

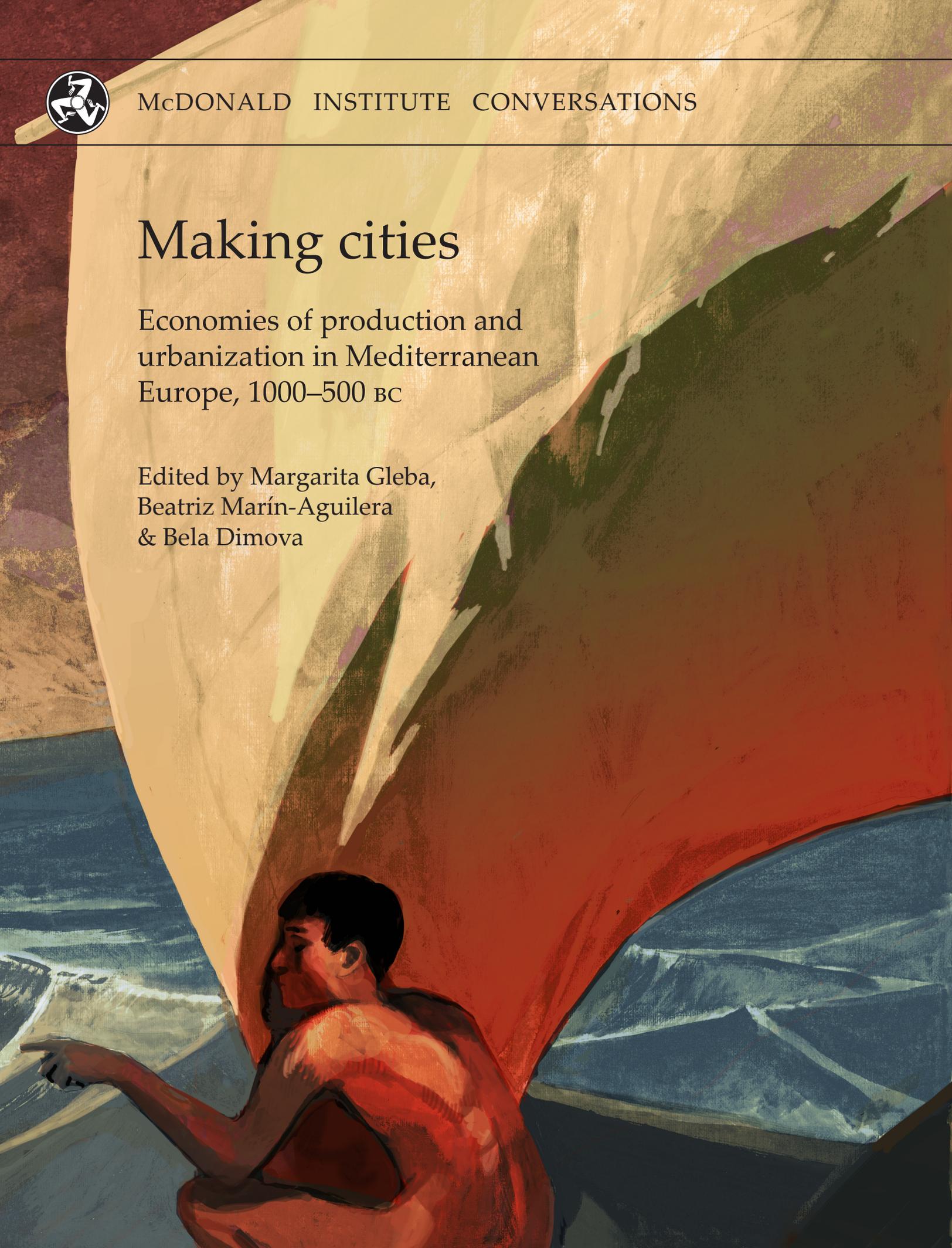


McDONALD INSTITUTE CONVERSATIONS

Making cities

Economies of production and
urbanization in Mediterranean
Europe, 1000–500 BC

Edited by Margarita Gleba,
Beatriz Marín-Aguilera
& Bela Dimova



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CONTENTS

Contributors	ix
Figures	xiii
Tables	xvii
<i>Chapter 1</i> Making cities: economies of production and urbanization in Mediterranean Europe, 1000–500 BC	1
BELA DIMOVA, MARGARITA GLEBA & BEATRIZ MARÍN-AGUILERA	
Definitions of urbanism	2
Urbanism and textiles	2
Contributions to this volume	3
Cover illustration	4
Part I Eastern Mediterranean	
<i>Chapter 2</i> Argilos: the booming economy of a silent city	9
JACQUES PERREAULT & ZISIS BONIAS	
<i>Chapter 3</i> Regional economies and productions in the Thermaic Gulf area	21
DESPOINA TSIAFAKI	
Thermaic Gulf economies and production	22
Ancient Therme and its harbour	26
Conclusion	34
<i>Chapter 4</i> Production activities and consumption of textiles in Early Iron Age Eretria	39
KARL REBER	
Eretria in the Early Iron Age	39
Eretria's economic situation	41
The production and consumption of textiles	41
Conclusion	45
<i>Chapter 5</i> Productive economy and society at Zagora	47
LESLEY A. BEAUMONT	
<i>Chapter 6</i> Making Cretan cities: urbanization, demography and economies of production in the Early Iron Age and the Archaic period	57
ANTONIS KOTSONAS	
Urbanization	58
Demography	66
Economies of production	69
Conclusion	71
<i>Chapter 7</i> Production, urbanization, and the rise of Athens in the Archaic period	77
ROBIN OSBORNE	
<i>Chapter 8</i> Making Corinth, 800–500 BC: production and consumption in Archaic Corinth	89
IOULIA TZONOU	
Eighth century, to the end of the Geometric period and the transition into the Early Protocorinthian, 720 BC	95
Seventh century, the Protocorinthian and Transitional period into Early Corinthian, 720–620 BC	97
Sixth century, the Corinthian period, 620–500 BC	98
Conclusion	100

Part II Central Mediterranean		
Chapter 9	Making cities in Veneto between the tenth and the sixth century BC	107
	GIOVANNA GAMBACURTA	
	Urbanization criteria	107
	Landscape and population	109
	Settlements	110
	Necropoleis	111
	Borders and shrines	112
	Inscriptions	114
	Myths	115
	Conclusion	116
Chapter 10	Attached versus independent craft production in the formation of the early city-state of Padova (northeastern Italy, first millennium BC)	123
	MASSIMO VIDALE & PAOLO MICHELINI	
	Materials and methods	124
	General patterns of industrial location	126
	Methodological issues	128
	The craft industries through time	130
	New craft locations: size and size variations through time	131
	Duration of urban craft workshops	132
	Ceramic, copper and iron processing sites: size versus duration of activities	133
	Discussion	134
	A historical reconstruction	138
	Onset of proto-currency and the issue of remuneration	141
	Conclusion	142
Chapter 11	Resource and ritual: manufacturing and production at Poggio Civitate	147
	ANTHONY TUCK	
Chapter 12	Perugia: the frontier city	161
	LETIZIA CECCARELLI & SIMON STODDART	
	Geology and culture	161
	History of research	163
	The emerging city from the rural landscape	165
	The topographical development of the city	166
	The city and its hinterland	168
	The rural settlements associated with the city	169
	Conclusion	172
Chapter 13	Tarquinius: themes of urbanization on the Civita and the Monterozzi Plateaus	177
	GIOVANNA BAGNASCO GIANNI, MATILDE MARZULLO & CLAUDIA PIAZZI	
	Approaching themes of urbanization at Tarquinia	177
	On the positioning of the protostoric site of Calvario and its road links	178
	The Calvario village on the Monterozzi Plateau and its economic activities during the eighth century BC	180
	The process of urbanization based on the evidence for the fortifications	185
	The limits of Tarquinia before its fortification, a theoretical approach	188
Chapter 14	Prolegomena to the material culture of Vulci during the Orientalizing period in the light of new discoveries	195
	SIMONA CAROSI & CARLO REGOLI	
	New data from Poggio Mengarelli Necropolis	195
	Conclusion	202

<i>Chapter 15</i>	Defining space, making the city: urbanism in Archaic Rome	205
	JEFFREY A. BECKER	
	Making civic space – the <i>Forum Romanum</i> and its environs	206
	Monumentality	210
	Peri-urban evidence	211
	Discussion	214
<i>Chapter 16</i>	Commodities, the instability of the gift, and the codification of cultural encounters in Archaic southern Etruria	219
	CORINNA RIVA	
	Agricultural surplus and a new funerary ideology	220
	Oversize vessels and fixing the gift	221
	Codification in the encounter	222
	Conclusion	226
<i>Chapter 17</i>	The Etruscan <i>pithos</i> revolution	231
	PHIL PERKINS	
	The <i>pithos</i> as artefact	232
	Making <i>pithoi</i>	236
	Using <i>pithoi</i>	240
	Socio-economic agency of <i>pithoi</i>	243
	<i>Pithoi</i> , economic development, and inequality	245
	<i>Pithoi</i> , economic growth and cities	248
	Conclusion	250
<i>Chapter 18</i>	Birth and transformation of a Messapian settlement from the Iron Age to the Classical period: Muro Leccese	259
	FRANCESCO MEO	
	The Iron Age village	259
	The Archaic and Classical settlement	266
	The Hellenistic period and the end of the town	276
<i>Chapter 19</i>	Indigenous urbanism in Iron Age western Sicily	281
	MICHAEL J. KOLB & WILLIAM M. BALCO	
	Settlement layout	282
	Demographic changes	286
	Production, consumption and exchange	288
	Ritual and cultic activity	290
	Conclusion	291
Part III	Western Mediterranean	
<i>Chapter 20</i>	Colonial production and urbanization in Iron Age to early Punic Sardinia (eighth–fifth century BC)	299
	ANDREA ROPPA & EMANUELE MADRIGALI	
	Colonial production and <i>amphora</i> distribution in Iron Age Sardinia	299
	Case studies: Nora and S'Urachi	301
	Discussion	305
	Colonial economies and urbanization	309
<i>Chapter 21</i>	Entanglements and the elusive transfer of technological know-how, 1000–700 BC: elite prerogatives and migratory swallows in the western Mediterranean	313
	ALBERT J. NIJBOER	
	Movement of peoples and goods	314
	Iron	316
	The alphabet	319
	Early monumental architecture	321
	Discussion and epilogue	323

