Sanctuary and society in central-southern Italy (3rd to 1st centuries BC) : a study into cult places and cultural change after the Roman conquest of Italy
Stek, T.D.

Citation for published version (APA):
Stek, T. D. (2008). Sanctuary and society in central-southern Italy (3rd to 1st centuries BC) : a study into cult places and cultural change after the Roman conquest of Italy
Chapter 4

Location and Function of Italic Sanctuaries in Society:
Three Models

In the previous chapter, the importance that sacred places assumed in Samnium from the fourth to the beginning of the first centuries BC was discussed. Individuals of a high status invested in votives, decoration and the sacred buildings themselves, often in their capacity as political leaders. As has been seen, a presumed general economic prosperity, whether deriving from the activities of Italic negotiatores in the east or from large-scale transhumance, has been put forward as an explanation for this phenomenon. The explanation might also be sought in more acute historical and socio-political circumstances. One possibility is to think of different peer communities as competing in a more or less friendly manner, with the construction of lavish sanctuaries as one of the corollaries. This would underscore the importance of political competition within Samnite society. Also a more outward-looking interpretation is possible: ‘state intervention’ could be imagined, especially in relation to the growing ethnic consciousness outlined in the previous chapter. As has been seen, the epigraphical evidence is inconclusive on this matter (Chapter 3). In any case, none of these different explanations has to be exclusive. We may therefore generally accept that the monumentalisation of Samnite sanctuaries is influenced by socio-political developments in which the ruling elite, whose names we indeed find in inscriptions in these sanctuaries, play key roles.

Irrespective of the incentives of the initiators, the monumentalisation of the sanctuaries conveys a specific message. As noted earlier, a message is directed to an audience and is intended to communicate something to someone. This could have been ‘Samnite pride’ (in the ‘ethnic’ interpretation of the phenomenon), or ‘status’ (if general elite representation processes are favoured). But who was the intended audience? In order to answer this question we must try to reconstruct the social context within which the sanctuaries functioned.

For Pietrabondante, the telling expression on behalf of (the) safinim (Vetter 149) is indeed only one side of the coin, as it probably represents an initiative of one or more members of the ruling elite, dedicated in the most ‘official’ sanctuary of the Samnites, which was probably not meant to be visited on a regular basis by devotees as part of
personal religious practice. Rather, the temple complex at Pietrabbondante seems to have been a supra-local sanctuary that was important for military and political meetings, as may be concluded from the large quantities of weapons found, and the expensive sacrifices, apparently mostly bulls, that were made there (Chapter 3).

Unfortunately, it is not possible to tell in what spatial and social environment the sanctuary of Pietrabbondante was located. Apart from graves in località Troccola and the wall-structures on Monte Saraceno,¹ structures that could indicate dense settlement in this area are lacking until now, but this could be due to the lack of systematic archaeological research in the direct environment of the complex.² However, at this stage, there is no evidence that large numbers of average Samnite people visited this non-urban sanctuary on a regular basis.³

Even less is known about the possible audiences of Samnite sacred places on a local level, down the hierarchy, at the smaller sanctuaries and shrines dispersed over Samnite territory. It is however of considerable importance to understand the local functions of Samnite sanctuaries: arguably, these form the very raison d’être of the sanctuaries, and determine the audience at which cultural messages might have been sent. As has been seen, especially in the third and second centuries many smaller Samnite sanctuaries are built or reconstructed in monumental forms. Often, these sacred places are generally referred to as ‘rural sanctuaries’, but their supposed ‘rurality’ cannot simply be assumed a priori and, indeed, ex silentio. Also, the term ‘rural’ has to be further explained: what do we mean by stating that a sanctuary is ‘rural’? The possibility of a major bias in our view of sanctuaries within the general pattern of settlement should also be taken into consideration. This bias may be the result of a scholarly tradition that, as observed earlier, pays disproportionate attention to the monumental elements of the landscape, such as hill-forts and temples, at the expense of more modest forms of settlement. Later we will return to this problem; first some current ideas with regard to the local functions of Italic sanctuaries in relation to the spatial organisation of the landscape will be explored. Although reference will often be made to ‘Samnite’ sanctuaries proper, this analysis regards sanctuaries in Central-Southern Italy in general, including the Central Apennines (i.e. the so-called ‘Sabellian’ areas).

Until few decades ago, few studies have explicitly tried to understand why and for what specific purposes sanctuaries were actually built in antiquity. Within a culture-historical paradigm, most attention has been directed to the architecture and the aesthetic (as well as economical) value of the votive objects and adornment of the temple. Especially in the last two decades, interest has grown immensely, influenced by the post-processual focus on symbolism, cognition and experience, the realm of religion par excellence. This development can be seen best in studies on Greek

¹ COARELLI and LA REGINA 1984, 231-232.
² Recently, excavations have been executed by La Regina that revealed a large structure, which has been interpreted as a public building. Presented during a conference in november 2006 at Isernia.
³ Contra e.g. SCHUBERT 1996, who assumes that the theatre at Pietrabbondante “dazu diente, grosse Zahlen der Landbevölkerung aufzunehmen, die die religiösen und öffentlichen Feiern des dortigen Heiligtums besuchten.”
religion and sanctuaries, for example the influential studies of Colin Renfrew, François de Polignac, Madeleine Jost, Albert Schachter, Susan Alcock, to name but few, and numerous collections of studies. Not surprisingly, Magna Graecia is relatively well covered too, especially as regards the Great-Greek temples themselves, but in the discussion about the relations and interaction between indigenous Italians and Greek colonists, sanctuaries have also played a special role. The Tyrrhenic coast is well served with studies as varied as Giovanni Colonna’s *Santuari d’Etruria* and Filippo Coarelli’s *Santuari del Lazio*, as well as Ingrid Edlund-Berry’s *The gods and the place*, on both Etruria and Magna Graecia.

For inland Italic sanctuaries, the situation is rather different, and only few attempts have been made to explain, problematise or theorise the function of sanctuaries. There are good reasons for this situation. First, the advance of archaeological research: a lot of sanctuaries have been excavated only relatively recently, and there is no firm archaeological or historical framework within which the new discoveries can be interpreted. Second, the nature of the material: the absence of written sources relating to sanctuaries (apart from a few notorious exceptions, cf. Introduction and Chapter 2) and the scarcity of epigraphic material have not invited to venture into historical interpretations. Comprehensibly, most studies on Italic sanctuaries have focused primarily on the publication of the architecture, rather than on the roles these sacred places assumed in Italic society.

In Samnium proper the situation is rather awkward: together with the remains of the walls of the hill-forts, the landscape of ancient Samnium almost appears to have existed exclusively in the presence of sanctuaries, the most visible remains of the Samnites (Chapter 3). It therefore does not come as a surprise that the cult places of Samnium are, within the Italic world, relatively well-known, and are often cited as examples of architecture outside urban centres. But detailed studies lag behind. After Cianfarani’s publication of a small booklet entitled *Santuari del Sannio*, the most influential study regarding Samnite sanctuaries has been La Regina’s contribution on Samnium in general to the seminal Göttingen congress on *Hellenismus in Mittelitalien* (1974), in which La Regina presented the evidence from several new (and at the time ongoing) excavations, fitting it into an integral narrative on the development of Samnium. In this and later contributions, La Regina pointed to the architectural features as well as the epigraphy, and the narrow ties between a few families and the fate of the sanctuaries. Studies that focus entirely on Samnite sanctuaries in general (as opposed to studies on single sanctuaries) are almost non-existent after Cianfarani’s

---

5 E.g. Carter 1994 and cf. infra.
6 Colonna 1985; Coarelli 1987; Edlund-Berry 1987.
7 Cianfarani 1960.
8 La Regina 1976.
9 La Regina 1976, and esp. La Regina 1989.
essay, although Samnite sanctuaries figure prominently in handbooks and standard works on classical archaeology.\(^{10}\) Nonetheless, several ideas regarding the function of these sanctuaries in society have been formulated. In this chapter, some conceptualisations as they appear in modern research will be identified, and it will be attempted to explain them within their different scholarly traditions. For Central-Southern Italy, it seems possible to discern three main strands in the hypotheses on the general functions of sanctuaries. These are mostly implicit, and different authors attach different values to various factors in the location and construction of sanctuaries.\(^{11}\) Thus, although this distinction should not be applied too rigidly, its arrangement being mine, for the sake of clarity they will be presented under different headings.

\(^{10}\) E.g. GROS and TORELLI 1988; FLOWER 2004; ALCOCK and OSBORNE 2007.

\(^{11}\) Cf. e.g. MENOZZI 1998, where a sanctuary near a ‘vicus’ is interpreted as a frontier sanctuary, but later connected as well to transhumance.
Transhumance: Sanctuaries, Hercules and ‘Tratturi’

“la struttura tradizionale è appunto quella del santuario di campagna, in relazione stretta con un grande tratturo” (Torelli 1996, 36).

It has been argued repeatedly that there is a direct relationship between the location of sanctuaries and the long transhumance routes that cut through Central and Southern Italy. Along these so-called tratturi flocks moved seasonally from the lower plains to the higher pastures, e.g. from modern Puglia to Abruzzo and back. Different branches of tratturi intersected, forming a network of communication routes (cf. fig. 4.1). The sanctuary of S. Giovanni in Galdo has been interpreted in light of a nearby branch of a tratturo, for example.

![Fig. 4.1. Transhumance routes, important places and sanctuaries (Van Wonterghem 1999, 415 fig. 2)](image)

The location of these sanctuaries along or in the neighbourhood of these transhumance routes has usually been connected with the deity venerated in these sanctuaries. In some important instances, Hercules is known to have been worshipped in sanctuaries along major transport routes, most famously in Tivoli, Rome, and Alba Fucens, in his

---


13 Di Niro 1980, 269.
role as patron deity of herdsmen and trade, especially of salt. Because the cult of Hercules was popular in Italic territory, these facts have been combined to strengthen the argument. The spread of the cult of Hercules is sometimes even seen as an indicator of the practice of transhumance. The connection between Hercules and pastoralism is often seen as very direct. In this vision, herdsmen would have made up an important part of the clientela of the sanctuaries. Although it is admitted that other people must have formed part of the visitors of the sanctuaries, because the monumentalisation can hardly be ascribed to musty shepherds, the accumulation of wealth through transhumance has also been connected with the elaborate architecture.

In many cases however there is scanty if any evidence for the veneration of one specific deity, especially if we dismiss the numerous Hercules bronzes dispersed all over Italy as evidence for a Hercules cult, as seems wise. Also, inversely, Italic sanctuaries have been assigned to Hercules precisely because their presumed location along tratturi, evidently a case of circular reasoning. The cult of Hercules is attested with certainty in fewer cases than one might think, and the connection with transhumance is not always clear cut either. Perhaps one of the most famous sanctuaries in the Italic area is the sanctuary of Hercules Curinus in the territory of ancient Sulmo, modern Sulmona in Abruzzo. This sanctuary is especially well known because of its monumental rebuilding after the Social War and forms one of the few examples of non-urban sanctuaries that survive the changes in the pattern of settlement following the Roman municipalisation (cf. infra). It is perched on a steep side of the

14 Esp. VAN WONTERGHEM 1999. Cf. e.g. also TORELLI 1996, 36. On salt trade cf. COARELLI and LA REGINA 1984, 87; COARELLI 1988b; TORELLI 1993b (on Hercules Salarius in Alba Fucens in connection to the forum pecuarium, perhaps the sanctuary at Campochiaro can be identified with the Hercules Ranus from the Tabula Peutingeriana, where Ranus would constitute the Samnite version of Salarius; cf. however CAPINI 2000). For an example of the connection of Samnite sanctuaries with transhumance without the connection with Hercules (but rather with Mefitis) cf. BONIFACIO 2000, 34.

