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

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Chapter 6

Roman Sacred landscapes? The *Pagus-Vicus* System Revised

“è proprio sicuro che l’unica chiave di lettura sia quella che vede nel *pagus* un sistema integrato in cui convivono *oppida*, *vici* e santuari? (LETTA 1997b, 313).

This cautious question posed in 1997 by Letta, himself one of the most influential advocates of the *pagus-vicus* system, indicates a growing discomfort with the system. It can be answered now, and it must be negatively. As will be shown in this chapter, there are strong reasons to abandon the traditional scheme. The consequences of the ‘deconstruction’ of the *pagus-vicus* system are manifold. First, its application, ubiquitous in modern studies, on sanctuaries in virtually all areas of Italy lacking strong urban development, should be abandoned. The expression has been used more often than not for situations lacking actual epigraphical evidence for a *vicus* or *pagus* (let alone both!), and here the problem is limited to wrong terminology. This is for example the case for the sanctuary of S. Giovanni in Galdo, which in the past by some authors has been seen as functioning within a *pagus-vicus* system (cf. Chapter 5). But, second, there are sanctuaries in Central Italy which do yield epigraphical evidence for the involvement of a *vicus* or a *pagus*. The implications of the problems with the *pagus-vicus* system entail much more than mere terminology here, and ultimately have important consequences for ideas on the romanisation, religious and not, of Italy.\(^1\)

The interpretation of the function and meaning of sanctuaries within the *pagus-vicus* system relies, by definition, on the acknowledgement of this very system as the most important structure in organising the territory. In Chapter 4, weaknesses in the attempts to interpret sanctuaries exclusively within the *pagus-vicus* system already have been pointed out. But these weaknesses could be demonstrated ‘internally’; that is without discarding the whole framework of the *pagus-vicus* system, which basic notion is that several *vici* were contained by one *pagus*. It has been shown in Chapter 4 that in many modern studies it is an assumption that such a configuration existed (e.g. Letta’s ‘griglia per l’inquadramento e l’interpretazione dei dati’), whereby a *vicus*

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\(^1\) See also STEK forthcoming.
necessarily implies the presence of a pagus and vice-versa, and this notion persists in very recent scholarship.\(^2\)

As will be made clear, positive evidence for this hierarchical relation between pagus and vicus is thin, and probably vicus and pagus should rather be seen as autonomous or complementary institutions. This implies that the hierarchical relation between overarching pagus sanctuaries and minor vicus sanctuaries cannot stand up. There is, however, a more fundamental challenge to the interpretation of sanctuaries within a pagus-vicus system. This concerns the origin and status of the institutions of both the pagus and the vicus, apart from one another. Especially the pagus is traditionally considered to be an ancient, typical Italic institution, that later, under Roman dominion, continued to exist. The standard account on the vicus is similar, depending as it is on the traditional interpretation of the pagus. Recently, two different and important studies, that by Tarpin and that by Capogrossi Colognesi, have treated the subject.\(^3\) Although their conclusions are not identical (or even compatible), they agree in questioning the traditional conception of the nature and development of both pagus and vicus. If the arguments of these scholars are correct, this will influence the interpretation of the administration and pattern of settlement substantially. As will be made clear, both vicus and pagus can probably be understood as Roman, rather than Italic institutions. As a matter of fact, they may ultimately provide insight into the commonly underplayed impact of Roman religion in the Italian countryside. In Chapter 7, it is shown how these new theses would affect the interpretation of Italic sanctuaries and, in the end, the ‘romanisation’ of Italy; but first the debate on pagi and vici is briefly discussed in the present chapter.

\textbf{The Pagus: “die uritalische Siedlungsform”?}

It has been noted earlier that according to Salmon, writing in 1967, the pagus would represent an “immemorial Italic institution”.\(^4\) This notion is part of a long tradition; going back further, Ernst Kornemann described the pagus already in 1905 as “die uritalische Siedlungsform”.\(^5\) This idea is usual in most of modern scholarship on pre-Roman Italy, where pagi have been recognised from the ca. seventh to the fifth century BC in the central Italian areas.\(^6\) Moreover, this system would have persisted as a ‘substrate’ for the municipal system.\(^7\) In this way, a paradigm has been formed which basically discerns continuity from a pre-Roman pagus to a Romano-Italic pagus. Capogrossi Colognesi has shown that the origins of this paradigm can already be found in the work of Adolf Schulten and can be placed in a specific historiographic tradition in Germany at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, which for politico-ideological

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\(^2\) 
\footnotesize{LETTA 1992, 110, cf. Charter 4. See e.g. Bispham 2007, who states on p. 195 that “the model [scil. pagus-vicus system] has held up well”.

\(^3\) 

\(^4\) 
\footnotesize{SALMON 1967, 79.

\(^5\) 
\footnotesize{KORNEMANN 1905, 83.

\(^6\) 

\(^7\) 
\footnotesize{See discussion in Chapter 4.
reasons did not leave room for the structural existence of the village in Italy. Since it is clear that the *pagus* played a role in Roman administration in the empire (there are, for example, *pagi* attested in various provinces, such as Roman Africa), a model of diachronical evolution from a pre-Roman structure to a Roman one was conceived. The evidence for such an early date of origin and consequent evolution is poor. In the first place, we are naturally dealing with a Latin term, and therefore basically with Roman terminology, as has been carefully acknowledged by some scholars. Yet this has not prevented modern scholarship from applying this Roman term to pre-Roman Italic society, implicating that the Roman term translates or reflects a pre-Roman entity. Actually, the ancient authors never describe the allies or independent peoples of Italy as living in *pagi*. Other arguments in favour of the pre-Roman character of the *pagus* have been put forth, the validity of which will be discussed here. Arguably, the presumed age-old pre-Roman origin of the *pagus* has been constructed along three main ‘threads’: the early *pagi* of the archaic *Urbs*, the changing status of Capua in the Republic, and the conceivably ‘traditional’ names of some *pagi*.

**ROME**

It is for the city of Rome itself that the literary tradition points indeed to a very ancient date of origin. Dionysius of Halicarnassus attributes the institution of the *pagus* in