<i>Chapter 22</i>	Making cities, producing textiles: the Late Hallstatt <i>Fürstensitze</i>	329
	MANUEL FERNÁNDEZ-GÖTZ & KARINA GRÖMER	
	Monumentality, production and consumption: the settlement evidence	330
	Textile use and display in funerary contexts	336
	Conclusion	340
<i>Chapter 23</i>	From household to cities: habitats and societies in southern France during the Early Iron Age	345
	ÉRIC GAILLED RAT	
	A question of time	346
	A contrasted image	347
	From one Mediterranean to another	348
	The evanescent settlement	349
	The emergence of the fortified group settlement	351
	The <i>oppida</i> of the sixth–fifth centuries BC	354
	The house in the context of the group settlement	358
	Craftspeople, crafts and workshops	361
	Conclusion	363
<i>Chapter 24</i>	Urbanization and early state formation: elite control over manufacture in Iberia (seventh to third century BC)	367
	JOAN SANMARTÍ, DAVID ASENSIO & RAFEL JORNET	
	The historical process	367
	Craft in its social context	369
	Conclusion	380
<i>Chapter 25</i>	Productive power during the Early Iron Age (c. 650–575 BC) at the Sant Jaume Complex (Alcanar, Catalonia, Spain)	385
	LAURA ÁLVAREZ, MARIONA ARNÓ, JORGE A. BOTERO, LAIA FONT, DAVID GARCIA I RUBERT, MARTA MATEU, MARGARITA RODÉS, MARIA TORTRAS, CARME SAORIN & ANA SERRANO	
	The Sant Jaume Complex	385
	Production in the Sant Jaume Complex chiefdom	388
	Conclusion	392
<i>Chapter 26</i>	Not all that glitters is gold: urbanism and craftspeople in non-class or non-state run societies	395
	MARISA RUIZ-GÁLVEZ	
	Craftspeople and workshops in Iberia	395
	Workshops in Iberia	398
	The Iberians as a House Society	400
	Conclusion	404
<i>Chapter 27</i>	Urbanization and social change in southeast Iberia during the Early Iron Age	409
	JAIME VIVES-FERRÁNDIZ SÁNCHEZ	
	Iberian urbanization: connectivity and dispersed territories	409
	Local economies into broader networks	411
	Agricultural intensification	412
	Urbanization, institutions and political authority	415
	Conclusion	420
<i>Chapter 28</i>	‘Building palaces in Spain’: rural economy and cities in post-Orientalizing Extremadura	425
	JAVIER JIMÉNEZ ÁVILA	
	Cancho Roano as a phenomenon	429
	The ‘post-Orientalizing’ world	432
	Post-Orientalizing economies	432
	Countryside and cities	438
	Final remarks	440
Part IV	Conclusion	
<i>Chapter 29</i>	Craft and the urban community: industriousness and socio-economic development	447
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Figures

1.1	<i>Map indicating the volume coverage.</i>	4
2.1	<i>Argilos, aerial view.</i>	10
2.2	<i>Argilos, general plan.</i>	10
2.3	<i>Small furnace in building E.</i>	11
2.4	<i>View of building L.</i>	12
2.5	<i>Plan of Koutloudis area with buildings H, L, P, and Q.</i>	13
2.6	<i>Building L, press-bed in room 4.</i>	13
2.7	<i>Building Q, room 1.</i>	14
2.8	<i>Building L, room 11, crushed amphorae.</i>	16
2.9	<i>Dividing wall between L7–L8 with remains of clay over the lower courses of stone.</i>	17
2.10	<i>Building L, facades of L2–L3.</i>	18
3.1	<i>Thermaic Gulf region.</i>	22
3.2	<i>Iron sword, grave offering, Nea Philadelphia cemetery, late sixth century BC.</i>	24
3.3	<i>Miniature iron wagon, grave offering, Sindos cemetery, late sixth century BC.</i>	25
3.4	<i>Methone. Pottery kilns in Building A at Sector B.</i>	26
3.5	<i>Ancient settlement at Karabournaki, aerial view.</i>	27
3.6	<i>Ancient settlement at Karabournaki, storeroom with pithoi.</i>	28
3.7	<i>'Eggshell' type vases made at the pottery workshop at Karabournaki.</i>	29
3.8	<i>Karabournaki settlement metal workshop.</i>	30
3.9	<i>Weaving tools from the Karabournaki settlement.</i>	31
3.10	<i>Loom weight with stamp depicting a satyr, Karabournaki settlement.</i>	32
3.11	<i>Karabournaki: distribution of textile production tools within the excavated area.</i>	33
4.1	<i>Map of Geometric Eretria.</i>	40
4.2	<i>Plan of the Sanctuary of Apollo in the eighth century BC.</i>	40
4.3	<i>Spindle whorl with dedication, from the Sanctuary of Apollo.</i>	42
4.4	<i>Cruche à haut col C41 (tankard) from the Aire sacrificielle.</i>	42
4.5	<i>Cruche à haut col C37 (tankard) from the Aire sacrificielle.</i>	43
4.6	<i>Fragment of linen from Grave 10 in the Heroon Necropolis.</i>	44
4.7	<i>Close-ups of wool weft-faced textiles from the Heroon Necropolis.</i>	45
5.1	<i>View of Zagora promontory from the northeast.</i>	48
5.2	<i>Plan of Zagora.</i>	49
5.3	<i>Aerial view of Trench 11, partially excavated.</i>	52
6.1	<i>Map of Crete showing sites mentioned in the text.</i>	58
6.2	<i>Plan of Karphi.</i>	59
6.3	<i>Plan of the Knossos valley.</i>	62
6.4	<i>Plan of Prinias.</i>	64
6.5	<i>Plan of Azoria.</i>	65
6.6	<i>Knossos North Cemetery: maximum and minimum number of cremation urns over time.</i>	68
6.7	<i>Knossos North Cemetery: number of cremation urns per year.</i>	68
6.8	<i>Fortetsa Cemetery: number of burials over time.</i>	68
6.9	<i>Fortetsa Cemetery: number of burials per year.</i>	68
6.10	<i>Reconstruction of the pottery workshop at Mandra di Gipari, near Prinias.</i>	70
7.1	<i>Attica, 1050–900 BC.</i>	80
7.2	<i>Attica, 900–800 BC.</i>	80
7.3	<i>Attica, 800–700 BC.</i>	81
7.4	<i>Attica, 700–600 BC.</i>	81
7.5	<i>Attica, 600–500 BC.</i>	85
8.1	<i>Map of the northeast Peloponnese showing sites mentioned in the text.</i>	90
8.2	<i>Corinth: Geometric Period multiphase plan (900–720 BC).</i>	91
8.3	<i>Corinth: Protocorinthian to Transitional Period multiphase plan (720–620 BC).</i>	91
8.4	<i>Corinth: Corinthian Period multiphase plan (620–500 BC).</i>	92
8.5	<i>Corinth: fifth century BC multiphase plan.</i>	93

8.6	<i>Corinth: multiphase plan up to 400 BC.</i>	93
8.7	<i>Corinth: Forum, all periods.</i>	94
8.8	<i>South Stoa, Tavern of Aphrodite Foundry.</i>	99
8.9	<i>Late Corinthian kraters from the sixth-century BC floor.</i>	101
8.10	<i>The Arachne aryballos, Late Early Corinthian or Middle Corinthian (600 BC).</i>	102
9.1	<i>Maps of Veneto.</i>	108
9.2	<i>Maps of cities with different orientations: a) Oderzo; b) Padova.</i>	110
9.3	<i>Este, clay andirons with ram's heads.</i>	112
9.4	<i>Padova, funerary stone monuments: a) Camin; b) Albignasego.</i>	112
9.5	<i>Padova, via Tadi, boundary stone with Venetic inscription on two sides.</i>	114
9.6	<i>Padova, via C. Battisti, boundary stone with Venetic inscription on four sides.</i>	114
9.7	<i>Padova, via Tiepolo–via San Massimo 1991, Grave 159, bronze figured belt-hook.</i>	115
9.8	<i>Este, Casa di Ricovero, Grave 23/1993 or Nerka's grave.</i>	116
9.9	<i>Isola Vicentina, stele with Venetic inscription.</i>	117
10.1	<i>Location of Padova and the study area in northeastern Italy.</i>	124
10.2	<i>Padova, general cumulative map of the craft locations, c. 825–50 BC.</i>	125
10.3	<i>Padova, location of the craft areas and workshops in the early urban core.</i>	127
10.4	<i>Padova, the extra-urban location of craft industries in Roman times.</i>	129
10.5	<i>New manufacturing areas per different craft.</i>	131
10.6	<i>Maximum total area occupied by craft production sites.</i>	132
10.7	<i>New craft areas activated in each period.</i>	132
10.8	<i>Frequency distribution of dimensional class of craft areas per period.</i>	132
10.9	<i>Padova, Questura, site 2, northeast sector.</i>	133
10.10	<i>Workshop size and duration of activity.</i>	134
10.11	<i>Padova, Questura, site 2. Ceramic tuyère.</i>	136
10.12	<i>Padova, Questura, site 2. Cluster of fine feasting pottery.</i>	137
10.13	<i>Padova, Questura, site 2. Antler combs from the metallurgical workshop.</i>	137
10.14	<i>Sherds of Attic pottery from workshop areas in Padova.</i>	138
10.15	<i>Padova, Piazza Castello, site 3: vertical kiln and modular perforated grid.</i>	139
10.16	<i>Part of an elite grave's furnishings from Padova, end of the eighth century BC.</i>	140
10.17	<i>Vessels from the cemetery of Piovego, Padova, fifth century BC.</i>	141
11.1	<i>Map of central Italy.</i>	148
11.2	<i>Early Phase Orientalizing Complex Building 4 (c. 725–675 BC) reconstruction.</i>	148
11.3	<i>Orientalizing Complex (c. 675–600 BC) reconstruction.</i>	149
11.4	<i>Archaic Phase Structure (c. 600–530 BC) reconstruction.</i>	149
11.5	<i>Orientalizing Complex roofing elements.</i>	150
11.6	<i>Partially worked and complete bone, antler and ivory.</i>	150
11.7	<i>Unfired cover tiles with human footprints.</i>	151
11.8	<i>Distribution of variable sized spindle whorls.</i>	152
11.9	<i>Carbonized seeds from Orientalizing Complex Building 2/Workshop.</i>	153
11.10	<i>Fragment of statuette from Orientalizing Complex Building 2/Workshop.</i>	153
11.11	<i>Frieze plaque depicting banqueting scene, Archaic Phase Structure.</i>	155
11.12	<i>Elements of a banquet service from the Orientalizing Complex.</i>	155
11.13	<i>Compote with incised khi.</i>	156
11.14	<i>Map of Poggio Civitate and surrounding traces of settlements or other human activity.</i>	157
12.1	<i>Location of Perugia.</i>	162
12.2	<i>The immediate environs of Perugia with key sites.</i>	162
12.3	<i>The geological context of Perugia.</i>	163
12.4	<i>Plan of the city of Perugia.</i>	166
12.5	<i>Hierarchical relationship of Perugia to its territory.</i>	169
12.6	<i>Civitella d'Arna survey area.</i>	171
12.7	<i>Montelabate survey area.</i>	172
13.1	<i>Positioning of the structures of the Calvario.</i>	179
13.2	<i>Tarquinia and its territory around the middle of the eighth century BC.</i>	180

