Latin cults through Roman eyes

Myth, memory and cult practice in the Alban hills

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Publication date
2017
Document Version
Other version
License
Other

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Hermans, A. M. (2017). *Latin cults through Roman eyes: Myth, memory and cult practice in the Alban hills*.

Chapter I: Introduction. Memory, Identity, *Latinitas*

He [Anthony] taunts Gaius Caesar's son with his humble birth, though even his natural father, had he lived, would have been elected consul. "A mother from Aricia": you might think he was speaking of a woman from Tralles or from Ephesus. Do you see how we who come from *municipia* are looked down upon – that is, just about all of us: for how few of us do not come from such towns? And if he has such contempt for Aricia, an immemorially ancient community, a Roman ally under treaty, so close as almost to adjoin the Roman boundaries, distinguished by the high standing of its citizens, what municipality does he not despise? [1]

Aricina mater. With these words, Anthony had apparently tried to belittle the ancestry of Octavian, whose mother came from the Latin town of Aricia. Cicero, who defends the future *princeps* here, is clear in his rebuttal: if even the *origo* of someone from Aricia was subject to criticism, what then of the ancestries of the honourable men surrounding him? Were they not all from *municipia*, and had they not all come to Rome to contribute to the Roman state? Cicero refers to the diversity and inherent pluralistic origins of the Roman citizenry, a concept that he famously explained with the term *duae patriae* in *de Legibus*.[2] As a result of the large scale inclusion of municipal elites from all over Italy, every Roman citizen had in fact two homelands, one being the Roman Republic, the other being his ancestral town. This did not result in conflicted loyalties, because the Roman citizen, according to the orator, thought of his two fatherlands as one.[3]

It should not surprise us that a *homo novus* like Cicero chose to praise the inclusive character of Roman citizenship and emphasize the fact that a local identity was part of, and not in contrast to, Roman identity. For someone from a Latin town like Aricia however (such as Octavian's mother), the

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[1] Cic. *Phil.* 3.15: *Ignobilitatem obicit C. Caesaris filio, cuius etiam natura pater, si vita suppeditasset, consul factus esset "Aricina mater": Trallianam aut Ephesiam putes dicere. Videte quam despiciamur omnes qui sumus e municipiis, id est omnes plane: quotus enim quisque nostrum non est? Quod autem municipium non contemnit is qui Aricinum tanto opere despicit, vetustate antiquissimum, iure foederatum, propinquitate paene finitimum, splendore municipum honestissimum?* The translation is my own.

[2] Cic. *Leg.* 2.5. Cf. Farney (2007) 5-11.

[3] Cic. *Leg.* 2.5: *Dulcis autem non multo secus est ea, quae genuit, quam illa, quae excepit. Itaque ego hanc meam esse patriam prorsus numquam negabo, dum illa sit maior, haec in ea contineatur [...] habet civitates sed unam illas civitatem putat.*

duae patriae were even more intertwined. Aricia was in the heart of Latium Vetus ('old Latium') and, from its very beginnings, was just as Latin as Rome. Although it eventually came to dominate all others, Rome shared mythical ancestors, juridical rights and religious history with the Latins of its neighbouring villages. In this context, the attachment to (and advertisement of) a local Latin municipality was very much an attachment to the heart of Rome itself.

And yet, despite the shared cultural and political background, the Romans had waged war on Latins just as much as on non-Latins. While the communal Latin origins were acknowledged and remembered in literary sources of the later Roman Republic and Empire, so were these early military campaigns. Just like the Italians in the Social war, or even the Gauls talked about by Claudius in his famous speech to the Senate, the Latins had joined the Roman imperial cause only after fiercely opposing it.[4] Not only the favourable outcome of the struggles was reported, but also centuries of strife and war before that reconciliation, the end of the Latin war in 338 BC. While we can certainly not use the information provided by Roman historians about this period uncritically, it is revealing that they present a Latin past of which the binding elements – political alliances, religious meeting places, military cooperation – often originated not in partnership, but in opposition to Rome. In this historical context, the Latin status of the neighbouring villages could also be considered as something distinctively non-Roman.[5]

In many ways, the relationship between Latins and Romans was defined by their mutual past, and it is the reflection upon that past that is at the heart of this thesis. I am fully aware that an investigation of Rome's Latin past could span a large number of subjects, varying from the Latin language, to colonization, or to civic law, but I will focus on one central aspect: religion. More precisely, this thesis will discuss the three large cult centres of the Alban hills: the sanctuary of Diana Nemorensis at lake Nemi, the sanctuary of Juno Sospita in Lanuvium and the sanctuary of Jupiter Latiaris on the Alban mount. The Alban hills are volcanic highlands southeast of Rome that presented (and still present) a dramatic scenery for anyone leaving the *urbs* using the Via Appia.[6] Although it was a highly popular location for elite villa's in the late Republic and Early Empire, parts of the region remained rather isolated, with dense woods, steep sided crater lakes and dozens of little streams and waterfalls. So, the landscape formed a sharp contrast with Rome and the busy traffic going in and out of it. Located in the core of Latium Vetus, the sanctuaries on and below these hills had long histories as meeting places for Latins, both in times of war and in times of peace.

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[4] The speech is recorded in Tac. *Ann.* 11.23-24 and on the Lyon tablets (CIL XIII 1668).
[5] Farney (2007) 77, who also notes examples of Latins (especially from Tusculum or Praeneste) being accused of arrogance.
[6] Horden and Purcell (2000) 59-64.

My selection of Latin cults could have been expanded, as I am also aware of, by including the other large monumental sanctuaries of Latium in my study, such as the sanctuary of Hercules Victor in Tibur or the famous sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia in Praeneste. Also missing from the selection, are old communal sanctuaries elsewhere in the region, such as that of the seven altars in Lavinium and the temple of Mater Matuta in Satricum. Instead of providing a more general outline of the religious past of Latium however, I have chosen to perform a detailed analysis of three specific cases studies, within the geographically confined area of the Alban hills. I have chosen this strategy because a number of studies have already emphasized the similarities in religious practices and the common development of religious structures, as well as the general chronology of material Latin culture.[7] Apart from that, I have adopted a case study approach because I believe that the creation and transmission of religious memory that is the focus of my work, is best studied as a product of acting and communicating individuals. Focussing on three cults within the geographically confined area of the Alban hills allows me to study the required individual detail, recognizing similarities in dealing with the religious past, but also differences and inconsistencies in the sources that have sometimes been overlooked in the earlier studies. Located in the same volcanic landscape and even connected by sightlines, the cults of the Alban hills are comparable in many ways, from the Latins inhabiting the communities around the cults and visiting them to the political history – of strive and reconciliation with the Roman state – they are embedded in. Still, as the analysis in the following chapters will show, the way that past was perceived and communicated could vary greatly and, depending on the context, the Latin deities could take on a foreign, local or Roman role. By studying these roles in detail, I hope to futher the understanding of three individual cults in the religious landscape of Latium Vetus, but I also, by extension, hope to contribute to the continuing debates on Roman identity and its relation to the Latin past it originated in.

In the case studies that make up the core of my work, I will focus on the question if, and if so in what form, the Latin past played a part in the everyday cult practice for Diana Nemorensis, Juno Sospita, and Jupiter Latiaris. In a detailed analysis of literary and visual representations, ritual practices and archaeological remains, I will not attempt to reconstruct an 'original' or pre-Roman version of the cult, but will instead focus on the ways later Romans – including the inhabitants of the villages that hosted the deities – made sense of the religious heritage of the Alban hills. This study thus begins from the premise that the Latin character of the cults was not a static relic of the

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[7] The common development of religious structures in the late Republic is most famously discussed in Coarelli (1987). Cf: Colonna (1983), Rous (2010) and section 'The Latin sanctuaries and their archaeological remains', on pages 29ff of this introduction. For the earlier developments in religious architecture, see Potts (2015); a recent overview of the developments in Latial material culture is provided by Fulminante (2014) with bibliography). Cf: Smith (1996a), Holloway (1994). In the literary domain, Fantham (2009) has studied the representation of Italian gods, but has focused exclusively on 'rural' cults like Priapus, Silvanus and Faunus.

archaic past that somehow survived through the ages, but was constantly reinterpreted, redefined and reinvented. Consequently, my approach relies considerably on insights on the relationship between history, (religious) performance and collective identity that have arisen from the field of memory studies over the last few decades.

Before we turn to the analyses in the individual chapters however, some of the key concepts of this scientific paradigm must be critically examined, in order to create a point of departure that is workable but also suitable for the context of Republican and early Imperial Rome. Apart from that, the introduction will devote attention to the different types of sources used in this thesis, and the different types of religious experience they represent. Narratives from the ancient literary tradition will form an important part of the discussion, but the different chapters do not always leave room for a critical discussion of the authors themselves, nor for the literary context of their remarks on individual deities. Therefore I will introduce some of the most important authors used and will also pay attention to the role of religion and religious history in their work. While the study of material remains – such as temple structures, inscriptions and sculpture – broadens the scope of our research and provides us with a different perspective on the Latin cults, the confrontation between material and textual (both literary and epigraphic) evidence is not without methodological risks. So, I will not only use this introduction to point out some of the peculiarities and possible interpretation problems of these material remains but also formulate a standpoint on how and why to use material and textual sources together.

1.1 The memory 'boom'

Since the late 1990s, 'memory' and 'identity' have become new catchwords in the study of the humanities. Theorists like Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, and Jan and Aleida Assmann have developed concepts that are so frequently adopted that it is safe to speak of a memory boom.[8] In general, these studies have paid scant attention to the ancient world, but in recent years the research paradigm has sparked interest in Greek and, to a lesser degree, Roman identity.[9] The subject of memory has also attracted attention amongst ancient historians, especially when it comes to the 'memory of place' tradition that emerged with Nora's monumental work on *lieux de mémoire*.[10] As this introduction will show however, the developing field of memory studies has produced other and more useful insights into the connection between history, memory and (collective) identity.

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[8] Burke (2004) 65-66. For the growth of memory studies see also: Winter (2000) 69-92, Erll and Nünning (2008), Whitehead (2009).
[9] Gruen (1992), Gardner (1993), Hall (1997), MacInerney (1999), Malkin (2001), Alcock (2002), Hall (2002), Dougherty and Kurke (2003), Dench (2005)
[10] Nora (1984) 17-42, Stein-Hölkeskamp and Hölkeskamp (2006a), Stein-Hölkeskamp and Hölkeskamp (2006b), Diefenbach (2007). Cf: Galinsky (2014), for an approach that puts more emphasis on the plurality and multimediality of memories in the Roman world.

Although these advancements have so far largely been ignored in classical studies, they can be a useful tool to study the complex, plural and often dissimilar views that the Romans had of their religion and past – and the ways in which these views were transmitted. At the same time the term memory has been stretched so far, that it increasingly becomes a vague and somewhat tedious notion. Contributions were so abundant and diverse that scholars have warned for a 'terminological profusion' and 'semantic overload'.[11] This should warn us not to use the concept of memory only for its rhetorical power, but to formulate a clear and functional starting point for our research that takes into account the possibilities and limitations of the Roman evidence.

