



# Strade e centurie

Insieme agli interventi in città, i Romani agirono profondamente sul territorio, sia con la stesura di una efficiente rete stradale, sia con la sistemazione razionale delle campagne (centuriazione).

Risalgono a questa epoca l'impostazione della via Popillia, da Rimini alla laguna di Venezia, passando per San Basilio e Adria, e della via Annia, percorso la cui origine è ancora fortemente in discussione, ma che da Adria dirigeva verso Padova e da qui ad Altino e a Concordia, per giungere ad Aquileia.

Su questi tracciati nord-sud, ma anche sulle strade che attraversavano il Polesine in direzione ovest-est, come la via di Gavello e la via di Villadose, si impostavano suddivisioni agrarie, in particolare una a nord di Adria organizzata in appezzamenti allungati in senso nord-sud e l'altra, impostata sulla via di Villadose, con grandi appezzamenti, orientati nord-est/sud-ovest.

La suddivisione agraria, che consentiva l'assegnazione di parcelle ai coloni, innescò una forma di agricoltura razionale ed efficace anche in termini di drenaggio e bonifica del terreno.

L'indizio evidente del fiorire dei commerci è anche la consistente presenza di monete di epoca repubblicana (assi, denari, dracme venetiche), dalla fine del III secolo a.C.

Ricostruzione della Via  
Popillia nel centro di Adria.

## **Il miliare di Publio Popillio**

**Lenate**, console tra il 132 e il 131 a.C. fu rinvenuto nei pressi della chiesa di S. Maria Assunta della Tomba nel 1844, vicino ad un tratto di strada romana.

Il miliare ricorda l'impostazione della strada che attraversava la città di Adria, ad opera del console, e annota l'81° miglio dal punto di partenza, forse Rimini.



# Atria e il suo territorio in età imperiale

Augusto, nell'organizzazione dell'Impero, suddivise l'Italia in dodici *Regiones* e *Atria* venne inglobata nella *X Regio, Venetia et Histria*, nei pressi del suo confine meridionale, acquisendo lo statuto di *municipium*: una comunità che rifletteva la capitale nelle proprie istituzioni pubbliche. Le città dell'Impero, infatti, dovevano rispondere al modello urbanistico comune, dotandosi di strade, di edifici pubblici civili e sacri, oltre che da spettacolo.

Così dovette essere anche per Adria, anche se poco rimane di questa monumentalità poiché in epoca medioevale gli edifici vennero sistematicamente spoliati per fabbricare calce nelle numerose calcare rinvenute spesso anche negli scavi recenti. È possibile, tuttavia, identificare i principali monumenti pubblici della città: il foro, il teatro, l'anfiteatro, oltre ad edifici lussuosi, privati o pubblici, con decorazioni prestigiose, come il bel frammento di lastra con festoni in marmo bianco rinvenuta nell'area dell'Ospedale Civile o i frammenti di cornici e capitelli dalla collezione Bocchi.

Un unico pavimento musivo si conserva dei molti rinvenuti in città: il tessellato bianco e nero riproduce motivi geometrici e vegetali stilizzati e decorava una *domus* del I sec. d.C. che affacciava su via Chieppara, nei pressi dell'anfiteatro.

Il territorio di *Atria* comprendeva gran parte dell'attuale provincia di Rovigo e gran parte del-

Dadi da gioco  
(I-II secolo d.C.).



Frammento di lastra in  
marmo con ghirlanda  
d'alloro (inizio I secolo d.C.).



la zona costiera, dall'ampio e ramificato delta del Po alle foci dell'Adige e del Bacchiglione - Brenta poco più a nord. Centro di traffici e commerci adriatici e mediterranei con prospezione europea anche nella prima età imperiale, *Atria* conservava la vivacità del suo porto fluviale, in cui confluivano derrate alimentari, come olio, vino e salse di pesce, per le quali erano sfruttate diverse tipologie di anfore. L'ampiezza dei riferimenti commerciali è testimoniata dall'ampia gamma di marmi preziosi in uso per la decorazione delle abitazioni e degli edifici pubblici, provenienti da tutto il bacino del Mediterraneo tra il I e il III secolo d.C.

L'attività del porto innescava anche un ampio indotto per l'artigianato cittadino, dalle produzioni di laterizi da costruzione a quella delle ceramiche da mensa; anche la carpenteria e le attività più 'domestiche', come la filatura e tessitura, conoscono una fioritura tra il I e il II secolo d.C.

Si conservano oggetti di uso comune, come le lucerne e i campanelli, accanto ad altri più rari, come le pedine e i dadi da gioco in osso e avorio, utilizzati nelle case come nelle taverne della città. Le statuette in bronzo e in marmo documentano forme di religiosità privata o pubblica, come la bella testa di Attis, divinità orientale, o il vaso con la dedica a Giunone.

Olletta globulare con  
iscrizione: *PROPIA  
IUNONEM* (II secolo d.C.).



Testa del giovinetto orientale  
*Attis* con il tipico berretto  
conico (II secolo d.C.).



66 \_ Adria

## Domus e matronae



Nelle case adriesi, tra la fine del I secolo a.C. e tutto il secolo successivo, le tavole più prestigiose erano imbandite con ricchi servizi in ceramica fine. Di gran moda erano le ceramiche con rivestimento rosso lucente, a volte decorate a rilievo, la



cosiddetta 'terra sigillata', le cui officine principali si trovavano ad Arezzo, luogo da cui la produzione si diffuse largamente in tutto l'impero. Le decorazioni riportano a volte preziosi ornati geometrici, a volte vere e proprie

scenette di genere o motivi floreali. Si affiancavano a questi piatti, coppe, tazze, bicchieri detti 'a pareti sottili' per la loro raffinatezza e leggerezza, ma anche rare coppe con decorazione invetriata verde o giallastra. Tra gli utensili in metallo, accanto al colino e ai manici in bronzo, compare un raffinato stampo a forma di conchiglia, forse per dolci. Il cucchiaino in osso era invece destinato al consumo delle uova crude.

All'universo femminile si ascrivono le gioiellerie, gli anelli e gli orecchini con e senza gemme, accanto agli strumenti della toilette: specchi, pinzette, bastoncini e coticule per impastare i colori del trucco, contenuti nelle pissidi.

Spicca la collana in oro e granati databile al II secolo d.C., ultimo prezioso rinvenimento dall'area dell'Ospedale Civile; il gioiello, in oro zecchino e granati tagliati a forma di cuore, è strappato ad una estremità e fu forse perduto proprio per questo motivo.

Cucchiaini in osso e in bronzo (I secolo d.C.).

Bottiglia in terra sigillata e coppa invetriata (I secolo d.C.).





Pinzetta e specilli in argento e oro, tavoletta in ardesia e spatola in osso per miscelare trucchi, pisside in avorio e strigili in bronzo (I-II secolo d.C.).



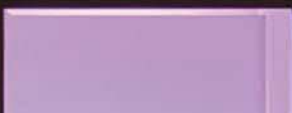
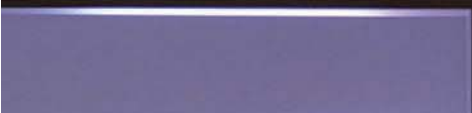
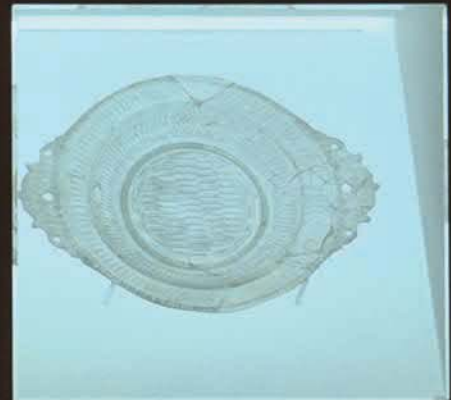
Specchio in bronzo  
(I-II secolo d.C.).

