
Land for the living, land for the dead. Transformations, encounters, and contrasts in the plain of Nursia (PG) between the iron age and the roman conquest.

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Résumé

Nestled in the heart of the Apennines, in the South-East of the modern-day region of Umbria, the Norcia basin, with its famous plain of *Santa Scolastica*, represents one of the few plateaus in the innermost part of the historical region of Sabina. This characteristic has meant that this area has, over time, represented one of the primary nodes of the entire territorial system. Despite a general underdevelopment of our archaeological knowledge of the Apennine territories, which has only in the last decades begun to be overcome, in the case of the Norcia basin we possess a certain amount of archaeological data. In addition to a series of fortuitous discoveries there are being brought to light also some archaeological features of great importance. Several cemeteries' nuclei, with hundreds of graves, have been found there, chronologically framed, to date, between the Early Iron Age and the Imperial Roman period. Significant traces of Roman centuriation as well as important elements of the landscape of power of the Roman *Nursia* have also been brought to light. The Norcia plain therefore represents a rich, although complex, palimpsest through which it is possible to analyse some of the main dynamics of life in this area over the centuries.

Specifically, the contribution focuses on the natural and anthropic transformations occurring in this landscape between the Iron Age and the period following the Roman conquest of the area. After this conquest, attributed to the campaign of *Manius Curius Dentatus* in 290 B.C., these Sabine lands were also the object of a horizontal movement of settlers sent here by the new Roman power. Apparently, it is only at that time that a rich and active 'land of the living' would have emerged in the plain, alongside the 'land of the dead'. The settlers' immigration also offers us the opportunity to investigate the encounter between the local Sabine communities and the newly arrived Romans, bearers of a different society and culture, as well as a different approach to the territory itself.

The aim of the paper is therefore to propose an analysis of the different structuring of the territorial system and their evolution in a long-term perspective. This process will be analysed in the light of the encounter/contrast between a series of intersecting dialogic pairs, such as natural/anthropic, Sabine/Roman or world of the living/world of the dead.

Mots-Clés: Sabina, Sabines, Iron Age, Roman Conquest, Preroman Italy, Landscape Archaeology, Paleoenvironment, Nursia

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