Latin cults through Roman eyes

Myth, memory and cult practice in the Alban hills

Hermans, A.M.

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, 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 IV: Jupiter Latiaris and the feriae Latinae: celebrating and defining Latinitas

The region of the Alban hills, as we have seen in previous chapters, has been interpreted by both modern and ancient authors as a deeply religious landscape, in which mythical demigods and large protective deities resided next to and in relation to each other. Within this dense cultic landscape, the mons Albanus – monte Cavo in modern times – was an obvious focal point: the volcanic peak was, then as it is now, clearly visible from the city of Rome and from the entire Latin countryside. It towered high above lake Nemi and its sanctuary of Diana Nemorensis and was also visible from Lanuvium and the sanctuary of Juno Sospita. The centrality was not only geographical but also religious in nature: the hill was the location of the cult of Jupiter Latiaris, a Latin deity par excellence who was venerated in the annual feriae Latinae. In this festival, the ancient links between the Romans and Latins were celebrated, in a ceremony that brought many of Rome’s magistrates to the hilltop, as well as delegates from the ancient Latin towns surrounding Rome. Led by the consuls, they shared a meal and made ritual sacrifices, thus remembering and revoking the ancient truce that connected them.

In the last chapter of this thesis, I will study the cult of Jupiter Latiaris and the feriae Latinae, by investigating how the Latin status of the cult was articulated in the sources, how it was integrated into the Roman religious landscape and if and how the origins of the worship played a part in the later ritual proceedings, during the Republic and Empire. Although ancient authors agree that the worship on the Alban mount had deep historical roots, there are diverse and often conflicting narratives about when the cult started and who initiated it. The literary sources referring to these earliest beginnings will be studied in the first part of the chapter, in which I will focus on a question that was raised in antiquity as well: who were these Latin peoples the Romans remembered they had united with? Next, the analysis will focus on Rome’s metropolis, the mythical town of Alba Longa. The myths surrounding this town are evoked by the name of the mountain on which the ceremonies were celebrated, the mons Albanus, but did Rome’s origin story play a part in the cult practice as well? While it will quickly become clear that the different accounts do not add up to a complete and coherent sequence of events, the ancient authors who describe the cult of Jupiter Latiaris clearly put much emphasis on its history, which served to explain and justify the rituals offered to the god.

---

Horden and Purcell (2000) 59-65. For the peak as an obvious focal point in the landscape, see Simón (2011) 127-128 and page 188 (with notes) of this chapter.
After an overview of the different historical traditions and myths that surrounded the earliest phases of the cult, attention will turn to the position of the festival in the Roman religious and administrative calendar of the Republic and Empire. What happened during the feriae Latinae and how was its presiding deity addressed? I will discuss the organization of the worship and the involvement of the consuls and other magistrates, which was regulated by a set of rules and traditions. Because of the involvement of so many of Rome’s elite citizens, the festival was of considerable military and political importance and, as the analysis will show, the implications of incorrect or untimely executed rituals could be severe. For the organization of the festivities on the Alban mount, the investigation of the archaeological record is of course of crucial importance. In earlier chapters, the material remains have provided insight into the age, size and layout of the sanctuary buildings, as well as – in some cases – into the identity and expectations of the visiting worshippers. When we bring the same approach to the cult of Jupiter Latiaris, the analysis will prove more difficult. This is to some extent the result of the scarce archaeological research on the hill and the complicated circumstances at the moment – the site is closed off and occupied by a large centre for telecommunication – but even apart from these research difficulties, the apparent lack of material evidence is striking. In the discussion of the archaeological record, this relative scarcity will be further examined, as will the implications for the interpretation of the sanctuary and the type of worship that took place there. Did Jupiter Latiaris have a temple on the Alban Mount and, if so, what did it look like? Information from the archival sources will be highlighted, both for the alternative insights they offer, as well as to redress their long neglect in previous research.

A subsequent category of sources that is important for our understanding of the cult on the mons Albanus is the epigraphic material. Evidence of votive inscriptions is unfortunately scarce, but honorary and funerary inscriptions mention a range of priesthoods that relate to the cult as well as to the hill: salii Albani, Vestales Albanae and sacerdotes Cabenses (‘priests of Cabum’) to name only a few. What was the status and function of these priesthoods and can we be certain that they were connected with the organization of the feriae Latinae? Were the priestly titles claimed by or awarded to citizens from a specific locality in the Alban hills? The limitations of the evidence will prevent definitive answers on most of these questions, but the titles seem to preserve – as we have seen in earlier chapters – a real or imagined link with the distant past. By investigating these ancient priesthoods and their holders, we are investigating the appeal of this past, which connected Rome with its Latin neighbours. In the final paragraphs of this chapter, I will further study the religious bonds between Rome and Latium by looking into the symbolic significance of the feriae Latinae in the

629 Cabum is referred to in the sources as a disappeared village on the slopes of the Alban mount, see pages 180ff.
context of Roman expansion. In doing so, I will draw attention to some suggestive parallels between the cult of Jupiter Latiaris and its Roman counterpart, the cult of Jupiter on the Capitoline hill. Eventually, the analysis of this remembered past brings us to the intersection of politics, religion and identity that we have studied before in this thesis, and to a complicated yet important question: how did Roman citizens - as individuals and as a community – conceive of, relate to and engage with the Latin past in the Roman present?

Jupiter Latiaris will be the subject of the last chapter of this thesis, but, as will become clear early on, the evidence for his cult looks quite different from the sources discussed in the context of the cults of Diana Nemorensis and Juno Sospita. While there is ample literary evidence for the feriae Latinae and the festival certainly played an important part in the Roman religious calendar from the Republic well into the Empire, the archaeological sources for the rites are surprisingly sparse, both in terms of architectural remains as well as in terms of votive material. In the following pages, the discrepancy between the different kinds of source material will be even more prominent than in earlier chapters. Does this have implications for the reconstruction of the cult practice surrounding Jupiter Latiaris practice as well?

While it will prove difficult to reconstruct a – public or private – image of Jupiter Latiaris as a deity the evidence provides some encouraging leads, something that was mostly missing in earlier chapters: a description of the rituals performed on the site and a reflection on the way they came into being. Thus, this chapter will confront the complex material situation with the written sources that abundantly comment on the feriae Latinae. Ancient authors describe these rites as a direct relic from the past, connecting them both with the foundation legends of Rome and with the battles and alliances that characterized Rome’s early relations with the Latins. The organization of the proceedings, although hard to trace on the hill itself, has left an imprint in the epigraphic record, and shows the direct involvement of many of Rome’s elites over a long period of time.

4.1 Tarquinius’ unification attempts
There are a number of possible beginnings to the story of Jupiter Latiaris and the feriae Latinae, and Roman authors seem to have been well aware of that. A number of sources comment on the origins of the festival of the feriae Latinae and present various explanations, which differ not only in detail but also – as we will see in the course of this chapter – in elementary names and dates. The most elaborate account is that of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who attributes the festival to Tarquinius Superbus, traditionally the seventh and last king of Rome. After winning the Latins over during a meeting at the lucus Ferentinae and persuading them to accept an agreement that acknowledged the dominance of Rome, the king instituted a festival to celebrate the peace:
And as a means of providing that the treaties made with those cities might endure forever, Tarquinius resolved to designate a sanctuary for the joint use of the Romans, the Latins, the Hernicans and such of the Volscians as had entered into the alliance, in order that, coming together each year at the appointed place, they might celebrate a general festival, feast together and share in common sacrifices. This proposal being cheerfully accepted by all of them, he appointed for their place of assembly a high mountain situated almost at the centre of these nations and commanding the city of the Albans; and he made a law that upon this mountain an annual festival should be celebrated, during which they should all abstain from acts of hostility against any of the others and should perform common sacrifices to Jupiter Latialis, as he is called, and feast together, and he appointed the share each city was to contribute towards these sacrifices and the portion each of them was to receive. The cities that shared in this festival and sacrifice were forty-seven. These festivals and sacrifices the Romans celebrate to this day, calling them the ‘Latin Festivals’; and some of the cities that take part in them bring lambs, some cheeses, others a certain measure of milk, and others something of like nature. And one bull is sacrificed in common by all of them, each city receiving its appointed share of the meat. The sacrifices they offer are on behalf of all and the Romans have the superintendence of them.630

The passage offers a lot of information on the festival: it originated in a military context and apparently an annual truce was necessary to perpetuate the treaty; the celebrations included a feast in which different cities brought different items; it ended with the common sacrifice of a bull of which the meat was divided over the participating cities and, significantly, the ceremony was superintended by the Romans. Thus, in this narrative, it was the Roman dominance over Latium that initiated the communal cult of Jupiter Latialis, and according to Dionysius the festival established by Tarquinius was still celebrated by the Latins in his day.

630Dion. Hal. 4.49: τοῦ δὲ μένειν εἰς ἡπαντα χρόνον τὰ συγκείμενα ταῖς πόλεις πρόνοιαν ὁ Ταρκύνιος λαμβάνων ἱερόν ἔγινε κοινόν ἀποδείξῃ Ὄμασιν τε καὶ Λατίνων καὶ Ἑρνίκων καὶ Οὐδολούσκων τῶν ἐγγραφαμένων εἰς τὴν συμμαχίαν, ἵνα συνερχόμενοι καθ’ ἐκαστὸν ἐνιαυτὸν εἰς τὸν ἀποδειχθέαν τὸν πανηγυρίως καὶ συνεπιτύναι καὶ κοινῶν ἱερῶν μεταλαμβάνωσιν. ἀγαπητῶς δὲ πάντων τὸ πράγμα δεξαμένων τὸν μὲν ἀπέδειξεν ἐνθά ποιήρονται τὴν σύνοδον ἐν μέσῳ μάλιστα τῶν ἐθνῶν κείμενον ὁρος ύπηλόν, ὃς τής Ἀλβανῶν ὑπέρκειται πόλεως, ἐν ὑπονηγόρεις τ’ ἀνά πάν ἐνος ἄγεσθαι καὶ ἐκεχείριας εἶναι πάσης πρὸς πάντας ἐσεπνομοδέτερας θυσίας τε συντελεῖσθαι κοινὰς τοῦ καλουμένου Λατιαρῶν Δί τε καὶ συνεστάσεις, τάδες δ’ δεῖ παρέχειν ἐκάστην πόλιν εἰς τὰ ἱερά, καὶ μόριαν δὴ ἐκάστην δεήσει λαμβάνειν, αἱ δὲ μετασχοῦσας τῆς ἑορτῆς τε καὶ τῆς θυσίας πόλεις τριῶν δέονσι πεντηκόντα ἐγένοντο. ταύτας τὰς ἑορτὰς τε καὶ τὰς θυσίας μέχρι τῶν καθ’ ἡμῶν χρόνων ἐπιτελοῦσα ὘μασίως Λατίνως καλούντες, καὶ φέρουσι εἰς αὐτάς αἱ μετέχουσαι τῶν ἱερῶν πόλεις αἱ μὲν ἄρναις, αἱ δὲ τυροίς, αἱ δὲ γάλακτος τι μέτρον, αἱ δὲ ὑμοῖον τι τούτος πελάνω γένος ἐνδὸς δὲ ταῦρου κοινὸς ὑπὸ πασὸν ὑσθημένου μέρους ἐκάστη τοῦ τεταγμένου λαμβάνει, θύσει δ’ ὑπὸ ἀπάντων καὶ τὴν ἱγεμονίαν τῶν ἱερῶν ἔχουσι Ὀμασίως.
Livy does not comment on the establishment of the festival, but he does mention episodes of its later history. We shall come back to some of these later, but what is important now is that Livy describes the same kind of hierarchy as Dionysius does: Romans and Latins celebrate collective rites for a communal deity, but the Romans take the lead in the proceedings and decide which city gets what part of the sacrificial meat. Livy describes this process with the phrase *carnem dari*: the Romans distributed the sacrificial meat and the Latin cities had to accept their share.\(^{631}\) Pliny the Elder uses the phrase *carnem accipere* and in other passages, the role of the Latins in the rituals is described as *carnem petere* – asking for the meat.\(^{632}\) The formulations of allocating and accepting meat do not imply an equal ritual relationship, but a ceremony under the direction of the Romans.\(^{633}\) What this discourse thus seems to explain, is that the religious bond of the Latins worshipping Jupiter Latiaris was not only initiated by Rome, but also clearly expressed a sense of Roman authority. For modern readers, this foundation story represents clear signs of anachronism. While it is certainly imaginable that Tarquinius established some control over the region during his reign, it seems hard to imagine that this Roman authority over the cult continued unproblematically, as the political and military relations with the Latins were troubled for many years after Tarquinius’ supposed reign.

This discourse about the origins of the *feriae Latinae* was however far from generally accepted, neither by modern interpreters, nor by other ancient writers that sought to explain the rites. The history of the cult is interwoven with a dense and complex set of historiographic traditions about the relations of early Rome with its neighbours – and with the complicated histories of the kingship in Rome, for that matter. As we have seen in the discussion of the *lucus* of Diana at lake Nemi, alternating episodes of war and peace are very hard to reconstruct, as are the alliances in support of and against Rome.\(^{634}\) Especially in the period before the *foedus Cassianum* (supposedly in 493 BC), it is safe to say that Roman hegemony was far from established in the region.\(^{635}\) Many of the earlier alliances between Latin states, such as the league that met at the *lucus* of Diana, may well have had the purpose of opposing the expanding power of Rome. Although political bonds did not necessarily correspond with religious bonds, it seems unlikely that Tarquinius’ power in the sixth century BC extended to uniting the Latins (and even some of the surrounding tribes) in a cult that stressed Roman dominance. As several authors have noted, the

\(^{631}\) Liv. 32.1.1-9; 37.3.4.  
\(^{634}\) See chapter II, pages 50ff.  
\(^{635}\) The *foedus Cassianum* was a peace treaty between the Roman Republic and the Latin states, after the battle of lake Regillus. It established military cooperation (mutual defence and shared exploits) and the exchange of private rights (marriage and commercial) between Roman and Latin citizens. Cic. *Bob.*53; Dion. Hal. 6.95; Liv. 2.33.9). See Cornell (1995) 299-301 and cf. chapter II (pages 41ff) and page 151 of this chapter.
circumstances in which Dionysius of Halicarnassus situates the establishment of the cult of Jupiter Latiaris and the agreement at the *lucus Ferentinae* that preceded it are actually far more plausible evidence for the – somewhat better documented – settlement of the *foedus Cassianum*, and the entire discourse may thus be viewed as a fairly obvious projection of later history back into the regal period.636

Before we turn to the alternative narratives explaining the establishment of the cult of Jupiter Latiaris, we must first go a bit further into these semi-historical alliances in Latium. Who actually were these Latin tribes that the Romans remembered they had united with? As we saw in chapter two, Livy attributes the very first attempts at religious unification to king Servius Tullius, who inaugu-rated a temple to Diana on the Aventine where all Latins could meet and worship, under the supervision of Rome.637 In this tradition, there is no specification of cities or peoples involved. In the case of the cult of Jupiter Latiaris, the historical tradition has preserved more details, but they are notoriously difficult to interpret. Pliny the Elder links the cult to a community that he identifies as the *populi Albenses*, in his ethnographic overview of the towns and peoples that were once found in Latium but had by his time disappeared:

The first region formerly included the following celebrated towns of Latium besides those mentioned: Satricum, Pometia, Scaptia, Politorium, Tellena, Tifata, Caenina, Ficana, Crustumerium, Ameriola, Medullum, Corniculum, Saturnia on the site of the present Rome, Antipolis, which to-day is Janiculum and a part of Rome, Antemnes, Camerium, Collatia, Amitinum, Norbe, Sulmo; and together with these the Alban peoples who were accustomed to ‘receive flesh’ on the Alban Hill, namely the Albani, Aesolani, Accienses, Abolani, Bubetani, Bolani, Cusuetani, Coriolani, Fidenates, Foreti, Hortenses, Latinenses, Longulani, Manates, Macrales, Munienses, Numinienses, Olliculani, Octulani, Pedani, Polluscini, Querquetulani, Sicani, Sisolenses, Tolerienses, Tutienses, Vimitellari, Velienses, Venetulani, Vitellenses. Thus 53 peoples of Old Latium have perished without leaving a trace.638

637 See pages 52-54.
It is a curious list, in which Pliny suggests that it were the *populi Albenses*, long lost in history, who had assembled and received the sacrificial meat on the Alban hill. This religious unity would thus be very different from the league that met at the *lucus of Diana*, described by Cato and preserved in Priscian: the Latin communities that are listed in that context still existed in historical times and assembled in what appears to have been an attempt to resist and rival Rome. Finally, another list of Latin peoples appears in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who—when he narrates the build-up to the battle of lake Regillus—describes a meeting at the *lucus Ferentinae* and mentions the Λατινοὶ involved in opposition to Rome, which were delegations of: Ardea, Aricia, Bovillae, Bubentum, Cabum, Cora, Carventum, Circeii, Corbino, Gabii, Laurentum, Lanuvium, Labici, Nomentum, Norba, Praeneste, Pedum, Querquetula, Satricum, Scaptia, Setia, Tibur, Tusculum, Tolerium, Tellenae, Velitrae.

Dionysius’ list is much longer than that of Cato and has its own interpretation problems, but it represents a similar historiographic phenomenon: a discourse that preserved the names and the efforts of the Latin communities that opposed Rome in its very earliest attempts of conquering the region of Latium Vetus. Religious assemblies at *luci*, which in peaceful times were locations of communal feasts for the entire region, became increasingly associated—with political struggle, and with Latins uniting and fighting against Romans. Were the origins of the cult of Jupiter Latiaris connected with this phenomenon, or was it an isolated and predominantly Roman affair, in which not the neighbouring Latins, but only a separate and perhaps more geographically confined group of *populi Albenses* were involved? The ancients seem to have been confused about it as well, as becomes most clear from a scholiast on Cicero’s *pro Plancio*. He comments on a passage where the orator mentions the *feriae Latinae*, for which some towns in his time apparently could not find appropriate envoys.

For most authors disagree over by whom the Latin festival was instituted. Some think it was by Tarquiniius Priscus, king of the Romans, but others think it was by the *prisci Latini*.