Collana in oro e granati  
con vaghi a forma di  
cuore (II secolo d.C.)



Gemme e anelli con castone inciso (età imperiale).





# Il vetro in età romana

Il fulcro della sezione romana è rappresentato dalla vetrina in cui sono esposti reperti di vetro della prima età imperiale (fine I secolo a.C. – I secolo d.C.).

Le grandi olle con coperchio, in vetro soffiato verdeazzurro, erano utilizzate come ossuari in sepolture ad incinerazione di prestigio. Arricchivano questi corredi oggetti vitrei di diversa foggia e realizzati con tecniche molto raffinate. I balsamari in vetro soffiato policromo o verdeazzurro e le più rare bottiglie in vetro verdeazzurro o incolore rappresentano un'ampia gamma di contenitori per liquidi, profumi o balsami destinati anche alla cura della salma. Gli esemplari più preziosi possono avere una decorazione con filamenti policromi o con modanature e baccellature.

Un utilizzo cerimoniale si suppone per i *rythà*, o corni portatori, vasi configurati, spesso a testa di animale, di cui si può ammirare l'esemplare in vetro giallo con testa di lumaca, o quello in vetro spruzzato policromo.

Le preziose coppe in vetro blu, a stampo, si devono ad un vasaio di origine orientale, Ennione, che firmò con una iscrizione greca le sue opere.

Richiamano i raffinati prodotti della tradizione veneziana le coppe in vetro murrino o con vetri a canne o con la tecnica del reticolo, mentre nell'ambito delle rarità rientrano i bei vetri opachi celesti o neri e il piatto in vetro incolore decorato ad intaglio.

Vetrina con le principali tipologie di vetri (fine I secolo a.C. – I secolo d.C.).

Bottiglia in vetro soffiato (prima metà del I secolo d.C.).



Adria \_ 73



Bicchieri in vetro soffiato;  
Cavarzere (VE), *rython* in vetro  
soffiato (I secolo d.C.).

Cavarzere (VE), coppa di  
vetro a reticolo (fine I secolo  
a.C. – inizi I secolo d.C.).





Cavarzere (VE), coppia di tazze in vetro soffiato a stampo, opera del vetraio siro-palestinese Ennione (secondo quarto del I secolo d.C.).



Pisside portacosmetici  
in vetro murrino (inizi I  
secolo d.C.) e coppa in  
vetro a nastri policromi  
(fine I secolo a.C. – inizi I  
secolo d.C.).





# Le tombe di età imperiale: nuovi rituali

Tra il I e il II secolo d.C. tutte le sepolture prevedevano il rituale della cremazione e differente è la soluzione che le persone adottavano per la deposizione e la protezione delle ossa combuste dei defunti: gli ossuari venivano deposti con il corredo all'interno di una semplice cassetta di legno o di laterizi, a volte protetti da un'anfora segata o rovesciata.

I più prestigiosi contenitori dei resti cremati erano le olle in vetro; i numerosi balsamari di vetro colorato contenevano profumi per il trattamento della salma e per lenire l'odore della combustione. Accompagnavano l'ossuario oggetti destinati ad agevolare il viaggio del defunto nell'al di là: il vasellame utile per un ultimo pasto, con l'offerta propiziatoria di vino o latte, o la moneta, da utilizzare per pagare a Caronte il trasporto verso i Campi Elisi. Molto comune la fibula in bronzo, idonea a chiudere le vesti deposte per l'ultimo viaggio se non a fissare i lembi del 'sudario' che avvolgeva le ossa combuste.

Piatti, coppette, tazze, in ceramica o in vetro anche policromo di particolare bellezza, venivano utilizzati per l'ultimo banchetto, destinati poi a scomparire, sepolti con il defunto. Nelle sepolture femminili si ritrova a volte, accanto a qualche gioiello, lo specchio in bronzo, di proprietà della defunta e insieme piccoli utensili da toilette.

Cavarzere (VE),  
portaprofumi in vetro  
soffiato a forma di  
colombina (prima metà  
del I secolo d.C.).

Balsamari in vetro soffiato  
(seconda metà del  
I secolo d.C.).



Adria \_ 79

Q. CASTRICIVS  
Q. TERCIVS  
SIBI ET  
VETTIAE M. F.  
Q. VARIAE  
V. F.

M. V. S. T. I. A. C. I.  
T. H. Y. M. E. L. L. E.

S. I. I. A. Q. I.  
I. I. D. A.

# Le pietre parlano: il lapidario

Le iscrizioni esposte nel lapidario consentono di ricostruire l'articolazione sociale e parte della struttura politica della città romana. Il capitello corinzio o il pilastro di portico o arco quadrifronte, sul lato est, testimoniano la fase monumentale della città; accanto, i documenti religiosi e pubblici, come la dedica al culto di Nettuno da parte dei quattuorviri, la più importante magistratura cittadina. Questo culto era sicuramente molto importante ad Adria, città legata alla prosperità che veniva dal mare.

Un unico sarcofago in marmo (II secolo d.C.) fu dedicato dal marito alla moglie, *Terentia Capitolina*.

Le stele funerarie riportano iscrizioni che illustrano la società adriese tra la fine del I secolo a.C. e il I secolo d.C. attraverso le caratteristiche dell'onomastica: la denominazione completa dei *tria nomina* (*praenomen*, *nomen* o gentilizio, *cognomen*) designava l'uomo libero, iscritto alla tribù del suo luogo di nascita, per Adria la tribù Camilia; frequente la citazione del prenome paterno abbreviato, seguito da *f* per *filius*. Le donne sono distinte solo da *nomen* e *cognomen* e non erano iscritte alla tribù, in quanto non partecipavano alla vita pubblica.

Gli schiavi si potevano avvalere solo del prenome, a volte indizio della loro provenienza straniera, a volte accompagnato dal nome del padrone. Quelli che riacquisivano l'indipendenza diventavano liberti, e il loro nome era unito alla formula *l...* o *lib.* ... (liberto di...).

Stele funerarie (fine del I secolo a.C. – inizi del I secolo d.C.).



# Il Delta in età romana

Lungo il tracciato della via Popillia costiera, che si distaccava da un percorso interno a San Basilio, si trovavano due *mansiones*, stazioni di sosta che offrivano ricovero e ristoro ai viaggiatori.

## **la mansio Fossis**

Nei pressi della foce dell'Adige, sorgeva un raffinato complesso residenziale, dotato di un impianto termale che, nel corso del I secolo d.C., divenne una *mansio* ricordata negli itinerari antichi. Si affacciava al fiume con una darsena, resa monumentale da una copertura sostenuta da colonne fittili intonacate con capitelli in pietra di tipo tuscanico. Vi furono rinvenute due imbarcazioni lignee a fondo piatto, idonee alla navigazione fluviale o endolagunare.

