

Map 40 Patavium

Compiled by M. Pearce, R. Peretto and P. Tozzi, 1994

Introduction

This map poses many problems, particularly in the reconstruction and representation of the ancient landscape. Indeed, the lower plain (the *bassa pianura*) is a landscape in constant evolution, and the floods and changes in the course of its rivers are a *topos* in ancient literature. What appears here must thus be considered as a plausible but hypothetical model.

The hydrography (water courses, lagoons, coastline) shown follows the present-day pattern except where important changes are involved. In such cases, our proposals are based on geomorphology, the ancient sources and evidence from archaeology and aerial photography. In the interests of clarity, we have had to sacrifice a diachronic approach for the Po delta, where the situation represented is that of the Roman period.

River communications assumed great importance in the Po plain, and regular services are attested along the Po itself (Tozzi 1987, 16). We have shown two principal branches of the river (as attested by Polybius 2.16) and the seven major mouths attested by other ancient sources (Mela 2.62; Pliny, *NH* 3.119-21). It should not, however, be thought that all these mouths and branches functioned together fully at any one time in antiquity. The areas of lagoon shown in the delta are hypothetical. Further information on its evolution can be found in Schmiedt 1970, pls. LVI, LVII, CXXXVII; Veggiani 1972; 1974; Bondesan 1990; 1990a.

The lagoons of *Venetia marittima* were certainly occupied during antiquity, and this settlement steadily acquired importance in Late Antiquity as the unstable political and military conditions made the islands more inviting. Traditionally (H)Eraclia preceded the medieval foundation of Venice (Tozzi 1984), but evidence is accumulating for settlement in the area of Venice from Roman times (Tuzzato 1991; 1993; Ammerman 1992; 1995). Some idea of the changes in the geography of the lagoon since the fourteenth century can be gained from early maps (Tiepolo 1983; Tozzi 1984)

The ancient sources attest important hydraulic engineering work by the Etruscans and Romans in the delta. We have shown hypothetical courses for two canals (Fossa Augusta and Fossa Flavia), but have been unable to propose plausible reconstructions for Fossa Philistina or Fossa Claudia.

Other rivers present different problems, to which the ancient sources contribute. For example, the Plavis fl. is not mentioned by Pliny in his list of rivers (*NH* 3.126), so that many authors have suggested its confluence in the Silis fl. (e.g., Lacchini 1972, 196-98). Blake (1988, 113-19) and Castiglioni (1987) discuss the course of the Plavis fl. and Lipientia fl. Another peculiarity of the ancient sources is the duality assigned to many rivers: thus the Meduacus and the Tiliaventum both have two branches (Pliny, *NH* 3.121, 126). For the problem of the Brenta and the Bacchiglione, see Marcolongo 1973; Castiglioni 1981; 1982. Since many road stations are located at the crossing of a water-course, this makes their secure identification more difficult. The At(h)esis fl. followed a markedly more northern course in antiquity, passing through Ateste (Marcolongo 1987).

We show only those roads that are attested in ancient sources or can be reconstructed along the greater part of their route. Consequently, we have been unable to offer an adequate picture of communications across the Apennines and the central Po plain. Although the major trans-Apennine routes were certainly towards the east (the Via Flaminia (Map 42) in particular) other connections certainly existed, particularly towards Bononia and Faventia (Viabilità 1992). Since natural routes across the plain are less obvious, we have followed the most plausible hypotheses for the connections between Bononia / Mutina and Ateste via Vicus Serninus, Vicus Varianus and Montagnana (Calzolari 1989a; 1990; Ferri 1990; Bosio 1991, 35-41). The lack of a secure identification of Anneianum hampers the reconstruction.

Although most of the fertile Po plain was probably centuriated, we have limited our reconstruction to those areas where it is well attested (Misurare 1983).

We have marked the Bronze Age banked and ditched settlements of Castello del Tartaro, Fabbrica dei Soci and Fondo Paviani. Their defense works were a visible part of the later environment, respected by the Roman centuriation and highly visible in the flat landscape of the Po plain. All three have yielded Aegean-type pottery. So, too, have the later settlements at Montagnana and Frattesina. Frattesina, a trading station, has an impressive range of eastern Mediterranean goods (Bietti Sestieri 1997).