---


642 Cic. *Planc.* 9.23. Cicero is accusing Laterensus of relying too much on his family name and having no support from the people of Tusculum, where he came from, and from the neighbouring villages of Gabii, Bovillae and Labicum. See for Bovillae, pages 188-190 and 198 of this chapter.
[ancient Latins]. And even amongst those, the reason for the sacrifice is not agreed. For some say it was founded on the instruction of Faunus, and some think it was after the death of King Latinus and Aeneas, because they never appeared again. And on those days they instituted the custom of swinging, when they are moved by swinging devices; since their body was not found on earth, like souls they were sought in the air. This custom was observed in relation to the sacrifice at the feriae Latinae, that the adjacent cities would receive portions of meat of the sacrificial victim, on the Alban mount, according to ancient superstitio. It shows how small the number of men in these cities was that there were even lacking men to accept the meat according to this solemn custom.643

So, apart from mentioning king Tarquinius as a potential creator of the feriae, the scholiast also mentions the possibility that the rites were instigated by the prisci Latini, without specifying when this took place or which tribes and cities were considered to be part of the ‘old Latins’. His further explanation of the last option raises even more questions, to which we shall come back in a moment. For now, we must acknowledge that even though it is plausible that the tradition preserved an early communal celebration on the Alban mount, the initiative or precise circumstances under which this originated cannot be reconstructed.

What does become clear is that the discourse surrounding the feriae Latinae took the shape of an affirmative projection, an attempt to explain the relationship between Rome and its neighbours and to trace it back to a bond with and amongst Latins. What shape this unity took, and the name under which it operated, seems to have been not very well defined. In some of the writings of Roman grammarians, we see attempts to define the prisci Latini more precisely: they record these oldest Latins as the inhabitants of the colonies of Alba Longa, which occupied the area of Latium Vetus before the foundation of Rome and the subsequent war of Rome against Alba.644

643 Schol. Bob. in Cic. Planc. 9.23 (ed. Hildebrandt 128-129): Nam Latinae feriae a quo fuerint institutae, dissentient plerique auctores. Alii ab L. Tarquinio Prisco, rege Romanorum, existimant, alii vero a Latinis priscis. Atque inter hos ipsos causa sacrificii non convenit. Nam quidam id initum ex imperato Fauni contendunt, nonnulli post obitum Latini regis [et] Aeneae, quod ii nusquam comparuerant. Itaque ipsis diebus ideo oscillare instituerunt: quoniam eorum corpus in terris non esset repertum, ut animae velut in aere quaererentur. Feriarum Latinarum sacrificio solebat hoc observari, ut ... hostia civitates adiacentes portiunculas carnis acciperent ex Albano monte secundum veterem superstitionem. Verum tam exiguam in illis civitatibus numerum hominum significat, ut desint etiam, qui carnem petitum de sollemni more mittantur. The scholiast, whose work has been dated by Hildebrandt (1971) xxiii-xxiv to the late third or early fourth century AD, describes the rituals as a form of superstition. The only parallel for this is in Arn. 2,68, where the author denounces the rites in a Christian fashion. The connotation of this passage is not so negative and the Bobbio scholiasat does not seem hostile to Roman religion in general. For evidence concerning the worship on the Alban mount in the late Empire, see page 190.

644 In Servius’ Ad Aen. (5.598) the prisci Latini are labeled as those who ‘occupied the areas where Alba Longa was founded’ (Priscos Latinos ita dixi sunt quia tenuerant loca ubi Alba est condita); Festus 253L claims that the old
Although specific names are missing, this idea is similar to Pliny’s list of populi Albenses. However, when Pliny uses the term prisci Latini himself, he refers to the Latin war of 338 BC and the involved communities.\(^{645}\) So, although there are some attempts at categorization in Roman literature, the picture that emerges is highly inconsistent, confusing and complex. Modern scholars have tried to bring some chronological and geographical order to the various groups of Latini, prisci Latini and Latinenses that appear in the sources.\(^{646}\) This results in a dense web of etymological as well as mythological correlations, but what the references have in common is that the first Latins were perceived as a relatively small group of cities, of which the common name eventually expanded to include the peoples and cities in a wider area around Rome (although the exact dimensions of both the early and later area are unclear). While the prisci Latini certainly had forefathers and origin legends in common – we shall discuss them shortly – in historical times the appellation Latini referred to a geographical location more than to a distinct ethnic union. In the historical sources (Livy being the best example) a city or population is generally labelled Latin when it is located within the Latium of their own days.\(^{647}\)

The religious and political alliances between Latins that we find in the sources certainly do not reflect a homogenous or static group. The composition of the Latin league probably changed over time and different circumstances required different coalitions. In this process, as we have seen earlier in this thesis, the deities of Latium gradually gained more importance and attracted larger crowds.\(^{648}\) We may trace the first phases of the cult of Jupiter Latiaris back to this process as well, and although the exact circumstances cannot be reconstructed, it is safe to say that the leading role of Rome and king Tarquinius in the literary tradition shows signs of anachronism that reflect the later dominion of Rome over the region and over the rites. Thus, in the late Republican and Imperial context in which our sources were written, the contemporary reality of the celebration of the feriae Latinae was provided with an historical explanation and justification. This reflection was not just an intellectual effort: it was an intrinsic part of the religious celebration itself, which was all about the relation between Rome and the larger world around it.

---

\(^{645}\) In Plin. NH 34.20: … sicuti C. Maenio, qui devicerat priscos Latinos (‘For example [the statue in honour of] Gaius Maenius who had vanquished the Old Latins’). Pliny refers to one of the consuls, who had been the first to receive statues on columns at the expense of the city.


\(^{647}\) Liou-Gille (1997) 731-734. Eventually, of course, the appellation referred to the communities obtaining the ius Latii.

\(^{648}\) See chapter II, pages 50-53 and chapter III, pages 138-139.
4.2 Latinus as forefather and Alba Longa as metropolis

Before we turn to the rites that actualised the historical links between Rome and its neighbours, we must first discuss another part of the distant (mythical) past that was evoked by the *feriae Latinae*: the foundation history of Rome. The scholiast on Cicero concerned with the origins of the rites, briefly mentioned before, offers a curious account on the possible involvement of Rome’s founding fathers. His reference to the mythical king Faunus as the establisher of the cult is otherwise unattested, but the story on the death of king Latinus and Aeneas finds a parallel in a fragment of the second century grammarian Festus, who explores the meaning of the word *oscillantes* and connects it with a rite in celebration of Jupiter Latiaris:

Cornificius says that the *oscillantes* (‘swingers’) are so called from the fact that people who enjoyed this kind of game used to cover their face with masks out of modesty. The cause of this display is given as follows. King Latinus, who in the battle he had with Mezentius king of Caere, disappeared, was adjudged to have become Jupiter Latiaris. And so on that day freedmen and slaves seek him not on earth but in a way by which it seems that they can reach the sky through swinging, which is also an image of human life, in which the highest moments become the depths and the depths are carried to the heights. And it is believed to recall the beginning of life through the motions of the cot and the nourishment of milk, because on those festive days people use swings and drink milk. And there are those who think the Italians followed the example of the Greeks, for they too, when Icarus was killed by injury, and his daughter – impelled by grief – had died by hanging herself, by simulation...

Whereas the scholiast on Cicero mentions both Aeneas and Latinus, Festus claims that it was the disappearance of Latinus and his transformation into Jupiter Latiaris that was the origin of the rite on the Alban mount. Both accounts relate the cult to the custom of *oscillare*, or ‘swinging’. In an

---

649 Fest. 212L: *oscillantes, ait Cornificius, ab eo, quod os celare soliti personis propter verecundiam, qui eo genere lusus utebantur. Causa autem eius iactationis proditur Latinus rex, qui proemio quod ei[s] fuit adversus Mezentium, Caeritum regem, nusquam apparuverit, indicatusque sit Iuppiter factus Latiaris. Itaque ?scit eius dies ? feriatos, liberos servosque require eum non solum in terris, sed etiam qua vide[n]tur coelum posse adiri per oscillationem, velut imaginem quandam vitae humanae, in qua altissima ad infirmum interdum <ad infima>, infima ad summum efferentur. Atque ideo memoriam quoque redintegrari initio acceptae vitae per motus cunarum lactisque alimentum, quia per eos dies feriarum et oscillis moveantur, et lactata potione utantur. Nec desunt qui exemplum Graecorum secutos putent Italic[jos], quod illi quoque, innuria interfector Icaro, <cum> Ergione filia eius dolore impulsa suspendio perisset, per stimulationem … (Text is lost from here). The translation is adapted from Smith (2012) 283.

650 The Greek parallel that is missing here, is that of the daughter of Icarus (and not Icarus, as is noted in Festus), who – after her father got killed – killed herself and triggered an epidemic of Athenian girls hanging themselves. At the advice of Delphi, the Athenians stopped this by instituting the festival of Aiora (‘swinging’) in which girls were supposed to swing in chairs hanging from trees. The aition is represented on vase paintings as well. See: Johnston (2013) 219-222.
attempt to search for the soul of Latinus (and Aeneas), the participants in the rite apparently swung in the air, with some sort of mask covering their faces. The description of the ritual remembrance of these Latin forefathers seems to have something to do with human life and afterlife as well, but very little is known about the context in which this rite should have taken place. In other instances in Roman literature, oscilla are referred to as swinging votives, for example in the celebration of the feriae Sementivae.\footnote{Feriae Sementivae: Verg. Geor. 2.386-396, and the commentary of Servius ad loc., who claims to quote Probus on the subject. See further: Cecamore (1996) 59-60, Liou-Gille (1996) 95, Grandazzi (2008) 577-582.} If and how this relates to the masks or people that were swinging during the feriae Latinae is not clear from the written sources, nor is the relation of this custom to the much better defined and described ritual division of the sacrificial meat.

There have been attempts to further our understanding of this rite through archaeological sources. We know of several depictions of swinging devices in religious scenes on relief panels and wall paintings from the first and second century AD, which have been recognized as oscilla (figure 4.1).\footnote{The example in figure 4.1 is a stucco decoration in Pompeii. See Taylor (2005) 83-105 for other pictures and an analysis of the possible religious or apotropaic meanings.} Furthermore, Giovanni Colonna has identified about a hundred ‘ciottoli’ (pebbles) in a votive deposit under the comitium in Rome as oscilla, suggesting that they were gifts for Dis Pater.\footnote{Colonna (1981) 75 (the votive wells were excavated by Boni The reference to Dis Pater is derived from Macrobius, who states (1.7.31; 1.11.48) that the god used to receive human sacrifices, until Hercules changed the ritual and oscilla in the shapes of humans were sacrificed instead. For Romulus’ disappearance and subsequent worship on the Comitium as Quirinus: Plut. Num. 2.1-3; Rom. 27-28.} In a re-examination of the evidence found on the mons Albanus, Claudia Cecamore has identified an egg-shaped stone as an oscillium too, suggesting that there was a ritual connection between the Comitium, where – according to some traditions – Romulus disappeared into thin air, and the mons Albanus, where his forefathers Latinus and Aeneas met the same fate (figure 4.2).\footnote{Cecamore (1996) 60.} Captivating though this may be, Grandazzi rightfully points out that the evidence seems overly stretched here, and there is no indication that the practice of using oscilla in other cults had anything to do with the commemorative celebrations for Latinus and Aeneas practiced on the Alban mount.\footnote{Grandazzi (2008) 560, 600.}

Of course, the connection between the feriae Latinae and the earliest history of Rome was also established through the village that was connected with the festival through its supposed location and that had a special significance in the Roman mind: Alba Longa. As we have seen, the mythical mother city of Rome was mentioned in the context of the beginnings of the feriae Latinae. According to some authors, like Pliny, the earliest festivities on mons Albanus centred on the populi Albenses, who apparently could be distinguished from peoples of other Latin towns that had also
disappeared. Diodorus Siculus, in a passage preserved in Eusebius, appears to relate to the same tradition when he provides a list of colonies founded by the Alban king Aeneas Silvius, but instead of mentioning populations, as Pliny does, Diodorus mentions towns. Adding further confusion, Diodorus’ list of eighteen towns contains places that still existed in historical times, whereas Pliny claims the communities sharing the sacrificial meat on the Alban mount had disappeared by his time. Notwithstanding these discrepancies in the surviving literary record, at least some authors (quoted by the scholiast on Cicero), seem to trace the roots of the feriae Latinae back to pre-Roman times, when the forefathers of Romulus, the kings of Alba Longa, dominated the region and supervised the execution of the rites. The name of the hill itself would be reminiscent of this earliest history, thus connecting it – according to modern as well as ancient interpreters – to the religious landscape of the later Roman Republic and Empire.

Obviously, this continuity is far from straightforward. The complex nature of Rome’s mythical genealogy has often been recognized as an amalgam of competing stories, in which the part centred around the kings of Alba Longa is perhaps the most obvious invention: it evidently serves to cover the chronological gap between the end of the Trojan war and Aeneas’ arrival in Italy (calculated back to the twelfth century BC by Greek historians), and Romulus’ foundation of Rome (traced back to 753 BC by Roman authors). Even in its fully developed Augustan version in Livy and Vergil, the list of Alban kings – starting from the reign of Aeneas’ son Ascanius – has many inconsistencies and anachronisms. The fifteen versions we have of the Alban royal line differ to a considerable degree, but most agree that there were some fifteen generations between Aeneas and Romulus. The names of the kings are quite obviously fabricated and demonstrably based on toponyms of locations in and around Rome, on traveling heroes from Greek legends and on the

---

656 See pages 148ff.
657 Diod. Sic. 7.5.9 (Eus. Chron. 288): ‘He was a vigorous ruler both in internal administration and in war, laying waste the neighbouring territory and founding the eighteen ancient cities which were formerly known as the ‘Latin cities’: Tibur, Praeneste, Gabii, Tusculum, Cora, Pometia, Lanuvium, Labici, Scaptia, Satricum, Aricia, Tellenea, Crustumerium, Caenina, Fregellae, Cameria, Medullia, and Boilum, which some men also write Bola’. (Hie in rebus gerendis et in bello validus repertus finitimam regionem evertit atque urbes antiquas, quae antea Latinorum vocabantur, XVIII condidit: Tiburam, Praenestum, Kabios, Tiskalum, Koram, Kometiam, Lanuvium, Labikam, Skaptiam, Satrikum, Arkiam, Telenam, Okostomeriam, Kaeninum, Phlegenam, Komerium, Medipliant, Boilum, quam nonnulli Bolam vocant). Most of the Greek text of Eusebius’ Chronicon is missing; this translation is adapted from a Latin translation of the Armenian translation of the Greek original, in the Schoene-Petermann edition.
658 Some earlier version (Naevius, Ennius) even claimed that Romulus was a direct grandson of Aeneas, posing even greater chronological difficulties. The canonical date of the sack of Troy was calculated by the Greek mathematician Eratostenes of Alexandria; it was probably Varro who established Rome’s foundation date. Cf: Laroche (1982) 112-120, Cornell (1995) 70 and note 78, Grandazzi (2008) 791-792, 887-888.
659 An insightful table was made by: Trieber (1894) 123-124. Laroche (1982) 112-120 argues that there was a process of numerical rationalization behind the establishment of the reigns of the Alban kings, in which each generation ruled for about thirty years, with the expection of the first and last kings, who ruled for 43 years. Similar numerical generalizations appear in the list of Roman kings. Cf: Forsythe (2005) 98-99.
famous gentes of the Roman Republic and their claims to a mythical lineage. Although it was long thought to be located at the foot of the mons Albanus, the town itself has never been found, nor can its alleged destruction – described by Livy as a total war between Rome and Alba Longa resulting in the total demolition of Alba and the deportation of its population to Rome – be traced anywhere in the archaeological landscape around monte Cavo (or anywhere else).

However, concluding at this point that there simply never was an Alba Longa is too easy, as the mythical place held such an important position in the Roman mythical landscape that it became associated with the physical landscape as well. As we will see further ahead, the communities that in historical times occupied the Alban hills began to identify with the traditions surrounding Alba Longa, and religious functionaries – perhaps in some way involved in the celebrations of the feriae Latinae – received titles that also alluded to the mythical origins. The legendary history of Rome’s mother city has generated lengthy debates amongst classicists and archaeologists, and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore these arguments in full detail. What concerns us here is that the feriae Latinae may have contained elements that referred to Alba Longa and Rome’s legendary genealogy, such as the tradition of the populi Albenses and the mysterious custom of oscillare, but that the festivities certainly did not revolve solely around these elements. As Alexandre Grandazzi states in his monumental work on the subject, the name of the hill itself – mons Albanus - may be the most important link between the origin myths, the landscape and the cult practice. In the many references to the yearly celebrations, ancient authors mention the cult site frequently and there can be no doubt that the feriae Latinae took place on a peak that the Romans identified and described as the mons Albanus. How and when the hilltop acquired this name is uncertain, but Grandazzi

---

660 Toponyms include the kings named Tiberinus, Aventinus and Palatinus; kings like Capys and Atys refer to Greek traditions, and connections with influential families are clearly recognizable in the cases of Amulius (forefather of the Aemulii) and Agrippa. See for a full overview of this tradition and its many variations: Grandazzi (2008) 731-890 (figure 22 for the fifteen versions of the list of kings). For Republican gentes tracing their ancestry back to Trojan roots see: Farney (2007) 53-60, Wiseman (1974) 153-164. The most well-known example is of course that of the gens Iulia, who claimed descent from Aeneas and thus Venus through their forefather Iulius (also known as Ascanius) and celebrated this link in the town of Bovillae. See for the connection between the Iulii, Bovillae and the mons Albanus, pages 198-199.

661 Livy (1.22-28) claims that it was king Tullius Hostilius who waged war on Alba Longa and eventually ordered it to be destroyed to the ground, with its entire population transferred to Rome. For the academic tradition that identifies Alba Longa at the foot of the monte Cavo: Grandazzi (2008) 445-514, where he also discussed theories that identified the mythical village with present day Albano Laziale and Castel Gandolfo. In the ancient literary sources, there is little coherence or specificity: authors place Alba Longa on a (fortified) hill on or near mons Albanus, at the shores of the lake or in the valley towards Aricia.


663 Grandazzi (2008) 572 counts 18 examples of the expression in monte (or montem) Albano (or Albanum), 14 instances of in Albano (or Albanum) monte and one fragment in which the location of the festivities is labeled as Albano in monte. Examples include, but are not limited to passages in Varro (Ling. 6.25), Cicero (Div. 1.11.18; Att. 1.3) and Livy (1.31.1-4; 5.17.2; 7.28.6-7). For further examples and analysis, see the following section on the ritual proceedings during the feriae Latinae.
suggests that this was at a rather late stage of the developing legendary tradition in Rome, when the festivities of the feriae Latinae had long been established. In fact, as Cornell suggested earlier, the prominence of the cult on monte Cavo may have been the reason that the origin myth landed there in the first place.