15 E.g. PASQUINUCCI 1996, 23: “La distribuzione del culto di Ercole e l’esistenza di fora pecuaria attestano una pratica capillare della pastorizia e delle attività economiche connesse.” Cf. also MANCINI 1998, 23: “Nei pressi dei tratturi sorgevano frequentemente i templi dedicati ad Ercole … La distribuzione di questi luoghi di culto lascia intravedere la loro particolare funzione di grandi mercati, anche e soprattutto in relazione alla transumanza. La maggior parte dei santuari dedicati ad Ercole … sorgeva sempre in relazione ai punti cruciali di collegamento e di incrocio dei percorsi della transumanza e del sale ed in relazione alle sorgenti.” Cf. e.g. also COARELLI 2001a for the ‘tempio dorico’ of Pompeii.

16 E.g. VAN WONTERGHEM 1999, 415: “Anche se i pastori transumanti potevano costituire una clientela regolare dei santuari, è poco probabile che siano loro i responsabili dell’espansione monumentale che alcuni di essi conobbero” and “ ... i santuari situati presso una fonte ... venivano senz’altro visitati anche da altri devoti e non solo dai pastori transumanti”. Cf. also the rather wishful statement on p. 427, on animal bones found in a sanctuary at Nesce: “Si tratta di sacrifici compiuti dai conduttori delle greggi per implorare la protezione di Ercole.”

17 LLOYD 1991a, 184-185; DENCH 1995, 121.

18 For these, cf. DI NIRO 1977.

19 Cf. CRAWFORD 2003a, 63.

20 In many of the sanctuaries listed by VAN WONTERGHEM 1999, a study on Hercules and transhumance, the principal deity is actually unknown.
Monte Morrone, with a height difference of over 200m to the valley floor of the river Sagittario.

A similar situation can be seen in the major sanctuary at Campochiaro, in Samnite territory, that has been identified with the Hercules Ranus sanctuary indicated on the Tabula Peutingeriana. This sanctuary is located on a side of the high mountain range of the Matese, at a height of ca. 800m a.s.l., ca. 300m above the Boiano basin, set on a plateau. Just as the Hercules Curinus sanctuary, the Campochiaro sanctuary is not easily reached from the valley floor. It will take at least 2 hours, following steep paths. I would suggest that this location is not particularly appropriate for a sanctuary controlling the moving of flocks with a connected market function. In any case, in both situations it is difficult to imagine a forum pecuarium on the steep hill, with only relatively small plateaus for the cult buildings. Similarly, the suggestion by La Regina that the toponym Schiavi (d’Abruzzo) could be related to the Oscan word slaagid, slag[im], which could indicate a marketplace, and the inference that there is a connection between the Samnite sanctuaries attested there (dedicated to unknown deities), would result in the same situation: a steep, high hill with almost 300m of height to the valley floor. Of course, it might not be necessary to imagine the flocks themselves reaching the sanctuary proper, since business could have been done at some distance, but it is important to acknowledge that the relation between transhumance and sanctuaries was made in the first place because of the putative topographical correspondence, which is as seen however much less obvious.

Most examples of Hercules supervising market places, and especially sheep and cattle markets, actually seem to date to the Roman period, and are found mainly in Roman colonies or municipia (e.g. Alba Fucens, Herdonia, and Saepinum; fig. 4.2). Similarly, many of the cult places listed in Frank van Wonterghem’s transhumant ‘itinerary’ along Hercules sanctuaries are urban, not rural (Teanum Apulum, Larinum, Luceria, Corfinium).

---

21 Torelli 1993b.
22 Contra Torelli 1993b and La Regina 2000. Torelli 1993b, 117 argues that the sanctuary would constitute “una tappa cruciale dei percorsi di armenti e greggi provenienti dal cuore del Sannio”.
24 Cf. on marketplaces Gabba 1975 (155-156 on the relation with sanctuaries); de Ligt 1993; for macella, appearing also from the second half of the second century BC, see de Ruyt 1983. One of the ‘Italic’ exceptions could perhaps be the sanctuary at Abella, known from the cippus Abellanus. The actual presence of a major tratturo is not attested here, but if slaagid = campus relates to a marketplace, as suggested by La Regina 2000, 219, the market place was linked to the sanctuary of Hercules. However, this would only document the presence of a generic marketplace near the sanctuary, no explicit connection between Hercules and cattle or sheep markets, and transhumance, is attested here.
Most evidence for the connection between the cult of Hercules and transhumance starts only in the second century BC, and although continuity is often presumed,\textsuperscript{26} this is not self-evident. Hercules was venerated in different Italic regions long before transhumance can be presumed to have been an important factor.\textsuperscript{27} This is not to say that Hercules was not important in the Italic world, also in his role as patron of herdsmen and merchants, but the evidence for the direct relation between Hercules and (flock) market activities for the Samnite period is less abundant than it may sometimes appear in modern accounts on Samnite economy and sanctuaries. The question is related, of course, to the discussion to what extent long-distance transhumance was practised at all on a large scale before the Roman ‘pacification’ of the Italic areas. This is not the place to enter this debate, but it must be noted that evidence for large-scale transhumance is late and often even derived from (early) modern parallels.\textsuperscript{28} In any case, the image of Samnite economy as being based largely on transhumance reflects, at least to some extent, clichés on the primitiveness and pastorality of Samnite society.\textsuperscript{29}

Even if it is true that we do not normally find Samnite ‘peak sanctuaries’ far from the inhabited landscape as in some other Italic areas,\textsuperscript{30} it is important to underline that

\textsuperscript{26} Van Woninghem 1999, 416-417.
\textsuperscript{27} Bradley 2005, 139.
\textsuperscript{28} Sabattini 1977 for the idea that large-scale transhumance was the result of changes after the Hannibalic War. Cf. the discussion in Dench 1995, 111-125 and Crawford 2003a; Crawford 2005, esp. 164 with n. 12.
\textsuperscript{29} On these images, see Dench 1995.
\textsuperscript{30} Esp. in Umbria and in the Marche, cf. e.g. Bradley 1997; D’Ercole 2000, 129.
very few Samnite sanctuaries are located directly along the long tratturi. And in itself, it is not remarkable that sanctuaries are located not too far from important transportation and communication routes, and one could wonder whether analyses of the location of sanctuaries in relation to ‘normal’ roads in, say, Etruria and Lazio, would produce significantly different situations. It does not seem methodologically possible to sustain that the location (and very appearance) of sanctuaries was dictated by the presence of transhumance routes, since the last are ubiquitous in the Samnite landscape. For a convincing image of Samnite sanctuaries essentially functioning as road shrines or ‘caravanserais’ along the Samnite tratturi and serving primarily passing herdsmen and merchants, too little evidence is present.

**Sanctuaries as Territorial Markers**

“L’ultima categoria di ‘indicatori territoriali’ ... è quella dei santuari di confine” (D’ERCOLE 2000, 127)

Another, quite different aspect sometimes attributed to Italic sanctuaries is their supposed function as markers of the territory of a certain community, or their establishing the boundaries between separate communities. In this view, sanctuaries define a border between ‘in’ and ‘out’, and they would accordingly have operated both as frontier markers and as places of exchange between the bordering communities. This idea has been developed in most detail for Greece and the Greek colonies, where relatively well-defined communities (poleis, colonies) have been recognised from the geometric period on. Most influential has been the thesis put forward by De Polignac, in his analysis of ‘the birth’ of the Greek city (1984). His study puts religion, ritual and thereby sanctuaries at the centre of the development of the Greek poleis in the eighth and seventh centuries BC. The ritually created ‘civic space’ would moreover have a bipolar structure, “où la société se reconnaît et s’organise à la fois en son centre et sur la périphérie géographiques”. Because the cults of the city-centre were not able to maintain control over the territory, the territorial cult was located in the extra-urban sanctuary and this would therefore constitute “le pôle de la constitution sociale de la cité”. By doing so, de Polignac discerns typically structuralist binary oppositions between cultivated and natural land, and the borders between the two being marked by

---

31 Cf. the considerations in BRADLEY 2005, 139-140; cf. also CRAWFORD 2005, 162.
32 Cf. for full quote infra.
33 “C’est en termes cultuels que sont conçus et mis en œuvre les intégrations, entrées en dépendance, conflits et exclusions par lesquels, dans le cadre territorial délimité par la guerre, s’édifie le nouvel agencement des groupes sociaux auparavant juxtaposés : la participation aux rites garantit la reconnaissance mutuelle des statuts et scelle l’appartenance en définissant une première forme de citoyenneté. Et c’est en termes cultuels, par l’essor des rites et le début d’édification des sanctuaires autour des divinités présidant à cette mise en ordre, que la société émergente manifeste sa cohésion nouvelle et prend ses premières décisions collectives, donc politiques, à long terme; l’espace cultuel qui se dessine alors constitue le premier espace civique.” DE POLIGNAC 1984, 155.
34 DE POLIGNAC 1984, 155.
35 DE POLIGNAC 1984, 155.
extra-urban sanctuaries. These were under direct control of the major urban centre, this control being manifested and enlivened by religious ‘centrifugal’ processions, for example the *pompê* from Miletus to Didyma.\(^{36}\)

**REFINEMENTS OF THE CENTRAL THESIS BY DE POLIGNAC**

Although the model proposed by De Polignac has significantly changed the direction of studies on the relations between Greek politics, religion and sanctuaries, his approach has appeared to be too rigid, as he himself explains in a later restatement of his central thesis.\(^{37}\) In this refinement, he allows for more diversity in these processes, and stresses the concepts of mediation and competition as central to the development of sanctuaries. The idea is that cult places sometimes could develop from more or less neutral central places of contact between different communities into a great rural sanctuary where the sovereignty of a city is made manifest. As an example he gives the Argive Heraion, which from a rather isolated meeting point for different communities in the ninth century BC developed into the great monumental complex relating to the city of Argos, which regained regional hegemony in the Classical period.\(^{38}\) He thus allows for a more complex development over time for the formation of the model. Along the same lines, however, his thesis has been criticised as to the situation he envisages for the final, ‘completed’ stage, with the extra-urban sanctuary expressing a city’s sovereignty over its territory. De Polignac’s distinction between cultivated land and non-cultivated land may be too inflexible, and would tend to regard sanctuaries as boundaries rather than as the integrative elements between hinterland and polis that they could have been.\(^{39}\) De Polignac treats both mainland Greece and Greek colonies in his model of the birth of the city, and in his later elaboration even sees colonies as the prêt-à-(im)porter versions of the mainland Greek evolutions: “The peculiarity of the colonial world lies more in how speedily and systematically it develops what in the Aegean world is the outcome of an evolutionary process at work since the ninth century ...”\(^{40}\)

**MAGNA GRAECIA**

Studies on Magna Graecia have taken up the challenge, and indeed in several instances it seems easy to recognise De Polignac’s principles at work. As a result, the idea of extra-urban sanctuaries as territorial markers has been adopted and developed further for the Greek colonies in Southern Italy.\(^{41}\) Pier Giovanni Guzzo established a ‘scheme’ for the location and function of different sanctuaries in different liminal or ‘threshold’

---

\(^{36}\) DE POLIGNAC 1984. He distinguishes between sanctuaries of the city, ‘sanctuaires suburbains’ directly outside the city, and extra-urban sanctuaries.


\(^{38}\) DE POLIGNAC 1994, 4-5.

\(^{39}\) Cf. e.g. MCINERNY 2006 who stresses the economic role of extra-urban sanctuaries on the border of agricultural and pastoral economies and their consequent ‘integrative’ function; cf. also POLINSKAYA 2003 for criticism on the notion of liminality.

\(^{40}\) DE POLIGNAC 1994, 15-16.

zones. Guzzo distinguishes three border zones in Greek colonial establishments; first the boundary between city and the cultivated countryside, second the boundary between cultivated and uncultivated countryside, and finally the frontier between territories belonging to different colonies or different ethnê. Within this system, the sanctuaries would serve primarily to formalise and normalise the contacts between different zones. In addition, especially in Magna Graecia, in the last decades there has been much interest in the contacts between colonists and the autochthonous population, where sometimes the role of the extra-urban sanctuaries as meeting point is emphasised. This emphasis has opened up a perspective wherein the extra-urban sanctuaries not exclusively serve the community of the hegemonic city, but other neighbouring communities as well.

