

FEDERICO DE ROMANIS

IMPERIUM INTRA TERMINOS AND ITALIA DISCRIPTA: SHORT NOTES
ON AUGUSTUS AS GEOGRAPHER*

In order to appreciate Augustus' sensibility of geographic realities, it is necessary to consider first the territorial implications inherent in the expression *imperium populi Romani*, as it occurs in his *Index rerum a se gestarum*.

The third person singular of the verbs *subiecit* and *fecit* indicates that the preface of the surviving copies did not belong to the original Augustan text.¹ Also inconsistent with the genuine Augustan formulae is the idea that Augustus brought the whole *orbis terrarum* under the *imperium populi Romani*. In fact, in Augustus' own text, expressions such as *imperio populi Romani subicere* or *imperio populi Romani adicere* are specifically and concretely meaningful, referring as they do to the submission of the Pannonic peoples between 12 and 8 BC²—a prelude to the extension of the frontier of Illyricum to the banks of the Danube—and to the annexation of the Ptolemaic kingdom in 30 BC.³ Even the more nuanced wording *imperia populi Romani perferre cogere* references circumscribed episodes of limited importance, such as the military campaigns against the Dacians between 6 BC and AD 4.⁴ If

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¹ Aug., r.g. pr.: rerum gestarum divi Augusti, quibus orbem terra[rum] imperio populi Rom. subiecit, et inpensarum, quas in rem publicam populumque Romanum fecit, incisarum in duabus aeneis pilis, quae su[n]t Romae positae, exemplar sub[i]jectum. The Greek version of the *Monumentum Ancyranum* announces the translation of the *πράξεις τε καὶ δωρεαί* that were published in Rome engraved in two bronze *στῆλαι*. It does not repeat that with his *πράξεις* Augustus had brought the *orbis terrarum* under the *imperium* of the Roman people, nor does it clarify that the *δωρεαί* concerned the *res publica* and the *populus Romanus*.

² Aug., r.g. ; 30, 1: Pannoniorum gentes, qua[s] ante me principem populi Romani exercitus nunquam adit, devictas per Ti. [Ne]ronem, qui tum erat privignus et legatus meus, imperio populi Romani s[ubiec]i, protulique fines Illyrici ad ripam fluminis Dan[ui].

³ Aug., r.g. 27, 1: Aegyptum imperio populi [Ro]mani adieci.

⁴ Aug., r.g. 30, 2: *κίτρ[α]* quod [D]a[cor]u[m] tran[s]gressus exercitus meis a[u]sp[ici]is victus profligatusque [es]t et post[ea] tran[s] Danu[ui]um ductus ex[er]citus me[us] Da[cor]um gentes im[per]ia p[er] R[omani] perferre] cog[er]e.

Augustus claims that he undertook many civil and foreign wars by land and sea in the whole world (*toto in orbe terrarum*),⁵ that is just because those conflicts were fought in all its three known parts—Europa, Asia, and Africa.⁶ Other epigraphical texts presumably checked and approved by Augustus himself show the same use of similar formulae. *In potestatem populi Romani redigere* signifies the annexation of Egypt in the inscriptions under the Rome obelisks.⁷ In the *Tropaenum Alpium, sub imperium populi Romani redigere* alludes to the subjugation of the Alpine peoples and the absorption of their territories in the Roman state.⁸

Still, the un-Augustan use of the Augustan formula *imperio populi Romani subicere* betrays a notion about the relationships between *orbis terrarum* and *imperium populi Romani*, which may be legitimately defined as Augustan, insofar as the men of the Augustan establishment recognised the exercise of an *imperium*—a term of convenient semantic ambivalence (Richardson, 1991)—not limited by the boundaries of the lands under Roman rule (Lo Cascio 2000) as being the ultimate of Augustan achievements.⁹

In other words, Augustus was *custos imperii Romani totiusque orbis terrarum praeses*¹⁰, but not only because, under his rule, the *imperia populi Romani* could overstep established boundaries¹¹ and expand territorial control when facing noncompliant neighbours.¹² The ecumenical allure of Roman power under Augustus also stemmed from a totalizing notion of geographic space, based on the idea that the *orbis terrarum*, the *imperium populi Romani*, Italy, and Rome were politically concentric spaces. Complementing this perception of space is the equally totalizing notion of historic time, centred on the current *saeculum augustum*. Furthermore, such perceptions seemed to be corroborated repeatedly—by the recovery of the standards lost by other commanders in Spain, Gaul, Dalmatia and of those taken by the Parthians; by the campaigns in Arabia Felix, in the Meroitic kingdom, and in the northern Ocean up to the land of the Cimbri; by the arrival of embassies and hostages; and by the requests of friendship from remote peoples never before encountered.

⁵ Aug., r.g. 3, 1: [be]lla terra et mari c[ivilia ex]ternaque toto in orbe terrarum s[aepe gessi] victorque omnibus v[eniam] petentib[us] civibus peperci.

⁶ Cfr., e. g., Cic., nat. deor. II 165; Sall., b.I. 17, 3; Aug., frg. XI, VII (p. 83) Malcovati; Vell. II 40; Mela I 8; Plin., n.h. III 3; Flor. I 18.

⁷ ILS 91: imp. Caesar divi f. / Augustus / pontifex maximus / imp. XII cos. XI trib. pot. XIV / Aegypto in potestatem / populi Romani redacta / Soli donum dedit.

⁸ Plin., n.h. III 136: imp. Caesari divi filio Aug. pont. max. imp. XIII tr. pot. XVII s.p.q.R. quod eius ductu auspiciisque gentes Alpinae omnes quae a mari Supero ad Inferum pertinebant sub imperium p.R. sunt redactae.

⁹ On Augustan ecumenism, Cresci Marrone 1993. On late Republican ecumenism, cfr. Musti 1978, 15-17; Nicolet 1989, 19-48.

¹⁰ ILS 140, l. 8.

¹¹ Aug., r.g. 30, 2.

¹² Aug., r.g. 26, 1.

