Tène grave goods, including prestigious metal vessels, weaponry and imitations of Campanian ware, mirroring an intensifying transalpine trade. From *c.*40 BC La Tène *vasi a trottola* were replaced by Roman-style *olpai*. And between 20 BC and AD 50 most La Tène artefacts disappear. As in other north Italian cemeteries in this period, Campanian ware was gradually replaced by Italian *terra sigillata*. Subsequently (10 BC–AD 50) glass vessels become increasingly common, while the last brooches with late La Tène characteristics disappear completely. With regard to the appearance of Roman objects, chronologies at more northern cemeteries, like Melano (Ticino, Switzerland), are only slightly later, perhaps due to people's cultural orientation towards Insubrian territory (Biaggio Simona 2001).

The Lomellina is centrally located on north–south and west–east axes between the rivers Ticino and Po (Vannacci Lunazzi 1982a–b). Despite the vicinity to urban centres like Pavia and Tortona, La Tène artefacts dominate funerary assemblages from the fourth to third centuries down to the first century BC, while Campanian ware only appears from *c.*100 BC. The wealth of grave goods indicates that we are not dealing with a secluded rural population, but with elites participating in wider socio-political relationships. As we have seen above, the presence of isolated imported objects is not that significant.

Much more interesting are changes in funerary practices. From *c.*70–50 BC the first tombs were constructed as rectangular boxes built of tiles, which can be attributed to Italo-Roman practices, largely replacing the previous *cassetta litica* style that had derived from Golaseccan times (Figure 16). At the same time, the grave goods consist of La Tène *vasi a trottola*, knives and middle La Tène brooches (but there are no swords in La Tène D), together with locally produced black gloss ware. We also find the first usages of the typically Graeco-Roman Charon coin. From *c.*40–30 BC the *vasi a trottola* were replaced by Roman *olpai*. The most recent grave at Gambolò shows the adoption of typical Italo-Roman constructions whereby the remains were deposited between two amphorae cut in half. Also at Oleggio, a cemetery occupied during the first centuries BC and AD, we can recognize analogous changes in funerary rituals, with later cremations using urns of local pottery sometimes positioned between amphorae, as is common in central Italy (Spagnolo Garzoli 1999). In the latest phase we also find the typical repertoire of grave goods of the Principate, consisting of oil lamps, glass vessels and *olpai*, among other things. One of the urns from Gambolò even carries a Latin name, *Vindonidius*, written in the Latin alphabet.

Does this suggest the complete 'Romanization' of the inhabitants? We are dealing with a period when people could already profit from Latin rights (89 BC) and since 49 BC they were Roman citizens. The evidence from the Lomellina

16   Tomb construction of *cassetta-litica* type; stone slabs surround the tomb on all sides, Stabio (Ticino) c.80-70 BC (after Biaggio Simona 2001, 76, fig. 1)

reflects people's interaction with neighbouring communities. But considering its geographical location, changes in material culture appear extremely late. Why is this? It is implausible to conclude from the evidence that people aspired to be 'Roman'; indeed, it is generally difficult to envisage a process of self-Romanization prior to the Principate. Moreover, the funerary evidence is not a mirror of life: it is more conservative with regard to rituals and especially aspects of group identity, such as dress. Also in Ornavasso burials have a certain 'conservative' character (Martin-Kilcher 1998; 2000). The continued presence of middle La Tène brooches and Ligurian conic buttons suggests the persistence of

dress as an important external sign of group identity, while the Vercelli and Briona inscriptions (*supra*) reveal the degree of socio-political interaction. The Ligurian conic buttons, being part of female dress, may also imply that women's group identity was less subject to socio-cultural change and adapted less quickly to a changing socio-economic conditions; or that cultural conformity to existing male–female relationships continued to be expressed in 'indigenous', Ligurian, customs.

Participation, Latin Rights and Roman Citizenship

The potential of the population to adapt to the new socio-economic situation of the first century BC is obvious at many sites. Change profoundly affects all aspects of life in this period. There is no drive towards a Roman identity. Instead people experimented with social expression in the local context, resulting in relatively rapidly changing cultural assemblages, as seen in case of the cemeteries of the Ticino Valley. Yet, although societies were able to adapt, the last generation experienced a period when La Tène artefacts lost their intrinsic values, their connotations and their force to motivate and inspire people's behaviour. Archaeological remains, inscriptions and coins have demonstrated that something new appeared after *c.*100 BC. But how does the situation in the first century differ from that of the second century BC?