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9. For which, see Teutsch 1962; Maurin 1995.
10. Exceptions are Rudolph 1935, 50-51 and Frederiksen 1976, 344; the latter distinguishes two parallel types of *pagi*: “And while in some cases it is clear that these *pagi* of the Roman *census* were the old tribal *pagi* taken over and transformed into part of the new system, in other cases it seems certain that the *pagi* were new institutions.” Frederiksen, moreover, concludes that during the late Republic *pagi* were “grouped together to form new *municipia* or were joined to old ones, or were created afresh wherever they did not exist”. He thinks that this process was already under way in the late second century BC, but was only systematised under Augustus in his procedures for *census* taking (p. 352).
11. E.g. Schulten 1894, 634 on the different application of the Roman term of *pagus* on various pre-existing situations: “Damit ist nicht gesagt dass nicht etwa *pagus* ein einer grösseren Gruppe von Italikern gemeinsames Wort und ein gemeinsames Landtheilungselement sein könne. So lange aber das Wort in keiner der anderen italischen Sprachen nachgewiesen ist, kennen wir den *pagus* nur als den römischen Flurbezirk”. Laffi 1974, 336 cautiously says: “ampie zone dell’Italia centro-meridionale ... si presentavano strutturate secondo un sistema di insediamenti che aveva nel *pagus*, o meglio in quello che i Romani chiameranno *pagus*, la sua fondamentale unità territoriale e amministrativa,” but propagates all the same the view that the *pagus-vicus* system is basically a pre-Roman feature, parallel to the Roman municipal system. The connection with the Greek *pagos* (“hill”) by Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.15.2 is misinformed, although deriving from the same root *pag-* “fix” as pointed out by Page in the Loeb edition of 1939.
12. Cf. on the connection with the Oscan *touto*, e.g. Letta 1994; Letta 1997b, 313: “si può riconoscere un nesso tra la *touta* italica ... e il *pagus* attestato in queste aree in età romana?”.
14. These *pagi* would, apparently, to some represent a later development of the “*pagus* der Urzeit”; Kornemann 1905, 82: “Dem *pagus* der Urzeit stehen noch näher manche *pagi* bei den italienischen Bergvölkern des Innern, wo sie noch nicht zu Flurbbezirken von Städten, wie in Gegenden mit einer stärker fortgeschrittenen Entwicklung, z. B. in Latium, herabgesunken sind, sondern noch neben den Stadtgemeinden in einer gewissen Selbständigkeit sich erhalten haben.”
Rome to the mythical kings Numa and Servius Tullius.\textsuperscript{15} The historicity of his account is notoriously hard to establish, just as it is to what extent the Greek author described what he observed first-hand in the late first century BC, and what could possibly refer to previous realities. As a matter of fact, in this passage Dionysius quotes some of his sources (4.15.1). The late third-second century BC Fabius Pictor and Cato, and the somewhat obscure late second century BC writer Vennonius are named as sources for the division of Rome’s territory into \textit{tribus} (which were, according to Dionysius, subdivided into \textit{pagi}).\textsuperscript{16} It has been argued that many of the ‘Servian’ institutions (the \textit{census} and the \textit{tribus} division, and by consequence the terminus post quem of the \textit{pagus} division) reflect ideological constructions of the fourth century BC.\textsuperscript{17} In Dionysius the central role of the \textit{pagi} is administrative; they are in fact subordinated to the regulation of citizens and the collection of taxes and the festival of the \textit{Paganalia} is portrayed as a consequence of this function.\textsuperscript{18} The importance of \textit{pagi} for taking the \textit{census}, however, seems best documented from the Augustan age on.\textsuperscript{19} Nonetheless, it might seem reasonable to conclude with Charlotte Schubert that, on the basis of Dionysius’ sources, the relation between \textit{pagus} and some form of territorial organisation must go back to at least the second century BC.\textsuperscript{20} In any case, the first epigraphical evidence from Roman \textit{pagi} is dated to the end of the second, beginnings of the first centuries BC.\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{CAPUA}

An often cited argument in favour of the pre-Roman nature of the \textit{pagus} regards Capua. An inscription has been found in its neighbourhood documenting a decree of the \textit{pagus Herculaneus}.\textsuperscript{22} The inscription mentions magistrates of Jupiter Compagies and is provided with a consular date of 94 BC. According to the decree the \textit{magistri} are allowed to spend their money not, as was usual, on games, but on the restoration of a \textit{porticus pagana}. As a reward the \textit{magistri} are allowed to take their seats in the theatre at the games “as if they had given the games”.

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\textsuperscript{15} Dion Hal. \textit{Ant. Rom.}, 2.76.1, 4.14-15. The relevant texts are treated in the discussion on the installation of the \textit{Paganalia}, Chapter 8.
\textsuperscript{16} Dionysius cites Fabius Pictor, Vennonius and Cato for the new division in \textit{tribus} (4.15.1) and Piso (4.15.5) for the installation of a city register which is paralleled with the function he ascribes to the \textit{Paganalia}. However, he never refers directly to these sources writing on \textit{pagi}. According to \textsc{Frederiksen} 1976, 345, “Dionysius seems here to be combining information taken from some antiquarian source with other items deriving from his own observation or contemporary knowledge”. He continues, however: “Of course, the \textit{pagi} had for centuries had religious functions.”
\textsuperscript{17} \textsc{Humm} 2001.
\textsuperscript{18} Cf. the discussion in Chapter 8.
\textsuperscript{19} \textsc{Schubert} 1996, 99-100.
\textsuperscript{20} \textsc{Schubert} 1996, 100.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{CIL VI}, 2219 and 2220.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{CIL X}, 3772. The inscription could belong to Capua, but also to Calatia: cf. \textsc{Guadagno} 1993, 409 n. 46.
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The *pagus* dates to the period before the Social War, in a period in which Capua had no city rights. Capua, *civitas sine suffragio* since 338 BC, had been punished by the Romans after their defection in the Hannibalic War. After its recapture in 211 BC, senators were executed, people sold in slavery, and Capua was deprived of its city status (Liv. 26.16). According to some authors, notably Ernst Kornemann and Jacques Heurgon, the epigraphically attested *pagus* would thus betray a ‘relapse’ of Capua to an ancient and pre-existing tribal *pagus* structure as a consequence of the Roman punishments. However, as Martin Frederiksen has pointed out, the terminology of the inscription seems quite Roman, especially the consular dating. He concludes that this *pagus* may well be a result of “the Roman *census*, for we know that in 189 BC the Campani were included in the Roman *census* and subjected directly to the censors from Rome (Liv. 38.28.4)”. Indeed, the appearance of the *pagus Herculaneus* in this context seems to make much more sense as a way of Roman control, than as the re-emergence of a putative tribal Italic institution in Campania, which had been urbanised as early as the eighth century BC.

**WHAT’S IN A NAME: PRE-ROMAN NAMES OF PAGI**

Yet another argument that has often been put forth in favour of a pre-Roman origin of the *pagus*, is the appearance of names of *pagi* that apparently originate in indigenous, pre-Roman contexts. For Schulten this was indeed decisive for recognising a pre-Roman origin for the *pagus*. It is true that in some texts listing a number of *pagi*, the *tabulae alimentariae* of Beneventum in Hirpinic territory and of Veleia in Liguria, pre-Roman names are present. Especially those of Veleia would prove the pre-Roman