13.3	<i>Plan of the Villanovan village on the Monterozzi Plateau.</i>	181
13.4	<i>Plans of some of the Villanovan huts.</i>	183
13.5	<i>Finds from the huts.</i>	184
13.6	<i>Walls, gateways and roads of ancient Tarquinia.</i>	185
13.7	<i>Tarquinia, Bocchoris Tomb, lid.</i>	189
14.1	<i>Location of the excavation area at Vulci.</i>	196
14.2	<i>Aerial photograph of the excavation (2016–2018).</i>	197
14.3	<i>General plan of the excavation (2016–2018).</i>	197
14.4	<i>Textile fragment from the ‘Tomb of the Golden Scarab’.</i>	198
14.5	<i>Detail of the grave goods from Tomb 35 during excavation.</i>	199
14.6	<i>Tomb 29 during excavation.</i>	200
14.7	<i>Tomb 29: detail of the traces of cloth on the lid of the sheet bronze stamnos.</i>	201
14.8	<i>Tomb 72: a textile with colour pattern of small red and white checks.</i>	202
15.1	<i>Plan of Rome’s territory in the Archaic period.</i>	206
15.2	<i>Area of the Volcanal and the Comitium in the seventh and sixth centuries BC.</i>	207
15.3	<i>Reconstructed plan of Rome within the so-called ‘Servian Wall’.</i>	208
15.4	<i>Sketch plan of the area of the Forum Boarium and Velabrum in the seventh century BC.</i>	210
15.5	<i>Phase 1 of the so-called ‘Auditorium site’ villa.</i>	212
15.6	<i>Phase 2 of the so-called ‘Auditorium site’ villa.</i>	212
15.7	<i>The Republican ‘Villa delle Grotte’ at Grottarossa.</i>	213
16.1	<i>White-on-red pithos with lid, Cerveteri.</i>	223
16.2	<i>Figurative decoration of the Gobbi krater.</i>	224
16.3	<i>Black-figure amphora, Vulci, side A.</i>	226
16.4	<i>Black-figure amphora, Vulci, side B.</i>	226
17.1	<i>Pithos types 1–6.</i>	233
17.2	<i>Distribution map of Etruscan pithoi within the study area in Etruria.</i>	240
17.3	<i>Comparison between the altitude of pithos find spots and the range of altitude.</i>	241
17.4	<i>Map of sample area.</i>	242
17.5	<i>Distribution of architectural terracottas, pithoi, amphorae, and tiles.</i>	249
18.1	<i>Muro Leccese and the other Iron Age settlements in the Salento peninsula.</i>	260
18.2	<i>Muro Leccese, find spots of Early Iron Age and Archaic ceramics and structures.</i>	261
18.3	<i>Muro Leccese, Cunella district, traces of two huts.</i>	262
18.4	<i>Muro Leccese, DTM with location of the Iron Age ceramics and structures.</i>	263
18.5	<i>Vases and decorative motifs characteristic of matt-painted ware from Muro Leccese.</i>	264
18.6	<i>Vases imported from Greece and Greek apoikiai.</i>	265
18.7	<i>The Messapian era road network in the Salento peninsula.</i>	267
18.8	<i>Muro Leccese, Palombara district.</i>	268
18.9	<i>Muro Leccese, Palombara district. Vases.</i>	270
18.10	<i>Muro Leccese, Cunella district. Plan of the residential building.</i>	272
18.11	<i>Diorama of the place of worship in the archaeological area of Cunella.</i>	273
18.12	<i>Muro Leccese, Masseria Cunella district. Tombs 1 and 2.</i>	274
18.13	<i>Muro Leccese, fourth century BC walls.</i>	275
19.1	<i>Map of Sicily, showing the Bronze Age sites mentioned in the text.</i>	282
19.2	<i>The defensive wall at Bronze Age site of Mursia, Pantelleria.</i>	283
19.3	<i>The Late Bronze Age excavations at Mokarta.</i>	283
19.4	<i>Monte Bonifato, showing its steep approaches.</i>	284
19.5	<i>Map of western Sicily showing the Iron Age sites mentioned in the text.</i>	284
19.6	<i>The urban layout of Eryx.</i>	285
19.7	<i>The urban layout of Segesta.</i>	286
19.8	<i>The orthogonal grid and Iron Age/Classical/Hellenistic finds of Salemi.</i>	287
19.9	<i>The archaeological sites of Salemi territory.</i>	287
19.10	<i>The temple of Segesta, facing west.</i>	291
20.1	<i>Map of Sardinia showing sites mentioned in the text.</i>	300
20.2	<i>Plan of Nora and the Punic quarter under the forum.</i>	301

20.3	<i>Main amphora types discussed.</i>	302
20.4	<i>Dating profiles of amphora types.</i>	303
20.5	<i>Plan of nuraghe S'Urachi and cross-section of the ditch in area E.</i>	304
20.6	<i>Dating profile of the amphora types from the case study at nuraghe S'Urachi.</i>	305
20.7	<i>Dating profiles of Phoenician amphora types.</i>	306
21.1	<i>Early iron and the distribution of Huelva-Achziv type fibulae on the Iberian Peninsula.</i>	317
21.2	<i>Three copper alloy bowls dated to the decades around 800 BC.</i>	319
21.3	<i>The Phoenician, Euboean, Etruscan and Latin alphabetic letters.</i>	320
21.4	<i>Early monumental architecture in Italy and Spain.</i>	322
21.5	<i>Provenance of ceramics from the ninth century BC, pre-Carthage Utica (Tunis).</i>	324
22.1	<i>Fürstensitze north of the Alps and selected sites in Mediterranean Europe.</i>	330
22.2	<i>The Heuneburg agglomeration during the mudbrick wall phase.</i>	331
22.3	<i>Indicative lifespans of selected Fürstensitze sites.</i>	331
22.4	<i>Aerial view of the gatehouse of the Heuneburg lower town during the excavation.</i>	332
22.5	<i>Large ditch at the south foot of wall 3 at Mont Lassois.</i>	333
22.6	<i>Reconstructed monumental building in the Heuneburg Open-Air Museum.</i>	334
22.7	<i>Fired clay loom weight and spindle whorls from the Heuneburg.</i>	335
22.8	<i>Comparison between grave textiles and other textiles.</i>	337
22.9	<i>Tablet-woven band, reproduced after a textile from Hochdorf.</i>	338
22.10	<i>Functions of textiles in graves.</i>	339
23.1	<i>Map of the south of France showing the main settlements of the Early Iron Age.</i>	346
23.2	<i>Mailhac (Aude).</i>	350
23.3	<i>Examples of apsidal floorplans of wattle-and-daub (a) or cob houses (b–d).</i>	352
23.4	<i>Examples of rectangular floorplans of houses with one or more rooms.</i>	353
23.5	<i>Pech Maho (Sigean, Aude).</i>	355
23.6	<i>Examples of functional combinations of apsidal and rectangular floorplans.</i>	356
23.7	<i>Early examples of urban planning combining blocks of houses with a system of streets.</i>	357
23.8	<i>a–c) Examples of rectangular floorplans; d–e) houses of La Liquière.</i>	359
23.9	<i>Montlaurès (Narbonne, Aude).</i>	360
24.1	<i>Map of northern Iberia showing the sites mentioned in the text.</i>	368
24.2	<i>Pottery workshop of Hortes de Cal Pons.</i>	371
24.3	<i>Bases of Iberian amphorae.</i>	372
24.4	<i>Les Guàrdies (El Vendrell).</i>	373
24.5	<i>Castellet de Banyoles.</i>	375
24.6	<i>Mas Castellar de Pontós.</i>	376
24.7	<i>Coll del Moro de Gandesa.</i>	378
24.8	<i>Sant Antoni de Calaceit.</i>	379
24.9	<i>Els Estinçells.</i>	380
25.1	<i>General location of the area under study.</i>	386
25.2	<i>View of Sant Jaume.</i>	387
25.3	<i>Plan of Sant Jaume.</i>	387
25.4	<i>Aerial view of La Moleta del Remei.</i>	389
25.5	<i>Aerial view of La Ferradura.</i>	389
26.1	<i>Tumulus 'A' at Setefilla.</i>	396
26.2	<i>Sample of matrices and tools from the so-called goldsmith's graves at Cabezo Lucero.</i>	397
26.3	<i>Iberian tombs with grave goods connected with weighing metal.</i>	398
26.4	<i>Spatial distribution of tools in rooms of Iberian oppida.</i>	400
26.5	<i>Iberian funerary pillars crowned by heraldic beasts.</i>	402
26.6	<i>Enthroned Iberian ladies: a) Cerro de los Santos; b) Baza.</i>	403
26.7	<i>Reconstructions: a) La Bastida de les Alcusses; b) El Castellet de Banyoles.</i>	403
26.8	<i>Bronze horseman from La Bastida de Les Alcusses and reconstruction as a sceptre.</i>	404
27.1	<i>Map of the study area showing the main sites mentioned in the text.</i>	410
27.2	<i>Metallurgical workshop at La Fonteta.</i>	412
27.3	<i>Plan of Alt de Benimaquia and local amphorae.</i>	413