A clear example of the apparently ‘ideal’ colonial situation is documented in the territory of the Greek colony of Metapontum by Joseph Carter. This case could illustrate both the wealth of the Great Greek evidence (Metapontum presenting perhaps the best studied chora of all Great Greek cities), and the careful elaboration of De Polignac’s range of thoughts, substantiated by fine data. In the chora belonging to the Greek urban centre of Metapontum that rose probably somewhere at the end of the seventh century BC, rural shrines, dating mostly from the sixth century BC onwards, are distributed regularly along the river valleys of the Basento and (to a lesser degree) the Bradano, at an interval of ca. 3 km, sometimes with smaller shrines in between. Their location seems to be the result of careful planning (cf. fig. 4.3) in light of their symmetrical position, but also because of the similarity between both the rural cults themselves and between rural and urban cults. The typology of the votive figurines for instance is strikingly uniform, and sometimes the same moulds seem to have been used. So far this would fit nicely into the picture of a colony manifesting authority over its territory. However, in the vicinity of the sanctuaries that are located in the area, surveyed intensively by Texas University, there seem to be significantly more individual family farms. From this observation Carter concludes that “the distribution of sanctuaries may have corresponded to a division of the chora made in the sixth century into a dozen or so larger units”, accordingly organised and inhabited by different local communities. Ultimately, he compares the shrines to modern parish churches. Thus, Carter puts the emphasis more on the local significance of these rural sanctuaries, albeit the direct result of colonial planning.

---

43 Cf. the contributions in Modes 1983 and Stazio, Ceccoli and Amelle 1999; Torelli 1977.
44 Carter 1994; Carter 2006.
ITALY

Similar ideas that link the location and function of sanctuaries with territoriality have been developed for Central and Central-Southern Italy. In the city of Rome space was religiously defined by the location of sanctuaries at ritual boundaries, for example the *pomerium* and the sanctuaries along the roads at the first or fifth and/or sixth mile.\(^{46}\) Especially revealing in this respect is the festival of the *Terminalia*, celebrated at the sixth mile of the *via Laurentina*, an institution attributed to the mythical king Numa, renowned for his piety.\(^{47}\)

For Etruria comparable hypotheses have been put forward, especially by Andrea Zifferero, who discerns clear developments in the importance of different extra-urban sanctuaries over time, and links this to political developments.\(^{48}\) For example, he concludes that the border between the cities of Caere and Tarquinia became clear only after the (re-)organisation of the rural population beginning in the orientalising period.

---


\(^{47}\) Cf. PICCALUGA 1974.

\(^{48}\) ZIFFERERO 1995; cf. also ZIFFERERO 1998; ZIFFERERO 2002.
This border followed ecologically defined lines, whereas in the sixth century a mixed frontier system came up, “a barriera interrotta” but reinforced at critical points with extra-urban sanctuaries. In the fourth century this system would have been enhanced by the divergent political developments of Caere, now more under Roman influence, and Tarquinia, expanding into internal Etruria, but was ultimately disturbed by the Roman conquest at the beginning of the third century BC.\(^{49}\) Zifferero’s study illustrates well the possibilities of diachronic research. The territorial character of early Etruscan colonisation in the Po basin has been tracked similarly in the religious realm by Monica Miari, who discerns “una articolata trama di segni, che scandiva ed organizzava lo spazio delineando un ‘paesaggio del culto’.”\(^{50}\) Her study is also clearly influenced by De Polignac’s ideas, emphasising the expression of sovereignty through the location of cult places.

But also for the Italic inland areas efforts have been made to explain the existence and location of sanctuaries as frontiers within the pattern of settlement. Vincenzo D’Ercole is to be credited for his studies on the Abruzzo region (the areas inhabited in antiquity – partly – by the Praetutii, the coastal Vestini, Marruccini, Frentani, Carricini, Pentri, Paeligni, Marsi, Equi and inland Vestini) in which he demonstrates an explicit interest in spatial relations between different elements of the ancient landscape. His are amongst the few studies that seek to understand the function and significance of Italic sanctuaries (and, for that matter, cave sites, habitation centres and necropoleis) within the general pattern of settlement.\(^{51}\)

Taking a long term perspective, D’Ercole puts forward the interesting thesis that in different eras different ‘markers’ in the landscape were predominant. Put simply, whereas caves were of central importance in the Bronze Age, this position would have been taken up by the necropoleis with the conspicuous tumulus graves of the late Bronze Age to the early Iron Age, and this privilege would then, in the Hellenistic period, be passed on to sanctuaries.\(^{52}\) According to D’Ercole, these sanctuaries would have marked the territories of different tribes, suggesting that this would have been reflected in the choice of the venerated deities, every tribe (‘popolo’) worshipping different (characteristics of) gods.\(^{53}\) In his contribution to *Paesaggi di potere*, the proceedings of a conference held in 1996 explicitly dealing with spatial analysis, D’Ercole studies the whole modern region Abruzzo. He concludes that sanctuaries reflect the intention to express territoriality by different communities. In this place, for

\(^{49}\) ZIFFERERO 1995, 348.

\(^{50}\) MIARI 2000b, 57.


\(^{52}\) D’ERCOLE 2000, 121-127. On p. 146 n. 65, D’Ercole sees a ‘paradigmatic’ situation in the river Raiale (west of Gran Sasso) where a cave site (“il marker territoriale della preistoria”), necropoleis (“i markers della protostoria”) and the “caratteristico santuario di confine d’epoca storica” of Feronia at Civita di Bagno, are situated within a range of 10 km.

\(^{53}\) D’ERCOLE 2000, 127: “L’ultima categoria di ‘indicatori territoriali’ ... è quella dei santuari di confine. Essi sembrano rivestire in Abruzzo quel ruolo precedentemente svolto dalle sepolture a tumulo (e, forse, ancora prima dalle grotte), di marcare cioè un territorio non più attraverso il ricordo di antenati mitizzati ed eroizzati ma mediante il culto di vere e proprie divinità, formalmente definite, con caratteristiche e forse nomi, diversi a seconda dei vari popoli.”
the sake of comparability, only his work on the more properly ‘Samnite’ region of Southern Abruzzo will be considered. Here, the location of sanctuaries in relation to habitation centres and necropoleis was analysed by D’Ercole, together with Vincenza Orfanelli and Paola Riccitelli. Figure 4.4 reproduces the resulting proposal for a territorial division in Southern Abruzzo in the ‘Samnite’ period. To establish the dimensions of the different centres in the region Thiessenpolygons were used.

Fig. 4.4. Sanctuaries as frontiermarkers according to D’ERCOLE, ORFANELLI and RICCITELLI 1997, fig. on p. 23.

---

54 D’ERCOLE, ORFANELLI and RICCITELLI 1997.
55 Unfortunately nothing is said about the decision to use this model, and the exact application of it, especially with regard to included sites. This approach to the reconstruction of borders in antiquity stands in a long tradition, cf. e.g. RENFREW 1975; MORRIS and ORTON 1976.
In their analysis, all indicators of cultic activity were included: sanctuaries with structural remains, but also finds of bronze statuettes or inscriptions relating to cults. According to their reconstruction, several cult places are located along borders of ethnic groups and cities. For instance, the territory of the Marruccini would be separated from the Carricini and the Frentani by the alignment of the finds of bronze statuettes at Tollo, Crecchio, Ari and Bucchianico, and the sanctuaries of Vacri and Rapino. In the same way, the territories of the Frentani and Maruccini on the one side and that of the Carricini and the Pentri on the other would be drawn by the cult places (or rather dispersed finds of statuettes) of Orsogna, Palombaro, the sanctuary of Atessa, Furci, S. Buono and Tufillo. What’s more, the ‘hegemonic’ centres of Teate (modern Chieti, territory of the Marruccini), Histonium (modern Vasto, territory of the Frentani) and perhaps that of Iuvanum (territory of the Carricini) would express their territorial boundaries with extra-urban sanctuaries.56

PROBLEMS WITH THE FRONTIER APPROACH

Although the spatial approach to sanctuaries adopted here is highly interesting, some objections could be raised. In the first place, it remains difficult to postulate a geopolitical organisation on the basis of the archaeological record, because it relies so heavily on the very completeness of that record; if we happen to ‘miss’ one important centre, the whole picture changes. Especially if one wants to include evidence like bronze statuettes and other haphazardly found objects possibly (but not certainly) indicating cult places, there is a risk to read too much into the material, which is after all not the result of systematic archaeological research. The suggestion that there is a strong relation between the location of necropoleis and sanctuaries is highly interesting.57 According to D’Ercole the combination of funeral and religious contexts with no corresponding settlements would strengthen the idea of territorial limitation by means of these kinds of markers.58 Caution is required however, especially since it is precisely sanctuaries and necropoleis that are overrepresented in the archaeological record of Central Italy, due to the poorer visibility of (and attention to) habitation sites. Only systematic archaeological research can establish whether the correspondence is a historical one or rather the result of an observer’s bias. Intensive field survey should therefore be conducted to analyse relationships of this kind (cf. Chapter 5).

Another question regards the possibility to trace ethnic boundaries in the archaeological record. Ethnic identities will certainly have been important at some places and some specific moments in time (cf. Chapter 3), but it does not go for itself that these ethnic distinctions translated into fixed territorial ‘states’. The imposing

56 D’ERCOLE, ORFANELLI and RICCITELLI 1997, 22-23.
58 D’ERCOLE 2000, 129 on the Praetutti: “colpisce la presenza di necropoli apparentemente tutte senza abitato di riferimento. Esse sembrano proprio delimitare una fascia territoriale il cui significato di ‘confine’ appare certificato dalla presenza ... dell’unico santuario di altura in Abruzzo per le fasi orientalizzanti ed arcaiche e cioè quello di Monte Giove a Penna Sant’Andrea.”
character of ethnicity should not be overstated, and especially the possible discontinuity in its importance, or even existence, should be taken into account. Ethnicity is a social construct and depends on specific socio-historical situations, and therefore is very sensitive to historical changes. 59 In other words, it can be seriously questioned whether there were stable ethnic boundaries during the whole Hellenistic period (D’Ercole suggests even precursors of these constellations in the pre-and protohistorical periods), 60 precisely because this does not correspond to the very nature of ethnic feelings. Methodologically, there is the problem that we cannot easily check or falsify the proposed ethnic boundaries as signalled by cult places. There is, apart from very scarce epigraphical evidence, no possibility to establish these ethnic boundaries by other archaeological evidence, and historical evidence is problematic because of its later date and lack of precise descriptions. Even in the arguably ‘exemplary’ Greek world, recent studies have increasingly emphasised that the borders between the territories of different communities were less clear cut than has been envisioned before, both in the Greek mainland and colonies. 61 Moreover, as to the map, a devil’s advocate could draw other lines of distinction, connecting the same dots on the map, especially if one releases the privileged position of ethnic groups over, for example, smaller local communities. In fact, it may be imprudent to see almost every non-urban sanctuary (let alone sporadic finds of statuettes) necessarily as part of a geopolitical constellation formulated along ethnic lines, in the absence of firm evidence documenting such a function.

EXCLUSION?