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24 So e.g. KORNEMANN 1905, 81-82: “Die unterste administrative Einheit ist auf italischem Boden in der vorstädtischen Zeit der *pagus*. Wenn später in der Epoche der Städte Rom einer italischen Gemeinde das Stadtrecht entzieht, wie z. B. Capua im hannibalischen Krieg, so treten die *pagi* wieder zu Tage und übernehmen ... die Pflichten der städtischen Verwaltung”; HEURGON 1942, 117-118, speaking of “les instincts plus profonds des populations”. Cf. discussion in FREDERIKSEN 1976, 350-351 and TARPIN 2002, 40-43. CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, 162-163 demonstrates that Heurgon and Kornemann reflect a tradition presupposing some sort of in-born Italic propensity to revert to rurality, linked to the idea that all that is urban must be Roman.
25 FREDERIKSEN 1976, 351.
26 RUDOLPH 1935, 51; FREDERIKSEN 1976, 351; FREDERIKSEN 1984, 266-268; POBJOY 1998, esp. questioning the Oscan character of Capuan administration; TARPIN 2002, 40-43. Heurgon’s argument indeed relies on the premise that there was a *pagus-vicus* system before the urbanisation of Capua, evidence for which is absent, or it should have been imported by the Samnites when they took Capua in 423 BC (Liv. 4.37.1). However, it is only generically said by Strabo (5.4.12) that the Samnites live *komedon*. As CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, 163 points out, this is to be translated with *vicatim*, not *pagatim* (cf. discussion infra). Heurgon therefore had to assume that a *vicus* implies the presence of a *pagus*...
27 SCHULTEN 1894, 632, on the fact that “auch in den mittelitalischen Landschaften die römischen Inschriften *pagi* nennen. Diese Thatsache allein würde nun nichts beweisen, da die *pagi* mit der Anlage der römischen Colonien oder (seit 90) mit der Verwandlung der unterthônigen Orte in Municipien erst geschaffen sein könnten; aber entscheidend sind die Namen der *pagi*, welche uns die Alimentartafel von Veleia kennen lernt, und die zum guten Theile unrömisc sind”.
28 CIL XI, 1147; CIL IX, 1455.
date of these *pagi*. However, in these documents of Trajanic date only a very small number of *pagi* present such a name. In Beneventum only the *pagus Meflanus* seems to reflect a really non-Latin name. In Veleia, most *pagi* seem to bear gentilicial (*Domitius, Iulius, Valerius*, etc.) or theophoric names (*Apollinaris, Cerealis, Dianius, Venerius, Martius, Iunonius, Mercurialis*, etc.). In the end, only three *pagi* seem to bear real indigenous names: *Ebareus, Moninas, and Luras*. Similarly, for Volcei, Ulubrae and Beneventum mostly localities and Latin gentilicial names, along Roman theophoric ones, are present. Therefore, in general the names of the *pagi*, even those using pre-existing names, cannot attest to a pre-Roman origin. In conclusion, in Capogrossi’s words: “Quanto all’onomastica autoctona di certi *pagi* sembra abbastanza evidente che, in sé, un nome indigeno non possa attestare la preesistenza del *pagus* in quanto tale. A maggior ragione se immaginato come una precisa struttura costituente di una unità etnico-politica. Esso può semplicemente richiamare una preesistenza di popolazioni e di insediamenti, non anche la loro forma specifica.”

What’s in a name: in any case not the proof for the pre-Roman *pagus*.

### The Pagus: A Roman Invention?

For the city of Rome it could be argued – if Dionysius of Halicarnassus is to be trusted when quoting his sources – that the first *pagi* have a terminus ante quem of the second century BC. For Italy outside Rome it is even harder to put a date on the appearance of the *pagus*. Besides the arguments just discussed, the traditional assumption of an early ‘Sabellian’ or ‘Samnite’ *pagus* rests on some indications given by the ancient authors. To be honest, these are rather scarce as a result of a general lack of interest in the Italian countryside. In any case, ancient authors describe the settlement pattern of rural Italy as *vicatim* (most famously Livy 9.13.7), or as organised in *komai* or *komedon* as runs the often quoted expression of Strabo 5.4.11 and 12. But as Capogrossi Colognesi emphasises, *vicatim* (and *komedon*) cannot be equalled with

29 SCHULTEN 1894, 632-633; cf. supra n. 27.
30 VEYNE 1957, 92.
31 *CIL* XI 1147; VEYNE 1957, 91-93; FREDERIKSEN 1976, 344. Only the *pagus Bagiennus* seems to take its name from the Celtic background, but the first may refer to the city of *Augusta Bagiennorum*: TARPIN 2002, 38.
33 FREDERIKSEN 1976, 344.
34 Possibly, pre-Roman names are indicative in some way, but of what precisely is hard to say: CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, 180: “al massimo qualche nome preromano di un *pagus* può aprirsi qualche scorci su realtà preromane”; cf. also TARPIN 2002, 230 on a “fond indigène encore vivace” on which *pagi* were superposed.
36 As does SCHUBERT 1996, 100; cf. supra. In any case *CIL* VI, 2219 and 2220 attest to *pagi* at the end of the second / beginning of the first centuries BC (cf. e.g. NONNIS 2003, 40).
38 But Strabo’s point in 5.4.11 is precisely to indicate the way in which Roman intervention had altered the countryside, from wealth and urbanity to village-like structures! CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, 170.
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*pagatim*: this is only possible by assuming a fixed hierarchical relation between *pagus* and *vicus*, which cannot be proved for Central Italy. 39 So even if these early imperial definitions of territorial structures were applicable to earlier periods, this would attest to the existence of *vici*, not *pagi* in the Italian countryside. As to the epigraphical evidence, besides the already mentioned Capuan inscription from 94 BC there are few early attestations of the *pagus*. Actually, the only other examples of inscriptions mentioning a *pagus* in Italy dated before the Social War come from Ariminum (second half of the third century BC) and Cupra montana (second century BC). 40 In this context, Tarpin points out that Capua seems at that time under Roman control (cf. *supra*), Ariminum is a Latin colony and Cupra montana is located on *ager Romanus*. On the basis of the epigraphical evidence, he concludes, it is difficult to consider the *pagus* as an Italic ‘indigenous’ structure. 41 After the Social War the *pagus* appears more often in Italy, which is by then wholly under Roman control. This cannot be explained merely as a result of the increased epigraphical habit. The conclusion seems, therefore, almost inescapable: the *pagus* is a corollary of Roman control of the territory. 42 Although one may allow for some pre-Roman echoes in the Roman *pagi* – especially in the nomenclature, 43 convincing evidence for a pre-Roman origin or continuity into the Roman period is simply absent. It is, however, only from the reorganisation of the *census* by Augustus onwards that the *pagus* surfaces frequently in the official record. From then on references to *pagi* are often found in financial contexts. 44 It is now that lands are indicated by their location within certain *pagi*, and the process of municipalisation seems to run synchronous with the division per *pagos*, even if the borders of the *pagi* do not always correspond to the municipal borders. 45 In sum, the evidence suggests that the *pagus* was mainly devised as an instrument of Roman control, in order to administrate people and property. 46 *Pagii* existed in Italy at least from the second half of the third century BC onwards (in the Latin colony of Ariminum), but their financial and administrative function can be clearly distinguished only from the time of the Augustan reforms on. The *pagus* was thus surely a rural structure in Italy (cf. also Chapter 4), but it depended on Roman, and urban, forms of government. 47