27.4	<i>Plan of El Oral.</i>	414
27.5	<i>The territory of El Puig d'Alcoi and the secondary rural settlements.</i>	416
27.6	<i>Different furnaces for iron metalwork from La Cervera.</i>	416
27.7	<i>Plans of walled settlements: a) Covalta; b) Puig d'Alcoi; c) La Bastida de les Alcusses.</i>	417
27.8	<i>Aerial view of the storerooms at La Bastida de les Alcusses.</i>	418
27.9	<i>Plan of Block 5 at La Bastida de les Alcusses.</i>	419
27.10	<i>Weapons ritually 'killed' in the West Gate, La Bastida de les Alcusses.</i>	419
28.1	<i>Cancho Roano: a) general plan; b–c) reconstructions of the external rooms.</i>	426
28.2	<i>Map of sites considered as post-Orientalizing palatial complexes.</i>	427
28.3	<i>La Mata.</i>	428
28.4	<i>Post-Orientalizing settlements: a,d) El Chaparral; b) La Carbonera; c) Los Caños.</i>	431
28.5	<i>Millstones and amphorae from post-Orientalizing sites in Middle Guadiana.</i>	433
28.6	<i>Storage building at the Orientalizing site of El Palomar, Oliva de Mérida.</i>	434
28.7	<i>Greek pottery from Cancho Roano, late fifth century BC.</i>	436
28.8	<i>Antique (sixth-century BC) goods in post-Orientalizing contexts.</i>	437
28.9	<i>The Orientalizing site of Medellín.</i>	439
28.10	<i>Ancient toponymy in southwestern Iberia.</i>	440

Tables

7.1	<i>Sites in Attica, late eleventh to seventh century BC.</i>	78
8.1	<i>Dates: abbreviations and chronology.</i>	90
9.1	<i>List of criteria for defining cities.</i>	108
9.2	<i>Inventory of houses and buildings with their shape, dimensions and chronology.</i>	111
10.1	<i>Variations through time of principal type of craft occupation.</i>	128
10.2	<i>Variations through time of the maximum area of all craft occupations.</i>	129
10.3	<i>Padova, average duration in years of the main craft occupations for each period.</i>	129
10.4	<i>Padova, the development of craft industries as monitored in 29 craft workshops.</i>	130
10.5	<i>Positive correlation between size and duration of activity of craft workshops.</i>	134
10.6	<i>The composition of funerary vessels in the earliest graves from Padova.</i>	140
14.1	<i>Types of tombs excavated at Poggio Mengarelli, Vulci (2016–2018).</i>	196
17.1	<i>Type 1.</i>	234
17.2	<i>Type 2.</i>	234
17.3	<i>Type 3.</i>	235
17.4	<i>Type 3A.</i>	235
17.5	<i>Type 3B.</i>	235
17.6	<i>Type 3C.</i>	236
17.7	<i>Type 4.</i>	236
17.8	<i>Type 5.</i>	237
17.9	<i>Type 6.</i>	237
17.10	<i>Chaîne opératoire of Etruscan pithos manufacture.</i>	238
21.1	<i>Number of iron artefacts per phase at Torre Galli (c. 950–850 BC).</i>	318

Chapter 9

Making cities in Veneto between the tenth and the sixth century BC

Giovanna Gambacurta

'La première ville n'existe pas' or 'the first city does not exist' stated Corinne Castel, a Near Eastern archaeologist, in a recent paper (Castel 2015). What she likely meant was that the survival, maintenance and improvement of ancient cities was best facilitated if they were linked together in a network. Thus, the archaeological scientific community should conceptualize the beginnings of urbanism as a plurality of 'first cities,' rather than just a single 'first city'. This issue has been studied in detail since the 1980s, mostly by scholars of the Near East (Castel 2015).

Archaeologists specializing in prehistoric and protohistoric periods have also focused attention on the relationship between the city and *polity* and the rise of the state. In addition, we can list significant contributions about the concepts of the city itself, including the opposition between city and countryside, or city and countryside villages.¹ Before exploring the urbanization of northern Italy, particularly the evidence from the Veneto region, it is necessary to investigate the specific contexts (landscape, sources, routes, etc.) in which the first city as an institution appeared, to define the concept of 'city', and to determine which kind of city we are trying to describe.

The concept of the city as defined by archaeologists is not the same as that used by urbanists, historians, sociologists and researchers in other disciplines. Beyond commonplace assumptions and stereotypes, we must be very careful in our definition, due to the fact that our point of view is always focused on archaeological realities (i.e. physical evidence), and we are almost always only able to investigate small portions of ancient cities, usually less than five or ten per cent.

It has been established that, in Italy, the earliest development of cities begins around 1000 BC, possibly in Etruria (Pacciarelli 2001; see Bagnasco Gianni *et al.* in this volume), about 100 years earlier than in northern

Italy, where the first cities begin to develop from the ninth to the early eighth century BC, and continue to evolve over the course of at least two centuries. An important question, therefore, pertains to what kind of features should we consider as 'standard', or indicators of a settlement being a city. After establishing what features constitute a city, several other matters remain without a clear answer. For example, was the city an intentional or accidental creation? How many people lived in the city? What was life like in cities? What was the physical health of the residents of cities, e.g. did city life contribute to the spread of epidemics? How were social relationships affected by life in the city? These and other questions remain for future research (Cowgill 2004; Caliò 2009).

For these reasons, it is essential to define the criteria that we consider relevant to describe a city and to emphasize that no single one of these criteria should be considered alone, or as the most important; rather, that all of the attributes defining cities work together (Cowgill 2004, 526–8).

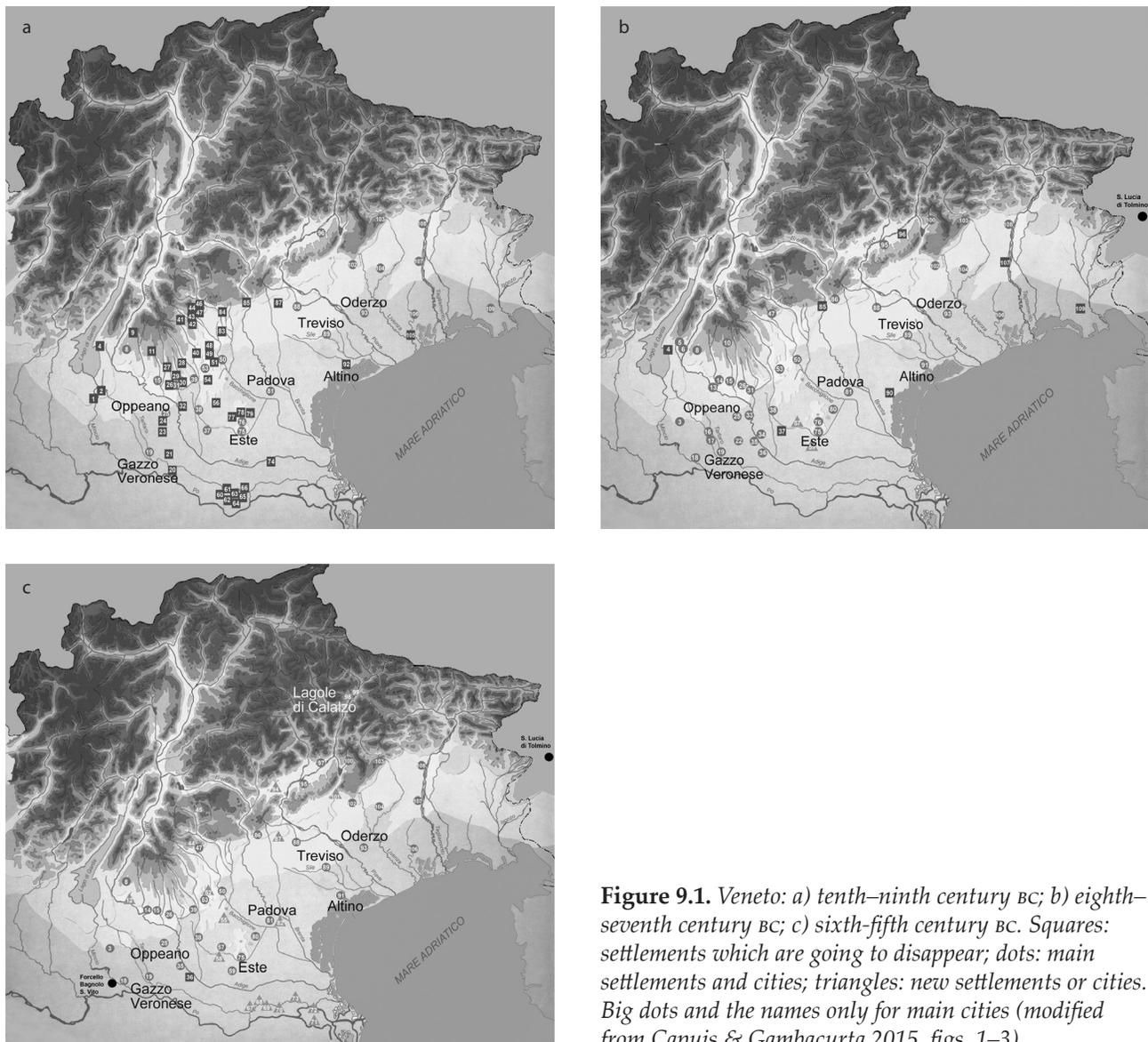
Urbanization criteria

As Carmine Ampolo (1988, 54) emphasized, drawing on Thucydides' and Rousseau's concepts, 'only the citizens make the city,' and the city is a centripetal phenomenon that is strongly connected with the private ownership of the land (Thucydides, VII.77.7; also see Colonna 1987, 15–6; Frisone 2019). Homer mentions four main actions necessary to create the city or the *polis*: building walls, building houses for the citizens, building houses for the gods, and sharing fields for agricultural activities (Hom. *Od.* VI.9–10: 'ἀμφὶ δὲ τεῖχος ἔλασσε πόλει καὶ ἐδείματο οἴκους / καὶ νηὺς ποίησε θεῶν καὶ ἐδάσσατ' ἀρούρας'). Yet, even if these criteria are true from a historical point of view, what are their physical counterparts?