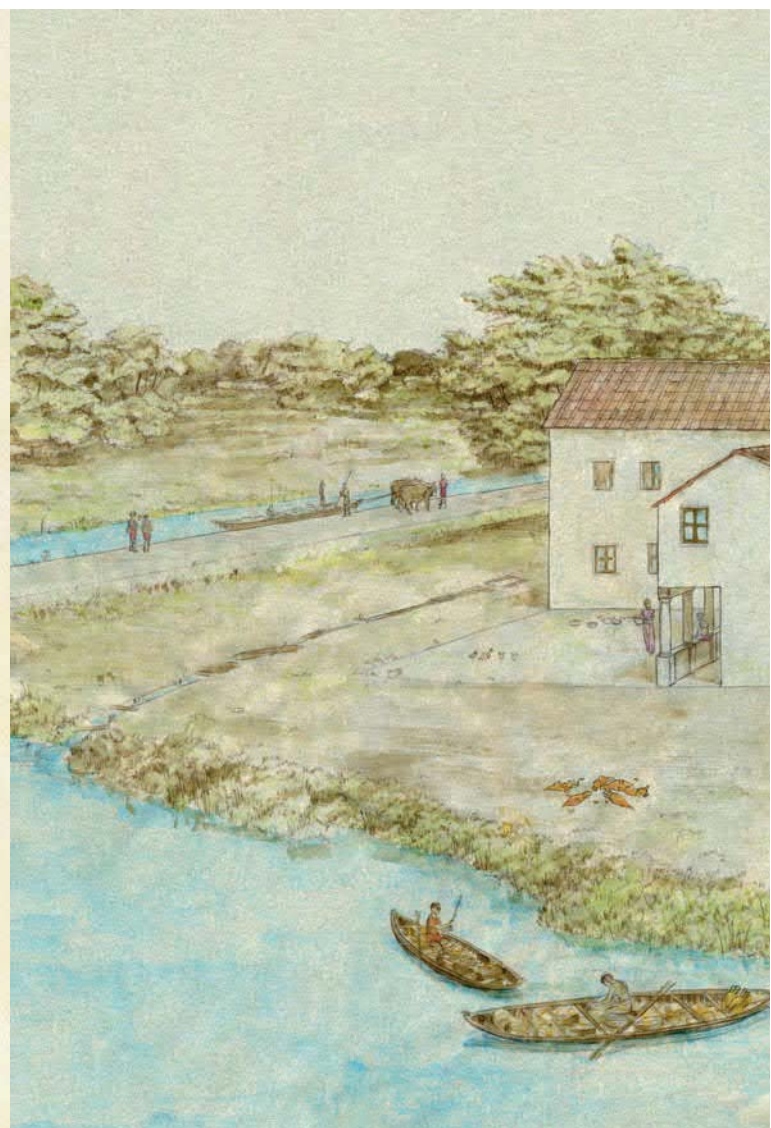
L'ampiezza degli interessi commerciali nell'intero mondo mediterraneo fino al V secolo d.C. è indicata dalle numerose anfore per il commercio di olio, vino e salse di pesce; i vetri lasciano trasparire la raffinatezza della elaborazione dei colori e delle tecniche decorative, come la bottiglia in vetro viola e la coppa con decorazione a intaglio. Il culto del dio Mitra, famoso presso i militari che avevano prestato servizio in oriente, è testimoniato da un frammento di marmo con la divinità intenta ad uccidere il toro (II secolo d.C.).

Corte Cavanella di Loreo (RO), maschera in terracotta (*oscillum*) con funzione apotropaica (II secolo d.C.).

Frammento di bassorilievo raffigurante una scena del culto di Mitra (II secolo d.C.).