The recent emphasis on 'memory' has its origins in the first half of the 20th century, in the works of French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945). In *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Mémoire* and *La Mémoire Collective* he develops a model to study cultural continuity and change.[12] In his view, the identity of a group is defined by its ability to create, and to relate to, a collectively shared memory. This is not the same as a shared history: the study of history is about changes, peculiarities and differences and therefore creates an irrevocable distance to the present. When people collectively remember something, they focus on similarities and continuities, they recognize the past in the present and vice-versa. Shared perceptions about events in the past, certain monuments or natural features create a group feeling and direct the thoughts of an individual within that group. Consequently, in Halbwachs' view, memory is not (only) a biological function of the brain but also a constructive power in society that creates cohesion and defines individual as well as collective identity.[13]

Halbwachs theory has gained momentum rather late. It is not until the last decades of the previous century that the works of Pierre Nora and Jan and Aleida Assmann place memory at the centre of academic attention. In his famous introduction of *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, Nora adopts Halbwachs' distinction between history and memory.[14] His realms of memory are physical locations and landmarks, but also metaphorical 'spaces' that contain memories that are important for the formation of societies and (nation) states. The *lieux* can be very diverse: topographical sites, monuments, works of art, but also persons, myths, rituals and symbols. The realms form a representation and 'embodiment' of memories, because they connect the present with the past and function as elements of continuity in a changing world, when any 'real' connection with the past and spontaneous memory is long gone. In a French context for example, the Revolution of 1789 is represented by the annual celebration of the 14th of July and by the historical site of the Bastille.

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[11] Klein (2000) 127-150, Kansteiner (2002) 179-197.
[12] Halbwachs (1925), Halbwachs (1950).
[13] Halbwachs (1950) 78-84, Assmann (1992) 34-36, Whitehead (2009) 125-138, Erll and Nünning (2008) 134-143.
[14] Nora (1984) 17-42.

According to Nora, the selection of these symbols is neither random nor impartial: it is the state that selects and constructs the things that ought to be remembered, and in the author's view, memory serves the development of state, nationality and public authority.

Nora's approach was very influential, and similar large scale projects have since appeared in Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and elsewhere.[15] In classical studies the impact has not been so profound, but volumes on Greek and Roman *lieux de memoire* show that Nora's theory has influenced the debate on identity in antiquity as well.[16] Still, historians and others have warned against adopting too much of Nora's ideas and language. His analysis is solely centered on France and several critics have noted the sense of nostalgia that overshadows his ideas of 'authentic' memories versus 'constructed' ones.[17] More important, to our case, are the methodological limitations of his focus on nation building and state formation. Nora's *lieux de mémoire* are the result of a conscious attempt to nationalize the past, create unity and confirm national authority. Pre-modern states often lack the will and collective means to take such measures, and, as we will see below, this was especially the case in the competitive world of the Roman Republic.

Another stimulus for the upsurge of memory studies was the work of Aleida and Jan Assmann. In several books– mainly on pre-modern societies – they took on Halbwachs' theory of memory as a group-specific social phenomenon.[18] In their view, common perceptions of the past generate a shared knowledge within a community. This cultural memory is a defining component of group identity and provides a framework for individual behavior.[19] In his research programme, Jan Assmann distinguishes between three categories of 'every day' memory: the 'mimetic' memory of habits and imitations, the memory of objects (i.e. the material world), and the communicative memory of speech and other forms of communication. These three categories eventually find their way into cultural memory: this is characterized, by definition, by its distance to every day practices and contains selected written, visual and ritual representations of the past. For our purposes, it is important to reflect on Assmann's distinction between these three communicative spheres of memory and the overarching cultural memory. Using insights from oral history, he explains that the communicative memory wanders along with the present and covers a period of approximately

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[15] Isnenghi (1996), François and Schulze (2001), Wesseling (2005-2007). For an overview of the tradition, see: Klein (2000) 127-150, Erll and Nünning (2008) 19-76.

[16] Alcock (2002), Hölkeskamp and Stein-Hölkeskamp (2000), Stein-Hölkeskamp and Hölkeskamp (2006a), Stein-Hölkeskamp and Hölkeskamp (2006b), Diefenbach (2007).

[17] For example: Tonkin (1992) 118-120, Kansteiner (2002) 179-197, Klein (2000) 127-150, Misztal (2003) 105-107.

[18] Assmann (1992), Assmann (1999), Assmann and Livingstone (2006), Assmann (2006), Assmann (2007). See for Jan Assmann's discussion of Halbwachs' concepts: Assmann (1992) 34-45.

[19] Whereas Halbwachs used the term 'collective memory', based on sociological categories like families, neighborhoods or professional groups, Assmann prefers the term 'cultural memory', which allowed him to take into account Nietzsche's theory of conscience and Freud's theory of superego. See: (Assmann 1992) 22-36.

80-100 years, in which generations share experiences and reflections of the past.[20] Outside of this period, only the *Erinnerungsbilder* ('figures of memory') that are preserved and stabilized in the cultural memory are remembered. The preservation is in the hands of so-called 'experts of cultural memory' – people who make an effort to safeguard certain texts, images, actions and occurrences. Assmann himself studied the development of writing and the canonization of literary works, a phenomenon that illustrates his theory well: by selection and conservation a body of *Erinnerungsbilder* is created that surpasses the generations and that is inevitably distinct from communication in everyday life. The same can happen with rituals or monuments, although these aspects have received relatively little attention in his works.

Assmann's model combines well with contemporary insights from historical anthropology like those of Clifford Geertz, who proposed to study a society as 'the story they tell themselves about themselves'.[21] In general, Assmann's work proved to be a great stimulus for a growing field: he showed that memory and its formation also could offer insightful tools to study cultural change in non-nation states. Apart from that, his differentiation between communicative and cultural memory gained a lot of following.[22] Nevertheless, scholars have recently stressed the limitations of the theory.[23] Assmann identified cultural memory as a key factor in cultural development, but for many theorists the functioning of the model is too unclear for such a far-reaching explanatory claim. The transformation of certain images from the communicative memory into the cultural memory remains particularly vague, since Assmann does not go into detail about the nature of the transition and the groups or individuals that bring it about. Because he focuses on the consolidation, reproduction and canonization of *Erinnerungsbilder*, the model is static in nature and leaves little room for the varying social circumstances in which memory was generated.

The emphasis on collectively shared memories can be explained by the two case studies that form the basis of Assmann's concept: ancient Israel and pharaonic Egypt.[24] Here the political and religious conditions can perhaps account for the development of a monolithic cultural memory, but it must be emphasized that the circumstances are unique. In other societies, like the diverse polis-centered world of ancient Greece, there was no central control or authority to structure the creation of a collective memory.[25] Assmann's conception of cultural memory as an integrating force and focal point of identity seems especially problematic if we turn to our context, the highly

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[20] Assmann (1992) 48-55.
[21] Geertz (1973) 448.
[22] See for example: Welzer (2005). Assmann adopted the term *kommunikatives Gedächtnis* from Lutz Niethammer, who in his book established the concept of oral memory in the German historical tradition. See: Niethammer (1980).
[23] Ricoeur (2000), Winter (2000) 69-92, Kansteiner (2002) 179-197.
[24] Assmann (2008), Assmann and Meier (1995), Assmann (1992).
[25] Hall (2002) 14-37, Dougherty and Kurke (2003) 66, Stein-Hölkeskamp and Hölkeskamp (2006b) 12-13.

competitive society of the Roman Republic. As Uwe Walter and others have observed, memory in the Roman Republic was intrinsically linked with the *gentes*, who actively produced, reproduced and manipulated perceptions of the past.[26] These diverse, competing and sometimes conflicting images existed next to each other, with no undisputed authority that could define 'the' cultural memory that would serve as 'the' basis for 'the' *mos maiorum* or identity. Assmann's model leaves no room for this complexity and is thus too static to describe the dynamic nature of Roman memory culture.

1.2 Memory and theory in ancient Rome

Although *memoria* was as important as it was ubiquitous in Rome, we have observed that modern theories seem hardly suitable to analyze the specific context of Republican aristocratic culture. In what appears to be a lack of modern research tools, it may help to look more closely at ancient ideas and practices themselves. Philosophers and rhetoricians from Plato onwards have debated the working and purpose of memory. In the Greek tradition, most notably in Plato's *Theaetetus* and Aristotle's *de Memoria et Reminiscentia*, memory (*mnêmê*) is presented as a dialectical process, in which images are imprinted on the soul and, in a later stage, recollected. This remembrance serves as a connection between body and soul, which secures knowledge or – in Plato's case – recovers some of the absolute truth and Forms that are buried in the soul.[27]

Both Plato and Aristotle object to a rhetorical use of memory: the rote-learning of arguments would deprive the students of real knowledge, and fill them with only the 'conceit of wisdom'.[28] Nonetheless, it is precisely this correlation between memory and oratory that is the most well-known and well-studied aspect of the ancient memory discourse.[29] The *ars memoriae* was, as part of the aristocratic educational programme, fully developed in Roman rhetorical training and literature of the first centuries BC and AD. Cicero introduces us – although he probably did not invent it – to a mental system that combines space (places or *loci*) with content. In his *de Oratore*, he elucidates the legendary origins of the system, which are traced back to the story of Simonides of Ceos.[30] The poor man was a guest in a dinner party, when the ceiling collapsed and everyone but he died. By remembering the order of the rooms, and the places where the guests had been seated, Simonides was able to identify all the victims. This explains the technique: memorable objects are

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[26] Gardner (1993) 35, Walter (1999) 35, Walter (2004) 23-26, Diefenbach (2007) 11
[27] This is of course a very short (and simplified) overview of the tradition. For further elaboration on Platonic and Aristotelian theories of memory, see: Morris and Gruneberg (1994) 3-9, Draaisma (2000) 24-30, Sorabji (2006), Whitehead (2009) 15-27.
[28] Pl. *Phdr.* 274c-275b; Arist. *Mem.* 452a4.
[29] Weinstock (1983), Connerton (1989) 6-26, Farrell (1997) 373-383, Sorabji (2006), Erll and Nünning (2008), Whitehead (2009) 12-24, Radstone and Schwarz (2010) 3-43.
[30] Cic. *De or.* 2.86.351-54.

placed against the background of an imagined location, with different rooms representing different things to remember. The way one can walk through the 'memory house' explicates the order of the arguments. The anonymous work *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (long thought to be a work of Cicero) offers further detail and is especially clear about the kind of images that the orator should keep in his imaginary rooms: they are supposed to be vivid and have a dramatic quality that makes them easy to remember.[31] The *ars memoriae* inspired medieval and renaissance writers – mainly through the influential work of Quintilian – and has, to this day, not lost its appeal.[32]

Although *memoria* was clearly of concern to both Greek and Roman writers, the discourse on rhetorical proficiency seems to have little to do with modern theories on cultural memory that have been analysed earlier in this introductory chapter. Does that mean that the connection between memory and identity, often proclaimed universal by the abovementioned theorists, was not acknowledged in Roman literature? The encyclopedist Varro, who in the first century BC offers an explanation of the verb *meminisse* ('to remember') in his *de Lingua Latina*, suggests otherwise:

> *Meminisse*, 'to remember,' from *memoria* 'memory,' when there is again a motion toward that which *remansit* 'has remained' in the *mens* 'mind'; and this may have been derived from *manere* 'to remain', like *manimoria.* Therefore the Salii, when they sing "O Mamurius Veturius", indicate a *memoria vetus* 'memory of olden times'. From the same word comes *monere* 'to remind,' because he who *monet* 'reminds' is just like a memory. So also the *monimenta* 'memorials' which are on tombs, and in fact alongside the highway, that they may *admonere* 'admonish' the passersby that they themselves were mortal and that the readers are too. From this, the other things that are written and done to preserve their *memoria* 'memory' are called *monimenta* 'monuments'.[33]

The last part of the definition is particularly revealing. Varro emphasizes the correlation between monumental spaces and memory; in a funerary context that is meant to remind people of their own

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[31] Rhet.Her. 3.22.

[32] Quin. *Institutio oratoria.* Modern appreciation of ancient mnemonic techniques can be observed in Yates (1966) and the recent and very successful Foer (2011).