39 Cf. also *infra*.
40 *CIL* I², 2897a and b; *CIL* IX, 5699. Cf. discussion in Chapter 7.
43 *Cf. supra* n. 34. There is a tendency to admit some pre-Roman reflections in the Roman *pagi*. Frederiksen 1984, 47 n. 22 states that the seven *pagi* of Nola “are probably Roman creations for administrative purposes, but probably reflect pre-existing settlement patterns to a certain extent”. CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, 180 thinks that the pre-Roman names of *pagi* are in some way testimony of pre-Roman situations. Cf. TARPIN 2002, esp. 220-232 for the idea that marginal groups could express themselves “à travers le *pagus*” in the course of the process of statutory redefinition.
45 CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, 203.
47 CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, 227: “appare abbastanza evidente la fisionomia del *pagus* come un sistema insediativo di carattere rurale in rapporto di subordinazione funzionale con l’assetto municipale romano.”
The Pre-Roman or Roman Vicus

THE EVIDENCE

Traditionally, *vici* are considered to have formed an integral part of pre-Roman society, as single hamlets or clusters of hamlets located within the territorial district of the *pagus*. Three types of evidence have been evoked to demonstrate the pre-Roman origin and character of the *vicus*. To begin with, inscriptions mentioning *vici* dating as early as the third century BC have been found in Central Italy. Here, reference will be made to this type of evidence, but a more detailed discussion follows in Chapter 7. Second, the literary sources: these are, as opposed to the situation for the *pagus*, rather explicit, but at the same time enigmatic. The principal text is the damaged lemma by Festus (502, 508 L). The text seems to indicate that the *vicus* was the typical mode of settlement in the backward areas of the Marsi and Paeligni. This specific Italic location seems to point to the pre-Roman, Italic origin of the *vicus*. The third type of evidence adduced, archaeology, is actually not appropriate for answering this question.

ARCHAEOLOGY

The presence of both pre-Roman and Roman village-like settlements or clusters of settlements – omnipresent in Italic archaeology – have induced researchers to term them generically *vici*, even in the absence of epigraphical or other evidence justifying such a specific identification. This has resulted in the situation that a clustered settlement that is not an *oppidum* is, in archaeological and ancient historical jargon, recognised as a *vicus*. Obviously, archaeology in itself is sometimes able to distinguish different types of settlement, with different sizes and perhaps functions, but is by definition not able to recognise the statutory or juridical status of such a settlement. Once it is admitted that the term *vicus* relates to something more precise than, generically, ‘village’, archaeological evidence cannot prove nor falsify the existence of a *vicus*, and we will leave it out of the discussion here.

LITERARY SOURCES: FESTUS 502-508L

Festus’ statement in his *de verborum significatu* on the Marsic and Paelignian *vici* forms an extremely difficult passage because it is fragmented, and the topic is hotly debated currently from different points of view. It is relevant here to point out only some of the problems that have emerged, and especially the consequences they could have for ideas on the origin of the *vicus*.

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48 In addition to the ubiquitous but confusing interference with the *pagus* (according to the false logic *pagus* implies *vicus* and vice versa, cf. infra).
49 This application is ubiquitous. Cf. e.g. the *CIL* volumes or the *Forma Italiae* series (e.g. VAN WONTERGHEM 1984; DE FELICE 1994).
50 Cf. the considerations in CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, 176-182.
The text reads, in Lindsay’s edition of 1913:

(502 L) \(<vici>... cipiunt ex agris, qui ibi villas non habent, ut Marsi aut Paeligni. Sed ex vic[i]s partim habent rempublicam et ius dicitur, partim nihil eorum et tamen ibi nundinae aguntur negotii gerendi causa, et magistri vici, item magistri pagi quotannis fiunt. Altero, cum id genus aedificiorum definitur, quae continentia sunt his oppidis, quae ... itineribus regionibusque distributa inter se distant, nominibusque dissimilibus discriminis causa (508 L) sunt dispartita. Tertio, cum id genus aedificiorum definitur, quae in oppido privi in suo quisque loco proprio ita aedifica<n>t, ut in eo aedificio pervium sit, quo itinere habitatores ad suam quisque habitationem habeant accessum. Qui non dicuntur vicani, sicut hi, qui aut in oppidi vicis, aut hi, qui in agris sint vicani apellantur.

Apparently, three types of vici are envisaged, one rural, one (peri-)urban, and one as a certain type of urban building. The first part on the ‘rural vicus’ is of most interest here. In Festus’ passage, there seems to be a division between land use oriented towards villa-type settlements and land use oriented towards vicus-type settlements, the last of which would be typical for the Marsi and Paeligni.

\textit{vici appelliari incipiunt?}

According to the integration by Mueller (371), based on codex Vaticanus Latinus 3369, we should read the beginning as \(<vici appelliari in>cipiunt\); in other words, “one starts calling vici the settlements in those areas which have no villae, such as amongst the Marsi and the Paeligni”. With this chronological interpretation of \(<cipiunt\), the conception of an ancient rural vicus as opposed to urban ones is confirmed. Torelli, for instance, uses this interpretation of Festus in arguing for a watershed between landscapes organised according to the villa, and those according to the pagus-vicus system, which he calls the “world of non-cities” (cf. Chapter 1).

Tarpin accepts Mueller’s reading, but not the traditional interpretation. According to him, Festus’ indication of the territories of the Marsi and Paeligni as the first regions where the vicus was to appear, could be nothing more than a general stereotype of these peoples as being culturally backward. The fact that vici would have appeared here first is no evidence for their indigenous origin: it may be here that the first vici were conceptualised as such because of special circumstances. Also, the opposition between a landscape with villae and a village-landscape, which has been followed to an extent by modern scholars, can certainly not be accepted at face value, and has been

\begin{footnotes}
\item[52] Cf. the emendation by TODISCO 2006, 610: \textit{quae continentia sunt his oppidis quae [eis finiuntur]}: “che si sviluppano in continuità a queste città che li assumono come confini”; cf. LETTA 2005b, 93.
\item[53] MUELLER 1839.
\item[54] Cf. TARPIN 2002, 55.
\item[55] TORELLI 1995, 10: “The hill-fort fortified enclosures, the small farm scattered in the countryside ..., and the series of country sanctuaries perform the functions otherwise and elsewhere performed by the city. As a consequence, the rural villas for agricultural production are completely absent, as indeed is noted by the ancient sources [citing Festus].”
\item[56] TARPIN 2002, 53-54, 82.
\item[57] TARPIN 2002, 62, 82-83; cf. infra, and on these circumstances also esp. Chapter 7.
\end{footnotes}
proved to be over-simplistic. More specifically, the *vicus* appears quite often in combination with the *villa*, and also Varro’s assertion that the *vicus* served as a provisioning centre for *villae* would underscore an interdependency between *vicus* and *villa*.\(^58\)

It is, however, possible to reconstruct the first line of the lemma differently. The codex Vaticanus Latinus 3369 does not form an independent tradition, but is rather a tentative reconstruction of the mutilated principal Farnesian codex, and Mueller’s integration based on Vat.Lat. 3369 is therefore actually less more than an educated guess.\(^59\) Alternatively, Elisabetta Todisco and Letta have (independently) recently proposed to read something like *[Vicus ter modis intelligetur. Uno, cum id genus aedificiorum definitur ad quae se re]cipiunt ex agris, qui ibi villas non habent etc.*, which eliminates the ‘chronological’ value of *incipiunt* in favour of a verb of movement (“that type of buildings where those who have no villas congregate coming from the fields”).\(^60\) In this reading, the Marsi and Paeligni would still function as a mere example of backwardness, but not necessarily indicate an ancient local (and indeed pre-Roman) origin.