Although sensitive to its unrestrained ecumenical projection, Augustus' contemporaries understood the territorial coherence of the empire he moulded. Respected by Sarmatians, Albanians, Iberians, Medes, Parthians and Indians, and safeguarded by the patronage of Mars Ultor (the other side of the *Pax Augusta*), the *imperium populi Romani* appeared at Augustus' death to dwell in solid geographic unity¹³, with boundaries that were not supposed to be further extended¹⁴. To interpret as inauthentic or hypocritical the *consilium coercendi intra terminos imperii* is to underestimate the coherence of those "legions, provinces, fleets, all linked together"—that is, to underestimate Augustus' understanding of geographic realities. Augustus is the emperor who gave up conquering the opulent Arabia Eudaemon after the expedition of 26-25 BC¹⁵, who refrained from making Greater Armenia a province in 20 BC¹⁶—and yet annexed the kingdom of Galatia in 25 BC (Mitchell, 1993, 61-69), and waged long wars to conquer the Alps (34-14 BC: Oberziner, 1900; Gruen, 2008, pp. 169-171) and reach the geographic boundaries of the Atlantic Ocean (29-19 BC) and the Danube (12-8 BC, and again AD 6-9: Gruen, 2008, pp. 163-166; pp. 171-178; Eck, 2010). As for the other riverine boundaries, Augustus would simply uphold the Euphrates as the Roman Empire's eastern line of defence¹⁷, whereas in Germany, especially between 12 BC and AD 9, he would pursue the goal to push the empire's boundary beyond the Rhine¹⁸.

New evidence about the Roman presence between the Rhine and the Elbe during the occupation reopens the debate concerning how advanced the provincialization process of Germany in AD 9¹⁹ actually was, as well as how imperative the goal of restoring Roman rule between Rhine and Elbe after Teutoburg could be. Crucial for the second question is the interpretation of the sentence *Gallias et Hispanias provincias. i[tem Germaniam qua inclu]dit Oceanus a Gadibus ad ostium Albis flumin[is] pacavit*²⁰. It has recently been suggested that with these words the conquest of all of Germany up to the Elbe had been declared 'mission accomplished': such a claim would either precede or even deliberately ignore the Teutoburg defeat (Zecchini 2010a, 189-190; Zecchini, 2010b, 157-158). The implied gap between rhetoric and reality would be surprising in an author whose lexicon, in

¹³ Tac., ann. I 9: [...] mari Oceano aut amnibus longinquis saeptum imperium; legiones, provincias, classis, cuncta inter se conexas.

¹⁴ Tac., ann. I 11; Cass. Dio LVI 33, 5. Cfr. anche Suet., Aug. 21.

¹⁵ Strab. XVI 4, 22.

¹⁶ Aug., r.g. 27, 1.

¹⁷ Plut., Pomp. 33, cfr. Polverini, 2011/2012; otherwise Halfmann, 2011/2012.

¹⁸ Eck 2004.

¹⁹ Different evaluations in Eck, 2004 and Timpe, 2006.

²⁰ Aug., r.g. 26, 2. Restorations like *i[tem Germaniam qua]* or *e[st item Germaniam qua]* are somewhat guaranteed by the Greek ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Γερμανίαν καθῶς. The subsequent *---]dit*, translated by the Greek περιλαμβάνει, has been variously restored: *clau]dit*, *inclu]dit*, *cin]git*. The text reproduced above is that established by Scheid, 2007, whose critical apparatus will be consulted.

contrast with his own *entourage*, turns out to be so circumstantial when it comes to defining Roman hegemony. However, this interpretation is far from compelling. Evocative as it could seem of ecumenical pipe dreams and comparisons with Alexander (Braccesi, 1991), the intent of the phrase *qua inclu]dit Oceanus* is clearly restrictive—whether it relates only to *Germaniam* or to *Gallias et Hispanias provincias* as well²¹. As was recognized long ago, Augustus is talking “nur von der Nordküste Germaniens bis zur Mündung der Elbe” (Wölfflin 1886, p. 275). The sentence was apparently written after the Teutoburg, which obviously is not mentioned (Cooley, 2009, 221), but certainly taken into account (e.g., Scheid, 2007, p. XXIV-XXV, with select bibliography). The emphasis on Roman control over the German coasts up to the mouths of the Elbe River is justified by the strategic importance of that coastline, both for defensive monitoring²² and for offensive operations²³. Those words in fact demonstrate Augustus’ habitual ability to manipulate geographic perspectives and fine-tune his hegemonic lexicon as a way to reassert imperial ideology. By drawing attention to the greater landscape of the Atlantic—from Gades to the mouths of the Elbe—Augustus pushed the Teutoburg defeat to the background, thereby underscoring the loyalties of the Frisii and the Chauci²⁴. On the other hand, the idea of ‘peacemaking’ allows him to juxtapose the complete subjugation of the Gaulish and Spanish provinces with the deployment of military detachments along the coasts between the Rhine and the Elbe²⁵.

While chapters 26-27 and 29-33 of the *Res Gestae* provide us with the guidelines for the imperial interpretation of the *orbis terrarum* depicted in Agrippa’s map and completed by Augustus (lastly De Nardis, 2004; for the fragments, Riese, 1878, pp. 1-8; Klotz, 1931), another Augustan text, the *Breviarium totius imperii*, also published after the author’s death, offers an analytical description of the internal structure of the empire and its client states²⁶. In addition to a comprehensive inventory of the military deployed throughout the empire and the balance of *aerarium* and *fisci*, the *Breviarium* carefully detailed the empire’s revenues and expenditures. The precise assessment of both tributary potential and spending requirements enables the definition of policies concerning, for instance, the length of military service (extended, for the legionaries, from sixteen to twenty years in the last

²¹ Cfr., e. g. ., Nep., Cim. 2, 5: his ex manubiis arx Athenarum, qua ad meridiem vergit, est ornata. Referring *qua inclu]dit Oceanus* to *Gallias et Hispanias provincias* too would not extend Augustan peacemaking in Germany. It would rather restrict its scope in Gaul and Spain.

²² Tac., ann. IV 72, 3.

²³ Tac., ann. II 5, 4.

²⁴ Vell. II 106, 1; Plin., n.h. XXV 21; Tac., ann. I 38, 1; 60, 2; IV 72, 1, cfr. Will, 1987, pp. 26-27; 34-35; Deininger, 2000, p. 770.

²⁵ Augustus evokes the notion of ‘peacemaking’ in connection with the war Sex. Pompeius (Aug., r.g. 25, 1) and the conquest of the Alps (Aug., r.g. 26, 3).

²⁶ Tac., ann. I 11, 3; Suet., Aug. 101, 4; Cal., 16, 1; Cass. Dio LVI 33, 2; LIX 9, 4. A similar text had been already written in 23 BC: Suet., Aug. 28, 1; Cass. Dio LIII 30, 1.

phase of Augustus' principate) or the corn dole to the *plebs frumentaria* (cut down from 320,000 to 200,000 units in 2 BC and then to 150,000 before AD 14). Regrettably lost for us, the *Breviarium* was a source of information for later writers, from Strabo to Flavius Josephus and the author of the *Epitome de Caesaribus* (Cresci Marrone, 1993, pp. 77-85). Drawn from this text, for instance, was the assessment of the annual tributes in grain from Africa and Egypt, the former being quantified as equivalent to eight months of *frumentationes*, and the latter as 20,000,000 *modii* or four months of Rome's consumption²⁷.

