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THE INFLUENCE OF THE AUGUSTAN REGIO I ON THE ITALIAN REGIONALIZATION DEBATE

1. *Between «Latium et Campania»: a different perspective* - The Augustan Regio I was a territorial aggregate of *Latium (vetus et adiectum)* and *Campania*. Although it is accepted that these territorial contexts are different, as it is suggested also by place names, the relationship between Rome and the other important urban center of Phlegraean Fields (*Misenum, Baiiae, Puteoli*) gave a unitary profile to this territorial division. *Baiiae* was a leisure destination, well known to the roman aristocracy; *Misenum* was the military harbour of the roman army, while *Puteoli* was an important seaport to the trade flows. Many cities of Campania played a strategical role for Rome and its aristocracy, as pointed out from the high frequency in affairs by sea and by land.

The territorial asset of *Regio I* does not result from ethnic criteria but, more probably, it is due to an infrastructural network between Rome and the Southern Italy (Gambi, 1977). The Appian Way and the Latin Way were certainly the most important routes to travel and trade.

Since the nineteenth century, the area comparable to the ancient *Regio I* was involved in a series of regional models. We would also underline as several criteria of regionalization (hydrogeological features, historical experiences and sense of identity, economic and functional forces) were chosen in order to create regions. After the political unity of Italian peninsula (1861), the administrative subdivision became the best way of governing the new country. The political debate on regionalization highlighted the difficulties of making decisions and moving from theory to practice. The matter has taken off again and it is due to the current territorial changes. Therefore, the Augustan perspective on *Regio I* has been examined in order to consider its potentialities for a new territorial asset based on the socio-economic dynamics between Lazio and Campania.

¹Author contributions: Maria Ronza conceived and designed the research. She has written the third and the fourth paragraphs; she also made all the maps. Eliodoro Savino gave many suggestions for improving this article. He has written the first and the second paragraphs.

2. *The Augustan Regio I: economic relationship as a key factor of the territorial cohesion* - The debate on the Augustan *discriptio* is still open in relation to aim and reason of the Augustan regionalization. The *regiones* of Italian peninsula are based on historic, ethnic and economic criteria. The mixture of “regionalization” and “regionalism” is particularly clear in the *Regio I*. This region included *Latium* and *Campania*, which are contiguous geographical areas linked by age-old relationship. However, these areas were characterised by ethnic and cultural differences.

During the Augustan age, Rome grew approximately up to one million inhabitants (Morley, 1996). According to reliable studies, the *Urbs* was at the climax of the demographic and urban growth happening over the last two centuries, in the Republican age. Supplies of food were a priority for the roman metropolis. This had led to an integrated system between Rome and neighbouring areas of south-central Italy, mainly based on a high diversification of production. The relationships of production and trade were closely related to the distance of these areas from Rome. We cannot say exactly if Augustus took into consideration these elements. However, the economic relationship with Rome became a unifying force between *Latium* and *Campania*, at the beginning of the Imperial age.

According to historical and epigraphical sources, the area within a twenty or twenty-five miles radius of Rome is defined as suburban. *Salubritas*, *otium* and *amoenitas* were significant elements for increasing the quality of life, contrary to the frenetic and unhealthy city life. However, only the roman emperors and the most important senator's families used to spend the summer and long periods in the *suburbium* (Champlin, 1982).

In *Latium antiquum*, many towns lost their relevance becoming small villages in the beginning of the Imperial age. Therefore, the roman *elites* preferred to spend their financial resources in the suburban area more than in the old towns. They built luxurious houses, but also *villae rusticae* for the management of agricultural funds. As usually in the suburban areas of the main pre-industrial cities, these agricultural funds were reserved to the intensive farming of perishable foods and valuable products. This was possible thanks to the Egyptian and Africans food imports of wheat, sufficient to Rome requests. Close to the orchards and the horticultural plants, there were the valuable productions characteristic of *villatica pastio* as, for instance, the honey production, the breeding of unusual species (thrushes, peacocks, gophers, peculiar fishes) and the flower growing with the aim to satisfy the demand of the roman aristocracy. Even the southern Lazio had close economic relations with Rome. The geographer Strabo referred to this area: it was well-known for its soil fertility, farming production, but also for the lively urban energy too.

