Latin cults through Roman eyes
*Myth, memory and cult practice in the Alban hills*
Hermans, A.M.

[Link to publication](#)

*Creative Commons License (see [https://creativecommons.org/use-remix/cc-licenses](https://creativecommons.org/use-remix/cc-licenses)):
Other

*Citation for published version (APA):*

**General rights**
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

**Disclaimer/Complaints regulations**
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: [https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact](https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact), or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
CHAPTER III: Juno Sospita: guardian of Lanuvium and Rome*

When the ancient traveler took the Via Appia southwards from Rome, wandering through Latium Vetus and the beautiful surroundings of the Alban Hills, he would - having passed the town of Aricia and the road turning left to the sanctuary of Diana – soon get a view of Lanuvium. According to Strabo, this was a 'city of the Romans', from which both Antium and the sea could be seen.334 Appian locates it at a distance of 150 stades – about 27 kilometres – from Rome.335 The modern town of Lanuvio is still located here, although in academic literature there has been a considerable degree of confusion with Lavinium, the legendary site founded by Aeneas.336 In fact, the village was called civita Lavinia until 1914, when it was recognized that the ancient Lavinium was located some 25 kilometres west towards the sea, under the medieval hamlet Pratica di Mare.337

Ancient Lanuvium was, as the modern city today, dominated by its highest hill, which was the oldest nucleus of the settlement and was probably inhabited from the ninth century BC onwards. The town is listed as a Latin town by Cato the Elder and eventually, as Cicero claims, it became famous for the numerous sacrifices and shrines that had a place within its walls.338 From the seventh century BC onwards, this religious activity revolved around the acropolis.339 Eventually, the largest and most renowned cult was that of Juno Sospita, and it was her sanctuary that covered most of the acropolis and dominated the landscape, especially after its monumentalization in the middle of the second century BC. Juno Sospita was the main reason for the fame of the little town and although she had temples in Rome as well, she remained intrinsically connected to Lanuvium. Ovid has the goddess talking about the town as 'my own' and Silius Italicus labels it *Iunonia sedes.*340

Ancient historiographers deliberated on the antiquity of Juno Sospita and modern interpreters have often connected this literary discourse with the pre-Roman remains found on the

---

334 Strab. 5.3. 12: ὑπὲρκειται δ’ αὐτῆς τὸ μὲν Λανούιον, πόλις Ῥωμαίων, ἐν δὲξιὰ τῆς Ἀππίας ὁδοῦ, ἄφ’ ἂς ἔκοπτος ἢ τε θάλαττά ἐστι καὶ τὸ Ἀντιον.
335 App. BC 2.3.20.
336 Chiarucci (1983) 19-23, Gordon (1938) 21 and the bibliography in the notes. Apparently, the names of both villages were so similar that they were confused already in antiquity, as is for example visible in a passage of Claudius Aelianus (*De Nat. An.* 11.16), who, curiously enough, lived in nearby Praeneste. See pages 89-90.
337 On Lavinium, its mythology, history and the archaeological remains there is an extensive bibliography. See for an introduction to the site: Castagnoli (1972), Beard, North and Price (1998) 12-14, Panella and Avilia (2005) 33-37.
338 Cat. Or. Fr. 58 (Peter) = 28 (Cassignet). For a discussion of this fragment and the list of Latin towns, see chapter II, pages 50ff. Cicero remarks on the density of the religious landscape in Lanuvium when he discusses Lucius Thorius Balbus, who came from there. (Cic. *Fin.* 2.63.3-4). For Balbus, see page 117ff.
Colle San Lorenzo that supposedly preserve earlier stages of her cult. Thus, they assume that there was a continuous worship of Juno Sospita on this spot from the sixth century BC onwards until – at least – the third century AD. This chapter does not take this continuity for granted and explores the goddess and her cult practice from a different perspective. Much like the previous chapter on Diana Nemorensis, the discussion will center not so much on the possible archaic history of the cult – which, as we shall see, is again hard to reconstruct – but on the way this history was perceived and remembered by the later Romans and Lanuvians who encountered Juno Sospita. In my analysis I wish to examine the position of Juno Sospita in the Roman pantheon and study the relationship between the goddess and her worshippers, both Roman and Lanuvian. Did the focus of the cult shift after the goddess received a temple in Rome, in the second century BC or long before? Did the pre-Roman, Latin roots of the cult play a part in the later ritual proceedings, during the Republic and early Empire? And, if so, in what form was this history evoked? What does the case of Juno Sospita tell us about the role of the past in the religious self-perception in Roman society?

3.1 Juno Sospita as patrona of Lanuvium and Rome

In 340 BC, the expanding power of Rome provoked a final rebellion from its Latin neighbours, which had united their efforts against Rome many times before in various federations, as we have seen in the previous chapter. This time, the war lasted for about two years and ended dramatically for the Latin cities: they suffered an unprecedented defeat with many casualties and, by 338 BC, the Romans controlled the region more firmly than ever. After their defeat, the fate of the individual cities, which previously had been more or less independent allies of Rome, was completely in the hands of the Roman Senate. It was the victorious consul Camillus who ensured the senators that the gods had given them complete control over the situation, and that it was their job to do whatever was necessary to bind the Latins to perpetual peace, either by cruelty or clemency. Because the circumstances varied from city to city, the Senate devised a plan that accounted for these differences. As part of the rebellious Latin League, the small city of Lanuvium was subject to Rome’s decision, but it received a rather mild punishment: the inhabitants obtained the civitas cum suffragio and no land was taken from them for the establishment of a colony.

With this, the town was at the lucky end of the spectrum: after the Latin war only a few Latin towns received full Roman citizenship. The others were deprived of many of the rights they had as Latin allies: they were forbidden to vote, marry and trade amongst each other. Besides, large plots of land were confiscated for Roman colonists, harbours were closed and Velitrae, the town that

341 Liv. 8.13.13-16.
had disappointed the Romans the most, even had his walls demolished. The fact that Rome was merciful towards Lanuvium, was perhaps the result of earlier friendly relations between the two cities, as Livy describes the town elsewhere as a *fidelissima urbs*. There was, however, one important stipulation in the conditions of 338 BC, which is the only religious measure that Livy describes in the wake of the Latin war:

Lanuvium received the full citizenship and the restitution of her sacred things, with the proviso that the temple and grove of Juno Sospita should belong in common to the Roman people and the citizens living at Lanuvium.

As a relatively loyal city, Lanuvium retained part of the responsibility for the cult of Juno Sospita, but, from 330 BC onwards, it also had to endure the interference of the Roman conquerors in the management of the rites. This joint administration, in which local elites as well as Roman magistrates were involved, remained important throughout the history of the cult and we will return to the cultic organization later in this chapter.

For now, we will consider the literary traditions surrounding Juno Sospita, and analyse the character of the goddess as it was perceived by ancient and modern commentators. The narrative about her incorporation into the Roman state is an important aspect of that assessment, and Livy’s account of the Roman-Lanuvian relationship places it in a distinctively political context. By mentioning it as part of the negotiations after the Latin war, Livy suggests that the cult of Juno Sospita was a significant religious landmark with a long history of worship with which Rome sought to associate itself. From her temple on the acropolis, Juno could have acted as a *patrona* for the community of Lanuvium, a role which she continued to perform after her incorporation into the Roman state. It is important to acknowledge that this importance in Livy’s time may have been a contemporary rather than a historical reality, but the fact that the author interweaves the religious episode in an account that is otherwise political and military in nature, suggests that Juno Sospita was associated – at least partly – with a political and military context.

This role as a protectress of the city is supported by her warrior-like appearance – which will be discussed later in this chapter – and also by her epithet *Sospita*. This is the common form in

---

346 Liv. 8.14.2: *Lanuvinis civitas data sacraque sua reddita cum eo, ut aedes lucusque Sospitae Iunonis communis Lanuvinis municipibus cum populo Romano esset.*
347 See pages 126ff.
the literary sources, which present Juno as the ‘saviour’, or ‘the saving’. On material sources, such as several inscriptions and coins, the epithet appears in other spelling varieties as well: Sospes, Sispita, Sispes or even Seispes. The altering vowel seems to reflect an older form, as the grammarian Festus explains:

Juno Sispita, who is usually called Juno Sospita, was a form used by the ancients, and it appears to have been taken from a Greek word, which is σώζειν ['to save'].

Although the interpretation seems rather straightforward at first sight, the different epithets have presented modern commentators with a number of difficulties. Especially the relation between the variants Sospita and Sispita has provoked discussion. Early 20th century commentators rejected Festus’ explanation and have disconnected both forms, suggesting that Sispita and Sispes derived from sid(es) potis, referring to Juno’s role as power or influence over the moon and stars. This argument has however not found general acclaim and, in the absence of any other reference to Juno Sospita as a moon goddess, the etymological suggestion hardly seems convincing.

Problematic in this respect, is that the surviving literary sources do not comment on the exact nature and sphere of Juno Sospita’s influence, let alone her character and cult practice before Roman interference. Therefore, we have to rely on incidental accounts of what happened at the cult site in Lanuvium; events that happened long after the Romans conquered the region and that ended up in the historical record another several centuries later. Livy is, again, our most important source for the later history of the sanctuary and he mentions Juno Sospita and Lanuvium several times, in his recurrent rapport on the prodigia throughout the middle and late Republic. These extraordinary omens and portents were reported when the Roman state was in grave danger and were considered signs of divine wrath, demonstrating a disruption of the pax deorum after which placation of the gods (procuratio) was needed. The Senate decided what counted as a prodigium and the warnings could be very diverse in nature, ranging from unusual births of hermaphrodites and

---

351 See for the numismatic and epigraphic discussion, pages 117-122 and 126-139.
352 Festus, 262L: Sispiem Iunonem, quam vulgo sospiem appellant, antiqui usurpabant, cum ea vox ex Graeco videatur sumpta, quod est σωζειν.
353 There has been some debate on the implications of the use of the transitive and intransitive use of Sospes, which is also commented upon by Festus (preserved mostly in the summary of Paul the Deacon), according to whom the use dates back to the time of Ennius (Paul. Fest. 388L). For the linguistic implications of this usage see Radke (1965) 182-185, Harmon (1986) 1969.
354 The idea was proposed by Ehrlich (1907) 285 and has found some resonance in Pedersen (1922) 10ff and Gordon (1938) 36. For the etymological discussion, see Harmon (1986) 1967-1970, Schultz (2006b) 218 with note 41.
355 Liv. 21.62.4; 23.31.15; 24.10.6; 29.14.3; 31.12.6; 32.9.2; 35.9.4; 41.21.13; 42.2.4; 45.16.5; 45.19.2. Cf: Jul. Obs, Prod. Lib., 6, 9, 11, 12, 20, 46.
animals with too many limbs to voices appearing out of nowhere and frequent thunder and lightning strikes.  

After the recognition of a *prodigium*, the Senate also decided on the appropriate expiation ritual (*procuratio*) and the priesthods that had to perform it. Livy devotes much attention to the signs and expiatory rituals; they appear throughout his description of Republican history. In addition to that, there is the *Liber de Prodigiis* of the fourth century author Julius Obsequens, an epitome of Livy that preserves some records of the years for which Livy’s books have been lost. 

The portents often happened outside the city of Rome and the temple of Juno Sospita was the site of no less than fifteen of them. In fact, in no other site apart from the capital, did the gods express their concern for the Roman state as regularly as in Lanuvium. The signs are diverse and sometimes Juno’s involvement is very direct: in 215 BC her statue was dripping with blood and in 181 BC it even cried. Especially during the second Punic war, when every movement of Hannibal’s troops caused a new wave of panic, there were many reports throughout Italy. The temple of Juno Sospita faced rains of stones, nesting ravens and other trouble. Surprisingly, considering the number of *prodigia*, we know of only one ritual of *procuratio* from Lanuvium from this period: in 217 BC the *decemviri* – after a number of prodigies elsewhere – advised to honour Juno Sospita with larger offerings than usual.

The list of divine warnings and expiation rituals obviously shows elements of a literary *topos*, and when he arrives at the end of the third Punic War, Livy even belittles the trustworthiness of some *prodigia*, classifying them as *superstitio*:

This circumstance [the hope that the war with the Carthaginians would soon be over] had filled the minds of the people with superstitious notions, and they were strongly disposed to report and believe accounts of prodigies, and for that reason more were reported. It was said, “that two suns had been seen; that it had become light for a time during the night; that at Setia a meteor had been seen, extending from the east to the west; that at Tarracina a gate, at Anagnia a gate and the wall in many places, had been struck by
lightning; that in the temple of Juno Sospita, at Lanuvium, a noise had been heard, accompanied with a tremendous crash”.

Livy’s hesitation about their trustworthiness did not stop the author from reporting on Lanuvian prodigia that forecasted later threats from overseas. Sometimes the signs left little to the imagination, as is clear from an incident in 173 BC, when a worried Roman delegation reported war preparations on the Macedonian shore and, promptly, a large fleet was seen in the sky above Juno Sospita’s temple.

Even if literary commonplaces are plentiful and standardized patterns are clearly visible, the position of Lanuvium in this discourse of prodigia and procurationes is remarkable. Livy presents the site as a place where, during the third and second centuries BC, the concern of the gods for the affairs of the Roman state became more manifest than elsewhere. Whereas his narrative on the aftermath of the Latin wars emphasizes that the pre-roman cult was mostly a Lanuvian or Latin affair, this historical discourse emphasizes how the Roman cause had become the Lanuvian cause and vice-versa. In the light of new, overseas, enemies, the Latins and Romans had a joint war to win and Livy’s series of portents suggest that Juno Sospita’s role of protectress and guardian of the community now extended to the Roman people as well. By recognizing the prodigia and responding to them, the Senate secured the support of the goddess and at the same time underlined its own religious authority, which now extended to cults that were once distinctively non-Roman. As mentioned before, Livy’s account may be full of anachronisms, and the tight connections between Juno Sospita, Lanuvium and the Roman state may reflect the religious landscape of Augustan Rome rather than a historical reality from the third or second century BC. Still, the accounts show that Juno Sospita was perceived and remembered by later Romans as a goddess who had retained her political and military roles from pre-Roman times.

3.2 The goddess and the serpent
But was this the only manifestation of the goddess? Modern authors, most notably Georges Dumézil, have labeled Juno Sospita’s political aspect as secondary and have connected the goddess primarily

---


362 Liv. 42.2.4.

with the so-called feminine spheres of life, such as maternity, virginity and fertility. Part of this argumentation is based on the full name with which she appears on some of the inscriptions found at the sanctuary: *Iuno Sospes Mater Regina*, or, in the abridged form *ISMN*. We shall return to this epigraphic evidence later, but first, we must look into a literary source that has highly influenced the characterization of the cult in Lanuvium as a fertility cult. It is one of the *Elegiae* of Propertius, in which he describes the town as the scene of a peculiar fertility rite:

Lanuvium, from of old, is guarded by an ancient serpent: the hour you spend on such a marvellous visit won’t be wasted; where the sacred way drops down through a dark abyss, where the hungry snake’s tribute penetrates (virgin, be wary of all such paths!), when he demands the annual offering of food, and twines, hissing, from the centre of the earth. Girls grow pale, sent down to such rites as these, when their hand is rashly entrusted to the serpent’s mouth. He seizes the tit-bits the virgins offer: the basket itself trembles in their hands. If they’ve remained chaste they return to their parents’ arms, and the farmers shout: ‘It will be a fertile year.’ My Cynthia was carried there, by clipped horses. Juno was the pretext, but Venus was more likely the cause.

So, Propertius tells us that his Cynthia, on her way perhaps to an encounter with another lover, witnessed a rite that involved young girls entering the cave of a giant snake, to ensure – provided that the girls were virgins and their offerings were accepted – prosperous crops for the following year. The snake, described by author as *draco*, apparently noticed when the girls were impure as he seized the food from their hands, making it a terrifying experience for the girls. Although the account seems purely a literary frivolity at first sight, there are a number of reasons to devote some attention to this peculiar ritual. Firstly, the story is reproduced in the third century AD by Claudius Aelianus, who came from nearby Praeneste and presents a more detailed and curiously different version of the rite:

---


See the section on epigraphy, from page 126 onwards.

Prop. 4.8.3-16: *Lanuvium annosi uetus est tutela draconis, hic, ubi tam rarae non perit hora morae, qua sacer abripitur caeco descensus hiatu, qua penetrat (virgo, tale iter omne cavel) ieiuni serpentis honos, cum pabula poscit annua et ex ima sibila torquet humo. Talia demissae pallent ad sacra puellae, cum temere anguino creditur ore manus. Ille sibi admotas a virgine corripit escas: virginis in palmis ipsa canistra tremunt. Si fuerint castae, redeunt in colla parentum, clamantque agricolae 'fertilis annus erit.' Huc mea detonsis aucta est Cynthia mannis: causa fuit luno, sed mage causa Venus.*

Heyworth (2007) 245-247. That Cynthia was on her way to another lover, or that Ovid was afraid of that scenario, is implied by the reference to Venus. For Cynthia’s frequent escapes out of the city, see also chapter II, page 37.
It seems that one peculiarity of snakes is their faculty of divination. [...] Well, there is a sacred grove in Lavinium of wide area and thickly planted, and nearby is a shrine to Hera of Argolis. And in the grove there is a vast and deep cavern, and it is the lair of a Serpent. And on certain fixed days holy maidens enter the cave bearing a barley cake in their hands and with their eyes covered. And divine inspiration leads them straight the Serpent’s resting-place, and they move forward without stumbling and at a gentle pace just as if they saw with their eyes unveiled. And if they are virgins, the Serpent accepts the food as sacred and as fit for a creature beloved of god. Otherwise the food remains untasted, because the Serpent shames her virginity is punished in accordance with the law. This is the way in which I would demonstrate the faculty of divination in serpents.  

Remarkably, Aelianus mistakes Lanuvium for Lavinium and he labels the temple as that of Hera of Argolis. The association is interesting in itself, considering the fact that Hera at her famous cult centre in Argos was mainly worshipped as a patron deity of the polis, but was also – with the epithet Eileithyia - connected to motherhood and childbirth. Moreover, Aelianus’ version of the ritual provides us with details that lack in Propertius’ description: he describes that the girls were blindfolded, that they were guided by divine inspiration; the food is identified as barley cakes (μάζες) and if it was refused, it was cleaned away by ants. The impure girl was then punished by the awaiting community, instead of – as Propertius seems to imply – devoured by the snake.
In the anonymous and curious Greek work known as the *Parallela Minora*, the Lanuvian *drakōn* appears as well, with a priestess who was sent to it by the goddess Vesta.\(^{372}\) This, and especially Aelianus’ more elaborate version of the tale shows how intertwined the story of the snake rite at Lanuvium was with discourses on the tending of sacred *dracones* elsewhere in the Mediterranean.\(^{373}\) In the mythological sphere, there is of course the Colchian dragon, the giant serpent that guarded the golden fleece in the cave of Aris and was – in one version of the tale – put to sleep by Medea.\(^{374}\) The Hesperides, mythological nymphs that guarded Hera’s golden apples are known for taking care of the *drakōn* Ladon.\(^{375}\) Slightly more tangible are the *draco*-tending girls that are associated with cult practices around the Mediterranean. In the same section where Aelian informs us about the rite at ‘Lavinium’, he mentions an oracular shrine for Apollo in Epiros, with a grove full of snakes that descended directly from the Python at Delphi.\(^{376}\) Once a year, the snakes were fed by a virgin priestess: if they accepted the food, it would be a prosperous year; if they denied it, they prophesied the opposite.\(^{377}\)

Another parallel is presented by Pausanias, who explains the origin story of a sanctuary on mount Cronius, in the polis Elis near Olympia.\(^{378}\) It was devoted to a serpent-god with the suggestive name Sosipolis – ‘saviour of the state’. As Pausanias explains, the cult was instituted after an important victory of the Eleans over the Arcadians. Just before the battle, a woman appeared with a baby boy suckling at her breast. At the sight of the approaching enemy, the boy turned into a giant *drakōn* and threw the frightened Arcadians into disarray. Afterwards, the *drakōn* named Sosipolis disappeared into the ground and on that spot he was worshipped by the Eleans, along with the woman suckling him, who was recognized as the goddess Eileithya.\(^{379}\) Again, the description of the rites for the serpent has familiar characteristics. An old woman who looked after the serpent Sosipolis was supposed to live in chastity, and could only approach the deity carrying a white veil

\(^{372}\) The work was once attributed to Plutarch, but on the basis of stylistic arguments this is now refuted, although it is thought to be composed sometime around Plutarch’s era. Cf: Pailler (1997) 517-520.