At the heart of Augustus' empire is an Italy extended up to Alps, strengthened by twenty-eight colonies and divided into eleven *regiones*. Augustus' Italy is the final act of a centuries-long process during which the Roman ruling class had defined its 'imperialistic' projects by borrowing and repeatedly upgrading the geopolitical notion of *Italia* (Mazzarino, 2003² [1947], pp. 86-118; Catalano, 1961-2; Mazzarino, 1966, pp. 212-232; Prontera, 1998; Harris, 2007; Russo, 2010). Since Cato's time, there was dichotomy between a strategic Italy, protected by the Alps²⁸, and a juridical and administrative Italy which up to 42 BC did not include the province of Gallia cisalpine, not even after the latter was granted with Roman citizenship in 49 BC. With Augustus, indeed already with Octavian, that dichotomy ceases.

In the final balance of the *Res Gestae*, Augustus does not mention the Italy that revolted against the allotments of land to the veterans of Philippi. Instead, he commemorates the Italy that unanimously swore allegiance to him before the war against Mark Antony and Cleopatra²⁹, and sent multitudes to Rome to elect him as *pontifex maximus* in 12 BC³⁰. Between the two dates, more exactly between 30 and 14 BC, Italy accepted further allotments of land and the founding of twenty-eight colonies; the land confiscations were compensated this time with about 600,000,000 sesterces³¹. However, Augustan Italy was the centre of an empire that needed a larger base of romanization. By the last decades of the second century BC, the Mediterranean scale of Roman hegemonic expansion and the aggravated social tensions at home recommended the founding of colonies outside Italy, so as to garrison the provincial land and to ease the social distress triggered by the imperialist expansion and its subsequent economic dynamics (Levick, 1967, pp. 2-6). In his *Res Gestae*, Augustus does not flaunt the number of colonies founded in the provinces, as he does for the Italic colonies. He merely lists the provinces in which they were deployed (Africa, Sicilia,

²⁷ Ios., b.I. II 383; 386; Epit. de Caes. I 6. Data quoted by Tiberius in AD 32 (Tac., ann. VI 13) are drawn from the same source.

²⁸ Cato, orig., fr. 85 Peter = IV 10 Chassignet.

²⁹ Aug., r.g.25, 2. Long time *clientes* of the Antonii, the Bononienses were excused from the oath: Suet., Aug. 17,1.

³⁰ Aug., r.g.10, 2.

³¹ Aug., r.g.28, 2.

Macedonia, both Hispaniae, Achaia, Asia, Syria, Gallia Narbonensis and Pisidia)³² and makes it clear that the sum spent to compensate the allotted land was only about 260,000,000 sesterces—less than half than had been spent in Italy³³.

Both the clarifications and the omissions in the *Res Gestae* betray Augustus' embarrassment regarding extra-Italic colonization. The establishment of colonies of Roman citizens outside Italy, as well as the grant of the status of *municipium* to peregrine communities (Vittinghoff, 1952, pp. 100-135; Levick, 1967; Brunt, 1971, pp. 589-607), reduced the gap between Italy and the provincial world, which, at the time of Pliny the Elder, had become almost imperceptible in the case of the Gallia Narbonensis³⁴. Despite Augustus' efforts to minimize their fears, the Italic upper classes were well aware of the dangers in that trend, which threatened their own careers and territories. Quite significantly, a senator in the age of Tiberius would blame Gaius Gracchus for founding the Roman colony of Carthage, recalling with regret the good old days when Roman citizens living in the provinces had to go back to Italy to declare their *census*³⁵.

By 14 BC, the conquest of the Alps led to a re-evaluation of the distinction between what was “Italy” and what was not. Occasionally, the annexation to Italy resulted from the dispossession of indigenous communities and establishment of colonial settlements. The Salassi, who had most valiantly opposed Roman conquest, were deprived of their best land, which was assigned to 3,000 colonists of Praetoria Augusta; all the indigenous populations not sold to slavery were admitted with the alienating condition of *incolae*³⁶. In other instances, along the Alps, the boundary between Italy and province was determined by which areas could easily be romanized and which required a longer process of cultural assimilation. The ethnic communities that appeared more open to the Romanization were adjoined in a subordinate position and with diminished personal rights (procedure known as *adtributio*) to the closest Italic towns (Laffi, 1966). Such was the condition, for instance, of Catali and Carni (*adtributi* by Augustus to Tergeste) and Camunni and Trumplini (probably *adtributi* to Brixia: Laffi, 1966, pp. 19-29; 36-41). However, the appeal of the Italic towns among the Alpine communities could blur the distinctions between different territories and dissimilar personal rights, especially when large imperial estates grew between the towns and those ethnic communities. Claudius would recognize as Roman citizens those Anauni, Tulliasse and

³² Aug., r.g. 28, 1.

³³ Aug., r.g. 16, 1.

³⁴ Plin., n.h. III 31: Narbonensis provincia [...] agrorum cultu, virorum morumque dignatione, amplitudine opum nulli provinciarum postferenda breviterque Italia verius quam provincia.

³⁵ Vell. II 7. On the changing perception of Italy following the advancing romanization of the empire, see Giardina, 1997.

³⁶ Strab. IV 6, 7; Cass. Dio LIII 25, 3-5; ILS 6753.

Sinduni, who conducted themselves for long enough as if they were Roman citizens—although at times they were only *adtributi* of Tridentum, and sometimes not even such (ILS 206, cfr. Laffi, 1966, pp. 29-36; 181-191). Other *adtributi* would merge much later with the towns to which they were assigned or would acquire Roman citizenship in a different way. In contrast, those areas that seemed less susceptible to romanization were at first organized as military districts (Raeti, Vindelici, vallis Poenina, Alpes Maritimae and, probably, Alpes Graiae) entrusted to local chiefs, who appeared either as Roman prefects or as independent kings (Laffi, 1976; Laffi, 1988). Sooner or later, all these areas would ultimately be transformed into Roman provinces, excluded from Italy. In north-western Italy, the boundaries that emerged from the policies implemented after the conquest were not always linear (Gribaudo, 1928, pp. 89-182). The *nona regio* of the Augustan *discriptio* included, to the west of the Alps, the coastal strip just east of the Varus: the Italic Nicaea remained however administratively dependent on his metropolis Massalia in Gallia Narbonensis³⁷. The *undecima regio* took the territory of Praetoria Augusta away from the Alpine districts³⁸. Despite being an earlier conquest, no less troublesome was the definition of the north-eastern boundary, fixed at first along the Formio River and then extended to the Arsia, including Histria. Since Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* mentions some Liburnian communities twice—once as part of the Italic *decima regio* and another time as part of the provincial *conventus Scardonitanus*, but endowed with the *ius Italicum*³⁹—it has been inferred that the Augustan *discriptio* recognized them as belonging to Italy. In turn, since the inclusion of those communities fits neither with an *aucta Italia* limited by the Formio nor with a further extended Italy demarcated by the Arsia⁴⁰, we have to assume that the boundaries of Italy were reconsidered three times: twice in connection with the official definition of the *finis Italiae*, and a third intervening time in connection with the Augustan *discriptio* (Mazzarino, 1974 [1971], p. 370; Mazzarino, 1980, pp. 212-213).