[33] Varr. *L.L.* 6.49: Meminisse *a memoria, quom <in> id quod remansit in mente rursus movetur; quae a manendo ut manimoria potest esse dicta. Itaque Salii quod cantant: "Mamuri Veturi"significant memoriam veterem. Ab eodem monere, quod is qui monet, proinde ac sit memoria; sic monimenta quae in sepulcris, et ideo secundum viam, quo praetereuntis admoneant et se fuisse et illos esse mortalis. Ab eo cetera quae scripta ac facta memoriae causa monimenta dicta.* The translation is slightly adapted from that of Ronald Kent, editor of the Loeb edition, who observes that *meminisse, mens, monere* and *monimentum* (or *monumentum*) are from the same root. Varro's other etymological connections (notably *manere*) are probably wrong.

mortality, but also recalls the lives and deeds of the deceased. From grammarians and philosophers like Festus and Porphyry it is clear that anything that was intended to call to mind (*monere*) the memory of a person or event could reasonably be called a *monumentum*.[34] Literary works, already mentioned in Varro's definition, were no exception. Livy, for example, uses *monumentum* several times in reference to literary achievements (like his own), as does Horace, who famously claims to have 'constructed a memorial more lasting than bronze'.[35] The expressions *memoria* and *meminisse* were used for a similarly broad range of categories: buildings, statues, locations, persons, archives and books could all be referred to as manifestations of memory.[36]

The Roman discourse on memory was not limited to things that could contain or represent memory. Authors also reflected on the process of remembering itself. Cicero, apart from describing its rhetorical function, presents *memoria* as part of *prudentia* (wisdom), itself part of *virtus*, which he rather curiously defines as 'a habit of mind in harmony with reason and the order of nature'.[37] This quality is particularly associated with the aristocratic class, because 'the memory of distinguished men who have served the Republic well, even though they be dead, is important for us'.[38] The past has authority and remembering notable events and exemplary behaviour was seen as central to Roman aristocratic self-presentation and identity.[39] The *gentes* devoted great attention to the display of their famous lineage, which could be articulated – and put to political use – by erecting honorary statues, issuing coins or organizing *ludi* and *munera*. Perhaps the most illustrious and visible aspect of the aristocratic memory culture was the *pompa funebris*, the funerary procession. Here, the mourning family walking in a street procession was accompanied by *imagines* (wax masks) of their ancestors and although there is much debate on the function and appearance of the portraits, it seems clear that the ancestors were carried along as if they were present.[40] The link between past and present was made even more explicit by the funeral oration, which put the

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[34] Porph. *ad Hor. Carm.* 1. 2. I 5: *monumentum non sepulchrum tantum dicitur, sed omne quicquid memoriam testatur*; cf. Dig. I 1.7.2.6 (Ulpian): *monumentum est quod memoriae servandae gratia extistat* ('a monument is what exists for the purposes of preserving the memory'); Festus I23 L: *monumentum est quod et mortui causa aedificatum est et quicquid ob memoriam alicuius factum est, ut fana, porticus, scripta et carmina* ('a monument is both what is built for the sake of a deceased person and whatever is made for the sake of someone's memory, like shrines, porticos, writings and poems'). Meadows and Williams (2001) 41-42, Walter (2004) 32-33

[35] Liv. *Praef.* 10; 6.1.2; 38.57.8; Hor. *Car.* 3.30.1: *Exegi monumentum aere perennius [...]*

[36] Buildings: Cic. *Sest.* 26; Locations: Plin. *H.N.* 3.34; Books: Gell.6.1; People: [Cic.] *In Sall.*21; Archives: Cic.*leg.* 3.46; *Cael.*78; *Mil.*73; Grave inscriptions: Cic. *Leg.agr.* 1.5. The list is far from complete, for additional examples see: Walter (2004) 26 ff.

[37] Cic. *Inv.* 2.160: *Virtus est animi habitus naturae modo atque rationi consentaneus. Virtus* is commonly used in the sense of 'manliness', 'strength', 'courage' or 'excellence'. See: MacDonnell (2006) 330-331.

[38] Cic. *Sest.* 15: *Valet apud nos clarorum hominum et bene de re publica meritorum memoria, etiam mortuorum.*

[39] Gowing (2005) 23.

[40] No ancestor masks survive from the Roman period, but there is epigraphic, literary and legal evidence. Flower (1996) has studied the phenomenon especially convincing.

deceased in line with his famous relatives.[41] For the broad mass of Roman citizens, with little or no access to literary documentation, this was probably the most direct confrontation with history and memory.[42]

Again, it should be emphasized that the images the *gentes* promoted of their past were neither neutral nor uncontroversial. Remembering was an active process that had its justification and purpose in the present.[43] The historian Sallust (86-35BC) is very clear about this in his *bellum Iugurthinum*:

> I have often heard that Quintus Maximus, Publius Scipio, and many other illustrious
> men of our country, were accustomed to observe, that, when they looked on the
> images of their ancestors, they felt their minds irresistibly excited to the pursuit of
> honour. Not, certainly, that the wax, or the shape, had any such influence; but, as
> they called to mind their forefathers' achievements, such a flame was kindled in the
> breasts of those eminent persons, as could not be extinguished till their own merit
> had equalled the fame and glory of their ancestors.[44]

In other words, memory equips Romans with the capacity to make sense of the present, to imitate the accomplishments of their ancestors (*imitatio*) and – preferably – to exceed those achievements (*aemulatio*).[45] We find many comments of a similar nature in Roman literature, and it is noteworthy that the authors often present their own work as an active display of memory, meant to provide guidance and inspiration.[46] In this way, a book, a statue or an ancestor mask was more than a souvenir of a long forgotten past: it was part of the social reality and active communication of everyday life. Memory could create unity, but was also – probably more often, in Republican Rome –

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[41] For a famous description of such a funeral, see: Polyb. 6.53-4. Modern literature on the subject is extensive, for recent contributions see: Hölkeskamp (1996) 303-333, Flower (1996), Flower (2006) 321-339, Walter (2004) 89-108, Wallace-Hadrill (2008) 215-231.

[42] Flower (1996) 127.

[43] Walter (2002) 326-339.

[44] Sal. *Iug.* 4.6: *Nam saepe ego audivi Q. Maximum, P. Scipionem, praeterea civitatis nostrae praeclaros viros solitos ita dicere, cum maiorum imagines intuerentur, vehementissime sibi animum ad virtutem accendi. Scilicet non ceram illam neque figuram tantam vim in sese habere, sed memoria rerum gestarum eam flammam egregiis viris in pectore crescere neque prius sedari, quam virtus eorum famam atque gloriam adaequauerit.* Quintus Maximus: Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus Cunctator (ca. 280 BC – 203 BC), famous politician and general; Publius Scipio: Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus (236–183 BC), famous for defeating Hannibal.

[45] Gowing (2005) 23. Academic discussion on *imitatio* and *aemulatio* is extensive, especially in studies of Graeco-Roman sculpture and literature. See for an introduction: Gazda (2002).

[46] Livy's use of exempla is well known: Liv. Praef. 10-11: *[...] omnis te exempli documenta in inlustri posita monumento intueri; inde tibi tuaeque rei publicae quod imitere capias.* ('[...] that you see, set in the clear light of historical truth, examples of every possible type. From these you may select for yourself and your country what to imitate.'). Cf: Jaeger (1997) 15-29, Chaplin (2000). Similar comments: Nep. *Hann.* 8.2; Liv. 21.28.5; Cic. *Mur.* 16; Cic. *Sull.* 27; Liv. 8.18.12; *Phil.* 13.26; Liv. 6.1.2. Plin. *NH* 6.32.8; Gell. 6.19.8.

the focus of *aemulatio*, a striving for excellence that could lead to rivalry and tension. 'Tradition', as Andrew Wallace-Hadrill puts it even more cynically, 'is an instrument of dominance of old over young, insider over outsider, male over female'.[47]

1.3 Communicative memory: a different perspective

As this introduction shows, the Roman discourse on forms and functions of memory is extensive. It is not limited to abstract theorization, but provides us with insights into a society in which the articulation of past events was an integrated part of everyday communication. Authors like Livy and Cicero clearly recognize a link between memorial culture and the social position of an individual or family. In studying this phenomenon, we owe thanks to the instigators of memory studies like Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora and Jan Assmann, because they opened our eyes to the way shared perceptions of the past shape and define identity. Still, before we come to a point of departure for this thesis, two important observations have to be made. First, as has been emphasized before, it would be incorrect to describe memory in the Roman Republic as 'collective' or 'communal'. Although it is in my opinion valid to describe religious traditions as 'the story they tell themselves about themselves', we always have to ask ourselves whose story we are actually talking about. Memory in Republican Rome was always group specific and therefore pluralistic: different parts of history were accentuated by different groups of people, at different moments in time and in different social circumstances. Second, the dichotomy between communicative and cultural memory – particularly important in the theory of Jan Assmann – cannot be upheld in the Roman case. Here, literary representations of the past stood in direct contact with other forms of memorial culture, like statues, inscriptions, rituals or shrines. There was not one group of experts who had the authority to decide which elements had collective significance and consequently it makes no sense to look for a moment in which certain representations were somehow 'elevated' from every day communication.

During the Principate, this situation changes, and the power to decide what was being remembered and on what occasion increasingly shifted from a variety of aristocratic *gentes* to the much smaller circles of the emperor and the imperial court. In these circles – the Augustan poets of the early first century AD are probably our best example – we may certainly recognize the experts of memory mentioned by Assmann: people who had the ability to promote certain memories and who actively tried to place them into a collectively shared framework, while other memories were

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[47] Wallace-Hadrill (1997) 13.

consciously forgotten.[48] For example, in the quick proliferation of Roman *fasti* (inscribed calendars) across Italy in the first century AD, we can identify a distinctively Julio-Claudian version of the Roman past, in which traditional Republican festivals were combined with Julio-Claudian achievements of the more recent past.[49] While we must not mistake this for one-way memory politics or plain propaganda (local appropriations of the Roman-Augustan past likely played a part in the construction of calendars as well), the concentration of power in the early Principate did create ample opportunities to form a collective past centred around the imperial court, to replace or rather transform a compartmentalized aristocratic past.[50] In this way, some memorial practices in the Principate resemble the creation of cultural memory as it was described by Assmann, and the analysis in the individual chapters to come will show that – in some cases – this centralization of memory culture had an effect on the perception of Latin cults as well.

Nevertheless, I have decided to study narratives, images and other representations of the Latin gods as forms of communicative memory. In light of the previous discussion, this might seem surprising, but in my view an emphasis on the communicative aspect of memory – or: on the activity of remembering itself instead of on fixed memories as the results of that process – is best suited for the dynamic, diverse and often competitive allusions to the past in the Roman Republic, in which most of the narratives on and representations of the Latin gods took shape. There is no reason to assume that in the Principate and later in the Empire, the religious memories of the Latin past had turned into fixed reference points that were distanced from everyday communications. New groups – whether they were linked to the emperor or not – laid fresh claims on the Latin past and these claims stood in direct contact with contemporary and earlier claims. The Latin past of the cults of the Alban hills, in other words, could change shape and meaning under different circumstances.

Communicative memory as I use it, is thus disconnected from the strict meaning that Assmann assigned to it: I explicitly do not consider communicative memory as a preliminary stage to cultural memory, but as a valuable instrument of analysis in its own respect.[51] With the term I refer to discourses on the nature and history of Latin cults – brought forward in different media – which affected contemporary social and political communication but also shaped memories that were passed down over the generations. Consequently, I am not so much interested in the *res gestae*, the 'facts' or events themselves, but in the *memoria rerum gestarum* - the way these stories were

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[48] Gowing (2005) 1-4.
[49] Rüpke (1995a) 396-416, Feeney (2007) 14-20.
[50] As emphasized by Wallace-Hadrill (1987) 221-230, in a study on the *Fasti Praenestini*, which show – apart from the Augustan dates and Republican festival – clear signs of local Praenestine influences. Cf.: Rüpke (1995b) 121-122.
[51] For a similar approach: Diefenbach (2007) 1-18.

remembered or 'got into the heads' of the Romans. In my discussion of three Latin cults, I will try to distinguish individual and group memories and the reflection of them in different media, thereby avoiding the terminological confusion that surrounds the cultural historical category of memory as a whole. Only when the analysis is strongly concentrated on specific cases, and memory is conceived as the product of acting and communicating individuals, can its role in the formation of identity be recognized and understood.

