

Picenum and the *Ager Gallicus* at the Dawn of the Roman Conquest

Landscape Archaeology and
Material Culture

Edited by

Federica Boschi, Enrico Giorgi, Frank Vermeulen

Access Archaeology





ARCHAEOPRESS PUBLISHING LTD
Summertown Pavilion
18-24 Middle Way
Summertown
Oxford OX2 7LG
www.archaeopress.com

ISBN 978-1-78969-699-8
ISBN 978-1-78969-700-1 (e-Pdf)

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Cover: View of the Tronto Valley in the heart of the ancient Picenum. Drawing by Giorgio Giorgi.

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Picenum and the Ager Gallicus at the Dawn of the Roman Conquest. **Landscape Archaeology and Material Culture**

Federica Boschi, Enrico Giorgi, Frank Vermeulen (eds.)

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Introduction

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This book represents the main outcome of the international workshop *Picenum and the Ager Gallicus at the Dawn of the Roman Conquest. Landscape Archaeology and Material Culture*, organized by the Universities of Bologna and Ghent, held in Ravenna on 13th – 14th May 2019.

The specialized conference was conceived in order to understand better the transition between Italic culture and Romanized society in the central Adriatic area (*ager Gallicus* and *Picenum* under Roman dominance). In particular, the scientific meeting focused on the crucial transition period of the fourth to second centuries BC, which include: the later phases of Umbrian and Picene cultural development; the introduction of Gallic elements in a predominantly Italic society; the later phase of Greek and Hellenistic cultural and economic influence in this part of the Adriatic area; the gradual increase of Roman/Latin commercial interests; the Roman military conquest and subsequent colonization; the deepening urbanization of the region; and the general unrest announcing the Social War that would entail the full municipalization and complete incorporation of the region in the Roman State.

According to the organizers of the meeting it is time that archaeologists working in this part of Italy develop a focused research agenda, which can help to enhance our understanding of such important aspects as the precise nature of settlement dynamics, the character of landscape change, the internal and external relations of populations living in the area, the cohabitation of ethnically different groups peopling the region, the evolution of material culture and the economic drives connected with the times of change and transition. The workshop was aimed at presenting and confronting some of the latest archaeological research concerning two main fields of operation: topographical aspects and the study of material culture. Within this framework, short papers by invited specialists working in the field and/or on pottery and small finds in this region, as well as a few selected presentations from comparable research in other parts of the Italian peninsula, were exposed and followed by discussions and an open exchange of ideas.

The colloquium and all the presented contributions enabled the investigation of the relationship between the centres of central Adriatic Italy and their territories during a period that marks a profound transformation in the whole of central Italy. The complex and varied processes of territorial and socio-political reorganization characterizing this part of the Italian peninsula are progressively modified by the conditioning of nearby Rome and its growing military expansionism. The profound transformations and upheavals caused by the Roman expansion towards the Po plain and by the Punic Wars, which projected Rome to the level of Mediterranean power, rapidly and substantially changed the territorial structure of the region. The relationship of central settlements with the surrounding agricultural landscape, the mainly archaeological definition of the territorial districts and the boundaries between the major centres, and the impact of early Romanization, were given particular attention.

The two-day meeting ended with a round table, during which targeted proposals were made for the continuation of research in the considered area, in the light of open issues and new data acquired and discussed.

We feel confident that this outcome of the workshop can help the archaeological community to develop efficient methodological approaches to advance knowledge and understanding about this still

understudied period of the region's past and help to define the specific nature of the pre-Roman to Roman transition in central Adriatic Italy.

Acknowledgements

The editors of the volume are deeply grateful to all workshop participants for their important contributions and for sharing stimulating thoughts and discussions.

A heartfelt thanks also goes to the institutions that supported the initiative, namely the University of Bologna (Department of History and Cultures), the University of Ghent (Department of Archaeology) and the Centro Studi per l'Archeologia dell'Adriatico. Finally, we thank the University Campus of Ravenna, for hosting the workshop, and the Fondazione Flaminia for the valuable organizational assistance.