It is debated whether or not Emona was incorporated in Augustan Italy. Later literary sources annexe it to Italy⁴¹; Pliny assigns it to Pannonia⁴². The recent discovery of the Bevke boundary stone⁴³, which beyond the Alpine ridge marked the boundary between the territories of Aquileia

³⁷ Strab. IV 1, 3; 9; VI 4, 6; Plin., n.h. III 47; CIL V 7914.

³⁸ Plin., n.h. III 123.

³⁹ Plin., n.h. III 130; 139, on which Kubitschek, 1882, pp. 80-85; Degrassi, 1954, pp. 94-100; Mazzarino, 1974 [1971], pp. 369-370.

⁴⁰ Strab. VII 5, 3; Plin., n.h. III 127; 129. At n.h. III 44 Pliny gives *latitudo e ambitus* of Italy up to Arsia. The fact that at n.h. III 127 he gives the distance from Ravenna to the river Formio and at n.h. III 129 he indicates the *oppida Histriae civium Romanorum* (unusually, since Histria should be regarded as Italic land) suggests that in these passages he is relying on a source prior to the extension of the *aucta Italia* to the Arsia: Desanges, 2004, 1182-1183; 1187-1188.

⁴¹ The earliest testimony is Hdn. VIII 4, 1; for the other evidence, cfr. Šašel, 1989, pp. 172-173.

⁴² Plin., n.h. III 147. Emona is less clearly assigned to Pannonia by Ptol., geogr. II 14, 5.

⁴³ AE 2002 532:finis // Aquileien/sium // Emonen/sium.

and Emona, has spurred further discussion on the issue. Since the stone marked the boundary between the territories of the two towns it has been inferred that both cities were in Italy (Šašel Kos, 2002; Šašel Kos, 2003; Šašel Kos, 2014; Zaccaria, 2007, p. 137). I am not certain that this conclusion necessarily follows⁴⁴. Pliny's wording *patet* [sc. *Italia*] *longitudine ab Inalpino fine Praetoriae Augustae*⁴⁵ raises the suspicion that a boundary around Augustan Italy could be denoted by the boundaries of a border city. Therefore, the Bevke stone would mark the boundary both between Aquileia and Emona and, by implication, between Italy and Illyricum/Pannonia. At any rate, a mistake by Pliny about Emona's position should be considered less likely than an expansion of the Italic boundaries that continued after the completion of the *Naturalis Historia* (or after the sources followed by Pliny for this section of his work)⁴⁶.

The delicate chemistry of the Roman democracy had divided Italy in a very high number of small districts each assigned to one of the thirty-one rustic tribes⁴⁷. With his *descriptio* of only eleven solid *regiones*, Augustus brings back an old division, which, in the government procedures of the Roman republic, had already surfaced in Polybius' (that is Fabius Pictor's) quantification of the men able to bear arms in 225 BC⁴⁸: the total allied troops to whom *ex formula togatorum milites in terra Italia imperare solent*⁴⁹, transmitted separately by the authorities of each community⁵⁰, was eventually regrouped, either into large districts based on ethno-territorial criteria or—in the case of the Latins—into an assemblage based on common civil rights (Ilari, 1974, pp. 83-84). Several of those districts foreshadow the future Augustan *regiones*: Sabines and Etruscans (*septima regio*), Umbrians and Sarsinates (*sexta regio*), Veneti and Cenomani (*decima regio*), Samnites, Iapygians and Messapians (*secunda regio*), Lucanians (*tertia regio*), Marsi, Marrucini, Frentani and Vestini (*quarta regio*). Moreover, the Italic areas who had not joined—and indeed were fighting—the Roman alliance system display a regional division which prefigures the Augustan *descriptio*. When in 215 BC Hannibal makes a

⁴⁴ No strict rule regarding Italy's borders can be sufficiently established based on boundary stones such as AE 1928, 152; AE 1992, 1533; ILS 5956; AE 1984, 919 = AE 2007, 1631.

⁴⁵ Plin., n.h. III 43.

⁴⁶ The seriousness of Pliny's alleged mistake cannot be minimized by assuming (Šašel Kos 2014, pp. 156-157) that n.h. III 147 relies on a source more sensitive to physical than administrative geography (it should be noted nonetheless that, in this passage, the status of both Emona and Siscia as Roman colonies is emphasized). If Emona were 'an (early) Augustan Italian colony' (Šašel Kos 2014, 159), it would be hard to explain why it is not mentioned at n.h. III 130. This passage shows that Emona was not included in the *descriptio Italiae*, whereas CIL III 10768 suggests that it was an early Tiberian colony (Alföldy, 2011, p. 385). Degraffi, 1954, pp. 113-125 connects Emona's adscription to Italy to the *praetentura Italiae et Alpium* established between AD 168 and 170.

⁴⁷ Ross Taylor, 2013² [1960]; Silvestrini, 2010. The *Italia tributim descripta* is evoked in [Q. Cic.], *comm. petit.* 30-31.

⁴⁸ Pol. II 24 = Fabius Pictor fr. 23 Pet.

⁴⁹ Cfr. CIL I 583 = FIRA I 8 = *Roman Statutes* I 2, ll. 21; 50.