Of course, one may agree that certain sanctuaries functioned indeed in and as a border zone between different communities (some evidence will be discussed below). However, such a function cannot be taken for granted at the outset. D’Ercole c.s. do not explain why they think cult places functioned as frontier markers in the first place, neither do they explain what they exactly take ‘santuari di confine’ to mean. The only theoretical and methodological study which is referred to is based on the situation in rather differently organised societies: the Greek colonial situation. 62 There is reason, however, to doubt that the situation in Apennine Central Italy was similar to the Tyrrenian and Greek world. In many areas of Greece, a strong territorial claim would

59 Cf. in general JONES 1997; and esp. DENCH 1995 for Central Italy.
60 D’ERCOLE 2000, on the supposed link between South-Picene inscriptions and the distribution of tumulus graves, and 124-125, n. 15 on the existence of ‘proto’-peoples. For this conception, cf. also FAUSTOFERRI 2003.
61 Cf. the recently concluded project Regional pathways to complexity by the Free University Amsterdam and the Groningen Institute of Archaeology (see e.g. BURGERS 2002). Cf. the discussion on the sanctuary of Timpone della Motta, the identification of which as a Greek frontier sanctuary is dismissed by KLEIBRINK 2001, 39-42, cf. however GUZZO 2003. See LEONE 1998, esp. 11-18 and 31-35 on theories on extra-urban sanctuaries in Archaic Magna Graecia). Cf. e.g. BURGERS and CRIELAARD 2007 on Greek colonial-indigenous interactions.
62 In D’ERCOLE, ORFANELLI and RICCITELLI 1997 no reference or explication with regard to the concept of frontier sanctuaries is given at all, but in D’ERCOLE 2000 GUZZO 1987 is quoted, here discussed supra.
have existed already from the early Iron Age on, simultaneous with the rise of the poleis. In a highly centralised and hierarchically organised society, the fixation of boundaries makes perhaps more sense, and so do the extra-urban sanctuaries at the fringes of the city’s territory. The same goes for the Etruscan (and early Roman) forms of political organisation. But I would argue that we should be cautious in presuming a rigid territorial organisation with clear boundaries for the non-urban Italic world in this stage.

Even if we accept the interpretation of certain sanctuaries as boundary markers (of groups of whatever kind), the question remains what exactly happened in these border sanctuaries: Were they only visual territorial markers, or do we have to imagine processions, specific border rites, or should we perhaps think of them as places of contact between the neighbouring peoples? D’Ercole argues that, apparently in different sanctuaries, different gods appealing to different peoples would have been venerated, which underlined ethnic difference. This conception suggests that these cult places had an exclusive quality; that the border sanctuaries were intended for the own group, excluding others and at the same time enhancing (ethnic) group identities. Unfortunately, in most cases in the Italic world the names (let alone the specific characteristics or epithets) of the venerated deities are unknown, and any analysis on a grand scale seems therefore impossible at present. Although there certainly were exclusive cults in Italy, as for example the rather xenophobic ritual documented in the Iguvine tablets where ‘outsiders’ are formally banished might indicate, it is much less clear if this attitude corresponded to an exclusive character of territorial sanctuaries. As a matter of fact, the ‘urban’ case of Gubbio does not necessarily represent religious behaviour in the rest of Italy. For now, it seems unwise to transpose the specific ideas developed for differently organised areas in Greece and Magna Graecia to the Apennines.

But cf. de Polignac’s reservations with regard to the application of a conceptualisation of the city based on the classical Greek city for the Geometric and early Archaic periods, DE POLIGNAC 1994, 4. Without entering the debate on the Greek situation, it should be pointed out that further deconstruction of this fixed territorial idea for Greece would only strengthen my argument for the situation in Italy. However, this is not to say of course that it is easy to establish the location of these boundaries: cf. the remarks in ZIFFERERO 1995, 335-336 and infra. Incidentally, it is good to keep in mind that we know from several sources that boundaries or frontiers were considered sacred in the Etruscan and Roman societies: cf. for Rome e.g. the necessity for magistrates to retake the auspices after crossing the amnis Petronia in the campus Martius. For Etruria cf. ZIFFERERO 1995, 333 n. 4; cf. for the linguistic evidence LAMBRECHTS 1970, and COLONNA 1988. But apart from the intriguing example of the Iguvine Tablets, which in the end refers to an ‘urban’ reality, there is to my knowledge no evidence for the non-urbanised Italic regions that this kind of territorial conception was formulated this rigidly. Most evidence in this realm derives from (semi / proto etc.-) urban contexts, with a strong emphasis on the importance of the city walls, not territorial boundaries. For the Iguvine Tablets, cf. POULTNEY 1959; PROSDOCIMI 1984; PROSDOCIMI 1989; MALONE and STODDART 1994; SISANI 2001b; PORZIO GERNIA 2004. Cf. infra on the cippus Abellanus.

D’ERCOLE 2000, 127: “… di marcare cioè un territorio … mediante il culto di vere e proprie divinità, formalmente definite, con caratteristiche e forse nomi, diversi a seconda dei vari popoli.” (Underscore TS; see longer quote at n. 53).

See Chapter 2 on the problem. E.g. the contribution by PROSDOCIMI 1989 on “Le religioni degli Italici” almost exclusively treats the Iguvine tablets.
PLACES OF CONTACT

However this may be, there is evidence that sanctuaries were located sometimes in border zones between different ethnic groups or other communities. The most famous example is the *lucus Feroniae*, near Capena, which according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom. 3.32.1*) was frequented by Sabines and Latins alike, especially for markets and fairs.67 Apparently, the sanctuary profited from its location between different cultures. The *cippus Abellanus*, from Avella in Campania, dating to the end of the second century BC,68 may be the most explicit evidence for an ‘Italic border sanctuary’. In the Oscan text, the rules regarding the use of a sanctuary dedicated to Hercules are laid down. It is explicitly stated that the sanctuary served the inhabitants of the towns of Nola and the inhabitants of Abella, and in order to resolve problems of property, it seems that the terrain of the sanctuary itself was extra-territorial, in a ‘no-man’s-land’ between the two communities. This is not an ethnic border however.

Another possible example, at least according to the usual interpretation that has been given to it, should be treated with caution. At Furfo, in Vestine territory, an inscription of 58 BC has been found that relates to a sanctuary of Jupiter Liber.69 The inscription has been thought to mention different communities, since apart from the *vicus* of Furfo apparently another party has a say in the sacred law. It has been proposed that there were three *vici*, which together formed a *pagus*, and this would indicate that the sanctuary was located at the border of these (three) territories (cf. discussion further in this chapter, and esp. Chapter 6).70 But in this interpretation (which is erroneous, as we will see later) the sanctuary also belongs to one single ‘umbrella’ community: the surmised *pagus*. In any case, since the inscription dates well after the Social War, it should be kept in mind that it is questionable whether this Roman situation reflects an earlier Italic one.

In the strict sense, in these cases, the *lucus Feroniae*, the *cippus Abellanus*, and the *lex aedis Furfensis*, there seems to be evidence for sanctuaries at the borders of different communities. But the apparent function of the sanctuaries is precisely not to signal closed boundaries, demarcating one group. On the contrary, if anything, these sanctuaries seem to have served as meeting places, as places of social contact in a religious sense and possibly even more so in a commercial one (note that both

---

67 “There is a sanctuary, honoured in common by the Sabines and the Latins, that is held in the greatest reverence and is dedicated to a goddess named Feronia ... To this sanctuary people used to resort from the neighbouring cities on the appointed days of festival, many of them performing vows and offering sacrifice to the goddess and many with the purpose of trafficking during the festive gathering as merchants, artisans and husbandmen; and here were held fairs more celebrated than in any other places in Italy” (transl. Loeb). Cf. also Livy 26.12.

68 According to *LA REGINA* 2000 ca. 120-110 BC.

69 *CIL* IX, 3513; *CIL* I², 756.

70 E.g. *LA REGINA* 1967-68, 393-396 explaining *fifeltares* as the *vici* of the *Fificulani et Taresuni*; *COARELLI* and *LA REGINA* 1984, 16: “Si tratta infatti della dedica di un tempio a Juppiter Liber, fatta dal magistrato e dal sacerdote di Furfo, ma nella quale vengono citate, come parti contraenti, anche gli abitanti degli altri due *vici* del *pagus*, i Fificulani e i Taresuni”; cf. also *LETTA* 1992, 112-114. Cf. discussion *infra.*
epigraphical texts treat financial arrangements, and that trade is highlighted by Dionysius). Such an interpretation, which sees sanctuaries as a central functional element in the organisation of settlement and communication, rather than as a merely demarcating and confining one, sets the scene for another line of interpretation that is discussed in the following section.

Sanctuaries and the so-called Pagus-Vicus System


“A shrine normally belonged to a single pagus, but the shrine at Pietrabbondante was clearly supported by many pagi” (SALMON 1982, 117 n. 345).

So far, different conceptualisations of the role or functions of sanctuaries have been discussed that relate directly to ideas on territorial organisation, economy and infrastructure. The theory on sanctuaries as frontier-markers that has just been discussed has the drawback that it has to rely on presumed fixed territorial boundaries of different tribes. Since independent proof for such boundaries is scant, a risk of circular reasoning exists. This model also has the serious drawback that it has been developed for a specific type of society, and especially urbanised areas, such as Greek poleis and colonies and to a lesser degree Etruria. The interpretation of sanctuaries as road shrines along the long distance transhumance routes, on the other hand, does take into account a (at least perceived) particular feature of Italic society. As has been pointed out however, this interpretation seems to be rather one-sided and hardly stands closer scrutiny as an explanatory model. It seems attractive, however, to try to understand the placing and functioning of sanctuaries in relation to a specific Italic pattern of settlement, rather than using Greek or other models.

A third line of interpretation discernable in modern studies is indeed more directly linked to particular ideas on the organisation of Italic society. In this model sanctuaries are an integral part of a distinct pattern of settlement. This model could be called the pagus-vicus system, a translation of ‘il sistema pagano-vicanico’ or ‘paganico-vicano’ vel sim. often found in Italian literature, and indicating the two most important elements making up this model of settlement. The vicus is understood as a village, and the pagus is understood (mostly) as a territorial district, containing one or more vici. The model has been tremendously popular in both Italian and other mainland European research, as well as in Anglo-Saxon studies.

The discussion on this conception of Italic pattern of settlement is complicated, not least because recently the very premises of this model have been shown to root in poor evidence. Because sanctuaries of Central-Southern Italy are often understood to have functioned within this pagus-vicus system, both implicitly and explicitly, it is important to address the model itself at least briefly. For more detailed discussion on the development of the model one is redirected to the thorough and recent works by
Luigi Capogrossi Colognesi and Michel Tarpin. Their studies, although not in all respects unanimous, are the basis for the critical reconsideration of the *pagus-vicus* model and the role of sanctuaries within it, which will be returned to in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

First, the traditional picture of the *pagus-vicus* system will be sketched in relation to general ideas on Italic patterns of settlement. Thereafter the putative role of sanctuaries within it will be discussed.

**SAMNITE SETTLEMENT AND THE *PAGUS-VICUS* SYSTEM: AN ‘IMMEMORIAL ITALIC INSTITUTION’**

In general accounts and handbooks, but also in specialised studies, one will find that the Italic or Samnite peoples lived in small villages and hill-forts, besides more diffuse or scattered sites, mostly small farms. Let it be said from the outset that this image *per se* seems to be well-supported by the archaeological evidence. Hill-forts are virtually the only imposing remnants in the Samnite landscape, and a lack of urban centres would, together with the idea that the population density was relatively high, indeed sustain such an idea. It would seem to fit as well the expressions by the ancient authors with respect to the Samnite pattern of settlement, apparently consisting of small villages. Livy 9.13.7 is classic: *Samnites ... in montibus vicatim habitantes* – together with Strabo 5.4.12 κωμηδόν ζώσιν. These modern and ancient observations on the pattern of settlement have been conceptualised as representing a specific settlement organisation. For instance, in the chapter on the Roman conquest of Italy in the *Cambridge Ancient History* Tim Cornell develops the following ideas on the nature and organisation of Samnite society:

> “... it still remains true in general that before the Roman conquest the region was poor and relatively backward, with few, if any, urban centres, no coinage and little trade. The inhabitants supplemented their livelihood by warfare and raiding ... The political organization of the Samnites was correspondingly simple and unsophisticated. The basic local unit was the *pagus*, a canton comprising one or more villages (*vici*), which was economically self-sufficient and possessed a large measure of political autonomy. Each *pagus* was probably governed by an elected magistrate called a *mediss* (Latin *meddix* – Festus 110L). A group of such *pagi* would together form a larger tribal unit, for which the Oscan term was *tuito* (Latin *populus*). The chief magistrate of the *tuito* had the title *mediss tovtiks* (*meddix tuticus*).