Both the interpretation of the traditional Muellerian text by Tarpin and the new reconstruction of the first phrase by Todisco and Letta would thus weaken the momentum of Festus as an argument for the pre-Roman character of the *vicus*.

**Different integrations and consequent interpretations: the place of the pagus in Festus**

Since Festus mentions *magistri pagi*, it has seemed plausible to some authors that *pagi* originally formed in some way part of Festus’ lemma on *vici*. In his discussion of the relation between *pagus* and *vicus*, Capogrossi Colognesi suggests that at the mutilated beginning of the lemma possibly *pagi* were mentioned, as the unit containing the *villae*.\(^61\) This reconstruction would imply a dichotomy between *pagus* and *vicus* landscapes: the first corresponding to a new Roman ‘economical’ land use, based on the *villa*, the second to a more ‘traditional’ pattern of small villages economically based on, one supposes, mixed farming and pastoralism.

The notion that *vici* and *pagi* were possibly complementary has been elaborated by some authors, pointing to the regional diversity in the distribution of *pagi* and *vici*. Letta has underscored that the Marsi did not have *pagi* at all, whereas the Paelignian territory has not yielded even one *vicus*,\(^62\) and Tarpin has demonstrated an uneven distribution of *pagi* and *vici* for *Germania*.\(^63\) In a recent contribution to the debate, Letta has proposed yet another reading of Festus’ lemma. His reconstruction results in a similar distinction, not between *pagi* and *vici* landscapes but rather between landscapes made up of *pagi* and *vici* on the one hand, and landscapes exclusively provided with *vici* on the other. As noted, Letta comes to a solution equivalent to

\(^{58}\) Varro, *Rust.* 1.16.4; TARPIN 2002, 55.

\(^{59}\) Cf. LINDSAY 1913, xi-xvii; LETTA 2005b, esp. 81; TODISCO 2006, 606 n. 4.

\(^{60}\) TODISCO 2006, 607-608; similarly LETTA 2005b, 83.

\(^{61}\) CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, 190.

\(^{62}\) LETTA 1993; cf. also GUADAGNO 1993.

\(^{63}\) TARPIN 1993.
Todisco’s for the initial phrase of the lemma, but he is ready to reconstruct and re-order more of the rest of the text. Letta emphasises the apparent distinction between two different types of rural *vici* in the lemma, one with and one without *respublica*. According to him, these would correspond respectively to *vici* with their own *magistri vici*, and those without their own *magistri*, consequently supervised by *magistri pagi*.\(^{64}\)

In sum, this would mean that some areas presented only *vici* and other areas *vici* within *pagi*.

The role of the *pagus*, and especially the contingent idea of ‘dichotomised’ landscapes suggested in different ways by Capogrossi Colognesi and Letta, must remain hypothetic as far as regards Festus’ text. However, the important implication would be that whereas *pagi* relate to a new ‘Roman’ organisation, autonomous *vici* could indeed be seen as ‘non-Roman’ indigenous elements.

In conclusion, already in the interpretation of the principal literary source different ideas on the character of the *vicus* appear. Beyond the distinction between an ‘urban’ and a ‘rural’ *vicus*, two alternative views could be elaborated: one that seeks to underscore the character of the *vicus* as a typical traditional Italic phenomenon, and another that connects its invention to Roman times and influence. The elaboration of these different strands will now be sketched and evaluated.

**THE *VICUS* AS ‘ANTI-URBAN’ AND NON-ROMAN INSTITUTION (CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI)**

Capogrossi Colognesi emphatically leaves open the possibility that the institution of the *pagus* formed an alternative settlement system with respect to the *vicus*: the presence of the one would be at the cost of the other (which would also explain the scarcity of inscriptions mentioning both *pagus* and *vicus*).\(^{65}\) This view enables the detachment of the origin of the *vicus* from that of the *pagus*. There is, as seen, basically a consensus on the Roman character of the *pagus* by both Capogrossi Colognesi and Tarpin. The interpretation of the *vicus* is more complex however. Whereas Tarpin, as will be shown, recognises the *vicus* as an entirely Roman and intrinsically urban feature, Capogrossi Colognesi is, amongst others, more reticent. Notably, Capogrossi Colognesi raises the possibility that *vici* were actually of pre-Roman origin, but consequently took on functions similar to those of the *pagus* for administrative purposes. This idea has been developed also for other regions than Italy.

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\(^{64}\) *LETTA* 2005b, 89: “Si potrebbe pensare che la parte finale, con la menzione dei *magistri vici* e dei *magistri pagi*, intendesse riprendere la bipartizione iniziale tra *vici* con *respublica* e *vici* che ne sono privi, per precisare che, mentre i primi eleggevano ogni anno dei propri magistrati (*magistri vici*), gli altri, non avendone di propri, facevano capo ai *magistri pagi*, cioè ai magistrati eletti dalla popolazione di un distretto rurale più ampio in cui era compreso il *vicus*.” His translation of Festus’ first *vicus* type would be (97-96) : “I *vici* possono intendersi in tre modi diversi. S’intendono nel primo modo quando così si definisce quel tipo di edifici in cui si ritirano di ritorno dai campi coloro che non hanno fattorie nei campi stessi, come i Marsi o i Peligni. Ma tra questi *vici* alcuni hanno proprie istituzioni e in essi si amministra la giustizia, altri non hanno nulla di tutto questo, tuttavia in essi si tengono giorni di mercato per esercitare il commercio, e come (negli unii) si eleggono ogni anno dei *magistri* del *vicus*, allo stesso modo (negli altri) si eleggono quelli del *pagus*."

\(^{65}\) *CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI* 2002, e.g. 190; cf. *TARPIN* 1993.
In his study on Roman Spain, Leonard Curchin argues that *vici* appeared especially in the "relatively unromanised zones of central, western and northwestern Iberia – none in Baetica or in eastern Spain – and that most of them bear non-Latin names", which according to him indicates that they were indigenous centres which may have existed since pre-Roman times.\(^{66}\) Interestingly, according to Curchin, *pagi* were located “almost exclusively in the highly romanised province of Baetica”, and always in areas where the agrarian space was regulated firmly, linked to the large-scale production of olive oil and the presence of colonies.\(^{67}\) Moreover, *pagi* would bear, as opposed to the *vici*, largely Latin names (*Augustus*, *Suburbanus*), indicating at times the town to which the *pagus* was attributed, sometimes a topographical or functional indication, e.g. *pagus Carbulensis* (Carbula), *pagus rivi Larensis* (river Larensis), *pagus Marmorarius* (from an area with marble quarries).\(^{68}\) Thus, according to Curchin, in Spain *pagi* would evidently be a creation of the Roman administration, whereas *vici* would “perpetuate pre-Roman villages”.\(^{69}\) This idea of dichotomisation between rural and perhaps more autonomous, indigenous *vici* versus Roman *pagi* would be confirmed by Curchin’s observation that “*vici* are most often attested making religious dedications to indigenous gods, a function unrecorded for the *pagi*”.\(^{70}\)