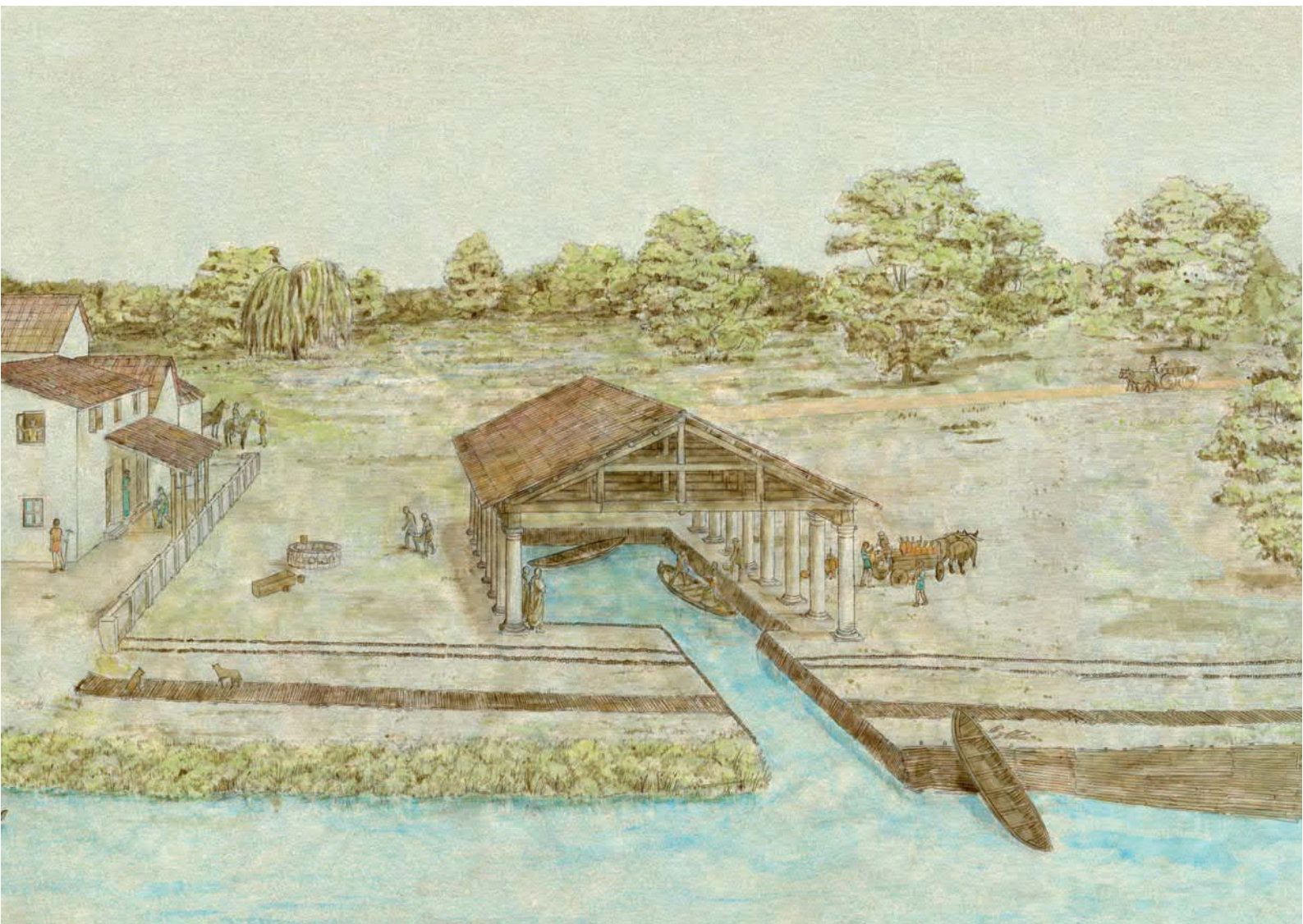






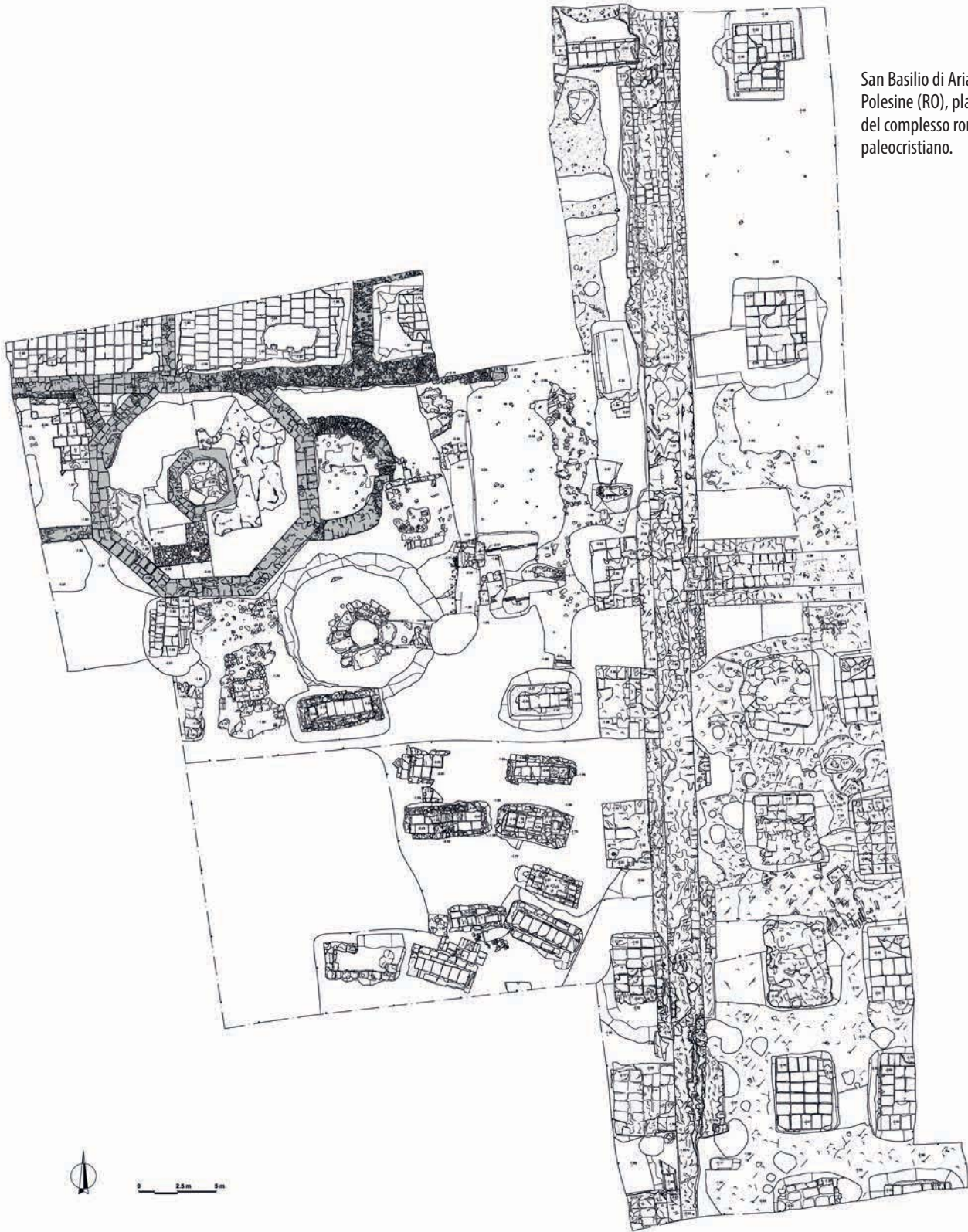
**LEGENDA**

- Strada romana
- - - Strada romana di percorso incerto
- - - Canale artificiale di età imperiale
- Città
- Stazione di posta
- Antichi corsi d'acqua
- Antica linea costiera
- Città attuale
- Linea costiera attuale



Ricostruzione della *mansio*  
*Fossis* nel II secolo d.C.

Tracciati stradali e *mansiones* in età  
imperiale lungo la costa adriatica.



San Basilio di Ariano Polesine (RO), planimetria del complesso romano-paleocristiano.

### **la *mansio Hadriani***

L'insediamento costiero di San Basilio di Ariano Polesine, già vivo nell'età preromana, in età imperiale rappresentò un importante snodo viario, identificato con la *mansio Hadriani* o *Radriani* degli itinerari antichi. La via Popillia si divideva in un tracciato interno, diretto ad Adria, ed uno costiero coincidente con i cordoni lagunari.

Un grande complesso residenziale, ricco di pareti affrescate e di costosi vetri da finestra, restituisce l'immagine di un centro arricchito dall'arrivo di genti esotiche con le loro merci raffinate e preziose. La ricchezza traspare anche da alcuni tesoretti, un primo composto di denari e quinari in argento, databile in età repubblicana (tra il II e gli inizi del I sec. a.C.) e altri due, costituiti da monete di bronzo databili al IV secolo d.C. e tra la fine del IV e il V secolo d.C., epoca ormai inquietata, quando San Basilio divenne anche un importante luogo di diffusione del cristianesimo.

La scoperta di un battistero di forma ottagonale, adiacente ad una basilica, individuata solo in parte, attorniate da una piccola necropoli ad inumazione, getta luce sull'epoca paleocristiana. Le sepolture, protette da strutture in laterizi, sono per lo più prive di corredo; alle tombe dei bambini sono a volte destinate anfore riutilizzate. Alcuni oggetti recano l'apposizione del *chrismòn*, simbolo formato dall'unione delle lettere greche che compongono il nome di Cristo.



San Basilio di Ariano Polesine (RO), frammento di intonaco affrescato (II-III secolo d.C.).



San Basilio di Ariano  
Polesine (RO), contenitore  
portaincensi profumati a  
forma di busto maschile  
(fine II-III secolo d.C.).



San Basilio di Ariano  
Polesine (RO), lucerna  
bronzea a forma di  
colomba con *chrismòn* sul  
petto (IV-V secolo d.C.).



90 \_ Adria

## Adria tra il VI e l'VIII secolo d.C.

Pochissimi sono i rinvenimenti relativi a questo periodo, ma ancora documentano una certa agiatezza e l'ampiezza dei traffici.

La contrazione del centro storico della città si evince dalla collocazione di alcune sepolture, rinvenute in via ex-Riformati, precedentemente il cuore dell'insediamento antico. In queste poche tombe, i gioielli e le decorazioni delle cinture e delle vesti appartengono ad individui di un certo prestigio.

Una significativa qualità dei traffici più tardi traspare dalle monete d'oro coniate tra il VI e l'VIII secolo d.C. a Roma e a Ravenna, capitale dell'esarcato.

Ancora agli inizi del VII secolo d.C. Adria costituisce un rilevante baluardo contro la conquista longobarda; nasce in questo momento probabilmente la diocesi con un primo Vescovo, Gallionisto. La città, nonostante la contrazione, conserva un porto fluviale e assume anche il nome di *Adrianopolis*.

Intorno alla metà dell'VIII secolo d.C. la conquista Longobarda coinvolge Adria con l'Esarcato di Ravenna, ma il dominio longobardo non fu molto duraturo e la diocesi di Adria fu donata al Papa, insieme ai territori dell'Esarcato di Ravenna.

Fibbia da cintura in bronzo dorato di fattura ostrogota (fine V – inizi VI secolo d.C.) e sperone in bronzo (VII-VIII secolo d.C.).



Tremisse di Maurizio Tiberio (583-602 d.C.), Roma.



Solido di Costantino IV (668-685 d.C.), Roma.



Tremisse di Giustiniano II (705-711 d.C.), Ravenna.





# La collezione Bocchi

Una piccola sezione ricorda l'opera attenta e preziosa di molti rappresentanti della famiglia Bocchi, tra i quali soprattutto Francesco Girolamo e Francesco Antonio. Il primo coltivò l'idea della formazione di un domestico museo da rendere visitabile a quanti fossero appassionati cultori di antichità; dal 1787 egli iniziò a registrare i nomi dei visitatori, tra i quali si annoverano gli arciduchi d'Austria, Francesco Carlo con la moglie Sofia, e, nel 1867, Theodor Mommsen, illustre epigrafista tedesco che lavorava al *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Fu poi Francesco Antonio, nominato Ispettore agli Scavi e Rinvenimenti del Polesine, ad intraprendere scavi per allora 'sistematici' nel Pubblico Giardino, ove oggi sorge il Museo, restituendo un significativo spaccato della città etrusca e romana.

La loro opera, attenta e appassionata, aiuta ancora gli studiosi nelle loro interpretazioni anche grazie ad una inestimabile documentazione, origine e cuore del museo.



Francesco Antonio Bocchi.



Francesco Girolamo Bocchi.

Cratere attico a colonnette a figure rosse con scene di palestra (470-460 a.C.).





Gioielli neoclassici ottocenteschi in oro e pietre dure. Le gemme sono in larga parte di epoca romana (I secolo a.C. – I secolo d.C.).