Workshop participants as speakers or chairperson

Silvano Agostini (Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio dell'Abruzzo)
Peter Attema (Groningen University)
Gabriele Baldelli (MiBAC)
Vincenzo Baldoni (Università di Bologna)
Francesco Belfiori (Università di Bologna)
Federica Boschi (Università di Bologna)
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Lorenzo Cariddi (Università di Urbino)
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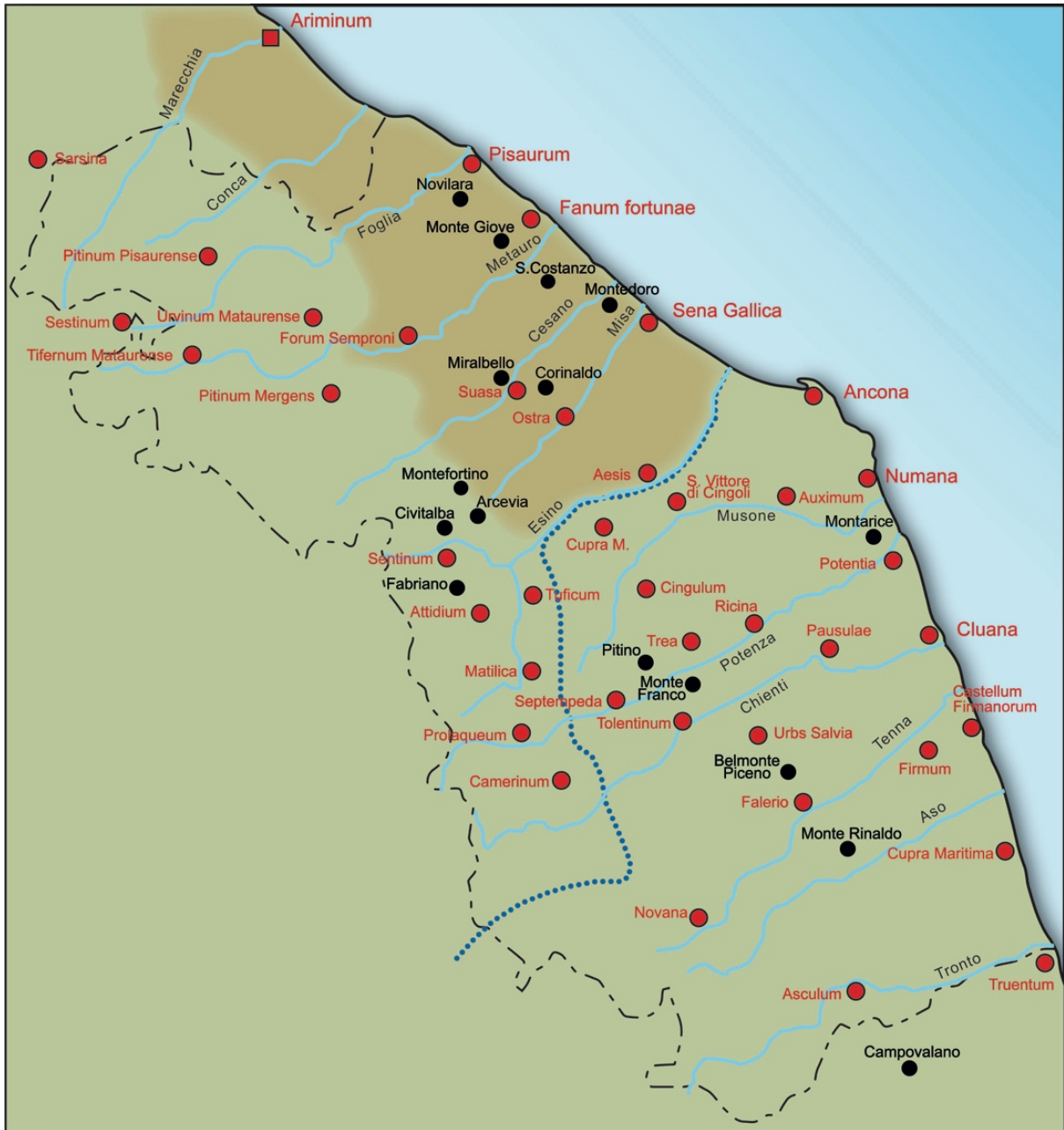


Figure. Cities, towns and other central settlement sites discussed or mentioned in this book. The sites marked as red dots became important Roman towns or service-centres.