“Did Etruscans ever become Celts? Interaction patterns and changing identities in the Italian Po region between the 4th and 2nd centuries BC”

According to historical sources, different Celtic tribes invaded the area that is today northern and central Italy from the 4th century BC onwards. The ancient authors focus mainly on the narration of battles between Celts, Etruscans, and other Italic populations. According to these sources, the main consequence of the invasions was either the assimilation or the expulsion of local groups by the Celts just prior to Roman conquest of the entire region.

Focusing my attention on the Po valley between the 4th and 2nd century BC, I aim to show that the archaeological and epigraphic records indicate a more complex and dynamic reality constituted by patterns of social interaction and cultural heterogeneity. Analysing the material culture of the region’s main archaeological sites, I aim to show that the different ethnic groups mentioned in ancient sources were in fact coexisting, reaching in some cases such a profound level of interconnection that it is difficult (if not impossible) to determine their ethnic identity: were they Celts, Etruscans, Etrusco-Celts/Celto-Etruscans, or something else entirely?

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