\(^{373}\) Cf. Hermans (2016) 204-213.

\(^{374}\) The main sources for the story are Euripides’ *Medea* (lines 480-482), Pindar’s *Phthian* (2.424-50), Apollonius of Rhodes’ *Argonautica* (4.123-66), Diodorus Siculus (4.48), Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (7.149-158), Valerius Flaccus’ *Argonautica* (8.54-121), Martial (12.53) and shorter references in other texts. The earliest evidence of the Colchian dragon is of material nature: it appears on the so-called Douris cup, a red-figure kylix, datable to 480-470 BC. See further, also for bibliographical references: Ogden (2013) 58-63, 202.

\(^{375}\) They appear, for example, in Hesiod’s *Theogony* (33-336), Sophocles’ *Trachiniae* (1089-1100), Vergil’s *Aeneid* (480-486) and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (4.643-8). For further ancient sources and modern literature, see McPhee (1990) 394-406, Ogden (2013) 33-40.

\(^{376}\) Claud. Ael. De Nat. An. 11.2.

\(^{377}\) Cf. Luc. Astr. 23.

\(^{378}\) Paus. 6.20.2-6. See for a discussion of this cult: Sinn (2004) 84-86, Mitropoulou (1977) 62-63. It has been suggested that the cult was related to that of Zeus Sosipolis but apart from the name and the connection with the name of the mountain (Cronius), the evidence for this is lacking. See Ogden (2013) 204, note 63.

\(^{379}\) The site is thought to have been identified and a small temple (of less than 10 square meters) was found. Sinn (2004) 84-85 and figure 67.
over her head and face. She brought water for his baths and fed him with barley cakes kneaded with honey.\textsuperscript{380} Several elements in this literary discourse provide a context for Lanuvium’s story: the\textit{lucus} or cave where the\textit{drakōn} was hidden, the blinded (virgin or chaste) women that were supposed to look after it, and the ritual food offerings, sometimes specified as μᾶζες (barley cakes).

We encounter Lanuvium’s serpent rite a final time in the work of Quodvultdeus, a bishop from fifth century Carthage. He presents a bizarre version of the story, in which a monk investigates the curious ritual, descends into the cave and finds out that the snake is in fact a mechanical device, with gemstone eyes and a sword as its tongue, which is triggered by stepping on one of the stairs. By destroying the mechanism, the monk saves the girls and proves the fictitious nature of the pagan gods.\textsuperscript{381} Once more, the line of events fits the description of other snake-slayers in the hagiographic tradition, often clerics who went out to expose pagan rites as works of the devil.\textsuperscript{382} The legendary\textit{vita} of Saint Silvester from the fifth and sixth century AD, for example, present a story that shows a clear analogy to the events in Lanuvium.\textsuperscript{383} Silvester was one of the first popes of Rome, supposedly serving during the time of Constantine the Great and even baptizing the emperor. According to one version of his biography, he was responsible for stopping a\textit{draco} that lived in the Tarpeian hill beneath the Capitol.\textsuperscript{384} The Vestal virgins had been feeding the beast with barley cakes on every kalend, descending a long cave of 365 steps. But suddenly, the\textit{draco} unexpectedly and repeatedly came up from his hole, spreading pestilence and death with its foul breath. Silvester, after due prayers and fasting, descended the cave with his disciples and managed to lock the cave with a bronze door and bury the keys.\textsuperscript{385} In this way, they released the city from one of its false idols as well.

It is of course very difficult to say anything about the historicity of the narratives and it seems clear that by the time Quodvultdeus wrote his account, he was influenced much more – if not: exclusively – by the ancient authors before him and by the circulating tales of saintly\textit{draco}-defeaters than by anything he himself had witnessed or heard in Lanuvium. Several elements in the stories are clearly recognisable as literary\textit{topoi}, and the discourse seems hard to relate to the actual

\textsuperscript{380} Paus. 6.20.2.
\textsuperscript{381} Quodvult. \textit{Lib. Prom.} 3.43. The work was long thought to be written by Prosper of Aquitaine. Translation and commentary in: Braun (1964) 572-573, note 1., Hermans (2016) 210-211.
\textsuperscript{383} There are, broadly speaking, two versions of the tales of Saint Silvester. The first, known as the\textit{Actus Silvestri}, was composed at some point in the late fourth century AD, while the second, known as the\textit{Vita Silvestri}, was composed at the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries. See Pohlkamp (1983) 5-44, Pailler (1997) 559-568, Canella (2006) 184-188, Ogden (2013) 391-393 for the tale of the\textit{draco} in these versions.
\textsuperscript{384} This is the more recent version of the story, which is from the fifth/sixth century.
\textsuperscript{385} Cf. also Tertullian, \textit{Ad ux.} 1.6.3, where he identifies a dragon to which virgin women tended as a work of Satan. The same motive appears in Paul. \textit{Nol. Carm.} 5.143-8, where the tale of the\textit{draco} in the capitol is explained as being either a fantasy or a former work of the devil. Cf: Pohlkamp (1983) 14-15, where the texts are reproduced as well.
cult practice of Juno Sospita and the site of the sanctuary. Still, the connection between Juno Sospita and the agricultural rite did not begin with Propertius and is not solely restricted to the literary sources. As we will see further ahead, the goddess appears with a snake on several Republican denarii and the discovery of a long, man-made corridor under the Colle San Lorenzo, in the vicinity of Juno’s temple, has caused many archaeologists and historians to connect it to the goddess and ritual as well. At the same time, none of the ancient authors mention Juno Sospita as actually being involved in the proceedings or receiving offerings herself. Moreover, as Celia Schultz has pointed out, even if the story of the ritual does confirm the goddess’ interest in agricultural fertility, this does not necessarily imply her influence over female fertility or childbirth as well. The fact that Propertius and his successors mention female worshippers in this particular rite has perhaps tempted modern interpreters to regard Juno Sospita solely as a women’s goddess, who consequently had to have a female sphere of influence. As we have also seen in the previous analysis of Diana Nemorensis, the conclusions are based on preconceptions about the gender specificity of Roman cults rather than on the sources themselves – a line of reasoning that will be challenged again further on in this chapter.

At this point, it is important to note that the village Lanuvium was not only known for its cult of Juno Sospita, but also for the agricultural rite that involved young girls and a snake. Already in antiquity, both discourses were connected and although it remains unclear what the exact relation was between the literary sources and the possible cult practice on the sanctuary grounds, the story of the ritual adds another perspective to our understanding of the character of Juno Sospita. Apart from her rather obvious competence in military and political matters, she may have had an influence over agricultural matters as well. At least for some worshippers visiting the sanctuary, the snake and the girls formed part of their knowledge of Juno’s cult site and – as we will see further ahead – recent discoveries near the sanctuary seem to provide clues on how the narratives about the snake and the girls became part of the religious landscape of Lanuvium.

3.3 Cult place(s) in Rome
The esteemed sanctuary of Juno Sospita in Lanuvium was less than 20 miles away from Rome, and as we have seen, the Romans were involved in the cult practice and organization from the moment they conquered the region. Nonetheless, Juno Sospita received a cult in the city of Rome as well. We find proof of her presence in literary and material sources, but there is debate about the moment

---

386 See pages 109-110 and 120-121.
387 Schultz (2006b) 219-220.
389 See pages 109ff of this chapter.
the goddess was given a place in Rome, as well as about the location of her temple. As with many of the traditions we have discussed so far, problems arise when we try to compile the various sources and reconstruct one central narrative from the diverse literary, epigraphic and archaeological sources. The historiographical record is, unsurprisingly, presented by Livy, who relates how, in 197 BC, consul Gaius Cornelius Cethegus vowed a temple:

The consul at the beginning of the battle vowed a temple to Juno Sospita if the enemy [the Insubrians] should be routed and put to flight that day; the soldiers shouted out that they would bring about the fulfilment of the consul's vow and the attack on the enemy began.\(^{390}\)

Of course, the battle was won and four years later, in 193 BC, Cethegus' temple was inaugurated. Livy presents the details of this event, but this time, a peculiar change of names occurs:

A number of temples were dedicated this year. One was the temple of Juno Matuta in the Forum Holitorium. This had been vowed four years earlier by C. Cornelius, consul during the the Gallic war, and he dedicated it when he was censor.\(^{391}\)

Because, apart from this passage in Livy, there is no evidence for a cult of a Juno with the epithet Matuta, it is likely that the author is mistaken and confuses the temple of Juno Sospita with that of Mater Matuta, which was nearby.\(^{392}\) Consequently, the temple of Juno Sospita was almost certainly located on the Forum Holitorium, where it was squeezed in between the temples of Janus and Spes, which were both older.\(^{393}\) Although Juno Sospita's temple was the biggest, the temples were built so close together that their facades resembled a *porticus*; in the Middle Republic this was an architectural novelty, which emphasized the stylistic unity of the design as well as the individual position of each temple.\(^{394}\) Remains of the temple have been identified under the church of San

---

\(^{390}\) Liv. 32.30.10: *Consul principio pugnae vovit aedem Sospitae Iunoni, si eo die hostes fusi fugatique fuissent; a militibus clamor sublatus compotem voti consulem se facturos, et impetus in hostes est factus.*

\(^{391}\) Liv. 34.53.3: *Aedes eo anno aliquot dedicatae sunt: una lnonis Matutae in foro olitorio, vota locataque quadriennio ante a C. Cornelio consule Gallico bello; censor idem dedicavit.* The translation is my own.


\(^{393}\) Janus' temple on the Forum Holitorium (not to be confused with that on the Forum Romanum) was, according to Tacitus (*Ann.* 2.48), built by C. Dupilius, after a victory in the battle of Mylae in 260 BC. According to Cicero (*Leg.* 2.28) and Tacitus (*Ann.* 2.49). The temple of Spes was vowed by A. Atilius Calatinus in the first Punic War. Although the exact year is unknown, this must have been around 250 BC.

Nicola in Carcere and on the Forma Urbis.\textsuperscript{395} The temples were repeatedly restored and most of the visible remains date from the first century AD.\textsuperscript{396}

So far, the arrival of the Lanuvian goddess in Rome can be reconstructed quite unambiguously, but some confusion arises when we examine Juno Sospita’s position in the Roman calendar. Ovid mentions a holiday for the goddess on the first of February:

> At the beginning of the month Saviour (Sospita) Juno, the neighbour of the Phrygian Mother Goddess is said to have been honoured with new shrines. If you ask, where are now the temples which on those Kalends were dedicated to the goddess? Tumbled down they are with the long lapse of time.\textsuperscript{397}

There is an entry in the \textit{Fasti Antiates Maiores} on the same date, reconstructed – not entirely without debate – as \textit{Iunon(i) S[osp(itae)] Matr(i) Re[g(inae)]}\.\textsuperscript{398} This corresponds with several other Juno cults that were celebrated on the \textit{calendae} (first day) of a month.\textsuperscript{399} The connection of the \textit{Fasti} fragment with the other sources, however, causes problems: Ovid claims that Juno Sospita’s was ‘the neighbour of the Phrygian Mother Goddess’, that is, Magna Mater, but that temple was on the Palatine, not on the Forum Holitorium. Besides, it seems highly unlikely that Juno’s temple had ‘tumbled down’ by Ovid’s time, since the archaeological evidence show restorations up until the first century AD, and the temple appears on the third century AD Forma Urbis Roma.

Was Ovid mistaking Magna Mater for Mater Matuta, who did have a temple on the Forum Holitorium, as is often assumed?\textsuperscript{400} Then why does he claim that the temple, or temples, had disappeared by his time? Filippo Coarelli proposed a solution for the inconsistency: according to him, Rome had an archaic or early Republican temple for Juno Sospita on the Palatine, which had fallen down and was almost forgotten by the time Cornelius Cethegus inaugurated his temple on the Forum Holitorium. His hypothesis is based on a very complex analysis of calendar dates, which is as attractive as it is problematic.\textsuperscript{401} According to Coarelli, the \textit{dies natalis} of Juno Sospita’s temple on the Forum Holitorium was not February first, but July first. On the \textit{Fasti Antiates Maioris}, July first has the

\textsuperscript{395} On fragment 31h of plate 12. Caretoni, Colini, Cozza and Gatti (1960) 91-93, Rodríguez Almeida (1981) 114, Fig. 23. For a detailed illustration, see: Najbjerg (2008) catalogue number 31h.
\textsuperscript{396} Coarelli (1996b) 128-129.
\textsuperscript{397} Ov. \textit{Fast.} 2.55-59: \textit{Principio mensis Phrygiae contermina Matri/Sospita delubris dicitur aucta novis.} / \textit{nunc ubi sunt, illis quae sunt sacrata Kalendis / templae deae? longa procubuere die.}
\textsuperscript{399} CIL I.2.248-9, Degrassi, \textit{In.It.} XIII.1, tab. I-III.
\textsuperscript{401} Coarelli (1996b) 128-129.
On the Fasti Vallenses, the same date has the entry [...rcell(i), to be completed as [ad theatrum Marcell(i). Consequently, if the calendae of July were the dies natalis of Juno Sospita’s temple on the Forum Holitorium, the other dies natalis – February 1st, on the Fasti Antiates Maiores mentioned above – had to refer to another, older cult place of the goddess. In agreement with the fragment of Ovid’s Fasti, Coarelli suggests the Palatine as a plausible location.

The tenuous nature of Coarelli’s reconstruction needs little explanation, but some additional evidence may support his theory. Two fragments of terracotta antefixes, dated to the early fifth century BC and identified as Juno Sospita, were found at the southwestern end of the Palatine, near the temples of Magna Mater and Victoria. They were found during an excavation in which the remains of a small structure from the archaic period also came to light. Coarelli, and scholars before him, thought it likely that the building – of which the remains of a colonnade may indicate that it was used as a temple – was the earliest shrine for Juno Sospita in Rome. Further archaeological research may perhaps provide more clarity but for now the argument is hardly conclusive. The iconographic identification of the antefixes as Juno Sospita is controversial as well, a difficulty to which we shall return later.

Nonetheless, we can conclude that Juno Sospita was firmly based in Rome, at least from 193 BC and possibly even from the sixth or fifth century BC. What did this mean for the cult practice in Lanuvium? Did the cults compete with each other or did they perhaps reinforce each other?

Since there is no source directly connecting Juno Sospita’s cult in Rome with that in Lanuvium, these questions can only – if, at all – be answered indirectly. In one instance, the problem is of particular relevance, and for that we need to return to the prodigia discussed earlier in this chapter. In 90 BC, an ominous sign of particular nature was reported. Livy’s account of that year has not been preserved, but Obsequens, in his collection of omens and signs, gives a vivid description of the episode:

---

402 CIL I.2 248-249; Degrassi, In. It. XIII.1.
403 CIL I.2 320; Degrassi, In. lt. XIII.18.
404 Fasti Allifani: CIL I.2 0217; Degrassi, In. lt. XIII.24.
405 See note 398.
408 For the discussion of these antefixes and the problems with identifying them, see the section on iconography, pages 114-116.
Caecilia Metella related that she had dreamed that Juno Sospita was fleeing away because her precincts were being desecrated with filth, and that Metella had by her prayers with difficulty called her back. Metella cleaned out the temple, which was befouled by ladies' attention to dirty and vile physical needs, and in which under the very image of the goddess, a bitch had her lair and her litter; ceremonies of prayer were held, and restored the temple to its original lustre.\footnote{Obs. 55: Metella Caecilia somnio Iunonem Sospitam profugientem, quod immunde sua templum foedarentur, cum suis precibus aegre revocatam diceret, aedem matronarum sordidis obscenisque corporis coinquinatum ministriis, in qua etiam sub simulacro deae cubile canis cum fetu erat, commundatam supplicationibus habitis pristino splendore restituit. Loeb translation with adaptations.}

Cicero comments upon the *prodigium* in *De Divinatione*, and because that work is nearly contemporary, the description is especially noteworthy:

Nor, indeed, were the more significant dreams, if they seemed to concern the administration of public affairs, disregarded by our Supreme Council. Even within my own memory, Lucius Julius, who was consul with Publius Rutilius, by a vote of the Senate rebuilt the temple of Juno Sospita in accordance with a dream of Caecilia, daughter of Balearicus.\footnote{Cic. De Div. 1.4: Nec vero somnia graviora, si quae ad rem publicam pertinere visa sunt, a summo consilio neglecta sunt. Quin etiam memoria nostra templum Iunonis Sospitae L. Iulius, qui cum P. Rutilio consul fuit, de senatus sententia refecti ex Caeciliae, Balearici filiae, somnio. Balearicus was the agnomen of Quintus Caecilius Metellus, which he deserved by defeating the pirates of the Balearic Islands in 47 BC (Liv. Per. 60; Flor. 1.43; Oros. 5.13.1; Strab. 3.5.1).}

This was not a routine divine warning, visible to all, but the dream of an individual: one from an influential family, but still a private person. Cicero acknowledges the possible unreliability of such a *prodigium* and returns to the incident later on in his work, within the context of his narrative on prodigies in general:

In recent times, during the Marsian war, the temple of Juno Sospita was restored by the Senate because of a dream of Caecilia, the daughter of Quintus Caecilius Metellus [Balearicus]. This is the same dream that Sisenna discussed as marvelous, in that its prophecies were fulfilled to the letter, and yet later – influenced no doubt by some petty
Epicurean – he goes on inconsistently to maintain that dreams are not worthy of belief.411

In contrast to Obsequens (and thus probably Livy), Cicero attributes the restoration to one of the consuls of that year, who allegedly acted on orders of the Senate. It seems that the dream preceding that action was regarded as very reliable, considering the fact that even the historian Lucius Cornelius Sisenna – apparently an Epicurean – had to acknowledge its trustworthiness.412 Schultz however, who recently investigated the matter in detail, rightfully concludes that Obsequens’ more sensational version has somewhat overshadowed Cicero’s version of the account.413 The academic discussion has for example centered on the exact nature of the ‘dirty and vile physical needs’, with some authors assuming that Juno Sospita’s temple was effectively a brothel, whilst others suggested that the ladies used it as a latrine.414

Schultz herself pays attention to another discussion, which is also of importance in light of our investigation of the relationship between Juno’s cult in Lanuvium and that in Rome. That is, both Cicero and Obsequens fail to mention the location of the temple that needed restoration. Many of the scholars addressing the prodigy have interpreted the absence of a location as an implicit reference to the temple on the Forum Holitorium in Rome, which would be the obvious frame of reference for the Roman public.415 Schultz has considered the matter more carefully, but arrives at the same conclusion: in the tensions surrounding the Social War, the Senate would have had reason to emphasize the religious centrality of Rome.416 But, given the fame of the cult in Lanuvium, this assumption is not as self-evident as it seems. Perhaps the assumption should be reversed: Cicero fails to mention a specific location because for his readers Juno Sospita’s place was obviously in Lanuvium, where portents had been reported many times before at her main sanctuary. If accurate, this could indicate that Juno Sospita, notwithstanding her longstanding worship in Rome, retained her strong association with Lanuvium.