More generally, it can be said that the territorial role of *vici* is far less certain than that of *pagi*: it is not clear what their competence was over the surrounding countryside.\(^{71}\) Because of the frequent mention of *magistri* (*vici*) a relative autonomy of the *vici* has been posited.\(^{72}\) Related to this, different ideas on the relation between urban centre and *vicus* can be formulated: Tarpin distinguishes (acknowledging a certain level of self-government) a direct relation of *vici* with cities and Roman administration in general (cf. *infra*), while Capogrossi Colognesi opts for a different interpretation. Whereas *pagi* obviously depended on the urban centres, according to him *vici* retained an alternative non-urban character.\(^{73}\)

The line of his argument unfolds itself along the general evolution of the village in the long term, from pre-Roman times to the medieval period. In the first place, Capogrossi Colognesi holds that the village was important already in the pre-Roman period. In the Roman period, the *vicus* could constitute some ‘alternative’ to the city-based pattern of settlement. Since the Romans – he argues – did ultimately not want to stimulate a village-like pattern of settlement, but rather an urban way of life, they did not organise the countryside according to *vici*, but according to the municipal system.\(^{74}\) Apart from some *vici* that happened to be favoured by the new Roman pattern of settlement, for


\(^{67}\) CURCHIN 1991, 125.

\(^{68}\) CURCHIN 1985, 338-342 (with previous bibliography).

\(^{69}\) CURCHIN 1985, 342-343.

\(^{70}\) CURCHIN 1985, 343. The religious role of *vici* and *pagi* will be discussed in detail in Chapters 7-9.

\(^{71}\) Cf. Cod. Justin. 6.25.9.1 for the category of *vici qui proprios fines habent*, cf. TARPIN 2002, 262-263.

\(^{72}\) CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, 228.

\(^{73}\) CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, e.g. 228-230.

\(^{74}\) Sometimes *vici* were upgraded to *municipia*; CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, 229.
example along roads, *vici* would have been “più tollerati che ulteriormente valorizzati”. The structure of pre-existing villages would thus survive, more despite of than thanks to the Roman settlement organisation. It is in this way that the *vicus* appears to take on a slumbering existence during the Roman period, only to re-emerge in the medieval period: for it would be the “duplice aspetto – il radicamento preromano e la sua estraneità o marginalità al modello ‘urbanocentrico’ romano”76 that explains the revival of the *vicus* exactly in the period that Roman control waned and hierarchical city-countryside relations deteriorated. Antagonistically, the *pagus* was doomed to go under together with the municipal system, on which it depended.77

**THE VICUS AS ROMAN, URBAN FEATURE (TARPIN)**

As has been announced, a radically different approach with respect to the *vicus* has been developed as well. Apart from the problematic lemma by Festus, epigraphical evidence seems to be most authoritative with regard to this issue. In the territory of the Marsi, around the Fucine lake (*lacus Fucinus*) inscriptions mentioning *vici* can be dated as early as the end of the third century BC (detailed discussion follows in Chapter 7). At first this would seem a corroboration of Festus’ text, or indeed an ‘Italic’ origin.

Tarpin thinks however that the *vicus*, a basically Roman word, 78 was also basically a Roman institution.79 The *vicus*-communities at the Fucine lake would not have been Marsic groups, but rather groups of Latin or Roman citizens.80 The names, arguably of ‘Sabellian’ origin, are written down according to Latin norms, and Tarpin would also see the appearance of magistracies such as *quaestor* as an indication of Roman administration, not as the local adaptation of Roman examples.81 Tarpin connects the difference between the Paelignian and Marsic territories – the first yielding no *vici*, but *pagi*, the latter *vici*, but no *pagi* – to different relations of these peoples with the Romans: whereas the Marsi would have been befriended, and supplied troops for Rome in 225 BC, the Paeligni did not, the community being incorporated already in 305 BC.82 In light of the date and location of the epigraphical evidence a Roman origin

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75 CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, 231.  
77 CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, 235.  
78 *Vicus* can etymologically be related to the form *wik* or *weik*, and stems from the same family as the Greek *oikos*, and can be interpreted to have designated ‘units of several families’, between Latin *domus* and *gens* (TARPIN 2002, 11-14). It is in origin Indo-European, but is not attested in the Osco-Umbran languages (contra Devoto; cf. TARPIN 2002, 10). Therefore, *vicus* seems to be a rather isolated word, and consequently a “concept proprement romain” (TARPIN 2002, 11).  
79 An additional argument is that *vicus* apparently designates a ‘community’ as well as the structure of a village (as becomes clear from dedications in the name of the *vicus* – instead of the *vicani* -, cf. e.g. TODISCO 2004a). According to TARPIN (2002, 57) this meaning is at odds with the idea of an ‘indigenous’ Marsic *vicus*: in this view, the appearance of *vici* would indicate the falling apart of the Marsic community into different groups in a time for which other evidence seems to point to a growing tribal cohesion (exemplified by the communal coinage).  
80 TARPIN 2002, 57.  
81 TARPIN 2002, 57; *contra* Letta, cf. Chapter 7 for more detailed discussion.  
of the *vicus* could well be defended. Moreover, Tarpin links the location of *vici*, often along roads and in the neighbourhood of colonies, and therefore in Roman territory, to the identification of *vici* as groups of Roman or Latin citizens. In other words, *vici* would constitute a general term for non-founded agglomerations of Roman citizens, without proper jurisdiction. This leads Tarpin to another tentative interpretation of Festus’ lemma (in the Muellerian reading): in fact, the words *incipiunt appellari* could be understood as ‘*vici* are for the first time named as such in the territories of the Marsi and the Paeligni’, whereas in other regions other names existed for the same or similar institution (such as *forum* or *conciliabulum*). Tarpin observes that there are no *fora* and *conciliabula* attested in Marsic territory, which proves the equivalence of the terms in his view. The specific situation of the Fucine area, moreover, without major roads, would explain the application of the ‘urban’ term *vicus* for a group of citizens instead of *forum* or *conciliabulum*, which would have been rather linked to virilatane colonisation and road construction.

According to Tarpin, the question is not so much one of traditional Italic patterns of settlement, but rather one of Roman legal vocabulary. And rather than envisaging a development from rural to urban *vici*, Tarpin concludes that “il est sans doute plus simple de retourner le discours traditionnel et de penser que l’on a dupliqué hors de Rome la structure fondamentale de la ville”.

In conclusion, Tarpin sees *vici* as a corollary of Roman control and urban development. Importantly, he underlines the specific urban connotation the *vicus* had, as opposed to the ‘rural’ or non-urban *pagus*. The evidence for *vici* in the context of colonies can be seen to fit into this scheme. Supposing that the division of the city in colonies copied the division of the city of Rome, inscriptions mentioning *vici* found in colonies (for example in Ariminum and Cales) would refer to the urban centres of these colonies, and not to villages in the territory. Burgeoning from this urban start situation, it is imaginable that the originally urban term was over time applied more widely to groups of citizens outside the walls as well. The case of the *coloni Caedicianeis*, who were located in a *vicus* outside Sinuessa, would illustrate the meaning of *vicus* as an indication of an agglomeration outside, but dependent on, the colony. As Tarpin puts it: “un morceau de ville à la campagne.”