After qualifying this system again as “very simple”, Cornell links it to the general pattern of settlement in the pre-Roman period which was “one of scattered villages with associated hill-forts and rural sanctuaries”, the functional separation of which

---

73 Also 10.17.2. is often, improperly, cited in this context.
74 CORNELL 1989, 353-356.
would be characteristic of a non-urban or pre-urban society. This text has been cited here at some length because it neatly illustrates some general assumptions on Italic, in this case more specific Samnite patterns of settlement: An institutional hierarchy between *vicus* (village), *pagus* (here as a territorial district or canton) and *tuto* (‘tribe’: Latin *populus, civitas* or *nomen*) is indicated. In the traditional view, Italic tribes would thus have been subdivided into *pagi*, whereas within these *pagi* people lived in small villages (*vici*), hill-forts (Latin: *oppida*) or dispersedly over the territory. (cf. fig. 4.5).

---

75 CORNELL 1989, 356. Regarding Cornell’s general contemptuous tone as regards Italic peoples cf. Cornell on p. 292 of the same volume of *CAH* on the incursions of the fifth century BC: “At all events the rationale behind these wars was always the same. They were predatory raids by highland peoples upon the relatively prosperous and advanced settlements on the plain. The notion of ‘just war’ and the traditional claim that Rome’s wars were fought in retaliation against external aggressors, probably derived from the experiences of the fifth century,” which echoes Liv. 9.13.7 quite literally, including Livy’s qualification of the Samnites as *montani atque agrestes* (9.13.6-7).

76 The ‘translation’ of *tuto* is unclear, and depends on different conceptions of the evolution of Samnite society organisation as well (e.g. the remarks in *LETTA* 1994, esp. 395). Cf. thus here CORNELL 1989, 356: *populus*; TORELLI 1988b, 72: *civitas*; *LA REGINA* 1980: ‘tribal’ *nomen*, also followed by DENCH 1995, 136-137 and TAGLIAMONTE 1997, 180, 258. Cf. e.g. also TORELLI 1988c, 55-56 for the same hierarchical order tribe-*pagus-vicus*.

77 SALMON 1967, 79-81 (p. 80: “each *tuto* contained a number of *pagi* … When, however, a number of *pagi* agreed to cooperate closely a *tuto* was born”); La Regina has put forward his ideas in, amongst other publications, *LA REGINA* 1970; *LA REGINA* 1980; *LA REGINA* 1989; *LA REGINA* 1991; cf. also TORELLI 1988c and TORELLI 1999, 10: “this traditionally underdeveloped land organized on the village model of the *pagus* and the *vicus*.”

The *oppida* are sometimes considered to be merely defensive structures of the *pagus* as a whole because few habitation structures have been found in the hill-forts, but this may to a certain degree rather represent the status quo of archaeological research than...
the ancient reality (cf. Chapter 3). Especially for the peoples of the Central Apennines, La Regina has developed the model further, departing from the idea that the *pagus* forms a sub-tribal entity. For example, on the basis of the numbers of settlements in different areas and the *tabula alimentaria* of the *Ligures Baebiani*, he has asserted that there would have been a rather constant ratio between *vici* and *pagi* (3:1), as well as a more or less constant relation between the surface area of the respective territories of different tribes and the number of *pagi* in which it was divided.

Concerning the chronological dimension of this model as it appears in most studies, it is generally assumed that it stems from ‘very ancient times’. This is perhaps mostly based on the attribution of the institution of the *pagus* in Rome to Servius Tullius and the supposed relapse of Capua to a *pagus*-structure after the Roman punishments in 211 BC, as well as the occurrence of pre-Roman onomastics in proper names of some *pagi*. According to Salmon for example the *pagus* was the Samnites’ “sub-tribal entity”, and he calls it “the immemorial Italic institution”. Although there has generally been little contemplation on the chronological development of the *pagus-vicus* system until recently, there seems to be general consensus on the pre-Roman date, and nature, of the system. La Regina for instance dates it to the late fifth century BC, and Tagliamonte discusses the system when considering the seventh to mid sixth century.

---

79 e.g. Laffi 1974, 336: “Ogni *pagus* si articolava in uno o più *vici*, che rappresentavano nuclei di stanziamento compatti, subordinati al *pagus*, nei quali si raccoglieva stabilmente parte della popolazione rurale del *pagus* stesso. *Oppida* e *castella*, ubicati per solito in posizioni elevate, assicuravano la difesa dell’intera comunità territoriale paganica.” The well-studied Lucanian hill-fort of Roccagloriosa has been seen as an example for the Samnite situation: Gualtieri 2004. Cf. discussion in Stek 2006.

80 La Regina 1970-1971, 444–6; the average area occupied by a *pagus* would have amounted to 34-36 km² and by an average *vicus* 11–12 km². Criticised by Capogrossi Colognesi 2002, 175 with n. 37.


82 Salmon 1967, 79-80. On p. 79: “Their sub-tribal entity was the immemorial Italic institution, the *pagus*; and traces of their *pagus*-arrangements survived into Roman times. The unmistakably Oscan character of such a name as *pagus Meflanus* (listed in the alimentary tables of the *Ligures Baebiani et Corneliani*) shows that it goes back to the *toto* of the Hirpini.” Cf. Kornemann 1905, 83.

Interesting for this ‘timeless’ character of this pattern of settlement is the website of the Comune di Fagnano, where is stated that: “Fagnano Alto richiama l’idea della “città diffusa.” Infatti il comune è un insieme di 10 centri abitati ... Questo sistema insediativo richiama quello italicico dei *Pagus* [sic], un insieme di piccoli centri facenti capo ad una comunità. Oggi, queste piccole realtà sparse nel territorio riassumono con ancor più forza questo concetto, diventando sempre più elementi naturali in un contesto territoriale in cui lo spopolamento ne caratterizza i segni visibili.” [http://www.comunefagnanoalto.it/FSFraz.htm last accessed April 30 2008].

83 But cf. e.g. Letta 1988; Letta 1991.

84 La Regina 1975, 273 (on the *pagus*); Tagliamonte 1994, 37, cf. *infra* n. 90. Cf. also Torelli 1970-1971 on Etruria and Apulia, esp. 433-435, who discerns the emergence of the Etruscan *pagi* and accordingly a *pagus-vicus* system in the seventh-sixth centuries BC; *pagi* which would have been subsequently ‘in crisis’ (fifth century) and partly integrated in the urbanisation processes (fourth century), but would have been disturbed or substituted by the Roman colonisation from the third century BC on. Cf. also, e.g., Dench 1995, 136.
Ch. 4. Location and Function of Italic Sanctuaries

THE SUPPOSED PERSISTENCE OF THE PAGUS-VICUS SYSTEM

But what happens after the Roman conquest? Umberto Laffi sketches a situation in which the Romans found, after the Social War, regions organised according to the pagus-vicus system, which would have been much more difficult to re-organise within the Roman system of municipalisation than the areas which already presented urban structures.\(^{85}\) The Romans would have had, for example, to choose which vicus was to become the seat of the new municipium and to delineate the municipal borders. Laffi’s goal is to explain how the new municipal system interfered with the pre-existing pagus-vicus system. He basically envisages a persistence of the pagus-vicus system alongside the Roman municipal system. Vici and pagi would have preserved their religious, but also administrative functions, and every pagus and every vicus would have continued to constitute an autonomous ‘respublica’, the only infringement on their autonomy being jurisdiction, to be dispensed by the municipia.\(^{86}\) A general Roman policy of non-intervention in the tribal structures would have been the reason for the continued existence of the pagus-vicus system in the first century BC.\(^{87}\)

Moreover, Laffi discerns different developments in the Roman organisation before the Social War with regard to the independence of the Italic pagi and vici. The Roman praefecturae, representing only juridical power, would have had little influence on the traditional Italic structures. On the other hand, the relatively autonomous municipia would have gradually controlled the whole territory, and therefore altered the Italic patterns of settlement much more profoundly. However, vici and pagi maintained their organisational roles also during the empire, even if their powers were diminished and partly transferred to the city authorities.

It should be stressed that this conception of Italic or Samnite settlement organisation is present in virtually all studies on pre-Roman Central-Southern Italy, and is endorsed, for instance, by Ivan Rainini in his 2000 contribution on settlement forms in Samnium. Here, Rainini accepts the validity of the pagus-vicus system,\(^{88}\) but takes a different stance than Laffi with regard to the relation to the Roman municipal system. He sees the pagus-vicus system as a “presupposto del sistema municipale romano” rather than understanding both systems as parallel or even antithetical forms.\(^{89}\) This image of the

---

\(^{85}\) LAFFI 1974, e.g. 336: “l’imposizione dello schema del municipium esigeva in via preliminare un’ampia opera di ristrutturazione del contesto politico-amministrativo.”

\(^{86}\) LAFFI 1974, 337.

\(^{87}\) LAFFI 1974, 338.

\(^{88}\) RAININI 2000, 238: “come è ormai da tempo acquisito.”

\(^{89}\) RAININI 2000, 238; cf. on this antagonism – substrate paradox e.g. GABBA 1994a: 74 (1994): “Il processo di municipalizzazione dopo la Guerra Sociale è in stretto collegamento con il ricordato fenomeno dell’urbanizzazione dell’Italia nel corso del I sec. a.C. Credo, anzi, che il passaggio dalla fase degli insediamenti tribali, caratteristica di larga parte dell’Italia centrale e meridionale (nonché, ovviamente, della cisalpina), alla fase urbana rappresenti l’aspetto più imponente della municipalizzazione dell’Italia dopo l’89 a.C.” and on p. 97: “… i nuovi impianti urbani (seil. municipi), costruiti secondo lo schema ortogonale, cercarono di sostituire gli antichi insediamenti basati sui pagi e i vici. In molti casi, il vicus più importante in un gruppo di pagi sarà stato scelto per divenire il centro urbano del municipium.”
system as a ‘substrate’ for the later Roman institutions is well established.\textsuperscript{90} In general, the \textit{pagus-vicus} system in Roman times is described in terms of the ‘persistence’ or ‘perseverance’ of the system, despite the Roman conquest, or indeed as a sign of a ‘remarkable vitality’ of the system still in this period.\textsuperscript{91} This ‘persistence’ is sometimes formulated in almost romantic wording, Marco Buonocore for instance ends his article on the subject as follows: “Dalla fase di insediamento paganico-vicano si passò ad una fase urbano-cittadina la quale, sebbene si sia sovrapposto alla precedente, non credo mai, almeno in certe aree sabelliche, che sia riuscita ad annullarla.” After this brief sketch of the traditional conception of the \textit{pagus-vicus} system in the Italic areas, the supposed role of sanctuaries within will be discussed.