411 Cíc. De Div. 1.99: Caeciliae Q. filiae somnio modo Marsico bello templum est a senatu Iunoni Sospitae restitutum. Quod quidem somnium Sisenna cum disputavisset mirifice ad verbum cum re convenisse, tum insolenter, credo ab Epicureo aliquo inductus, disputat somniis credi non oportere.
412 Sisenna is best known as a writer of Roman histories, which are now lost to us but were widely appreciated by his contemporaries and were also used as sources by Livy and Sallust. As a person, we mainly know him through descriptions of Cicero, in De Divinatione but also in other works. See: Beck and Walter (2001) 241-313.
413 Schultz (2006b) 208. She points out an illustrative passage in Scullard (1981) 71, who cites only Cicero but obviously has Obsequens’ more sensational version in mind.
414 Dumézil (1974) 431 assumed that the temple was a prostitution site, while its use as a latrine has been suggested by Balsdon (1962) 249.
416 Schultz (2006b) 223.
Cicero, in my opinion, hints at Juno’s Lanuvian sanctuary in De Divinatione, in the lines immediately after Caecilia’s dream, the second fragment discussed above. The sceptic Sisenna may have been suspicious of divine dreams (apart from that of Caecilia), but this did not stop him from believing in prodigies and Cicero has him mentioning one in Lanuvium:

This writer, however, has nothing to say against prodigies; in fact he relates that, at the outbreak of the Marsic War, the statues of the gods dripped with sweat, rivers ran with blood, the heavens opened, voices from unknown sources were heard predicting dangerous wars, and finally – the sign considered by the soothsayers the most ominous of all – the shields at Lanuvium were gnawed by mice.417

Although it is unclear where the ‘shields of Lanuvium’ were located and if Juno Sospita was involved in the portent, it is significant that Cicero mentions both *prodigia* in the same section.418 They both took place in the early days of the Social War, named the Marsic War here (after the Marsi that formed the core of the uprising). Schultz has argued that the shields visible in the frieze of the tomb of Caecilia Metella on the Via Appia – a younger niece of the Caecilia above – may refer to those same shields that were gnawed in Lanuvium, indicating that the family took pride in its involvement in the restoration and she also suggests a link between the Metelli and the town of Lanuvium.419 However, that suggestion cannot be substantiated, nor are there other indications for such a connection.420

Nevertheless, there is reason to assume that Cicero referred to Lanuvium instead of Rome when talking about Juno Sospita’s temple. In *De Natura Deorum*, the work that preceded *De Divinatione*, Cicero’s *De Divinatio* 1.99:

\[\text{Idem contra ostenta nihil disputat exponitque initio belli Marsici et deorum simulacra sudavisse, et sanguinem fluxisse, et discessisse caelum, et ex occulto auditas esse voces, quae pericula bell? nuntiarent, et Lanuvii clipeos, quod haruspicibus tristissum visum esset, a muribus esse derosos.}\]

Sacral shields are mainly known from the Salii, the priests of Mars who carried around a bilobate shield that had allegedly descended from heaven into the hands of king Numa Pompilius. Schultz (2006b) 224 and note 59-61. Actual weapons are not commonly found around temples, but we do know some cases of reliefs of shields being depicted as part of war booty, for example on Hadrian’s temple in Rome. In case of the sanctuary in Lanuvium, there is no evidence for this type of decoration. Apart from that, miniature models of shields, swords and shields are fairly common in votive deposits. The practice has been especially well researched for the North Western provinces of the Roman Empire: Kiernan (2009) 40–113. In a Latial context, miniature weaponry is known from burials from the fifth century BC in Satricum: Gnde (2007) 458–462, Meering (1992) 109–114. Although they are not attested for in Lanuvium, the *prodigium* may refer to votive models rather than to large shields.

Schultz (2006b) 223–227. She especially calls attention to the rare trilobate shield visible on the tomb, which also seems to be visible on Republican *denarii* portraying Juno Sospita (see page 118ff.)

Undermining Schultz’ theory is the fact that Cicero uses the term *clipeus* when he refers to Caecilia’s dream, which usually indicates a big round shield and not the trilobate form on the mausoleum. Also, in the fragment of *De Natura Deorum* (see following note), he uses *scutum* (usually referring to a semicircular, rectangular shield) when discussing the appearance of Juno Sospita.

---

418 Sacral shields are mainly known from the Salii, the priests of Mars who carried around a bilobate shield that had allegedly descended from heaven into the hands of king Numa Pompilius. Schultz (2006b) 224 and note 59-61. Actual weapons are not commonly found around temples, but we do know some cases of reliefs of shields being depicted as part of war booty, for example on Hadrian’s temple in Rome. In case of the sanctuary in Lanuvium, there is no evidence for this type of decoration. Apart from that, miniature models of shields, swords and shields are fairly common in votive deposits. The practice has been especially well researched for the North Western provinces of the Roman Empire: Kiernan (2009) 40–113. In a Latial context, miniature weaponry is known from burials from the fifth century BC in Satricum: Gnde (2007) 458–462, Meering (1992) 109–114. Although they are not attested for in Lanuvium, the *prodigium* may refer to votive models rather than to large shields.
419 Schultz (2006b) 223–227. She especially calls attention to the rare trilobate shield visible on the tomb, which also seems to be visible on Republican *denarii* portraying Juno Sospita (see page 118ff.)
420 Undermining Schultz’ theory is the fact that Cicero uses the term *clipeus* when he refers to Caecilia’s dream, which usually indicates a big round shield and not the trilobate form on the mausoleum. Also, in the fragment of *De Natura Deorum* (see following note), he uses *scutum* (usually referring to a semicircular, rectangular shield) when discussing the appearance of Juno Sospita.
Divinatione, he leaves little room for uncertainty. There, the politician and pontifex Gaius Aurelius Cotta defends the various natures and manifestations of the Roman gods against the Epicurean Velleius, by means of a well-known example:

[...] Precisely as much as you believe Juno Sospita of your native place to be a goddess. You never see her, not even in your dreams, unless equipped with goat-skin, spear, shield and slippers turned up at the toe. Yet that is not the aspect of the Argive Juno, nor of the Roman. It follows that Juno has one form for the Argives, another for the people of Lanuvium, and another for us.⁴²¹

Apparently, Velleius came from Lanuvium and he is told that ‘his’ Juno Sospita is typically Lanuvian and distinctively different from other Junones, such as the Roman one. What sets the Lanuvian Juno Sospita apart from the other goddesses is her iconography, and the elements of Cicero’s descriptions have helped modern scholars to identify the Lanuvian Juno on a number of material sources. We shall return to the discussion of this iconography further below, but for the moment, it is important to acknowledge that Juno Sospita, although she had a longstanding worship in Rome – was described by Cicero as a typically Lanuvian goddess.⁴²²

Patrick Kragelund, in an article on religious dreams and politics, has drawn attention to the clause ‘not even in your dreams’ in Cicero’s description.⁴²³ In his view, this does not refer to some random dream but to Caecilia’s one, a well-known prodigy at the time. In a time of political turmoil, the Senate would have taken the warning in her dream (described in the passages above) very seriously and would have ordered the restoration of the temple in Lanuvium. Schultz agrees on the political significance of the prodigium, but believes that the Senate was more likely to devote attention to Rome as religious centre, precisely because of the political turmoil. Ultimately, the issue remains unresolved, if only because of the presumed decrepit state of the sanctuary in need of renovation. This is hard to imagine in Rome, where – as we have seen – the temple was located in the busy Forum Holitorium or perhaps on the Palatine. But it also seems unlikely in the case of the well-known temple of Lanuvium, which went through a process of monumentalization in the first century BC, as we shall see further ahead.⁴²⁴ It was rich enough to lend gold to Octavian to pay his troops in 42 BC and during the rule of Hadrian it still accumulated enough wealth to make a 209

⁴²¹ Cic. Nat. Deor. 1.82: Tam hercle quam tibi illam vestram Sospitam. Quam tu numquam ne in somnis quidem vides nisi cum pelle caprina, cum hasta, cum scutulo, cum calceolis repandis: at non est talis Argia nec Romana Iuno. Ergo alia species Iunonis Argivis, alia Lanuvinis, alia nobis.
⁴²² For the iconography, see page 112ff.
⁴²⁴ See pages 104ff.
pound gold and silver statue out of old votives.\textsuperscript{425} Although especially Obsequens' late version of the story implies a high degree of neglect of the sanctuary, Cicero's terminology in describing Caecilia's dream (\textit{templum...restituit}) indicates a restoration as well. Schultz, however, draws out an important ideological factor that may influence our interpretation: in general, there was a concern for the posterity and continuity of buildings as \textit{monumenta} in Roman culture. The prestige of a restoration may have been an incentive to either exaggerate the antiquity of a structure or the extent of the damage that it had undergone – as is suggested by the language of many building inscriptions. So, an extension or a simple refurbishment – in a series of many – may have ended up in the family records as a large renovation.\textsuperscript{426}

We have seen that Juno Sospita, in the third and second centuries BC, mainly manifested herself in times of crisis. From her cult place in Lanuvium, she showed concern for the Roman state, and the historical tradition emphasizes that a goddess who was originally the protectress of Lanuvium, had expanded her guardianship to Rome. The confrontation with new enemies from overseas, like the Carthaginians, brought back memories of earlier wars and conquests. By taking the \textit{prodigia} from Lanuvium seriously and acting on them, the Senate secured the support of Juno Sospita and at the same time underlined its own religious authority, which extended to previously non-Roman cults. In the build-up to the Social war, that authority was severely challenged, and this time even Rome’s position in Latium was under pressure. The gods show their concern in a great number of \textit{prodigia}, and Caecilia Metella’s dream about Juno Sospita is a remarkable example of that. The account shows that even during a civil war – or: especially during a civil war – a local, originally non-Roman goddess should be placated. In 90 BC, when Roman authority in Latium was far from self-evident, the Senate may have welcomed Caecilia’s dream as an invitation to strengthen the ties with the old cult in Lanuvium, which not only secured Juno Sospita’s backing but also created political support amongst Lanuvians and other Latins. The temple restoration is in this perspective a conscious message from Rome to its neighbours and therefore I am inclined to situate it in Lanuvium.

\textsuperscript{425} Appian (\textit{Bell. Civ.} 5.24) refers to its wealth, stating that Octavian borrowed money from the sanctuary in Lanuvium to pay his troops their long awaited salary. The wealth during the reign of Hadrian is illustrated by an inscription (CIL XIV 2088), which states that the statue was made out of old votive gifts (\textit{vestutate corruptis}) in the temple. For the inscription, see pages 124-125.

\textsuperscript{426} Schultz (2006b) 211. Schultz based her argument partly on an influential article of Thomas and Witschel (1992) 135-177. They argue that renovations claimed in Latin inscriptions are not always supported by the archaeological data, and thus should not be interpreted as direct testimonies, but as ideological statements with which the patrons sought status and public recognition. The argumentation is disputed by Fagan (1996) 81-93, who states that the claims made on building inscriptions could not be too far removed from reality, since everybody would know.
3.4 The development of the sanctuary in Lanuvium

Can we identify this restoration of the temple in the archaeological record of Juno’s sanctuary in Lanuvium? To answer this question, we must shift our attention to the Colle San Lorenzo and to the excavations that have been performed there since 1888. In that year, the British ambassador to Italy Lord Savile Lumley – who we have already mentioned as the first excavator of the sanctuary of Diana Nemorensis – started digging on Lanuvium’s highest hill, after earlier reports of the antiquities still visible there. The excavations did not reveal the same amount of sculptural finds as the campaign that had prompted the treasure hunt a few years earlier in Nemi, but the way they were undertaken was still very far removed from the scientific standards of archaeological research today. Especially the lack of documentation throughout the fieldwork did much harm to the later understanding of the site. In Savile’s quest for sculpture and other artefacts, he unearthed the remains of a large scale late Republican sanctuary that was spread out over several terraces on the south side of the hill and that faced west (figure 3.1). The excavations lasted until 1892 and the results have become the basis for subsequent studies on the construction and social embedding of the late Republican sanctuary of Juno Sospita. After the 19th century campaigns the site was abandoned for decades and deteriorated rapidly, as was noted for example by the early 20th scholar Guy Blandlin Colburn, who saw that the grand portico that had been unearthed by Lord Savile – and had been restored by Vincenzo Seratrice using the original material – was already partly destroyed by his time. Bombings during the Second World War further damaged the site and afterwards it was long neglected. A restoration in 1980 prevented the final decay, and since 2012, new restorations and excavations by the Museo Civico Lanuvino have not only protected the archaeological surroundings of the sanctuary but have also provided new insights into its building phases and use.

Before we turn to the analysis of the larger sanctuary however, we must first discuss the highest and most eastern terrace of the hill, on which the mid-Republican temple building for Juno Sospita was located. Now as in antiquity, it is separated from the other structures by a road that runs from the northeast to the southwest of the hill, so the temple was not immediately recognized as part of the sanctuary (and thus remained unaffected by the diggings of Lord Savile). When the

427 Antonio Nibby and Arthur John Strutt had, amongst others, pointed out the significance of the site, which was then known as civita Lavinia. See for further background on the 19th century excavations of the site: Attenni (2011) 164-168. For the excavations at the sanctuary of Diana, see pages 58ff.
428 The results were published in: Pullan (1884) 327-334, Savile Lumley (1886) 367-381, Savile Lumley (1892) 147-154, but the articles focused almost solely on the sculptural finds, without paying attention to finding circumstances and excavation methods. Additionally, some context is provided by the photos made during the campaigns by E. Moscioni, for which see: Attenni (2011) 164-168.
429 Colburn (1914) 26.
430 See for the results of these investigations pages 105-106 below.
temple was identified and excavated in the 1910’s and 1920’s, it soon became clear that the eastern terrace was the oldest nucleus of the sanctuary and earlier phases of the structure have been dated back as far the 6th century BC. After the first campaigns, the site of the temple was largely neglected, until a new series of excavations in the years 2006-2011 provided more clarity on the chronology of the remains and produced a more detailed study of the earliest stages of the cult practice.

The successive investigations have revealed a long continuity of religious activity on the hill, but many questions remain about the ground plans of the different phases of the temple building, as well as about the relation between the architectural remains and the terracotta decorations found nearby. The oldest structural remains consist of a tufa wall of about six meters in length, which was oriented north-east to south-west and which has been tentatively dated to the early sixth century BC. Colonna hypothesized that it belonged to the first temple on the hill, a small rectangular building, but the lack of other structural features cannot substantiate this claim (figure 3.2). In any case, the late archaic (late sixth or early fifth century BC) temple that was subsequently built on the site was much larger, had a different orientation, and was built in grey peperino tufa. After the recent excavations, Fabrizio Santi has plausibly reconstructed the ground plan of this temple, which according to him had two cellae and two rows of columns in the pronao, whereas earlier interpretations had assumed a temple with one or three cellae (figures 3.2 and 3.3). Relatively large amounts of ceramic finds from the late sixth century correspond with the dating of this temple, and suggest that it was relatively widely visited.

---

431 This was discovered in campaigns led by Angelo Pasqui (1914-1914) and reported by Galieti (1916-1917) 28-35, Galieti (1928) 75-118, 199-124, who also performed further archaeological research. Meanwhile, Bendinelli (1921) 293-370 had also studied the remains in relation to the discoveries made by Lord Savile, and produced the first formal plans of the entire area of the Colle San Lorenzo. For a more thorough discussion of the earliest excavations on the temple grounds, see: Santi (2014a) 103-138, Cf: Chiarucci (1983) 166-176.


435 Of this temple phase, a stretch of the northern wall is preserved, as well as some bases for columns, part of the podium and part of the stairs. On the basis of this, the structure had a reconstructed size of approximately 23 by 14 metres. In contrast to the earlier structure, it was oriented facing west.

436 Santi (2014a) 103-138. The argument is based on the pattern in the floor pavement and on the position of the column bases. Earlier, Galieti (1928) 105-111 had assumed a ground plan with just one cella, while Colonna (1984) 408ff reconstructed three cellae.

437 See Bouma (1996b) 44, note 405. Further information is provided by the collection of the Dionigi family, which has lived in the nearby villa since the 18th century and has recently donated many of the artefacts it has collected over the years to the Museo Civico of Lanuvium. Within the collection are many pieces of bucchero pottery from the sixth century BC, amongst which is a small kylix with (part of) the alphabet inscribed. According to Attenni and Maras (2004) 61-78, this is the oldest abecedary known in Latin and suggests the presence of some sort of writing school near the sanctuary.
According to Santi, however, it is likely that the cultic activity on the hill went even further back. Underneath the floor level of the late archaic temple, remains of an oval and rectangular hut and several graves were found, which can be dated to the eight or early seventh century BC (figure 3.5). Especially the (larger) rectangular hut is of importance, because – according to Santi and the other excavators – it is related to a votive pit that was discovered (centrally) in front of it. The pit was filled up in multiple phases and revealed fragments of bucchero and impasto pottery, roof tiles, bone material and fragments of black-figure ceramics. It was closed around the time of the construction of the late archaic temple and is thus a fairly clear indication of the ritual use of the hill before that time, in the sixth century BC. Santi, though, goes one step further and assumes that the rectangular hut – dated to the eight century BC – can therefore be considered the first cult building of Lanuvium, a chronology that would for example be paralleled by the capanna sacra (‘sacred hut’) of Satricum.

Considering the fact that the votive finds in the pit cannot be dated precisely and may also belong to an open-air ritual context, this argument seems rather thin to me. The presence of huts on the highest part of the Colle san Lorenzo does not need to surprise us and a hut underneath a temple in itself does not necessarily prove functional similarity. Nevertheless, the material remains show a remarkably long history of worship, which proves that the religious site in Lanuvium was visited long before the Roman dominance of the area.

The final phase of the temple was built in the middle of the fourth century BC. Part of its grey peperino blocks can still be observed today, and the reconstructed ground plan shows a single cella flanked by two alae, behind a deep pronaos with two rows of columns (figure 3.4). Along the sides of the temple and in front of it, stretches of basalt road have been discovered. This mid-Republican arrangement was kept intact when the sanctuary was expanded in the second and first centuries BC and large parts of the rest of the hill were covered, which meant that the older temple was separated from the rest of the sanctuary by the road (and also had a slightly different orientation). In comparison to other large sanctuaries in Latium, where a new temple building was often part of the monumentalization in the late Republic, the cult site in Lanuvium seems to have

---

438 See Zevi, Santi and Attenni (2011) 292ff, Santi (2014a) 103-138. The oval hut has a diameter of approximately 5 metres, while the rectangular hut seems to have been larger (with a length of at least 9 metres) and had a small ‘porch’ on the northern side.
439 See below for the other votive material found in the sanctuary.
440 Zevi, Santi and Attenni (2011) 297, Santi (2014b) 50-51. In the latter article, the author ‘does not exclude’ that the hut may have had a purely residential character. For the sacred hut of Satricum, see Stibbe (1980) 174-175. Guidi (2009) 145-146 has argued that remains of huts that were located under or nearby later sanctuaries in Latium, should be considered the earliest nucleus of this cult. See Zevi, Santi and Attenni (2011) 297, note 18 for further examples.
441 See Bouma (1996b) 94-101 for a similar critical view on the sacred hut of Satricum.
442 Coarelli (1983b) 123, Colonna (1984) 110-11,
developed in a more organic way, which integrated the older religious nucleus with the grand scale and visual impact of the new sanctuary buildings.\footnote{Cf. Rous (2010) 180-181.}

The construction of the rest of the sanctuary took place in two phases. The most notable characteristic of the monumental design is the porticus on the western slope of the sanctuary grounds, partly reconstructed in the late 19th century and recently renovated.\footnote{After the excavation of Lord Savile Lumley, the porticus was reconstructed by Vincenzo Seratrice, almost completely with antique material. Savile Lumley (1892) 148. The site was cleaned and restored in 1980 and a new restoration campaign in 2012 left it in its current state. See: Chiarucci (1983) 176-186, Attenni (2014) 143, note 10.} Originally it had two floors and extended over a length of more than 100 metres.\footnote{This can be deduced from the fact that the collapsed ceiling contained pieces of mosaic floors. The hypothesis is that the second floor also contained semicolumns in opus reticulatum. Attenni (2004a) 223. For the individual elements of the architecture mentioned in this analysis, see figure 3.1.} It consisted of Doric semicolumns and was built in a slightly irregular opus reticulatum, dated by Filippo Coarelli to the middle of the first century BC. The wall behind this porticus, which supports a higher terrace that is now mostly covered, is in opus incertum and is about a century older.\footnote{Coarelli (1987) 142-143.} From underneath the arches, there is a staircase leading up this terrace, where the remains of a nymphaeum with niches and a cistern from the first century BC have been unearthed on the northern end. Behind the southern end of the monumental porticus, a series of rooms can be distinguished, again surrounded by a porticus with semicolumns. The function of these structures is unclear, but they may have been used as service quarters for the priests.