Where does this leave us? What the overview of literary sources has shown so far, is that the origins of the festivities on the mons Albanus were explained by a variety of literary traditions, which differ greatly and in many instances clearly contradict each other. One could hypothesise that the different narratives can be harmonized by assuming that there was a pre-existing festival on the hilltop, at which Latin communities worshipped collectively and perhaps reinforced their political relations; this religio-political status quo was broken by the expansionism of the Romans, after which the history of the festival was rewritten to account for the dominant position of Rome in the region and connect it to the mythical town of Alba Longa. It must be emphasized however, that there is no way to substantiate this hypothesis. More importantly, as was underlined before in this thesis: smoothing out discrepancies between these foundation stories may not be a valid approach to begin with, as it responds to a modern ‘drive toward coherence’ and an anxiety of multiplicity that is not necessarily shared by the ancient authors under discussion. Besides, the chronology of the feriae Latinae becomes even more confusing when the archaeological material is taken into consideration, as we will see below. What we can however deduce from the surviving narratives is that the deep historical roots of the feriae Latinae were explicitly connected with Rome’s position in Latium and with its role and function in the larger world. The festivities were a reflection upon the region’s earliest history, but at the same time the ceremonies shaped the form and significance of this history, making them a ritual performance of both memory and identity (politics). To study this process further, this chapter will continue with an analysis of the ritual proceedings on the Alban mount during the feriae Latinae and the way they are described and explained by ancient authors.

4.3 Carneum patera: a celebration of community and hierarchy

As mentioned earlier, the evidence for the cult of Jupiter Latiaris is quite different from the material discussed in the chapters on Diana Nemorensis and Juno Sospita. Whereas many of the sources on Diana and Juno consider the nature and appearance of the goddesses, it is very difficult to establish the exact identity of the deity that was worshipped on the Alban mount. In the surviving sources,

---

666 See the introduction, pages 14-16.
there is no description of the deeds, needs or appearance of the god, and he appears only in the context of the feriae Latinae. The sources on the feriae Latinae do provide us with a description of the rites performed during the festival and the rules surrounding them. In relation to this, there is another notable difference: the cults of Juno Sospita and Diana Nemorensis had a connection with Roman state religion, but there were many signs of private worship as well. In the case of Jupiter Latiaris, the picture is different: here, there are few indications of individual worship and the feriae Latinae, which were so obviously related to the affairs of the Roman state, seem to be the main occasion in which Jupiter Latiaris became manifest as a god. This brings up a number of questions, of which many may have more to do with the deplorable state of the (archaeological) evidence than with the character of the god under discussion. We will come back to these issues later, but for now it is important to acknowledge the importance of the descriptions of the feriae Latinae for our understanding of the god and the cult, and to study them in further detail.\footnote{668}

Although there are quite a number of sources on the proceedings during the Latin festival, there are major uncertainties as well, some of which have already been discussed. It is unclear, for example, what the relation of the mysterious rite of oscillatio – the swinging of people or votives – to the other celebrations was.\footnote{669} In a poem on his consulship of 63 BC (preserved in de Divinatione) Cicero mentions the festival and raises another issue: he labels the ceremony a lustratio (a purification ritual) and says that the area of the sacrifice was sprinkled with milk, instead of the more usual libation of wine or water.\footnote{670} Modern observers have interpreted this as a sign of the archaic, pastoral roots of the rites and have related it to the promotion of fertility, but since there are no other indications for this, the suggestion that the feriae Latinae originally were an agricultural festival seems all too speculative.\footnote{671} Also interesting, but without further context, is Lucan’s remark about a ‘bonfire which marks the end of the Latin festival’.\footnote{672} In Lucan’s account, the fire splits into two flames as one of the many prodigia surrounding the march of Caesar on Rome, and thus forecasted dissonance and civil war. We may assume that a huge fire on top of a hill that could be seen in the entire region was an appropriate ending for a festival that celebrated Latin unity, but again, we have no other references to this, and that silence in the sources could be telling.

\footnote{668 See for the discussion of the archaeological remains: pages 164ff.}
\footnote{669 See pages 152-153.}
\footnote{670 Cic. De Div. 1.11.18: [...] lustrasti et laeto mactasti lacte Latinas. See note 693.}
\footnote{671 See, for example: Grandazzi (2008) 516, Pasqualini (1996) 221, note 17, Alföldi (1963) 20ff. Libations with milk were made during the Parilia, the festival of shepherds and herds directed at the ancient god Pales. Rumina and Cunina, tutelary goddesses of childbirth, breast milk and the cradle, were honoured with libations of milk as well.}
\footnote{672 Luc. 1.549-525: Vestali raptus ab ara / ignis et ostendens confectas flamma Latinas / scinditur in partis geminoque cacumine surgit / Thebanos imitata rogos. (‘From Vesta’s altar the fire vanished suddenly; and the bonfire which marks the end of the Latin Festival split into two and rose, like the pyre of the Thebans, with double crest’).}
With so many insecurities and fragmentary passages, what do we know about the festival? Dionysius’ account of the way Tarquinius Suberbus established the *feriae* as a celebration of Roman and Latin bonds provides a rather extensive narrative of the sacrifice that took place, as he claims, ‘to his day’. As we have seen, his version of the origins of the festival is much disputed, but does this also go for his description of the offerings? Dionysius relates that the Latin cities each brought a part of the sacrificial meal to the hilltop, where a communal festival was celebrated in honour of Jupiter Latarius, which ended with the sacrifice of a bull. Next, under the supervision of the Romans, each of the 47 Latin cities received an appointed share of the meat. If Dionysius’ description can be trusted, this means that the sacrifices during the *feriae Latinae* were as much a celebration of the relations between Rome and Latium, as they were a confirmation of the Roman superiority over the area.

But what did it mean to perform a sacrifice under the superintendence of the Romans? A fragment of Livy provides more details, as it mentions a problem that occurred in 176 BC, when the magistrates from Lanuvium had apparently made a mistake that had dramatic consequences:

The Latin festival was held on the third day before the Nones of May, and a religious scruple arose because at the sacrifice of one victim the magistrate of Lanuvium had not prayed for the Roman people, the Quirites. When this was reported to the Senate and the Senate had referred the question to the college of pontiffs, the decree of the pontiffs was that the Latin festival should be repeated, since it had not been correctly performed, and that the people of Lanuvium, to whom was due the necessity of the repetition, should furnish the victims. Their religious fear was increased by the fact that Gnaeus Cornelius the consul fell on his return from the Alban Mount, and, paralyzed in some of his limbs, set out for Aquae Cumanae and, his illness growing more severe, died at Cumae. [...] The consul Quintus Petilius, as soon as the auspices permitted, was ordered to hold an election to choose his colleague and to proclaim the Latin festival; the election he declared for the third day before the Nones of August, the festival for the third day before the Ides of August. [...] While the two consuls were delayed first by religious observances, then one consul by the death of the other and the election and the repetition of the Latin festival.  

---

673 See pages 145-146 of this chapter.
674 Liv. 41.16.1-7: *Latiue feriae fuere ante diem tertium nonas Maias, in quibus, quia in una hostia magistratus Lanuvinus precatus non erat populo Romano Quiritium, religioni fuit. Id cum ad senatum relatum esset senatusque ad pontificum collegium reieisset, pontificibus, quia non recte factae Latinae essent, instaurari Latinas placuit, Lanuvinos, quorum opera instaurandae essent, hostias praebere. Accesserat ad religionem, quod Cn. Cornelius consul ex monte Albano rediens concidit et, parte membrorum captus, ad Aquas Cumanas profectus ingrauescente morbo Cumis descessit. [...].*
From this incidence, we learn a number of things about the festival. Firstly, it was apparently customary for the officials from the other towns to pray for the Roman people, *pro populo Romano Quiritium.* When this was neglected, the entire sacrifice was invalid and had to be performed again. This must have been an impractical and quite expensive affair, for which on this occasion the town of Lanuvium had to pay. When, however, one of the cities felt treated unfairly and had not received its fair share, the consequences were the same: in 199 BC the festivities were repeated because the representatives from Ardea complained about their part of the meat; in 190 BC the same thing happened because of the Laurentes.

It turns out that these unsuccessful and therefore repeated *feriae Latinae* were no isolated cases. From the *Fasti feriarum Latinarum,* which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, we learn that there are several years for which multiple festivals are recorded, both in the Republic and in the Empire. Political upheaval – like the death of the consul in 176 BC – appears to have contributed to the required reprises, as for example becomes clear from the first entry in the *Fasti.* In the year 449 BC, when the Republic was restored after the Decemvirate, the festival was apparently held three times. Livy records a severe winter storm that put an end to the proceedings in 179 BC, so that religious scruple led the pontiffs to announce a repetition. Finally, there is a remarkable report of an Etruscan *haruspex* who was very helpful in the long war preceding the capture of Veii. After an unusual rise of the Alban lake in the middle of August, causing great anxiety in Rome, he advised that the gods would only allow the Romans to take Veii if they dug a drainage from the lake to the sea. Connected with this prodigy, the soothsayer discovered that the gods were unhappy because the *feriae Latinae* had been announced for the wrong date. Only in 396

---

Consul Q. Petilius, *cum primum per auspicia posset, collegae subrogando comitia habere iussus et Latinas edicere, comitia in ante diem tertium nonas Sextiles, Latinas in ante diem tertium idus Sextiles edixit. […] Dum consules primum religiones, deinde alterum alterius mors et comitia et Latinarum instauratio impediunt.*

675 See Grandazzi (2008) 521-522 for some explorations on the ritual function of the prayer, which the author assumes was delivered by the magistrates of the Latin towns one after another, after which the Roman delegation offered prayers to the god on behalf of all of them.

676 Ardea: Liv. 32.1.9; Laurentum: Liv. 37.3.4

677 See pages 175-178 for the discussion of the inscription.

678 See page 176.

679 Liv. 40.45.2: *Itaque Latinas nona subito coorta et intolerabiles tempestas in monte turbavit instaurataeque sunt ex decreto pontificum.* The fact that the weather had such large influence on the festival, may be seen as support for Lugli’s theory that it was in fact not conducted in a sanctuary building, but in the open air. See: Lugli (1930) 166-167 and pages 174-175 of this chapter for further discussion.

680 Liv. 5.15.4-11. Apart from the sudden rise of the lake, five *prodigia* are reported around *mons Albanus:* the sky was seen on fire in 113 BC (Obs. 38; Plin. *NH* 2.100; rains of stones hit the mountain in 212 BC (Liv. 25.7.7-9); the canal of the Alban lake turned blood-red in 209 BC (Liv. 27.11.2); a statue of Jupiter and a tree near the temple were struck by lightning in the same year (Liv. 27.11.1) and finally, a small temple of Juno mysteriously turned northward overnight in 56 BC (Cas. Dio 39.20.1).
BC, when the canal was finished and the date of the festival had been reset, could Veii be conquered.\footnote{Liv. 5.17.1-6; 5.19.1. See further, on this case as an example of the value attributed to individual wisdom of soothsayers: Beard, North and Price (1998) 168-169. Cf: Grandazzi (2008) 37-41, who believes that the sudden rise of the lake was an historical event, as a similar volcanic phenomenon recently (in the 1980’s) occurred in West Africa.}

From Livy’s description cited above, it is also clear that it was the duty of the consuls to establish a date for the feriae. This was done by means of a senatus consultum, as we learn from a letter from Marcus Caelius Rufus to Cicero in Cilicia, in which he mocks the consuls of the year 51 BC who had not succeeded in passing a single decree through the Senate other than that about the feriae Latinae.\footnote{Cic. Ad Fam. 8.6.3: Consules autem habemus summa diligentia; adhuc s.c. nisi de feriis Latinis nullum facere potuerunt. (‘Our Consuls are paragons of conscientiousness—to date they have not succeeded in getting a single decree through the Senate except about the Latin festival’).}

This means that the festival on the Alban mount was not only repeatable but also moveable, and thus it is labelled by Varro as one of the feriae conceptivae (‘festivals without a fixed date’) along with the Compitalia, the Ambarvalia and others.\footnote{Var. Ling. Lat. 6.25: De statutis diebus dixi; de annalibus nec die statutis dicam [...] Similiter Latinae feriae dies conceptivas, dictus a Latinis populis, quibus in Albanico monte ex sacris carnem petere fuit ius cum Romanis, a quibus Latinis Latinae dictae. (‘The fixed days are those of which I have spoken; now I shall speak of the annual festivals which are not fixed on a special day [...] Likewise the Latinae feriae ‘Latin Holiday’ is an appointed day, named from the peoples of Latium, who had equal right with the Romans to get a share of the meat at the sacrifices on the Alban Mount: from these Latin peoples it was called the Latin Holiday’.) On the feriae Conceptivae in general, see: Rüpke (1995a) 488-490.}

It is the only festival in this category that was decided upon by the consuls instead of the priests, and, as such, it seems to have been one of the moments that highlighted consular power and initiated the political and military imperium.\footnote{Simón (2011) 129-130.}

The authority of the consuls was strengthened further by the fact that every magistrate in Rome was required – at least by the time of the late Republic – to travel to the mons Albanus and attend the rites. Even the tribunes of the plebs, who were usually not allowed to leave the city, participated in the festival.\footnote{Dion. Hal. 8.87.6; Liv. 22.1.6; Strab. 5.3.2. Cf: Alföldi (1963) 32, Simón (2011) 117.}

Because of the collective absence, a special praefectus urbi feriarum Latinarum was appointed, who was responsible for the administrative duties in the city while all of its magistrates were away.\footnote{Gell. NA 14.8. See, also for the games that were probably held during the feriae Latinae in the city of Rome, pages 191ff.}

The feriae Latinae, consequently, constituted a significant moment in the ritual year, and many if not all of Rome’s elite were involved in it. Adding to this importance, was the fact that Roman magistrates with imperium were only allowed to go on a military campaign after the rites of the Latin festival had been conducted. Gaius Flaminius, the designated consul of 217 BC, learned that ignoring this custom could have severe consequences. According to Livy, he feared that his enemies would manipulate the auspicia for the date of the feriae Latinae to delay his departure to the troops.
stationed in Ariminium, so he fled the city before he had performed his religious duties.\textsuperscript{687} This of course roused the Senate, which questioned his authority as a consul and called him back to Rome. Flaminius refused and set out to meet Hannibal at Lake Trasimene, where the disastrous battle ended his life and brought Rome to a state of panic.\textsuperscript{688} Although Cicero and Valerius Maximus mention the religious negligence of the consul, they do not comment on the *feriae Latinae* specifically, and Flaminius’ incident mainly seems to function as a negative *exemplum* in Livy’s narrative.\textsuperscript{689} Even so, there are several fragments that confirm the religious obligation of staying – ‘being detained’ – in Rome until the sacrifices on the Alban Mount were performed correctly, especially in dangerous circumstances like the Hannibalic war.\textsuperscript{690} From the perspective of the ancient sources, the violation of this rule was considered a serious break of the *pax deorum*. Cassius Dio even suggests a direct relation between the negligence of the consuls in 43 BC and the battles and murders of the Civil Wars:

\[\ldots\] Furthermore, the consuls took their departure just before the *feriae Latinae*, and there is no instance that has happened and the Romans have fared well. At any rate, on this occasion also, a vast multitude of the people, including the two consuls, perished, some immediately and some later, and also many of the knights and senators, including the most prominent. For in the first place the battles, and in the second place the murders at home which occurred again as in the Sullan regime, destroyed all the flower of the citizens except those who perpetrated the murders.\textsuperscript{691}

Considering the military issues at stake, the length of the festival, the prohibition for consuls and praetors to leave the city beforehand and the possibility of a reprisal if the proceedings were executed wrongly, one would assume that it was in everybody’s interest to celebrate the *feriae Latinae* as early as possible. Livy specifically mentions the festival in relation to (hasty) war

\textsuperscript{687} And thus, he left the city not as a consul but as a *privatus*. Liv. 21.63.5: [...] *privatus clam in provinciam abit.*

\textsuperscript{688} Liv. 22.1.6: the Senate is angry with Flaminius and repudiates his right to the *auspicia*; in caput 22.6 he eventually loses the epic battle against Hannibal.

\textsuperscript{689} Cic. *De Inv*. 2.17; Val. Max. 5.4.5. See, for Flaminius as a negative *exemplum* in Roman prose: Lushkov (2015) 32-38.

\textsuperscript{690} Liv. 25.12.1: *Romae consules praetoresque usque ad ante diem quintum kal. Maias Latinae tenuerunt. Eo die perpetrato sacro in monte in suas quisque provincias proficiscuntur.* (‘At Rome the consuls and praetors were detained by the Latin festival until the 26th of April. After performing the rites on that day on the Mount, each set out for his assignment’).

\textsuperscript{691} Cass. Dio 46.33.4: [...] καὶ προσέτι καὶ τὸ τούτῳ ὑπάτους τὴν ἔξοδον πρὸ τῶν Λατίνων ἄνοχων ποίησαθι· οὐ γάρ ἔστιν ὁπότε τούτου γεγονέν ἀλλὰ ἀπέλλαξαν. ἀμέλει καὶ τότε ὁ ὅποτα ἀμφότεροι καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ὅμοιο πάμπολο πλῆθος, τὸ μέν ἐν τῷ παρόντι τὸ δὲ καὶ μετὰ ταύτα, τῶν τε ἑπέμων καὶ τῶν βουλευτῶν πολλοί, καὶ οἱ μάλιστα ἀνὰ πρώτους δόντες, ἀπόλοντο. τοῦτο μέν γὰρ αἱ μάχαι, τοῦτο δὲ καὶ οἱ οἱκοί σφαγᾶ τὸν Σύλλειον τρόπον ἀδύνατος γενόμεναι πάν τι περ ἴν ἄθροι αὐτῶν, ἐξὼ τῶν ὀρέων σφαξ, ἐφθειραν.
preparations a number of times. In the poem on his consulship in 63 BC, already mentioned, Cicero describes the mons Albanus as being covered in snow, suggesting that he presided over the rites very early in the year. At the same time, there are references to celebrations later in the year and the Fasti show that most of the festivals – as far as we can reconstruct the dates – took place in May, with celebrations up to August in some years and only a few entries in winter. Does this mean that the magistrates with imperium waited that long, did they perhaps return to Rome for the celebrations or were not all of them present during the rites?