⁵⁰ Pol. II 23, 9: καθόλου δὲ τοῖς ὑποτεταγμένοις ἀναφέρειν ἐπέταξαν ἀπογραφὰς τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἡλικίαις; 24, 10: καταγραφὰὶ δ' ἀνήνεχθησαν κτλ. Cfr. VI 21, 4: κατὰ δὲ τοὺς αὐτοὺς καιροὺς οἱ τὰς ὑπάτους ἀρχὰς ἔχοντες παραγγέλλουσι τοῖς ἄρχουσι τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν συμμαχίδων πόλεων τῶν ἐκ τῆς Ἰταλίας, ἐξ ὧν ἂν βούλωνται συστρατεῦν τοὺς συμμαχοὺς, διασαφοῦντες τὸ πλῆθος καὶ τὴν ἡμέραν καὶ τὸν τόπον, εἰς ὃν δεήσει παρεῖναι τοὺς κειριμένους.

distinction between Ἰταλία, probably inclusive of Veneti and Cenomani, and Κελτία ε Λιγυστινή⁵¹, he foretells the future *regio nona* and *regio undecima*. Closer to the Augustan *discriptio*, comparable geographical divisions are revealed by the organization of the revolutionary initiatives in 63 BC⁵² and of the anticaesarian party in 49 BC⁵³. More clearly and significantly, however—since it does not rely on Augustan *discriptio*—these divisions are revealed by Strabo's *Geographia* (Mommsen, 1898; Maddoli 2011/2012).

The only ancient author who explicitly quotes the Augustan *discriptio* is Pliny the Elder, who takes the alphabetic lists of the towns in order to integrate them with descriptions of the Italic coastline drawn from his periplographic sources. The boundaries between *regiones* that can be inferred from these lists show that the Augustan *discriptio* was more often sensitive to anthropic rather than to geographic factors⁵⁴. For instance, although settled north of the Tiber, the Freginates were assigned to the *prima regio*⁵⁵. The Eburini, who were north of the Silarum, were given to the *tertia regio*⁵⁶. Bergomum, an Omorobii town east of the Addua, was allocated to the *undecima regio*⁵⁷. In addition to the *via Flaminia*, restored by Augustus himself, the merging of Umbria and *ager Gallicus* in the *sexta regio* is justified both by the old Umbrian settlements north of the Apennines (Bradley, 2000, pp. 19-22) and the Gallic ones to the south (Bourdin, 2007; Torelli, 2008, pp. 335-336)⁵⁸.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the Augustan *discriptio* appears to avoid framing its divisions according to ethnic identities, almost as if there was a need to undermine the regional identities on which they were based on. Its *regiones* were identified (probably only) by an ordinal number⁵⁹, an impersonal numbering system that seems intended merely to provide the regional diversity with a logical sequence. The order in which his eleven *regiones* is listed, however, differs from the order in which they are mentioned by the only surviving ancient author who refers to the

⁵¹ Pol. VII 9, 6: [...] καὶ πάσας πόλεις καὶ ἔθνη, πρὸς ἃ ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἢ τε φιλία τῶν ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ καὶ Κελτία καὶ ἐν τῇ Λιγυστινῇ, καὶ πρὸς οὐστίνας ἡμῖν ἂν γένηται φιλία καὶ συμμαχία ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χώρᾳ. Sul testo, cfr. Bickerman, 1944.

⁵² Cic., in Cat. I 9; II 6; Sall., Cat. 42.

⁵³ Cic., ad Att. XVI 11, 3.

⁵⁴ In the famous speech by Maecenas in Cassius Dio's history, a division of Italy κατὰ τε γένη καὶ ἔθνη (LII 22, 1) is recommended.

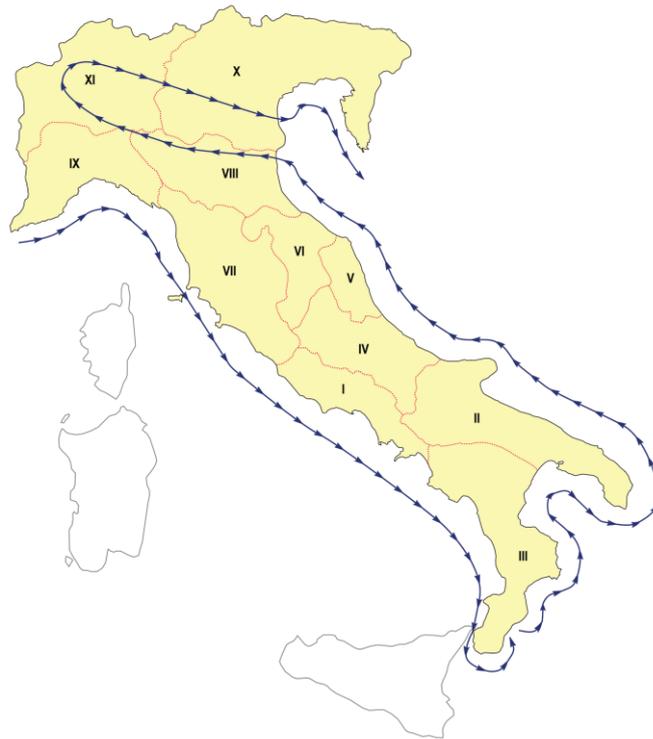
⁵⁵ Plin., n.h. III 64.

⁵⁶ Plin., n.h. III 98.

⁵⁷ Plin., n.h. III 124-125.

⁵⁸ The porosity of the Umbrian Apennine region encouraged M. Antonius Gniphō's theory that the Umbri were the descendants of the ancient Gauls, cfr. Mazzarino, 1966, 219-221.

⁵⁹ However Plin., n.h. III 123 shows that in the first century AD the *undecima regio* was called *Transpadana* (cfr. also Tac., hist. I 70, 2). The denomination *Aemilia* for the *octava regio* is in Mart. III 4, 2; VI 85, 6; X 12, 1.



The criteria underlying the Augustan numbering system is not immediately clear. Some sequences have been tentatively explained by the layout of some Roman roads, but no comprehensive or convincing explanation has been reached (Nicolet, 1991, p. 95, nt. 65; Polverini, 1988, p. 25-26; Galsterer, 1994, p. 311).