In the most recent excavation campaign, a number of rooms have been (re)investigated that are facing the road and are oriented along its track: they thus show the connection between the temple area, the road and the later sanctuary buildings.\footnote{The area had been (partly) excavated by Lord Savile and is visible on pictures of Thomas Ashby (who visited the site) but was covered and damaged by bombings and later habitation. For the most recent excavation campaign on the part of the sanctuary grounds, executed by the Museo Civico Lanuvino, see Attenni (2014) 143-151.} The detailed study of these rooms – which has revealed several black and white mosaic floors and a pavement in opus scutulatum – confirms Coarelli’s dating of the monumentalization of the sanctuary, and proves that the sanctuary received its grand appearance around the middle of the first century BC.\footnote{Opus scutulatum is a form of mosaic, in which irregular tesserae of different colours are inserted into a monochrome (in this case white) mosaic floor.} Although previous research has not yet identified the precise function for individual rooms, it is evident that an effort was made to integrate the older architecture of the temple buildings with the new monumental outline of the sanctuary. Finally, in a different series of archaeological campaigns, the eastern terraces of the Colle
San Lorenzo were investigated.\(^{449}\) Here, the slope is steeper; gates, ramps and stairs in the terracing walls prove that the temple area could also be approached from the east. Pieces of architectural decorations seem to reveal that this entry also was monumentalized. A significant discovery under the \textit{opus reticulatum} wall of the first century BC, was an older wall in \textit{opus incertum}, dated by the excavators to the second century BC. This corresponds with the two building phases of the monumental porticus on the western side of the sanctuary. The eastern terracing walls also show signs of restoration in the second century AD, which may correspond with the new cult statue that was supposedly put up for Juno Sospita in the second century AD (as will be discussed further ahead), or with restorations mentioned in the \textit{Historia Augusta}, which are listed among the public works of Antoninus Pius.\(^{450}\)

So far, the different architectural elements have revealed a relatively clear chronology: two archaic and one mid-Republican phase in the temple building that formed the religious nucleus of the site, with a later monumental sanctuary that was constructed in two stages in the late Republic. Additionally, we may assume that several restorations took place – one of which may have been triggered by the dream of Caecilia Metella discussed earlier in this chapter. The building activities thus span more than six centuries, and this continuity is matched by the votive material found on the site. As we have seen, the temple area revealed pottery fragments and animal bones that go back to (at least) the sixth century BC and after a notable dip the fifth century BC – as was the case for the sanctuary of Diana Nemorensis – the votive activity continued well into the Imperial period. The material included various types of pottery, metal object, terracotta statuettes and anatomical votives.\(^{451}\) Although uteri and breasts are reported among the finds, there is – again – nothing that singles out the sanctuary as a cult site specifically directed at women.\(^{452}\)

If we look at the decoration of the sanctuary, some problems of interpretation arise, partly caused by the fact that the sculpture found by Lord Savile was poorly documented and hastily shipped off to Britain. From the start of Savile’s campaigns, large quantities of terracotta ornaments were found, including plaques, friezes, cornices and antefixes. The material can be dated to three

\(^{450}\) Zevi, Santi and Attenni (2011) 301. The cult statue is discussed on pages 124-125 of this chapter. For the restoration of Antoninus Pius: Hist. Aug. \textit{An. Pius} 8.2-3. This last possibility seems credible, since Antoninus Pius was born in Lanuvium (Hist. Aug. \textit{An. Pius} 1.2) and a villa found nearby is identified as the ancestral seat of the Antonine family. For the villa, see: Aryamontri, Renner and Cecchini (2013) 135-141 (with earlier bibliography in the footnotes. Antoninus and Commodus also advertised their \textit{origo} in Lanuvium through coins of Juno Sospita: see pages 121-122.
\(^{451}\) The material that ended up in the archaeological museum of Leeds were (along with some pieces from the British museum in London) published first by Woodward (1929) 73-136 but no general overview exists. Cf: Bouma (1996b) 43-45, Rous (2010) 80. For votive practices near the sanctuary of Juno Sospita, in the recently discovered Pantanacci votive deposit, see section 3.5 of this chapter (pages 109ff).
\(^{452}\) For a discussion on the lack of gender specificity of these cults, see chapter II, pages 58ff.
different stages: antefixes and ornaments dating to the late archaic period (the end of the sixth to the middle of the fifth century BC), a second phase with decorations from the fourth and third centuries BC and a third phase dated to the first century BC.\footnote{Lulof (2016) 221-239. Colonna (1984) 406, Andrén (1940) 420-436.} The latter category could correspond to the late-Republican monumentalization of the sanctuary, which may have included a refurbishment of the mid-Republican temple.\footnote{Rous (2010) 217.} The first two phases of terracotta decorations, however, do not match the dating of the temple phases very well, although a fifth century refurbishment of a sixth century temple is certainly a possibility. Apart from the iconography and identification of the antefixes that will be discussed later, another problem arises from the scarce notes of Savile’s work, which locate the discovery of terracotta in the vicinity of the monumental porticus, and not on the terrace of the temple itself.\footnote{Woodward (1929) 85, Coarelli (1987) 145. For some of Savile’s notes, see: Garofalo (2011) 552-553.} Were the ornaments – of which at least a number of pieces seem to have been buried carefully, considering their undamaged state – ritually buried away from the temple grounds for some reason? Or was there an archaic cult building on the lower terraces as well? At the current state of research, these questions remain open, but they remind us of how little we really know of the nature and organization of the cult before Roman interference.

When it comes to the late-Republican decoration of the sanctuary, we are on somewhat steadier grounds. Perhaps the most important piece of evidence from this period is a large sculptural group, known as the equestrian group of Licinius Murena. Most of the fragments were found by Lord Savile around the area of the porticus and are now in the British Museum and the Leeds City Museum; a head that was excavated in the temple area is now kept in the local museum of Lanuvio.\footnote{The group is somewhat smaller than lifesize, is made of high quality Greek marble and clearly has a Hellenistic appearance. Portrayed is a group of at least seven but probably eight or nine horsemen, of which seven torsos and seven horse heads have been found.\footnote{Cf: Rous (2010) 227.} One of the figures clearly stands out from the rest: he is unarmed and wears a tunic and a large mantle, in contrast to the cuirasses worn by the other figures. The heroic, non-military depiction of this individual, along with the expressive movements of the horses and some other details, have led Filippo Coarelli to assume that the group was copied from – or rather: inspired by – a famous victory monument made in addition to these, the smaller pieces of sculpture seem to belong to at least eight individual horses. Moreover, one of the human heads does not belong to one of the known torsos either. Coarelli (1987) 153. Cf: Rous (2010) 227.} The head was badly damaged in the bombings of the Second World War and disappeared after. It was recovered in 1998. See: Attenni (2004b) 108-115. In 2010 the remains were exhibited together, see: La Rocca and Presicce (2010) 104-114.
by Lysippos for Alexander the Great (figure 3.6). The original bronze group would have represented 25 riders and Alexander during the battle of the Granicus river, and would have ended up in Rome after the victory of Quintus Caecilius Metellus in Macedonia.

According to Coarelli, this *imitatio Alexandri* was directed at a famous inhabitant of Lanuvium, L. Licinius Murena, who was the first of his village to rise to the office of consul in 62 BC. He had fought in all three Mithridatic wars and the association with Alexander would thus make some sense. Licinius Murena would have shared this honour with L. Licinius Lucullus, who was Murena’s commander in the third Mithridatic war and a member of the same *gens*. The victories of the latter Licinius in the east (near the river Granicus) are identified with the deeds of Alexander the Great in epic poetry, and according to Coarelli this motif fitted well into Murena’s own political strategies in the years before his consulsip. Consequently, it may be assumed that Licinius Murena was not only honoured by the sculpture group, but also as a donor and patron of the sanctuary, which was monumentalized precisely in the years he rose to political prominence and had returned from war with considerable rewards. The involvement of the *gens* Licinia with the sanctuary would moreover be proven by two small Republican *cippi* – both unfortunately lost at the moment – with the (reconstructed) names of both Lucullus and Murena.

Admittedly, the argument is rather complex and is not supported by all scholars who have studied the sculptural group. Patrick Kragelund, for example, has argued that it was not Licinius Murena who was the donor for the sculptural group and the sanctuary, but Q. Caecilius Metellus, who had conquered Macedonia and allegedly took the original Alexander sculpture to Rome; his granddaughter Caecilia Metella later dreamt about restoring the sanctuary of Juno Sospita. This suggestion seems to me even more hypothetical than Coarelli’s argumentation, which is at least backed by some (fragmentary) epigraphic evidence. In any case, if the connection between the sanctuary, the Licinii and the Mithridatic wars is correct, it is an interesting example of how the affairs of the Roman state enabled Latin elites to monumentalize the sanctuaries of their

---

660 Coarelli (1981) 250-261, Coarelli (1987) 155-159. In his defence speech for the poet Archias, Cicero (*Arch.* 21, 25) states that the man praised Lucullus and compared him to Alexander in his poetry. According to Coarelli (1987) 158, the composition of this *carmen Mithridaticum* was simultaneous with the construction of the equestrian group at Lanuvium.
661 The names on the two *cippi* are reconstructed by Coarelli (1987) as [L(ucio) licini]o muren[a]e and lucu[l]lus]. While especially the identification of the first personage is uncertain, photos of the *cippus* recovered by Garofalo (2011) 549, figures 11-12 show that such a reconstruction is likely.
662 See for example the work of Giuliana Calcani, who argues that it is possible that the statue group honoured Licinius, but that it was not inspired by the Lysippos statue: Gualandi (1980) 69-96 claims that there are no grounds for the connection at all. Cf: Attenni (2004b) 111-112, Rous (2010) 228.
663 Kragelund (2001) 170-175, who also points out that Cicero’s *Pro Murena* is suspiciously silent about Licinius’ supposed activities at the sanctuary.
hometowns. With the sculptural group and (possibly) the refurbishment of the sanctuary, Licinius Murena strengthened the connections with his fellow Lanuvians but also with their patron goddess, Juno Sospita. Vice-versa, the involvement with and promotion of his origo in Lanuvium can be understood as a political strategy directed at Rome: the reference to a local Latin goddess and her time old cult becomes an asset in the power politics of the late Republican urbs. As we will see further ahead in this chapter, this promotion of local religious heritage can be observed in the messages of Lanuvian monetarii as well.464

3.5 The Pantanacci votive deposit: the cave of the snake?

In the final part of my analysis of the archaeological remains, I want to take a look at some recent discoveries in the area of the Colle San Lorenzo, which shed new light on how Juno Sospita’s sanctuary in Lanuvium became associated with the literary motif of the draco and the virgins, a discourse that – as we have seen earlier in this chapter – was otherwise linked only to sanctuaries in the eastern half of the Mediterranean.465 What was it that triggered the connection and why was it so persistent over the course of multiple centuries? Could we perhaps imagine a physical location for the rite, or a ritual performance of some kind? Or could we even imagine the ritual to be a genuine religious experience?

Such questions are not new: in fact, the earliest observers and excavators of the sanctuary were highly intrigued by the serpent rite and actively searched for a fitting location. Rodolfo Lanciani, for example, believed that the snake was not an empty symbol, but that ‘a live specimen of a particular species’ was kept in a cave, adjoining the temple.466 At the far north end of the monumental porticus, discovered and restored in the first archaeological campaigns of Lord Savile, a small opening was found that led into a man-made corridor in the rock behind it. Although the corridor is part of the monumentalized outline of the sanctuary and the surroundings can hardly be described as a cave or a grove, the entry is narrow and the passage seems to go quite far into the rock, causing the archaeologists to believe that this was where the terrified girls went down (figure 3.7).467

464 See pages 117ff.
465 I have published a more extensive version of this argument in: Hermans (2016) 196-227.
466 Lanciani (1902) 127. He finds confirmation of this hypothesis in a common but harmless species of snakes, living in the Roman countryside and called ‘serpenti della regina’ by the peasants. He identifies them as descendants of the serpents that escaped the sanctuary after its destruction. Although there is no evidence in the case of Lanuvium, the keeping of actual snakes is not unheard of in antiquity. See Ogden (2013) 347-342, who presents a number of ancient examples and modern comparanda.
However, other than the somewhat evocative entrance, there is no evidence to support this claim. In recent speleological campaigns, the passage into the rock was partly cleared and investigated, as were the small rooms adjoining it.\textsuperscript{468} What the researchers identified was essentially a hydraulic structure, and nothing in it designated it as a ritual space: the elements in the corridor are clearly functional for the transport and storage of water and not a single sign of religious activity was found (figure 3.8).\textsuperscript{469} The search for the physical surroundings of a ritual of which we know the details mainly through poetry seems not only fruitless but also methodologically problematic, just like the search for the sacred tree of Nemi that we have discussed in the previous chapter.

Nonetheless, a recent and rather accidental discovery near Juno Sospita’s sanctuary in Lanuvium may serve as a reason not to abandon this approach altogether. In the summer of 2012, a special heritage protection team of the Guardia di Finanza in Rome interrupted an illegal excavation at the locality of Pantanacci, about 1,5 kilometers from the sanctuary at the northern end of the Colle San Lorenzo. What was discovered, and was about to be shipped off to the Asian market, was a votive deposit of enormous dimensions. For the protection of the site, an emergency excavation was undertaken in 2012 and investigations continued over 2013 and 2014.\textsuperscript{470} They revealed a natural cave, enlarged by human hands and made approachable with large peperino slabs. There are several cavities cut into the rear wall of the cave, and man-made tunnels create a channel of running water with a little lake, as they must have done in antiquity (figure 3.9).\textsuperscript{471} The research is ongoing and a definitive reconstruction of the complexity of the system cannot be given at this stage, but considering the dimensions of the cave, the human interventions in the landscape and the remarkable amount of votive material found, it is clear that we are dealing with a ritual space of considerable interest.\textsuperscript{472}

For the dating of the cave we must rely mainly on the votive offerings that were found there in large quantities. A chronology between the fourth and third centuries BC can be established for

\textsuperscript{468} The first research was undertaken by the Centro Ricerche Sotterranea Egeria and published in Attenni (2009) 20-22. Recently, the excavations were continued and expanded by the Centro Ricerche Speleo Archeologiche. For a report on this investigation, see: Paglia (2014) 5-14.

\textsuperscript{469} Attenni (2009) 22, Paglia (2014) 13. The use of the corridor cannot be fully reconstructed yet, but it probably changed over the centuries. While it was probably built for the storage and transportation of water, it may have functioned in a later period as an entry to a system of passages underneath the sanctuary.

\textsuperscript{470} The first results were published in Attenni and Ghini (2014) 153-161 and, for a larger audience, in Attenni, Calandra, Ghini and Rossi (2013) 14-26. The excavations are expected to continue for several years, provided that funding is available and legal issues regarding the land ownership will be solved.

\textsuperscript{471} Attenni and Ghini (2014) 155.

\textsuperscript{472} The excavated area has an approximate length of 15 meters, while the cave is roughly 10 meters deep. A large portion of the ridge under which the cave is situated is unexplored, as is path leading to it and the area further downstream, so further results are highly anticipated.
the majority of the more than 1000 objects investigated so far.\textsuperscript{473} The finds include ceramics, small bronzes and terracotta statuettes, but mostly – in line with other votive deposits in the region – anatomical votives, amongst which are unique and previously unknown models of lower jaws with open mouths (figure 3.10).\textsuperscript{474} What is remarkable about these offerings is that they were preserved in the context in which they were placed: in and near the cavities in the walls, or bundled in groups on the floor of the cave, surrounded by stones to keep them from moving. Some of the ceramic objects seem to have been laid directly on the floor stones, where water flowed over them.\textsuperscript{475} The ritual activity, therefore, was at least partly concentrated around running water, to which the visitors perhaps attributed healing qualities. The finding of seeds, oyster shells, animal bones and traces of burning shows that food offerings also were part of the religious ceremonies.\textsuperscript{476} All in all, the Pantanacci votive deposit allows us a glimpse into the functioning and significance of a \textit{lucus}, which is a rare opportunity in the study of the religious landscape of the Alban Hills.\textsuperscript{477}

Unfortunately, pending further research, many questions must remain open. Perhaps the first issue that comes to mind is the relationship between the Pantanacci deposit and the sanctuary of Juno Sospita. Despite their close proximity, the first investigations at the grove revealed nothing that could link both cult centres. This changed at the beginning of 2014, when an important discovery was made just outside the cave entry. Four carved cylindrical blocks of peperino came to light, of considerable size and weight; two of the four have an incised groove spiralling over their entire length (figure 3.11).\textsuperscript{478} What makes these blocks so interesting is that they bear a pattern of scales, inscribed lightly but unmistakably. Considering the shape and pattern, the excavating researchers have identified the peperino blocks as parts of a giant statue of a snake, which could have been more than three metres in its original length.\textsuperscript{479} This, obviously and immediately, brings to mind the poetical accounts of the \textit{draco}, and of the \textit{lucus} in which it lived according to Propertius, Aelian and other authors. Has the cave in which the virgins underwent their terrifying experience at last been found? Were the scaled cylinders part of the serpent’s cult statue, as the excavators have tentatively suggested?

\textsuperscript{473}Attenni and Ghini (2014) 156.
\textsuperscript{474} With the votives, worshippers may have sought a cure for diphtheria or for a speech impediment. For the percentages of the different votives attested, see the diagram in Attenni and Ghini (2014) 158. For the votive material found at the sanctuary grounds, see page 103-104 of this chapter.
\textsuperscript{475} As is also clear from the concretions visible on the pottery.
\textsuperscript{476} Attenni and Ghini (2014) 157.
\textsuperscript{477} See for a discussion of the \textit{lucus} of Nemi and other \textit{luci} as religious and political meeting places chapter II, pages 51-52. In general, we have little or no archaeological evidence for these sites, although a number of votive deports in the region could certainly be qualified as an early rural sanctuaries: Attenni and Ghini (2014) 159-160.
\textsuperscript{478} I am very grateful to Dr. Luca Attenni, director of the Museo Civico Lanuvino, who allowed me to inspect and study the stones myself.
\textsuperscript{479} Attenni and Ghini (2014) 158.
Even though the peperino blocks are an exciting find, the last assumption seems a little too ambitious at this stage of the research. The dating of the stones is still uncertain and even if they turn out to represent a serpent – which seems fairly likely – this would not necessarily mean that it was an object that received cult attention. The serpent may also be a votive statue, or be part of an architectural decoration. This changes the perspective on the discovery, but does not reduce the significance of it: it gives us a first indication of how and why the curious story of the draco became connected with Juno Sospita. The chronology remains uncertain, as the statue could reflect the decision of a group or an individual to make manifest an already circulating story, using the suggestive and sacred grove as a fitting context for it. Alternatively, the sculpture itself, already present at the site, could have been the source of the connection between the religious landscape of Lanuvium and the myth of the serpent rite, which was then further developed by poets like Propertius. In any case, the poetical discourse and the material representation will have reinforced and re-emphasized each other, triggering new stories and new images that connected the draco and the goddess, both to Lanuvium and to each other. As we will see in the next section of this chapter, some elements in the iconography of Juno Sospita – especially as it is expressed on coins – probably contributed to the connection of the serpent and the goddess, so that the ritual – as a literary discourse, but also as the visual representation of that discourse – must be regarded as an integral part of the religious landscape of Lanuvium.

3.6 Early representations of a goddess in goatskin

The modern identification of Juno Sospita is, as was briefly mentioned in the section on prodigia, primarily the result of the observation made by Cotta in Cicero’s De Natura Deorum. There, the pontifex describes several elements that define the Lanuvian Juno and distinguish her from counterparts in Rome and elsewhere: the goatskin, the spear, the shield and the shoes with the turned up toes (calcei repandi). The military attributes give her a distinctive warrior-like appearance, which suits her portrayal as a guardian and protectress in the literary sources. The image seems consistent and continuous, as we identify it in a relatively great number of material sources, dating from the sixth century BC to the second century AD. Also, Juno Sospita is portrayed in a variety of different materials, from terracotta antefixes and bronze statuettes, to coins and over life-size statues. But is this representation in fact so continuous or can we distinguish a change or shift in the portrayal of the goddess? And can her appearance be connected to her cult practice and

---

480 This process of interaction does not necessarily interfere with the hypothesis of the excavators, as we cannot exclude that the statue played an active role in the religious proceedings at the site, being worshipped as a deity or being at the centre of an ritual performance of some sort, in which the terrified girls could have had a role as well.

481 Cic. Nat. Deor. 1.82. See page 99ff.
the archaeology on the sanctuary grounds? As we have seen earlier in the context of Diana Nemorensis’ cult in Nemi, modern scholarship on Juno Sospita has been inclined to see a direct continuity between archaic and imperial representations. However, for a better understanding of the cult, reinterpretations and (re)inventions of that image have to be taken into account as well.