So, by concentrating on the active communication of group specific memories, we can attempt to do justice to the plural and dynamic nature of Roman society. However, if we shift our attention to the media that transmit these memories, we encounter a new difficulty. At first sight, texts, coins and statues present a very direct link with the individuals or groups that produced them. At least, these materials seem to offer a certain historical sensation, showing that the remote past really did take place, and that people living in it expressed their opinions and feelings in a way that we can still understand. As numerous studies have shown however, media are in no way neutral transmitters of (memory-relevant) information.[52] Every medium – or, in our case: source – has its own possibilities and limitations in providing information about the cults we want to know more about. Epigraphic texts, for example, are defined by the limited amount of space available to the issuer. Literary sources are affected by conventions of genre; statues by aesthetic standards, Greek examples or other conventions. In short, a medium does not only reveal messages, but also channels, classifies and reproduces them. Or, to refer to (yet another) platitude: the medium is the message.[53]

In studying the perception of the cults of the Alban hills, we have to acknowledge that, although various senders, media and messages together form a culture of memory, not every medium has the same potential for commemoration. This creates a structure that is potentially very confusing: on the one hand a cultural historical study of memory needs a broad definition of media, which accommodates different types of communication and varying groups of producers and receivers of information. On the other hand, this broad definition can obscure any concrete and useful analysis of how media actually work. In the next part of my introduction, I will pay attention to the different (written and material) sources that form the basis of my thesis and to their possibilities and limitations.

1.4 Necessary contextualization

As has been remarked above, in confronting the diverse discourses about Latin cults in Roman sources, we must also consider the characteristics of the media involved. Although the different

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[52] For example: Vries and Weber (2001), Zierold (2006), Erll and Nünning (2008), Erll and Rigney (2009).
[53] The famous phrase is from: MacLuhan (1964) 8.

messages brought forward by text, image and ritual together form a framework for religious memory, it would be mistaken to try to reconstruct one central perception of a god and its cult. Encountering a god in a temple was not the same as encountering a god in a book or a poem. Consequently, every discourse about a god or cult has to be contextualized, and genre-conventions and –priorities have to be taken into account. This does not make one message more believable or 'real' than the other. In his famous essay 'Les Grecs ont-ils cru à leurs mythes?', Paul Veyne reflected upon what he calls '*balkanisation des cerveaux*', or brain-balkanization: the capacity of educated Greeks and Romans to entertain different kinds of appreciation and criteria of judgment in different contexts, in ways that strike the modern observer as mutually contradictory.[54] Denis Feeney, following Veyne's analysis, stresses that this lack of an over-arching integrating system does not mean that we are left with a set of fragmented and unrelated messages:

> The co-existence of genres of belief does not prove their impotence, but is rather the very condition that makes meaning possible. Meaning is produced by dialogue, at every level, and the search for a single monolithic meaning system can only proceed at the expense of smothering this ubiquitous dialogic activity.[55]

Veyne and Feeney participate in an ongoing debate on the contextual nature of polytheistic belief-systems, in which the work of Henk Versnel on 'Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman religion' had a profound influence as well.[56] Much more can be said about this very rich discussion, but the limited scope of this introduction leaves room only for a few introductory remarks. For our purpose, it is important to realize that the literary, epigraphic, iconographic and archaeological evidence that provides us with information on the Latin cults has to be assessed within its own context. We cannot simply isolate a certain detail or a phrase from a literary work, without considering the aims and conventions of the genre involved. Likewise, statues may provide information about the iconography of gods, but an assessment of the imagery cannot be complete without taking into account both the aesthetic notions of the time of production and the religious function of statues as objects of cult.

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[54] Veyne (1983).
[55] Feeney (1998) 21.
[56] Versnels introduces 'cognitive dissonance' (adapted from cognitive psychology) to describe universal reactions to inconsistencies in polytheistic belief systems. Versnel (1990) 2-12 Cf: Versnel (1994). Further elaboration on the theological implication of this reading can be found is his recent publication: Versnel (2011). Other important contributions include: Scheid (1987) 303-325, Gill and Wiseman (1993), Buxton (1994), Ando (2008).

It has more than once been observed that combining literary and material sources does not necessarily result in a coherent and comprehensive image of a deity.[57] Therefore, it must be emphasized that this dissertation does not intend to smooth out possible discrepancies. Instead, the focus will be on the interaction between different messages in different media; or, in the terminology of Feeney, on the dialogue between various genres of belief. In the coming chapters there is not always room to contextualize the sources used and separate the medium from the message; therefore this introduction will shed light on some methodological issues regarding the sources used in this thesis and the religious past they (re)present.

1.5 Livy and the danger of *neglegentia*

Notwithstanding the deliberate and desired application of different types of sources for the reconstruction of religious memory, our analysis of the history of Latin cults inevitably draws heavily on the literary sources. For most periods in the history of the Roman Republic Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* (27 – 25 BC) is our principal (and sometimes only) informant, but the work of authors like Cicero (106 – 43 BC) and Ovid (43 BC – 17/18 AD) has also shaped ancient and modern interpretations of Latin cults.[58] Studying these presents a difficulty that seems banal but is nevertheless crucially important to acknowledge: Roman interference with the towns and cults of Latium was described and explained in a time when it had been a reality for decades, or even centuries.[59] Consequently, *Ab Urbe Condita* is – like other works of the late Republic and early Principate – not only a description of historical episodes, but also (or: chiefly) a rationalization, justification and interpretation of those events in the light of later military, political and religious developments.[60] Of course, the works now lost to us that preceded and influenced Livy, were just as much coloured by the preoccupations of their own time.[61] For the ancient historian who wants to study the historical 'core' of the incorporation of the Latin cults of the Alban hills, trying to untangle this knot of interpretation can be frustratingly hard – if it is possible at all. As stressed before, my own interest is not so much in reconstructing the moment of incorporation, but on the memory and representation of that process and on later stages of Roman involvement in the cults. In other words, it is the layers of interpretation layers themselves that are at the centre of my analysis.

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[57] Scheid (1987) 112, Buxton (1994) XV-XVII, Feeney (1998) 15-18, Ando (2008) 164-169.
[58] For Cicero, see the following section (pages 19ff) of this introduction.
[59] Cornell (1995) 7-15.
[60] Kraus and Woodman (1997) 1-8. Two recent handbooks provide an excellent introduction to the genre of Roman historiography and individual historians: Marincola (2007), Feldherr (2009).
[61] Forsythe (1999) 24-36, Beck and Walter (2001) 39-43, 211-215.

The dominant influence of Livy (59 BC – 17 AD) on the historiographical discourse of the Roman Republic has been mentioned already, and will be confirmed in all chapters of this study.[62] *Ab Urbe Condita* is our primary source for the conflicts with, and Roman conquest of the Alban hills. It is however important to observe that Livy's work marks not the beginning but - in a sense - the end of a tradition. The author uses the same methods as the annalists that paved the way before him – such as Fabius Pictor, Postumus Albinus and Cato the Elder – and drew extensively on their works.[63] These early works of history fell into oblivion for the most part, due to the astounding success of Livy's own work. The scarce remains that we are left with offer too little information to reconstruct the structure of their arguments, but the frequent references to prodigies and religious holidays in the fragments seems to suggest that religion was an important focal point for the annalists - as it was for Livy.[64]

Modern scholarship has more than once labeled Livy's own attitude towards religion as ambivalent.[65] On the one hand, he is often sceptical when it comes to wondrous signs of the gods or unbelievable legends; he repeatedly identifies these stories as forms of *superstitio*.[66] On the other hand, he takes a great interest in the recording and conservation of traditional religious rites and festivals. Despite his own reservations, he shows himself reluctant to dismiss stories that his Roman ancestors with their great *pietas* did find worthy to record:

> As I write of antiquity, not only does my own mind become in some way or other old-fashioned, but also a certain religious feeling (*religio*) keeps me from regarding those matters which the wisest men of former times decided required action from the part of the state as something unworthy to be reported in my History.[67]

Thus, Livy frequently refers to the Roman dominance of the Mediterranean as a result of divine inspiration and approval, while at the same time characterizing narratives about direct divine intervention as fairy tales. The deeds and responsibilities of men receive his primary attention: the

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[62] The limited scope of this thesis leaves no room to discuss Livy's writings in full, so I will confine myself to his standpoint on religion here. For further analysis of the author's methods, I gladly refer to one of the excellent monographs that have appeared in the last two decades: Moles (1993) 141-168, Levene (1993), Miles (1995), Jaeger (1997), Forsythe (1999), Chaplin (2000).

[63] Cornell (1995) 5-8, Forsythe (1999). Other (early) historians: Frier (1979), Forsythe (1994), Forsythe (1999), Davies (2004).

[64] Levene (1993) 16-30.

[65] Levene (1993) 16-30, Miles (1995) 4-7, Davies (2004) 21-85, particularly 82-84 with bibliography.

[66] For example, when all sorts of strange rites spring up during a disastrous plague in Rome in 327 BC: 4.30.9-10. When in 213 BC., during the second Punic War, Rome is affected by a sudden increase in 'superstitious fears', Livy sees this as a danger to traditional religion: 25.1.6-7.

[67] Liv. 43.13: *Ceterum et mihi vetustas res scribenti nescio quo pacto anticus fit animus, et quaedam religio tenet, quae illi prudentissimi viri publice suscipienda censuerint, ea pro indignis habere, quae in meos annales referam.*

approval of the gods has an influence on the outcome of wars and political events, but only in an abstract way.[68]

Ab Urbe Condita is saturated with the notion of moral decline, and Livy's description of the religious history of Rome is perhaps the most significant illustration of that idea. The latter part of the work is now lost, so we can only guess how deplorable the city of Rome had eventually become in Livy's eyes.[69] Still, from the pessimistic tone of the *praefatio* we can understand that the decline was evident right from the beginnings of Roman history.[70] After a relatively short period of glory, the signs of deterioration manifested themselves in every aspect of society, perhaps most notably in religion.[71] Livy does not describe a healthy religious system that is working. The taking of the auspices was, just like the meticulous execution of archaic rituals, part of a world that no longer existed - or at least one that was nearly gone. With the *neglegentia* of the gods, moral decline was inevitable. In the end, religion, past and contemporary society are so much intertwined that it is impossible to distinguish religious elements from the rest of Livy's argument, as D.S. Levene has convincingly shown.[72]

With his famous use of *exempla*, Livy repeatedly holds a mirror to his audience, especially when it comes to respect for the gods. Marcus Furius Camillus, who in book five safeguarded the relics of Rome and added many gods to the pantheon of the city, is perhaps the best example.[73] If the many studies of his work have made one thing clear, than it must be that Livy describes ánd reconstructs Roman religious history at the same time. While he calls into memory the *pietas* and

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[68] Levene (1993) 25-29.

[69] Livy's relationship with Augustus and his attitude towards Augustus' 'restoration' of the Republic is the subject of much debate. The chronology of the work remains obscure but it is important to realize that during the composition of – at least some of – *Ab Urbe Condita* (the first books were written somewhere in the early 20's BC) Augustus' power base was not firmly established yet and his ideological program was yet to be fully developed. There is no evidence for a close relationship and Augustus' and Livy's interest in *exempla* from the Republican seems parallel rather than mutually influential (Cf. Chaplin (2000) 168-196). Livy's vision in later books does not challenge Augustus' authority, and indeed it is conceivable that Livy's patriotic tenor will have appealed to the *princeps*, but there is nothing in AUC that proclaims explicit support either. Important contributions to the debate include: Syme (1959) 87, Badian (1993) 3-38, Kraus and Woodman (1997) 70-74, Sailor (2007) 329-388.