Unfortunately, we are not that well informed, even on some of these basic features of the event. Cassius Dio, in a description of the prodigia that occurred when Agrippa died in 12 BC, says that the house in which the consuls stayed on the Alban Mount was hit by lightning. This suggests that some arrangements had been made to house the magistrates there during the feriae Latinae – perhaps for a number of days. But other clues in the literature are lacking and the archaeological evidence, as we will see further ahead, is not very helpful. So was it even necessary to provide accommodation on the mountain itself? With regards to the duration of the festival, Dionysius of Halicarnassus seems to suggest it was. He explains that a third day was added in 493 BC, to celebrate the foedus Cassianum and the end of the troubles with the plebs. Originally, he says, Tarquinius established a one-day festival, and a second day was added when the kings were expelled from the city. Plutarch even states that a fourth day was added to the feriae by Camillus in 367 BC. There is reason to doubt this evidence on the length of the festivities. Dionysius claims that the supervision of the feriae Latinae was in the hands of the aediles from 493 onwards and that it were both rites and games that took place on the mons Albanus. As Smith and others have observed, the leading role of the aediles is highly unlikely, since it conflicts with the many sources that give this position to the consuls. Furthermore, there is no indication that games were part of the celebrations on the hilltop – although they were perhaps held in the city of Rome on the same days, as we will see shortly. The aediles are better known for their management of the ludi in Rome, and indeed in his discussion on the events of 367, Livy adds extra days to the ludi Magni. We cannot be sure of the exact relation between the narratives, but there seems to be a kind of confusion between

---

692 Liv. 44.49.4; 44.22.16.  
693 Cic. de Div, 1.11.18: [...] cum tumulos Albano in monte nivalis / lustrasti et laeto mactasti lacte Latinas. ('When, on ascending the mountainous heights of snowy Albanus, you offered joyful libations of milk at the Feast of the Latins'). See page 157 for the libations of milk.  
694 Cass. Dio 54.29.7. Cf: Simón (2011) 125, who hypothesizes that the consuls spent the night there on the eve of the sacrifice, the rites being performed in the morning after the auspices.  
696 Plut. Cam. 42.  
698 See pages 191ff.  
699 Liv. 6.42.2.
different festivals and, as Smith argues, the duration of the feriae Latinae may well have remained the same – just one day – throughout its history.

As we assemble the literary evidence, a confusing picture emerges. Many of the basic characteristics of the feriae Latinae – such as the duration of the festival, the exact ritual proceedings and the number of Roman officials and Latin allies involved – remain contested, and it is hard (if not impossible) to reconstruct a coherent image of what exactly happened on the Alban mount. At the same time, our sources leave little doubt that the feriae Latinae were considered an important part of the religious calendar in Rome, and a many of the sources we have on the festival examines its religious and historical significance. In the descriptions of the rites, the earliest expansionist history of Rome is symbolically evoked and connected to contemporary political and religious reality. Once a year, Romans and Latins celebrated their shared identity on mons Albanus, but the joint ceremony was clearly rooted in the Rome’s hegemony over both the physical and the religious landscape. The participation of so many of Rome’s magistrates confirmed this political prominence, and the feriae Latinae seem to have been one of the defining moments of consular authority.\(^{700}\) Only after the sacrifices to Jupiter Latiaris had been performed, were the magistrates with imperium allowed to leave for their provinces. Consequently, the conquests of the Roman Republic and early Empire were always preceded by a celebration and revocation of the distant Latin past. In the context of the growing Roman realm, the celebration of Latinity stood for the celebration of unity under Roman rule. As we will see further ahead in this chapter, the cult may have continued to flourish because of the evolving significance of this metaphorical model. Celebrating Latinity and the Latin past meant, in many ways, celebrating being Roman: a union that was also reflected in the close relation between Latin Jupiter and Roman Jupiter, as the final part of this chapter will show.\(^{701}\)

Before we expand on these issues, we must return to one of the issues this chapter started with: the sphere of influence and appearance of the god worshipped on the mons Albanus. In the literary sources discussed so far, the character of Jupiter Latiaris was hardly addressed. Considering his connection with Roman war efforts and the political arena, we may assume that he was perceived as a protective or guardian deity, but there are no passages that specify this and we know nothing of the expectations and wishes of worshippers that visited the cult site at the Alban Mount. In fact, apart from the Roman magistrates and their Latin allies, the literary sources reveal nothing about the identity of individual worshippers. As in previous chapters, the archaeological remains and votive gifts discovered on the hill, and epigraphic testimonies of the cult, may shed some light on on the organisation of the cult site, the diversity of the worshippers, and their communication

\(^{700}\) For the emphasis on consular authority, see especially Simón (2011) 116-132.

\(^{701}\) See pages 191ff. The paradigmatic status of the Latin past can also be observed in the prayers of the ludi Saeculares, where Latium is portrayed as the birthplace of Roman imperial ambition. See Cooley (2006) 334-336.
with its presiding deity. The following sections of this chapter will show that it is very difficult to align these different categories of source material and, just like in the chapters on Diana Nemorensis and Juno Sospita, it is worth emphasizing that the analysis cannot and should not result in a coherent, all-encompassing image of Jupiter Latiaris. Perhaps even more so than in previous chapters, however, the material evidence invites us to think about the contextual nature of the sources we have on the religious landscape of the Alban hills. The literary discourse suggests that the *feriae Latinae* created a close connection between the mythical and semi-historical past, contemporary cult practice and political authority, but is this reflected in the material relics of the cult as well?

### 4.4 Archaeological remains – or the lack thereof

While the sanctuary of Jupiter Latiaris on the Alban Mount was one of the most famous – if not the most famous - sanctuaries of Latium Vetus, it is also one of the least investigated cults in the region. As will be immediately clear for the modern visitor to the hill, this is partly due to the terrible state of conservation of the sanctuary and the inaccessibility of the site, which was a former German and Italian air force base and is now an important centre of telecommunication, with many large antennas dominating the landscape (figure 4.3). Since the 1930’s, no serious archaeological investigations have been undertaken and the results of earlier campaigns in the late 19th century were published irregularly and unscientifically. Apart from this lack of up-to-date archaeological data, the research into the cult of Jupiter Latiaris is also complicated by the fact that the data that are available are very hard to interpret and almost impossible to align with the literary evidence. While the latter category of source material – as we have seen earlier in this chapter – suggests that the cult on the Alban mount was important, well-known and well-visited, the material evidence found thus far does not correspond with that image. On the contrary, the sanctuary, to our current state of knowledge, hardly left any traces in the archaeological landscape.

This apparent scarcity of material evidence is surprising, but is it also indicative of the status of the sanctuary? Of course, any analysis of this problem must take into account the poor circumstances of conservation and the lack of proper research into the remains of the *mons Albanus*. In a strict sense, the evidence does not allow us to formulate any definitive conclusion as to the nature of the worship on the hill until further excavations or geophysical examinations have been conducted. At the same time, even with these methodological issues taken into consideration, the sharp contrast with the other monumental sanctuaries in Latium is remarkable. This may invite us

---

702 For an extensive overview of the archaeological research conducted on the hill and further bibliography, see Cecamore (1993) 19, notes 1-2.

703 Cecamore (1996) 49.
to reflect on the organization, form and character of the cult on the Alban mount and the deity that was at the centre of it. Whereas we have seen that the monumental layout of the sanctuaries of Diana Nemorensis and Juno Sospita was closely connected with euergetism and the expression of a specific local identity, the worship of Jupiter Latiaris does not seem to have generated this phenomenon (to the same degree). As Christopher Smith has suggested, an explanation may be found in the communal character of the cult, which celebrated unity between the Latins and was perhaps not the right location to promote local pride.\(^\text{704}\) While that may certainly be of importance, it does not fully explain the scarcity of signs of private worship on the hill. I would, therefore, tentatively argue that the lack of physical remains for this cult is also related to the fact that this was not a year-round functioning cult site like the other sanctuaries of Latium Vetus, but that the worship of Jupiter Latiaris was mainly confined to the day(s) that were assigned to him in the Roman religious calendar, the feriae Latiae. It was during these very public and political festivities that the deity showed his concern for the Roman state, in a symbolic celebration of Latinitas that survived and evolved over the centuries but that did not find much reflection in the private sphere.

Was there a temple for Jupiter Latiaris on the Alban mount? Even for such a basic question, there has been an extensive academic debate.\(^\text{705}\) In the literary sources there are very few comments that refer to actual buildings or other structures on the hill. As we have seen, Dionysius of Halicarnassus refers to the establishment of a common sanctuary (ἱερὸν κοινὸ) but this expression is too vague to derive any idea on the actual shape of the cult site.\(^\text{706}\) Perhaps the most illustrative reference to the physical surroundings of the site comes from Livy, who – as part of the many prodigies that surrounded the arrival of Hannibal in Italy – claims that ‘on the Alban Mount a statue of Jupiter and a tree near the temple had been struck by lightning’.\(^\text{707}\) The terminology of Roman cult sites is notoriously difficult to interpret, but here templum seems to refer to a built structure (instead of an open-air sacred space).\(^\text{708}\) This is a single occurrence however, and it is perhaps significant that the word aedes, which was most often used to label temple buildings in Roman

\(^{704}\) Smith (2012) 275.

\(^{705}\) For the academic debate on the existence of a temple see: Finocchi (1980) 156-158, Grandazzi (2008) 118-122. In a general sense, one can observe that in earlier academic literature it was taken for granted that the cult of Jupiter Latiaris had to be in a temple, and the earliest excavators were mainly trying to find that structure. Later observers, most notably Lugli (1930) 162-168, have suggested that the cult could have been performed outside, in an open air sanctuary that lacked many of the monumental characteristics of the other Latin sanctuaries. In recent work, however, the possibility of a more traditional temple was brought forward again, mainly because of data collected from archival sources, most notably that of the order of the Passionisti that had a convent on the hill. For the latter, see pages 171ff of this chapter and Cecamore (1993) 19-44, Cecamore (1996) 49-66.

\(^{706}\) See pages 145-146 of this chapter.

\(^{707}\) Liv. 27.11.1: [...] In Albano monte tacta de caelo erant signum Iovis arborque templo propinqua. Cf: footnote 680.

\(^{708}\) Templum was used to describe sacred spaces of varying nature, of which the sanctuary building was just one. For a useful introduction to these differences in terminology, see: Dubourdieu and Scheid (2000) 59-80.
literature, does not appear in the sources on the *feriae Latinae* at all.\footnote{Grandazzi (2008) 120.} Two references to the built environment of the *mons Albanus* in Cassius Dio’s Roman history provide information as well, but these descriptions of prodigies are not very illuminating. The author declares that in 56 BC, while Rome suffered from bribery and corruption, ‘the statue of Jupiter erected on the Alban Mount’ was struck by a thunderbolt.\footnote{Cass. Dio 39.15: τὸ δὲ θεῖον κεραυνὸν κατ’ ἄρχας εὐθύς τοῦ ἐχόμενον ἔτους τὸ ἁγαλμα τοῦ Δίως τοῦ ἐν τῷ Ἀλβανῷ ἱδρυμένου βάλων τὴν κάθοδον τοῦ Πτολεμαίου χρόνον τινὰ ἐπέσχε. (‘Heaven at the very beginning of the next year struck with a thunderbolt the statue of Jupiter erected on the Alban Mount, and so delayed the return of Ptolemy for some time’).} This, consequently, seems to confirm Livy’s claim that the cult site was adorned with at least one statue. Furthermore, in a passage that we have already cited in another context, Cassius Dio mentions a house that accommodated the consuls during the *feriae Latinae* being hit by lightning after the death of Agrippa.\footnote{Cass. Dio 54.29.7.} All in all, apart from the statue(s) that were apparently placed on the cult site, the literary material is not very helpful for our reconstruction of the material surroundings for the cult of Jupiter Latiaris. It would be methodologically unsound to draw conclusions from this silence in the sources, but it is nevertheless remarkable that, considering the weight and importance that is attributed to the *feriae Latinae* in the ancient literature, there is so little attention given to the physical surrounding of the rites.\footnote{This is in contrast to the literary sources in our previous casestudies, where for example the shape and size of the temple of Diana was extensively discussed (chapter II, pages 61ff) and where the prodigies in Lanuvium unambiguously referred to Juno Sospita’s temple (chapter III, pages 86ff).}

Notwithstanding this lack of literary leads, or perhaps precisely because of this lack, it is useful to look at the archaeological investigations that have been conducted at the Alban mount. As mentioned before, the state of research and conservation is quite discouraging, but thanks to earlier publications and the archival documents investigated by Claudia Cecamore, some tentative observations may be made.\footnote{Cecamore (1993) 19-44, Cecamore (1996) 49-66.} The appearance of the hill is nowadays dominated by a large number of television antennas, which are scattered around a now largely abandoned building that was employed as a military base by the Germans in the Second World War and afterwards by the Italian air force.\footnote{Several antennas were placed illegally and juridical attempts to remove them and make the site more accessible to visitors have thus far had little success.} In the early 20th century, the building was used as a hotel; before that it was in the possession of the Colonna family, who acquired it after an earthquake in 1806 and installed an astronomic observatory in it in 1873.\footnote{See, for the stages of modern building activity on the hill: Grandazzi (2008) 120-122.} Before that, however, the edifice was built as a convent, inhabited from 1723 by monks of the Trinitarian order and later (from 1757 onwards) occupied by the order of the Passionists. The latter executed a large-scale renovation including the construction of a new church in 1783, which was payed for by Henry Benedict Stuart, who was the cardinal duke...
of York and last in line of the famous British crown pretenders. It is evident that especially the last reconstruction severely affected the archaeological record on the Alban mount, and an early commentator has remarked that it was easier for Henry to 'knock down an ancient temple than to revive an ancient throne'.

But in fact – as Cecamore, Grandazzi and others have remarked before – the transformation of the area had begun long before 1783. Pius II, who wrote about his visit to the Alban Mount in 1453, mentions a circular wall and some large stones, as well as a hermitage, which was apparently already built on top of the ruins of an old church. If this is correct, it means that before the two successive convent buildings, at least two earlier structures occupied the area. These interventions will have profoundly changed the landscape and, considering the lack of proper archaeological research, it is unclear to what extent the builders used or removed the ancient ruins. In any case, in the 16th century, a traveler claims to have seen a large quantity of monumental remains. Much later, in 1672, Piranesi made an etching of the Alban lake with several architectural remains that he claims came from the sanctuary of Jupiter Latiaris, such as Doric columns and ‘tegole di terracotta’ (figure 4.4). Obviously, Piranesi’s drawing should be studied with extreme caution, as he is well-known for his creative interpretations and exaggerations of ancient monuments. The remarks of some of his travelling contemporaries however, who mention large blocks and column fragments in the surroundings of Monte Cavo as well, suggest that there may be at least a germ of truth in the fanciful drawing of the artist. All in all, the travel diaries that were written before the renovation of the convent by the Passionists provide perhaps little solid information on the archaeological area of the Alban mount, but they remind us that monumental remains that are completely vanished now may well have been partly visible in previous centuries.

For our understanding of the situation on top of the hill as it is today, we are largely dependent on the excavations of De Rossi from 1869 onwards, some scarcely published

---

716 The statement is that of the French historian Jean-Jacques Ampère (Histoire Romaine, 1862-1864) and is quoted by Grandazzi (2008) 121.
717 Pius II Commentarii, éd. Van Heck, 2, 709: Hunc (collem) pontifex ascendit. In cacumine planitiem reperit stadium aut amplius paulo in circuitu complexam. Antiqui per ambitum muri fundamenta extant et saxa ingentia ferro expolita et sacellum in medio dirutum, super cuius ruinis Dalmata quidam heremitorium sibi construxit contegit sine calce lapidibus. (‘The Pope climbed this hill, and on the summit found a plateau of about a stade, or a little more, within a perimeter. The foundations of ancient walls are preserved in their entire course, as well as huge stones smoothed by iron tools, and in the centre a ruined chapel, on whose ruins a man from Dalmatia had built a hermitage for himself by piling together the stones’). Text and translation adapted from: Hutchinson (1988) 91.
719 Piranesi, Descrizione e disegno dell’Emissario (1762).
720 Grandazzi (2008) 125 cites the works of Jerôme Lalande (Voyage en Italie, 1786) and Antonio Riccy (Memorie Storiche dell’antichissima Città di Alba Longa e dell’Albano moderno, 1787).
investigations by Giovannoni and Ricci in the years 1912-1914 and a more scientific but small-scale archaeological campaign by Lugli in the 1920’s.  The results of these excavations were of course influenced by the limitations presented by the buildings of the convent, but even so may be considered poor. With regards to the structural remains, only a few fragments of Roman walls have been identified. De Rossi notes part of a wall in *laterizio* (brick), which was apparently removed immediately after it was found, but of which he claims that it was part of a large structure that had been the northern enclosure of the sanctuary. Lugli, through reviewing Giovannoni’s notes and through a series of trial trenches, discovered that underneath the 18th century convent wall, there was a corresponding stretch of wall from the second century BC, consisting of a single course of ashlar of uncertain date. At least at the southwestern end of the hilltop, and possibly for the entire stretch, the antique enclosure wall thus seems to correspond with the modern enclosure. This is consistent with the 15th century description provided by pope Pius II, who identified a circular wall as well during his visit to the hill. De Rossi’s piece of wall was much bigger and does not align with this; consequently it probably belonged to a different structure, which cannot be identified at the moment. The same is true for some of the other remains of walls that were discovered by De Rossi, but were not properly described nor situated.

Lugli notes that most of the garden of the convent, its surroundings and the southern slope of the hill were systematically researched by Giovannoni, but his trenches revealed only virgin soil (volcanic rock). Within the surroundings of the convent walls, the results were a bit more promising: two wells, a small cistern, some wall fragments and a part of the road leading up the hill were discovered. Lugli himself, taking up from this research, discovered a piece of Republican wall that was probably part of a small colonnade but had disappeared by the second century AD, when it was used as a foundation for a structure in brick that has now largely disappeared under the modern convent building. The biggest building discovered so far is from the second century BC as well, and with its several rooms it has the appearance of a house. A few water canals leading up to a well have been discovered, as well as some rough patches of white mosaic floor. All in all, the structure is hard to relate to the other fragmentary remains of the area, and even harder to the supposed sacred character of the hill. Lugli assembled the scattered findings and tried to establish a map of the area

---

723 Lugli (1930) 166.
724 See previous page and note 717.
726 Giovannoni (1912) 382.
727 Lugli (1930) 162-168.
within the convent enclosure (which was reworked by Cecamore, see figure 4.5), but many of the finds are highly uncertain and certainly do not add up to a coherent image.  