## per approfondire

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# english text

## **From the Bocchi collection to the National Museum > 9**

The first core of the museum collection owes its origin to the research, cataloguing and conservation work that several members of the noble Bocchi family - especially Ottavio, Francesco Girolamo and Francesco Antonio - carried out between the end of the XVIII and the XIX centuries. The increasing number of their excavations led them to the idea of collecting the finds in a "domestic museum", which could be of interest for visitors and scholars. In the early XX century the Bocchi heirs left to the Adria municipality their 6000 pieces collection, then exposed in the newly founded Civic Museum. It has been inaugurated by a famous speech by Gherardo Ghirardini, the first antiquity supervisor of the region. Its first location was the male primary school situated on Cavallotti Street. In 1934 the finds were moved to Cordella Palace, but their quick growth in number, caused by the excavations of the new Canal Bianco bed and by the ones on the Public Garden, required their relocation. The new Museum, planned by Giovanbattista Scarpari and Ferdinando Forlati, rose on the Public Garden, previously donated to the State by the Adria municipality for this specific purpose. The inauguration took place on 9/17/1961. In 1972 the Civic Museum became National Museum.

## **The new set-up > 11**

After three decades, the growth of the collection prompted the building of an extension of the Museum, along with a radical renewal of the set-up, now oriented towards more modern communication standards. The enlargement, concluded in 2004, saw the addition of a block on the southern side, which shares the architectonic features of the original building; the deriving new exhibition trail is now ring-shaped, and

security-effective as well. Between 2007 and 2012 the renewal works regarded some sections of the exhibition, as well as the didactic space and, in the end, the entrance hall.

The new set-up follows a linear trend, characterized by simple and essential shapes. The window-shaped showcases are part of wings that constitute an ideal background for the thematic setting of the different sections. All of them are rich in information and illustrative devices, such as drawings, maps, text panels etc.

The use of different colours, based on a complex lighting engineering study, is one of the most characteristic features of the exhibition. Light and colours are of primary importance in creating atmospheres and feelings linked to the museum trail. Different colours connote and emphasize the different sections: they are light and bright for the urban areas sections, dark and deep for the necropolis ones. Great attention has been paid to the colour contrast between the background/layout and the finds, making them outstand as much as possible. The museographic project spotlights some findings of particular importance, located at various points along the trail and emphasized by specific settings and scenographic solutions. An example is represented by the Roman glasses showcase, where a sophisticated technological solution let the lights of each case change dynamically in colour and brightness.

## **The Bronze Age in the Polesine and the origins of Adria > 15**

Between the III and II millennium BC the Polesine was an important match point of various trade routes between Europe and the Mediterranean Sea. The settlements were situated close to the water courses, mainly the Tartaro and "Po di Adria" rivers. The latter was

the principal branch of the ancient Po, and represented a favourable way - exploited by various ancient populations - to access the great Po plain.

Recent excavations led to the discovery of the remains of the Late Bronze Age (XIV-XIII centuries BC). The ancient settlement of Adria was to the north-east of the present-day town, in an area now called Campetto. The village, just like some other contemporary ones, was based on pile dwellings, due to the swampy nature of the area during that period. The settlement was dynamically linked to the other contemporary centres of the rest of Polesine, like Larda di Gavello and Castello del Tartaro.

The spread of precious goods coming from the north - like amber from the Baltic Sea - and the south (ivory, for example), and the diffusion of the glass manufactory technology (coming from the Near East) caused the fortune of this region, that became a crossroads of trade routes and traders of different origin. Amber and bone processing, glass production and metallurgy enhanced the wealth of centres like Gringano and Frattesina, with the latter representing, between XII and X century BC, an international emporium.

## **The Greeks in the Adriatic Sea > 15**

The expansion of trade in the Mediterranean Sea is due to the Greeks. Starting from the VIII century BC, the development of the poleis and the subsequent demographic growth prompted a dramatic crisis. As a consequence, between VIII and VI centuries BC Greece gave origin to an eastward and westward migratory wave, aimed at looking for fertile land. Colonization involved Southern Italy (Magna Graecia) and Sicily, as well as the Po plain, that the Greeks saw as an incredible "granary".

The Greek traders sailed the Adriatic Sea, following the previous Mycenaean routes and challenging the pirates that infested the eastern coast. The Greek mythology reflected these audacious journeys, involving heroes such as Diomedes, horse tamer and main character of the myth of amber, or Antenor, the founder of Padua.

The Greeks reached the most remote Adriatic gulf looking for cereals, metal, amber and other products coming from the north. They exchanged with the locals the prestige black- and red-figure vessels, together with precious goods such as coral, spices, perfumes and balsams. The Greeks introduced to Italy also wine, along with the use of drinking it during a ceremonial meeting called symposium.

#### **Greeks, Etruscans and Veneti Contarina and San Basilio di Ariano Polesine > 19**

At the beginning of VI century BC, the region between the Adige and Po rivers was the centre of an intense phenomenon of cultural interchange, as it represented the border area between the Etruscan and the Veneti spheres. These two populations had a dynamic economic relationship, and shared similar social and political models. At that time, the Etruscans were spreading northward their script/alphabet, together with their elegant artistic crafts. The discoveries along the ancient coastline, from Contarina to San Basilio di Ariano Polesine, witness this ethnic “melting pot” and the contact with Greek goods and culture through the Adriatic harbours.

A famous bronze statuette, traditionally identified with Heracles, has been found around Contarina. The homeric hero is usually represented wearing a lion skin and bringing a club; in this case, the skin is that of a caprid (deer?), and the weapons are bow and

arrows. Therefore, some think the statuette could be a votive simulacrum of a hero or god, linked to the cult of hunting and to the “wild world”: maybe a demigod that embodies the transition between the feral and the civilized worlds.

This item witnesses a tight link with the southern Etruscan world, where it has probably been produced between 500 and 480 BC.

During this period the region close to the Adriatic harbours became an important place for the exchange of ideas and mythical/religious traditions. In the Po delta landscape, San Basilio represented not only a harbour, but also the place where different cultural and commercial entities met, and the bazaar of the Adriatic and Mediterranean world. The archaeological discoveries - especially the pottery - tell us about this convergence between different populations.

The domestic pottery was of local productions and of Venetic type, while the black and gray bucchero and the pink pottery with simple red or brown geometric decorations were imported from northern Etruria. Other objects were of particular prestige because of their faraway origin, for example the lydion, an elegant pointed recipient, and the Corinthian and Attic red-figure and black-figure cups, coming from eastern Mediterranean.

From San Basilio, once left the coast, the visitor moves inland towards Adria, a landmark town and a cult place, whose fame was linked to the eponymous sea.

#### **Adria: a town, a river, a sea > 23**

The town rose on the “Po di Adria” river, in an unstable geomorphological and hydrogeological context. This situation needed particular building techniques and a deep knowledge of land management skills. The ancient

town was situated on the southern part of the area now occupied by the present day one, between the so-called “Church of the Tomb”, the Public Garden and the hospital. The necropoleis were located to the south, east and north of the ancient urban area, following the principal ways in and out the town.

Founding and then preserving a town like Adria needed impressive excavation and management works, especially on principal and secondary drainage channels, as the houses and the production infrastructures faced these internal water courses. The house foundations were an alternation of wood, soil and draining layers; this solution aimed at reclaiming the land, and reflected the logistical effort required by the unstable, wet environment. As in other settlement of the Po plain, the houses employed simple and perishable materials, such as wood, earth and straw.

Between VI and V century BC some buildings were half between a house and a craft laboratory: they hosted the many craftsmen who supplied the town with their products.

#### **Etruscans and Greeks at Adria > 25**

Between VI and V centuries BC the Etruscan settlement became bigger and more multiethnic: Greeks and Veneti were steadily in town. The Greek inscriptions report the names of the people who came to Adria for their trade affairs, thus meeting with Veneti and Etruscans, who had different cultures, languages and religions.

The imports regarded refined goods, such as the unguents that must have been the content of the rare little amphora of Fikelloura type, coming from the eastern part of the Aegean sea; from Peloponnese, and more precisely from Sparta, came the Laconic cup with geometric decoration. The am-

phorae of Corinthian type were used for wine trade; this business was particularly lively in this period, as the beverage favoured social integration and legitimation.

