

Abstract #: 2161

**HOLY WATERS AS PLACE OF ENCOUNTER AND NEGOTIATION IN PADANIAN ETRURIA: RECORDS FROM CASTELFRANCO EMILIA AND LAKE BRACCIANO OF MONTESE**

Diana Neri<sup>1</sup>, Sara Campagnari<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Comune di Castelfranco Emilia - Museo Civico Archeologico*

<sup>2</sup> *Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali e per il Turismo*

Two important archaeological findings concerning the cult of waters occurred in the Panaro river valley, in the province of Modena. These waters have healthy attributes, such as those coming from salsobromiodic springs, or those from resurgences, providing homeothermy and natural self-purification.

In Emilia-Romagna such natural phenomena are frequently connected with the cult of a goddess, protector of the feminine sphere. During the Roman Age her identity is Minerva, while in most cases she incorporates divinities related to the Etruscan, Celtic and Ligurian melting pot inhabiting the area at the time of Romanization. These places of worship are often located near communication routes, at least from the early Iron Age. The worship area of Prato dei Monti is located near the soon to come via Emilia in Castelfranco Emilia, formerly Forum Gallorum. The area features many springs and is probably located near the Minerva worship area, quoted by Cassio Dione relating to the prodigia of the war of Mutina (43 b.C.).

A border sanctuary exists near the Lake Bracciano of Montese, located in the mountain area.

In spite of its marginal location, it bears a strong strategical position, along routes through the valleys.

The area is a meeting point for different ethnic groups residing there at the eve of Romanization.

These people were shepherds practicing transhumance along the valley thus contributing to important market places such as the Campi Macri.

Both places offer various votive objects, dating from the 6th century to at least the 3rd century B.C., when the Celts occupy Emilia-Romagna.

During the Roman age the Prato dei Monti area features solely cults of Italic matrix.

**Keywords**

cult of waters, Contact zones, springs

**Note/comment**