Table 9.1. List of criteria for defining cities.

1.	The landscape: geomorphology, natural sources, spatial dimensions
2.	Settlements: planimetry, houses and other buildings, streets, districts
3.	Public places or monumental buildings
4.	The arrangement of the cemeteries
5.	Borders: structures and shrines
6.	Growing economy and transformation of value
7.	Political, institutional and religious organizations
8.	Writing knowledge
9.	Army
10.	Ability and power to include foreigners
11.	Tales and myths

In this chapter, I collect some criteria and identify them within a hierarchical system (Table 9.1), and then attempt to verify whether these markers are documented in Veneto. Some of these criteria have been noted before (cf. note 1), but they have not been discussed as a coherent system with respect to Veneto, and not in a correct chronological perspective (e.g. Lomas 2007; 2017). The analysis is based on excavated data from the two most important cities, Este and Padova, considered Veneto's 'first cities', as well as smaller centres of Gazzo Veronese, Oppeano, Oderzo, Treviso, Altino and others (Fig. 9.1). I will begin with the most concrete archaeological evidence, followed by the discussion of indirect considerations and new ideas, in order to understand the nature of the development of ancient Venetic cities.



Following the establishment of criteria to define cities, we will first consider the landscape, the choice of the settlement, followed by a consideration of the economic and natural resources. Then, we shall analyse its design, including borders, streets, quarters and the intentional use of space as public or residential. In this perspective, a very important feature of ancient cities is the presence of shrines as sacred places devoted to a divinity to satisfy the spiritual needs of the citizens. Additionally, another significant aspect to consider is the existence of an entire pantheon that provides a complex system of answers to those spiritual needs. The evidence furthermore demonstrates that these cities quickly developed a complex organization, as reflected in their funerary rituals and the arrangement of their cemeteries (see Gambacurta 2020).

Summarizing, the criteria to be considered include:

- 1) The landscape;
- 2) The settlement features;
- 3) Public places or monumental buildings;
- 4) The arrangement of the necropoleis;
- 5) Borders: structures and shrines.

No single feature is sufficient to make a city; but it is important to evaluate them together, and also in combination with other aspects that are frequently forgotten:

- 6) A growing economy supported by the production of surplus and exchange of goods, and the transformation of their value, especially considering consumers, farmers and entrepreneurs (Frankenstein & Rowlands 1978; Greco 1994, 588–9; Cowgill 2004);
- 7) The presence of political, institutional and religious organizations;
- 8) The emergence of an army with a clear structure (Greco 1994, 596–7; Cherici 1999);
- 9) The ability and power of the community to include foreigners;
- 10) The capacity of the citizens to develop stories and myths to support the way in which they conceptualize their own narrative, reflecting understanding and knowledge of their world.
- 11) The knowledge of alphabet and the ability to write are also relevant markers indicating increasing urbanization.

Some of these features could be discussed further, using a combination of analysis of written sources from Classical writers and epigraphic inscriptions.

Landscape and population

Before considering each urbanization characteristic, I will briefly discuss topographical features of the Veneto region and its population dynamics. The morphology of the landscape is very diverse, characterized by high mountains in the north, followed by hills, and a large plain crisscrossed by several rivers that overlooks the Venice lagoon and the Adriatic Sea. The most important rivers in this region are the Po (the longest in Italy) in the south, the Adige (the second longest in Italy), which flowed 15 km further north than its current course, and the Piave in the east. The Po River and its valley link the southern Venetic area with northwestern and central Italy, while the Adige and Piave Rivers allow crossing the Alps towards central and eastern Europe.

When it comes to the population dynamics in the Early Iron Age, it has been recently demonstrated that numerous villages had collapsed in Veneto during this period, mostly along the Po River and on the hills, similar to what happened in Etruria almost at the same time (Capuis & Gambacurta 2015). It appears that, at the beginning of the eighth century BC, many small villages were quietly and peacefully abandoned, with evidence of people choosing new locations for new settlements that became cities over a short period of time (Calzavara Capuis *et al.* 1984; Capuis & Gambacurta 2015).

Meanwhile, an interesting phenomenon occurred in the region between the Po and Adige Rivers, resulting in social and economic changes. It has been well established that this area was very important during the Bronze Age for long-distance trade. For example, amber from the Baltic coast transited through here to be exchanged on the Mediterranean markets, with Frattesina di Fratta Polesine being one of the most important ports of trade in the Adriatic Sea (Cardarelli *et al.* 2015; Bietti Sestieri *et al.* 2015; 2019). Nonetheless, after about two generations, Frattesina and all the territories near the Po River were abandoned at the end of the ninth–beginning of the eighth century BC and remained uninhabited until the early sixth century. It is possible that the frontiers between the Venetic people, carriers of the Villanovan culture, and the Etruscans had been established along the Adige River (Capuis & Gambacurta 2015, 451). Therefore, people who had lived in this area found themselves needing to search for better places to start a new settlement, which probably also had a new shape. In almost every case, new settlements were built on elevated terraces or small hills instead of the surrounding plains, and from the outset locations with about 60–80 or 100 ha were chosen (Capuis & Gambacurta 2015, 455, tab. 1). It is also interesting to note that, in Veneto, almost all

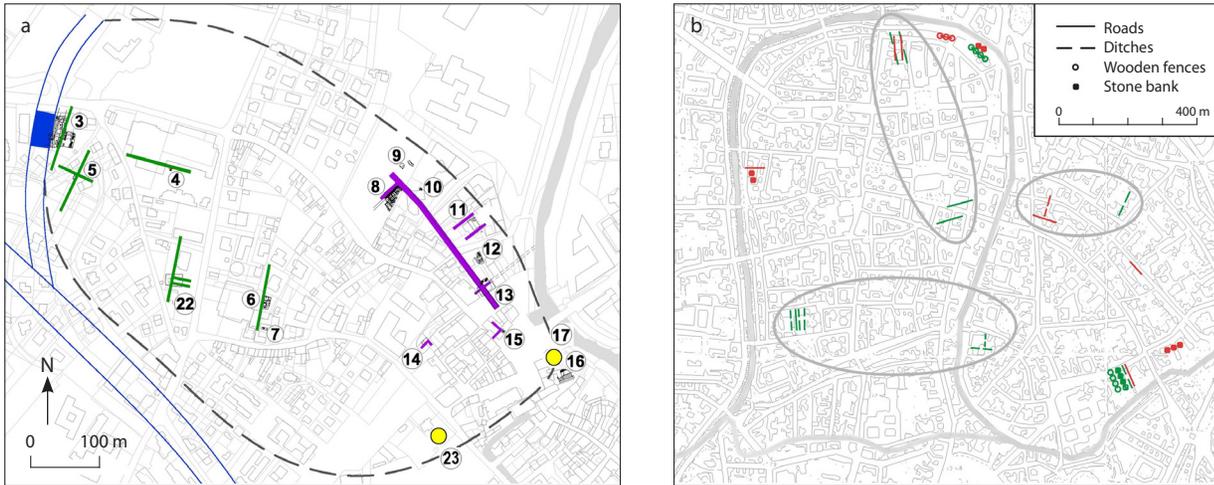


Figure 9.2. Maps of cities with different orientations: a) Oderzo: two distinct districts; two yellow dots to the south indicate two boundary stones; b) Padova: distinct districts in the centre and near the riverside.

of the settlements that would later become cities are situated near a river, which reflects Strabo's famous quote about Venetic cities as isles, strictly connected with water (Strabo V.1.5; Pezzelle 2016, 168–8, 447, T. 39i; Capuis 1993, 69–76). Furthermore, Strabo describes the Venetic people as populating 'fifty cities', but considering that he wrote between the first century BC and the first century AD, this could be an anachronistic exaggeration. Another source also emphasizes the importance of Veneto in the ancient Mediterranean world (ps.-Scymn., vv. 369–403; Pezzelle 2016, 412–3, T. 29b).

For central Italy, it has been demonstrated that cities were completely inhabited from the beginning, but not in an intensive way (Pacciarelli 2001, 11–14; 115–16, with ample bibliographic references). There are similar examples in Veneto, where the open plans of the first houses have been observed. These areas were probably designed as gardens or areas for keeping small animals (Gamba *et al.* 1990, 101–2; Capuis 1993, 71–2). Therefore, it appears that these newly occupied sites were chosen to allow for expansion and rapid growth, probably representing a proto-urban phase that likely had a variable duration and evolution in different centres (Pacciarelli 2001, 115–16; Castel 2015, 1).