On the basis of these architectural remains it is impossible to define the area as a sacred space, let alone to identify a temple. The other finds from the peak, which were mainly excavated during the campaigns of De Rossi and during earlier digs by the monks of the Passionist order, provide a little more clarity on this. Perhaps most significant are eight fragments of an inscribed calendar found on top of the hill during the excavations of De Rossi, known as the Fasti feriarum Latinarum. The calendar dates from the first century BC and contains the names of the consuls in charge of the feriae Latinae, together with the dates on which the rites were conducted. The list, although only very fragmentarily preserved, gives us an interesting insight in the organization of the cult and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. What is important here, is that the inscription shows that the top of the hill that is now known as the monte Cavo was in antiquity known as the mons Albanus and was in all likelihood the location of the feriae Latinae. In other words, the inscription strongly connects the narratives about the festival to the physical landscape of the Alban hills and it definitively designates the summit of the mountain as a sacred space. With so many insecurities in both the literary and the material sources, it is an important piece of evidence.

Also quite revealing, is De Rossi’s discovery of a small lead pipe with the inscription cur(ator) aed(is) s(acrae) on it – dated to the late first century BC or the early first century AD – which proves that there was at least one sacred edifice to be maintained on the hill. Of course, the cult of Jupiter Latiaris immediately springs to mind but in theory, the inscription could also refer to the aedes of (Juno) Moneta, which according to Livy was dedicated on the mons Albanus by Caius Cicereius in 167 BC. In any case, these finds help us establish with reasonable certainty that the area was used as a religious space during the Republic and early Empire, but they do not allow us to say much about the context of the rites, nor about the deity to which they were directed. The same conclusion can be drawn from the other materials found during the excavations of De Rossi, for which we have to rely on a written list because the material itself was lost not long after it had been excavated.

However, the finds from the excavations of 1912-1914 have been preserved, and together with De

---

728 Part of this outline is a relatively large structure on the eastern side of the hilltop, which seems to have several chambers and a different orientation from the rest of the walls. According to De Rossi, the structure was built in opus reticulatum. Like the other remains on the former convent grounds, it is unfortunately not accessible for further study at the moment.


730 CIL XIV 2233: cur(ator) aed(is) s(acrae). De Rossi (1876) 330 reconstructs the inscription in the plural

731 Liv. 45.15.10: Eodem anno C. Cicereius aedem Monetae in monte Albano dedicavit quinquennio post quam vovit.

732 The finds were in the possession of the Sforza Cesarini family in Genzano, but were given back to the Italian authorities and subsequently disappeared. Cf: Cecamore (1993) 22.
Rossi’s inventory they have been catalogued and analysed by Cecamore. The picture that emerges from this is not very remarkable: a relatively small number of votive gifts, including (fragments of) small statuettes, animals, (fragments of) anatomical votives, pottery, fibulae, small bronze objects and some coins, of which only the pieces of aes rude have been preserved. The finds date from the 4th to the 2nd centuries BC and were probably discovered in the same votive deposit, resembling many other small votive deposits in the region. Of interest is the appearance of a considerable quantity of early archaic or even proto-urban pottery on De Rossi’s list, which – if we can trust the scholar’s description – may derive from an older votive deposit and may thus be related to the oldest phases of the cult practice. The inventory is concluded by a number of undocumented and now lost inscriptions, amongst which was possibly another fragment of the Fasti feriarum Latinarum.

A final important clue regarding the use of the hill is the ancient road leading up to it. In its preserved condition, the basalt road circles up to the summit for about 5 kilometres and it has an average width of 2.8 metres (figure 4.6). Although restorations since the Middle Ages may have affected the appearance of the road in some places, it is still one of the best preserved examples in its kind. The basalt paving stones date to the Early Empire and large parts of the edge-stones have been preserved as well; some slabs even show protective phalli on the surface. Other stones in the upper part of the route have letters inscribed: V and N. They are on separate slabs, but almost always adjacent to each other. Older literature has suggested that the inscriptions refer to the guardian numen of the road (Numinis Via). After a visit, Mommsen proposed a different reading and suggested that the letters are signs of a restoration of which the – now unidentifiable – benefactor perhaps wanted to remind the visitors: V[etus] et N[ova] (via). The interpretation was accepted by Lugli and by later scholars, although further evidence is lacking. We may have doubts about this argument, especially considering the fact that there are no other signs of elite sponsorship along the route or on the peak of the hill, but unfortunately the evidence does not

---

733 Cecamore (1993) 23ff. The catalogue contains a relatively extensive descriptions and pictures of the finds. For further analysis, see: Bouma (1996b) 55-58.
735 Bouma (1996b) 57 assumes that the – now lost – miniature pottery imitation bucchero vases (noted by De Rossi in 1876) must date to the 8th or 7th century BC. Cf: Grandazzi (2008) 130-132.
737 Discussion in: Lugli (1923) 269-270, Grandazzi (2008) 277. The road is fully accessible and starts close to the church of Madonna del Tufo in Rocca di Papa, near the Alban lake.
738 See, for example: Riccy (1787) 70 and, for further references, Grandazzi (2008) 277 and notes 415-418.
739 Mommsen suggested this to Christian Hülsen, who published the suggestion in a short article on the Fasti feriarum Latinarum: Hülsen (1890) 70.
provide clues for a different reading. In any case, the construction and maintenance of the road show that comfortable access to the hill was considered important, whether it was for religious purposes or because the road was used in the oationes – minor triumphal processions that were awarded to generals that weren’t allowed a triumphus in Rome – that also took place on mons Albanus.

Although this overview clearly shows that the summit of the Alban Mount was visited by worshippers and the access route was well taken care of, the amount of material is limited and does not seem to reflect a great deal of religious activity on the hill. Of course, we must take into consideration that the first excavators were not primarily interested in finding walls or small signs of private worship (nor were, for that matter, the earlier plunderers), and their selections may well have severely blurred our understanding of the cult practice. Nevertheless, it is clear that the cult of Jupiter Latiaris, seen from a material perspective, did not attract the same crowds as the cults of Diana Nemorensis and Juno Sospita. Not only is there fewer evidence for the involvement of ‘common’ worshippers, but forms of elite sponsorship, which were so important in the development of the sanctuaries that we have seen in earlier chapters, are suspiciously absent. Therefore, Christopher Smith has assumed that – in contrast to the monumental sanctuaries at lake Nemi and Lanuvium – ‘places of communal activity may not always be the right places for competitive architectural display’.

4.5 Excavation and destruction in the archival sources

While Smith’s comment may be a valid observation, it does not fully explain the sharp contrast with the other Latin sites, which also served as (early) meeting places for large groups of Latins but nevertheless show clear signs of sponsoring from local elites. Before we turn to other possible reasons for the differences, we must look into a category of evidence that has thus far been ignored and that sheds a different light on the discrepancies in the evidence: the archival sources. Thanks to the efforts of Claudia Cecamore, we can now get a clearer picture of the digging activity by the Passionist order on the hill before the first archaeological campaign of De Rossi. Previously, the only

---

741 Further down the hill, in the vicinity of present-day Campi d’Annibale (a neighbourhood of Rocca di Papa), some remains of a hut and possible necropolis from the late Bronze or early Iron Age have been identified through ground penetrating radar: Di Gennaro, Guidi and Pacciarelli (1978) 84-86. A connection with the sanctuary – of which the earliest remains are of a much later date – seems implausible, but Grandazzi (2008) 278-279 speculates that the vestiges may confirm the literary traditions of the earliest Latin tribes living on the slopes of monte Cavo, most notably that of the Cabenses. For further evidence on the inhabitants of ancient Cabum and their possible later descendants, see pages 180ff.

742 For the oationes on the Alban Mount see pages 195ff.

piece of evidence relating to this earlier period was an imprecise ‘map’ found in a 17th century notebook of anonymous origin. The drawing, described as ‘vestigia templi atque arae Iovis Latialis’, depicts a rectangular and elevated platform, with stairs leading up to it (figure 4.7). Within this area, the artist has drawn and described several religious structures, such as a votive well, an altar base and the groundplan (ichnographia) of an apsidal enclosure that he assumes to have been the temple of Jupiter Latiaris. The reading of the document is notoriously difficult, as there is no indication of the scale and orientation of the map and since it is undated and unsigned. Although De Rossi tried to use it as such, later authors have quickly realized that it is impossible to use the document as a scaled plan of the area, if only because the results of the excavations did not match the drawing. The circular piece of enclosure wall discovered by Lugli, for example, does not resemble the elevated rectangular platform at all. Although Cecamore does acknowledge that the similarities with the archaeological record – such as the wells and wall fragments - could give the drawing some credibility, it seems clear that it cannot be considered a conclusive testimony of the existence of a temple on Monte Cavo.

The archives of the Passionist order (the monks that inhabited the hill from 1758 onwards) offer a little more insight, even if they reveal mainly the destruction and removal of ancient material. Especially the chronicle from the years 1774-1779, where a large restoration and expansion of the monastery buildings is described, provide interesting details of the earlier layout of the hill. From these reports, it is obvious that the monks were well aware of the ancient remains and also identified the sanctuary as that of Jupiter Latiaris, but were at the same time completely indifferent to its conservation. Claudia Cecamore has researched the document and has published some of its passages in full. The first remarkable entry is an account from the year 1770 or 1771, in which the monks mention two statues that had been found on their premises, one of which was sent to pope Clement XIV and one that was reported earlier in 1714 but could not be traced anymore. They also describe large quantities of marble and other (quantità di pietra) that have disappeared beneath the foundation of the new buildings and the enclosure or have been used to build the church. Apart from that, they mention a round mosaic of

---

744 Barb. Lat. 1871, fol. 38. The notebook is part of the Barberino Vaticano collection of the Vatican Library.
745 De Rossi (1876) figure Q. See further: Lugli (1930) 162-168.
746 Although the platform indicated on the picture may have been much smaller than the surrounding wall discovered by De Rossi – making it in theory possible that the platform was located within the circular wall. Because of the missing scale of the drawing however, it is impossible to align it with the archaeological remains in a convincing way. See page 168-169.
748 The document, Platea del ritiro de Rocca di Papa, is preserved (under number B.II-IV, 1-4) in the archives of the order of Passionists, at the convent of SS. Giovanni e Paulo in Rome.
750 At the moment, the location of both statues is unknown.
fine quality with another, ‘more ordinary’ one underneath. Of a temple, the monks claim not to remember how it looked like, although on the basis of the pavement they suppose it could have resembled the ‘tempio del Sole’ (now identified as the round temple on the forum Boarium in Rome).\footnote{Cecamore (1996) 53: […] Quello che riguardi il tempio, non abbiamo memoria alcuna della sua figura. Sembra però che poteva rassomigliare al Tempio del Sole che tutt’ora si vede nella piazza della Bocca della Verità, e ciò si racava dai pavimenti. The tempio del Sole refers to the St. Maria del Sole, the church that was housed in the round temple until the 19th century.}

It is hard to make sense of these reports. The statues cannot be traced anymore, nor can the remains that supposedly disappeared beneath the convent buildings. The comment about the shape of the temple is probably of little significance: the pavements of the round temple at the forum Boarium are mediaeval and can certainly not function as a comparison for an ancient temple on monte Cavo.\footnote{Claridge (1998) 254-255.} In a later account, the finds are even more suggestive but equally hard to analyze. During the enlargement of the church, the monks state they have again found quantities of marble, together with idoli di metallo (images of metal) of a fine quality, which show attributes of Jupiter (Fulgur), such as lightning bolts and wings. After that, the list of finds continues: male and female statuettes (of a crude quality), many medallions, architectonic ornaments, a ‘more than gigantic’ finger of bronze and a pedestal with two marble feet resting on it.\footnote{Cecamore (1996) 50-52, note 3, referring to page 11 of the chronicle.} The finds, some of which have reportedly been given away and cannot be traced anymore, seem to refer to some sort of votive deposit and – if we can trust the observations of the monks – lend the site a clearly religious function. Furthermore, the identification of the figurines would link the sanctuary to the cult of Jupiter, although the already uncertain references are further complicated by the fact that the monks knew that their hill was once dedicated to Jupiter Latiaris and this may have influenced their interpretation.

In any case, this knowledge did nothing to protect the area from further damage, as is clear from a more recent correspondence between the Passionists and the cardinal Camerlengo, dated to 1825. At that point, the monks apparently wanted to perform a dig on their grounds and use some of the stones for building a new clock tower.\footnote{The letter is now lost from the correspondence records.} The Camerlengo is apprehensive and prohibits any action on the convent grounds, insisting that the ancient wall consisting of rectangular blocks, which according to the Camerlengo still had antique letters (an old inscription?), should not be touched.\footnote{This and the other letters about the order of the Passionists are all preserved in the same folder, filed under: ASR, Camerlengato, IV. II B147, fasc. 43: Il recinto di Monte Cavi, ove V.P. […] desiderrebbe praticare uno scavo per toglierne alcuni macigni da servire per la fabbricazione del nuovo campanile, è il famoso recinto del tempio di Giove}
dossier however, dated to August 1836, suggests that the monks went ahead anyway. In a response to a – now lost – letter from the Camerlengo that apparently asked about thievery on the hill, the governor admits that it is no longer possible to restore the site to its original state and that his office in the years before has failed to supervise and register the proceedings on the hill. He promises to watch after the affairs closely in the future, but the damage seems to have been already done.756

Although it is still noteworthy that the excavations have revealed so little archaeological evidence for the cult of Jupiter Latiaris, this overview of possibly destroyed, removed or stolen remains reminds us that we should not apply any archaeological argumentum ex silentio too easily. The fact that no evidence of a temple has been found does not mean that there never was one. To the small amount of votive material discovered by De Rossi, some significant but now lost votives must probably be added. Also, the reference to statues could indicate that the sanctuary was more richly adorned than can be discerned from the current state of the ruins. Despite the numerous issues of interpretation, the archival sources confirm the religious identification of the site and add to its ritual significance. In my opinion, however, the finds still do not add up to anything that is comparable to the situation at Lanuvium or Lake Nemi, and it is hard to imagine a traditional temple building on Monte Cavo. Evidence for architectural and roof decoration, for example, is almost completely absent. The most feasible reconstruction would perhaps be to imagine the site as an enclosed open air sanctuary, adorned with an altar, several (cult) statues, and possibly a display of votive and honorary inscriptions.757 The relatively limited amount of votive material would support the hypothesis that the sanctuary was not visited as frequently as other Latin sanctuaries in the area, and was mainly known for its yearly celebration of the feriae Latinae. It is important to emphasize, especially regarding these specific rites, that not all ritual activity leaves an imprint in the material record. The sacrifice itself, the taking of the auspices and the ritual prayer for example, are elements of the descriptions in the literary sources that require no special architectural facilities and many of the proceedings may have taken place in the open air, or in a temporary wooden

756 Cecamore (1996) 54-55: sarebbe già inutile il voler riandare la ordinanza che..  
757 The solution of an open air sanctuary was first proposed by Lugli (1930) 162-168, who disputed the earlier idea – expressed for example by De Rossi (1876) 314-333 – that the scattered remains on Monte Cavo should point to a temple building. Since then, the question has not been addressed straightforwardly often, although it may be revealing that the sanctuary is not included in the monumental study of Coarelli (1987). Also, in his half page on the monte Cavo, Gierow (1964) 281, only devotes a footnote to the issue, opting for the same possibility of an open temenos. Grandazzi (2008) 267, 369, who has most recently discussed the matter, considers the debate to be open and emphasizes the difficult weather conditions on the mountain, but eventually concludes that the proposal of the open air sanctuary is for now the most probable explanation for the lack of archaeological remains.
structure. Consequently, the scarcity of material remains does not necessarily reflect a lack of ritual activity.

In this respect, it is fortunate that we can gain a little more insight in the organization of the *feriae Latinae* because of the epigraphic material, which provides information on the participants and some of the possible priesthods that were involved. Here, the archaic past of the cult of Jupiter Latiaris – which featured so prominently in the literary discourse but seems largely absent in the archaeological record – appears to have had a distinct appeal: the inscriptions reveal the reappraisal, or perhaps reinvention, of ancient offices and traditions.

4.6 Epigraphic testimonies of the *feriae Latinae*

Perhaps most significant for our understanding of the organization of the *feriae Latinae* is the very fragmentarily preserved inscribed chronicle known as the *Fasti feriarum Latinarum*. This document contains a list of yearly festival dates, along with the names of the magistrates who were in charge of the festivities. As mentioned before in this chapter, fragments of the document were found on the hill itself, during the excavations of De Rossi in the 1870’s. Unfortunately, the circumstances under which they appeared are poorly described, as they were probably scattered over the entire hill. In total, eight fragments were found, and perhaps a ninth can be recovered from the archival sources. The largest three were documented, but are now unfortunately lost; others are preserved in different museums. According to a reconstruction by Degrassi, the inscription must have been up to four metres in height and was attached to a wall of some sort. Each plaque featured two columns with 36 years, and the available fragments of the chronicle show entries from the year 451 BC to at least the middle of the second century AD. Although it is impossible to reconstruct further details concerning the location of the inscription and its relation to the other structures on the hill, the calendar provides – as remarked before – an important and secure link between the *mons Albanus* and the rites of the *feriae Latinae*.