In the Ancient Campania, the incredible wheat and wine production supports a well-developed network of towns. The agricultural surplus was offloaded on Rome, the largest market place of the ancient world. Archaeological finds confirmed this strong trade relationship, clearly evidenced by a particular kind of epigraphs known as *indices nundinarii*. These *indices* were inscriptions relating to *nundinae*: they were periodic markets (every seven or eight days) taking place in some of the most important cities of the *Regio I*.

Three *indices* are interesting for our research, referring to the middle of the first century A.D. and called with regards to the places where each *index* was found. We refer to the *index Pompeianus* (Degrassi, *Inscriptiones Italiae*, n.53), the *index* of Southern Lazio (the original place of this *index* is uncertain, perhaps this could be from *Fregellae*, Degrassi, *ibidem*, n.49) and the *index Pausilypensis* (Degrassi, *ibidem*, n.52). Roma and Capua (Volturno plain) are set out in sequence on each *index*. In the *index Pompeianus* and in the *index Pausilypensis*, these two cities are respectively preceded by the most important harbour town of the areas where were found: *Puteoli* and *Minturnae*. The *indices nundinarii* provide significant information about the centres of products store and distribution. Therefore, it is possible to identify the trade flows between Southern Lazio, Campania and Rome. The *index Pompeianus* points out the prominent position of *Puteoli*. This town was the terminal of two trade flows regarding local specialist products: the cereals from the *ager Campanus* and wine from the Vesuvian area. Other valuable products (fragrances, vases from Capua, *garum* from Pompeii) used to get into the terminal of *Puteoli*. The *index* of Southern Lazio highlights the role of *Minturnae* as terminal for the trade of fine wines coming from the *ager Falernus*, also confirmed by Latin literature and archaeological finds. Although the *index Pausilypensis* is a fragmented source for our research, it gives rise to a trading function performed by Benevento (Campania hinterland). This city is mainly considered as a marketplace for the wool coming from Lucera (Apennine mountains). This product type was inexpensive but widely used. Perhaps, the trade flow of fine textile products got through Benevento before arriving to Capua and stopping to the port city of *Puteoli* where all these productions were shipped to Rome.

The inclusion of Rome in these three *indices nundinarii* attests the establishment of an integrated network including the most important cities of the *Regio I*. This urban network was intended to direct local products toward the metropolis of the first century AD. In Rome, there were *nundinae* since ancient time (Storchi Marino, 1997). For our research, it is important to highlight the role played by the *nundinae* in the *Urbs*. The *nundinae* were able to satisfy the needs of the metropolitan population, but also to improve the trade of luxury products coming in Rome from all parts of the Empire. Probably, the traders of Campania were allowed to buy and sell these luxury goods in many cities of the *Regio I*.

3. *Regio I, a territorial context between uniform and heterogeneous geographical features. The Augustan perspective and its suggestion in the Italian regionalization process.* - During the Roman Empire, the cities have always played a

key role in the territorial government. The long-term and frequent relationships between the *Urbs* and the dynamic cities of Campania and Phlegrean coastline have been the cohesive forces able to overcome ethnic and landscape differences existing between “*Latium et Campania*”. The study of historical and epigraphic sources highlights how commercial and productive matters have oriented the configuration and the boundaries of the Augustan *Regio I* more than natural and cultural features. Therefore, functional criteria are the main keys of regionalization process (Polverini, 1998).

The establishment of a singular collaborative pattern between Rome (the metropolis of the past) and the main cities of Campania coastline and hinterland is the result of several factors, like for example: a continuous provision of food resources for the *Urbs*, a strategic positioning of the Roman military fleet, a well-known amenity of places for Roman élites. Since the Republican period, the Appian Way and the Latin Way were basic road networks connecting urban areas and rural settlements with a different socio-economic profile between *Latium et Campania*. Then, during the Imperial period, the construction of other ways - called *Domitiana* and *Severiana* - made stronger and more various these territorial relationship.

However, if we analyze the Italian administrative organization in the 1900s, we realize how the Augustan idea regarding the *Regio I* has absolutely neglected. Today, Lazio and Campania are two regions with different administrative authorities. An administrative boundary line between regions divides the ancient *Latium* from the *Campania felix*. Unlike *Regio I*, northerly Lazio includes Tuscia, while southerly Campania includes Cilento. Moreover, both regions extend over the Apennine mountains (*fig. 1*).