Settlements

Rectangular or square houses, some with two different rooms, appear in Treviso from the tenth century BC onward (Bianchin 2004). However, it is only from the end of the ninth century BC that rectangular houses organized in a regular system of gridded roads with defined districts appeared in Oderzo. Sometimes,

these districts were oriented the same way, sometimes they were oriented differently (Gambacurta & Groppo 2016, 33, figs. 1–2). Between the end of the ninth and the seventh century BC, in Oppeano, Este, Padova and Oderzo (Fig. 9.2), significant portions of districts with a coherent orientation become apparent.² Orientation could vary among the different districts, according to the needs of local topography or other reasons. Thus, the orientation could vary, for example, near the river and along the banks.

Concerning the dimensions of the buildings, the co-existence of houses of different sizes is quite notable. Between the ninth and seventh century BC, several settlements contain houses of small size, with just one room of about 35–45 sq. m; intermediate size houses, about 75–100 sq. m with at least two rooms, and rare large houses ranging from 150–200 sq. m (Table 9.2) (Capuis & Gambacurta 2015, 456, tab. II). This wide differentiation of house dimensions could be explained as a result of an establishment of a clear hierarchy among the buildings in relation to the increasing social hierarchy. For example, during the eighth century BC in Padova, houses of 32.5 sq. m were identified in the centre of the town, and houses of 170–190 sq. m were documented in the southern district (De Min *et al.* 2005, 80, figs. 88–89, 88, fig. 100; see also Vidale & Michelini in this volume). Interestingly, in Oderzo, small houses in the western districts were in use at the same time as a very large building with a portico on its southern side located in the eastern district. This large building is connected with a substantial, enigmatic ditch lined with wooden walls and filled with about 300,000 fragments of local and imported pottery, dating over the span

Table 9.2. Inventory of houses and buildings with their shape, dimensions and chronology (modified from Capuis & Gambacurta 2015, 456, tab. II).

City	Shape	No. of rooms	Measures	M. sq.	Chronology
Treviso S.PioX 1	Rectangular	1	7.5 × 6 m	45	Late tenth–ninth centuries BC
Treviso S.PioX 2	Rectangular	2	15 × 7 m	105	Early ninth century BC
Oderzo, east quarter Stadio 1	Rectangular	2	17.5 × >9 m	>157	Late tenth–ninth centuries BC
Oderzo, east quarter Stadio 2	Rectangular	3 + little porch	19 × >9 m	>170	Late ninth–middle seventh centuries BC
Oderzo, east district Stadio 3	Rectangular	4 + little porch	22.5 × >10 m	>225	Mid-seventh–mid-sixth centuries BC
Oderzo, west district Dalmazia 1	Rectangular	1 + little porch	7 × 5 m	35	Mid-eighth century BC
Oderzo, west district Dalmazia 2	Rectangular	2	8.8 × 5 m	44	Mid-eighth century BC
Altino Fornace	Rectangular	2 + little porch	13 × 6.75 m	87.7	Second half of the eighth century BC
Padova Castello 1	Rectangular	2	>17 × 10 m	>170	Eighth century BC
Padova Castello 2	Rectangular	2	18 × 11 m	198	Eighth century BC
Padova S. Martino e Solferino 1	Square	1	5.6 × 5.8 m	32.5	First half of the eighth century BC
Padova S. Martino e Solferino 2	Square	3	5.6 × 5.8 m	32.5	Second half of the eighth century BC
Padova S. Martino e Solferino 3	Rectangular	3	8.4 × 8.8 m	73.9	Early seventh century BC
Oppeano	Rectangular	1 + little porch	15 × 5 m	75	Eighth–seventh centuries BC

of two centuries, from between the late eighth–early seventh to the sixth century BC (Ruta Serafini *et al.* 2007, 211–26; Sainati 2013, 231–2). Future research will hopefully reveal the function of this interesting context. Another relevant building has been discovered in Oppeano (Guidi & Salzani 2008, 31–3, figs. 12–13), where, between the eighth and the seventh century BC, modular-sized houses with little porticos on the southern side were built next to each other. To the south, each building overlooked a large open area, maybe a road, more than 10 m wide, and another structure with a similar orientation. It is possible that the road had a pavement on each side about 1.5 m wide. The houses were quite narrow, measuring about 15 × 5 m. These houses are very similar to those identified at an important north Etruscan settlement Forcello near Bagnolo San Vito, near Mantova, dating about one century later (Quirino 2013, fig. 1).

Another interesting aspect concerns the dimension of the roads. There are interesting examples from Spina, Forcello and primarily from Marzabotto (Pattitucci Uggeri & Uggeri 1993, 26–8; De Marinis & Rapi 2007, 38–44; Zamboni 2017; Govi 2019, 443–6). Roads that are about 2 m wide are adequate for one-way traffic, while a road about 4–4.5 m wide can accommodate two-way traffic (Quilici 1998, 166–7; Gambacurta 2004, 40–2). From the eighth century BC, Oderzo had a road more than 7 m wide, along with smaller roads about 4–6 m wide, probably with a well-defined proportion. In Este and Padova, current evidence has revealed that roads were about 4 m wide (Gambacurta 2004). The only other road as wide as the one in Oderzo was found in Oppeano, dating between the eighth and seventh century BC. Perhaps, it is not a coincidence that the

two largest roads are found in settlements or cities located near the frontiers that were largely devoted to production and exchange.³

From the eighth century BC onwards, the orientation of roads, structures and canals follows a coherent plan in almost all settlements. Furthermore, the dimensions of buildings, roads and channels are connected not only to the social hierarchy and the complexity of the settlement, but also to the monumental furnishings and architecture that are recognizable through few but significant remains. Thus, large clay andirons ornamented with ram's heads, roof decoration adorned with fantastic animals or with simple geometric motifs (Fig. 9.3),⁴ dated mostly between the sixth and fifth century BC, indicate the increasingly monumental nature of the urban environment, pursued by the elite in order to affirm and confirm their power.

Necropoleis

This monumental attitude is detectable also in funerary customs. In fact, there are multiple examples where the necropolis design reveals an expression of monumentality, as a marker of leadership. Many of the Venetic necropoleis are structured around *tumuli*, burial mounds composed of stones or wood and earth, that symbolized the social cohesion and the power of certain families (Gambacurta *et al.* 2005; Gamba *et al.* 2015). Moreover, funerary monuments such as inscribed *cippi* or *stelae*, for selected people, both males and females, have been documented in Este, Padova and Altino (Gambacurta 2013; Este: Marinetti 1992, 136–40; Padova: Zampieri 1994, 49–52; Altino: Marinetti 2011, 23–4, fig. 1).



Figure 9.3. Este, clay andirons with ram's heads: a) height 16 cm; b) height 17.5 cm (from Gamba et al. 2013).

The fact that funerary monuments are different in every city reflects their level of autonomy and independence. In Este, a pyramidal engraved *cippus* distinguishes important graves or groups of graves. In Padova, engraved and decorated *stela* with the image of their owners could be placed not only near a grave or a group of graves, but even near the edge of the necropolis (Fig. 9.4) (Gamba et al. 2008). Necropoleis and cities are furthermore often connected through a coherent orientation of roads and structures (see Gambacurta 2020).

Borders and shrines

Very early in the process of making cities, the definition of boundaries and their structures emerges. First, I will discuss the typology of structures, because we have identified at least three very similar examples of border structure, the oldest in Oderzo, one in Padova and the



Figure 9.4 Padova, funerary stone monuments: a) Camin, late sixth century BC, Venetic inscription: Puponei ego Rakoi ekupetaris; b) Albignasego, third century BC, Venetic inscription: [(-)-]steropei A[-] ugerioi ekupetaris ego (from Gamba et al. 2013, 359–60 and 370).

latest in Este. The first example is a double palisade located near the northwestern border of Oderzo, next to the river, making its banks particularly steady, dating to the tenth–ninth century BC (Gambacurta & Groppo 2016, 32–3, fig. 4–5). The second example is a similar double fence situated on the riverbank to the north of Padova, dated to the early eighth century BC (De Min *et al.* 2005, 85–6, fig. 98). The last example is a massive fence with a small quay used during the sixth century BC along the east side of Este, with a similar construction along the south side of the city (Ruta Serafini & Salerno 2006, figs. 1 and 3). The analysis of these examples leads me to further questions concerning boundaries and borders, such as: what was the nature of borders? Was the border just a place, maybe marked by morphological features, or something more? Was there an institutional area or a sacred idea? In my opinion, it is difficult to answer these questions for this period at this stage of research. In the future, however, I hope to explore how Venetic people developed a clear idea of borders and frontiers with sacred and political implications. For example, they had specific gods for their frontiers and borders, as shown by the inscribed stones from Vicenza, dedicated to *Termonios deivos* (Gamba *et al.* 2013, 320).

The connection between boundaries and shrines in Greek cities has been established by the research of François de Polignac (1991). Considering these data, we can no longer underestimate the meaning and the topography of sanctuaries in their relationship with ancient Etruscan and Italic cities. During the Iron Age, there were many sacred places in Veneto, not only connected to settlements, but also with territorial features, such as boundary shrines like Lagole di Calalzo, which from the sixth century BC marked the northern border of the region with Celtic lands (Fogolari & Gambacurta 2001). Similarly, the shrine in Lova di Campagna Lupia was situated on the border of the Venetian lagoon, although it dates only from the third century BC (Bonomi & Malacrino 2011). Padova and Este demonstrate the most significant relationship between city and shrine. Livy (X.2) wrote about a shrine devoted to Juno in the city centre of Padova; however, no clear archaeological traces of this shrine have been identified (Tosi 1994; 2002, 96–9),⁵ only small votive deposits with a limited number of objects, dedicated between the sixth and fourth century BC (De Min 2005). Another shrine has been identified near the hills (Dämmer 1986; 2002), probably at the boundary with Este.