We should not underestimate the Roman impact in the second century BC, like the numerous military interventions, when Rome defended her 'allies' from Alpine raids, arbitrated between the Libici and the Salassi (143 BC) and stopped the invasion of the Cimbri (101 BC). And although roads and colonies largely set up south of the Po, Roman *publicani* did exploit, for example, the gold mines of the Bessa near Vercelli (Bocca and Centini 1995), although this did not seem to have any cultural impact: the archaeology from the Bessa consists of Late Iron Age finds. In 175 BC auxiliary troops of Cisalpine Gauls are attested for the first time (Livy 41.1.8). Supplying troops did not only create a common consciousness across Italy, with allies fighting 'just wars' against the same enemies and sharing the booty, but also, as in the case of the Insubres, much stronger local identities developed in response to Roman perceptions of ethnic units.

The Social War had significant repercussions, although people in north-west Italy did not participate. While Italy south of the Po acquired Roman citizenship, the Transpadani were granted the *ius Latii* by Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo in 89 BC (*lex Pompeia*). Asconius (*in Pisonem* 3) indicates that there was no general grant of Latin rights to the Transpadane territory. Instead Pompeius created Latin colonies (*colonias deduxerit*) without any new settlers, while the existing inhabitants (*veteribus incolis*) acquired Latin rights (Asconius, *Pis.* 3; Pliny, *HN* 3.138). Alba Pompeia (Alba), whose name combines the Ligurian name *Alba* with the name of the law-giver and patron, must have been one of

these colonies (Luraschi's 'fictitious Latin colonies' 1983). But Alba Pompeia also poses a problem since it is located south of the river Po, although the Cispadani should have acquired full Roman citizenship in 90 BC. We have to assume that peregrine communities in hardly urbanized Piedmont and Liguria were treated like those in the Transpadana. In this way the political landscape of north-west Italy changed significantly. Instead of ethnic entities, the *lex Pompeia* created the need for Roman-style municipalities, thus splitting up the 'tribal' polities into smaller Latin colonies (Wolff 1985, 555). This was one of many aspects of the first century BC that accelerated the disintegration of existing identities, hierarchies and ideologies.

The *lex Pompeia* also put an end to the exclusion of the Insubres from citizenship that Cicero mentioned. But this also threatened existing socio-economic structures: *commercium* and *conubium* facilitated commerce, intermarriage and new social relationships, while the *ius civitatis per magistratum* allowed members of the elite to acquire Roman citizenship. Local communities were thus split up into a two-tier society: *peregrini* and Roman citizens. Status and authority became increasingly defined by Roman concepts. In this respect, the rapidly changing funerary practices and inscriptions (like those from Vercelli and Briona), provide a rare insight into the confusing identity of local elites in this period, torn apart between Roman and indigenous habits. Increasingly, local elites made use of new opportunities. Roman citizenship allowed them to circumvent local jurisdiction, for example by appealing to the *praetor* and Rome, thus undermining their own local hierarchies. The *lex de Gallia Cisalpina* shows Rome's attempt to avoid a flood of trials being transferred to Rome (Crawford 1996). By participating in a legal discourse, local elites integrated themselves into a Roman society.

Why is the first century BC such an important period of social change? The key was participation. The Gauls were no longer excluded from Roman society and participated in great numbers in the armies and political factions of the late Republic. At the same time Rome was more and more responsible for paying soldiers and mercenaries (resulting in an increased monetization). And under Caesar many Cisalpini participated in the Gallic and Civil Wars that created a common identity and made them accustomed to the leadership of a Roman autocrat, while the Civil Wars resulted in a large-scale displacement of people throughout Italy. In 49 BC Caesar granted them Roman citizenship, followed by the end of provincial status in 41 BC. This does not mark the complete 'Romanization' of the Cisalpine Gauls, as suggested by Kremer (1994), since, as we have seen, La Tène objects and indigenous traditions continued to be used.

In the entire period between the Roman conquest and Caesar's grant of citizenship it seems inappropriate to talk about Romanization. It cannot be denied that socio-cultural patterns were changing, but *Romanitas* was not an issue: we lack the Roman symbols of power and lifestyle as long as the people of north-west Italy continued to identify themselves with local cultures. Socio-cultural change continued to be experimental as individuals made choices

within the repertoire available to them in order to express status, authority, wealth and identity. The impact of colonization and centuriation, which only really began under the triumvirs, should not be overemphasized. Although it appears that there were colonial foundations at many sites in this time (e.g., Augusta Taurinorum, Augusta Bagiennorum), onomastic and archaeological evidence show the survival of the previous inhabitants (e.g., in the Canavese and Cuneese, cf. Häussler 1997, 2002). The demographic impact on local societies must have been limited, while centuriation took place in an area that has not revealed much evidence for human activity in the La Tène period; centuriation provided irrigation and drainage, and with it new economic opportunities not only for a few thousand colonists and veterans, but especially for the indigenous population. As we have seen, socio-cultural change had been taking place gradually for centuries. The 'Celtic invasion' and the Augustan period are the only two periods that are visible as a rupture in the archaeological record (and neither are *complete* changes of socio-cultural expressions. How can we explain such a rupture? New cultural symbols and ideologies can only gain ground when the previous societal pattern had lost its meaning to consolidate society. Only a profound legitimizing crisis within local societies that could not be resolved by a gradual adaptation can explain the extent of rupture that we witness after 50 BC. In a way, we are dealing with a movement from below: it is the lower strata of society that challenged the authority of the aristocracy.