In view of the current situation, is it possible to consider the value and the persistence of Augustan regionalist model for this area? During the scientific and political debate on Italian administrative reorganization (Agnelli Foundation, 1994; SGI, 2014), are still relevant the principles of “Augustan *discriptio*”, especially for *Regio I*?

It is not easy to answer these questions but this research tries to do this in two ways. First, we have reinterpreted the geo-historical approach using new geographical methodologies like, for instance, the georeference of historical maps in a GIS (Geographical Information System) data structure¹. Overlaying several layers about different ideas on Italian regionalization, it is possible to highlight their differences and their changes during the time. In particular, we consider the border of the Augustan *Regio I* versus

¹ The historical maps were turned into a digital format, using a laser scanner; in a GIS environment, all the maps are georeferenced on “Google Earth” by the well-known method of Ground Control Point (GCP). We were able to overlay historical maps, although the differences between geographical scale, projections, iconographic system. Then, it was possible to create a georeferenced geometrical layers (linear at first, polygonal later with geoprocessing tools). This approach has allowed us to make a comparative and analyse trough the different ideas of regionalization, since the nineteenth century until today.

main hypotheses of the Italian Risorgimento in the 1880s. Then we consider the different phases of the administrative organization until the early 1900s.

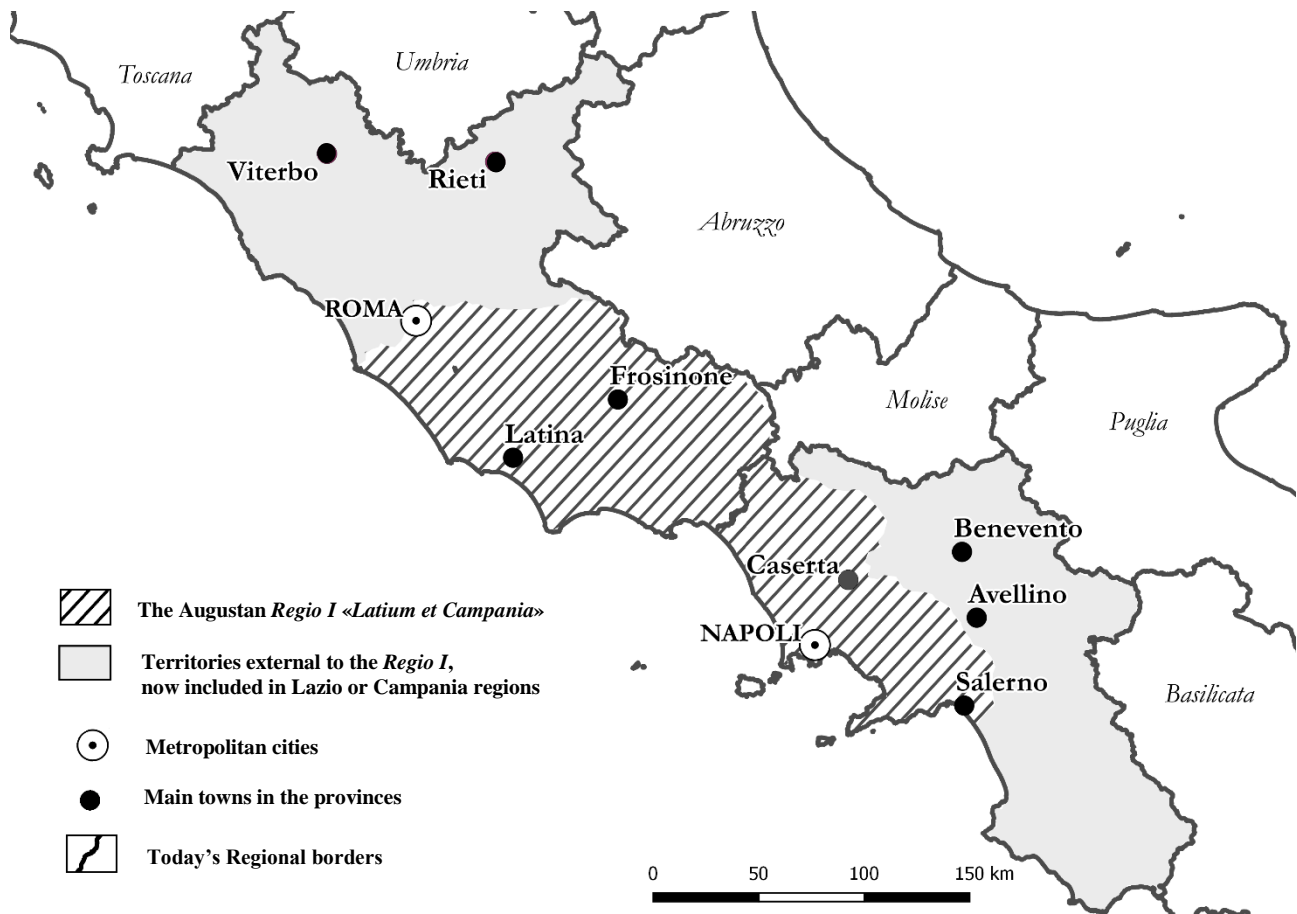


Fig. 1 – The Augustan *Regio I* and today's regional asset. In the same area, the regional border between Lazio and Campania is in contrast to the unitary structure of the *Regio I*. Source: author's elaboration.

Second, we defined several “drivers” that could help us to re-imagining the *Regio I* idea at the present time. In particular, these “drivers” are the recent urban growth of Rome and Naples, the urban sprawl in the region between these two metropolises and, finally, the strong growth of road and rail networks (Ronza, 2014). Therefore, at the present, the socio-economic integration is by far more relevant than the differences in landscape, traditions and customs.