[70] Liv. Praef. 9: *[...] labente deinde paulatim disciplina velut desidentis primo mores sequatur animo, deinde ut magis magisque lapsi sint, tum ire coeperint praecipites, donec ad haec tempora quibus nec vitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus perventum est.* ('[...] then let him note how, with the gradual relaxation of discipline, morals first gave way, as it were, then sank lower and lower, and finally began the downward plunge1 which has brought us to the present time, when we can endure neither our vices nor their cure.')

[71] Chaplin (2000) 87 ff.

[72] Levene (1993).

[73] Livy's use of *exempla* is extensively studied by J.D. Chaplin. Her innovative approach does not only consider historical characters to be *exempla*, but also moral concepts and practical events: in short, everything that can be learned from. Chaplin (2000), on Camillus: 86-89 and 207. On *Ab Urbe Condita* book 5, where the religious position of Camillus is most clearly noted: Kraus (1994) 290.

glory of Rome's religious past, he simultaneously creates a framework of moral reference for Romans of his own day.

1.6 Cicero and scepticism

Ab Urbe Condita may be our most important source for the early history of the Latin cults in the Alban hills, it is certainly not the earliest source that reflects on Roman religious history. In many cases, our most direct link with the Republican past is presented by the work of Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC – 43 BC), who was acutely aware that he was writing in and about a system that was falling to pieces.[74] Although the religious history of Rome is not Cicero's focal point, a lot of information on Roman gods and religious practices can be extracted from his letters, orations, and philosophical treatises. In general, there is a sense of decline in his work, and in several instances he links his concern for the Republic with a concern for the loss of manners, memory and religion.[75] In his later works Cicero often presents himself as a philosopher, and most of his accounts and opinions on religion have to be set against that background. In his treatise *De Natura Deorum*, Cicero introduces himself as a teacher and therefore abstains from imposing his own opinion:

> Those however who seek to learn my personal opinion on the various questions show an unreasonable degree of curiosity. In discussion it is not so much weight of authority as force of argument that should be demanded. Indeed the authority of those who profess to teach is often a positive hindrance to those who desire to learn; they cease to employ their judgement, and take what they perceive to be the verdict of their chosen master as settling the question.[76]

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[74] Gowing (2005) 3.
[75] For example: Cic. *Rep.* 5.2: *Nostra vero aetas cum rem publicam sicut picturam accepisset egregiam, sed iam evanescentem vetustate, non modo eam coloribus eisdem, quibus fuerat, renovare neglexit, sed ne id quidem curavit, ut formam saltem eius et extrema tamquam liniamenta servaret. Quid enim manet ex antiquis moribus, quibus ille dixit rem stare Romanam? Quos ita oblivione obsoletos videmus, ut non modo non colantur, sed iam ignorentur.* ('But our age, on the contrary, having received the Republic as a finished picture of another century, but one already beginning to fade through the lapse of years, has not only neglected to renew the colors of the original painting, but has not even cared to preserve its general form and prominent lineaments. For what now remains of those antique manners, of which the poet [Ennius] said that our Commonwealth consisted? They have now become so obsolete and forgotten that they are not only not cultivated, but they are not even known').
[76] Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.10: *Qui autem requirunt quid quaque de re ipsi sentiamus, curiosius id faciunt quam necesse est; non enim tam auctoritatis in disputando quam rationis momenta quaerenda sunt. Quin etiam obest plerumque iis qui discere volunt auctoritas eorum qui se docere profitentur; desinunt enim suum iudicium adhibere, id habent ratum quod ab eo quem probant iudicatum vident.*

This hesitation in expressing a judgment is also observable in the rest of the work: in the classical form of a dialogue, Cicero displays his knowledge and informs his readers on the three dominant philosophical schools of his time: the Stoic, the Epicurean and the Academic. Their positions on belief systems and gods are assessed judiciously, so much that Cicero's own opinion is hard – if not impossible – to discern. Several modern authors have identified the opinion of the author with the Academic scepticism of one of his debaters, Aurelius Cotta.[77] They argue that the later Cicero, perhaps because of all the personal and political mishaps in his life, had turned from the strong believer we see in several of his early orations into a skeptic; a process of which his philosophical treatise on divination would also testify.[78]

There are several reasons to question this assertion. To begin with, in the introduction of *De Natura Deorum*, in the first person that seems to mark his own words, Cicero states that he considers the decline of religion a genuine danger for the *res publica*:

> Piety however, like the rest of the virtues, cannot exist in mere outward show and pretence; and without piety, reverence and religion must likewise disappear. And when these are gone, life soon becomes a welter of disorder and confusion; and in all probability the disappearance of piety towards the gods will entail the disappearance of loyalty and social union among men as well, and of justice itself, the queen of all the virtues.[79]

There are similar comments in Cicero's other philosophical works, where approval for ancient cults and traditions is expressed by the same speakers that declare the severest doubt on the existence of the gods and the immortality of the soul.[80] In the case of Cotta, there seems to be a tension between his role as a *pontifex*, a representative of Roman state religion, and his critical stance on the nature of the gods. Likewise, Cicero's position as augur seems hardly compatible with his denunciation of the principles of augury as a character in *De Divinatione*.[81] The list of ambiguities continues, for example if we examine Cicero's attitude towards deification. In several speeches he praises the divine qualities and honours of human beings (for example Pompey), but at the same time, again

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[77] Linderski (1982) 212, Momigliano (1984b) 211.

[78] Explicit support for Roman state religion is for example to be found in: *Att.* 1.16.6; *Cat.* 2.13.29; *Sull.* 14.40; *Leg.* 2.13; 32-33. Cicero's 'shift' from piety to skepticism is suggested by Linderski (1982) 212, Momigliano (1984b) 211.

[79] Cic. *Nat. D.* 1. 3-4: *In specie autem fictae simulationis sicut reliquae virtutes item pietas inesse non potest; cum qua simul sanctitatem et religionem tolli necesse est, quibus sublatis perturbatio vitae sequitur et magna confusio; atque haut scio an pietate adversus deos sublata fides etiam et societas generis humani et una excellentissuma virtus iustitia tollatur.*

[80] For example: Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.2.5; *Div.* 2.33.70.

[81] Cic. *Div.* 2.27. 58; 2.68.20.

mainly in his philosophical works, he seems very critical of the matter.[82] It is especially remarkable how the aged author, in his letters to Atticus appears to be obsessed with building not a tomb but a shrine (*fanum*) for his beloved daughter Tullia, so that 'posterity shall respect its sanctity'.[83] For the later, allegedly sceptical, Cicero this seems a very curious emotion.

It is tempting to interpret this ambiguity as a direct outcome of Cicero's changed personality but in my opinion, this interpretation would neglect an aspect that was mentioned earlier: the need to take the context and genre into account when trying to interpret a religious message. Cicero, perhaps more than anyone in his time, had the knowledge and ability to employ the conventions of different literary genres to every possible extent, in order to enhance the rhetorical power of his works.[84] In his philosophical treaties he demonstrates his extensive knowledge of a Greek tradition and is at the same time able to apply that tradition to a Roman context. Because he was so very aware of genre conventions, it is virtually impossible to reconstruct what Cicero actually thought or practiced. If anything, his work is a fine example of how sophisticated the 'balkanization' of different religious sentiments was in the late Republic. Religion, as an activity and a practice, had become the subject of philosophical discourse as well.[85]

1.7 Varro and the antiquarians

The antiquarian and grammarian Marcus Terentius Varro (116 – 27 BC), is not quoted directly in this thesis very often. Still, his output was so vast and influential that his historical investigations penetrate our evidence in many ways and a brief reflection on his person and the genre is in place. Varro's influence has been recognized in many works of varying genres, from Roman poetry (e.g. in Ovid's *Fasti*) to history (e.g. in Plutarchus' *Antiquitates Romanae*) to grammatical and linguistic works (e.g. in Aulius Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*).[86] More directly, Varro's studies formed a great stimulus for the genre of antiquarian literature itself, as is clear from the lexicons of Verrius Flaccus and Festus, which successively became important sources of historical information in their own respect (for authors like Pliny, for example).[87] While historians like Livy provide the narrative framework

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[82] Appreciation for divine qualities of Pompey: Cic. *Leg. Man.* 3-48. Cf: Cic. *Pro Mil.* 21. Criticism: *De Div.* 2.89; *Nat. D.* 1.22.91; 1.43.119; 3.16.41; 3.19.50; 3.23.60. For additional examples, see: Sullivan (1943) 157-159.
[83] Cic. Att. 12.36: *[..] ut posteritas habeat religionem*. Other references to the *fanum*: Att. 12.12.1; 12.23.3; 12.23.4; 12.25.1; 12.29.2; 12.35; 12.36; 12.38; 12.40.4; 12.41.2; 12.43; 12.53.2; 13.1.2; 13.6.1-3; 13.29.2; 13.31.4.
[84] Beard (1986) 36-40, Bleich-Schade (1996) 188 ff.
[85] Beard (1986) 46, Ando (2010) 61 ff.
[86] For an overview and further bibliography, see: Cornell (1995) 19-23.
[87] For the dominance of Varro in the work of Verrius Flaccus and Festus, see: Glinister (2007) 11-32, North (2007) 49-68, who argue that Varro's work was used much more than Festus and Verrius Flaccus are willing to admit, because both authors quote Varro's sources, while (deliberately?) ignoring Varro's own work. For the later influence of this tradition, for example in the work of Pliny: Grandazzi (1991) 101-123.

surrounding the cults in the Alban hills, the antiquarians give us an idea of what these narratives could be based on. The compilations are far from a collection of facts to our standards, but they were seen as factual information by Roman sources. As such, antiquarians give us an idea of the intrinsic multiplicity of Roman historical narratives, because for almost every investigation of an historical phenomenon they provide several – and often competing – explanations.

As a near contemporary of Cicero, Varro suffered an almost opposite fate. Although the author himself made it through the turbulence of his time unharmed and – after fighting for Pompey, being pardoned by Caesar and proscribed by Anthony - managed to spend the second half of his life writing under the protection of Augustus, most of the results of his labour are now lost to us.[88] Varro's vast oeuvre is estimated to have consisted of about 420 works, of which we know 55 titles and of which only a fraction has survived: the three books of *De Re Rustica* and six of the 25 books of *De Lingua Latina*. His impact was all-pervasive and – paradoxically – the reproduction of so many of his detailed studies in other works could have contributed to the fact that his own works survived so poorly. In the words of Nicholas Horsfall, Varro has perished by absorption.[89]

For our understanding of Roman religion, the almost complete loss of his sixteen books on Roman religion, the *Antiquitates rerum divinarum*, is particularly regrettable. These studies were part of a larger work on Roman traditions, which also contained twenty-five books on *res humanae*.[90] In contrary to the latter, bits and pieces of his studies on *res divinae* have survived thanks to the quotations in Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, who was paradoxically also his biggest critic.[91] His selection is particularly problematic, because Augustine clearly aims at proving Varro wrong and showing the contradictions in Roman religion – or polytheistic state religion in general. It is thus not always clear how and if we can separate these fragments from their early Christian context: we must unavoidably look at Varro through the mirror of Augustine.[92]

Still, Varro's antiquarian investigations have had such a profound influence on Roman discourse on religious matters and on modern studies of Roman religion, that it is useful to take a further look at the way he defines and explains the religious traditions of his time. Much like Livy a few decades later, Varro sees himself confronted with a society that is rapidly changing and sets out to preserve some of the religious heritage that is at risk of disappearing.[93] After lamenting that such

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[88] For a discussion of Cicero's and Varro's lives, careers and relations, see: Wiseman (2009) 107-130.
[89] As quoted by: Cornell (1995) 19.
[90] August. *De civ. D.* 6.3. Cardauns (2001) 51-63
[91] See, for example, the introduction to the second paragraph of book six: August. *De civ. D.* 6.2: *Quid Varronem de diis gentium sensisse credendum sit, quorum talis et genera et sacra detexit, ut reverentius cum eis ageret, si de illis omnino reticeret* ('What we must suppose was Varro's view of the gods, whose nature and rites he disclosed in such a way that it would have been more reverent to have kept altogether silent about them').
[92] Ando (2010) 75, van Nuffelen (2010) 164.
[93] Edwards (1996) 5, Baier (1997) 43, Cardauns (2001) 53.

a learned man wrote about so many things worthy of ridicule and scorn, Augustine quotes what seems to be a programmatic passage from Varro's introduction:

> ... But in fact he [Varro] worshipped the gods and considered their worship so necessary that he says in this very work that he was alarmed for fear they would perish, not by an enemy's invasion, but by the neglect of his fellow citizens. He says that in rescuing them from this downfall, and in storing and preserving them in the memory of good citizens by writing such books, he is performing a service more essential than the much renowned deeds of Metellus, who rescued the holy appurtenances of Vesta from the fire, and of Aeneas, who saved the Penates from the fall of Troy.[94]

Varro's conservation efforts took the form of a meticulous compilation of religious information. He assembled, categorized and explained long lists of gods and their spheres of influence, but also classified principal religious institutions like priesthoods, rites, festivals, altars and temples. His erudition was illustrious and although similar antiquarian works appeared both before and after his *Antiquitates*, none of their authors displayed the same omniscience and achieved such an authoritative status as Varro.[95] In matters of religion, as well as in other areas of knowledge, 'as Varro says' became a catchphrase that could legitimize almost any claim about Roman traditions.[96] Thus, while investigating and writing about the gods and their rites, Varro was as much contributing to Roman religious thought as he was commenting upon it.