In their current form, the plaques of the *Fasti* can be dated to the late first century BC, which makes them – just like the *Fasti Consulares, Fasti Triumphales* and the many local calendars of the period – part of the Augustan promotion of the Julian calendar, which was closely related to his program of religious reforms. Just like the other chronicles, we can assume that the list was partly

---

759 De Rossi (1876) 314-333. Cecamore (1993) 20 and (1996) 55 reconstructs that the *Fasti* were attached to a large rectangular wall discovered by De Rossi (see page 156), but in fact – as Grandazzi (2008) 123, footnote 293 rightfully points out, De Rossi (1876) 119 himself states that the fragments were found all over the hilltop.
761 Degrassi (1963) 143-158.
based on Republican consular lists, but the reliability of especially the entries of the first centuries of the Republic is highly questionable.\(^{762}\) For the *Fasti feriarum Latinarum*, the first entries record the Decemvirate, with one entry in 451 BC, *xviris legibus scribendis / L(atae) f(uerunt)* and one in 450 BC, when the festival was not held.\(^{763}\) In 449 BC, three celebrations of the festival are recorded, which may have had something to do with festivities after the decemviri were forced to lay down their function and the consular order was restored.\(^{764}\) These first celebrations of the *feriae Latinae* are interesting, since they show that the inscription preserves a different tradition from the one narrated by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Whereas the latter claims that it was Tarquinius Superbus who started the *feriae Latinae*, the *Fasti* do not start with the king, or with the first consuls of the Republic.\(^{765}\) This does not make the fifth century BC a more reliable starting date for the festival than the late sixth century BC. Just like the other contemporary *Fasti*, the chronicle is not a direct survival of the festival’s roots, but rather the result of antiquarian efforts in the late Republic and early Empire, as well as a reflection of the religio-political concerns of the early Principate.\(^{766}\) In this way, the *Fasti* originate from the same annalistic traditions as the literary sources discussed earlier. While the calendar does not provide definitive answers to the questions about the starting date of the festival or the start of the Roman involvement, it does show how efforts were made to conserve the memory of the *feriae* and how this memory was interwoven with the political history of the Roman state.

Notwithstanding the uncertainties regarding these earliest beginnings, the inscription provides a great deal of information on the celebration of the rites. Firstly, it confirms that the consuls were formally in charge of the procedures on the hill. Each entry consists of their names, followed by the formula *L(atae) f(uerunt)* and the date of the festival. In his frequent mentions of the *feriae Latinae*, Livy also uses the phrase *Latiniae fuerunt* to indicate the celebration of the Latin festival.\(^{767}\) Also recorded are the years in which Rome was governed by a dictator, for example in 396


\(^{763}\) CIL VI 2011: (xviris legibus scribendis / L(atae) non f(uerunt)).

\(^{764}\) CIL VI 2011: M(arco) Horatio M(arci) fil(io) P(ubli) n(epote) / Barbat[o] / [L(ucio) Vallerio P(ubli) fil(io) P(ubli) n(epote) P(utito co(n)s(uli)bus) / [L(atae) f(uerunt)] IIII Eid(us) Ian(uarias) / [ite]r(um) L(atae) f(uerunt) III Non(as) Febr(uarias) / [ertium] L(atae) f(uerunt) K(alendis) Mai(is). Mommsen (1871) 381-382 suggests that the abdication of the decemviri, along with the installation of the consuls and the strengthening of the position of the tribunes of the plebs were reasons for multiple celebrations.

\(^{765}\) Alföldi (1963) 31 sees the Decemvirate as the moment the Romans took over the superintendence of the festival, and claims that the *Fasti* deliberately hid the fact that it had pre-Roman origins. This is in line with his general idea about the Roman historiographical and annalistic tradition, which according to Alföldi exaggerated the early Roman dominance and disregarded the Latin traditions as a general rule. For a critique of this notion, with regards to the Latin festival: Grandazzi (2008) 531.


\(^{767}\) Liv. 38.44.7-8; 42.35.3; 44.22.16.
BC when Camillus headed the sacrifice. Even in this fragmented state, we can recognize that the tradition continued into the Principate, when we see the appearance of Caesar (49 BC), Agrippa (27 BC) and Augustus (23 BC). Based on the fragmentarily preserved names of the consuls, the last entry can be dated to the reign of Antoninus Pius, more precisely the year 140 or 141 AD. In this way, even in its fragmented state the chronicle preserves almost 6 centuries of religious history on the Alban hill and we may assume that the list continued well into the third and fourth century AD.

Furthermore, the inscription supports the claim of the literary sources that, in some years, the festival was repeated, probably because something went wrong in the execution of the rites or because of some political upheaval. Apart from the year after the Decemvirate (449 BC), the Fasti preserve occurrences of this phenomenon in October 396 BC and November 23 BC. 396 BC was the year of the dictatorship of Camillus and the repetition was recorded by Livy as well, who – as we have seen before – connected the repeated feriae Latinae to the final victory over Veii. In 23 BC, the renewal of the festival may be connected to the fact that Augustus, who became seriously ill during that year, abdicated his consulship: after he miraculously recovered, the Senate bestowed the tribunicia potestas on him, which may have been reason for a replication. In the years of the reign of Augustus that have been preserved on the inscription, the recorded information is unusually extensive, since these are the only years in which the presence or absence of the princeps is specifically mentioned. The commitment of the princeps to the ancient ritual was thus not only publicized through the erection of the calendar, but also in its individual entries.

Although most of the dates are in May, the Fasti show that the feriae Latinae could take place very early in the consular year, as well as very late. The examples in October and November quoted above concern a repetition of the rites, but there are also a few instances in which the odd date cannot be explained so easily, like the first two celebrations in mid-winter 449 BC (for which the chronicle records January 10th and February 3rd), the celebration in 395 BC (in September) and the first entry in 23 BC (July). While the inscription confirms the irregular yearly pattern, it does not

---

768 See note 770 for the celebration and instauratio of 396 BC.
769 As established by Eck (2013) 248-250, who uses information on a military diploma that was found in Britain to reconstruct the pair of (suffect) consuls that were in charge of the feriae Latinae as Q. Antonius Isauricus and L. Aurelius Flaccus.
771 See pages 159-160 and notes 680-681.
772 As suggested by Mommsen (1871) 384.
reveal details as to why the feriae were brought forward or postponed. As mentioned before, religious devotion may go hand in hand with political manoeuvring here, but considering this list, it seems even more unlikely that the rule of the commanders staying in Rome until the end of the Latin festival was enforced as strictly as is claimed by sources like Livy. At the same time – and it remains important to emphasize this – the traditions in the literary texts and those reflected in the Fasti stem from the same annalistic tradition and may very well have mutually influenced each other, which could explain the frequent use of the formula Latinae fuerent. This should – again – warn us not to read the calendar as a straightforward account of past celebrations.

A different formula is used in an honorary inscription for Marcus Consius Cerinthus, who was an accensus velatus during the reign of Claudius and Nero.774 In this function, of which the exact nature is still debated, he probably had to assist both emperors – in their roles as consuls – in religious matters of the Roman state.775 Cerinthus, who according to a different inscription was a freedman and had paid for some work on the roads of Ficulea, assisted the emperors in the feriae Latinae at least three times. The choice of words in the text is remarkable, since the emperors are described as founders of the rites, with the expression Latinas condere. In the same inscription, this form is also used to refer to the lustrum, the purifying rites surrounding the census. Grandazzi labels the use of condere as a sign of the archaic and even pastoral origins of the festival, which – as we have seen before – would also be clear from the libations of milk during the festival and from the fact that it was described by Cicero as a lustratio.776 Because the testimony of the accensus velatus is the only epigraphic evidence for the use of condere in the context of the feriae Latinae, the assumption seems a little far-fetch; instead of seeing the expression as an archaic relic of long forgotten times, we may also consider it a deliberate attempt at archaization.

So far the epigraphic testimonies give us an idea about the organization and yearly pattern of the feriae Latinae, but the deity that is supposed to be at the centre of the cult is notably absent. In fact, we know of only one secure votive inscription to Jupiter Latiaris, recovered in the excavation campaign of De Rossi in 1869.777 It is a (now lost) fragment of a statue base or altar, with large letters that reveal a votum to the god by Lucius Rubellius Geminus, consul of 29 AD. A second and very early


775 In the Republic, accensi velati were auxiliary soldiers trained to replace Roman soldiers, but over time they lost their military function and became assistants in rites of the Roman state. See, especially, Di Stefano Manzella (1994) 261-279.


777 CIL VI 2022: L(ucius) Ru[be]liu[s] / [Geminus c(o(n)s(ul))] / [Iovi Lati(a)r] / [vo]tum.
fragment of a votive inscription (now in Rome), dated on the basis of the lettering to the late fourth or early third century BC and reads *divei / Ardea / tes* could have been set up for Jupiter as well.\(^778\) While they are very few in number, these inscriptions do provide some insight into the cult practice. The latter shows the early presence of the inhabitants of Ardea on the hill, also noted by Livy, and provides support for the assumption that the worship on the hill was organized as a communal cult of Latin villages.\(^779\) None of the architectural remains found so far are dated as early as this small fragment, which reminds us that much of the earliest worship may have taken place in the open air and that the possible lack of a temple does not necessarily reflect a lack of ritual activity. The votum of Rubellius Geminus on the other hand, illustrates that the ritual practice was perhaps particularly connected with the authority of the Roman consuls – even when the Principate was well in place.

### 4.7 Cult officials on the *mons Albanus*

With so little evidence, it is hard to reconstruct anything of the votive practice on the hill. Like in our discussion of the other material remains, it is not so much the nature of the data as the scarcity of data that is noteworthy. Signs of private devotion to Jupiter Latiaris are almost completely absent, setting the sanctuary apart from other sanctuaries in the region like that of Diana Nemorensis and Juno Sospita. Can we use this observation as an *argumentum ex silentio*, and argue that the cult of Jupiter Latiaris was not widely visited or appreciated by individual worshippers in the Alban hills? A final category of epigraphic material allows us to think in a different direction. Inscriptions reveal the existence of a number of priesthoods that can be linked to the *mons Albanus* and to the ritual activity that took place there. Although not all of the priesthoods can be decisively connected to the administration of the *feriae Latinae* and Jupiter Latiaris – nor can the holders of the priesthoods – they reflect the appeal of priestly positions associated with the worship on the Alban mount and especially with the historical and mythical traditions surrounding that worship. Similar to the offices of *dictator* and *rex sacrorum*, which we have seen at Aricia and Lanuvium, these offices seem to stem from a distant Latin past, but they may also reveal a reappraisal or perhaps even reinvention of that past, for which religious celebrations were an especially appropriate occasion.

As regards the worship on the *mons Albanus*, we know of a number of priestly titles that appear to refer to the mountain and to the celebration of the *feriae Latinae*: four *sacerdotes Cabenses feriarum Latinarum montis Albani*, two *pontifices Albani*, two *dictatores Albani*, two *salii Albani* and three

\(^778\) CIL XIV 2231: *divei / Ardea / tes*. In an earlier edition (CIL VI 2020; cf. CIL XIV 2231), the text was transcribed as *restuerunt / ardeates*. The inscription is carved on a small statue base or votive cippus, with *-tes* on the lateral side. For further background, see the analysis of D. Nonnis in Friggeri (2012) 178, who reconstructs the votum as for *divei lovi*.

\(^779\) For the inhabitants of Ardea and their attendance at the *feriae Latinae*, see page 159, note 676.
Virgines Vestalae Albanae.\textsuperscript{780} We can recognize some of the ostensibly archaic offices that we have seen before in the cults of Diana Nemorensis and Juno Sospita, such as the dictatores and the salii, but the relation between the Alban officials and the Latin festival is far from straightforward. The titles may also refer to cultic traditions surrounding the town of Alba Longa, in which case neither the location nor the intended god is identifiable. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, there is little connection between the feriae Latinae and Rome’s mythical metropolis except for the name of the hill the festivities took place on, but in the few inscriptions that reveal Alban priesthoods, it is hard to distinguish whether they refer to Alba Longa or the mons Albanus. In other words, it is easy to recognize the appeal of archaizing titles in the area of the Alban hills, but it is uncertain if this archaism was directed at the cult of Jupiter Latiaris.

For the first category of priests under consideration however, the sacerdotes Cabenses Feriarum Latinarum montis Albani, there is little doubt that this was the case. It was Mommsen who first suggested that the name of the Cabenses that appears on these inscriptions in relation to the mons Albanus, had to be derived from Cabum - one of the villages mentioned in Dionysius’ list of Latin towns.\textsuperscript{781} Elsewhere – in his list of still existing Latin communities – Pliny mentions the Cabienses in monte Albano, probably referring to the same people.\textsuperscript{782} Although – like many of the other supposed Latin villages – no trace of Cabum has ever been found and it appears in no other Roman source, it seems that the titles of the priests somehow alluded to the name of this village.\textsuperscript{783} Does this mean that the name was (quite literally) inscribed into Roman memory through religious practices, or was it a late invention, deriving from the same archaistic traditions that ended up in the works of Pliny and Dionysius? As we have seen when discussing the reges, dictatores and sacerdotes earlier in this thesis, there is no definitive answer to this question. Nonetheless, the name of the sacerdotes Cabenses may be considered another example of the importance of the remembered, perceived or even reinvented past in the cult practice in the Alban hills, which in the case of the feriae Latinae, was fully integrated into Roman state religion.

\textsuperscript{781} Mommsen (1861) 205-207, Mommsen (1882) 50-51. Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom. 5.61.3. See page 149.
\textsuperscript{782} Plin. NH 3.64. In some earlier editions of the NH, Cabiensis is transcribed as Fabiensis, but the form chosen here derives from a later edition, that of Mayhoff (1963). For different definitions of the prisci Latini and the villages that according to Pliny had disappeared, see pages 146-150 of this chapter.
\textsuperscript{783} Granino Cecere (1996) 276-284, Grandazzi (2008) 489-490. Interestingly enough, it was probably Cabum and the Cabenses that gave its name to the mountain as it is named today. Earlier – for example in Lugli (1923) 269-270 – this was explained by the stone quarries (cavi) that were dug in the mountain, but some form of Cabiensi / Cabi / Gabi probably survived, as the Liber Pontificalis (probably dating to the sixth century AD) speaks of a monte Gabum that could be reached by using the Via Latina. See: Coarelli (1986) 37, Grandazzi (2008) 489 and footnote 175.
The most clear-cut illustration of the fact that sacerdotes Cabenses had a function in the execution of the feriae Latinae is presented by a fragment of what was once a relatively large statue base, found by De Rossi on top of the mons Albanus during the excavation of 1869. It was dedicated by the sacerdotes Cabenses to an emperor whose name is largely lost, but who has most convincingly been identified as Decius. If the dedication is indeed from his reign, the middle of the third century AD, it is a rather late testimony of the feriae Latinae. In fact, Maria Granino Cecere connects it with Decius’ attempts to restore old Roman religious practices and infers that the emperor revived a cult that was increasingly becoming less popular. Considering the general scarcity of material from all periods, this assumption is hard to prove and the size of the statue base could just as well be considered an indication that the priests had considerable sums at hand – not exactly a sign of decline.

In the dedication, the priests identify themselves as Caben[ses] [s]acerdot[es] [feria]rum Latinar[um] mon[tis] Albani. So, the inscription connects the group to the rites of the Latin festival as well as to the location and – together with the Fasti feriarum Latinarum and the votive inscription to Jupiter Latiaris that were found in the same excavation campaign – it offers an important clue regarding the cultic activity on mons Albanus, in which the priests apparently participated. Granino Cecere suggests that they may have had a permanent residence there and that they were responsible for the inscription of the Fasti. Although this cannot be substantiated, the Cabenses are the only priests who are actually attested on the hill itself. But can we trace these cult officials before the third century AD as well? And can we say anything about the origins and status of the men that held the priesthood?

We know of three individual sacerdotes Cabenses from different funerary inscriptions in Rome, each of which have significant interpretation problems. The epitaph that seems to record the oldest reference is now lost and only preserved in a nineteenth century notebook. It was put up for C. Antistius by his father, also called C. Antistius, and has been dated – rather speculatively – to

---


785 On the basis of the lettering the text can dated to the third century AD and the available space on the inscription suggest Tr(aianus), the name that Decius took up after his coronation: Granino Cecere (1996) 277-278, Granino Cecere (2012) 494-495.


787 Preserved in the Vatican archives: Cod. Vat. Lat. 9758 f. 28ª: C. Antistio [---] / sacerdo[ti] Cab(n)sis montis [Albani qui] / vixit ann(is) X[---] / C. Antist[ius] pater [---] / fe [cit ---?].
the first or early second century AD.\textsuperscript{788} Antistius’ function of \textit{sacerdos Cabensis} appears here without
the reference to the \textit{feriae Latinae} and as his only recorded title. Granino Cecere has interpreted this
as an indication of the humble status of the deceased and his father, of whom we have no other
trace, and thus suggested that the priesthood itself was of relatively humble status. This reasoning
seems stretched, however, because Antistius may have deliberately chosen to mention just this one
title on his son’s epitaph. Or the boy died too early to acquire further titles, and held the priesthood
as a (very) young man.

That it was possible to do so, is clear from a funerary altar for Caius Nonius Ursus, who was
only two years, 11 months and 13 days old when he died.\textsuperscript{789} Not only was he \textit{sacerdos Cabe(n)sis} montis
Albani by then, but he is even identified as \textit{curio}, which probably makes him a member of the
equestrian class.\textsuperscript{790} Considering the style of the altar – which has partly preserved the portrait bust
of the deceased – it can probably be dated to the Trajanic period, perhaps the first decade of the
second century AD.\textsuperscript{791} While it may seem strange that someone at this young age was expected to
oversee the rituals, his function must have been a purely ceremonial one, which only involved him
being present at the site. A further explanation is provided by the dedicator of the altar, C. Nonius
Iustinus, who calls the boy \textit{alumnus dulcissimus} and thus probably took him in as a foster child.\textsuperscript{792} In a
different funerary altar, again unfortunately lost now but seen and transcribed by Mommsen, this
man Iustinus is identified as a \textit{Cabe(n)sis} mont[is Albani] as well.\textsuperscript{793} This allows the possibility that the
priesthood was passed on from father to (adopted) son, a procedure that we know from other

\textsuperscript{788} As suggested by Granino Cecere (1996) 280, on the basis of the simple formulation and the fact that there is
no reference to the \textit{di manes}, which are often addressed in epitaphs of the second and third century AD (but
not always).

\textsuperscript{789} CIL VI 2174: \textit{Dis Man(ibus) / C(ai) Noni C(ai) f(ili) Ursi / sacerdotis Cabe(n)sis / montis Albani / curioni / C(aius)
Nonius Iustinus / alumno dulcissimo / vix(it) ann(is) II m(ensis) XI d(iebus) XIII}. The funerary altar is barely legible
and in the CIL editions, the age of the deceased is transcribed as LI. I follow the the later interpretation by
early drawing of the altar (Cod. Neap. XIII B 8, 158r), which clearly indicates II and the appellation
\textit{dulcissimo}, which was often used for children.