The region idea aroused much interest in the asset of Italian peninsula; it represents a distinctive feature of the Italian political thought, also during the institutional fragmentation. After the national unity, the regionalization became a response to the problems of Italian government (Castelnovi, 2012). From now on, local communities fell the distance between regionalism and regionalization in many areas of the country.

Carlo Frulli, a prominent personality of the Risorgimento, proposed an interesting hypothesis on the Italian regionalization. He supposed “the Vesuvius clivo” as a wide region including the Campania plain (known also as Volturno plain) and the inner valleys of Liri and Sacco rivers. These Apennine valleys ensure a geographical connection with Rome and its plain (fig.2). This territorial division do not consider the border between the Papal States and the Bourbon Kingdom, still existing in the nineteenth century (Scacchi, 1996). Therefore, it is more similar than the other models to the *Regio I* configuration. Although the Frulli’s regional model has based on hydrogeological criteria (“the Vesuvius clivo” includes a series of connecting hydrographical basins)², this territorial organization highlights the strategic role of a natural link between Lazio and Campania, such as between the Middle and the South of Italian peninsula. In the Middle ages, the famous Francigena Way runs along these inner valleys to connect Rome and the Tyrrhenian plains with Brindisi and the Adriatic coastline. The route of pilgrims press again the ancient roman ways, mainly the Latin way and the Appian Way; so, there was a strong continuity of economic and social relations from Romans to Medieval kingdoms, also for the lands interested by the ancient *Regio I*.

² Carlo Frulli though that the concept of *clivo* was the basis of the regionalization. *Clivo* has become an obsolete term in Italian. It could signify a territorial context having the same lines of slope. In this model, a *clivo* could be a geographical region or not. For example, “The Tiber *clivo*” is the wide Tiber basin and it corresponds to “the Tiber region” in the Frulli’s regionalization. Instead, “the Parthenopean region” derives from the aggregate of “the Vesuvian *clivo*” and “the Sele river *clivo*” (Frulli, 1845).