**EVALUATION I: THE VICUS AS ROMAN, URBAN FEATURE (TARPIN)**

It is important to briefly evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the views of Capogrossi Colognesi / Letta on the one hand and Tarpin on the other. I start with

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84 TARPIN 2002, 72-81.
85 TARPIN 2002, 82-83.
86 TARPIN 2002, 85.
88 TORELLI 1990; TARPIN 2002, 63; 243. This and other views are discussed in more detail in the section on the character of early colonial settlement in Chapter 7.
89 Plin. *HN* 14.62 with *CIL* X, 4727 (= *CIL* I², 1578); TARPIN 2002, 243 (quote); 70-72.
Tarpin’s thesis. As Tarpin shows, it seems fairly plausible that the term *vicus* was indeed applied within specifically Roman contexts, as opposed to indigenous pre-Roman contexts. While I am inclined to follow the main lines of his argument, it is because of the drastic consequences of his thesis for the interpretation of Roman influence in Italy in general, and, in this study, the role of sanctuaries in particular, that it is important to point out that not all arguments are equally strong or unambiguous. In fact, some of the evidence could be read differently.  

90 Many of the used arguments (especially the use of Latin, titles, onomastics) could be turned over to prove varying, and diametrically contradictory conclusions, if viewed from a different perspective. The relationship between the Marsi and Romans, which according to Tarpin was good, is an example. The implication that *vici* were placed more on ‘friendly’ territory than otherwise is not self-evident: colonies were not placed exclusively in territory of befriended groups either; sometimes on the contrary.  

91 Also the contingent idea, that confiscated enemy territory (here that of the Paeligni) was more apt to be divided into *pagi*, needs more elaboration. And in fact, the relation between Marsi and Romans has been described as anything but friendly by other authors.  

92 In the end, the character of this relationship is perhaps too difficult to establish in order to use it as an independent argument in the present discussion. The most crucial point however is the use of Latin onomastics and titles. Tarpin interprets the appearance of a *quaestor* as an indication of Roman presence. The discussion on the argument could be infinite, but it is important to point out that an opposite argument could be based on the same evidence: i.e. that these magistracies were local adaptations of Roman examples, or even just the adaptation of the Roman names, without necessarily the corresponding functions: in other words ‘self-romanisation’ with varying ‘depths’.  

93 In conclusion, different perspectives lead to rather different interpretations of the same evidence.

I believe these perspectives are ultimately determined by basic assumptions on the character of Roman control in Italy. Even if one admits – with Tarpin – a Roman origin for the institution of the *vicus*, it is still questionable whether the *vicus*-structure was imposed ‘from above’, involving only Roman or Latin citizens, or that this title was adopted or even sought after by the indigenous population, that became enfranchised in the process.  

94 Cf. the remarks by CURCHIN 2005.

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90 For example, it does not automatically follow that the apparent designation of a community with the word *vicus* runs counter to the formation or existence of a larger tribal community (TARPIN 2002, 57; cf. here n. 79): the existence of ‘layered’ group identities is a well-known phenomenon. Also, there is discussion about the status of the territory of Aveia as *civitas sine suffragio*, as Tarpin himself admits (TARPIN 2002, 58 n. 21) which would undermine the argument that the *vicus* was on Roman territory. On the appearance of the Roman goddess Victoria cf. Chapters 3 and esp. 7.

91 Cf. e.g. COARELLI 1992.


93 As in LETTA and D’AMATO 1975, no. 128 (192-201); cf. discussion in Chapter 7.

94 Cf. the remarks by CURCHIN 2005.
EVALUATION II: THE VICUS AS ‘ANTI-URBAN’ AND NON-ROMAN INSTITUTION (CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI)

Let us consider then the opposite view, which sees the vicus as a rural structure, developing preferably away from Roman influence. It may be clear that the picture that arises from the Spanish situation is (at least apparently) exactly the opposite of what has been argued for the Marsic vici, whose appearance has been explained by the relative early romanisation and friendly relationship with Rome. In the first place, it should be underscored that it is not at all self-evident that the application or significance of the terms vicus and pagus were identical throughout the empire, as Curchin stresses rightly:95 in fact the contrary would seem true. However, for Spain there could be indicated some circumstances which would soften the sharpness of the dichotomy between rural pre-Roman vicus and urbanised Roman pagus. For instance, at least one vicus demonstrably depends directly on a larger town, Clunia,96 and although the etymology of the names may be largely indigenous, it would be equally possible to stress the ‘Romanness’ of many inscriptions. With regard to dedications to indigenous gods, for example, it is in the first place noticeable that more dedications by vicani are made to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus (four)97 than to various local deities (three). This could simply be explained with presumptions on Jupiter’s character “whose name probably disguises a native deity”, but one could perhaps as well be struck by the undeniably Roman(-ised) aspect of the dedications.98 Moreover, it should be stressed that also in Spain there is the familiar use of vici as urban subdivisions parallel to their use for rural villages, as the vicus Forensis and vicus Hispanus from Corduba prove.99 In conclusion, the apparent contradiction between the indigenous Spanish rural vicus and the idea of the vicus as a Roman invention should perhaps not be overstated. This is especially true if one allows for the possibility that some pre-Roman centres were granted the legal status of vicus later on, or simply for the relatively large amount of ‘indigenous’ people included in new vici.

As to Capogrossi Colognesi’s elegant explanation in the longue durée, it is more difficult to decide which arguments should be given precedence. Whereas his argument is well sustained, by underscoring the importance of the village structure in pre-Roman Italy as well as in late antiquity and Medieval times, one could wonder whether the explanation of the decline and re-emergence of the vicus and the contemporaneous rise and fall of the pagus, is not, as far as regards the vicus, more relevant to structural elements than to the names given to these structures. That is to say: I would suggest that Capogrossi Colognesi’s argument perhaps holds true for the

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95 Curchin 1985, 328.
96 Curchin 1985, 335; Iler 3492: Dercinoassedenses, vicani Cluniensum
97 Curchin 1985, 330-332; nos. 4, 6, 8, 14; no. 6 mentions only Jupiter, the other nos. (Optimus) Maximus.
98 Quote: Curchin 1985, 335.
role of the village as a structure of settlement in Italy, which however does not necessarily coincide with the term vicus.¹⁰⁰

Both the interpretation of the vicus as a rural ‘anti-urban’ structure, and the opposite one, that the vicus as a Roman invention of control based on urban structures, have their merits since both give coherence to historical processes, but in different ways. Perhaps one could say that in Capogrossi Colognesi’s account coherence in the development of the vicus is attained by viewing the historical development of the village (as a structure) over time. Tarpin on the other hand creates coherence on a different level, on that of terminology, in a historical development from stadtrömischer vicus to extensions of this onto the countryside – but always related to urban structures.

