



Displaying **Via Tecta** | Barbro Santillo Frizell & Jonathan Westin

Displaying Via Tecta

The Via Tecta is the gallery along which the herdsmen conducted their flocks through the substructure of the Sanctuary of Hercules Victor at Tivoli. This extraordinary space organized the civilized side of pastoral life and reflects the economy of animal breeding, capital investments and markets, protected by god Hercules.

The Via Tiburtina followed a prehistoric cattle-trail connecting the cattle market in central Rome to Alba Fucens in the interior Appenine highlands. Tivoli, situated on the edge of the mountain range dominating the Aniene River and the plain below with its important sulphurous lakes, *Aquae Albulae*, was a crucial place along this route.

Our ambition is to visualize the Via Tecta in a context which stresses its role in the movements on Via Tiburtina, and thus as a part of an organized economic system of animal breeding, the so-called transhumance. The idea is to display this history through illustrations, reconstructions and models, elaborated according to the latest scientific results, and using the gallery itself as venue for the exhibition.

Our presentation shows how the ancient drove-roads had an inherent logic, based on certain features in the landscape, such as fords, supply of fresh and curative waters and access to pastures. These choices, that were mainly economic and political, have to a large extent influenced social development and ideological attitudes, reflected in visible structures such as markets and settlements, sanctuaries, shrines and temples. This exhibition presents and visualizes suggested functions of the gallery, such as tax collection for pastures (*scriptura*) and how the shops flanking the Via Tecta were used for selling the animal produce, such as wool, hides, cheese and for storing and selling precious salt.

With this display we desire to show that the Via Tecta - a unique feature in Roman architecture - has a great potential bringing attention to the history of Tivoli in both a local and a global perspective, thus attracting the community as well as tourists. The shops in the gallery could be used as a modern-day market, where local manufacturers sell goods produced in the territory of Tivoli. The proposed exhibition can make a contribution to the vitalization of the suburban parts of Tivoli, and in giving this area a new meaning.