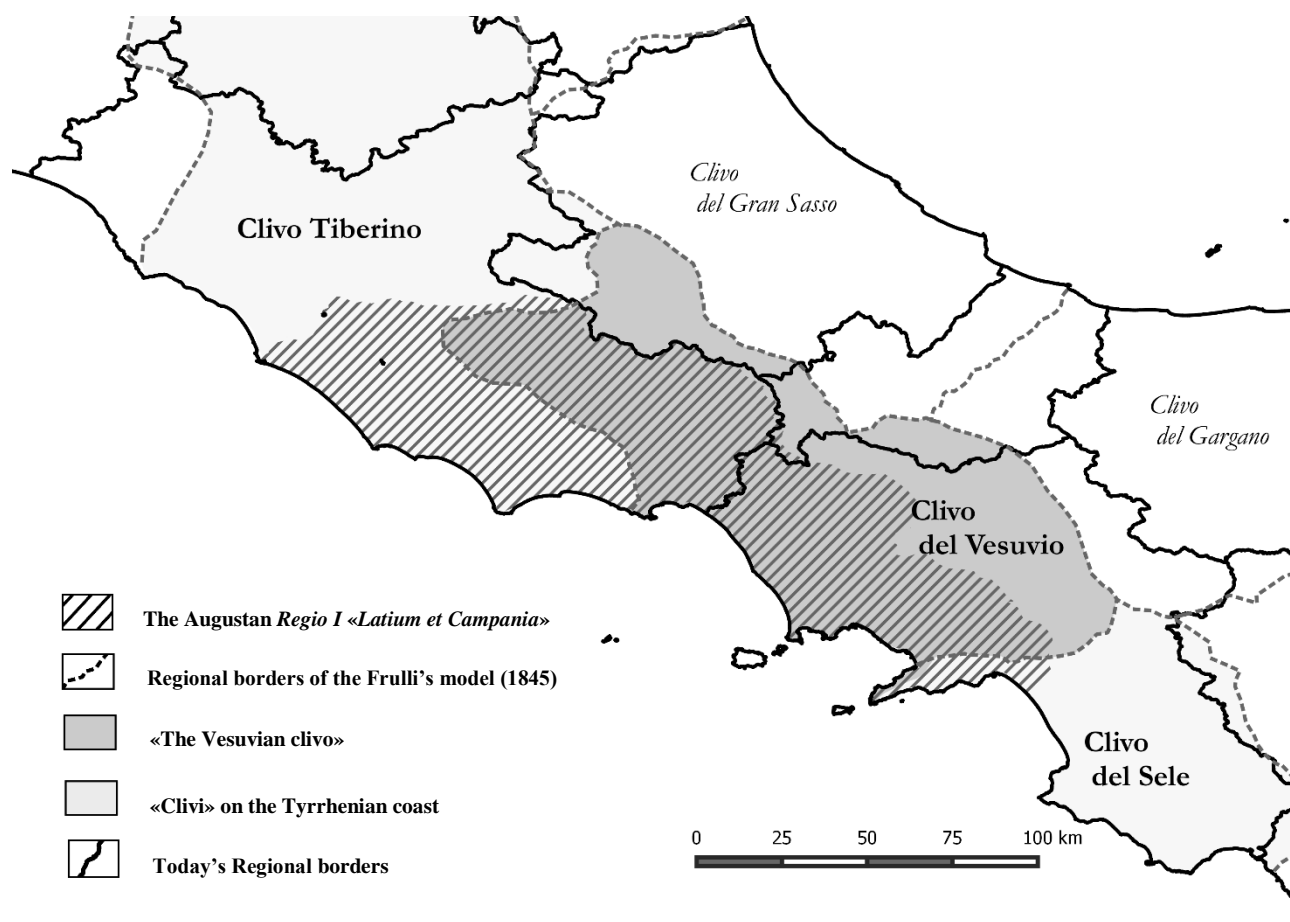


Fig. 2 – “The Vesuvius Clivo” in the regionalization model of Frulli (1845). *Source:* author's elaboration.

However, the Frulli's model effects on the Italian regionalization are marginal, mainly if compared with the effects produced by Correnti's model. Pietro Correnti was a patriot during the Risorgimento and a senator at the time of the Italian Kingdom. His model was firstly used for statistical compartments, but then this territorial division became the basis of the Italian administrative organization. Lucio Gambi, an eminent Italian geographer, thought that the Correnti's model was approximate because it was based on ambiguous criteria for regional breakdown (Gambi, 1998). Although, national territory was divided into units of administration for local and regional government, following the Correnti's perspective.