The *Antiquitates* are, however, not only characterized by their enumerative and pragmatic description of Roman religion. It has long been observed that Varro was not interested in religious traditions for the sake of tradition alone, but that he consciously tried to relate his studies to a Greek discourse about the nature of the divine.[97] In the first book, Varro analyses the different ways

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[94] Aug. *De civ. D.* 6.2 = Varro, *Ant.* fr. 1. 2a Cardauns: *Cum vero deos eosdem ita coluerit colendosque censuerit, ut in eo ipso opere litterarum suarum dicat se timere ne pereant, non incursu hostili, sed civium neglegentia, de qua illos velut ruina liberari a se dicit et in memoria bonorum per eius modi libros recondi atque servari utiliore cura, quam Metellus de incendio sacra Vestalia et Aeneas de Troiano excidio penates liberasse praedicatur.*
[95] See for an overview of the antiquarian tradition: Rawson (1985), Cardauns (2001), Sehlmeyer (2003) 151-171.
[96] For example: Sen. *Apocol.* 8; Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 5, 14, 105; Serv. *Aen.* 3.578, 4.167, 8.275, etc. Beard, North and Price (1998) 152-153.
[97] van Nuffelen (2010) 162-188, Peglau (2003) 137-164, Tarver (1997) 130-164 .

people could think about religion, in a theory commonly described as the *theologia tripertita*.[98] Varro distinguishes, again in Augustine's words, three types of religion, practiced in different situations: 'The mythical, which poets in particular employ, the physical, which philosophers employ and the civic, which peoples employ'.[99] The first category is formed by what we would call Greek and Roman myths, while the second – which Varro labels physical after the Greek word for 'nature', *physis* – concerns all the questions which philosophers could ask about the existence, nature and character of the gods. Civic religion, finally, regards the proper worship of each individual god, by the citizens and the priests of a specific state. Varro is critical of the religion created by poets, who attribute characteristics and deeds to the gods that are unworthy and 'against nature', such as gods being born from heads and other body parts, or gods stealing and committing adultery.[100] He acknowledges that civic religion shares some of those peculiarities, a suggestion that Augustine readily exploits in his attack on the deities and rites of the Roman state. Although it is hard to discern through the Augustinian filter, Varro seems most in agreement with the religion practiced by the philosophers, who offer explanations and truths that one is more likely to hear in a school than outside in the Forum.[101]

We might recognize a discrepancy here: while Varro privileges the *theologia naturalis* and seems dissatisfied with some of the characteristics that the *theologia civilis* had developed, he nevertheless invests a lot and time and energy in describing every practical aspect of Roman religion, cataloguing his findings in books to prevent them from being forgotten. Yet, differentiating 'Varro the philosopher' from 'Varro the antiquarian' would create the same distinction that we earlier recognized as a modern rather than a Roman one. As the *theologia tripertita* acknowledges, religion could be presented, experienced and discussed in many contexts, and Varro's scholarly curiosity is just one aspect of the process of differentiation of religion that took place in his time. It would therefore be mistaken to treat Varro's studies as a written-down version of what cultured Romans generally knew about their religion. Even a highly educated man like Cicero felt like he had been a 'stranger abroad and lost in his own city', until Varro's book explained everything there was

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[98] Other references to this theory in: Strabo 1.2.8; Plut. *Amat.*763c; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.39-47; Sext. Emp. *Adv. Phys.* 1.61-64, 191-192; Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.42-42; *Rep.* 1.56; Min. Fel. 18.11ff; Macr. 1.7.18. See for an overview of the terminology and classification of the different authors: Cardauns (1976) 140.

[99] Aug. *De civ. D.* 6.5 = Varro, *Ant.* fr. 1.7 Cardauns: *Mythicon appellant, quo maxime utuntur poetae; physicon, quo philosophi, civile, quo populi.*

[100] Aug. *De civ. D.* 6.5 = Varro, *Ant.* fr. 1.7 Cardauns.

[101] Aug. *De civ. D.* 6.5 = Varro, *Ant.* fr. 1.8 Cardauns. In several instances Varro reflects on the way *viri fortes* can distribute images about the gods that are 'false' in a strict sense but can nevertheless be very useful for the functioning of the *res publica*: Aug. *De civ. D.* 3.4 (Varro, *Ant.* fr. 1.20 Cardauns), Aug. *De civ. D.* 4.31 (Varro, *Ant.* fr. 1.12 Cardauns). See also: Cardauns (2001) 54-59.

to know about matters human and divine and 'led him home'.[102] Cicero's reaction shows us that there was no single Roman religious system, inherently meaningful and consistent, waiting to be participated in.[103] So, while all authors played a part in the proliferation of the narratives surrounding our Alban cults, the religious past that Varro presents is entirely different from Cicero's philosophical discussions and also from Livy's moral *exempla.*

How do these different versions of the religious past relate to memory? According to Assmann, written testimonies typically belong to the sphere of cultural memory and form fixed, highly formal and hierarchically structured representations of the past, which are elevated from everyday communications by memory specialists. While this may be the case for some of the traditions preserved in Livy, the overview of literary genres concerned with religion and religious history has shown that different (and often conflicting) narratives could exist next to each other, without an apparent hierarchy or ranking in authority. What was being remembered or emphasized about the past, was very much a question of circumstances and genres involved. Furthermore, diverse literary narratives stood in direct contact with representations of the Latin past in different (material) contexts, and although interactions between sources can be observed, it makes no sense to label the literary representations as somehow being dominant or leading in this process. Literary representations of the Latin past are thus, in my perspective, components of communicative memory rather than the outcome or result of it.

1.8 Epigraphy: filling up voids in our knowledge and uncovering new ones

In my investigation of the relationships between Rome, its citizens and the Latin sanctuaries of the Alban hills, literary sources are thus a major – in some cases the most important – source of information. Nevertheless, texts have several significant limitations as source material. They often focus on 'great men' in exceptional situations, or discuss the theoretical and political aspect of cults and gods. By contrast, everyday habits, basic religious institutions and the practicalities of routine rituals are only rarely mentioned. Even where we have a more thorough reflection on everyday religion, like in Ovid's *Fasti*, it is hard to establish which elements were familiar to larger groups of people and which belong to the sphere of the scholar or elite members of Roman society. Apart from

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[102] Cic. Ac. 1.9: *Tum ego, sunt, inquam, ista Varro. Nam nos in nostra urbe peregrinantis errantisque tamquam hospites tui libri quasi domum deduxerunt, ut possemus aliquando qui et ubi essemus agnoscere. Tu aetatem patriae, tu descriptiones temporum, tu sacrorum iura tu sacerdotum, tu domesticam tu bellicam disciplinam, tu sedum regionum locorum tu omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum nomina genera officia causas aperuisti.* ('Yes indeed, Varro', I said. 'When we were strangers abroad and lost in our own city, your books led us back home, so to speak, so that at last we were able to recognize who and where we were. You revealed the age of our native land, its divisions of time, the rules of sacrifices and priesthoods; discipline at home and at war; the locations of regions and places; and the names, types, functions and causes of all matters human and divine'). Wiseman (2009) 127-128.
[103] Feeney (1998) 140.

that, it is hard to get a glimpse of municipal customs and religious practices, because many of the literary testimonies focus heavily on the largest metropoleis, in our case particularly on Rome itself.[104]

In an attempt to fill these voids in our knowledge, inscriptions play a vital role. They show us a glimpse of religious life at ground level that we can get only rarely from other sources, by providing examples of the regular and recurring features of cult practice and of the texture of civic life. Three types of inscriptions will be discussed in this thesis: 'official documents' that refer to the regulation of the Latin cults and their commemoration on calendars – roughly summarized as *leges sacrae*; honorary and funerary inscriptions that mentioned (honorary) priesthoods and magistracies; and finally, as perhaps the most direct communications with the divine world, the votive dedications. In the Latin west, *leges sacrae* are usually very rare, but the calendars from the Italian peninsula, the so-called *fasti*, constitute a valuable exception to this rule. Together with the lists of consuls and triumphators that are preserved in Rome (the *Fasti Consulares* and *Triumphales*), they enhance our understanding of the cults of the Alban hills in several ways.[105] The formulation of votive inscriptions, marking the consecration of a shrine, an altar, or some smaller offering to a god, is often very simple. With only the name of the god, the dedicator and sometimes an indication of the circumstances of dedication, these texts can nevertheless be quite informative in revealing the identity and background of the worshippers, as well as the identity and way of addressing the deities. In the case of honorary and funerary inscriptions, it is not only the identity of individual priests and magistrates that comes to light, but – in some cases – it also allows us to reflect on the nature of the organizational structures surrounding the cults. In this way, although the evidence will turn out to be unfortunately fragmentary for some cults, honorary and funerary inscriptions (as well as the occasional building inscription) can inform us of the way the religious practices were integrated into the civic life of Aricia , Lanuvium and the villages around the Alban mount, as well as on the many relations between the Latin cults and the city of Rome.

The epigraphic evidence frequently offers a view that is very different from the information we can retrieve from the literary material. Perhaps the most illuminating example of this – in the field of Roman religion – is the cult of Dea Dia, the goddess that was worshipped in Rome by the *fratres Arvales* (Arval brothers). Epigraphically, this is by far the best documented Roman cult we know of, with dozens of inscriptions describing the cultic activity, the ritual year and the names of the priests involved.[106] Without these documents however, we would have known hardly anything

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[104] Rives (2001) 118-136.
[105] The calendars are transcribed and most thoroughly commented upon in Degrassi (1963) XIII.2.
[106] For a detailed account of the *fratres Arvales* and a catalogue of the inscriptions: Scheid (1990), Scheid, Tassini and Rüpke (1998).

about the *fratres Arvales*, not even the name of the deity they worshipped. Conversely, the few things that are described in the literary material, such as an aetiological explanation of the name of the priesthood, appear in none of the inscriptions.[107] Although the priesthood invested a lot of time and energy in record-keeping, their cultic activity was nonetheless almost entirely neglected by several generations of Roman authors. This brings us back to an earlier point: combining textual and material sources does not necessarily deliver one dominant image of a deity or a cult, nor one that answers to modern ideas of consistency.[108] This means that we cannot simply study the inscriptions as reflections of the 'reality' of the Latin cults in the Alban hills, or as a way to surpass the subjectivity of the literary material. Again, we have to acknowledge the inevitable plurality of the religious messages and be sure to evaluate the epigraphic testimonies within the context of the medium itself.

