Background and aims
The research reported on here is part of the University of Groningen’s Pontine Region Project (PRP). This project has been on-going for more than 25 years and has as its main objective to study long-term developments in settlement and landscape in the Pontine Region, central Italy. In most recent phase, we are focusing on the productive aspects of the landscape in the Roman period (Tol et al. 2014), for which we increasingly realize the importance of historical and epigraphic data to complement archaeological evidence from field surveys and excavations. This paper provides a first analysis of the combined evidence from these different sources in order to investigate systems of production and distribution of building materials in the Pontine region, using the port town of Antium and its hinterland as a pilot area.

Tile stamps in the Pontine region
Brick and tile stamps, which were in various shapes used from the 1st century BC onwards, form a very useful category of evidence to understand elite involvement in commercial activities, especially in the larger coastal towns and their hinterlands. Simple rectangular or circular stamps may mention the owner (dominus) of the production facilities, while more complex stamps may also inform us on the officinator (manufacturer), the year of production, and/or bear additional elements (e.g., a signum) (Graham 2006: 12/13).

For the Pontine region, brick stamps are primarily known from excavations in consumption contexts, especially urban centers. Only during recent PRP surveys we are also starting to systematically search for brick stamps in rural consumption contexts and brick production sites as well. Therefore, our image of production and distribution in the region is surely partial and for only one area, Antium and its hinterland, we have a mix of data to relate such patterns to elites: besides the rich epigraphic record of this town, recent PRP surveys, site mappings and the study of a local museum collection provide data on production sites of tile and brick (De Haas et al. 2011).

Tile stamps from the age of Antium and production?
In total, we have 19 stamp types attested in the museum collection and from the PRP field survey data. These include simple rectangular stamps (typical for the late Republican period and the 1st century AD), and more complex circular stamps of the 1st to 3rd century AD.

Most of these stamps have only been attested as a single specimen, and have only a general provenance assigned. Some, however, occur more than once and/or can be traced back to specific rural sites. These include the stamp AEMILI PAULLI, a well-known Roman gens name that provided several high-ranking administrators holding office at Rome, POMPEI MAGINI, and L DOMIT DAPH. These three stamps occur on different sites in the coastal area, but are unknown or rare outside it, which in our view suggests that they were produced locally. The limited distribution of these stamps (only the AEMILI PAULLI-stamp has been attested outside the study area, at Ostia) suggests that bricks were primarily intended for the local market, as well as the local urban and rural contexts.

Conclusions and future work
Although the work presented here is only a pilot study, the potential of integrating epigraphic and landscape archaeological data has arisen clearly. At Antium, a town of considerable size and therefore a large market, the production of building materials was an industry of considerable importance: we have archaeological evidence for several workshops situated at or near large elite estates, and in proximity to clay beds. The epigraphic material suggests that various elite figures were involved - a member of the Aemilii Paulli certainly, and others very probably. Such figures would have used their villa maritimae on the Pontine coast not just for leisure, but also for productive activities, providing building materials for their estates, as well as for the local urban and rural markets, as is clear from the distribution of these stamped tiles in both urban and rural contexts.

These first results encourage us to extend our work: first we will continue to compile epigraphic data, extending the inventory from our pilot area towards the regional scale. At this scale, we expect geographic patterns to emerge (with Roman and/or local elites being involved in different parts of the region) (cf Graham 2006; CIFARELLI 2007). On a micro-level, we will continue fieldwork on production sites, aiming to better understand the range of contexts in which production took place and using intensive survey and sampling methods, searching for both production debris and epigraphic material.