The boundary between the Papal States and the Bourbon Kingdom, existing before the political unification of Italian peninsula, was necessary to mark two different regions, called “Valle del Tevere” and “Terra di Lavoro e Principati”. Unlike the Frulli's model and by analogy with the present situation, the first region includes Tuscia, while the second region includes Cilento and the Sele floodplain. It is important to underline that the border between “Valle del Tevere” and “Terra di Lavoro e Principati” was further north than the actual border between Lazio and Campania. In this way, an area uniform in terms of soil profile, agricultural production, social structure and economic organization - exactly “Terra di Lavoro” - brought under one administration.

“Terra di Lavoro” was one of the largest provinces of the Italy, after the unification process. If we consider the current administrative organization, it corresponded to the southern part of Latina and Frosinone provinces, to the whole province of Caserta, to the inner section of Naples province and it extended in the external section of Molise region. Until 1927, the province of “Terra di Lavoro” was an administrative authority for the government of a rich agricultural land (Landini, 2013). Frequently, the debate has focused on the uncertain correspondence between *Campania felix*, included in the Augustan *Regio I*, and “Terra di Lavoro”. As already said, it was a rural landscape, playing a key role in the food supplying the *Urbs* and the Tyrrhenian cities mainly during the Imperial age. Today, this area is divided by regional and provincial limits (*fig. 3*).

Finally, we also analyzed another cartographic source: the Italian map of river basins, as defined by the national law n.183 in 1989. Environmental protection and hydrological risk prevent are the main purposes of this law. The river basins are ranked by territorial extension (Mautone *et alii*, 2008). In South Italy, one of the most important river basins is the Volturno and Liri-Garigliano basin. Like Po and Tiber, it is a basin of national level and it extends over a large area in south-central Italy, mainly between Lazio and Campania (*fig. 4*). As already put in evidence from the Frulli’s regionalization and in the Augustan *Regio I*, also the Volturno and Liri-Garigliano basin highlights about keeping regional cohesion.