\textbf{THE ROLE OF SANCTUARIES WITHIN THE \textit{PAGUS-VICUS} SYSTEM}

“The Samnites, for instance, maintained a separation between their settlements and the various forms of communal or state activity they engaged in. They lived in villages or on farms dispersed throughout the territory (Livy 9.13.7), but each locality (\textit{pagus}) had a hill fort for defensive purposes and a religious sanctuary that acted as a focus not just for sacrifices and festivals but also for markets, legal hearings, and assemblies of the local people. These assemblies seem to have chosen magistrates to govern them in much the same way as a city was governed and to have banded together into larger political units, each known as a \textit{tutto}. These in turn seem to have formed a federation, known to modern historians as the Samnite League, which had the power of declaring peace and war. A number of larger and more elaborate sanctuaries probably served as the meeting points of the \textit{tutto}, and a particularly large and imposing example at Pietrabbondante has been identified as a possible headquarters of the Samnite League.”\textsuperscript{92}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{90} Cf. e.g. \textsc{La Regina} 1970, 191; \textsc{Tagliamonte} 1994, 110 on pre-Roman internal Sabina and the ‘area medio-adriatica’: “L’assetto del territorio nel suo complesso resta legato al modello pagano-vicanico, che del resto sopravvivera in età romana quale sostrato del sistema municipale, come appare esemplarmente documentato, per citare un caso più noto, dalla \textit{lex Furfensis}.” Cf. also \textsc{Humbert} 1978, 238: “Il reste maintenant à se demander à quel type d’organisation les Romains et les peuples indigènes, \textit{Praetutti, Sabini et Picentes}, vont confier les tâches communes d’administration locale. Il est certain que ces populations ignoraient la structure unitaire de la cité; c’est soit à partir de cellules créées de toutes pièces (\textit{fora}), soit, sur le modèle qu’ont offert les \textit{Vestini}, en utilisant les structures villageoises (\textit{pagi, vici}) préexistantes, que les Romains jetteront les bases d’une organisation “municipale” élémentaire.”

\textsuperscript{91} Besides Laffi, cf. e.g. \textsc{La Regina} 1970-1971; \textsc{Frederiksen} 1976, 350; \textsc{Gaggiotti} 1983, 141, on the changes after the Social War: “sebbene la tradizionale forma insediativa paganico-vicana non venisse completamente destrutturata …”; \textsc{Letta} 1992; \textsc{Guidobaldi} 1995, 178: “l’organizzazione del territorio pretuzio al momento della conquista era essenzialmente di tipo paganico-vicano; come vedremo, essa sopravviverebbe in età romana quale alternativa indigena al modo di abitare cittadino introdotto dai Romani con le colonie,” and 247: “lo schema applicato [scil. da Roma] destrutturò soltanto in parte il precedente contesto rurale; per il resto il tipo di insediamento prevalente nel territorio continuò a essere quello paganico-vicano …”; \textsc{Franchi De Bellis} 1995, 383: “Tipica dell’Italia centrale e meridionale (con esclusione delle colonie greche), questa articolazione paganovicanica non è mai venuta meno in età romana,” in discussing the \textit{pagi} and \textit{vici} of the Latin colony (!) of Ariminum, documented by inscriptions relating to the colony in the late third century BC and Augustan period (cf. discussion in Chapter 7); \textsc{Dench} 1995, 140 (“remarkably persistent”); \textsc{Buonocore} 2002a; 43-45.

\textsuperscript{92} \textsc{Lomas} 2004, 201-203.
\end{flushleft}
This passage from a recent handbook which would claim at least some authority, the *Cambridge Companion to the Roman Republic* published in 2004, perfectly illustrates the general consensus on the relation of the Samnite pattern of settlement and sanctuaries, and at the same time the very ambiguity of this model. Indeed, Italic sanctuaries are so often attributed a specific role within the so-called *pagus-vicus* system, that it has become a commonplace. The development of this model is the subject of this section.

One feature recurring in descriptions or conceptions of the *pagus-vicus* system is the alleged spatial separation of functions. In this respect, as has been said, the hill-forts would serve defensive purposes, separated from the *vici* and necropoleis. Sanctuaries would have occupied a specialised position as well. In the passage by Kathryn Lomas, this boils down to different sanctuaries on the level of respectively the *pagus*, the *tutto*, and the ‘Samnite League’. Often, a category further down the hierarchy is added: sanctuaries that relate to the *vicus*, which would have been a subdivision of the *pagus*. This alleged special relation between pattern of settlement and sanctuaries needs some further investigation. In the authoritative handbook on the history of urbanism by Pierre Gros and Mario Torelli, with regard to the Samnites Pentri and the Lucanians is stated:

“Di fatto perciò, i territori di queste tribù sono articolati in aree paganiche … nelle quali gravitano più *vici*, le cui *arces* sono da identificare con le cinte fortificate, e uno o più santuari gestiti tanto da uno o più *vici* quanto da uno o più *pagi* … Il *pagus* dunque vive e «funziona» come una città, il santuario principale del *pagus* ne costituisce in buona sostanza il *forum*, con tempio e mercato, sia pur periodico o stagionale, mentre gli *oppida* sulle vette montane fungono da rocche per la necessità di difesa.”

In fact, the *pagus* is conceptualised as an ‘exploded’ city: the societal functions concentrated in an urban context are here dispersed over the territory. The principal functions of sanctuaries would consequently have included political, religious and economic aspects, just as the *forum* in urban societies. This is the basic layout of the significance of sanctuaries within the *pagus-vicus* system: sanctuaries are seen as a pole of aggregation. As will be obvious, to see sanctuaries as central places within the general and directly local pattern of settlement is substantially different from their conception as frontier markers or road shrines. Within this basic conception,
subdivisions have subsequently been made, discerning different types of sanctuaries with different appeals. Such divisions are reminiscent of other, more general typologies of sanctuaries. For example Helena Fracchia and Maurizio Gualtieri distinguish three types of sanctuaries in late fifth to fourth century Lucania: large ‘cantonal’, extra-urban sanctuaries such as Rossano di Vaglio, small rural sanctuaries “at crossroads”, and cult places in aristocratic houses. Also, the divisions made by Colonna for Etruria and by Edlund for Etruria and Magna Graecia, illustrate this idea of a hierarchy between different sanctuaries, whereas the idea that the different Italic tribes each had a central ‘tribal’ sanctuary is also widely popular.

In the case of the pagus-vicus system, however, these differing competences of sanctuaries are attached to different institutional entities: vicus, pagus, and touto / populus / nomen. An example of a differential approach to the function of sanctuaries of varying dimensions is to be found in the section on the Apennines (“l’antico cuore del sottosviluppo”) by Torelli in Storia di Roma. According to Torelli, voicing a widely accepted view, the big rural sanctuaries would constitute the gathering places on the level of the civitas or touto, whereas the smaller ones, connected with springs and ‘natural routes’, would have formed the meeting places for the pagi.

Similarly, La Regina assigns most Samnite sanctuaries a pagus-wide reach, naming Schiavi d’Abruzzo, Vastogirardi and S. Giovanni in Galdo, whereas sanctuaries such as Campochiaro would appeal to ‘more communities’. The most important, even ‘national’ sanctuary would have been that of Pietrabbondante. This possible function of Pietrabbondante has been treated in Chapter 3, here the focus will be on the

98 Colonna 1985; Edlund-Berry 1987.
99 E.g. the fanum Voltumnae for the Etruscans, Pietrabbondante for the Samnites Pentri, Rapino for the Marrucini. Cf. Chapter 3 n. 69.
100 Torelli 1988b, quote on p. 72.
101 Torelli 1988b, 72: “Alcuni grandi santuari di aperta campagna nel territorio di un segmento tribale; la touta rappresentano il centro naturale e tradizionale di riunione religiosa e politica, con ovvio richiamo per fiere e mercati periodici, mentre i santuari minori, di norma connessi con sorgenti (e percorsi naturali), al pari dei maggiori, costituiscono i punti di raccolta per i pagi, articolazioni geografiche e politiche della civitas, così come i vici (e gli oppida) sono a loro volta articolazioni di un pagus.”
102 Cf. however Capini 1991a, 115, who states that “era l’area sacra alla quale facevano capo gli abitanti del pagus al quale il santuario stesso apparteneva, in questo caso quello che aveva il suo centro nell’abitato di Boiano”.
somewhat smaller sanctuaries that, in the traditional conception, would have been relevant to *vici* or *pagi*.

**AN ELABORATION OF THE MODEL: LETTA’S ‘I SANTUARI RURALI’ 1992**

By far the most elaborate study on the function of sanctuaries, especially in relation to the *pagus-vicus* system, is the 1992 article by Letta on the Central Apennines. Although Letta focuses on the first century BC, he does this “per poter evidenziare la peculiarità dei santuari rurali nella dialettica tra le strutture urbane dei municipi voluti da Roma e le strutture paganico-vicane tenacemente persistenti”\(^{104}\), that is to say, its results would have significance as well for the period preceding the municipalisation because of the persistent character of the *pagus-vicus* system. Letta departs explicitly from the idea that the *pagus-vicus* system has to form the basis for further interpretation: “è necessario sforzarsi … di utilizzare la distinzione *pagus* / *vicus* come griglia per l’inquadramento e l’interpretazione dei dati.”\(^{105}\) Therefore, the rural sanctuaries he focuses on in this article are by default within this ‘grid’. Considering the inscriptions of the Augustan regio IV indicating cult places outside the municipal centres, he attempts to classify the rural sanctuaries according to their function in relation to settlements.

-In the first place, Letta discerns a type of sanctuary located outside settlements, *municipia* as well as *vici*, that would relate primarily to the whole *pagus* (“tipo A”). He suggests that most sanctuaries in the areas with *pagi* can be classified as such. The finest example of this type would be the temple at Fontecchio, in the Vestine territory of Peltuinum. The podium of a temple dating to first century AD has been recognised under the modern church of S. M. della Vittoria.\(^{106}\) This represents a restoration phase; the date of the original building is unfortunately unknown.\(^{107}\) The sanctuary was dedicated to *Quirinus* (perhaps *Juppiter Quirinus*).\(^{108}\) There is an inscription mentioning magistrates, but it is unclear whether they belong to a *vicus* or a *pagus* (or yet another institution).\(^{109}\) An additional inscription re-used in the same church however mentions the settlement of Aufenginum, the actual Fagnano Alto.\(^{110}\) The influence of a *vicus* from elsewhere would document the *pagus*-wide reach of this sanctuary.\(^{111}\)

Another example of a *pagus* sanctuary would be provided by an inscription dating to the period of Sulla found near Fiamignano at S. Angelo in Cacumine, in the territory

---

\(^{104}\) Letta 1992, 109. Letta highlights the problems in definition of *pagi*, which he sees as a territorial unit that can comprise *vici* or isolated houses, and *vici*, villages proper.

\(^{105}\) Letta 1992, 110.

\(^{106}\) La Regina 1967-68, 387-392; Coarelli and La Regina 1984, 30-31.

\(^{107}\) Letta 1992, 110 argues that it dates to the second half of the second century BC, referring to La Regina 1967-68, but here (p. 392) is only said that the type of cornice is spread “a partire dalla metà del II secolo a.C.”.

\(^{108}\) If related to AE 1968, 154 found in another church nearby.

\(^{109}\) CIL IX, 3440 (= CIL I², 3265).

\(^{110}\) AE 1968, 153.

\(^{111}\) Letta 1992, 111.
of the Aequicoli. At least two people dedicated different sacred objects to an unnamed deity, which were paid for by four different groups, which would correspond to four *vici*.

-A second type of sanctuary ("tipo B") would be characterised by its pertinence to the whole *pagus*, whereas it was located within one of its *vici*. An example of this type would be the already mentioned temple of Jupiter Liber known from the so-called *lex aedis Furfensis*, dating to 58 BC. Here, apart from the *vicus Furfensis* where the temple apparently stood, possibly also the communities of the *Fifficulani* and *Taresuni* are mentioned, thus representing three *vici*, which would be part of one and the same *pagus*.

-The third type ("tipo C") could be recognised in sanctuaries in or in the direct neighbourhood of the *vicus*, and which, differing from the "tipo B", would exclusively serve the population of the *vicus* itself. For example, in Marsic territory there is the sanctuary of *Victoria* at Trasacco, which presents a late third or early second century BC dedication on behalf of the *vecos Supnas* or *vicus Supinum*. Juppiter *Trebulanus*, venerated at the sanctuary of Quadri in Samnite territory, would have taken its name from a *vicus* of the same name, thus attesting to another *vicus* sanctuary. For the territory of the Marsi Letta would not hesitate to assign all sanctuaries to the *vicus* “C” type: in Marsic territory there never seem to have existed *pagi* at all.