The votive inscriptions tell us that the Greeks founded in the town a cult place dedicated to Apollo and Iris, in order to have the chance to pray their gods in this faraway land as well. In these inscriptions the alphabet is of Aegina type, showing a preferential relationship between Adria and Aegina traders; but soon later, the Athenian monopoly would have prevailed.

The terra-cotta antefix of Greek type, which was part of a cult building, recalls the period (i.e. the second half of the VI century BC) during which the town became monumental.

For the everyday life, the inhabitants of Adria used pots that were typical of the Veneti, such as the ones with black and red bands. Nevertheless, very common were some ware classes related to northern and central-southern Etruria, i.e. the refined bucchero (black ware) or the Etruscan imitation of the Greek black-figure and red-figure pottery.

Some cups and vessels bear incised letters, which can be either part of proper names, votive inscriptions or abbreviations related to the vessel content.

The Athenian pottery represented a status symbol that could elevate the prestige of the rich houses that owned them. Vessels of this kind were mainly related to wine consumption. This beverage favoured and strengthened the social relationships. Of particular importance is the black-figure amphora fragment with dolphins on the neck, dating between 550 and 525 BC and maybe related to the maritime vocation of the town.

Bronze vessels, linked to wine consumption and meat cooking, were used along with ceramic ones. These

metal tools could either come directly from Etruria or be local imitations, made by the laboratories so common in town at that time. Their presence is ensured by the recovering of metallurgy tools (for instance, the clay nozzle for bellows).

### **The Attic pottery > 29**

The Attic pottery (initially black-figure; then, during the V century BC, red-figure pottery) has been produced in Athens since the end of the VII century BC. The refined images that decorate these vessels represents the most famous episodes of myth and devotional scenes, along with every-day life moments and (noble) activities, such as music, sport (for men) and housework (for women). These vessels became therefore means of communication for cultural models and “narrations”, and luxury goods related to symposium and wine consumption as well. In the rich narrative repertoire, the most used topic is myth, that is the adventures of gods and heroes and their relationship with humans. Outstanding is the big black-figure lekythos depicting Heracles’ apotheosis. This hero is famous and well known at Adria, as his figure is linked to civilization, and also to swampy areas and salt extraction and trade. This last aspect maybe could have some relationship with the Delta environment as well. On the lekythos, Heracles is represented while ascending to the Olympus after his well known fatigues.

The presence of Achilles, Menelaus, and Ulysses on the Attic pottery, along with the legendary Amazons, the female warriors related to border areas, refers to the Homeric tradition. The symposium, born in Greece but soon adopted by the Etruscans, was a meeting during which the participants drank wine, conversed, listened to music and played around.

The ceremony followed codified rules that led to the specialization of the various pottery shapes. Wine and water were contained in amphorae and hydriae (or kalpides) respectively. The two beverages were mixed together in big kraters, along with spices and herbs. The resulting liquid was then filtered and drawn with oinochoai, little jugs and simpula, and finally put into drinking receptacles like cups (kantharoi and kylikes) and two-handled glasses (skyphoi). Sometimes unusually-shaped vessels did occur, for instance the animal-configured rythà and the breast-shaped cups, probably linked to particular rituals.

### **The cemeteries of Adria between VI and V centuries BC > 37**

Since the world of the dead mirrored the society structure, in the cemeteries we find rich burials along with more modest ones. The grave goods were also different for men and women. Two burying rituals were used, incineration (common among the Veneti) and inhumation (more typical of the Etruscan culture).

The necropoleis were to the east and north of the town; sometimes they were arranged in mounds that contained the burials of different families, as demonstrated by Ca’ Cima (1994/1995) burials n. 4, 5 and 8. The graves could be signalled by a cobble emerging from the ground.

The most renowned men had grave goods rich in Attic pottery and Etruscan bronzes; this banquet equipment followed a codified standard. There were also andirons and spits for grilling meat, and knives (often arranged in a “set”) for cutting it. The bronze vessels, often coming from southern Etruria (especially Vulci) and decorated with refined figurative handles, were used for wine consumption.

In this period the female grave goods



were less worthy than the male ones. Nevertheless, they could include jewels made of amber, faience, gold, silver and bronze, together with precious glass perfume vessels, which probably had been imported.

Along with some modest burials that had only a few recipients, we can find women who carried with them prestige ornaments, like amber pendants, fibulae of alpine origin and golden earrings coming from Taranto. This implied large-scale trade, from North to South.

#### **Between IV and III century BC > 41**

##### **From crisis to magnificence**

The burials dating back to the IV century BC are quite few. This mirrors a demographic crisis of the town, in a period during which the multiethnic Adria saw the arrival of the Celtic component in the “melting pot”. Nevertheless, rich graves with prestige grave goods have been found as well, for instance Spolverin grave n. 57, an inhumation tomb with a krater by the Filottrano painter. Along with the banquet pottery, the grater used for adding cheese to the wine recalls the high status of the dead, while the faience buttons testify the acceptance of Etruscan-Italic models. A new kind of vessel did appear, i.e. the lekane, a capped pan that would characterize the later female burials.

At the end of the IV century BC the female burials were sometimes enriched by Celtic ornaments, as happens in Spolverin grave n. 7. In this case, a girl burial, the grave goods include a green and yellow faience bangle, a particular bronze fibula and various shells. The latter were used by children as toys.

##### **In the town**

Between the end of the IV and the III centuries BC, dramatic changes in

pottery international trade did occur, and the consequences of such change involved Adria as well. Following the long war against Sparta and the pest epidemic, Athens fell into crisis. The figure pottery production stopped, and a new, completely black-glazed pottery emerged. This kind of pottery would later be imitated by Magna Graecia, Northern Italy and Etruscan (especially Volterra) workshops. Other kinds of pottery that spread in this period are represented by the one painted in white, red and yellow on black background, i.e. the “Gnathia” ware (from Apulia), and that with quickly- and roughly-painted figures, which is called “Alto-adriatica” and was popular between the Adriatic coast and the Piceno. This last production was characterized by new shapes, often linked to the banquet, or to the homework and to the female world: the myke, a refined jug with a single handle made of two ribbons; the lekane, a capped pan sometimes used as a recipient for female make-up tools; the pyxis. Apart from this rich and refined pottery, the everyday one included vessels with simple shape and uniform (gray or pink) colour. Plates and cups often reported inscriptions of Etruscan, Venetic and Celtic proper names, thus mirroring a multiethnic community that used both Etruscan language and alphabet.

##### **The “chariot burial” > 47**

The “chariot burial”, found on 5/25/1938 during the excavation of the Canal Bianco bed (to the South of the town), is the most famous grave of ancient Adria, as well as part of a huge cemetery made of 396 graves, both of Etruscan and Roman age.

The funerary ritual involved the sacrifice of a pair of carthorses, tied to a chariot (of which we have the metal elements, i.e. axle, rudder, wheel rims and hubcaps), and of a third horse that

was behind the chariot. The animals have been buried with their harness. The omega-shaped bits were common during the III century BC. To the same period can be dated the iron spearhead found close to the third horse neck, and maybe used for the sacrifice.

The person to whom such sacrifice was addressed is shrouded in mystery. The excavation journal says the area around the burial was disturbed (violated?), and that a quite rich tomb, belonging to a young man, was found some 15 m away from the chariot one; much closer to the latter was a poorer tomb, belonging to a kid wearing a bronze torque (a typical Celtic ornament). The three horses belong to races of oriental origin. The two yoked animals, a female and a colt, are very robust, while the third one, tall and slim, is a 7- or 8-year-old male.