As a result we get very different socio-cultural processes. The cultural phenomenon 'Romanization' can only be explained by the insertion of individual people and social groups into new social relationships because this affected the spontaneity of the adoption process. Thus, external factors become increasingly important in the local decision-making process. In the Principate, societal change is not merely a reaction or response to external factors. Instead there are internal motivations, especially the personal ambitions and aspirations of the political actors and their ability to exploit concepts and external threats in order to create coercion. As a result, choices for the locals became increasingly reduced due to new social and ideological guidelines that are part of Roman structures. People can make a variety of choices in response to Roman imperialism, but during the Principate, choice was increasingly limited.

While there was a long process of cultural contact and integration for people such as the Insubres, Cottius, by contrast, whose kingdom was conquered by Augustus *c.*14–13 BC, integrated very rapidly. He was received into the friendship of Augustus and became prefect of the Alpes Cottiae, while his capital city Segusio (Susa) underwent a substantial building programme that was clearly inspired by Rome. The most symbolic monuments are the arch of Susa and Cottius' heroon (Bartolomasi 1994). The arch's iconography (the presence of lictors, Cottius wearing the toga, the *taurobolium*) lacks any Celtic influence; its Roman character strongly correlates in form and message with cases from

Rome. Both heroon and arch reflect ideas of the Augustan regime: architecture is used by dynastic rulers to occupy social space.

Even the most marginal regions of north-west Italy became an integral part of *tota Italia*. But despite enfranchisement, urbanization and the elite's Roman lifestyle, many regional differences of the pre-Roman period continued to remain visible in the Principate. At the Roman *municipium* of Novara, for example, the Latin epigraphy included more Celtic onomastics and theonyms than the neighbouring *civitates* such as Vercelli, and other elements of a strong local identity that can be traced back to the thriving La Tène and Golasecca sites. [3]

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CHAPTER 4

The Archaeology of Picenum
The Last Decade

Corinna Riva[1]

Introduction: The Cultural Definition of Picenum

With the term Picenum (Piceno) Italian archaeologists today refer to a region roughly corresponding to modern Marche and northern Abruzzo on the eastern seaboard of central Italy (Figure 17). Extending to just less than ten thousand square kilometres, the Marche faces the Adriatic Sea on its eastern side, and Umbria on its western side where the Apennines ('appennino umbro-marchigiano') form a natural barrier. The region as a whole is characterized by a mountainous landscape reaching altitudes over two thousand metres near Umbria. The high reliefs inland become lowlands as they approach the coastal plain, which forms a rather narrow strip of land. Parallel river valleys running from the mountains to the sea are wide and almost perpendicular to the coast, but begin very narrow at their sources in the mountain ranges inland. Here, some water courses cut through spectacular deep gorges, the most notable being the Furlo Gorge cut by the Burano River, tributary of the Metauro River, through which the Roman Via Flaminia, built in the third century BC, passed, ending at Fano on the coast. In antiquity as much as in the modern era, movement occurred along these river valleys, and communication with the west side of the Apennines was possible along passes over the high ground.

The peculiar geographical configuration of the region strongly determined the pattern of contact in antiquity, although, as we shall see, physical obstruction did not inhibit socio-cultural interaction. On the contrary, a characteristic trait of the history and archaeology of Picenum is its high level of interaction with other neighbouring regions both in Italy and beyond. This is partly the result of the geographical configuration of the river valleys making travelling to other regions along river courses easier than from valley to valley within the region.

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[1] It would have been impossible to write this article without the astonishing efficiency and professionalism of the staff of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici per le Marche who have been excavating an incredibly wide range of sites and disseminating results, and displayed the finds at various museums across the Marche at an unbelievably fast rate. The exhibition catalogue 'Eroi e Regine' is testimony of this activity. My involvement in the Upper Esino Valley survey over the last five years has made me appreciate all this, and for this I would like to thank in particular Dr Giuliano de Marinis, soprintendente, and Dr Mara Silvestrini.