Once the interchangeability of the structure of the village and the term vicus is abandoned, the argument in favour of a Roman origin of the concept of vicus is most convincing. The term vicus appears to be intrinsically Roman, and a village or conglomeration indicated as such depended, therefore, on a Roman system of administration. It should be stressed, however, that if the status of vicus is documented for a village, this status does not preclude a pre-Roman origin of this village. Indeed, a legal status does not tell all about the character and the social reality of the vicus. I have stated that preconceptions concerning the Roman conquest and control steer interpretations of the character of the vicus. Even if an entirely autochthonous interpretation of the vicus seems now to be ruled out, there is still left an ample range of interpretations between local and ‘Roman’ aspects of the vicus. Are we dealing with a community of ‘ex-pats’; imported Roman (or Latin) citizens, or rather with an ‘indigenous’ village with (largely) ‘indigenous’ inhabitants upgraded to a specific status? In Chapter 7 this question will be treated in more detail in relation to the religious role of the vicus.

In any event, it seems clear that if vici are explicitly mentioned in epigraphy, this does not refer to pre-Roman Italic structures, but to a specific status within a Roman administrative system. This means that conceptualisations of vici as a constitutive element of pre-Roman settlement organisation are erroneous. This revision applies to the model of the pagus-vicus system as a pre-Roman feature, as has become already clear from the conclusion that the pagus was a Roman instrument, but also to other variants¹⁰¹ or conceptions, such as a model which envisages the Oscan tutto to be constituted by vici.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ As a matter of fact, Capogrossi Colognesi often speaks of the role of the ‘villaggio’ instead of that of the vicus proper. He is very aware of the limits of archaeology and the impossibility of the recognition of legal or hierarchical statuses other than in epigraphical sources (cf. CAPOGROSSI COLONESI 2002, 176-182). However, his general argument (the supposed marginal role in Roman times and consequent re-emergence afterwards, as well as the presumed pre-Roman character of the vicus underscored at times) seems, at least sometimes, to conflate vicus and village.

¹⁰¹ E.g. the pagus-vicus-oppidum system, promoted by GUALTIERI 2004; and in this respect uncritically reviewed by the present author (STEK 2006).

¹⁰² Cf. supra n. 12.
THE RELATION BETWEEN PAGUS AND VICUS

The conclusions of the preceding sections have paved the way for the observations to be made here, and can therefore remain brief. Since the publications of Tarpin and Capogrossi Colognesi in 2002, the general inappropriateness of the term pagus-vicus system (‘sistema paganico-vicano’) has become clear.\textsuperscript{103} The exact relation between pagus and vicus remains obscure however. It could be that it varied from place to place. Perhaps there was indeed a hierarchical relation between a tribal pagus and vicus north of Italy – at least for the Roman eye – as indicated by Caesar for the Helvetii.\textsuperscript{104} Inscriptions mentioning pagus and vicus together are however scanty,\textsuperscript{105} and in Samnium proper, they have not been found at all. As noted, it is possible that pagus and vicus actually constituted parallel or even ‘competing’ institutions. Capogrossi Colognesi would stress the independence of pagus and vicus: according to him, a pagus could include vici, but not necessarily, as they existed often alternatively, not complementarily.\textsuperscript{106} Tarpin would even develop, on the basis of his thesis, that the vicus is essentially an urban feature, whereas the pagus denotes non-urbanity, the logic that they are exactly for that reason seldom found together.\textsuperscript{107}

Conclusion: New Perspectives on Pagus and Vicus

The pre-Roman origin of the pagus has been demystified successfully by the studies of Capogrossi Colognesi and Tarpin: it seems clear now that the pagus was essentially a territorial district, in function of a Roman administrative system. The role and origin of the vicus is less clear, and debatable, but the term and its application point in the first place to Roman contexts. An origin in the city of Rome and its consequent application to designate ‘pieces of city / clusters of citizens’ in the conquered Italic countryside, as envisioned by Tarpin, seems most sensible. Tarpin would see both institutions of pagus and vicus as instruments of Roman control. While admitting some echoes of pre-Roman structures, and the presence of ‘indigenous’ people in the vici, he stresses that pagi and vici were not envisaged at all to secure continuity from the pre-Roman past. “Leur rôle, bien au contraire, est de formaliser la possession du sol et l’intégration des individus dans un ensemble administratif et culturel fondé sur la suprématie de Rome.”\textsuperscript{108} Nonetheless, the character of the community indicated by the word vicus remains, within these legal boundaries, open to debate, and probably varied from place to place (and as well over time).

\textsuperscript{104} The Helvetii were divided into four pagi; Caes. B Gall. 1.12.4-5.
\textsuperscript{105} Amongst which near Rome CIL VI, 2221 which was found “in fundo agri Romani”, mentioning magi(stri) de duobus pageis et vicei sulpicei, and CIL IX, 3521 on an aquaduct at Furfo, where magi(stri) pagi built something de v.s.f., which could be an abbreviation for de vici sententia faciundum. See CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, 181 n. 51.
\textsuperscript{106} CAPOGROSSI COLOGNESI 2002, 252-253.
\textsuperscript{107} TARPIN 2002, 244: “L’élément déterminant de la nature des uici, … , est le caractère urbain”; whereas pagi and pagani would be defined negatively as “extérieurs à quelque chose”.
\textsuperscript{108} TARPIN 2002, 245.
In the end, how does this discussion on *pagi* and *vici* inform us regarding Italy in the Republican period? It is necessary to try to translate these archaeological, epigraphical and literary observations into an image of the historical situation as tangible as possible: a reconstruction demonstrates most clearly what we do not know. For the *vici*, tentatively, one could imagine clusters of Roman or Latin citizens from Rome and other places of Italy (especially as hamlets outside the urban centres of the colonies), as well as the installation of groups of autochthonous people (perhaps enfranchised in the process) in new conglomerations, and finally pre-existingItalic villages that were granted a new, Roman, status. The *vicus*, indicating a legal status, therefore is distinct from the ‘village’ as a form of settlement, which seems to have been quite ubiquitous in Central-Southern Italy. This means that, before the Social War, a landscape could be be imagined dotted with, apart from some towns and hill-forts, villages, some of which had a different status, which was indicated by the name *vicus*. If *vici* indeed had some territorial sovereignty as well, these borders were probably not readily ‘visible’ in the physical landscape.

Equally invisible, but nonetheless extant, were *pagi* that divided the countryside into administrative units, depending on the municipal centre. *Pagi* could comprise only lands, some houses and perhaps sometimes a conglomerate indicated as *vicus* (but it is possible as well that the *vicus* had its own territory apart from the *pagus*). It can be assumed that when it seemed practical the divisions of *pagi* followed already existing boundaries of the land, but when it did not, the pre-Roman situation had by no means to be respected. Both *vici* and *pagi* were Roman instruments devised to administrate people and property. Besides that, the *pagi* and *vici* became the organisational units of religious activity.

Even if *pagi* and the possible territories of *vici* were ‘invisible’ in the landscape, since they defined territories by imagined boundaries, there were means to construct these boundaries and make them indeed visible and ‘tangible’. To these means will be turned in Chapters 8 and 9. First, however, the consequences of this ‘deconstruction’ of the *pagus-vicus* system for the interpretation of ‘Italic’ sanctuaries have to be discussed.

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109 If one excludes, of course, the general territorial boundaries (field boundaries, roads, rivers) along which the *pagus* most probably was defined.