##### **The Hellenistic burials > 51**

During the III century BC, inhumation became the most widespread burying ritual. The corpses were put inside large wooden coffins that could contain more and more numerous grave goods, such as complete banquet equipments, sometimes with many amphorae for wine. This reflected the collective nature of the funeral ceremony, joined by the extended family of the dead. New status symbols appeared in the female graves: rich amber necklaces, golden jewels decorated through granulation (an Etruscan technique), silver hair rings, and glass bangles of Celtic style. The precious perfumes and balsams were contained in polychrome glass vessels. The male grave goods were often enriched by iron weapons of Celtic typology. The presence of Celtic people at Adria is confirmed also by some inscriptions, for instance Verkantus, found on some vessels belonging to tomb n. 9 of the Ca' Cima 1993 necropolis.

Among the prestige tableware is worth noting the originality and refinement of the black-glazed kantharoi with tangled handles, coming from Volterra, and the so-called “dishes for fish”, characterized by a central socket for sauces, thus showing the usage of eating elaborated food.

The rich grave goods dating between the end of the III and the mid-II century BC reflect the need to reinforce the cohesion and the social legitimation of the most relevant families of the town. The funeral ceremonies provided banquets that were addressed to a growing number of participants, as we can see from the large amount of tableware contained in the graves. The amphorae of various dimensions (and capacity) reflect the consumption of different beverages, i.e. of many kinds of wine. Unusual (and, for this reason, precious) objects began to appear among the grave goods. Examples are the rare black ceramic flasks. The taste for exotic items is coupled by the prestige of the ceramic ones, as in the Conton grave (brought to light in 1904), where we can find an askos in the shape of a man who rides a phallic-shaped recipient (a characteristic production from Apulia), and a rare vessel in the shape of Bes, coming from Egypt. In this period, the wide commercial relationships that Adria had in the previous centuries still last, thus qualifying the town as completely integrated in the economic and cultural context proper of Hellenism.

#### **The Romans at Atria > 57**

Between the end of the II century BC and the beginning of the I century BC Atria was involved in an important economic change, due to the integration into the Roman world. Its flourishing trade activities were prompted by the efficient new road network. The increasing amount of amphorae,

linked to the trade of wine, oil and other prestigious liquids, mirrors the growth of commerce: many different kinds of amphorae lead the visitor from the first floor to the mezzanine. Also the burials reflect the ongoing social transformation: some of them maintain the previous tradition, with rich tableware sets, while other ones follow the new Roman model, with a more simple set of grave goods and incineration as burying ritual.

The town multiethnicity can still be seen in the presence of many exotic objects: for instance, the singular glass pendant in the shape of a black man's head, coming from Piantamelon necropolis, tomb 80; a terra sigillata vessel of similar shape comes from Retratto necropolis, tomb 28. Another example is represented by the green glass cup coming from Ca' Cima necropolis (1970), tomb 8.

By the end of the II century BC, the town gained a monumental aspect. The fragment of a female draped statue, coming from the Hospital area, was part of the decoration of a temple. The ceramic figurative elements found at Adria, quite rare in Northern Italy, were made by craftsmen working in Central Italy, where these artworks were more common.

#### **Roads and centuriae > 61**

The Romans worked on the town architecture and on the surrounding land as well, both by arranging an efficient road network and by subdividing rationally the land itself (centuriation). To this period can be dated back the building of Popillia road, starting from Rimini and reaching the Venice lagoon through San Basilio and Atria, and Annia road, whose origin and route are still matter of debate. The latter, passing through Atria, Padua, Altino and Concordia, finally led to Aquileia.

The agrarian subdivisions were ar-

ranged basing on these roads, all having a north-south orientation, and also on other courses with an east-west one, like the Gavello and Villadose roads. To the north of Adria there was a centuriated area with elongated parcels (oriented north-south), while another area around Villadose road was characterized by big plots, with a north-east to south-west orientation. Centuriation, and the consequent assignation of plots to the colonists, prompted a land arrangement that was efficient also from the point of view of land drainage and reclaiming. A clear evidence of what should have been a flourishing commerce is represented by the substantial presence, in the archaeological record (from the III century BC onwards), of Roman coins of Republican age, such as asses, denarii and Venetic drachmae.

#### **Atria and its district during the Imperial age > 63**

Augustus, while arranging his Empire, divided Italy into 12 regiones, with Atria belonging to the X Regio, Venetia et Histria. The town gained the status of municipium, i.e. a community whose institutions mirrored the ones proper of Rome. The cities of the Empire had to share a common urban model, with roads and civil, holy, and entertainment public buildings, and Atria was no exception. Anyway, very few of what monumental Atria should have been survived until the present day: during the Middle Ages, the buildings were systematically spoliated, in order to produce lime by cooking the marble in the many “calcare” (ovens) that have been found during the excavations. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify the main public monuments of the town, such as the forum, the theatre and the amphitheatre, along with other prestigious, public and private buildings that were provided with

sumptuous decorative devices. Examples are represented by the white marble fragment with festoons, found in the Hospital area, or the fragments of capitals and cornices belonging to the Bocchi collection.

Among the many mosaic floors that have been found in the town during the past centuries, only one survived until now. The black-and-white tessellation of this mosaic reproduced stylized geometrical and vegetal motifs, and decorated a I century BC domus that has been found along Chieppara road, close to the ancient amphitheatre.

The Atria district comprised most part of the present-day Rovigo province, as well as most part of the coastal area between the Po delta and the Brenta-Bacchiglione estuaries. In this period Atria maintained its role of crucial commercial centre in the frame of the Adriatic and Mediterranean trade networks; this was due mainly to its still lively fluvial harbour, where it was possible to find oil, wine and fish sauces, coming from faraway places. The wideness of the commercial network was reflected by the great range of different marbles (coming from the entire Mediterranean basin) that were used for the decoration of private and public buildings between the I and the III centuries AD.

The harbour-related commerce prompted also the town craftworks: during the first two centuries of the new millennium, brick and tableware production, along with woodwork and more domestic activities, such as spinning and weaving, underwent a strong development.

A lot of common-use objects, such as lamps and little bells, did survive up to now; the same is true also for more rare items, like ivory and bone dices and pawns that were used both in private houses and in the taverns. The bronze and marble statuettes are the clues of a religious sense that could permeate

both the public and the private sphere. An example of this is the head of the Oriental god Attis, or the vessel with an inscription dedicated to Juno.

#### **Domus and matronae > 67**

Between the end of the I and the II centuries AD, the richest houses of Adria were characterized by sumptuous tableware sets. Very “trendy” were the terra sigillata vessels, provided with a glossy red surface, sometimes decorated with relief motifs. The main centre of production of this pottery was initially Arezzo. Later this production became widespread in the whole Empire.

The decoration represents sometimes geometrical or floral patterns, sometimes “scenes”. Other new ceramic typologies, the so-called “thin-walled pottery” (in the shape of dishes, cups and beakers), and the rarer green/yellowish-glazed one, appeared in this period.

Among the metal tools, along with bronze handles and strainers, we find a new object, i.e. a shell-shaped stamp, maybe used for cooking sweets. A bone spoon was used to eat uncooked eggs. Part of the female world were the jewels, such as rings and earrings (with or without gems), along with toiletries: mirrors, tweezers, sticks and tablets (the latter used for mixing the make-up pigments that were contained in the pyxides). Of outstanding value is a necklace made of pure gold and garnets, dating back to the II century AD, which has recently been found during the excavations of the Hospital area; the jewel, that has heart-shaped beads, is torn and broken at one end, and this could be the reason why it was lost.

#### **Roman glass > 73**

The cornerstone of the Roman section is represented by the showcase that displays the early Imperial age glass-

es (end of the I century BC - I century AD). The large capped jars made of green-blue blown glass were used as cinerary urns in prestige burials. Other glasses of various shape, produced by using different, very refined techniques, enriched these burials as well. The polychrome or green-blue blown glass balsam vessels, and the more rare green-blue or transparent bottles, represent containers for perfumes, balsams and other liquids that could be used for the corpse care. The most precious items were decorated by polychrome filaments or mouldings.