\textsuperscript{790} \textit{Curiones} appear in our sources as priests who were responsible for holding banquets and making sacrifices
on behalf of the Roman citizens of one of Rome’s \textit{curiae}. In the Republic, the priesthood was reserved for men
of senatorial rank that were at least 50 years of age, but – as epigraphic evidence attests – these requirements
seem to have been gone by the Imperial age. Nonetheless, the men that held the position seem to have been at

\textsuperscript{791} Kleiner (1987) 276-277, Boschung (1987) 88, no. 360, Haack (2006) 89. This is also supported by the lettering.

\textsuperscript{792} Although it was a less formal procedure than adoption, Roman families often took in orphans or poor
children if they had no (living) offspring. The exact legal status of \textit{alumni} is still debated, see: Rawson (2003)
250-263.

\textsuperscript{793} CIL VI 2175: \textit{D(is) M(anibus) / C(ai) Noni [---] / Justin[---] / haruspicis [---] / patris et Q[--] / cippum Cabe(n)[sis]
/ mont[is Albani] / qui vixit ann(is) [---] / (Caius) Nonius L(uci) f(ilius) [---] / Augustoru[m ---]. As seen by:
Mommsen. The text has many problems and Granino Cecere (1996) 281-283 points out several details that
indicate an incomplete and/or wrong transcription. Most notably, the appearance of \textit{cippum} in line 6 (usually
used to designate the \textit{sepulcrum} itself or the space occupied by it), before the priesthood, is hard to explain.
priesthoods in Rome. Unfortunately, because of the fragmented state of the inscription and the poor transcription, we know little else about Nonius Iustinus, apart from the fact that he was a *haruspex*. This supports the idea that he too was an *eques*.

From the limited evidence of these *sacerdotes*, we can establish only a few things about their role. Although none of the individual *Cabenses* is explicitly linked to the *feriae Latiae*, we may assume from their collective dedication to the emperor that the reference to their title implied as much. As we have seen with the *sacerdotes Lanuvini*, the priesthood is defined by a time old community in Latium, which in this case emerges in our literary sources only from the second century AD onwards and had probably long dissolved by the time it appears on inscriptions. Hence, even though it is not clear if it was a relic or a reinvention of earlier times, the title of the *Cabenses* forms an illustration of how the cult practice on the *mons Albanus* was connected to the remembered past of the area. With regard to the responsibilities of the priests many questions remain: it is uncertain what they actually did on the mountain and if their activities were restricted to the celebration of the *feriae Latiae*. Like similar priesthoods in Latium, there is a connection to the equestrian class, for which these functions seem to have had a distinct appeal. In this particular situation though, the evidence does not allow for more conclusions on the social standing of the *Cabenses*, since they do not appear in any additional administrative or financial context – which is in contrast, for example, with the extensive careers that were publicized by or for some of the *sacerdotes Lanuvini*.

For the second category of priests, the *pontifices Albani*, the situation seems different: as specified before, we cannot be sure that they were in fact active on the *mons Albanus*, although some of them do appear to originate from the area of the Alban hills. This was probably the case for the most illustrious – and also the earliest – example of a *pontifex Albanus*. It concerns a large marble plaque with a funerary inscription for L. Memmius, who was of senatorial rank and whose activities can be placed in the last decades of the first century BC. Apart from being an Alban priest, he held the office of *frumenti curator* (responsible for the grain distribution) and had a function in the

---

794 Such as for example the *flamen dialis* and the *flamen martialis*, which were sometimes passed on through generations. Val. Max. 1.1.9 provides an example of a *Salius* and his father. For further examination: Mitchell (1990) 150ff, North (1990) 527-543.

795 Haack (2006) 88. For the evidence regarding *equites* as imperial haruspices see: Scheid and Granino Cecere (1999) 94–96, Torelli (2011) 137-159. Although *equites* very often were members of the imperial augural colleges, the poor transcription does not allow for a final identification in this case.

796 See note 802 below.

797 CIL VI 1460: L(ucius) Memmius C(ai) f(ilius) Gal(eria) q(uaestor) tr(ibunus) pl(ebis) pr(aetor) / frumenti curator ex s(enatus) c(onsulto) / praefectus leg(ionis) XXVI et VII / Lucae ad agros dividundos / pontifex Albanus / Memmia filia testamento suo fieri iussit. The inscription is dated on the basis of the formula *frumenti curator* – which after the Augustan age was replaced by *praefectus frumenti dandi ex s.c.* – and on the tribus Galeria, with which this branch of the *gens* can be distinguished. Cf: Granino Cecere (1996) 285-290, Rüpke (2005) 1148, Farney (2007) 273-274.
division of land for veterans of Octavian, in the area of Luca. His service to the princeps probably made him an influential man and it is notable that his title of pontifex Albanus is placed at the end of his cursus honorum and is also inscribed with larger letters. This may indicate the prestige of the function at his time. Granino Cecere suggests that it was no coincidence that a member of the gens Memmia received and proudly presented the title: the Iulii and Memmii prided themselves on having Trojan ancestry, which made a priesthood connected with the mythical city of Alba Longa extra significant. What is not clear, however, is if the office was in any way connected to the celebration of the feriae Latinae, which is an issue we shall come back to later.

Other examples of pontifices Albani appear only much later, from the second half of the second century onwards. In contrast to L. Memmius, they all seem to have been members of the equestrian class. In the example of Cn. Iulius Domatius Priscus, of whom we have an epitaph from the second century AD, this is expressed by the formula ex(ornatus) equo public(o). Domatius Priscus fulfilled no administrative offices, but he is also labelled as an assistant to the imperial haruspices. The prominence of the Alban priesthood is suggested by its position at the end of his cursus honorum, as was the case for the prefect of the vigiles (whose name is lost) that fulfilled the post in the late third or even early fourth century AD. Although the evidence is far from conclusive, the impression we get from these later pontifices Albani is comparable to that of the sacerdotes Cabenses: they were equites who had relatively modest public careers, of which the Alban priesthood was an important part. L. Memmius – the senator in the first example – is the obvious exception, but this may explained by the fact that he held the position much earlier. As we have seen before, the Augustan reform in priesthoods – which made the oldest priestly colleges in the city of Rome exclusively available to patricians – may have made the Latin priesthoods especially attractive for members of the equestrian class.

798 Legio VII, which is mentioned in the inscription, was part of the troops that entered Rome with Octavian in 43 BC. As a result of their services, they received land in the area of Luca shortly after. See: Keppie (1983) 64, 174.
801 CIL IX 1595: praefecto vig(ium) e(gregiae) m(eroriae) v(iro) / pontif(ici) Alba/nio minori. Again, the original inscription is now lost, but it was seen and transcribed by Mommsen. The late date is based on the lettering and the use of the title e(gregiae) v(ir). The fact that the priesthood is labelled minor had nothing to do with the hierarchy within the order, but with the rank of the deceased. From the Antonine period onwards, senatorial priesthoods were often accompanied by maior, whereas equestrian priests were labelled minor. Granino Cecere (1996) 80-96, Beard, North and Price (1998) 260-261.
802 This was explained by Wissowa (1912) 519-521 as a reaction to the fact that priesthoods in the city of Rome (such as the Salii and the Arval brothers) had increasingly become the domain of men of senatorial rank since
Within this order of pontifices, there seems to have been a certain hierarchy, as is illustrated by two officials in our corpus that carried the title pontifex (et) dictator Albanus. On a votive inscription for the ordo haruspicum LX found in Rome, L. Fonteius Flavianus identifies himself as such.\(^8\) The Alban priesthood was part of his priestly career, which appears to be rather extensive: he was also a haruspex Aug(ustorum) and magister publicus of the haruspices. The document can be dated to the Severan age and shows how then the Alban priesthood had become a way for equites to distinguish themselves in the religious domain. Fonteius probably originated from Clusium and in Rome he became – like some of the priests we have discussed earlier – a member of the imperial augural college. He also held a leading post within the ordo LX, the order of 60 haruspices in the city of Rome that was formed in the early Empire to preserve the Etrusca disciplina and increasingly became the domain of equites as well.\(^9\) This time, the Alban priesthood and dictatorship are not positioned as the conclusion of the cursus honorem, but it certainly adds significance to it.

Like we have seen in Lanuvium and Aricia, the dictatorship of the Latin priestly order does not appear to have been an exclusively local affair. The second personage that we see as a dictator et pontifex Albanus, P. Flavius Priscus, is a fairly distinguished figure that we know from four different inscriptions in Ostia (although he may not have originated from there). In 249 AD, he is honoured for the fact that he was made dictator Albanus when he was only 28 years old, and he was probably the first to which this happened at such an early age.\(^10\) By the time the inscription was put up however, he was probably older: he was the patronus of Ostia and of a number of associations and

---


\(^9\) CIL VI 2161: (Lucius) Fonteius Flavianus / haruspex Aug(ustorum) CC / pontifex dictator / Alban(us) mag(ister) publicus / haruspicum ordini / haruspicum LX d(onum) d(edit). Granino Cecere (1996) 293-296, Haack (2006) 52-53, Rüpke (2005) 1001. The Severan date can be deduced from the lettering, but also from the title of ducenarius: From Severus Alexander the augurs were promoted (H.A. Alex 44.4) and given salaria (‘salaries’) and auditoria (‘lecture halls’).

\(^10\) There has been considerable debate on the position and development of this order. Torelli (1975) 115ff argued that the individual haruspices began to organize themselves from the middle Republic onwards, but later authors have argued that the ordo of 60 members was a later creation, perhaps by Augustus, and was further strengthened after an intervention by the emperor Claudius (Tac. Ann. 11.15). In any case, the epigraphic evidence for the ordo LX is all from imperial times and although the members were often recruited among equites as well, their functions should be distinguished from the haruspices active in the imperial colleges. For the latter, who grew in number and became increasingly important after the second century AD, see: Torelli (2011) 137-159. Fonteius Flavianus was from Clusium and thus could boast Etruscan roots, but probably this was no longer necessary from the second century AD onwards. Cf: Rawson (1978) 132-152, MacBain (1982) 59-50, Scheid and Granino Cecere (1999) 94-96, Haack (2006) 110-112.

---

had advanced on the equestrian ladder to the rank of centenarius through religiosa disciplina (‘religious discipline’). The exact meaning of the latter formula is unclear, but it has been suggested that Flavianus was a haruspex, just like Fonteius Flavianus, possibly in the service of the imperial family.\textsuperscript{806} In any case, he remained an important figure in the city of Ostia and within the ranks of the equites, as he is also honourably mentioned in an inscription by his son in law.\textsuperscript{807} In his career, the Alban dictatorship seems to have been the only post outside the city of Ostia.

So, the evidence points to a pattern that to a degree looks similar to the situation we have seen in Aricia and Lanuvium.\textsuperscript{808} There is little doubt that the religious dictatorship was an important function: while there may have been more pontifices Albani active at the same time, there was probably only one dictator. The title was awarded to men of a certain standing, who had extensive equestrian careers, including very often a post within the augural colleges. Unlike Lanuvium, we find no connection between the dictatores Albani and municipal career paths in one of the villages in the area of the Alban hills. Both our dictatores appear to be outsiders, as was for example the emperor Trajan in the case of Aricia. This brings back issues that we have discussed earlier about the position of the office and its relation to the Latin past. Did the Alban dictatorship retain any of its ancient associations and was it – by the time of the third century AD – a primarily religious or mostly honorific function? Did the dictator oversee the activities of the pontifices as a political magistrate or was he a chief priest? And, more importantly perhaps, to what Latin past did the post of dictator Albanus refer and where exactly did he perform his duties?

As mentioned before, we should place the origins of the dictatorship in the early history of Latium, in which similar socio-political traditions developed in different communities, alongside a shared development in material culture.\textsuperscript{809} From what time onwards Rome was dominant in this process is unclear, but we can assume that after the city took control in the region – from about the fourth century BC onwards – the administrative functions radically changed shape and meaning. The dictatorship may have survived as an honorary position, which was mainly (if not solely) exercised in the religious domain. In the case of the dictator Albanus, this could mean that he had a leading position in the celebration of the feriae Latinae, although this is hard to align with the descriptions of the consuls being in charge of the procedures. Did the dictator perhaps represent the long lost people of Alba Longa during the rites? In fact – according to Roman historical tradition –

\textsuperscript{806} His devotion to the imperial family is also clear from the dedication to Salona, wife of Gallienus: CIL XIV 5335 (dated to 253-268 AD). See, for Flavius Priscus as imperial augur: Scheid and Granino Cecere (1999) 139, Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli and Zevi (2010) 238. Note however that this is only a suggestion, since we have no other attestation of the formula ‘religiosa disciplina’.

\textsuperscript{807} CIL XIV 5340: [...] genero / Fl(avi) Prisci p(erfectissimi) v(iri) p(atroni) c(oloniae) [...].

\textsuperscript{808} See chapter II, pages 77-79 and chapter III, pages 136-139.

the institution itself had a special link to Alba Longa, as the town was allegedly ruled by annual dictatores, who had taken over the government from the kings long before the Romans destroyed the town.\textsuperscript{810} It is impossible to determine if there is any causal relation between this tradition and the continued or revived existence of the office of dictator Albanus, but in the course of history – as we will see further ahead – the narratives surrounding the feriae Latinae and the town of Alba Longa increasingly became interwoven.\textsuperscript{811} In this process, the age-old and at the same time constantly renewed office of dictator could have played an important part.

In this respect, two other priesthoods that we know from inscriptions are of importance. First, there is the salius Albanus, of which we have two examples in the epigraphic record. The Salii are known as an ancient order of Roman priests that danced in armour in honour of Mars and Quirinus, and although again we can only speculate about their cultic roles in this case, ritual dances may have been involved here as well.\textsuperscript{812} Our first example comes from a funerary monument from the early Augustan period found in Rome, where an Antistius Sarculo is commemorated as a salius Albanus and the magister of this college.\textsuperscript{813} We know nothing about his status or his family and Granino Cecere has suggested that the fact he married his former slave reveals a non-elite background - although the fine quality of his portrait and that of his wife suggests he did have money to spend (figure 4.8).\textsuperscript{814} We have no indication that the salius and magister Albanus was of equestrian rank and, just like the other early example in our corpus (the senator L. Memmius), this may prove that the equites became dominant in the Latin priesthoods in the period after the Augustan reform of Roman priesthoods. The second example of a priest with this title is datable to the late second century AD, and it is more like the Alban priesthoods we have seen before. On an honorary inscription on a large statue base found in the ager Praenestinus, the eques P. Aelius Tiro is identified as salius arcis Albanae.\textsuperscript{815} His military career started under the patronage of Commodus

\textsuperscript{810} Dion. Hal. 5.74.4; Liv. 1.23.4.
\textsuperscript{811} See below, pages 188ff.
\textsuperscript{813} This personage is known from two inscriptions, which are probably from the same funerary monument: CIL VI 2170: L(ucius) Antistius Cn(aei) f(ilius) Hor(atia) Sarculo / salius Albanus dem(um) mag(ister) saliorum // [...] and CIL VI 2171: L(ucius) Antestius Cn(aei) f(ilius) Hor(atia) / Sarculo salius Albanus [...] Granino Cecere (1996) 204-206, Rüpke (2005) 640.
\textsuperscript{814} Kockel (1993) 178 - 179, Granino Cecere (1996) 206. Antistius Sarculo was married to one of his libertae and two other liberti raised this monument for him.
(whose name is erased) when he was only fourteen years of age. Since his priesthood is the first title to be mentioned on the inscription, it may have been awarded to him as a young man, or it may have carried the greatest prestige. Here, in any case, a religious career is again combined with a typical equestrian career in military service, probably in close connection with the imperial administration.

The latter inscription provides an interesting clue as to where the priest performed his function. His title refers to the *arx Albana*, a location which has variously been interpreted as an archaistic invention (referring to Alba Longa) or perhaps the villa of Domitian at present day Castel Gandolfo. Recently however, Grandazzi has plausibly argued that the word *arx* may have had an archaistic ring to it, but also referred to a physical location, namely the summit of the *mons Albanus*. He supports this theory by referring to a number of literary sources, which mainly referred to Caesar’s ascent of the hill during the *feriae Latinae* and his return to Rome in the form of an *ovatio*. We will return to Caesar and his interest in the *feriae Latinae* in the final section of this chapter, but for now it is important to acknowledge that the adjective *Albanus* or *Albana* in the title could refer to the physical location of the peak and not just to the mythical or even fictional place of Alba Longa. This supports the idea that the cult officials we have discussed earlier were active on the *mons Albanus* itself. At the same time, the involvement of Caesar also illustrates how the Latin history of the *feriae Latinae* came to be associated with the Roman (if not Julian) history of Alba Longa and how it may not always be possible – or helpful – to separate the narratives.

The last category of cult personnel discussed here, the *virgines Vestales Albanae*, demonstrate this process well. Of course, the most obvious example of an Alban Vestal virgin is Rhea Sylvia, the mother of Romulus and Remus from Alba Longa. There is evidence however, that Alba Longa’s mythical office was somehow appropriated and reinterpreted by the inhabitants of Bovillae, who had a special claim to the religious heritage of Rome’s metropolis. We first hear about Vestal virgins that are distinctively different from the Roman ones and defined as *Albanae* in the commentary of

---

816 The use of the title *felix* for Commodus, dates the statue base to 185-192 AD. It was his father Blandus who recorded the fact that Aelius Tiro gained imperial favour at a young age and paid for the monument, *pro amore civitatis*.

817 The *arx Albana* as an archaistic invention, with no relation to a specific place: Granino Cecere (1996) 307 and 312. For the *arx Albana* as description of the imperial villa at Castel Gandolfo: Castagnoli (1993) 402ff.

818 Grandazzi (2006) 197-212, Grandazzi (2008) 542-545. Grandazzi (2008) 610ff takes this argument one step further, however, and argues that the *arx* on *mons Albanus* – throughout the year – was mainly used as an augural *templum*. He supports this by referring to the analogy of the *arx* on the Capitoline in Rome and the assumption that the *feriae Latinae* required augural *spectio* in the morning. The argument seems rather thin – as pointed out by Ziolkowski (2011) 7-8 – and is not followed here.