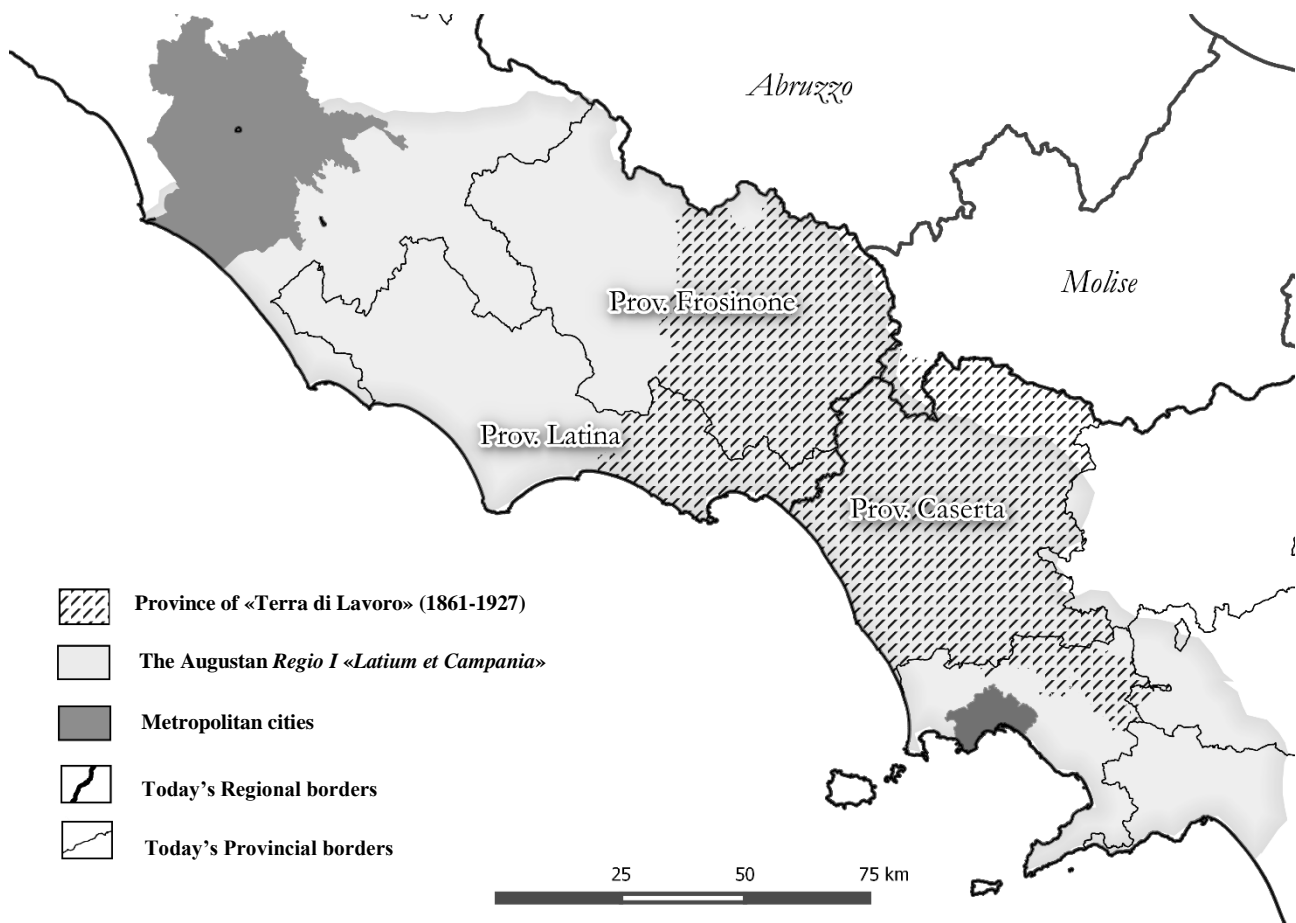


Fig. 3 – The province of “Terra di Lavoro” (1861-1927) and the Augustan Regio I: unitary perspective for the government of an area currently divided by regional and provincial borders. Source: author's elaboration.

4. *Urban dynamics and territorial changes. The Augustan pragmatism for a new regionalization.* - Referring to the regionalization process, the geographer Lucio Gambi puts in evidence how the central government played its power to decide the regional boundaries, according to its aims and objectives (Gambi, 1977). Therefore, there is a big difference between regionalism and regionalization. While the regionalism is a long-term process that involves the identity of a community and the sense of belonging to a place, the regionalization is a political and administrative division for the better management of socio-economic changes and urban dynamics. The regionalization process must adapt to the territorial transformation. Pragmatism and flexibility play a strategic role for the competitiveness and the economic growth of a country.

In the area between Lazio and Campania (more or less corresponding to the ancient Regio I), there are many elements against to the existing “regional status”. First, the recent institution of special authorities for the government of large metropolitan areas is a new (and very important) management apparatus for these newly developed socio-economic structures. Rome and Naples, respectively in Lazio and Campania regions, are the most relevant cities in the south-central Italy. These metropolises have also a

high population density and a strong demographic size. The influences of metropolitan areas is reinforced by several and frequent interactions between them at regional as well as interregional level. Second, we should also consider the impact of urban sprawl on this area. This phenomenon is particularly marked in regions able to attract activities, workers, population, like our study area. Increasing mobility and reducing housing costs encourage the spread of another settlement pattern. Therefore, the urban development refers about rural areas, small towns, medium-sized and peripheral cities located between the interlinked metropolises of Rome and Naples.