The rhyta, or drinking horns, had often the shape of an animal head, and should have been used during ceremonies. The showcase displays two refined examples of this type: the yellow rhyton with the bottom shaped as a snail head, and the one made of polychrome sprayed glass.

The precious blue glass cups, produced using the stamping technique, were made by Ennion, a vitrarius of Oriental origin who signed his products.

The murrino glass cups or the channelled ones, along with those with a reticulum frame, recall the refined production of the more recent Venetian tradition. Rarer are the mat blue or black glasses, and the carved transparent dish.

#### **The graves of Imperial age: new rituals > 79**

Between the I and the II centuries AD the incineration ritual became exclusive. The urns and the grave goods were put inside a little wooden or brick box, sometimes capped with a sawed amphora. The glass urns represented the more prestigious cinerary containers, while other polychrome glass vessels contained balsams and perfumes used for treating the corpse and soothing the combustion smell. The urns were associated with objects

that should ease the dead's trip to the afterworld: tableware, propitiatory offerings of milk or wine, or a coin that had to be paid to Charon in order to be carried to the Elysium. Also common was a bronze fibula, aimed at closing the dead's clothes or the sudarium that enveloped the burnt remains. Dishes, cups and beakers (made of glass or clay) were used during the funeral banquet and then buried together with the dead. In the female graves there could be a bronze mirror, along with some jewels and toiletries.

### Talking stones: the lapidarium > 81

The inscriptions of the lapidarium let us reconstruct the social articulation and (partially) the political structure of the ancient town. The Corinthian capital, or the portico pillar, both of them on the eastern side of the exposition, recall the monumental phase of Adria; nearby, some religious and public documents. Of particular interest is the inscription dedicated to Neptune by the *quattuorviri*, the highest magistrates of the town. The cult of this deity was certainly important at Adria, as it was strictly tied to the sea and the benefits it gave. A single marble sarcophagus is exposed in the Museum, and dates back to the II century AD. It was dedicated to Terentia Capitolina by her husband. The funerary stelae report inscriptions that reflect the structure of the town society between the end of the I century BC and the I century AD. With respect to this issue, onomastics is an important source of knowledge. The complete denomination (the so-called *tria nomina* system: prenomens, nomen, cognomen) characterized a free man, that was part of his birthplace tribe (the *Camilia* tribe for Adria); also frequent is the quote of the father's praenomen abbreviation, followed by the *f* of *Filius*. The women had not the tribe affili-

ation (only nomen and cognomen), since they didn't take part to the public life. The slaves had only the prenomens (sometimes recalling their foreign origin); sometimes it could be coupled with their owner's name. The freed slaves, or freedmen, had their name followed by the formula *l...* or *lib. ...* (freedman of/by...).

### The Po Delta during the Roman age > 83

Along the coastal branch of the *Popillia* road, which separated from the inland one around San Basilio, were two mansiones, that is shelters/rest-stop for the travellers.

#### The mansio Fossis

Near the Adige mouth rose a refined residential complex, equipped with a thermal plant. In the I century AD this complex became a *mansio*, which is present in some ancient maps. A monumental dock, with roof sustained by plastered clay columns and Tuscanic stone capitals, faced the river course. Two flat-bottom wooden ships, fit for fluvial or lagoon navigation, were brought to light during the excavations as well. The wideness of the trade interests characterizing this site up to the V century AD is well represented by the discovery of many amphorae, which are tied to the commerce of wine, oil and fish sauce. The glasses, for example the violet bottle or the carved cup, reflect the complexity of their production techniques. The cult of *Mitra*, a deity who was famous among the soldiers who served in the East, is represented by a marble fragment, on which the god is depicted while killing a bull.

#### The mansio Hadriani

The coastal settlement of San Basilio, already active in the Iron age, during the Imperial age was an important

hub for travel, identified as the *mansio Hadriani* or *Radriani* of the ancient maps. The *Popillia* road divided into an inland branch, leading to Adria, and a coastal one, that ran along the sand bars around the ancient lagoon. A large residential complex, rich in frescoed walls and expensive window glasses, gives us the idea of a wealthy settlement, enriched by the arrival of exotic people who carried with them refined and precious goods. This sense of wealth can be seen also in some coin treasures found at the site. One of them is made of denarii and silver quinarii, and dates back to the Republican age (between the II century and the beginning of the I century BC), while other two are composed by bronze coins dating back to the IV and V century AD, a period during which San Basilio became a crucial place for the spread of the Christian religion.

The discovery of a baptistry, octagonal in shape, and of a neighbouring basilica (only partially identified) surrounded by a little inhumation cemetery, shed light on the palaeochristian period of this region. The graves are protected by little brick structures, and there are almost no grave goods. Some children burials were contained inside reused amphorae. Some objects carried the *chrismòn*, the symbol resulting by the union of the three Greek letters that form Christ's name.

### Adria between the VI century and the VIII century AD > 91

The findings dating back to this period are few. Nevertheless, they witness a certain wealth and a quite large trade network.

A contraction of the urban area can be inferred from the position of some burials, especially those found at *Ex-Riformati* road, in the core-area of the ancient settlement.

These few graves had jewels and belt

decorations that qualify them as belonging to quite prestigious people. The discovery of golden coins, minted in Rome and Ravenna (the Exarchate capital) between the VI century and the VIII century AD, is a clue of still important trades.

Still in the VII century AD Adria represented an important bastion against the Longobards. To this period can be probably dated the birth of the Diocese; its first bishop was called Giallonisto. Despite its contraction, the town maintained a fluvial harbour and acquired the name Adrianopolis.

Around the mid VIII century AD Adria and the Ravenna Exarchate were briefly involved in the Longobardic domi-

nation. Anyway, this status did not last so long, since they were soon donated to the Pope.

### **The Bocchi Collection > 93**

A little section commemorates the careful and precious work of the Bocchi family, especially Francesco Girolamo and Francesco Antonio. The former conceived the idea of a domestic museum, as means of making the heritage of Adria available to those interested in antiquity; from 1787 onwards, he started recording the visitors' names, among whom are the Austrian archduke Francesco Carlo with his wife Sofia, and Theodor Mommsen, the famous German epigraphist

who compiled the *Corpus Inscriptio-num Latinarum*. Subsequently, Francesco Antonio Bocchi, who had been appointed Inspector for diggings and findings in the Polesine, excavated the Public Garden area, where the Museum now rises, thus providing a cross section of the Etruscan and Roman town.

The work of the Bocchi family, so careful and passion-driven, is still nowadays of utmost importance for the scholars; this is true with particular regard to the documentation they left, which represents the origin and the heart of the Museum at the same time.

### **Further information**

> **17** *The tiny fragment of a Siana-type cup (570-560 BC), with a bird facing a female figure, is a quite rare item; moreover, it is contemporary to the arrival of the Greek and Etruscan merchants and to the birth of Adria.*

> **21** *Among the pottery of Venetic production, worth noting is a rare handled cup with black and red incised decoration. These colours are quite common in the local tradition. On the contrary, very rare is*

*the decoration depicting a dog or a wolf, which can be considered an imitation of a famous production from Corinth that is characterized by zoomorphic figures.*

> **33** *Dionysus, the god of wine, was depicted carrying a crown of vine leaves and a two-handled beaker, the kantharos; he was followed by a plentiful cortège of satyrs and maenads, often represented as drunk and dancing wildly, thus reminding to the drinker about respecting the limits, in order to avoid conditions that are not human anymore.*

> **52** *The leather pilgrim flasks, used for keeping the water cold, were quite com-*

*mon. They were usually carried on the shoulder. Rarer are the metal or ceramic versions of the container. At Adria, two ceramic pilgrim flasks have been discovered.*

> **61** *Publius Popillius Laenas' milestone has been found in 1844 in the vicinity of the Church of Santa Maria Assunta della Tomba, close to a portion of a Roman road.*

*The milestone, entitled to the consul during whose tenure (132-131 BC) the road was built, tells us much about the road route; it marked the 81st kilometre from where the road began (maybe Rimini).*

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