The situation in Este is completely different from Padova. From the seventh century BC, Este was surrounded by shrines (Ruta Serafini 2002; Maggiani 2002). At first, two were constructed to the southeast and to the west, followed by two others built during the following century, to the north, on the hill, and

to the east. Another one appeared during the Hellenistic period to the south. Overall, five shrines were constructed for the spiritual and devotional needs of the people, who offered everyday objects and bronze figurines and sheets with their own depictions to different gods, sometimes accompanied by processions. A bronze cup with the oldest inscription in the Venetic language and alphabet was found in the western shrine. The cup is probably an imported Etruscan *kylix* dating to the second half of the seventh century BC, which was modified (it was missing a foot and two handles were added) and engraved with a votive inscription indicating that the cup was dedicated to a twin-deity, perhaps similar to Dioscuri (Locatelli & Marinetti 2002). In Roman times, a temple dedicated to the Dioscuri was erected nearby (Baggio Bernardoni 1992, 324–31).

Perhaps the most important shrine in Este and in all of Veneto is situated on the southeast side of the city boundary. It marked the border between the city and the surrounding territory on the route to Adria and the sea, and likely represented a sacred place for all Venetic people. It was dedicated to the goddess *Reitia*.⁶ Worship at this shrine was continuous until the second century AD. During Roman times, *Reitia* likely became conflated with Minerva. In this sacred place, many inscriptions and implements to teach and to learn writing were found, as well as approximately 14,000 objects originating from other cities and abroad. It is quite relevant that the *styli* for writing were all dedicated to the deity by women, and this likely had very interesting social implications (Marinetti 1992, 142–4; Ruta Serafini 2002, 99–100).

For many years, *Reitia* was considered the main goddess of the Venetic people; however, now it has been established that every city had its own gods or goddesses, often strictly connected with the features of the place itself, which challenges the assumption of the existence of a real ‘pantheon’ (Marinetti 2008). Furthermore, it is likely that commercial value transactions took place in the shrines. The shrines were the first and main places for trade and markets, mainly of perishable goods. During the seventh century BC, however, something changed concerning the nature of luxury goods in funerary contexts. The change was most likely due to the transition from a gift economy (cf. Riva in this volume) to the exchange of products devoted in the shrines and also in the cities, which was more akin to barter (Greco 1994, 591–3; Smith 2004). It is significant, in this respect, that Greek pottery imported from the sixth century BC onward is more abundant in the settlements and shrines than in funerary contexts (Bonomi 2003; Wiel Marin 2015). The transition from a gift economy to a barter economy before the development of a real market involved a

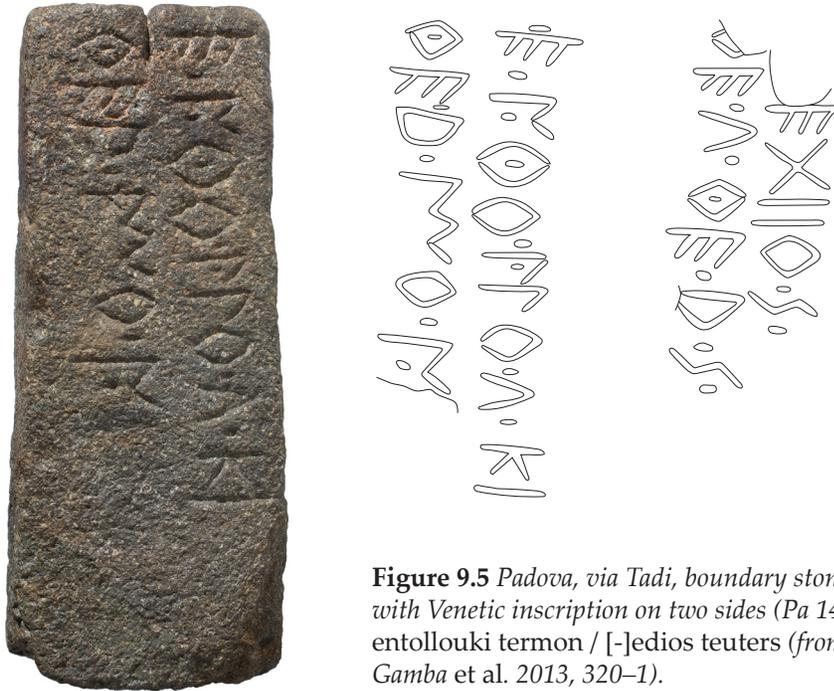


Figure 9.5 Padova, via Tadi, boundary stone with Venetic inscription on two sides (Pa 14): entollouki termon / [-]edios teuters (from Gamba et al. 2013, 320–1).

complete transformation of value. Eventually, the value of goods was concretely defined with the introduction of coinage during the third century BC (Biondani 2018).

Inscriptions

There are many examples of boundary markers in Padova. Mostly made of stone, these markers are distributed throughout the city, emphasizing the city border or the border of places likely devoted to sacred or institutional ceremonies by the community. Some of these stones are engraved with an inscription. Three of these inscriptions are particularly important. The first was identified during the eighteenth century, hidden and walled inside an ancient building (Fig. 9.5).⁷ The inscription, engraved on two faces, reads: *entoullouki termon / (.)edios teuters*. The most important words are the noun *termon* and the verb *teuters*. Since Venetic is an Indo-European language very closely related to Latin, the noun *termon* shares the same root as the Latin word *terminus*, and is a clear definition of the stone that marks a border. The verb *teuters* has a semantic root *teut-* close to the Italic *tout-* which translates as the Latin *civitas*, referring to all the citizens in an institutional way. Therefore, the verb (*teuters*) signifies an action that was performed in the name of the community in a public ceremony. This stone was erected by some public figures or officials that probably are identified by the word *(.)edios*.

Recently, two other stones have been found in Padova with similar inscriptions engraved with one

word on each of the four sides (Fig. 9.6) (Gambacurta et al. 2014). Here, the two inscriptions have different lacunae: *(.)ediai termon teuters esvortei / m(....) termon teuters vortei*. It is clear that the three inscriptions are purposely repetitive and that they were intended to definite spaces in the city which needed to be surrounded and outlined. The subject of the actions *(.)edios* in the first, *(.)ediai* in the second and only *m* in the third inscription possibly was meant to read *medios/ediai*, likely referring to a public office, which is marked both in male and female genders. This evidence is relevant to understanding the significance of women within Venetic society and relating the archaeology of ‘making cities’ to gender.

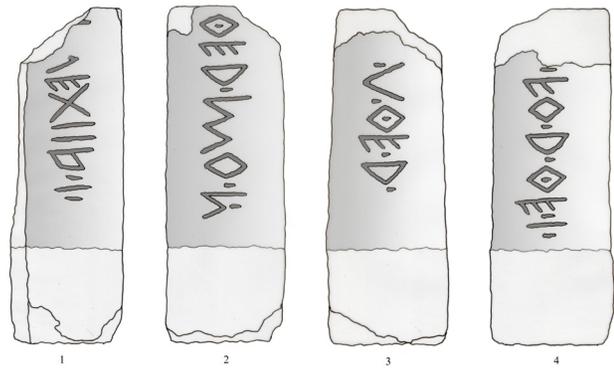


Figure 9.6. Padova, via C. Battisti, boundary stone with Venetic inscription on four sides: *mediai / termon / teuters / [-]vortei* (after Gamba et al. 2013, 230).

Another significant word which could refer to social class is *ekupetaris* (*ekupetars* or *eppetaris* or *eppetars*). The word is always documented on the funerary inscriptions on the *stelae* in Padova and on other monuments or vessels; it was even used on ossuary urns in Veneto. The word may refer to men and women. Its meaning is clearly connected with ‘horse’, because the root *eku-* is close to the Latin *equ-* for *equus*/horse. Additionally, according to the complex interpretation proposed by Anna Marinetti, this word may refer to an elevated social class with a socio-political role (Marinetti 2003). Perhaps, these inscriptions are the clearest observable markers of political organization and power with institutional and political offices in Padova.

Other inscriptions from Padova also indicate interesting information pertaining to the status of foreigners. An important inscription was revealed on the *stela* found in Camin near the city. Dated c. 525 BC, it is the most ancient monument of this kind, with clear comparisons in northern and inland Etruria (Fig. 9.4a). The inscription engraved on the stone, a so-called speaking inscription, records the name of the owner and the word *ekupetaris*: *Ego Puponei Rakoi ekupetaris*. The male name had initially been related to a Greek man; however, recently, Adriano Maggiani suggested that he was a man who came from southern Etruria, maybe from Caere or Veii, where the name *Raku* is well attested (Maggiani 2008, 351–2). In any case, he was surely a foreigner who came to Veneto and quickly obtained an elevated social position and

even a recognition as *ekupetaris*, suggesting that he was admitted into the elite of the city. There are other examples, but this one is the oldest and is a good illustration of established urbanization at Padova according to the criteria outlined at the beginning.⁸

Myths

The final urban characteristic mentioned at the beginning of this paper is the ability to develop tales and myths, of which there are many examples in Veneto. The first is represented by a bronze belt hook decorated in the style of Situla Art (Fig. 9.7). The belt hook was identified in a funerary context from Padova, ascribed to the end of the sixth or early fifth century BC (Capuis & Ruta Serafini 2002; Gambacurta 2005; Paltineri 2018; Nebelsick 2018). The iconography depicts a man who wears wings and follows a winged horse. The image would have been repeated at least twice, because the sheet was cut, and the head of a second horse is still visible. It has been suggested that another man (probably with wings) would have been on the other side. The man is not really winged; rather, he wears wings as indicated by the laces on his arms. He could represent Icarus, and in this case the missing figure would be Dedalus; but the scene could alternatively refer to figures similar to the Dioscuri, famous horse breeders. The scene seems to represent a tale, or a local myth well known by contemporary people, maybe connected with horse breeding.