A different solution—in part meta-geographical, in part cartographical—may be proposed here⁶¹. Meta-geographical reasons may have been the motivation for giving the honour of *prima regio* to the district that included the city of Rome⁶². Cartographic exigencies may then have dictated the order of the other ten *regiones*, which seem to be regrouped in four subsets, from the southernmost to the northernmost. In other words, the Augustan numbering system seems to suggest a map of Italy ordered in four rows (or divided in four rolls), the first two comprising the Italy prior to the Caesarean-Augustan extension, and the last two incorporating the rest of the *aucta Italia*. When adopting a “south-up” orientation like the Varronian *templum in caelo*⁶³, the four rolls are read from east (‘left’) to west (‘right’):

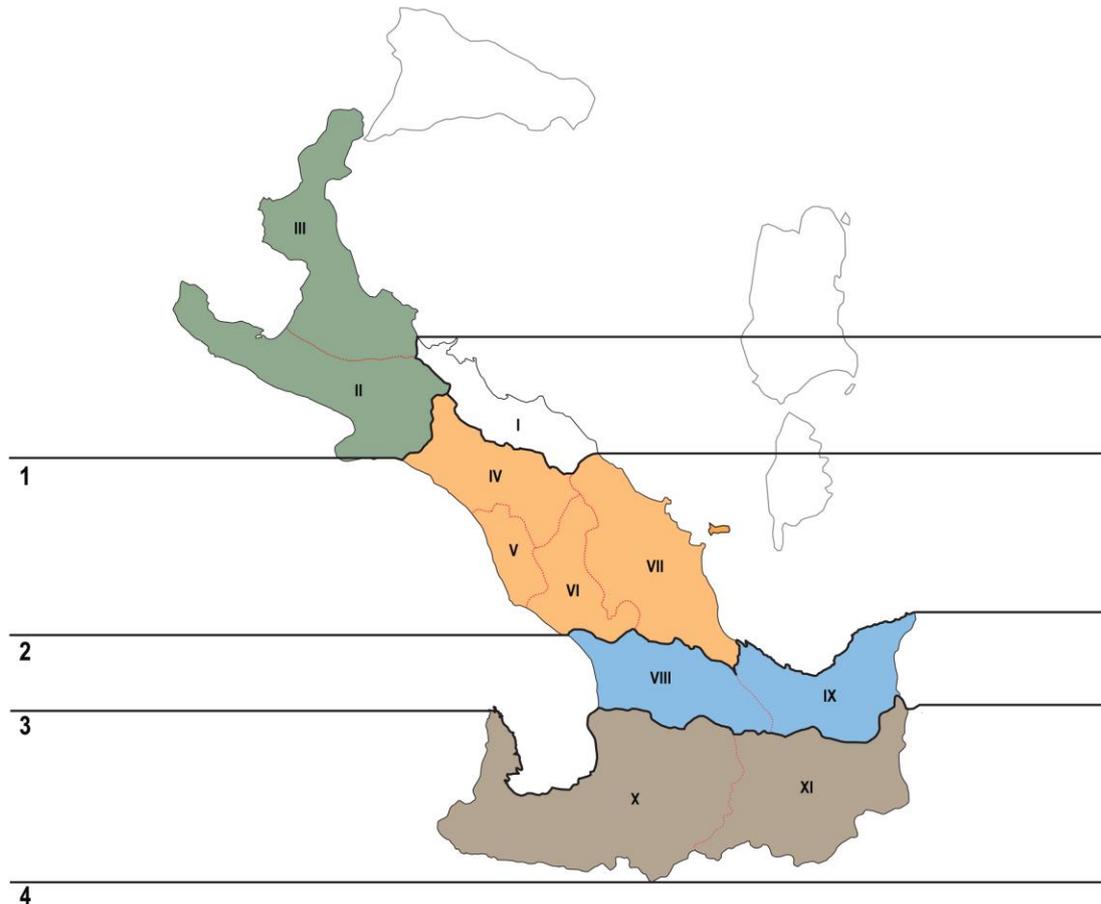
1) *regio II- regio III*;

⁶¹ The geographic accounts of ancient writers very often reflect a hodological perception of space (cfr. *infra*, nt. 000, but especially Janni 1984). Nonetheless the passages we will discuss here indicate that at least the readers of Mela and Pliny spontaneously envisioned a south-up oriented map of Italy. These passages could be explained only by a commonly followed practice of mapping the peninsula using a south-up orientation.

⁶² Pace Galsterer, 1994, 312-313 and Polverini, 1988, 25, Plin., n.h. III 65 does not suggest that Rome was not included in the *prima regio*.

⁶³ Varr., l.L. VII 7.

- 2) *regio IV- regio V- regio VI- regio VII*;
- 3) *regio VIII- regio IX*;
- 4) *regio X- regio XI*.



To support this interpretation of the Augustan numbering system, we may recall that both the *Tropaeum Alpium* and the *Res Gestae* ‘read’ the Alps from east to west⁶⁴ and that several ancient

⁶⁴ Plin., n.h. III 136: [...] gentes Alpinae omnes, quae a mari Supero ad Inferum pertinebant; Aug., r.g. 26, 3: Alpes a regione ea, quae proxima est Hadriano mari, [ad Tuscum pacari fec]i nulli genti bello per iniuriam inlato. The denominations *mare Superum* (already in Plaut., Men. 236) and *mare Inferum* are the consequence of the fact that the *Hadrianum mare* is perceived upstream (*supra*) and the *Tuscum mare* downstream (*infra*) of the Tiber.

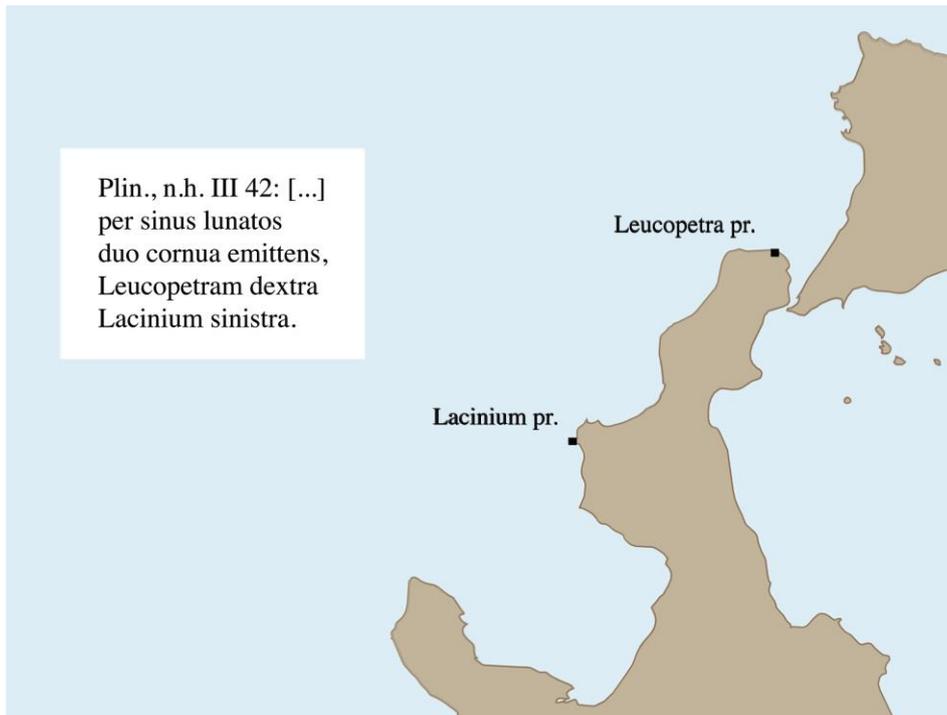
writers—certainly Mela⁶⁵, Pliny⁶⁶ and Appian⁶⁷—envisioned a south-up oriented map of Italy (Castagnoli, 1975-1976).