The first objects identified by modern observers as representing Juno Sospita date from the sixth and fifth century BC. They were mostly found in an Etruscan context and show the goddess in a characteristic military pose. To begin with, there are a number of interesting images in which Juno Sospita is accompanied by Hercules, wearing her goatskin just as Hercules wears his lion skin. An amphora dating to 530-520 BC from Cervetri depicts a female figure in fighting stance, wearing the goat skin and the shoes with their typical curls and brandishing both a spear and a shield (figure 3.12). Opposing her stands Hercules, wearing his lion skin and raising his club. On an applique of unknown provenance, which was part of an Etruscan helmet or cista lid, the goddess seems to battle with Hercules as well, as they both stand on the arms of a Silenus (figure 3.14). However, the pair do not always fight, as we can observe on a tripod from about 520-500 BC, found in an excavation in the present-day Castel San Mariano (near Perugia) (figure 3.13). We recognize a female figure identifiable as Juno Sospita, wearing a goatskin and carrying a big oval shield in her left hand. Her shoes are slightly curled up. On one of the other sides of the tripod is a Hercules, recognizable from the lion skin covering his head. Another example is represented on a golden ring, datable to the fifth century BC, on which Hercules and Juno seem to hold each other’s weaponry (figure 3.15). This seems much more a union than a fight, and the ring has therefore tentatively been identified as a wedding ring. The iconographic combination of Juno Sospita and Hercules may be explained as a purely compositional choice, since the god and goddess with animal skins and weapons form a nice symmetrical pair. We may deduce a cultic association between the two, considering the fact that Lanuvium had a sanctuary for Hercules as well, as we have seen earlier in this chapter. However, as far as the origin of the objects is traceable, the motif seems to be a local phenomenon from Etruria and none of the images can be connected to Lanuvium or, for that matter, Latium.

When we look at the single object from this early period that supposedly depicts Juno Sospita on her own, the connection with Lanuvium is equally problematic. It is bronze figurine from 500-480 BC, which seems to show the goddess in her familiar military pose: the weaponry is missing.

---

482 The vase is now kept at the British Museum, museum number 1839,0214.7, vase number B57. Ducati (1932) 14, fig. 13, Chiarucci (1983) 61, fig. 24.
483 Roscher (1894) 2261.
484 Höckmann (1981) 64 and figs. 35 and 36.
485 Roscher (1994) 559; Douglas (1913) 65.
486 Roscher (1894) 557ff.
but with both arms raised and leaning forward, she seems ready to attack (figure 3.16).\(^\text{488}\) The goatskin is visible but the upturned shoes are lacking, which makes the identification a bit more uncertain. The exact provenance of the figurine is unknown, but it is kept in Florence and the iconography resembles that of similar Etruscan imagery. The striding posture and ‘battle glee’ are reminiscent of the famous Apollo of Veii and a close parallel is presented by the so-called Minerva of Modena, who also leans forward in attack, raises her weapons and even wears a similar cloak (figure 3.17).\(^\text{489}\) So, it is clear that, bearing Cicero’s later description in mind, these early images are inevitably and quite reasonably identified as Juno Sospita, but at the same time they have roots in a more general Etruscan tradition of depicting female deities and none of them can be connected to Lanuvium or its hill top cult site.

A similar problem emerges, when we look more closely at the antefixes that have been recognized as images of Juno Sospita. As we saw before, some of these terracotta images were found on the Palatine, near the site where Coarelli situated the first temple of the goddess in Rome.\(^\text{490}\) The semi-circular antefixes display a female figure wearing a Chalcidian helmet, with ears and horns coming out (figure 3.18).\(^\text{491}\) The type is not unique: from different towns in Latium Vetus – Falerii, Antemnae, Fidenae, Satricum, Norba, Lavinium, Signia, Ardea, Aricia – we know of antefixes with similar female helmeted figures, including moulds for them, all dating to the late sixth century BC and the early fifth century BC.\(^\text{492}\) Marleen Termeer has examined the typology in detail and divided them into four different production groups.\(^\text{493}\) All of them are identified as Juno Sospita in archaeological literature, probably because the ears and horns resemble that of a goat and because of the military guise. There has been considerable debate on the relatively sudden appearance and distribution of these images, which represents – along with the introduction of other new types – a change in decoration style of Latial sanctuaries. The conversion more or less corresponds with the establishment of the first colonies of the Roman Republic, and this has prompted a discussion on the role of Rome in the spread of these architectural motifs and the changing alliances in Latium around that time. This thesis is not the place to go into these discussions fully, but with regard to the antefixes identified as Juno Sospita, Termeer has argued that the spread of the terracottas cannot be

\(^{488}\) Richardson (1983) 361, fig. 864-865; Cristofani (1985) 281.
\(^{489}\) Richardson (1983) 256-257, fig. 602-604. The statuette is now in the collections of the Museo Archeologico Etnologico in Modena.
\(^{490}\) Pensabene (1979), 67-71; Coarelli (1996b) 128-129.
\(^{491}\) The Palatine antefix is now kept in the Altes Museum in Berlin.
\(^{493}\) Termeer (2010) 43-58. I thank Marleen Termeer for explaining the details of her typology and the implications of the chronology in the academic debate on early Roman colonies.
regarded as a sign of Roman hegemony or direct implementation: antefixes of only one of the specified groups were found in Rome, and antefixes from other places in that group predate the establishment of a Roman colony. The popularity of the theme and spread of the antefixes was likely a larger Latial phenomenon, although Rome may have played an important role in the development of these cultural models.\textsuperscript{494}

With regard to the iconographic identification, the evidence of the early antefixes may be interpreted as another sign of a continuous iconography of Juno Sospita and indeed they have been placed in line with earlier and later representations of the goddess. There are, however, some notable problems with that interpretation. Firstly, it is remarkable that the antefix types were found all over Latium Vetus, but not in Lanuvium itself. Instead, as we have seen in the previous section on the archaeological remains of the different temple phases, other types of antefixes and other terracotta decorations were found. Amongst those, the most complete one dates from the late sixth or early fifth century BC and represents a female figure, smiling faintly and wearing a tiara and other jewellery (figure 3.19).\textsuperscript{495} Surrounding her head is an elaborate circular decoration in the form of a shell, labelled as a tongue-frame in archaeological literature.\textsuperscript{496} The frame resembles Campanian antefixes from the sixth century BC and is interpreted as an intermediate phase between late 6th-century Campanian and early 5th-century Etrusco-Latin antefix types.\textsuperscript{497} Amongst the latter, is a depiction of a bearded satyr and a maenad in relief, also found on the sanctuary grounds. This is a variation on a well-known type, found in great quantities all over Latium and dated to about 460-440 BC (figure 3.20).\textsuperscript{498}

The sculptural decoration found in Lanuvium puts the development of the sanctuary in line with that of the larger world around it, showing a mix of Campanian, Etruscan and Hellenistic influences over the course of four centuries. Although the finds obviously may be far from a representation of the whole sculptural programme of the temple phases, antefixes identified as Juno


\textsuperscript{495} Andrén (1940) 420-1. Lulof (2016) 223-224. Five examples of the antefix were found, one of which is part of the collections of the Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia in Rome and is at the moment of writing displayed in the Latium Vetus section, in the Villa Poniatowski. Three others are in the British Museum in London and one is kept at the Museum of the Philosophical and Literary Society in Leeds.


\textsuperscript{497} Knoop and Lulof (2017, in preparation) 54. I am grateful to Patricia Lulof and Riemer Knoop for generously allowing me to include parts of their work in my thesis. Their extensive comparative study on the roof decoration of Satricum will be published in 2017.

\textsuperscript{498} Andrén (1940) 100 ff; Gjerstadd (1966) 178-192; Knoop and Lulof (2017, in preparation) 43-54 with further literature and statistics. The antefix type is found across central Italy in large quantities (complete antefixes, fragments and moulds) but most of the fragments come from Falerii, which causes Lulof and Knoop to assume that the workshop was there. Four different categories occur, with minor differences in the objects and animals that accompany the satyr and maenad. The Lanuvium type, with a snake and a goat, is the most common one.
Sospita are notably absent from the archaeological record. This may have consequences for the interpretation of the image as well as for the interpretation of the earliest phases of the cult practice. With regard to the iconography of the antefixes, another problem appears. As for example Riemer Knoop and Patricia Lulof have remarked, most of the elements that distinguish Juno Sospita in Cicero’s description – that is the spear, shield and the *calcei repandi* – are obviously not part of the antefixes that depict only the head. More problematically, the female figure is depicted with the goat skin over a Chalcidian helmet, leaving her ears and horns open. This helmet is absent from Cicero’s description, but also from the other early depictions of the goddess that we have just discussed. One of the variations of the antefixes even has bovine ears and horns, rather than a goatskin. So, the association between the goddess and the iconography of the antefixes that is taken for granted in most academic discussions of Juno Sospita, is actually based on the horns and the military appearance alone, and may thus be considered rather weak.

Finally, it is remarkable that actual deities are very rarely depicted on antefixes, but rather on large-scale individual acroteria, positioned at the top of the pediment or on the ridge-pole of the temple-roof. On the lateral sides were minor mythological figures that seem to have been placed there as decorations or possibly for their aprotopaic function, such as the female faces already discussed, satyrs, maenads, and gorgons. The inclusion of an established goddess within these visual depictions of liminal demigods, would be a rare exception. This does not mean that the connection between the antefixes and the cult of Juno Sospita should be entirely dismissed: there are iconographic similarities between the terracotta images of the figure in goatskin and (for example) the fifth century BC Etruscan bronze statuettes, and both visual traditions may well have mutually influenced each other. At the same time, it is important to recognize how influential the passage of Cicero and the later representations of Juno Sospita have been in our recognition and description of these early images and in connecting them to the sanctuary in Lanuvium, although they were found elsewhere.

---

499 Andrén (1940) 102 ff. makes the same observation, but states that this poses no problems for the identification of the antefix type, nor for that of the early temple. According to him, Juno Sospita would be considered as a principal goddess only in a Lanuvian context, and would therefore not be depicted on the lateral sides of a temple. In other temple contexts, she may have had a minor or decorative role, just as Hercules or Medusa had in some cases.

500 Knoop and Lulof (2017) 255.

501 This could also be a *galerum* (a helmet made of leather). Andrén (1940) 45-49.

502 It is of course very difficult to make any sort of distinction between ‘real gods’ and demigods, and it must be emphasised that our categorizations in this respect were probably not shared (or deemed interesting) by the ancient Latin public.

503 As emphasized by Helle Damgaard Andersen (1998) 164, who entirely rules out the possibility that the antefixes depicted Juno Sospita. It must be noted, however, that in the antefixes of the temple of Diana Nemorensis, her image was recognized as well (see page 67).
3.7 Lanuvian argo coins
While the identification of the early source material poses some problems, the representations from the late second century BC onwards show a much more stable and standardized image of Juno Sospita that can be pretty securely connected to the sanctuary in Lanuvium. The development is most clearly visible in a number of coin series, of which the first issue dates to about 105 BC and was minted by the monetarius L. Thorius Balbus (figure 21a). The obverse shows the bust of Juno Sospita, clearly recognisable from the goatskin with horns tied around her neck. Apart from that, there is an inscription with the letters ISMR, which is usually reconstructed as Iuno Sospes Mater Regina, based on a comparison with the epigraphic material found in Lanuvium, to which we shall return later. The reverse of the coin has a depiction of a charging bull, possibly an allegorical reference to the name of the moneyer, which is also inscribed. Cicero confirms that the man was from Lanuvium, but the fact that he put the goddess on his coins may have had more to do with the prestige of the cult than with any personal religious devotion: Cicero claims that Balbus scorned the rites and shrines his native town was famous for.

After this, in the Republic another twelve coin types appeared with Juno Sospita on them, from six different moneyers. Some, such as the denarii of Lucius Papius (79 BC) and his relative Lucius Papius Celsus (45 BC), show only the bust of the goddess, and although the inscription of her name is lacking, the goatskin is clearly recognisable and very similar to that on the coins of Thorius Balbus. Most of the issues show the goddess in full length, brandishing her spear and shield in a characteristic battle stance. A denarius of the moneyer Lucius Procilius (80 BC) shows Juno Sospita both on the obverse – a bust – and on the reverse, where she stands in full armour, riding a biga (figure 21b). The latter image also appears on a coin of Marcus Mettius, which was minted during the dictatorship of Lucius Caesar (44 BC). From these series, it is clear why Cicero – in De Natura Deorum, written around 44 BC – emphasizes the stability of the image of the goddess. Notwithstanding the small size of the coins, all the elements of her appearance are visible, from the goatskin and the shield and spear to even – on the denarii where Juno Sospita is depicted from head to toe – the calcei repandi. This military image seems very suitable in the light of her character as a

---

504 RC 316/1.
505 See ’Priests, magistrates and devotees’, pages 126ff.
507 Cic. Fin. 2.20: L. Thorius Balbus fuit Lanuvius […] ita non superstitesus, ut illa plurima in sua patria sacrificia et fana contemneret […] (’There was a certain Lucius Thorius Balbus of Lanuvium […] He was so devoid of superstition as to scoff at all the sacrifices and shrines for which his native place is famous’).
508 Lucius Papius: RRC 472/1, RRC 472/3. Lucius Papius Celsus: RRC 384/1. For the gens of the Papii, see: Münzer (1920) 1097; Crawford (1975) 222, 267, 271, 278.
511 Cic. Nat. Deor. 1.82. See page 99ff.
There is a significant resemblance between these numismatic representations of Juno Sospita and the early fifth century BC images from Etruria that have been identified as the goddess; especially the bronze tripod from Castel san Mariano displays a very similar iconography. It seems reasonable to assume that the representation of the goddess that is so pronounced in the last years of the Republic was – at least partly – a survival of this archaic image. At the same time, the stabilization of that depiction of Juno Sospita reflects archaizing tendencies as well. Several scholars have drawn attention to the peculiar form of Juno’s shield on these coins: it has the shape of two (bilobate) or three (trilobate) joined circles, and was not Roman, nor is it visible on the Etruscan antecedents. Considering the lack of contemporary parallels, the illustration may be deliberately archaizing. More clearly, the *calcei repandi*, so prominent in Cicero’s description, were definitely out of fashion by his time. They appear very often on the feet of gods on Etruscan vases from the fifth century BC, but by the time of the Middle and Late Republic, they were the exclusive attribute of Juno Sospita. So, while the iconography of the goddess displays influences of the distant past, it also reflects that she was perceived and actively remembered by later Romans and Lanuvians as an archaic goddess, and was dressed accordingly.

A number of additional inferences can be drawn from the numismatic evidence. Firstly, and perhaps most interestingly, several of the *tresviri monetales* can be directly related to Lanuvium and as it seems, they used the cult to promote their *origo*, just like Thorius Balbus had already done in 105 BC. In *De Divinatione*, Cicero mentions that the moneyer Roscius Fabatus – who would later become a general under Caesar – was a friend of Velleius and was likewise from Lanuvium. From Asconius, we learn that Milo was a member of the *gens* Papii, and both Asconius and Cicero confirm that Milo was from Lanuvium, so we may assume that both Papii mentioned above as moneyers were also from there. Consequently, for four out of seven Republican *monetarii* who minted coins with Juno Sospita a Lanuvian *origo* can be established. Of the rest of the men we know nothing, although the depiction of Juno Sospita in itself has been – in a somewhat circular way – assumed to reflect Lanuvian origins. In that respect, the last series of coins in the Republic which depicted the goddess form an interesting example. They were minted in 42 BC, at the mint in Africa by Quintus Cornuficius, who was proconsul of the province. The series consists of two *aurei* and three *denarii*,

---

512 See ‘Juno Sospita as *patrona* of Lanuvium and Rome’, page 84ff.
514 As emphasized by Larissa Bonfante, who labels the depiction of the shoes as a typical Etruscan feature of clothing, used for depictions of humans as well as of gods. Bonfante (2003) 60-61.
515 *Cic. de Div. 1.79.*
that all have Cornuficius on the reverse. He is shown wearing a veil and holding a *lituus*, while being crowned by Juno Sospita. The goddess carries her shield and spear and also has a crow on her shoulder (figure 3.21d). The coins were probably struck to celebrate the moment Cornuficius started his office as *augur* in Africa, and on the obverse they refer very clearly to this province as well: the gods Ammon and Tanit are seen, as well as a personification of Africa. In this way, the coins combine a specific Roman African message with a reference to a cult in the heart of Latium Vetus.

Even if we cannot trace the roots of all these *monetarii* to Lanuvium with certainty, the relation between *origo* and cult image in the numismatic evidence is significant enough to assume that, at least for part of the public that observed the coins, the portrayal of Juno Sospita was understood as a direct reference to the town and cult of Lanuvium.

The advertisement of their Lanuvian origins by Republican *tresviri monetales* does not stand on its own. In his book on ethnic identity among Republican *gentes*, Gary Farney has assembled forty-three Republican coin issues that can be described as ‘private types’, which are coin issues that alluded to the *origo* of the moneyer and his family and not exclusively to the state. He believes that most of these – some twenty-eight – were minted by moneyers that advertised their status as Latins. The reference to religious practice was a popular way to do so. Among this category, the Juno Sospita types are the most widespread, but members of some *gentes* depicted other Latin cults as well. In the previous chapter, we already saw Publius Accoleius Lariscolus promoting his roots in Aricia by means of a representation of the cult of Diana Nemorensis; other examples include a Praenestine Plaetorius depicting his hometown cult of Fortuna Primigenia and a member of the consular Pisones from Tibur showing an image of Hercules. The rank of the families using this strategy diverged considerably, but the *tresviri monetales* – usually at the beginning of a political career – must have hoped to gain some prestige from their famous hometown cults, just as they may have participated in the rites or may have embellished the sanctuaries. Whether they did so out of religious devotion or out of hope for political gain – as Thorius Balbus was accused of – does not really matter; the motives may well have gone hand in hand.

But how widely was the iconography of Juno Sospita understood as a reference to her cult site at Lanuvium? We know from ample analyses of coin hoards that some of the *denarii* circulated for a long time and over great distances; especially the issues of Thorius Balbus and Roscius Fabatus

---

517 RRC 509/1-5.
518 Palmer (1974) 31-32 and Rawson (1978) 196-197 state that crows were sacred to various Junones (cf. Fest. 56L), but for Juno Sospita this is otherwise unattested.
522 For the coin of Publius Accoleius Lariscolus from Aricia, see chapter II, page 68-71; Fortuna Primigenia: RRC 405/1b; Hercules from Tibur: RRC 444/1a. See further: Farney (2007) 271-272, 274-275.
circulated far and wide. It cannot be ascertained whether the ethnic message conveyed on them was understood beyond the direct neighbourhood of Rome, but it seems safe to say that the specific role of Juno Sospita and the connection between the gentes and Lanuvium was lost on most people that used the money. That does not mean that the image itself was unknown, as is illustrated by three Celtic imitations that were struck in the middle of the first century AD by the Eravisci, a tribe in the Roman province of Pannonia, near the Danube frontier area in modern Hungary. They depict the bust of Juno Sospita in a somewhat abstract way, but the goatskin with the horns is clearly visible and resembles that of the coin issues of Roscius Fabatus from 64 BC (figure 21e). They were made in line with the Roman denarius standard and had only a tribe name inscribed, in the form of RAVI2. That the Eravisci were allowed to mint their own coins in this way, must have been the result of a special treaty with the Augustan administration, although the terms of this agreement are unclear. As we see in other frontier areas, the imitation of Roman coinage became a way for local elites to establish economic and cultural links with both the Roman administration and their fellow tribesmen, by answering to a growing demand for Roman denarii in the monetary economy or to promote their own position in the tribe. Apart from Juno Sospita, the Eravisci coinage includes images of imperial gods like Jupiter, Venus, Apollo, Roma and Honos and Virtus. So, while in the centre of the Empire the representation of Juno Sospita served as a reference to Lanuvium, a municipium just outside Rome, in the periphery the copied and imitated version of the same image could stand for the economic and political power Rome itself.