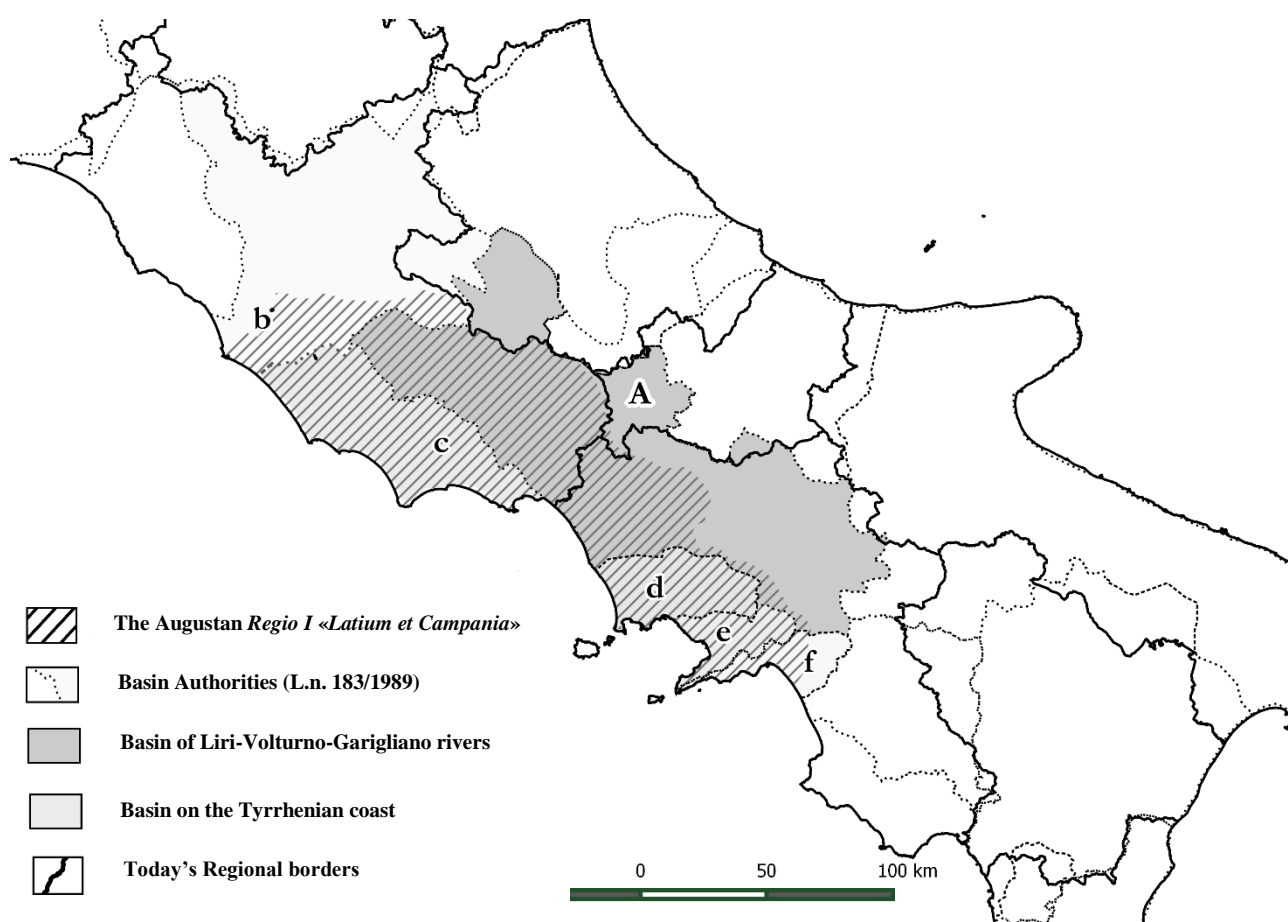


Fig. 4 – The National Basin Authority of Liri-Garigliano and Volturno rivers. It includes a wide area between Lazio and Campania (A). The bordering Basin Authorities along the Tyrrhenian coast: the Tiber river basin (b); the basin of the Lazio's sub-district (c); the north-west basin (d); the Sarno river basin (e); the Sele river basin - left bank (f). Source: author's elaboration.

Even if there are obvious and fundamental differences with regard to the Augustan age, today several factors seem to support the *Regio I* hypothesis. Two very important cities, a middle area and an infrastructure networks give cohesion to this territorial system. In a new regionalization, it is possible to reintroduce the Augustan idea about the *Regio I*, specifically set up as an integrated area.

Until now, the socio-economic and geographical researches focused on the high level of integration that bonds metropolitan areas, medium-size cities, urban frameworks in the Po plain (Pacini, 1996). If

we analyse the current dynamics, it is now clear that the area between Lazio and Campania is moving toward a new pattern of territorial and urban organization. We can suppose that an integrated system of cities and urban areas, driven by the two metropolises of Rome and Naples is growing. This situation is currently taking place, although an administrative border divides the regions of Lazio and Campania. Therefore, we believe that the Augustan perspective could have an increasing relevance to rethink the Italian regionalization, mainly in the area corresponding to the ancient *Regio I*.

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