⁶⁵ Mel. II 59-60: interiora eius [sc. Italiae] aliae aliaeque gentes, sinistram partem Carni, et Veneti colunt Togatam Galliam; tum Italici populi Picentes, Frentani, Dauni, Apuli, Calabri, Sallentini. ad dextram sunt sub Alpibus Ligures, sub Appennino Etruria; post Latium, Volsci, Campania et super Lucaniam Bruttii. urbium quae procul a mari habitantur opulentissimae sunt ad sinistram Patavium Antenorae, Mutina et Bononia, Romanorum coloniae, ad dextram Capua a Tuscis, et Roma quondam <a> pastoribus condita.

⁶⁶ Plin., n.h. III 43: est ergo folio maxime querno adsimulata, multo proceritate amplior quam latitudine, in laevam se flectens cacumine et Amazonicae figura desinens parmae, ubi a medio excursu Cocynthos vocatur, per sinus lunatos duo cornua emittens, Leucopetram dextra, Lacinium sinistra.

⁶⁷ App., Hann. 8, 34: τὰ γὰρ Ἀπεννίνα κατέρχεται μὲν ἐκ μέσων τῶν Ἀλπειῶν ἐπὶ θάλασσαν, ἔστι δ' αὐτῶν τὰ μὲν ἐπὶ δεξιᾷ πάντα καθαρῶς Ἰταλία, τὰ δ' ἐπὶ θάτερα, ἕς τὸν Ἴόνιον φθάνοντα, νῦν μὲν ἐστὶ καὶ ταῦτ' Ἰταλία [ὅτι καὶ Τυρρηνία νῦν Ἰταλία] (Vierek), οἰκοῦσι δ' αὐτῶν τὰ μὲν Ἕλληνας, ἀμφὶ τὴν Ἴόνιον ἀκτὴν, τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ Κελτοὶ, ὅσοι τῇ Ῥώμῃ τὸ πρῶτον ἐπιθέμενοι τὴν πόλιν ἐνέπρησαν.



The concordance between Mela and Pliny is all the more remarkable given that their expositions of the regions of the Mediterranean proceed in opposite directions⁶⁸ and that they often refer to orientations based on a hodological perception of space⁶⁹. The possibility that Appian drew his south-up oriented display of Italy from the same third-century source that mediated the archaic notion of cis-Appennine Italy (Mazzarino 1966, p. 215; Frascchetti, 1981; otherwise Harris, 2007, p. 320) suggests that Polybius' triangular Italy⁷⁰, with its sub-Alpine basis (βᾶσις) and its Bruttian apex (κορυφή), was envisioned with a south-up orientation as well. It is therefore probable that Augustus ordered the *regiones* of his *descriptio* using a traditional way of representing the Italic peninsula, an example of which could be—whatever its chronology—the *picta Italia* of the Tellus' temple (if indeed it was a map and not a personification of Italy)⁷¹.

The purposes of the Augustan *descriptio Italiae* are not all easy to determine. Certainly, it made it easier to file the data collected during the census of AD 73/74. In 225 BC, the numbers of men able to bear arms, as communicated by the local authorities, were regrouped into large districts based on ethno-territorial criteria, or into assemblages based on common civil rights. Likewise, under Vespasian (and probably already at the time of Augustus), data from the *census*, collected and communicated town by town, were filed by the *regiones* of the Augustan *descriptio* by the central administration⁷². It is probable that land survey information was similarly filed⁷³. The possibility

⁶⁸ Both Mela and Pliny proceed from the Strait of Gibraltar, but the former moves counterclockwise from the African coastline, whereas the latter moves clockwise from the European coastline: cfr. Sallmann, 1971, 104.

⁶⁹ For instance, the geographic descriptions often assume a point of view determined by river courses (Tanais: Mel. II 1; Rhenus: Mel. III 24; Indus: Mel. III 69; Baetis: Plin., n.h. III 11; Penius: Plin., n.h. IV 31; Strymon: Plin., n.h. IV 40; Nilus: Plin., n.h. V 48; 62; Euphrates: Plin., n.h. V 90; Granis: Plin., n.h. VI 99; Tigris: Plin., n.h. VI 138; 145). Seas are often envisioned from their 'entrances': Mediterranean Sea (Mel. I 24; 25; Plin., n.h. III 3); Atlantic Ocean (Mel. III 3); Black Sea (Mel. I 102, on which Parroni 1984, 254-255); Caspian Sea (Mel. III 38); Red Sea (Mel. III 80). The lands beyond the *portae Caspiae* (Plin., n.h. VI 45) are oriented after their 'entrances'. Sometimes, the perspective is determined by the mountain ranges or the promontories: from the Alps in the Illyricum (Plin., n.h. III 147), the Taurus (Mel. I 81; Plin., n.h. V 97; 99); from the promontory of the Sirtis minor (Plin., n.h. V 41); sometimes from the coastline of an island (Creta: Plin., n.h. IV 61) or a continent (Plin., n.h. IV 94). Some extra-Italic descriptions seem to imply a south-up oriented map: Dardani and Triballi (Plin., n.h. IV 3); Astabores (Plin., n.h. V 53, cfr. Strab. XVII 1, 2); Cappadoces (Plin., n.h. VI 24); Adiabene (Plin., n.h. VI 28), Tigris course related to Charax (Plin., n.h. VI 130): could they be relying on Agrippa's map?

⁷⁰ Pol. II 14 on which Clarke, 1999, p. 103.

⁷¹ Varr., r.r. I 2, 1. On the subject of the painting as well as its chronology, opinions differ: Janni, 1993; Brodersen, 1995, pp. 152-155; Palombi, 1997, pp. 164-168; Guilhembet, 2005; Le Bris, 2007; Roth, 2007; Russo, 2012, pp. 92-94. The temple was vowed in 268 BC during the battle of Ausculum: Flor. I 14, 8. The hypothesis that the *picta Italia* was indeed a map is supported by the *Sardiniae insulae forma* in the *tabula* set in 175 BC in the temple of Mater Matuta by Ti. Sempronius Gracchus (Liv. XLI 28, 9).