-A last type in late-Republican sanctuaries ("tipo D") could be distinguished in the sanctuaries that are located outside the municipal urban area, but that relate firmly to the *municipium*. An example would be the sanctuary of Hercules Curinus 5 km north of the ancient city of Sulmo, modern Sulmona in Abruzzo, that would have developed from a *pagus* sanctuary to a municipal one. The sanctuary of Jupiter Stator at Alba Fucens, attested by three inscriptions, would have related to the colony of Alba from the very beginnings. One of these inscriptions, with a consular date of 168 AD, was found outside the colonial urban centre, in Antrosano, and apparently mentions the

---

112 *AE* 1984, 274.
113 LETTA 1992, 112 with previous bibliography.
114 *CIL* IX 3513 (= *CIL* I², 756).
116 *CIL* IX, 3849 (= *CIL* I², 388); LETTA 1992, 115.
117 *CIL* IX, 2823 of Hadrianic date; LETTA 1992, 115.
119 Cf. GUARDUCCI 1981, 226 and *infra*. The link with the *municipium* would be demonstrated by an inscription of a *miles e municipio Sulmone* and an inscription referring to an *auguratus*, “probabilmente municipale” (LETTA 1992, 116). As for the sanctuary of Hercules at S. Agata in Campo Macrano, near Castelvecchio Subequeo, which would have started as a *pagus* sanctuary and was later incorporated in the centre of the *municipium* of Superaequum (VAN WONTERGHEM 1984, 78, site 1, 5c), the epigraphical evidence does not seem to justify such an interpretation.
120 *CIL* IX, 3923; 3949; 3950.
erection of a honorific statue in a public place to a certain C. Amaredius, who was, amongst other things, *curator aput Iovem Statorem*.\textsuperscript{121} Letta identifies this public place with the sanctuary, which therefore would be extra-urban.\textsuperscript{122}

The division of sanctuaries in different types is only helpful inasmuch as it contributes to create clarity in otherwise undifferentiated data. Of course, every kind of division, being an analytical tool, runs the risk of oversimplification and it would be inconsequential and even unспортиво to criticise it for that. However, it seems important here to look in some detail at the model, in this case the *pagus-vicus* system, and the data, in this case the sanctuaries attested epigraphically, and the connection between the two. It can be argued that in some aspects Letta’s interpretative ‘model’ determines the interpretation of the data, rather than vice-versa. This in the end might obscure rather than clarify what is actually known about these sanctuaries. Therefore, a brief look at the evidence for each category of sanctuary.

- The best example of a *pagus* sanctuary (“tipo A”) would be constituted by the Fontecchio sanctuary, dedicated to (Juppiter) Quirinus. Its public character is attested by an inscription of the first century BC in which three magistrates construct *cellam et culinam*.\textsuperscript{123} But it is unknown what competences these *magistri* actually had. Therefore, on the basis of this inscription it is not possible to tell whether this sanctuary functioned in the context of a *pagus*, or not. Letta finds evidence in another inscription however, walled into the same church, mentioning the settlement of Aufenginum. According to him, this was a *vicus*, situated in the *pagus* to which the sanctuary would relate.\textsuperscript{124} Although a similar function of the sanctuary is not improbable, it is important to underscore that in the inscriptions of the ‘exemplary *pagus*-sanctuary’ of Fontecchio there is no mention of a *pagus*, nor of any *vicus*: it is only the “griglia per l’inquadramento e l’interpretazione dei dati” that has added these entities.

The evidence for another suggested *pagus* sanctuary in the area of the Marruccini is, to say the least, inconclusive.\textsuperscript{125} Regarding the other alleged *pagus* sanctuary, at S. Angelo in Cacumine near Fiamignano, in the territory of the Aequicoli, an inscription

\textsuperscript{121} *CIL* IX, 3950.
\textsuperscript{122} LETTA 1992, 117.
\textsuperscript{123} *CIL* IX, 3440 (= *CIL* I², 3265).
\textsuperscript{124} LETTA 1992, 111: “[Aufenginum ], che evidentemente deve essere considerato un *vicus* compreso nello stesso *pagus*.”
\textsuperscript{125} This *pagus* sanctuary would be attested by the first-century AD dedication to the deified river Aternus, found in the bed of the river (now called Pescara). LETTA 1992, 111 links this inscription to another one found in 1850 and now lost, mentioning a *pagi Ceiani aqua*. This inscription was found at a source (Fonte Almone-Limone), albeit not far from the river (*La Torre* 1989b, 133). The architectural remains of a fountain or perhaps a temple have been seen at the end of the 19th century on the other side of Scafa, at località Fosse (*De Petra* and *Calore* 1900, 177-179). With the present data it seems difficult to combine the presence of a *pagus*-aqueduct at a natural source with a river cult in another place and architectural remains in yet another (albeit within a short range) in order to propose the existence of a *pagus* sanctuary, especially since the presence of tombs and funeral monuments in the neighbourhood seems to point to a nearby settlement (*La Torre* 1989b, 133).
dating to the period of Sulla tells us that at least two people dedicated different sacred objects, which were paid for by four different iuventutes: the Subocrīna, Aserea, Superfaia, and Farfina.126 Letta supposes that the names of these collegia iuvenum reflect four different communities that would have been in charge of this sanctuary.127 One may doubt however the logical validity of the following conclusion: “evidentemente si tratta di quattro vici compresi in un unico pagus, e il santuario comune a tutti e quattro era appunto il santuario del pagus.” The evidence for pagus sanctuaries located outside nucleated settlements might thus disappoint (cf. however Chapters 7 and 8).128

- With regard to the second type of sanctuary (“tipo B”) that would be characterised by its pertinence to the whole pagus, being located however in one of its vici, the example of Furfo remains intriguing. The lex aedis Furfensis129 from 58 BC would attest to the existence of three vici within one pagus, which had a common sanctuary at the vicus of Furfo. The lex is a dedication of a temple to Jupiter Liber, made by a magistrate and a priest of Furfo. It is dedicated Furfone; which can be interpreted as “in the vicus Furfensis”, actually mentioned some lines further. The lex concerns the definition of the temple area and regulations regarding alterations of the temple and the handling of objects that are donated to the sanctuary. In this context, it is stated that if someone would steal a sacred object, the aedile could determine the amount of the fine. Then a rather problematic expression follows: idque veicus Furf[ensis] mai[or] pars, FIFELTARES sei apsolve re volent sive condemmare. The incomprehensible FIFELTARES has been amended into Ffficulani e[t] Tares[uni], on the basis of other inscriptions of the region (ignoring the L and accepting that the interpunction, otherwise present, was forgotten here).130 In this interpretation, the vicus of Furfo had apparently a privileged position in the juridical procedure, but also other parties, the Ffficulani and the Tares[uni] are concerned.

La Regina, Laffi, Coarelli, and Letta have similarly interpreted these Ffficulani and Tares[uni] as representing two other settlements, “che evidentemente sono da considerarsi anch’esse come vici, compresi nello stesso pagus”.131 In this way, the sanctuary of Furfo would represent a sanctuary that served the whole pagus, consisting

126 AE 1984, 274.
127 LETTA 1992, 112.
128 With regard to the Paelignian area, VAN WONTERGHEM 1984, 42, generally considers sanctuaries as “nuclei religiosi di pagi”, and therefore sees the presence of sanctuaries as proof of the persistence of the pagus as principal core of the tribe down to the first century BC. In his n. 311 various sanctuaries are listed that would belong to a pagus. Of the nine sanctuaries mentioned, however, only one is directly linked with a pagus (Prezza), another one (Secinaro) possibly indirectly. See infra.
129 CIL IX, 3513 (= CIL I², 756).
130 LA REGINA 1967-68, 393-396; followed by, e.g., LAFFI 1978; COARELLI and LA REGINA 1984, 16. ADAMIK 2003, 81 argues in his new reading of the inscription to interpret fifeltares as ‘fiduciaries’ or ‘trustees’. SCHEID 2006a, 25 reads fifeltares without further comment as “likely the local authority”.
of at least three *vici*. The sanctuary would have been dominated however by one *vicus* – that of Furfo – in whose territory it was located.\textsuperscript{132} Perhaps needless to say, notwithstanding the fact that there is indeed mention of a *vicus*, that of Furfo, there is no direct evidence of a *pagus*,\textsuperscript{133} and the other two communities are actually known as *iuvenes* elsewhere, not as *vici*.\textsuperscript{134} Again, it seems that the preconception of the *pagus-vicus* system as a ‘given’ structure has determined the interpretation. This is of course not to say that *pagi* had no influence in sanctuaries. There are other epigraphically known sanctuaries where *pagi* had at least some sort of control, as is attested by inscriptions to the like of *de pagi sententia* or *ex pagi decreto*, or the cult of *Juppiter Victor decem pagorum*.\textsuperscript{135} Their relation to corresponding *vici* is however unclear.

-There are clear examples of sanctuaries that have yielded inscriptions mentioning only one *vicus* (“tipo C”). Therefore, these could be recognised as sanctuaries in or in the direct neighbourhood of the *vicus*. Different from the “tipo B” sanctuaries, they would have exclusively served the population of the *vicus* itself. The sanctuary of *Victoria* at Trasacco with a late third or early second century BC dedication on behalf of the *vicus Supinum* is a beautiful example.\textsuperscript{136} It should be pointed out however that the *Juppiter Trebulanus* venerated at Quadri may have taken its name from a nearby settlement, but this settlement is never qualified epigraphically as a *vicus*.\textsuperscript{137} For the territory of the Marsi, where *pagi* seem to have never existed at all, Letta would assign all sanctuaries to *vici*, whether inscriptions mentioning a *vicus* were present or not.\textsuperscript{138} In this typology as a whole, one can discern Letta’s explicit mission, stated at the beginning of his study, to interpret all the evidence within the *pagus-vicus* system.\textsuperscript{139} As a consequence, the sanctuaries are endowed with a significance that is not

\textsuperscript{132} According to COARELLI and LA REGINA 1984, 16: “Siamo cioè di fronte a un caso perfettamente ricostruibile di organizzazione paganico-vicana, con un “pagus” diviso in tre “vici”. LETTA 1992, 112-113 goes further, and ingeniously proposes to recognise the *pagus Frentanus* in the *pagus* relating to the temple at Furfo. The reasoning is as follows: the *Fificulani* are also found in the form of *iuvenes Fificulani Herculis cultores*, found at Paganica. Now, near Paganica, at Ponte di Grotta, a sanctuary to Hercules has been identified, “evidentemente” guided by these *iuvenes Fificulani Herculis cultores*. A funerary inscription from elsewhere (S. Martino di Picenze) mentions a *collegium Herculaneu[m] Frenetium*, which Letta links to the other inscriptions, which in turn would lead to the identification of the *pagus* comprising Furfo as the *pagus Frentanus*. One may or may not feel inclined to follow this reasoning, depending as it does on the conflation of different inscriptions found in different places. It seems however far from certain that from this would follow that the sanctuary at Ponte di Grotta was a *pagus* sanctuary of the “B or A type”, only because the *collegium Herculaneum Frenetium* may be connected to it.

\textsuperscript{133} The relation with the *pagus* mentioned in *CIL* IX, 3521 (= *CIL* F, 1804), which was found near Barisciano cannot be established securely.

\textsuperscript{134} *AE* 1968, 152 and *CIL* IX, 3578.

\textsuperscript{135} *CIL* F, 3269; for *pagi* active in sanctuaries, cf. Chapters 7 and 8.

\textsuperscript{136} *CIL* IX, 3849 (= *CIL* F, 388). See detailed discussion in Chapter 7.

\textsuperscript{137} LETTA 1992, 115; *CIL* IX, 2823; the relevant part of this Hadrianic inscription reads: [..] *conscripti*/tribui ob [merita]/Iovi Tre[bulano].