The coin series reveal other information about the cult of Juno Sospita as well, and for that we need to return to the Roscius Fabatus issue just discussed. The reverse of the coin illustrates another clear allusion to the town of Lanuvium: we see a woman, who is standing opposite a serpent that is depicted almost as large as she is (figures 3.21c and e). The woman seems to be carrying something, either in a bag or underneath her stola and the snake has its mouth wide open. The

523 Both coins circulated for more than 100 years and across the entire Roman Empire (and beyond). See for the evidence of the coin hoards the database online: Lockyear (2013 – version x), coin types RRC 316/1 and RRC 412/1.
525 Mócsy (1974) 56-57. In the area of Pannonia, there must have been a difference between tribes that were acknowledged as civitates liberae, foederatae and stipendiariae but it is unknown how this was arranged in detail. The fact that the Eravisci were allowed to mint their own coins suggests a treaty with a greater degree of autonomy than some of their neighbours and, possibly and perhaps temporarily, a status as a civitas foederata. The same phenomenon has been attested in pre-Roman Dacia and other Danube areas, such as Moesia and Thrace. See for a general overview of imitation coins in Roman border areas: Peter (2004) 19-30. For the larger region of Pannonia, see Vida (2006) 59, for Dacia: Găzdac (2010) 126-173 and for Thrace and Moesia: Davis and Paunov (2012) 389-405. There is a large amount of literature on the nature and functions of these coins and a debate too big to be specified here in detail. See for example, for the Danube region: Forrer (1968) 12-69; Harl (1996) 280-295 and Peter (2004) 19-24.
527 RRC 412/1. See page 118.
serpent, consequently, seems to be eating whatever woman has brought him. Obviously, this is a representation of the agricultural ritual described by Propertius, of which we have traced the literary roots and a possible physical location earlier in this chapter. A second look at the other numismatic issues makes it clear that this is not the only reference to the draco and the ritual. One of the types issued by Papius Celsus in 45 BC has almost the same iconography, although here it is more obvious that the girl is carrying a bowl. Less prominent, but still clearly present, are the serpents that accompany Juno Sospita on the reverse of the coins of Lucius Procilius, from 80 BC. On one of the issues the serpent is depicted at her feet, on the other we see it under her biga.

We already noted that Juno Sospita is not actually described as taking part in the rite of the girls feeding the sacred snake, but the coins show that she was nevertheless associated with it. What also becomes clear, is that Propertius did not invent the connection between goddess and serpent himself, since the Republican coin issues all preceded the composition and publication of the Elegiae. Since the serpent is absent from all iconographic sources before the coins, it could be argued that the image of the goddess had not always been associated with a serpent rite, but that this connection formed at some point between the fourth and second century BC, when her appearance also became inseparably connected with Lanuvium. The statue of the serpent that was found in the votive cave of Pantanacci, discussed above, could have triggered the connection with the goddess, although further research is required to establish a more secure chronology. While the question of whether some kind of ritual was actually performed in the cave or not – and, if so, in what form – must for now remain unresolved. Yet, the numismatic evidence underlines what has been argued before in this chapter: the discourse of the agricultural rite with the serpent should not be seen as a purely literary invention but was an integral part of the religious landscape of Lanuvium. The coins reflect the story and at the same time continue to reinforce it, just like the physical surroundings and statue of the Pantanacci cave may well have done in earlier times.

During the Empire, Juno Sospita makes two more appearances in the numismatic record. Around 140 AD there is a series of sestertii of the emperor Antoninus Pius, which show the goddess in full on the reverse. Her appearance has changed little since the Republic: the goatskin, calcei repandi, the armoury and even the serpent are – about 180 years after the last Republican coin was issued – unmistakable. An almost identical image of Juno Sospita was struck during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, another thirty years later, with the emperor’s son Commodus on the reverse (figure 3.21f). There is one difference with the Republican coin issues however: the Antonine coins name the goddess not as Juno Sospita, but as Juno Sispita. Where this vowel change came from, is

529 See pages 88ff, 109ff.
530 RIC III Antoninus Pius 608
531 RIC III Commodus 1583.
uncertain. It has been suggested that the Sispita-variety represented the reappraisal of an older name of the goddess, and that the Imperial coin masters used it to reinforce the archaic dignity of the cult. It is an attractive hypothesis and, as we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, Festus claimed as much as he explained the name of the goddess. There are no parallels for the use of Sispita however, neither on the epigraphic evidence after the Antonine era, nor on the earliest epigraphic testimonies with her name. Just as in the case of the Republican monetarii, there is a clear link with the town of Lanuvium. According to the Historiae Augustae, both Antoninus Pius and Commodus were born there. Furthermore, one of the large villas in the area between the lake of Nemi and Lanuvium was also identified as that of the Antonine dynasty. So, with the issue of the Juno Sospita coin, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius advertised their links with the old Latin town and cult, thus, also in the second century AD a depiction of the goddess was understood – at least by some of the public – as a reference to Lanuvium. Or, as Gareth Farney has stated: ‘As a symbol of Latin origin and pride, she was too great even for those emperors to resist’.

3.8 Cult images
As a last category of iconographic representations of Juno Sospita, we must pay attention to images that have been recognized as cult statues of the goddess. The most famous and most obvious example is a colossal statue that is now displayed in the Sala Rotonda of the Vatican Museums. It was obtained by the museums in 1798 but its exact origin is not known (figure 3.22). It has been suggested that the statue came from the temple on the Forum Holitorium, where it would have stood in the cella, but a provenance in Lanuvium would be just as possible. At first sight, all elements of Cicero’s description are present and the colossal statue depicts a Juno Sospita that is very similar to the images of the goddess on the coins, especially on later Imperial issues of the Antonine era. However, this resemblance is no coincidence, because immediately after its incorporation in the papal collections, the statue was heavily restored with exactly these images in mind. The eyes and hair, torso, shoulders and the upper part of the legs are original, but the lower

532 Gordon (1938) 32.
533 See page 86 for Festus’ explanation that Sispita was the older form of the name. This would mean another interesting example of a deliberate archaizing representation of the cult, but considering the lack of parallels this seems hard to substantiate.
535 For the villa, see: Aryamontri, Renner and Cecchini (2013) 135-141 (with earlier bibliography in the footnotes). Cf. footnote 450.
536 Farney (2007) 70.
538 That the statue came from the Forum Holitorium, was suggested by Delbrück (1903) 15-22 and according to Martin (1987) 112, note 541, evidence of a fire in the second century AD would have made the installation of a new statue plausible. Cf: La Rocca (1990) 821, note 28; Schultz (2006b) 213, note 27.
539 RIC III Antoninus Pius 608; RIC III Commodus 1583. See previous page.
part of the face, the arms with weapons and the lower legs are later additions, as is the snake under Juno’s feet.\textsuperscript{540} From the first study onwards, the statue has been dated to the Antonine period and even though the restorations cloud the interpretation, several scholars have confirmed the analysis since then.\textsuperscript{541} Thus, notwithstanding the lack of context, the statue may be an indication that the cult of Juno Sospita underwent a revival during the Antonine period, when the ruling dynasty had obvious personal connections with Lanuvium.

The colossal depiction of the goddess in the Vatican is however not the only representation of the goddess that, on the base of its size, was identified as a cult statue. After the Second World War, a large acrolithic head turned up at a villa near the sanctuary grounds in Lanuvium, with four holes on the sides that seem to have supported a – now lost – headdress (figure 3.23).\textsuperscript{542} The larger than life marble head was immediately identified as the head of Juno Sospita, and the presumed headdress would have been a goat skin with the characteristics horns on the head and two of the hooves hanging in front of her chest. When the head was first published, it was dated to the Antonine period and linked to supposed revival of the cult by Antoninus Pius, who was born in Lanuvium.\textsuperscript{543} This hypothesis was soon abandoned, not least because the head bears no resemblance to the colossal statue in the Vatican. In fact, German Hafner, the scholar to discuss the piece in more detail, proposed a rather different dating.\textsuperscript{544} Comparing the acrolith to another acrolith with holes on the sides, the so-called head of Athena in the Vatican, he suggested that the head of Lanuvium was from the fourth century BC (figure 3.24).\textsuperscript{545} The origin of the ‘Athena’ is unknown, but according to Hafner the similar fixation holes on both statues suggest that this head had actually belonged to the first cult statue of Juno Sospita. It would have been set up in Lanuvium around 470 BC and was buried there when the Romans took over the cult in 338 BC. It was then replaced by the other acrolith – the one found after the Second World War – which was the main focus of the cult all through the Republic, until it was buried and replaced by the Antonine colossal statue now in the Vatican.

\textsuperscript{540} Martin (1987) 112, note 540.
\textsuperscript{541} First analysis: Giuriani (1846) 21-29. Later interpretations: La Rocca (1990) 819-22 with further bibliography.
\textsuperscript{542} The head has a height of 56 cm and was found and published by Kaschnitz-Weinberg (1955) 1-5 with pictures. The present location of the head is unknown and the claim of Chiarucci (1983) 66 that the head is in the Vatican museums is, unfortunately, false. Martin (1987) 114, note 544.
\textsuperscript{543} Kaschnitz-Weinberg (1955) 5.
\textsuperscript{544} Hafner (1966) 186-205.
\textsuperscript{545} The ’Athena of the Vatican’ head is in the Museo Gregoriano Profano (Saletta degli originale Greci) and has inv. no. 905. Its height is 44,5 cm. Further discussion and bibliography: Catoni and de Settis (2008) 134-141. Earlier literature: Hafner (1966) 186, note 2.
Hafner’s theory has gained some support, but the rather meagre evidence for the resemblance of both acroliths was criticized as well, most notably by Hanz Günther Martin. He points out that there are other statues that have the same type of fixation holes, and that the marble head of the ‘Athena’ with unknown provenance looks nothing like the representations of Juno Sospita from the sixth and fifth centuries BC, discussed earlier in this chapter. The ‘Athena’, according to Martin, probably came from a Greek context in South Italy and there is no reason to connect it to the early stages of the Latin cult of Juno Sospita. With regards to the head found in Lanuvium, he does accept its identification as Juno Sospita, but rejects the early date suggested by Hafner. Although the eyes do seem to have an archaic gaze, the fleshy lips and cheeks reveal Hellenistic influences and suggest a late Republican date, giving the acrolith an archaistic rather than an archaic appearance. In line with Filippo Coarelli, who, as we have seen, dates the monumental sculptural decorations of the sanctuary to the first half of the first century BC, Martin proposes 60-50 BC as a more precise date for the acrolith head. The argument seems plausible and further comparison of the marbles used for the statue and for the monumental decorations could strengthen this hypothesis, but unfortunately the current location of the Lanuvian head is unknown.

More questions remain about the cult statues in Lanuvium, and the dispersed state of the evidence only adds to the confusion. One particular detail is a larger than life terracotta hoof, possibly of a goat, which was published in Hafner’s work as part of a private collection but has since then disappeared (figure 3.25). Hafner noted that also the underside was painted, and hence deduced that it hung loose in the air, visible from underneath. He reconstructed it as part of the terracotta goatskin of one of the acroliths that he considered to be of Juno Sospita. Martin, however, considers it unlikely that the separate headdress of an acrolith was made of terracotta, pointing out that it was common practice to make these pieces of bronze or other metal – traces of iron have even been found in the holes of the acrolith. The hoof, in his view, would be part of another, earlier statue, possibly from the fifth or sixth century BC, which would be in line with terracotta statues in Italic temples of the time. It is a convincing suggestion, but again, it cannot be substantiated by further evidence.

For the final piece of evidence for a cult statue, this statement can be echoed. An inscription from the reign of Hadrian, found on the Lanuvian sanctuary site, mentions another statue for Juno Sospita. After the imperial titles it reads: ‘To Juno Sospita a statue from silver and golden votive

---

547 See pages 104-106.
548 Hafner (1966) 204ff. Hafner does not divulge the location of where the hoof was seen and photographed.
549 Martin (1987) 119-120.
gifts, destroyed by age, he ordered to be made and consecrated out of 3 pounds of gold and 206 pounds of silver. It is uncertain whether the inscription records a statue that actually received cult attention, but the use of *conseccrare* seems a good indication of such a use. Apparently, in the first half of the second century AD, the sanctuary was still thriving and had accumulated enough votive gifts to make a statue of silver and gold out of them. The form of the inscription is somewhat remarkable, because the emperor ordered the statue to be made and consecrated, but used the gold and silver of the old votives for this instead of paying for the material himself. If we consider the weight and the fact that these statues were usually not made of solid metal but were hollow, it must have been of considerable height. Unsurprisingly, the precious metal did not survive and it is also unclear how it was related to the other cult statues we have evidence for. Did the gold and silver image replace the late Republican acrolith because that had been damaged and had to be replaced, as is suggested by Martin? And does that imply that the colossal statue in the Vatican did not stand in Lanuvium, since it is dated to only a few decades later? Or did the sanctuary have more than one consecrated image of Juno Sospita?

At the current state of the evidence, with the find spots of statues and even entire statues lost, these questions are impossible to answer. Besides, the discussion takes us back to an observation touched upon earlier in this thesis: the search for the temple statue that was the prime focus of worship in the sanctuary may reflect a modern rather than an ancient concern. The cult statue as a category, although it existed in Roman times, defies our easy dichotomies between decorative and religious imagery, between votive and consecrated statues, between *signa* and *simulacra*. In the case of Juno Sospita, the strong and continuous iconography of the numismatic evidence is reflected in some elements of the cultic imagery, most clearly in the colossal statue of the Vatican and possibly in the acrolith with the missing headdress. It seems likely that some of the

---

550 CIL XIV 2088: Imperator Caesar divi Traiani / Part(iicius) f(ilius) / Traianus Hadrianus / Aug(ustus) / pontifex max(imus) / tribunicia potestas / IIII / tribunicii / p(ater) p(atri)ae / I(uoni) S(ospiti) M(a)ter / Reginae / statuam ex donis aureis / et arg(entiis) / vetustate corruptis / fieri et consecrari iussit / ex auri p(ondo) III et arg(enti) p(ondo) CCVI. The plaque is now kept at the Musei Capitolini in Rome (Palazzo Nuovo, inv. no.589).


552 Martin (1987) 113; Granino Cecere and Mennella (2009) 292-293. For other gold and silver statues, see Feijer (2008) 166-168, Lahusen (1999) 251-266. The latter presents interesting information on the sizes and weights. He mentions the two golden emperor busts that have survived from antiquity: a life-size bust of Marcus Aurelius and a half life-size bust of Septimius Severus. They weighed 5 and 3 Roman pounds respectively. Entire silver statues have not been preserved, but Lahusen (1999) 262, footnote 99 sums up a number of inscriptions that testify to silver statues for deities, varying from a 15 pound statue of a Genius Coloniae in Taranto to a 150 pound Bonus Eventus statue in Castulo. In a discussion of the busts that have been found, he estimates that five pounds of silver should suffice for a life-size bust. The dimensions of the Lanuvian statue, therefore, were unusually big. Furthermore, considering the ratio of precious metals used, it is likely that only a relatively small part of it (possibly the face and hands) was made of gold.

553 Cf., for the debate around the cult statues of Diana Nemorensis: chapter II, pages 67ff.
images discussed received worship, and although many questions remain open, the traces of the various Juno statues do demonstrate a continuous ritual activity that extended over a number of centuries. While the renovations and restorations of the sanctuary buildings reflect a continuous interest of local and Roman elites in the maintenance of the cult, the renewal of the cult image shows that this interest extended to the ritual practices as well. However, the religious history of the sanctuary in Lanuvium was shaped not only by these elites, but also by the large groups of common worshippers that visited the goddess and left traces of their devotion, gratitude or expectations. The best illustration of this diversity is presented by the epigraphic material, as will become clear in the following and final section of this chapter.

3.9 Priests, magistrates and devotees in the epigraphic record

As we have seen in the case of Diana Nemorensis, from around the half of the first century BC, there seems to be a shift in the worship of Juno Sospita. Whereas from the sixth century onwards, we can trace the public worship of the goddess mainly through the terracotta votives donated to her, in the late Republic the inscribed votive becomes more prominent in our analysis of the cult practice. The terracotta votives never disappear, but from that time onwards the written testimonies provide more insight into the background of the worshippers, their origins and the way the ritual practices for the goddess were organised. In total, there are about 40 inscriptions that can be related to the goddess and her cult, and remarkably enough only six of those mention direct gifts to Juno Sospita. The rest of the inscriptions record priesthoods, sodales associated with the sanctuary and traces of the administration of the munipicium, which was closely associated with the administration of the cult. Of course, no full picture can emerge from this incomplete and unrepresentative set of data, but the evidence gives a relatively rich impression of the cultic landscape of Lanuvium and the different officials that were active in it.

Let us begin with the expectations of the worshippers of Juno Sospita and the character of the goddess, a topic touched upon briefly earlier in this chapter. As we have seen, on a number of coins the name of the deity appears with the abbreviation ISMR. From dedicatory inscriptions, we know that this must have stood for the long name that was sometimes used for the goddess worshipped in Lanuvium: Iuno Sospita Mater Regina. The full name is visible on a Pre-Sullan inscription on a large marble epistyle, dedicated by Quintus Caecilius, a freedman of a minor branch of the gens Metelli. Remarkably, the spelling Seispita in this relatively early inscription suggests

---

554 See pages 103-104 of this chapter.
555 See page 117 for the coins of monetarius L. Thorius Balbus.
556 CIL XIV 2090: Q(uintus) Caecilius G(nej) A(uli) Q(uinti) Flaminii leibertus Iunone Seispitei / Matri Reginae. The architrave is 235 by 60 centimetres and its letters are about 5 centimetres in height. It is unclear to which
that the goddess underwent a name change and that Festus, who – as we have seen earlier in this chapter – claimed that Juno Sispita was her ancient name, may have been right. Still, the form Sispita itself is not attested in the epigraphic record and appears only on the two Imperial coins issues discussed earlier. This leaves us with the same etymological questions we started with, and although the Republican inscription suggests that Juno Sospita was known under – slightly – different appellations, the nature of the name change cannot be reconstructed.

After this first example, the abbreviation appears in five other inscriptions, all from the Imperial period. It seems clear that the letters were commonly understood as a reference to the goddess and that her name, apart from the elements Juno and Sospita included the epithets Mater and Regina. Does this reflect or have implications for the cult practice at the sanctuary? Unsurprisingly, scholars have interpreted the nomenclature as a confirmation of Juno Sospita’s female tasks. Dumézil argued that the use of Mater was not an empty formulaic gesture: the position of the epithet right after the original name of the goddess would underline the significance of female worshippers in the cult. Dumézil links this to the draco rite described by Propertius and according to him, the epithet Mater reflects the fertility feast in which women who were both wives and mothers participated. In his reading, the cult of Juno Sospita had merged to a great degree with that of Juno Lucina in Rome and with the festival of the Matronalia, which involved a ritual of matronae as well. While the cult practice was, according to Dumézil, very much directed at women, the epithets Sospita and Regina reminded of the Lanuvian goddess’ military and ruling role, and thus she fitted perfectly into Dumézil’s theory of the three divine functions in Indo-European religion: sovereignty, force and fertility.

Other authors have emphasized the feminine aspects of Juno Sospita as well, as we have seen in the discussion of the fertility rite described by Propertius, and indeed they have used the ISMR inscriptions as a support for that interpretation. There is reason, however, to question such a direct relation between the name of the goddess and the ritual practices going on in Lanuvium. To begin with, Robert Palmer has convincingly argued that the epithet Mater can also have a purely honorific function and could thus be used for deities that had no primary cultic relation to fertility, pregnancy or parenthood. Vesta Mater is one example, or – in the male domain – Mars pater.

building the inscription belonged, although its dating suggests that it was part of the late Republican monumentalization of the sanctuary. See further: Nonnis and Pompilio (2007) 455–498 with pictures.