⁷² Cfr. especially Laffi, 2006, pp. 958-960, who refers to Plin., n.h. VII 162-163, Phlegon, FgrHist II B 257 F 37 and AE 1968, 145, which shows that M. Hirrius Fronto Neratius Pansa had responsibilities on *census* restricted to a *regio decima*, most probably of the Augustan *descriptio*.

⁷³ The alphabetic list of *civitates Campaniae* with gromatic information in the *Liber coloniarum* (Gromatici Veteres I 229-239) was drawn from a *liber regionum* (quoted also at Gromatici Veteres I 258), which was probably structured as an update of the Augustan *descriptio*: Nicolet, 1991, pp. 88-89; Grelle, 1992, p. 83; Laffi, 2006, pp. 955-956. It is less probable, instead, that the *libri beneficiorum* (Gromatici Veteres I 295) were structured after the same pattern: De

that Claudius, in the *tabula Clesiana*, refers to the *regiones* of the Augustan *discriptio* does not suggest additional functions⁷⁴. At any rate, there is no evidence that the Augustan division of Italy was intended to lead to an overall and systematic reform of its administration. When the Roman state needed to regionally organize such duties as the collection of the five percent inheritance tax or the administration of justice by the *iuridici*, new divisions would be created, which were fewer, often larger, and identified by (a series of) choronyms and ethnonyms⁷⁵. The choronyms of *Aemilia* and *Transpadana* identified the Augustan *octava regio* and the *undecima regio*, respectively. In later ages, *Flaminia* was detached from *Aemilia*, while *Transpadana* regained its larger extension, thus comprising both *decima regio* and *undecima regio*⁷⁶.

In the fourth century AD, the *diocesis Italiciana* would include the provinces *Raetia I and Raetia II*, *Alpes Cottiae*, *Corsica*, *Sardinia* and *Sicilia*, whereas in the southern part of the peninsula the divisions of the Augustan *discriptio* would persist. Apart from some differences, the *secunda regio*, the *tertia regio* and the *quarta regio* reappear as the provinces of *Apulia et Calabria*, *Lucania et Bruttii* and *Samnium*, respectively. In northern Italy, the *decima regio* reappears (also with some modification) in the province of *Venetia et Histria*. The rest is reorganised into larger entities. From the fusion of a portion of the *sexta regio* with the *septima regio* emerged the province of *Tuscia et Umbria*. The province of *Flaminia et Picenum* resulted from the merging of the *quinta regio* with portions of the *quarta regio*, the *sexta regio* and the *octava regio*. The rest of the *octava regio*, together with the *nona regio* and the *undecima regio*, would form the province of *Aemilia et Liguria* (Giardina, 1993, pp. 63-65; Cecconi, 1994, pp. 201-207).

Martino, 1975, p. 247. Grelle, 1992, p. 79 and Laffi, 2006, pp. 954-955 maintain that the *regiones* referred to in the *libri beneficiorum* were the areas subject to the *ensor's* intervention.

⁷⁴ ILS 206, ll. 17-18: *adhibitis procuratoribus meis qui {s} que in alia/ regione quique in vicinia erant*. Mommsen, 1869, p. 108 nt. 1 refers it to the *procuratores* both of *Raetia* and of the imperial properties in the territories of the cities. Laffi, 1966, p. 189 does not exclude that “il termine *regio* abbia qui un significato generico e serve a designare vagamente una qualsiasi circoscrizione territoriale o divisione geografica”. Nonetheless, he considers it more likely that “abbia un preciso valore tecnico-giudirico e serve pertanto a designare un distretto territoriale e amministrativo ben determinato”. However, it could be observed that neither the dispute between Comenses and Bergalei, nor Camurius Statutus’ denunciation, nor Iulius Planta’s survey, support the existence in AD 46 of precise fiscal districts in the area. In fact, the emperor did not even know that most of the disputed *agri* and *saltus* belonged to him (imperial estates were later reorganized in *tractus* and *regiones*: Maiuro, 2015). I wonder whether we can understand *in alia regione* as a generic geographic expression (cfr. Syme, 1985, pp. 30-31), similar to *in vicinia*, or – since the disputes were no longer restricted to the Comenses and Bergalei but also involved Tridentum and the assigned ethnic communities – as referring to the territories of the *decima regio*, as opposed to those of Comum, which belonged to the *undecima regio*.

⁷⁵ Corbier, 1973; Eck, 1999, pp. 138-144; 253-264.

⁷⁶ The (*regio*) *Transpadana* entrusted to the *corrector Italiae* T. Fl. Postumius Titianus (AE 1914, 249 = IRCOMO 1; CIL VI 1418; 1419b, cfr. Porena, 2006, pp. 1321-1327) probably covered the same area. Since it was already *recepta* when Costantine entered Milan and Maxentius’ army still held Verona and Aquileia (Pan. Lat. XII 7; 8; 11), the ephemeral *provincia Transpadana* (Cecconi, 1994, p. 202) mentioned by the panegyrist should, strictly speaking, leave out the Augustan *decima regio* (contra Clemente, 1966, pp. 536-539).

It should be noted that the binary denominations of almost all the provinces of the *dioecesis Italiciana* betray the same demand for a regionalism of smaller scope that is also evidenced in the revival of the term *regio*. While Italy was officially divided in *provinciae*, the term *regio* designated districts of the *provinciae*⁷⁷. As a consequence, we find a *corrector regionum Lucaniae et Brittiorum* and a *corrector regionum duarum* in two inscriptions from Paestum and Beneventum, respectively⁷⁸. We also witness *Apulia et Calabria* referred to as two *regiones* rather than as a *provincia* in a inscription from Lucera⁷⁹. Lastly, we hear the emperors evoking the *lumina provinciarum {b}ac regionum omnium*, when they permit the priests from *Umbria* and *Tuscia* to perform the *ludi scaenici* and the *munus gladiatorium, per vices temporis*, at Hispellum and Volsini, respectively (Cecconi 2012)⁸⁰.

⁷⁷ This use of the term *regio* may be regarded as the continuation of an informal use (cfr. Syme 1985, 30 on *regio mea* in Plin., ep. VII 22, 2) made official. In contrast, in SupIt V 6 (*consularis reg. Flaminie[et] Piceni*) and in ILS 8375 (*regione Camp. terr. Prae.*) *regio* means *provincia*.

⁷⁸ AE 1975, 257; ILS 1239.

⁷⁹ AE 1994, 511.

⁸⁰ ILS 705, ll. 11-12.

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