



CALL FOR PAPERS

Rethinking Colonization in Ancient Italy and the Western Mediterranean (500-250 BCE)



Possible depiction of Sacred Spring ritual. Sprandio Sarcophagus (510-500 BCE), Museo Archeologico Nazionale dell'Umbria

PANEL ORGANIZATION: Guy Bradley & Jeremia Pelgrom

16th Celtic Conference in Classics

Coimbra 2025

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ORGANIZER 1:

name	Guy Bradley
e-mail	bradleygj@cardiff.ac.uk
affiliation	Cardiff University
country	UK
biography	Guy Bradley is a professor of Roman and early Italian history at Cardiff University. He is the author of <i>Ancient Umbria</i> (2000) and <i>Early Rome to 290 BC</i> (2020), and the editor of various books on Greek and Roman colonization and the peoples and regions of ancient Italy.

ORGANIZER 2:

name	Jeremia Pelgrom
e-mail	j.pelgrom@rug.nl
affiliation	University Groningen
country	Netherlands
biography	Jeremia Pelgrom is an assistant professor of ancient history at Groningen University and previously served as the head of Antiquity at the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome. His research interests include Roman imperialism, ancient colonization, and landscape archaeology. More about his research projects here

PANEL SYNOPSIS:

This panel re-examines ancient Italian colonization through a comparative lens, moving beyond traditional Romanocentric, state-driven narratives. By adopting a multi-polar perspective, the panel situates Roman colonization within the broader context of Western Mediterranean colonizing practices, including those of the Etruscans, Sabines, Samnites, Gauls, Carthaginians, Massalians, and Syracusans. The aim is to highlight the diverse and evolving forms of colonization practiced by these societies, challenging the view of Roman exceptionalism.

The panel will also explore alternative forms of group mobility and settlement, such as secessions by lower classes, and movements such as the *ver sacrum*, broadening the scope beyond elite-driven, imperial models. By comparing Roman practices with those of other colonizing polities in the region, the panel will aim to reveal the interconnected and shifting nature of ancient colonization. So, is it accurate, for instance, to claim that early Roman colonization followed Etruscan and Italic patterns (Torelli 1999), while later developments aligned with broader Mediterranean imperial trends in colonization strategies and settlement planning? Some possible issues to address:

- How far can we compare colonial type movements across cultures?
- What similarities were there between the mobility of archaic groups such as in the *Ver Sacrum* or individuals such as traders with state controlled colonization schemes?
- How far do postcolonial approaches offer a useful way to recontextualize ancient colonization movements?



By considering these questions, the comparative approach explored in this panel should provide new insights into how colonization was related to imperialism in ancient Italy and beyond, contributing to wider debates on the history of empire-building in the Mediterranean world.

Confirmed speakers:

Marion Bolder-Boos (Darmstadt / Mainz)
Guy Bradley (Cardiff)
Massimiliano di Fazio (Pavia)
Jeremia Pelgrom (Groningen)
Tesse Stek (Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome / Groningen)

Observations:

We are particularly interested in papers exploring the colonization practices of the Etruscans, Sabines, Samnites, Gauls, Carthaginians, Massalians, and Syracusans. We especially welcome contributions that adopt a comparative perspective, examining the similarities and differences among various colonial polities in the ancient Western Mediterranean.

Please use the Template for Paper Proposals available on the conference website and you should include an abstract of up to 300 words. Papers may be either 20 or 40 minutes. Please indicate which format you prefer. Paper proposals should be sent to the panel organizers by January 15, 2025 (bradleygj@cardiff.ac.uk/ j.pelgrom@rug.nl). Presenters will be notified of the result by February 1, 2025.