558 CIL XIV 2088; 2089; 2091; 2121; Galieti (1919) 231, no. 2.
561 See for further references page 89, note 364.
Apart from that, the epigraphic record from Lanuvium shows no sign of an exclusive or dominant presence of women in the sanctuary. On the contrary, none of the votive inscriptions with ISMR can be attributed to a woman. We have already seen that the freedman Quintus Caecilius used the formula; Hadrian’s votive plaque that mentions the statue made of old votives was devoted to I(unoni) S(ospiti) M(atri) R(eginae) as well. Then, somewhere around the start of the second century AD, a public contractor from Lanuvium paid honour to Juno Sospita by devoting a plaque to her, with her name abbreviated as Iunoni SMR.564

Of the three remaining inscriptions with that formula, one has only the abbreviation itself and no further information, but the other two also reveal male worshippers – quite important male worshippers, so it seems.565 In an honorary inscription on a statue base from the Augustan period, 5 vici of Lanuvium honour Marcus Valerius:

The citizens who share the crossroads of five vici [dedicated this monument] to M. Valerius, son of Marcus, aedile, dictator, prefect of the youth, because he cleaned out and rebuilt the drains for a distance of three miles, replaced the pipes, restored at his own expense the men’s baths and the women’s bath, gave a distribution of meat and gladiatorial games to the people, and he alone organized the illuminations and games in honour of Juno Sospita Mater Regina.566

The final dedicator of this kind, a certain Gaius Agilleius Mundus, mentions a number of offices on his marble plaque: apart from having been an aedils, he was a flamen dialis and had held the position of rex sacrorum.567 In these inscriptions, we touch upon an interesting set of priestly offices, a subject to which we shortly shall return. For now, it is important to notice that the

563 Both Vesta Mater and Mars Pater appear in the annals of the fratres Arvales: CIL XIV 2074 (lines 10-12).
564 CIL XIV 2091: Iunoni S(ospiti) M(atri) R(eginae) / Q(uintus) Olius Princeps / redemptor oper(um) / publicorum / Lanivinorum / de s(uo) d(onum) d(edit). The plaque is now the Museo Archeologico, Naples. Redemptor as such has a wide spectrum of meanings, but in our case the redemptor operum publicorum was probably the contractor for public buildings in Lanuvium.
566 CIL XIV 2121: M(arco) Valerio M(arci) f(ilio) / aed(ili) dict(atori) / praefecto iuventutis / municipe compitenses / velicorum / quinque aequo specus millilia / passus IIII(milia) purgavit refect / fistulas reposuit balnea virilia / utraque et muliere de sua / pecunia refect populo viscerati(onem), gladiatores dedit, lumina ludos / I(unoni) S(ospiti) M(agnaes) R(eginae) solus fecit. The translation is that of Fagan (2002) 246, with adaptations. The current location of the marble base is unknown. See further: Fora and Gregori (1996) 61 and, for the offices of dictator and praefectus iuventutis mentioned in the text, pages 134-138 of this chapter.
supposed female character of Juno Sospita’s cult is not confirmed by the inscriptions in which she is honoured as mater. All the dedicators so far are men and although we do not know how representative the surviving corpus is, the epigraphic record shows male worshippers, such as Quintus Caecilius, Marcus Valerius, and Gaius Agilleius Mundus as both active partipipators and sponsors of the rites. Although direct evidence for female worshippers is missing, an honorary inscription from the late second or early third century AD makes mention of a curia mulierum that was active and dined in Lanuvium.\(^{568}\) Anna Pasquilini has recently argued that the ladies were ‘without a doubt’ concerned with the cult of Juno Sospita and the rite with the draco, thereby establishing an autonomous realm for themselves in the religious sphere.\(^{569}\) The argument seems rather overstated, however, and since similar female organizations in Rome and elsewhere were far from restricted to a religious agenda, there is no reason to assume that the Lanuvine curia was cultic in nature.\(^{570}\)

The last votive inscription for Juno Sospita is also dedicated by a male worshipper. Sextus Valerius was a member of the seventh cohort of the vigiles urbani, and his humble plaque states that it was devoted to Herculi San[cto] / et Iunoni Sispit[i].\(^{571}\) The inscription was found at the site of the temple of Hercules in Lanuvium, among some other dedications to the god from other vigiles.\(^{572}\) Valerius’ dedication is dated to the late second century AD and has been interpreted as evidence of Juno Sospita’s cultic connection with the second greatest deity in Lanuvium, Hercules.\(^{573}\) As illustrated earlier in this chapter, the deities appeared together on some of the earliest depictions we have of Juno Sospita, but none of these sources can be connected directly to the cult practice in Lanuvium. Paolo Garofalo has argued that the connection between the two was established by their concern over fertility matters, referring to a passage in Tertullian in which he asks why the women of Lanuvium did not participate in Hercules’ polluctum (banquet).\(^{574}\) To Garofalo, this exclusion of

\(^{568}\) CIL XIV 2120: C(aio) Sulpicio Victori / patri eeqq(uitum) RR(omanorum) homini / innocentissimo patrono / municip(i) (enatus) p(opulusque) L(anuvinus) ob in/parem obsequium et / erga se inmensam mu/nificentiam eius eque/trem ponendam cen/suerunt dedicaruum(ue) / ob cuius dedicationem / virtitm divisit decuri/ onibus et Augustalib/ us et curis n(ammos) XXIII et curi(a)e / mulierum epulum / duplum dedit.

\(^{569}\) Pasqualini (2005) 269.

\(^{570}\) In Rome, for example there is evidence for an ordo matronarum: a unofficial, undefined yet recognizable group of privileged aristocratic women that mimicked the male senatorial order and carried marks of honour that distinguished their status. Although they did seem to meet on religious days, their scope of activities was much wider. See further: Thonemann (2010) 175, who assumes (without further evidence) that the women in Lanuvium were the wives of male members of the municipal curia and, for the curia mulierum in general: Hemelrijk (2004) 11ff and notes 21-25.


\(^{572}\) Other dedications: CIL 1º 1428; EE IX 601; EE IX 604.


\(^{574}\) Tertull. Ad Nat. 2.7.17: cur Hercule[um pol]luctum mulieres Lanuv[ii]ae non gustant, si non mulierum causa p[eriit] ('Why do the women of Lanuvium not participate in the polluctum of Hercules, if not because he died on the
women from Hercules’ cult was a deliberate mirror of the fertility rites for Juno Sospita, in which men were prohibited from participation. Again, the actual evidence does not seem to support this – quite the opposite – and it seems that pre-existing ideas of gender specific and –exclusive cults shape the analysis to a considerable degree.575

What, to me, seems more plausible is the second part of Garofalo’s interpretation. He argues that the presence of the vigiles urbani in Lanuvium in the late second century and their worship of Hercules can be linked to the presence of the imperial house, and more specifically to the emperor Commodus. As we have seen, this ruler was born in Lanuvium and probably spent quite some time in the Antonine imperial villa. His activity in the village can be connected to an inscription with the month-name idus commodas: one of the few examples of the actual use of the new names that Commodus gave to the Roman months.576 Furthermore, the Historia Augusta has a peculiar statement about the emperor and Lanuvium: he supposedly fought there in the amphitheatre, deserving the title Romanus Hercules.577 The dominant role of Hercules in Commodus’ representation and self-promotion is well-known and well-studied, and this identification between the ruling emperor and the deity may have reinvigorated the role of Hercules in Lanuvium.578 The dedications of the vigiles can be considered evidence for that, as well as the fact that Tertullian – who wrote around 197 AD, just after the death and damnatio memoriae of Commodus – chose to mention the cult site of Hercules in Lanuvium, instead of one of those in Rome.579 As already shown, Juno Sospita received attention from the Antonines as well, for example in the form of a coin series issued by Marcus Aurelius with his son Commodus on the obverse and Juno Sospita on the reverse.580 Thus, while there is no indication for a shared or related ritual practice, both the cult of Hercules and that of Juno Sospita may have prospered because of the attention and vicinity of the Imperial house, and the decision of a vigilis to honour both ancient deities in one plaque, is, in that regard, hardly surprising.
Unfortunately, the limited number of votive inscriptions does not allow us more than a
glimpse of the different groups of worshippers that visited the sanctuary grounds in Lanuvium. Honorary and funerary inscriptions, however, offer a more detailed image of another aspect of the cult: the organisation of the priestly offices. According to Livy, Romans and Lanuvians shared responsibility for the ritual practices from the moment that the town and the sanctuary were incorporated into the Roman state, in 338 BC. Cicero mentions a few occasions in which this involvement of Rome became tangible: he states that the consuls went to Lanuvium to worship once a year, and that the most important magistrate – in Lanuvium known by the ancient name of dictator – was in at least one case a Roman senator. What do the epigraphic sources tell us about the priestly offices and the – Roman or Lanuvian – men that fulfilled them? The first thing that attracts attention is the wide range of religious functionaries that can be associated with cult practice in Lanuvium. Inscriptions found around the sanctuary reveal flamines who performed the rites, for the Roman state or for the municipium of Lanuvium, but they also demonstrate the involvement of members of an ordo iuvenum Lanuvinorum and various officials, amongst which are a rex sacrorum, a flamen dialis and several dictatores, who will be discussed shortly.

There is one category of priests who are not so easily connected to the cult practice, and these are the sacerdotes Lanuvini. We have nine inscriptions in which this title appears; they were found all over Italy and even as far afield as Dougga, in Africa Proconsularis. Three of the honorary inscriptions mention the same man: Gaius Sallius Proculus, who was honoured as a patron of Amiernum and Peltuinum, the top magistrate of Septaquae (a pagus in the Sabine territory) and was twice quinquinalis. His Lanuvian priesthood – indicated as sacerdos and pontifex Lanivinorum without charge – is the only priestly office in this cursus honorum, and it is unclear if and how the magistrate was related to Lanuvium. Proculus’ career was very similar to that of one of his family members, probably his son, who appears in an inscription from Amiernum. The list of offices is

582 In Cic. Mur. 90.2-4, Cicero claims that all consuls were supposed to worship in Lanuvium. For Lucius Murena, a consul who came from the town, these ancestral sacrifices were especially important. The dictator from Lanuvium was Milo (Cic. Mil. 27, 45). For the latter, see pages 136-137.
583 CIL V 6992; 7814; CIL VIII 26582; CIL IX 4206; 4207; 4208; 4399; CIL X 4590; CIL XI 3014. For the sacerdotes Lanuvini, see also: Gordon (1938) 46-48, Chiarucci (1983) 55-56.
584 CIL IX 4206: (C(ai) Sallio C(ai) f(llio) / Quir(vina) Proculo / splendidissimo / viro li q(uin)q(uennali) patrono de/curionum et populi / Amit(erninorum) sacerdoti et pontif(i)c(i) Lanivinorum im/muni patrono decur(ionum) et po/p(uli) / Aveiat(ium) Vestinor(um) summo ma/gistro Septaquis patrono / Peltuinatium ob perpetuo et sim/plicissimo eius erga se / amore / provociti patrono dignissimo / pagani. Cf: CIL IX 4207, 4399.
analogous, but in this case the benefactor is specifically thanked for adding a day of gladiatorial games to a munus at his own expense and in his honour a statue on a two-horse chariot was placed in the amphitheatre.586

Like both Proculi, the other people who carried the title of sacerdos Lanuvianus had municipal careers and most of them at some point seem to have acted as benefactors and patrons of their communities. Aulus Vitellius Felix Honoratus from Dougga, for example, received a statue from his city during the reign of Gallienus; and according to the honorary inscription on the base he was a former advocatus fisci and had held some minor military positions in Italy, before acting as an embassy to Rome for the ordo of his home town, ensuring the ‘public liberty’ out of his own free will and at his own costs.587 The travels to Italy will have brought him to Lanuvium and the cult of Juno Sospita, but he does not seem to have lived there when he held the priesthood.

Some – or perhaps all – of the sacerdotes seem to have been of equestrian rank. Georg Wissowa has argued that this was a result of the Augustan reform of priesthoods, which had revived some of the traditional priestly orders – for example the Salii, the fetiales and the Arval brothers – and had made them available only to men of senatorial rank, which would mean that the equites focused on the municipal priesthoods.588 The fragmentary state of the evidence does not allow us to ascertain the validity of this claim, but the fact that the datable inscriptions are all from the second or third century AD, may suggest that the priesthood of the sacerdotes Lanuviani was a later addition to the cult.589

What did these sacerdotes Lanuviani actually do? The fact that some lived far away from Lanuvium and had otherwise no priestly careers may indicate that the function was purely honorific in nature. Although it is very well possible that they paid one or several visits to the sanctuary site –

---

586 Statues of bigae were rarely awarded to private citizens; apart from this example from Amternum, we only know of three examples, one from Pisaurum, one from Djemila and one from Leptis Magna. See: Fejfer (2008) 444, Forbis (1996) no. 235 and 318 and, for the latter, Sparreboom (2016) 107 and note 407.

587 CIL VIII 26582 = Dougga 70: Honor[i] / A(ulo) Vitelli Pap(iri)a Felici Honorato / eq(uiti) R(omano) / f(isci) a(dvocato) at vehicula per Flaminiam / [et] Transpadum et partem No/rici f(isci) a(dvocato) at fusa per Numidian / f(isci) a(dvocato) at patrimonium Karthagi(nis) / p(rae)po(sito) agenti per Campaniam Cala/briam Lucaniam Picenum anno/nam curante militibus Aug(usti) n(ostri) sa/cerdoti Lanuvino pro liberta/te publica voluntaria() et gratu/ita legatione functo ob merita / et obsequia eius in patriam et / in cives amorem res p(ublica) co(niae) [[Lic(iiae)]] / Thug(ensium) d(ecreto) p(ecunia) p(ublica). There has been some discussion on the phrase ‘pro libertate publica’ in the inscription, which for Lepelley (1997) 109-110 was a sign that the privileges of Dougga – probably obtained when the town became a municipium in 205 AD – had been under pressure. However, Christol (2004) 31 has argued that the phrase was a sign that the town itself asked for more ‘liberty’, and as a result became a colonia during the reign of Gallienus.


589 Although, obviously, this timeframe also corresponds with a general peak in the number of Latin inscriptions. See the introduction, page 27ff.
and perhaps sponsored the rites – it is not likely that they had an active part in the daily proceedings of the cult practice.590 Also, we cannot be certain that the priesthood centred around Juno Sospita, although modern scholars have generally assumed that that was the case.591 Consequently, the only thing that can be deduced from the epigraphic evidence for the sacerdotes Lanuvini, is that the men who received the title cherished it and were actively remembered as holders of the post, even though some of them lived and worked far away from the town that was its name-giver. The fame of the rites of Lanuvium reached far beyond Rome and its environment, and the fact that this priesthood developed – or: was revived – and thrived throughout the Empire demonstrates the vitality of the cult in a changing and expanding Roman pantheon.

In Lanuvium itself, the cultic landscape seems to have had many different religious functionaries as well, and it is conceivable that many of the notables of the municipium were at some point involved in the organisation of the rites. That considerable sums of money could be generated by the city from these offices becomes clear from an inscription for Septimius Severus and Caracalla. The senatus of Lanuvium announced that it had restored the baths of the town with the revenues from the summae honorariae for the priesthoods plus interest, and it thanks the emperor for his indulgentia to allow them to use these funds.592 Apparently, the use of the money obtained for the priesthood required imperial approval, which may imply that the summae honorariae were normally used for the cult practice of the town. Apart from an unspecified flamen and a man styling himself as flamen maximus without mentioning a specific cult, we unfortunately have no epigraphic evidence to construct a full religious hierarchy for Lanuvium in connection with the cult of Juno Sospita.593

Much more clear-cut is the religious role of the ordo iuvenum Lanuvinorum. This Lanuvian association of young men appears in four inscriptions and on six types of lead tesserae.594 They seem to have been very active and visible in the civic life of the municipium, and their form of organization is far from unique for Lanuvium. Inscriptions attesting similar groups of iuvenes were found in many towns on the Italian peninsula and in fact all over the Western Roman Empire; in Greece, groups of

590 Contra Gordon (1938) 48, who believes that these were the priests responsible for performing the rites in name of the Roman state.
593 Flamen: CIL XIV 2115; flamen maximus: CIL XIV 2092. For the first see Fagan (2002) 260, no. 91.
594 Inscriptions: CIL XIV 2113; 2121; 4178b; AE (1994) 345. Tesserae: Rostowtzeff and Prou (1900) 81-82, nos. 4-9 and plate I, figures 1, 3 and 5., Rostowtzeff (1905) 83-93.
ephebia seem to have functioned roughly the same. Membership may have been rather exclusive and the functions they fulfilled in their towns could vary significantly, although many of them – in the western half of the Empire – were concentrated on competitive sports like sword-fighting or games in the amphitheatre. Apart from that, the groups of iuvenes took part in cultic activities, and that certainly was the case for the young men in Lanuvium, who seem to have had a considerable role in the rites for Juno Sospita.

In the honorary inscription for Marcus Valerius, already discussed in the context of the I.S.M.R. inscriptions, he is styled praef(ectus) iuventutis, or ‘prefect of the youth’. The title appears also on an epitaph of an anonymous eques, approximately a century later, in which the deceased is credited for giving a banquet to the senatus and otherwise unspecified curiales, in honour of his assumption of the toga virilis. It is unclear what the tasks of these praefecti were, and although it seems logical to assume that they were older than the other members of the ordo – Marcus Valerius obviously was – the anonymous eques was only sixteen years old when he died. Earlier scholars, like Arthur Gordon, have hypothesized a military role for both the iuvenes and their leaders, but the general theory that these youth organizations functioned as recruitment agencies for the army has been challenged in recent years and seems also unlikely in the case of Lanuvium. We may tentatively assume that the praefecti were wardens of the iuvenes, but unfortunately evidence from other locations does not provide much clarity in this discussion. The epigraphic record from Lanuvium reveals two other people associated with the group, both from the reign of Commodus: an unnamed legionary who is honoured as a quaestor and patronus by the ordo iuvenum Laniviorum – and may thus not have been a member himself – and Agilius Septentrio, an imperial freedman and a

There has been a considerable debate on the composition, function, activities and social status of these youth groups. For an introduction see, in particular: Jaczynowska (1978), Ladage (1979) 319-346, Ginestet (1991), Kleijwegt (1994) 79-102. Although the activities of the iuvenes and the ephebia were similar, there is a substantial difference in their composition: the ephebia seem to have been exclusively open for aristocratic classes, whereas in groups of iuvenes in Italy, slaves and freedmen have been attested in numbers large enough to assume that membership was not restricted to the elite. See: Ginestet (1991) 123-128, Kleijwegt (1994) 83-84.


CIL XIV 2121. See note 566.

AE (1994) 345: ] praef(ecto) / iuventutis eq(uo) p(ublico) / allect(o) in V dec(urias) / ab divo Traiano / hic ob honorem / togae virilis / senatui Augusti et curialibus / epulum dedit v(ixit) a(nnos) XVI m(enses) VIII d(ies) VI

Gordon (1938) 53. The interpretation of iuvenes as recruitment agencies for the army was put forward by a number of early scholars on the subject, most notably Rostowtzeff (1905) 62, 65-68. Later, Ginestet (1991) 162-166 makes a similar point, but refers mainly to the function of provincial groups of iuvenes. Rostowtzeff’s assumptions were criticized by Jaczynowska (1978) 62-63, while Kleijwegt (1994) 81-83 claims that Ginestet’s interpretation of the situation in the provinces is too militaristic as well. Although there were certainly members of the iuvenes that later joined the army, the epigraphic evidence for that is scarce and Kleijwegt points out that comparisons between army-lists and lists of iuvenes in the same region, have not produced a single match.
famous pantomime.\(^{600}\) The latter received a statue from the Senate and the people of Lanuvium, and, according to the accompanying inscription Septentrio was freed by Marcus Aurelius, ‘launched’ or ‘promoted’ (productus) by Commodus, had received the ornamenta decurionalia (the honours and status symbols of the decuriones) and was adopted into the iuvenes of Lanuvium.\(^{601}\)

For the religious role of the youth association, the lead tesserae found around Lanuvium are much more informative (figures 3.26a-c). After it was catalogued and studied by Michael Rostowtzeff, this material has unfortunately been studied very little.\(^{602}\) Still, from Rostowtzeff’s overview we know that Lanuvium was not the only municipium where youths issued these tokens, as similar examples have been found in Tusculum, Velitrae, Bovillae and Verulae.\(^{603}\) The phenomenon seems to be restricted to Latium and the practice of iuvenes issuing tesserae stops after the reign of Nero. With legends like SACR(A) LANI(VINA) IUVEN(ALIA), IUVEN(ALIA), SODALES LANIVINI, SACR(A) LAN(UVINA) F(ELICITER) and IUNON(I) LANU(VINAE), the tokens unambiguously refer to the cults of Lanuvium, as well as to the ordi of the iuvenes itself.\(^{604}\) The depictions on the tesserae make clear that the term sacra specifically refers to the cult of Juno Sospita: she appears on four of the six tesserae, according to Rostowtzeff, although from the blurred images available, it is hard to tell if all the elements of her iconography are represented. Interestingly enough, there are also four tokens that have the image of a girl approaching a snake with a bowl in her hand, a representation very similar to the one we have seen on the coins of Lucius Papius Celsus and Lucius Procilius, in the first century BC (figure 3.26a).\(^{605}\) This does not need to surprise us, since lead tesserae in general look very similar to coins and were – according to most scholars – sometimes even used as such when there was a shortage of small change. Nonetheless, it does mean that the image of the girl feeding

---


\(^{601}\) The man appears to have been very famous in his time: The same name appears on a honorary inscription from Praeneste (CIL XIV 2977), in which he is credited for being the prime pantomime of his time and honoured for the great affection he exhibited towards his hometown. That the emperor had to interfere to get him elected into the order was not because Septentrio was a freedman, but because his profession was not held in great esteem. Morel (1969) 525-535. See further: Kleijwegt (1994) 90, Blänsdorf (2004) 110-111.