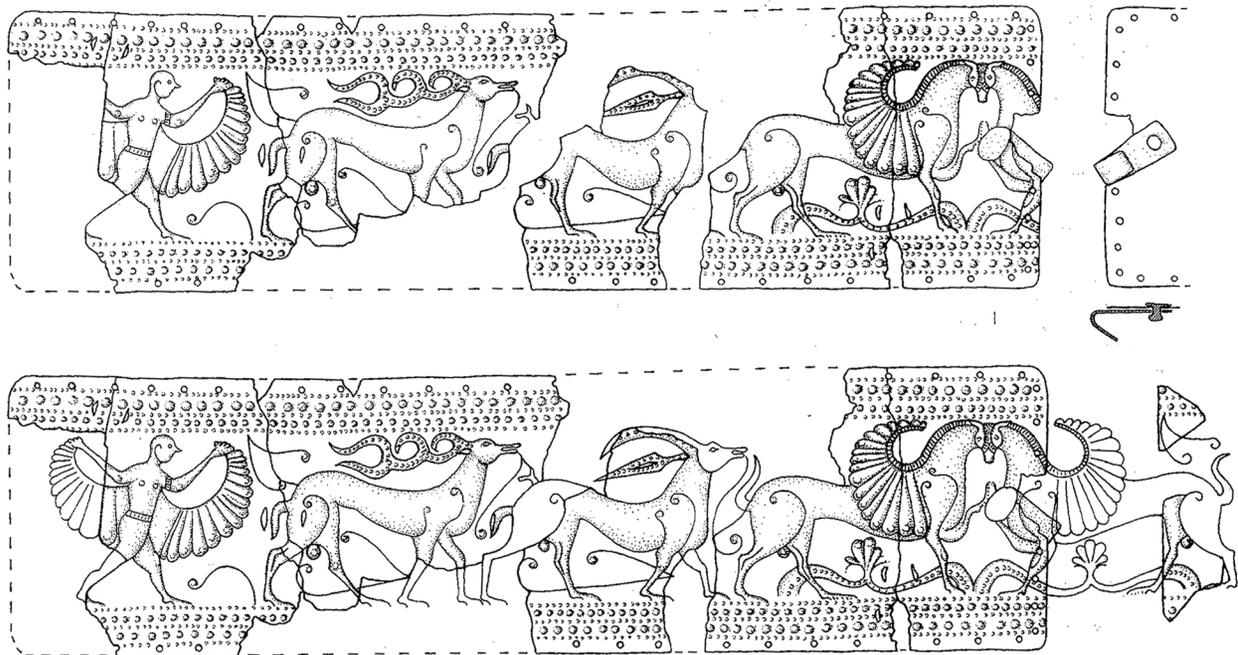


Figure 9.7. Padova, via Tiepolo–via San Massimo 1991, Grave 159, bronze figured belt-hook with a winged man and winged horses, drawing and reconstruction (from Capuis & Ruta Serafini 2002, 47).



Figure 9.8. Este, Casa di Ricovero, Grave 23/1993 or Nerka's grave, bronze figured model of a bench with horses and a wolf on the right (from Gamba et al. 2013, 298).

Strabo (V.1.9) wrote that the Venetic people had tales about horse breeding (Pezzelle 2016, 452–4). In particular, he told the story about a man who was a guarantor. His enemies, as a joke, asked him if he would take a wolf they had caught as a guarantee, and he accepted. The wolf was released, and chased an entire herd of horses to the stable of the guarantor, and thus started Venetic horse breeding, famous across the Mediterranean region. An inscription confirms that the Venetic people knew the role of the guarantor who is mentioned as *vinetikaris* (Prosdocimi 1988, 249–53). There is also a representation of this tale on the back of the bronze model of a bench, found in a rich female grave dated to the early third century BC, when the story was already quite old (Fig. 9.8) (Chieco Bianchi 1987, 210–1, fig. 29; 2013).

In fact, Situla Art is relevant evidence not only for the development of local stories and myths, but also for the emergence of urban organization. Depictions of ceremonies, feasts and rituals, but also themes of the army and war, as well as references to the understanding of measuring time and, therefore, the existence of a calendar further reflect increasing urbanization, as Luca Zaghetto shows in his latest work on the Situla Benvenuti from Este (Zaghetto 2017).

Conclusion

Richard Fox (1977; recently picked up by Cowgill 2004), reflected that, in a state, the system of the cities had to have three main roles or functions. First, a state needs a city with a primarily religious character, second, a state needs a city with a principally political role, and finally, a state requires a city that plays the role of a market. Our evidence indicates that these types of cities were present in the ancient Venetic region, even if the three functions – religious, political and economic – do not overlap in one, but appear in different centres. For example, Este and its shrines, including perhaps the most important of all the ancient Venetic shrines, the sanctuary devoted to the goddess *Reitia*, represents the religious city. The political function was served by Padova, perhaps the capital city of Veneto. The market city was likely Oderzo, as suggested by its name: Aldo Prosdocimi traced the city's Latin name *Opitergium* to the Venetic language, which included the preposition *Op*, that is the Latin *in/at* or English *to*, and the root *terg*, an Indo-European root meaning *market*. Therefore, the name would have meant 'to the market', likely reflecting the main function of the city (Prosdocimi 1988, 397–401).

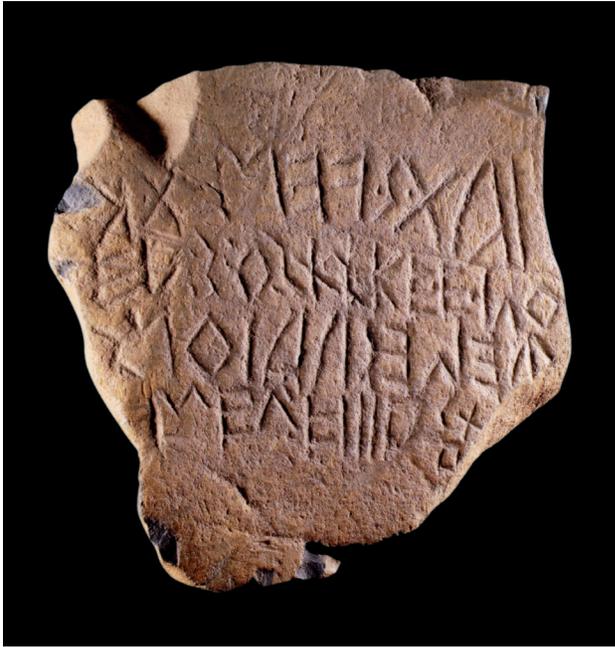


Figure 9.9. *Isola Vicentina, stela with Venetic inscription: Iats venetkens osts ke enogenes laions meu fasto (from Gamba et al. 2013, 391).*

Furthermore, a *stela* found near Vicenza contained an important inscription, even if the object dates to a later period than discussed here (third/second century BC). The inscription (*Iats venetkens osts ke enogenes laions meu fasto*) mentions a man (*Iats*) born in a Celtic land (*enogenes laions*) who become a Venetic citizen (*venetkens osts*). In this way, the inscription tells us the name of the people, from the root *Venet-* (Fig. 9.9; Marinetti 2013, 390–1). The inscription suggests that the inhabitants of Venetic cities had a clear perception of their own cultural identity. The term developed into the *nomen Venet-* (Lomas 2017), which was maintained in the Augustan denomination of the *X Regio Venetia et Histria*.

In conclusion, the archaeological evidence strongly suggests the existence of a Venetic state with its own political institutions and the emergence of a collective imagination represented by shared tales and myths. Other relevant questions and hypotheses concerning the relationship between cities provide an avenue for further research.

Notes

1 Colonna 1987, 15–6; Peroni 1989, 21–2, 428–62; de Polignac 1991; Greco 1994; Maggiani 2001; Pacciarelli 2001; Liverani 2002; D’Ercole et al. 2002; Cowgill 2004; Smith 2004; Malnati & Sassatelli 2008, 429–31; Guidi 2008; Bowman & Wilson 2011 (with regard to Roman cities); Creekmore & Fischer 2014; Robinson 2014.

- 2 Guidi et al. 2008, 24–40; Guidi & Salzani 2008, 31–3, figs. 12–13; Gambacurta & Groppo 2016, figs. 1–2; Gamba et al. 2005, 24–5, fig. 20 and fig. 30, Balista et al. 2002, 116–17, fig. 35.
- 3 For the western frontier, see De Marinis 1999; for the eastern frontier and for the eastern Venetic area, see Gambacurta & Nascimbene 2008; Vitri 2013.
- 4 Pirazzini 2013, 246–7, 252–3; Groppo 2013, 253–4; Facchi 2013, 241–2; Voltolini 2013, 241.
- 5 Liv. X.2; Tosi 1994; Tosi 2002, 96–9. Recently, Cupitò et al. (2020) suggested that the temple could have been near the eastern necropolis, outside the centre of the city, similar to the *Reitia* shrine at Este.
- 6 Ghirardini 1888. For the past 30 years, Heinz-Werner Dämmer led a research project to fully publish the votive objects from the sanctuary and the results of his new excavations in the 1990s. The work is now almost complete; see Meller 2002; Chieco Bianchi 2002; Riemer 2005; Meffert 2009; Capuis & Chieco Bianchi 2010; 2020; Meller 2012; Ickler 2013; Gambacurta & Cipriano 2018; Gambacurta et al. 2020.
- 7 Only one side was visible when the stone was walled in, so Aldo Prosdocimi read and translated the inscriptions in two stages, completing the work only after the removal of the stone; Pellegrini & Prosdocimi 1967; Prosdocimi 1979.
- 8 See Cerchiai 2017 and Malkin 2017 with bibliographic references on integration and hybridity.

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Making cities

Large and complex settlements appeared across the north Mediterranean during the period 1000–500 BC, from the Aegean basin to Iberia, as well as north of the Alps. The region also became considerably more interconnected. Urban life and networks fostered new consumption practices, requiring different economic and social structures to sustain them. This book considers the emergence of cities in Mediterranean Europe, with a focus on the economy. What was distinctive about urban lifeways across the Mediterranean? How did different economic activities interact, and how did they transform power hierarchies? How was urbanism sustained by economic structures, social relations and mobility? The authors bring to the debate recently excavated sites and regions that may be unfamiliar to wider (especially Anglophone) scholarship, alongside fresh reappraisals of well-known cities. The variety of urban life, economy and local dynamics prompts us to reconsider ancient urbanism through a comparative perspective.

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