\textsuperscript{138} LETTA 1992, 115-116: “santuari marsi ... tutti di tipo C, cioè esclusivamente vicani, sia che nelle iscrizioni relative il *vicus* sia espressamente menzionato, sia che non compaia.”

\textsuperscript{139} LETTA 1992, 110.
substantiated by the evidence itself, and I would suggest that the “griglia per l’inquadramento e l’interpretazione” formed by the pagus-vicus distinction has determined to a fairly high degree the outcome of the study. It is only in presuming the existence of a hierarchical relation between pagus and vicus, that a vicus can be taken to demonstrate the existence of a not-mentioned pagus, and vice-versa. In sum, it seems fair to say that the evidential basis for Letta’s typology of sanctuaries within the pagus-vicus system is not strong. This conclusion stands to a certain degree apart from the discussion on the pre-Roman origin of pagi and vici, that will be treated later in Chapter 6.

THE RISE AND FALL OF ‘RURAL’ SANCTUARIES BETWEEN PAGUS-VICUS SYSTEM AND MUNICIPALISATION

“The fate of rural sanctuaries ... seems to have varied from place to place, depending on the extent of their integration in the municipal structures of the area. ... similarly most of the vici, which had formed the core of the traditional settlement pattern seem to have lost their political importance” (CURTI, DENCH and PATTERSON 1996, 179).

In accordance with the conception of rural sanctuaries functioning within the pagus-vicus system, the idea has been developed that Roman influence in the Italic territories can be seen in the abandonment of these sanctuaries in the Roman period. Because the Italic settlement structures were ruptured, and building activities would have concentrated on the new municipal centres, the sanctuaries became obsolete. For Samnium proper, this idea is expressed as follows by Lomas: “The close association between these [Samnite] cult places and non-Roman culture and forms of government is demonstrated by their later history ... The background to this is the breakup of the indigenous Samnite states and the imposition of a Romanized system of municipia.”140

But also for the other areas of Central Italy the idea has been developed that Rome had to ‘overcome’ the traditional settlement pattern of pagus and vicus, with negative consequences for the non-urban sanctuaries.141 The only way for sanctuaries to ‘survive’ would be to happen to be located favourably within the new municipal

---

140 LOMAS 1996, 171.
141 For the general shift of focus in the first century BC, see the classic works of TORELLI 1983; GABBA 1972 (= GABBA 1994a, 63-103). For the idea that the pagus-vicus system had to be broken by Roman administration: COARELLI and LA REGINA 1984, 13-14, on the Sabelli: “Una grave difficoltà dovette rappresentare per lo stato romano la situazione socio-politica dei territori conquistati, privi di città e organizzati, come tutta l’area sabellica, in ‘pagi’ (aree territoriali) entro i quali gravitavano uno o più villaggi (‘vici’). Il sistema seguìto fu quello della prefettura ... Anche l’urbanizzazione di età augustea rappresentò del resto un fenomeno quasi del tutto artificiale, che modificò solo superficialmente l’organizzazione precedente, e che si dissolse quasi subito per dar luogo alla situazione originaria. Tipico ... il caso di Amiernum, ... dove permane la vecchia organizzazione per ‘vici’”. Sanctuaries in decline: e.g. LA REGINA 1970, 196; CAPINI 1991a, 119 (on Campochiaro); LOMAS 1996, 171; DENCH 1995, 139-140. Along similar lines VAN WINTERGHEM 1984, 45, “il pagus, che fino alla fine della Repubblica aveva costituito il più importante nucleo religioso ed amministrativo, a partire dall’età imperiale, sembra aver perduto ogni significato ufficiale.”
order. Actually, most studies refer to one example, which has become paradigmatic: that of the sanctuary of Hercules Curinus in Paelignian territory. One of the earliest expressions of the view that the survival of sanctuaries depends upon the integration in the new municipal system is to be found in the 1971 article on the ‘Sabellian and Samnite territories’ by La Regina, and it seems that this study has influenced subsequent research considerably. In this article, three important ideas are developed: first the idea per se of the pagus-vicus system as central organisation form, second the idea that sanctuaries served different vicus-type settlements, and third the idea that the fate of these sanctuaries in Roman times would depend entirely on their fitting in the new Roman municipal settlement organisation. Therefore, it seems worthwhile to consider La Regina’s line of reasoning.

Connecting the spread of rural settlement directly to the rise of non-urban sanctuaries, La Regina discerns one of the most important examples of the latter in the temple of Hercules Curinus. The monumental phase, reminiscent of Latial terrace sanctuaries, seen today is to be dated after the Social War, but there are the remnants of an earlier phase dating to before the beginning of the second century BC. According to La Regina, the sanctuary in this earlier phase did not belong to the city of Sulmo alone, but to the whole territory, and therefore to the rural vicus-type of settlement. Sulmo apparently did not develop enough territorial power in the period before the municipalisation to be able to exert control over the sanctuary. As to the supposed functioning within the vicus-type settlement of the early sanctuary, La Regina does not bring up evidence, apart from a comparison with the Vestine territory. There, the constellation of a pagus-vicus system would be proved by the cult of Jupiter Victor decem pagorum.

In a rather rhetorical way, it is argued that the Vestine case would demonstrate “un rapporto identico, tra insediamenti e santuario, a quello già visto per i Peligni”, a relation which, it has to be remembered, was not substantiated by any evidence in the sanctuary of Hercules Curinus (and is therefore surely not ‘already seen’). Moreover, the cult practised or organised by ten Vestine pagi would point to a specific “momento del processo senechistico” which would eventually lead to the formation of a municipality.

Turning to the sanctuary of Hercules Curinus near Sulmo, the only circumstance that changed its destiny and preserved it from abandonment, would have been its location

---

143 LA REGINA 1970-1971, 444. “In stretta connessione con la vasta disseminazione dell’insediamento rurale prende consistenza il santuario non urbano.”
144 LA TORRE 1989a.
146 LA REGINA 1970-1971, 444-445: “Questa situazione è confermata dal vicino santuario di Iuppiter Victor, nei Vestini ..., con la differenza però che il santuario peligno non cade in abbandono dopo la guerra sociale ... e ciò per il semplice motivo che con l’assetto municipale esso entra nell’orbita di Sulmo.”
147 CIL F, 3269. See Chapter 8.
Ch. 4. Location and Function of Italic Sanctuaries

within the orbit of Sulmo, the new *municipium*, at a distance of 5 km. Accordingly, the monumentalisation of this sanctuary, relatively unique for extra-urban sanctuaries in the post-Social War period in Central Italy, would have to be explained within this specific adaptation to the Roman system. This image would moreover be supported by the negative evidence from the area inhabited by the Samnites (Pentri), where the abandonment of sanctuaries would correspond to the installation of *municipia* in the plains.\(^{149}\)

Summing up, the central ideas are 1) that sanctuaries functioned within a *pagus-vicus* system and were not focused on one centre only, before the municipalisation, 2) that with the municipalisation, the sanctuaries accordingly lost their functions and were abandoned, and 3) that when sanctuaries did survive, this was due to their fortunate location within the new municipal system. Although this thesis may sound convincingly logical at face value, and indeed seems to suit much of the archaeological evidence, it is important to acknowledge the factual basis for what has become a firm interpretational model. In fact, for the case of Hercules Curinus, there is no evidence that points to its function within a *pagus-vicus* system before the municipalisation. The only argument brought forward, the presence of a cult for Jupiter Victor *decem pagorum* from the adjacent Vestini, does not prove in any way that the sanctuary of Hercules Curinus functioned within a constellation of *vicus*-like settlements. If anything, the Vestine cult of Jupiter Victor could attest to the influence of ten *pagi* in a sanctuary in Vestine territory; *vici* are not even mentioned.

A last remark regards the suggestion that the cult of the ten *pagi* would reflect a specific moment in a process of synoecism: this seems to suggest that the *pagus-vicus* system had the tendency to evolve to more nucleated or perhaps even urban forms of settlement. In another contribution, La Regina develops this idea more clearly with regard to the same sanctuary of Hercules Curinus (Quirinus) at Sulmona in combination with that of Jupiter Quirinus at the *municipium* of Superaequum, referring to the function of the Roman god Quirinus as patron of the *curiae*, the public assemblies. According to La Regina, this process of synoecism would have been, however, “in gran parte forzato”, and was not able to eliminate the *pagus-vicus* system entirely.\(^ {150}\) Thus, in this view, the *pagus-vicus* system forms on the one hand a persistent pre-Roman, Italic, mode of settlement, but on the other would have been

\(^{149}\) la Regina 1970-1971, 456: “… si ha la testimonianza archeologica ed epigrafica di una eccezionale vitalità edilizia nella seconda metà del II sec. a.C., con il totale abbandono negli anni immediatamente successivi alla guerra sociale. E questi sono proprio gli anni in cui prendono vigore quegli insediamenti di pianura, come Saepinum, Bovianum, che riceveranno la costituzione municipale.”

\(^{150}\) Coarelli and la Regina 1984, 113 and 132. Actually, here the idea seems to have been changed somewhat (?); the sanctuary first would have been of local significance only and consequently would, after the municipalisation, have assumed the Roman epithet Quirinus, from then on constituting the “santuario tutelare del sinecismo, mediante il quale i vari *pagi* della zona furono unificati in un unica entità amministrativa, il municipio di Sulmona”. Accordingly, the sanctuary was transformed “da struttura puramente locale in un grandioso organismo a terrazze” (Coarelli and La Regina 1984, 132).
susceptible to be manipulated by the Roman administration to enforce nucleation processes.

**Conclusion: Images of Society and the Lack of Evidential Basis**

In this chapter, three main lines in the modern interpretation of sanctuaries in Central-Southern Italy have been distinguished and discussed. The idea that sanctuaries were connected to the large transhumance routes that criss-crossed Central-Southern Italy has the merit that it seeks to interpret the phenomenon within a specific Italic context, the pastoral economy. This pastoral image of the Italic peoples has however somehow become a cliché, whereas evidence for large-scale transhumance before the Roman period is rather scarce. Also, the connection between Italic sanctuaries dedicated to Hercules and the *tratturi* has clearly been overstated. There is a certain circularity in the argument, and examples of the connection between the god and marketplaces feature more often in Roman, urban contexts. Whereas a relation with economic activities such as transhumance surely will have existed in certain cases, I see no reason to regard it as a key factor in the genesis, location or monumentalisation of rural Italic sanctuaries. The theory that sees sanctuaries as frontier markers of different ethnic territories derives from studies on Greek and other areas where urban centres held a central position. The transposition of the model to the less or non-urbanised Italic world is problematic, especially because the supposed Italic ethnic groups, and especially their territorial manifestations, evade us. Sanctuaries could of course assume a border function, but the scanty evidence in regard points rather to an integrative than an exclusive quality. A function as a central meeting place, also for commercial ends, seems reasonable. The most popular conception of Italic sanctuaries is their being part of the so-called *pagus-vicus* system. In this supposedly typically Italic settlement pattern made out of small villages and farms sanctuaries would have occupied a special position. They would have served at different levels, at that of the *vicus*, at that of the *pagus* comprising more *vici*, and at that of the *civitas* or *tuto*, including several *pagi*.

Romanisation is seen as antithetic to this settlement pattern: the municipalisation would have entailed the suppression of this Italic mode of living, although it sometimes shows a remarkable persistence. The municipalisation therefore explains the abandonment of Italic sanctuaries after the Social War as well. Exceptions to this rule are the sanctuaries that fitted well into the new municipal organisation. Although this model is by far the best developed in modern research, it must be admitted that the evidential basis is actually rather thin. This accounts especially for the ‘typology’ of sanctuaries according to their different competences within the *pagus-vicus* system. A more general observation on all three ‘models’ could be that the evidential basis is rather fragile. Conceptions of Italic economy and society have strongly influenced ideas on the functioning of sanctuaries, whereas factual evidence relating to the sanctuaries and their environment is scarce.