\(^{602}\) Rostowtzeff and Prou (1900) 81-82 for the tesserae from Lanuvium. In a later monograph, Rostowtzeff studied the tokens in more detail and discussed the municipal iuvenes of Lanuvium as well: Rostowtzeff (1905) 50-51, 80.

\(^{603}\) Rostowtzeff and Prou (1900) 79-80, 82-85.

\(^{604}\) In one case, the legend NEROCAESAR refers to the reigning emperor of the moment: Rostowtzeff and Prou (1900); Roztovtzeff (1900) 82-83, no. 7.

\(^{605}\) Lucius Papius Celsus: RRC 384/1, Lucius Procilius: RRC 379/2. See pages 120-121 above.
the draco was well alive in the early first century AD, a century after it last appeared on a coin.\footnote{606} Lastly, two of the tokens, with Juno Sospita on the one side, seem to depict members of the ordo iuvenum at the other side, clad in a tunic without a belt, leading a goat (or a sheep) and, therefore, perhaps on their way to sacrifice. If this is the case, the tokens could present a rare illustration of the rites at the sanctuary, and the active involvement of the municipium’s youth in the proceedings.\footnote{607}

For the last pieces of evidence for the religious organization of Lanuvium, we go back to Cicero, Asconius and their comments on Milo and the town of Lanuvium. It is because of Milo, and especially because of his deadly feud with Clodius, that we know somewhat more about yet another magistrate who was active in Lanuvium: the dictator. When Milo met with Clodius on the Via Appia, near Bovillae on January 18, 52 BC, he was on his way to Lanuvium, ‘from which town he came and where he was then dictator’, Asconius explains.\footnote{608} Cicero makes it very clear that this particular journey could not be avoided: Milo was on his way to appoint a flamen and to make the sacrifices required of him.\footnote{609} The fact that he was heavily packed and travelled with his wife and a large staff, has led modern interpreters to assume that Milo planned to stay until February first, the presumed holiday for Juno Sospita.\footnote{610} While the reconstruction of the fatal events of that day is of less concern to us here, the position of the senator in his hometown Lanuvium is very interesting, especially when confronted with the epigraphic material for the dictatorship as a municipal magistracy.

From these sources, we know of at least five magistrates who carried the title of dictator, and of one allectus inter dictatores.\footnote{611} The oldest reference is from a dedication to Hercules, dated to the late second or early first century BC. A certain Publius Fourius calls himself dic(tator) tertium and thus was dictator for the third time.\footnote{612} The honorary inscription for Marcus Valerius, discussed twice before, labels him a dictator as well, and this time the title can be more firmly connected to

\footnote{606} Unfortunately, the sources do not provide us with much information about the exact use of these tesserae. Roman authors used the term occasionally in the context of a money transaction, and there is some minor evidence that the lead tokens were used as entry tickets for a wild beast show or another spectacle. In the case of the iuvenes of Lanuvium, both uses may be considered plausible. Most of these tesserae are from the early Empire, when there was a known shortage of small change; after the reign of Nero, who started minting smaller denominations in great quantities again, the tradition of issuing the tesserae stops. See: Crawford (1970) 40-48. At the same time, the epigraphic evidence shows that the Lanuvian iuvenes were involved in theatrical performances and in the organization of public banquets, for which the use of tesserae may also have been convenient. For an overview of the evidence for Roman tesserae, the corresponding modern debate and comparisons with the use of ‘peasant money’ in later European contexts see: Thornton (1980) 335-355.

\footnote{607} Rostowtzeff and Prou (1900) 81-82, nos. 7 and 8. Unfortunately, the catalogue offers no drawings of these tesserae.

\footnote{608} Asconius, In Milon. 31.4: [...] ex quo erat municipio et ubi tum dictator.

\footnote{609} Cic. pro Mil. 10, 27

\footnote{610} Cic. pro Mil. 28. Gordon (1938) 49.

\footnote{611} Dictatores: CIL I 1428; XIV 2097; 2110; 2121. Allectus inter dictatores: CIL XIV 4178.

\footnote{612} CIL I² 1428: P(ublius) Fourius [3] / dic(tator) tertium / Hercoli ea dat / . The same stone was later re-used, for one of the dedications that the vigiles made to Hercules (see note 572).
the cult of Juno Sospita, as one of Valerius’ accomplishments was the organisation of ludi and gladiatorial fights in honour the goddess.¹³ The encounter the dictatorship again on a plaque from the time of Claudius, set up around 42 or 43 AD by the Senate and the people of Lanuvium for the emperor. It is dated with reference to local magistracies, of which the first one to be mentioned is the dictatorship of Gaius Caecius Pulcher.¹⁴ Another honorary plaque, very fragmentary, mentions the dictatorship as part of list of municipal and military offices, and has been dated to the late first century AD.¹⁵ The last of our dictatores appears in an honorary inscription on a statue base, which was found near the amphitheatre in Capua and dates from the first or early second century AD. The Lanuvian dictatorship is the first magistracy mentioned, but this man, a certain Gaius Lartius Gabinius Fortuitus stands out because the rest of his administrative career was focused on Capua, where he – as a duumvir – paved a part of the Via Diana.¹⁶

From this short list of officeholders, it is clear that the dictatorship was a prestigious post in the municipal cursus honorum of Lanuvium. The case of Milo and the inscription of Marcus Valerius show that the dictatores had a number of religious duties, which probably included making sacrifices at established days in the year and – according to Cicero’s remarks in Pro Milone, appointing flamines. But, as Adrian Sherwin-White has argued, this does not mean that the dictator was essentially a priest. The office is listed in the lex Acilia as a Latin magistracy, together with the aedile and the praetor.¹⁷ As mentioned in chapter II, other Latin towns had dictatores too and it could be postulated that these positions developed from older, Latin magistracies with the same name but with much more authority.¹⁸ Stripped of their official power as chief town executives after the Roman takeover, the dictatores took up more ceremonial responsibilities, making their position less influential but still highly esteemed. Tim Cornell has argued that the position of these officials in Latium may have had a longer history than the dictatorship in Rome, which developed after the

---

¹³ CIL XIV 2121. See note 566.
¹⁴ CIL XIV 2097: Senatus p(opulus)q(ue) Lan(i)vinus ex p(ecunia) p(ublica) / Ti(berio) Claudio Caesari Aug(usti) Germanico pont(ifici) max(imo) tr(ibunicia) pot(estate) II / Caecio Pulchro dictatore P(ublio) Autronio Celso L(ucio) Laberio Maximo aedilibus.
¹⁶ CIL X, 3913: G(aio) Lartio / Gabiniu P(ubli) f(ilio) / Palatina Fortuio / dictatores Lan(uvii) / Iu[ri]s Capuae / quod viam Dian(ae) / a porta Volturn(ensis) / ad vicum usque[ae] suae / pecunia[s] silice strever[it] / ob munificentiam eius / decret(um) / dec(urionum). For the trajectory of the road, which probably led up to the temple of Diana on the mons Tifata, see: Quilici Gigli (2000) 29-50; for the inscription 29-30 with notes 1-3. Unfortunately, the current location of the statue base is unknown.
¹⁷ Sherwin-White (1973) 58-71. Lex Aelilla (CIL I² 583) line 78: que eorum in sua quisque civitate dictator praetor aedilisve non fuerint.
regal period and only emerged in times of emergency. This opposes the earlier idea, put forward by Mommsen, that the Latin towns – much like the rest of Italy, later on – imitated Rome’s socio-political structures, such as magistracies, institutions and priesthoods. The development may well have been the other way around: Rome, as a newly founded Republic that had just abolished the kingship, may have adapted some of the municipal structures and magistracies from neighbouring Latin communities.

Nonetheless, studying the history of Rome as separate from the history of the rest of Latium can be considered a false binary to begin with. As Cornell acknowledged, an integrated approach may prove more effective, describing the region of Latium Vetus – or, in fact, entire Tyrrhenian Italy – as a cultural koiné, in which a common material culture was inevitably accompanied by parallel developments in the socio-political organisation of cities. The remnants of these early organisational structures, like the office of the dictator, could be found all over ancient Latium and were cherished, but in the end we cannot distinguish a dominant role for Rome nor for one of the Latin cities in this process. In the case of Lanuvium, participating in and perhaps leading the ancient rites for Juno Sospita, would be among the most obvious tasks for such a time-old magistracy, whether the person fulfilling it was a Lanuvian inhabitant or a senator living in Rome. But, yet again: the continuity in Lanuvium is far from straightforward and the dictatorship could also be a new and rather late introduction to the cult, as a reaction to the same offices arising – or being reinvented – in the municipia near Lanuvium.

In any case, the epigraphic material shows how interwoven the civic life of Lanuvium was with the cult of Juno Sospita. As a focal point for municipal identity, the goddess was honoured by an order of sacerdotes that came to Lanuvium from all over Italy and beyond, by local iuvenes and also by the magistrates of the municipium, who emphasized the relationship between the town, the goddess and the sanctuary. In this worship, a number of ancient – supposedly Latin and pre-Roman – elements were consciously remembered, re-used or perhaps reinvented, and the ‘survival’ of

---

619 Cornell (1995) 227ff, Cornell (2000) 221-223. The idea was first put forward by Rosenberg (1913), who investigated the indigenous constitutions of pre-Roman communities on the Italian peninsula and concluded that Rome’s Republican institutions developed from Italian predecessors, the prime magistracies being the dictatorship and the collegiate praetorship. This position has been challenged later on the basis of oversimplification, but is still highly influential in the current debate, for example because it was one of the foundations of Mazzarino’s idea of a cultural koiné in Tyrrhenian Italy.

620 Mommsen (1887) 133-164. The argument was further developed by Rudolph (1935), who took it one step further by claiming that Rome eradicated all earlier institutions when they conquered the Italian cities. For a critique of Rudolph’s analysis, especially with regard to the Latin dictatores, see Sherwin-White (1973) 62-65.

621 Cornell (1995) 163-172, 294-295. The linguistic term koiné was first used by by Santo Mazzarino in a 1945 book on the cultural transformation of Rome from the regal period to the Republic. See for its later use and the way the idea has changed the debate on the Romanization of Italy the introduction of the book’s latest reprint: Mazzarino (2001) v-xxvii. For some brief remarks on the common development of material culture in Latium, see the introduction, pages 34-35.
ancient offices – such as the dictatorship – attached to the cult is a prime illustration of that. In this respect, a last example adds to the complexity of this system. Gaius Agilleius Mundus, whom we have already seen as a dedicator of one of the I.S.M.R. inscriptions, labels himself rex sacr(orum), in a plaque from the first century AD that also mentions him being a flamen dialis. Both priesthoods are attested only rarely outside of the city of Rome, and may be relics from the religious history Rome shared with its Latin neighbours, as the dictator position described above. The reference to the sacrificial kingship finds a parallel in a small statue base, found at the sanctuary grounds but now unfortunately lost, which was dedicated by a certain Florianus rex. Little to nothing is known about this person, apart from the fact that he seems to have been of a much more humble background than Agileius Mundus. The office of rex sacrorum is mainly known from the city of Rome; the priest king seems to have performed some of the sacral functions that once belonged to the king, although it is a matter of debate if the office was a direct – depoliticised – remainder of the regal period or if it was instituted later, in the early years of the Republic. We will see this sacrificial kingship again in the next chapter, in the discussion of the celebrations on the Alban Mount, which involved a rex sacrorum from Bovillae. For now, the position of these kings in Lanuvium does is not clear, nor can we comprehend how their office related to that of the dictator. What seems evident, however, is that Lanuvium’s reappraisal, reinterpretation or perhaps reinvention of these time-old offices constituted another case of what we have earlier labelled ‘constructive archaism’; they show the important role of the remembered past in the daily performance of Juno Sospita’s cult.

3.10 Conclusions

Juno Sospita was, first and foremost, a Lanuvian goddess. As was clear from the many sources investigated in this chapter, her appearance and the discourse around her cult practice remained firmly attached to the Colle San Lorenzo in Lanuvium, even though she eventually received a temple

---

622 CIL XIV 2089. See note 567.
623 The flamen dialis was one of the flamines maiores associated with the earliest history of Rome. He was in function all year round and had to sacrifice every day, bound by a large number of restrictions and individual obligations. After the position had been vacant for almost a century during the civil wars, it was reestablished by Augustus. See: Cornell (1995) 227-240, Beard, North and Price (1998) 28-29, 323.
624 ILS 4016: Si deo si deai(!) / Florianus rex(!).
625 Garofalo (2011) 544 suggests that the man was a slave – because of the single name – and hypothesizes another function for him: as a slave, he could have been one of the reges Nemorenses, perhaps performing in the theatre of Lanuvium instead of that at lake Nemi. This, to me, seems highly unlikely, not only because of the meagre evidence for the Lanuvian context, but also because of fact that there is no proof for the actual involvement of slaves in the cult of Diana Nemorensis, as I have argued in Chapter II (pages 72-73).
626 For an introduction to the debate on the rex sacrorum, which is extensive and is interwoven with the fierce academic disputes over on the history of the kingship itself, see Cornell (1995) 232-235 with notes, Forsythe (2005) 135-137, Smith (2011) 21-42.
627 CIL XIV 2413. See pages 189-190 of chapter IV.
in Rome as well. On Lanuvium’s highest hill, religious practice can be traced back as far as (at least) the sixth century BC, and with the last restoration of the sanctuary being attested in the second century AD, the site shows a remarkable continuity of worship. In this chapter, I have argued that, for the cult officials, magistrates and worshippers visiting the cult in Roman times, this Latin past was an important part of the religious present. It was not a static relic that presented itself as a fixed framework of reference for every visitor, but could change shape and meaning according to the context it was perceived and presented in. As such, I have not only questioned the presumed direct relation between the early cult practice and the later representations of the goddess, but I have also observed apparent inconsistencies in the sources, which prove that different – and to modern eyes conflicting – images of Juno Sospita could exist alongside each other.

The most obvious example of such an apparent inconsistency in the sources is formed by the rite narrated by Propertius and later authors, who claim that Lanuvium was the location of an ancient agricultural rite, which involved young virgins feeding a serpent to ensure a prosperous harvest. The curious and potentially violent ceremony seems an ill match with the ancient rites for Juno Sospita and has all the characteristics of a fictional literary topos; besides, the participation of the goddess is not reported anywhere. Through the analysis of several parallels in Greek and Latin literature, I have analysed how the narrative of sacred serpents being tended to near cult sites, can indeed be identified as a literary topos, well known over the entire Mediterranean. For the Roman reader, the religious landscape around Lanuvium could thus look very different from the landscape experienced by the Roman worshipper: meeting a god in book was not the same as meeting a god in a temple. And yet, I maintain, it would be incorrect to study these diverse spheres of interaction as mutually exclusive. Representations of Juno Sospita on Republican coins – issued by Lanuvian monetarii – show that the goddess may not have participated in the snake ritual, but was certainly associated with it. On the coins (dated earlier than the poem of Propertius) Juno Sospita is accompanied by a snake, while the offering girl is represented as well. The images prove that it makes no sense to isolate the literary domain from a material sphere that was somehow more 'real' or believable, as the stories apparently influenced the material representations of the goddess (and vice-versa). Furthermore, the recent discovery of the Pantanaccio votive deposit adds an extra layer to our understanding of the ritual landscape of Lanuvium. In the fourth and third centuries BC, there seems to have been a fully functioning religious lucus on the Colle San Lorenzo, only a short distance from the temple of Juno Sospita. Among large quantities of votives excavated there, the discovery of a scaled round sculpture was especially exciting: an early cult statue of a serpent? As stated above, this identification seems premature at the present state of research. If it can be substantiated through further research though, the snake statue would provide an interesting
insight into the process of memory making that connected the site to the myth, and the myth to the goddess.

The Lanuvian *tresviri monetales* were not the only ones to refer to their *origo* in Lanuvium by using the image of Juno Sospita. The characteristic iconography of the goddess wearing a goatskin, as mentioned by Cicero, can be identified on the lead *tesserae* issued by local Lanuvian *iuvenes* in the early principate, as well as in at least one of the large cult statues of the goddess. My research suggests that the image could stand for the community of Lanuvium as a whole and that it was, as such, connected with the wider history of that community. The iconography of Juno Sospita not only shows clear signs of archaism – such as the clothing, shield and upturned shoes – but also remains very stable over time. When the Lanuvian emperors Antoninus Pius and Commodus used it on their coins, they labelled the goddess Juno Sispita to give her an even more archaizing appeal. I use the label archaizing rather than archaic, because the relation to the earlier images that have been identified as Juno Sospita is – in my view – far from clear: we may certainly identify a visual correspondence with the Etruscan imagery and the Latial antefixes from the fifth and sixth centuries BC, but none of the images before the second century BC can be securely connected to the cult practice in Lanuvium. Instead of tracing the elements of Cicero’s characterization back in time, we may use the description for what it is: a confirmation of the fame the appearance of Juno Sospita and her sanctuary held in the late Republic, as well as the way that fame was specifically connected with the town of Lanuvium and its inhabitants.

The iconography of Juno Sospita reveals another important characteristic of the goddess: with her armour, spear and raised shield, and sometimes striding forward in a battle pose, she appears to be a protective deity, more than anything else. Livy’s first mention of the cult puts it in this perspective as well, as he narrates that in the aftermath of the Latin war a special stipulation was made to include the Romans in the organization of the cult, which up until then had been a Lanuvian affair. The involvement of the local community in the worship for Juno Sospita seems to have had a lasting influence on the cult practice. The most visible aspect of this is perhaps in the construction of the sanctuary itself. In the large scale monumentalization in the first century BC we can recognize the hand of local officer Licinius Murena, who used the wealth gained from his participation in the Mithridatic wars to show his commitment to his hometown deity and to advertise his own position. It is in the epigraphic evidence, however, that the extent to which the cult practice was interwoven with the civic life of Lanuvium becomes most clear. We have identified several groups that were especially connected to the cult, such as the local *iuvenes*, who likely organized sacrifices and games for Juno Sospita. Whereas the *sacerdotes Lanuvini* seem to have been outsiders, who were perhaps awarded the priesthood as a sign of appreciation or honour, there are
several inscriptions (and literary sources) that testify to the involvement of local women, a number of *flamines*, several *dictatores* and even a *rex sacrorum*. I have argued that, just as the sanctuary on the Colle San Lorenzo dominated the landscape around Lanuvium, the intricate organization of the cult practice was a dominant factor in the civic life of the community: many of Lanuvium’s were involved in the rites elites at some point in their career. As such, the cult practice remained a focal point of local identity throughout the Republic and also into the imperial period, when we – for example – can trace the involvement of the Antonine emperors who had a villa nearby.

This local identity presented itself not in opposition to a Roman identity, but as a constitutive element of it. As we have seen from the long list of *prodigia* that were reported in Lanuvium (and the reaction of the Roman Senate to these occurrences), divine warnings there concerned the Roman state as well. This shared religious interest was underlined by the yearly visit of the Roman consuls. On a personal level, the emphasis on a local Lanuvian identity seems to have gained prominence in the context of a growing Roman empire. The aristocrats who affiliated themselves with Juno Sospita – and, for example, put her image on their coins – did so in the competitive society of the Roman Republic, where an *origo* in one of the ancient communities of Latium Vetus was an important asset. For the *dictatores*, the local elites that – at the top of the *cursus honorum* – had a leading role in the rites, this dual relationship between their local and larger Roman and Latin identity was even more evident. Their ostensibly ancient titles connected them to the traditions of their hometown, but also to the shared religious and socio-political history of Latium, of which the offices – however reconstructed or reinvented – were a living memory.