As said before, dedications, *leges sacrae*, funerary and honorary inscriptions can give us an unique insight into the 'ordinary' passage of the ritual year and reveal groups and activities that otherwise would have remained obscure.[109] However, in recent decades there has been a growing awareness that the epigraphic evidence passed down to us is far from a direct reflection of a society and its religious ideas. First of all, there are the conditions of conservation and preservation to consider. Only a small part of the actual number of inscriptions that once were erected has survived – possibly up to five per cent - and the uneven availability of the material is influenced by several factors.[110] In the west, for example, we have relatively few *leges sacrae* because they were often inscribed on bronze plates – a valuable material that seldom escaped recycling. Likewise, older inscriptions have often disappeared because stones were reused in later times. The smaller the stones were – and many of our dedications must have been carved on small marble plates – the more easily they were burned in a lime-kiln.[111] This coincidence in the loss or preservation of a document is worsened by the fact that very few inscriptions are found *in situ*, which makes it very hard to study texts in their archaeological context, as integral elements of the monuments they accompanied.[112] In the case of the sanctuaries of Diana Nemorensis, Juno Sospita and Jupiter Latiaris,

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[107] Feeney (1998) 17-18.
[108] See pages 14-16.
[109] An example, noted by Rives (2001) 133, shows that the religious order of the Augustales (or *severi Augustales*) appear in more than 2500 inscriptions and therefore seem a significant factor in many cities in the Roman west. However, if we had to rely on literature alone, we could have come to an opposite conclusion, because there are only two short references to the order in Petronius' *Satyricon* (30.2 and 71.12).
[110] Duncan-Jones (1982) 360-362 estimated five percent, but others have suggested that that number (based on a sample from Africa) may be too high and one or two percent would be a better approximation. The speculative nature of these numbers hardly needs to be stressed. See for further analysis and bibliographical references: Hemelrijk (2015) 33.
[111] Eck (2007) 56-60.
[112] Bodel (2001) 25.

which were first excavated in hasty and undocumented campaigns in the nineteenth century, the lack of archaeological context for our epigraphic evidence is especially problematic.

It is not only the factors of conservation that prevent us from regarding inscriptions as *prima facie* indications of a past reality. Scholars have become increasingly aware that the production of inscribed stones in the Roman world represented a very specific cultural practice, which some people might embrace and others ignore. In a ground-breaking article, Ramsay MacMullen defined this phenomenon as the 'epigraphic habit' and warned against history that was 'not written in the right way'.[113] What he meant was that in the study of ancient history, scholars have often used inscriptions to describe political, religious or even demographic changes without regard for the changes and cultural differentiations in the epigraphic practice *itself*. Most attention has since been given to the chronological dimension of this habit, and attempts have been made to explain the 'rise and fall' of Roman epigraphy.[114] Apart from chronological disparities, the spread of epigraphy as a medium also varies considerably per region and has often been linked with the process traditionally described as 'Romanization'.[115] Not surprisingly, our area of study, Latium, has delivered a relatively large number of inscriptions.[116]

For our purposes, and perhaps even more important than the discrepancies in region and time, are the ways in which the epigraphic material can be biased towards certain groups, cultural practices or ideological preconceptions. A well-known example is the composition of building inscriptions, which have been known to exaggerate the decay of a structure that was to be restored or even present entirely new temples as restorations. These texts reveal the prestige that derived from restoring something old and respectable rather than reflecting the architectural reality.[117] Similarly, scholars have warned against interpreting the frequent mention of dutifulness or piety in the superlative degree (*pientissimus*) on tombstones as a marker of the exceptional religious status of

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[113] MacMullen (1982) 245.
[114] Studies of the total number of preserved (datable) inscriptions per year, show a gradual increase in production from the time of the Republic, with a steep rise in the Severan period. The number of inscriptions decreases sharply in the third century. Mrozek (1973) 115, MacMullen (1982) 241-244, Woolf (1996) 23, Mouritsen (2005) 39.
[115] Most extensively by Meyer (1990) 74-96, who argued that the creation of an epitaph was first and foremost an expression of Roman citizenship. For the spread of epigraphy and Roman citizenship, see: Woolf (1996) 22-39, Bodel (2001) 6-7.
[116] Then again, the density of archaeological research in the region probably contributes considerably to this large number. Harris (1989) 265-268 has introduced the term 'epigraphic density' (the number of surviving inscriptions per 1,000 square kilometres) to evaluate regional variations in the distribution of inscriptions in the Latin west. Greg Woolf's map of these differences shows that central Italy was (with Africa Proconsularis) the region with highest amount of inscriptions (Woolf (1998) 82). See further: Bodel (2001) 35-37, Eck (2007) 50-51.
[117] Thomas and Witschel (1992) 135-177. On the reliability and formulaic nature of building inscriptions, cf: Fagan (1996) 81-93 and chapter III, pages 94ff.

an individual or a community.[118] More likely, what we see is a local custom to favour those qualities – in a family context – above others in epitaphs. In other words, the medium itself influences the message, distinguishing the epigraphic reality from the social or religious reality. Henrik Mouritsen has successfully shown that the epigraphic conventions within different groups can considerably distort our picture of Roman society, so much so that we should no longer speak of a single epigraphic practice but of multiple local and social habits.[119] He focuses on *liberti* (freedmen) and their motivations for commissioning monuments, demonstrating that this social group had particular reasons to emphasize its civic status and experiences in funerary inscriptions, while there is evidence that contemporary elites withdrew from the financing of such grand monuments. These differences in epigraphic habit should warn us not to use our corpus of votive, funerary and honorary inscriptions as a direct cross-section of the people involved in the Latin cults.

The particular orientation of the bias is often difficult to determine: how it precisely affects our analysis of the participants of the cults is different for every case study in this dissertation. In any case, quick conclusions based on epigraphic material, like Carin Greens assumption that the cult of Diana Nemorensis was a gathering place for relatively lowborn members of society, seems to overlook the particularities of epigraphy as a medium and is therefore too simplistic.[120] It is important to realize that the inscriptions do not directly reflect social or religious realities, but the attitudes of certain Roman groups or individuals towards those realities. Even when most epigraphic biases cannot be corrected, they can be recognized and can themselves become useful objects of study.[121]

1.9 The Latin sanctuaries and their archaeological remains

For the modern observer, the most visible and perhaps captivating traces of the Latin cults in the religious landscape are probably their archaeological remains. Juno Sospita and Diana Nemorensis had sanctuaries both in the city of Rome and in the surrounding region of Latium Vetus; Jupiter Latiaris' cult was particularly suggestive because of its prominent location on top of the Alban mount, in the centre of Latium Vetus. Although my research focuses more on the cult practice than on a typological analysis of the structures themselves, each of these sanctuaries will be discussed in the chapters to come. For this moment, a short exploration of some issues that may emerge when studying these temples as parts of religious experience is in place. Archaeological campaigns of

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[118] Curchin (1982) 179-182, Tod (1951) 182-190, as quoted in: Bodel (2001) 34.
[119] Mouritsen (2005) 38-63.
[120] Green (2007) 280-281. Cf. chapter II, pages 72-73.
[121] Bodel (2001) 46-47.

recent decades have added much to our knowledge of the religious landscape of ancient Latium, offering us a view on the Latin cults that supplements or corrects the often anachronistic and Romanocentric narratives of Livy and other authors.[122] The large sanctuaries of Latium Vetus have been especially well researched, while much is still unknown about the small and often complicated sites for the Latin gods in the city of Rome itself.[123] Although some temples in the region, like that of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste, have had a longer and more extensive history of research than the cult centres discussed in this thesis, all of our sites have been investigated since the late 19th century. A series of excavations since the 1970s have attracted new attention to the entire region and the discoveries had at least one important consequence: in archaeological and historical research, the temples were increasingly seen as one coherent group of structures, all built or restructured in a monumental way between (roughly) 175 and 50 BC. [124]

This 'canonization' of the Latial monumental sanctuary is first and foremost a result of the work of Filippo Coarelli, who in his 1987 study described the temples of Lanuvium, Gabii, Tibur, Praeneste, Aricia (Nemi), Fregellae and Terracina and emphasized the many connections between them.[125] Apart from the fact that the sanctuaries were built around the same time, they reveal similarities in topographical setting and architectural features as well. The imposing building structures were erected on highly visible locations, demonstrating an effort to reshape the landscape and create a scenery that underlined the grandiosity of the sanctuary itself. Coarelli and others have developed a more or less standardized typology, according to which a standard monumental sanctuary was built on one or more artificial terraces, had a centrally placed temple building, and with a pi-shaped portico surrounding the temple.[126] In addition, a theatrical *cavea* could be incorporated into the design, and the open court around the temple could be used as a sacred garden. The development of these sanctuaries was, according to Coarelli, the result of the building programs of a competitive local aristocracy, and was strengthened by the growing (economic) concentration on urban centres around Rome and the development of the road network.

At the same time however, it is important to remain critical towards the self-evidence with which the sanctuaries are grouped in modern literature and to critically reflect on the level of

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[122] Beard, North and Price (1998) 12.
[123] For a first introduction to the complexities around the sanctuaries in the city of Rome itself (and bibliographical references), see: Vendittelli (1995) 11-13, Coarelli (1995) 285-287, Coarelli (1996a) 15-17, Coarelli (1996b) 128-129.
[124] See, for example: Fancelli (1974), Giuliani (1970), Giuliani (2004), Almagro Gorbea (1983), Chiarucci (1983), Ghini (1993) 277-288, Ghini (1995) 143-154.
[125] Coarelli (1987). Coarelli builds upon some of his previous work, notably: Coarelli (1983a) 191-217, Coarelli (1983b) 217-240 and that of Colonna (1984) 396-411. The term canonization is adopted from Rous (2010) 12ff , who provides a more detailed overview of the history of research and offers further bibliography.
[126] Rous (2010) 5-6.

generalization that is implied by such a categorization. In his dissertation, Benjamin Rous has warned of the circular reasoning evident in some earlier publications: a monument is included in the 'standard' typology based on its chronology and certain architectural elements, it is then analysed and reconstructed with help of the characteristics of the 'standard Latial monumental sanctuary', and finally serves to further strengthen the idea of the typology itself.[127] If that is the case, the typology is no longer a descriptive tool but becomes a prescriptive and normative model as well. This might make us overlook the architectural singularities of the monuments but also – in our case perhaps more important – the specific local circumstances and cult practices that might have contributed to the construction and layout of the temples. Furthermore, as is most obvious from our last case study on Jupiter Latiaris, not every cult site was redesigned in a monumental way, or paid for by a local Latin community. The lack of large structural remains does not necessarily reflect a lack of religious significance, and some of the most meaningful activities in the sanctuaries – the rituals themselves, for example – left little trace in the archaeological landscape. We should therefore be careful not to assess the Roman perception and significance of a cult solely by the monumentality of its remains.

Besides (over)simplification, there are (related) methodological issues to consider, particularly concerning continuity and change in the sanctuaries. It has more than once been noticed – and will indeed be repeated a number of times in the chapters to come – that the cult sites of the Alban hills show a remarkable continuity, with cultic activity often going back to the archaic period or even to proto-urban times.[128] After the Roman takeover of the region and reconstructions in the second and first centuries BC they continued to flourish, going through the troublesome last decades of the Republic undisturbed and surviving well into the second and third centuries AD. This archaeological continuity provides a significant and valuable contrast to the religious 'neglect', 'impiety' and 'decadence' that the literary sources declaim, especially in the turbulent last decades of the Republic.[129] Despite the fact that the temples are located within a range of no more than forty kilometres from Rome, there is no indication of a changing attitude towards the cults, let alone of

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[127] Rous (2010) 14-18.

[128] For the continuity of proto-urban Latin religion into later archaic and early Republican cult practices, see especially the works of Alessandro Guidi – for example Guidi (2000) 85-94, Guidi, Pascucci and Zarattini (2002) 5-21, Guidi (2009) 143-151 – which connect the phenomenon with the urbanization and state formation in the region. For a more critical approach of the continuity of ritual practice and its relation to state religion, see: Smith (1996b) 73-89. The continuity of the Latin past throughout Roman history is most clearly put forward by Alföldi (1963), who however mainly studies the continuities in Latin cults to demonstrate his idea of the relatively late arrival of Rome on the Latin stage.

[129] See for example Cicero's and Livy's remarks on the subject: Liv. *Praef.* 9; Cic. *Rep.* 5.2 (See notes 70 and 75). Cf: Beard and Crawford (1999) 84-93.

the abandonment of or damage to one of them. 'Religious decline', so it seems, is very much a case of perception.[130]

This conclusion, however, can also be reversed. While the archaeological record shows a great deal of continuity, we cannot be sure of how the cult practice in these sanctuaries was perceived by the people that participated in it. While the temple stayed where it was and as it was, the disappearance of a particular priesthood or ritual might well be interpreted as a serious case of religious neglect by some observers (ancient and modern), while for others the same disappearance was a sign of the strength of the cult, which - like all living religion does - discarded some of the old traditions to adapt to new circumstances. The problem we face here, is that there may be a large gap between the fabric of religious buildings in Latium Vetus and the religious attitudes and devotions of the people that used them.[131] The maintenance of temples is not always connected with the maintenance of cult practice and the monumental remains of the temples only rarely reveal signs of what actually happened in there.[132]

There is one ritual act however that was widespread and is very recognizable in the archaeological record: the offering of votive objects. In the area of the Alban hills, large quantities of votive material have been discovered, both in the neighbourhoods of our sanctuaries as well as (far) beyond, in religious sites that did not have any architectural design and were centred around natural elements in the landscape, like springs. These gifts represent a genuine ritual act and can be understood as direct communications with the divine world. Thanks to the typologies made by Annamaria Comella, Maria Fenelli, Jelle Bouma and other scholars, we are able to identify a basic chronology in the finds.[133] From the earliest identifiable period of votive religion (the nineth or perhaps eight century BC) to the archaic period (sixth century BC), (miniature) impasto pottery was the most common category of offerings, sometimes imported but mostly of local making. While pottery remains an important category in later votive assemblages, the range of objects becomes bigger in the sixth century BC, when we see bronze figurines of deities appearing. Later (from the fourth century onwards) there are figures of humans and animals as well. In the fifth century, there seems to be a sudden decline in votive practices, which is hard to explain but appears all over Latium Vetus.[134] After this drop however, in the fourth and third centuries BC, votive activity comes

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[130] A similar conclusion is reached by Christopher Smith, who emphasizes the importance of the archaeological material in studying the continuities of archaic Roman religion (Smith (2007) 34-36.
[131] Beard, North and Price (1998) 12-134. Cf: Bendlin (2000) 123-125.
[132] A modern parallel that comes to mind here is the 21st century transformation and re-use of Christian churches, which shows that the upkeep of religious structures does not necessarily imply the continuity of religious practice or 'faith'.
[133] Comella (1981) 717-803, Fenelli (1975) 206-252, Bouma (1996a), who discuss material from the fifth century onwards. For an overview of studies that discuss the earlier period: Potts (2015) 6-7 with notes.
[134] This absence of material (or of recognizable material) is discussed in chapter II, page 59 and note 238.

to a peak. Deposits from this period, apart from pottery, include the large quantities of terracotta votives that are typical for central Italian cult sites: whole and half heads, terracotta (along with bronze) statuettes of deities and worshippers and (as the most common category of finds) models of body parts such as limbs, heads, intestines and genital organs – the so-called anatomical votives.[135]

The votives are a valuable source of information, as they provide insight into the *longue durée* of our cult sites and are an important testimony of religious continuity. At the same time, they present a number of interpretative issues. Firstly, because of the highly standardized production of terracottas (which were mainly made with moulds) they are extremely difficult to date. A general chronology from the fourth to the first century BC has been established for the category of anatomical votives, but a more exact dating is often based on highly unstable stylistic characteristics.[136] An examination of the precise archaeological context of the deposit does not help much, because the votives were often collected in large quantities and were ritually buried long after they were offered (after they were probably kept in storage for a long time).[137] Consequently, the votive offerings are hard to align with general historical developments of the time. More specifically, it often turns out to be impossible to tell if a votive was made before or after the Roman conquest of the area. Attempts to connect the terracotta votive religion to the process of Romanization have thus been convincingly refuted over the last years.[138] Similarly, the end of these votive practices in the late Republic is hard to explain; the possible connections with the monumentalization of religious architecture in this period or the struggles of the civil wars have sparked an extensive debate that cannot be fully discussed here.[139] It is important to stress, however, that our sites do show some continuity of votive offerings into the imperial age and that we may not recognize other votive material, such as coins that were not documented and categorized as religious material (or were melted instead of buried).[140]

A final possible risk in interpreting this material lies in the fact that there is no obvious connection between the types of votives found in a sanctuary and the deity worshipped there.

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[135] Comprehensible introductions to votive religion in general – with relating debates on Romanization and medical knowledge – can be found in: Schultz (2006a) 95-120, Glinister (2006) 10-33, Rous (2010) 28-37.
[136] Glinister (2006) 20.
[137] Glinister (2006) 20, footnote 43 provides examples of votives deposits that were closed several centuries after the dating of the terracotta votives, such as a deposit in Vulci where anatomical votives from the second and third centuries AD were found together with a Domitianic coin and oil lamps.
[138] Torelli (1999) 41-42 in particular argued that the rise of the anatomical votive culture was a sign of Roman superiority, and Pensabene (1979) 218, De Cazanove (2000) 74-75 and others express similar arguments. See for a critique of this line of though (and further references): Glinister (2006) 23-27, Schultz (2006a) 98-100, Rous (2010) 33-34.
[139] See for a thorough analysis of the religious changes in votive practices of the late Republican era (and the possible interpretation problems with votive material): Rous (2010) 32-57. Cf.: Glinister (2006) 30-33.
[140] For the melting of coins into a statue, CIL XIV 2088 and pages 116-117, where a statue for Juno Sospita was allegedly made *ex donis aureis et arg(entariis).*

Almost all deities could be recipients of votive offerings, and it is often unclear if the religious communication was addressed to the main deity of a sanctuary, to a 'minor' deity residing there or to the divine world in general. A votive offering thus reveals more about its donor (and her or his affliction) than about its recipient, as votive practices were far from limited to gods with healing powers.[141] Thus, as we will see further ahead in this thesis, attempts to ascribe a deity with qualities of healing or fertility on the base of the votives found in and around the sanctuary, fail to address the phenomenon of Latial votive practice as a whole. What we observe in the archaeological record is, in brief, an index of continuity of expenditure on religious display, not necessarily an index of continuity of attitudes, feelings or experiences. We can never know what a Roman citizen with Latin roots meant, when he decided to use his wealth to build or reconstruct a temple to a particular god of his hometown; still less can be said about the intentions, expectations and perceptions of the visitor who came to worship at the temple, made a small offer or simply walked past. Besides, whereas we know that the deities worshipped at lake Nemi, in Lanuvium and on the Alban mount were recognized in Roman times as Latin forms of Diana, Juno and Jupiter, it is difficult to trace this identification further back in time. As the following chapters will show, while we can definitely trace the Latin (pre-Roman) history of the cults in the early archaeological remains, we are forced to describe, label and classify the cult practices through the eyes of the Roman sources that later wrote about it.[142]

1.10 Preceding the argument: what is a Latin cult?

After an overview of the different types of sources used in this thesis and the problems they present, it may be useful to reflect briefly on one last definition before turning to the analysis of the different case studies. I realise I have used the terms Latin, Latial and Latium rather indistinctively so far, and a more precise designation is in place. What do I mean with Latin cult? How does an offering to a Latin god contribute to one's Latin identity and what is a Latin identy?

First and foremost, Latin refers to a geographical concept: the region of Latium, on the Italian peninsula. A Latin cult is a Latin cult not because of the language used or because of its juridical status, but because of its location within Latium. While this may seem a banal statement, we must emphasize that at no point during Roman antiquity, was the region as sharply defined as it is today. A general idea of the area may be reconstructed, in which the oldest part of Latium (Latium Vetus) constituted the area between the Tiber river in the North, the Appenine mountains in the

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[141] Schultz (2006a) 19ff and especially Glinister (2006) 16-32, who argues that while the votives reflect health related concerns, they do not testify to a massive 'obsession' with healing in central Italy, as the terracottas (being the main medium for addressing the divine) may also reflect a much wider range of religious feelings and expectations.

[142] Cf., for an earlier version of this argument: Hermans (2012) 327-336.

east and monte Circeo in the South (see the map in figure 1.1).[143] Our landscape of study, the Alban hills, lay at the heart of Latium Vetus. Later, the region was extended and Latium Adiectum came to include the Pontine plain south of Rome, as far as Terracina, as well as larger territories in the north. Although Augustus' regional division of Italy probably made the boundaries a little more clear, no strict definitions of this area appear before Pliny and even his outline is far from precise (nor undisputed). If we want to analyse Latium, we should thus not so much study the geographical boundaries of the area, but the people living within that area, the Latini.

As the following chapters will show however, the identity of these Latins and their relationships with Rome were far from agreed upon in the literary sources. Did Latins perceive themselves as being part of one group before the Roman dominance of the area? And were Romans part of that group as well? As we will see, 'Latinity' – *Latinitas* – was a subject of research and reflection, not only for modern academics but also for Roman authors. In search of the ethnogenesis of early Latins, material sources from the Bronze Age onwards have been applied as well, and similarities in the archaeological record have led to the establishment of a periodization of Latial culture.[144] However, there is an extensive and ongoing debate on using archaeological remains for studying ethnicity, and several archaeologists have warned that ethnic labels may create a false categorization of material categories that in reality are often blurred and overlapping, especially when these labels derive from later literary sources.[145]

For our purposes however, the danger of 'falsely' labeling a cult or a ritual practice Latin is not so acute, because it is not the early Latins that will be the main focus of this study, but the later perceptions of (and indeed labeling of) these Latins. In other words, I do not wish to penetrate through all the interpretation layers in the Roman sources, but rather want to identify and study the layers of interpretation themselves. As specified before, the Latin character of the cults under investigation, in my view does not lie in their pre-Roman, archaic or even pre-urban history, but is constantly being remembered, reinterpreted and even reinvented. This makes the memories surrounding the Latin past plural rather than singular, and fluid and dynamic rather than rigid and static. What was Latin and what not, was contstantly being negiotated, and it is this negotiation (and not its outcome) that is at the heart of this thesis.

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[143] For an attempt at identifying the geographic boundaries of Latium, see: Solin (1996) 1-22. All figures referred to in this thesis are provided at the end of this book, from pages 241 onwards.

[144] This was first attempted in the works of Gierow (1964), Gierow (1966), following in the footsteps of Gjerstad (1953-1973)who had developed a chronology for archaic Rome. The chronology was later adapted and corrected, in Bietti Sestieri and Bergonzi (1980) 47-78, Bietti Sestieri (1980) 79-96, after which the report of the excavations of Osteria dell'Osa (Sestieri (1992)) and a study of the cemeteries of Rome (Bettelli (1994) 1-66). became reference works for dating material culture in Latium. See for a recent overview of these discussions of relative and absolute chronologies: Fulminante (2014) 261-265.

[145] See especially Bradley (2000) 109-130. For a useful analysis of the debate, see: Fulminante (2012) 89-107.