819 See pages 196ff below.
Asconius on Cicero’s *pro Milone*, who mentions the women among the inhabitants of Bovillae.\(^{820}\) In the epigraphic record, the Vestals appear from the mid second century AD onward—not only in Bovillae but also in Tibur and Lavinium—and it is unclear if their position was similar to that of their namesakes in Rome.\(^{821}\) Concerning the Alban Vestals, we find a first example in an honorary inscription found near the eleventh mile of the Via Appia (the supposed location of Bovillae), which is datable to 158 AD. The badly damaged text records the public career of an individual who can be reconstructed as L. Manlius Severus.\(^{822}\) His merits included a gift to the local *decuriones* and *Augustales*, because they allowed the creation of a portrait shield of his deceased sister, who is identified as Manlia Severina, virgo Albana maxima. This not only indicates the presence of the Vestals, but also that there was some form of hierarchy in the order, in which Manlia Severina apparently had a leading position—although it is unclear what this entailed. In the funerary inscription for Manlius Severus himself, he carries the title of *rex sacrorum*, the time-old office that we have earlier discussed as another relic or reinvention of an ancient office that survived into the later religious domain.\(^{823}\) In Bovillae, where the brother and sister came from, the references to ancient priesthoods in inscriptions is particularly significant, as it can be associated with the claim of the town to the religious history of Alba Longa. This is expressed in some literary sources, but mainly in the formula *Albani Longani Bovillenses*, with which the inhabitants of the town are designated in several imperial inscriptions.\(^{824}\) As we will see further ahead, this association between Bovillae and Alba Longa was further strengthened—or, if we choose a more cynical approach, was

---

\(^{820}\) Ascon. *Mil. 40.15-18* (on Milo’s process and the witnesses produced): *Multi ex iis qui Bovillis habitabant testimonium dixerunt de eis quae ibi facta erant: coponem occisum, tabernam expugnatam, corpus Clodi in publicum extractum esse. Virgines quoque Albanae dixerunt mulierem ignotam venisse ad se quod Milonis mandato votum solveret, quod Clodium occisus esset.* (‘Many of those who lived at Bovillae bore testimony on what happened there—the innkeeper killed, the inn taken by storm, Clodius’ body dragged into the open. The Virgins of Alba also alleged that an anonymous woman had come to them to discharge a vow at Milo’s bidding, for the killing of Clodius’).

\(^{821}\) Vestal virgins are attested in Lavinium (CIL XIV 2077) and Tibur (CIL XIV 3677) as well. See Granino Cecere (2003) 67-80 for an overview. She has suggested that their position was largely the same as that of the Vestal Virgins in Rome, but the scarce (and late) evidence does not allow for any definitive conclusions on their ritual roles and organization. Cf: Hemelrijk (2015) 64-65.


\(^{823}\) CIL XIV 2413: *D(is) M(anibus) / L(ucio) Manlio L(uci) f(ilio) Pal(atina) / Severo regi sacrorum fictori / pontificum p(opuli) R(omanorum) IIII/ viro Bovillensi/um collactane/o dulcissimo et / indulgentissimo / erga se fecit.* Since the man was a fictor (maker of statues) for Roman priests and since his epitaph was found in Rome, it may be possible that the man held the position of *rex sacrorum* in Rome, which is also suggested by the order of his titles. See Rüpke (2005) 1130. For *reges sacrorum* in Lanuvium, see chapter III, page 139.

\(^{824}\) CIL VI 1425; VI 1851; XIV 2409; XIV 2411; I² 1439. The latter, with a dedication from three members of the Iulii to Veiovis—the younger version of Jupiter—is especially significant, since it establishes a connection between the gens Iulia, their Alban roots and the god Jupiter. See pages 197-198 below.
invented – by the Julio-Claudians, who celebrated and promoted their *origo* in Bovillae with an ancestral cult for the *gens Julia.*

As far as the Vestal virgins are concerned, we may return to the question we asked before: are there signs that they were actually active on the *mons Albanus*? If we follow Grandazzi’s view, there are good reasons to assume they were. The proof of this is in a second honorary inscription, found in Rome and datable to the third or perhaps even the fourth century AD. Here, a lady whose name is unfortunately lost is described as *virgo Vestalis maxima arcis Albanae.* Just like the *salius* discussed before, the reference to the *arx Albanae* in the title may be understood as a sign that her function was performed on the *mons Albanus.* It is also a late testimony of the religious activities there, even though it is – just like in the example of Manlia Severina – uncertain if the Vestal’s position was in some way related to the celebration of the *feriae Latinae.* The cult of Vesta is not otherwise attested on the Alban mount, but considering the political significance of the rituals of the *feriae Latinae* and considering the coinciding traditions of Alba Longa and the festival, it would not stretch the evidence too far to assume that priestesses of Vesta were participants in the ceremonies.

If that was the case for this *virgo Vestalis,* we may however question how important her position still was in the changing religious landscape of the late Empire. Suggestive of the continuity of the office but also of its decline, is the last testimony of a Vestal virgin from Alba, provided by two letters of Symmachus that are dated to about 382 AD. Symmachus was a member of the *collegium pontificale* and tried to persuade the urban prefect to punish an Alban Vestal named Primigenia for incest. His attempts apparently failed, and his somewhat desperate tone seems to show the diminished interest of the officials in the regularity of the Alban rites – a prelude to the anti-pagan measures of Gratian that came shortly after and were especially directed against the privileges of the Vestals. This is a sign that the worship on the *mons Albanus* – which had probably been fading for a while and had possibly lost its yearly pattern by then – probably found a definitive end at the close of the fourth century AD. In the centuries before, however, we can observe a long continuity of

---

825 See pages 196-199 below.
ritual activity that remained firmly connected to the religious and mythical past of the area. As we can tell from the relatively late date of most of our inscriptions, the priesthod seem to have gained appeal in the 2nd and 3rd century AD, possibly as a vehicle for non-senatorial elites to establish authority in the religious domain and connect themselves with long established and respected traditions of the Roman state. Although their ritual activities were performed outside of the city boundaries, these priests were connected to the heart of Roman religious tradition. The cult practice preserved a part of the Latin past through the conscious and constructive revival of old, half-forgotten offices, but at the same time it also continuously changed the shape and meaning of that past.

4.8 Roman Jupiter and Latin Jupiter: creating religious and political unity?
Throughout this chapter, we have seen how the cult practice and its history on the Alban mount were connected with the religious and political history of Rome. While we can speculate that the feriae Latinae had its origins in the pre-Roman history of Latium it appears in our literary sources in strict connection with the discourse of Roman dominance over the area. In the material record, the lack of private involvement is striking and, as argued before, Jupiter Latiiris appears to have been manifest as a god only (or mainly) in the context of the feriae Latinae. Although at the current, fragmented state of research it is impossible to draw any final conclusions, it seems that the metaphorical and political significance of the rites during the feriae Latinae contributed considerably to the celebrity of the cult of Jupiter Latiaris. The celebration of Latinitas, of being part of a Latin community, remained an important moment in the Roman ritual calendar, as it connected the religious history of the region with the contemporary reality of an expanding Roman Empire. In the last part of this chapter, I will explore this link between the Latin and Roman history of the feriae Latinae further by looking into the possibility of corresponding festivities in Rome during the festival. Also, I will examine if and how the cult on the mons Albanus became associated – if not partly equated – with the other important Jupiter cult in the region, that of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline hill in Rome.

For the proceedings in the urbs in the days surrounding and during the feriae Latinae, very few sources are available. There is no indication of the preparations for the festival, nor do we know which route the magistrates took to the mons Albanus and back. What we know, is that because of

---

829 There is no material evidence to support this theory on the decline of the cult, but the general decree with which Theodosius prohibited pagan cults in 392 AD seems a definitive terminus post quem non. See further: Grandazzi (2008) 492-493. The scholarship on the diminishing importance of the pagan cults in Rome in the third and fourth centuries AD is extensive, but see the monumental work of Cameron (2010) 33-92 for an overview of the developments between the reign of Constantine and Theodosius and for further bibliography.
the absence of all of Rome’s magistrates, a special urban prefect was appointed: the *praefectus urbi feriarum Latinarum causa*. According to Strabo, a ‘young noble’ was appointed ‘in charge of the city as governor for the time of the sacrifice’.830 The office was typically held at the beginning of an administrative career – as is amply attested by honorary inscriptions – and the young prefects were not expected to conduct political business during their short term of office.831 In fact, as suggested by a passage in Cicero, the *feriae Latiae* were probably accompanied by a number of free days in the Roman calendar. In one of his letters to his brother, Cicero mentions that he needs to take care of Tulia’s engagement to Crassipes, ‘but it is the two days after the Latin Festival (now ended), which are holy days, and he is just leaving town’.832 Elsewhere, in *de Republica*, he has Scipio Africanus spending the days surrounding the *feriae Latiae* in his country house, suggesting that there was ample time for leisure during this period.833

So, while there is no certainty about the duration of the rites on the Alban Mount – it was tentatively argued earlier that it remained just one day throughout its history – we may assume that the festival was accompanied by some free days in the calendar, in which Rome was devoid of most of its leading magistrates. Some modern interpreters have maintained, however, that the festivities of the *feriae Latiae* did not just entail a short holiday out of town, but were also – perhaps simultaneously – celebrated in Rome itself.834 Pliny mentions a chariot race on the Capitoline hill, after which the winner was rewarded with absinthium.835 As a sole reference, this claim is hard to believe, if only because the supposed location does not exactly allow for chariot racing. The Christian apologists – such as Tertullian and Minucius Felix – who describe the ritual much later (from the third century AD onwards), provide a rather grim image of the festivities for Jupiter Latiaris, which they claim took place in Rome.836 The details in their descriptions vary, but the authors agree that the rites involved a form of human sacrifice: the statue of the god was sprinkled with the blood of a *bestiarius*, an animal fighter who was – in the interpretation of Tertullian – a

830 Strab. 5.3.2.: τῇ πόλει δ᾿ ἐφιστήθην ἄρχοντα πρὸς τὸν τῆς θυσίας χρόνον τῶν γνωρίμων τινά νέων.
831 In the epigraphic sources, the office appears in its full form, but also as the abridged *praefectus feriarum Latinarum*: CIL VI 1343; 1421; 1358; 1422; 31632; 31819; 37079; 41076; 41138; 41144; 41162; 41214; 41229; 41233; 41239; 41240; CIL IX 3667; CIL XI 1432; CIL XIV 3609; AE 1916, 118; AE 1973, 200. That these *praefecti* were not supposed to behave as politicians, can be deduced from: Tac. Ann. 4.36; Suet. Nero 7; Gell. 14.8).
832 Cic. Quint.fr. 2.4.4: [...] sed dies erant duo qui post Latinas habentur religiosi (ceterum confectum erat Latiar), et erat exiturus.
835 Plin. NH 27.28.45: [...] siquidem Latinarum feriis quadrigae certant in Capitolio victorque absinthium bibit, credo, sanatatem praemio dari honorifice arbitratis maioribus. (‘[...] since that at the Latin festival there is a race for four-horse chariots on the Capitoline Hill, the winner of which takes a draught of wormwood, our ancestors thinking, I believe, that health was a very grand prize to give’).
condemned criminal.\textsuperscript{837} It is not difficult to recognize the polemic nature of this discourse, which answered to an abhorrence of human sacrifice that was shared by pagans and Christians alike. As such, this rite for Jupiter Latiaris has often been dismissed as a complete invention and an obvious inversion of the accusations of blood sacrifices that were usually directed at Christians.\textsuperscript{838}

Recently however, Grandazzi has suggested that there may have been an element of truth in the polemic narratives.\textsuperscript{839} He points out that the story of the blood offer was not disputed in pagan sources and is even repeated by one non-Christian author, the Neoplatonist Porphyry.\textsuperscript{840} Furthermore, Ittai Gradel has drawn attention to a passage in Suetonius, where it is claimed that Caligula liked to be in immortal company and was hailed as Jupiter Latiaris by some.\textsuperscript{841} Gradel reconstructs this as a pun on the bloodthirstiness of the emperor, a theme that was exploited more often by Roman authors.\textsuperscript{842} The salutation of Caligula would only make sense to Roman readers if Jupiter Latiaris really did receive human blood, in some form or another. Although it was clearly exploited by later Christian apologists, Gradel suggests that the detail of the sprinkling of the statue with blood was based on a genuine ritual act, be it that the criminal was executed, not sacrificed. While this may be a clever line of reasoning, it fails to take into account that – apart from the openly polemic Christian passages – the cult of Jupiter Latiaris is not attested in the city of Rome at all. Regarding the \textit{feriae Latinae}, the odd passage in Cassius Dio about the chariot race cannot be considered strong evidence either and our main body of urban evidence – the inscriptions in which the \textit{praefectus urbi fieriarum Latinarum causa} appears – actually refers to the departure of Rome’s elites. Thus, the cult practice seems clearly focused on the \textit{mons Albanus}, away from Rome, and

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{837} See, most clearly, Tert. \textit{Apol.} 9.5: \textit{Ecce in illa religiosissima urbe Aeneadaram piiorum est Jupiter quidam quem ludis suis humano sanguine proluunt. Sed bestiarii, inquitis. Hoc, opinor, minus quam hominis? An hoc turpius, quod mali hominis? Certe tamen de homicidio funditur.} (‘But look you! in that most religious of all cities, the city of the pious race of Aeneas, is a certain Jupiter, whom they drench with human blood at his own games. “Yes, but only the blood of a man condemned already to the beasts,” you say? That, I take it, makes it something less than a man’s blood? Or is it not so disgraceful because it is the blood of a bad man? At all events it is at least the blood of murder’). Loeb translation with adjustments.
\textsuperscript{838} Lennon (2010) 74-77, Rives (1995) 65-85, esp. 74-77 for several examples of this rhetorical strategy, with which Christian authors ‘turned the tables’ (\textit{retorquere} is the verb that Tertulian [Tert. \textit{Apol.} 9.6-8] uses) against their accusers.
\textsuperscript{839} Grandazzi (2008) 653ff.
\textsuperscript{840} Porph. \textit{Abst.} 2.56.9. Gradel (2002) 241. points out that the formulation is very similar to that of the Christian apologists and that is likely that that the author – even though he cannot be accused of Christian sympathies – derived his knowledge from common hearsay rather than from personally witnessing the rite.
\textsuperscript{841} Suet. \textit{Calig.} 22.2-3: \{[...]\} \textit{artem Palatii ad Forum usque promovit, atque aede Castoris et Pollucis in vestibulum transfigurata, consistens saepe inter fratres deos, medium adorandum se adeuntibus exhibebat; et quidam eum Latiarem lovem consulaturant.} (‘[...] he built out a part of the Palace [or Palatine] as far as the Forum, and making the temple of Castor and Pollux its vestibule, he often took his place between the divine brothers, and exhibited himself there to be worshipped by those who presented themselves; and some hailed him as Jupiter Latiaris’).
\textsuperscript{842} Gradel (2002) 245-252.
\end{flushright}
insofar as the *feriae Latinae* created cohesion between the Roman and Latin religious history, it was not through a corresponding ritual programme.

Still, it is enlightening to reflect on the similarities between the activities on the *mons Albanus* and the *mons Capitolinus*, as we see that the ritual practices on both hills— or rather: the narratives surrounding these practices— repeatedly coincide in our sources. We have already discussed a passage in Pliny, who claims that during the *feriae Latinae*, chariot races were held on the Capitoline hill.\(^{843}\) The sacrifice of the bull on the *mons Albanus* – the climax of the *feriae Latinae* and the beginning of the war season for Roman magistrates with *imperium* – is paralleled by the ritual initiation of the consular year in the city itself, which included the sacrifice of two bulls at the altar of Jupiter Optimus Maximus.\(^{844}\) Furthermore, there is an isolated passage in Livy, who claims that C. Cicereius dedicated a temple to Juno Moneta on the *mons Albanus*, after his victory against the Corsicans in 168 BC.\(^{845}\) This temple has not been attested elsewhere in the literary sources, nor can it be traced in the archaeological record. What we do recognize is the clear analogy with the religious landscape of Rome, where the temple of Juno Moneta was located next to the large temple for Roman Jupiter on the Capitolium.\(^{846}\)

The most obvious parallel, however, is presented by the *triumphus*: the ritual victory procession into Rome at the end of a victorious war, which usually ended with a solemn sacrifice by the commanding *imperator* to Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline hill. According to the extant sources, four of these *triumphi* occurred on the *mons Albanus*, in 231, 211, 197 and 172 BC.\(^{847}\) There, they presumably (although this is not stated directly) ended with an offer to Jupiter Latiaris. When and why was such an alternative triumph celebrated? From comments in Livy and Valerius Maximus, we learn that it happened only when the Senate denied a regular triumph and the commanders decided on their own initiative to lead their troops up the Alban Mount.\(^{848}\) As such it was less prestigious than the Roman version and it no doubt attracted fewer spectators, although

---

843 Plin. *NH* 27.28.45. See note 835.
845 Liv. 45.15.10: *Eodem anno C. Cicereius aedem Monetae in monte Albano dedicavit quinquennio post quam vovit.*
847 231 BC: C. Papirius Maso; 211 BC: M. Claudius Marcellus; 197 BC: Q. Minucius Rufus; 172 BC: C. Cicereius. A more thorough discussion of these commanders and the circumstances of the triumphs can be found in: Rosenberger (2009) 31-33.
848 Thus Livy, on the Alban triumph of C. Cicereius, 42.21.7: *Is expositis quas in Corsica res gessisset postulatoque frustra triumpho, in monte Alban, quod iam in morem venerat, ut sine publica auctoritate fieret, triumphavit.* (‘When he had set forth his achievements in Corsica and had vainly demanded a triumph, he celebrated his triumph on the Alban Mount, which had now become customary in order to permit the celebration of a triumph without the authorization of the state’). Cf: Liv. 26.21.2-6; 33.23.3-4; 33.23.8-9; 45.38.4; Val. Max.3.6.5; Plin. *NH* 15.38.126.
Livy mentions instances where the Alban triumph displayed impressive amounts of booty. Although it was a day’s march from Rome and the hill was steep, the road (presumably already paved in the Republic) would have made the ascent easier. What is remarkable is that the contested celebrations nonetheless ended up in the *Fasti Triumphales* (the inscribed triumphal records in Rome) and thus seem to have been recorded and remembered as legitimate rituals after all.

It has been argued, for example by Cory Brennan, that the triumphal processions on the *mons Albanus* were created *ex nihilo* in the third century BC, when a precedent was set by C. Papirius Maso, the first commander who resolved the issue of his rejected triumph in Rome by heading to the cult site of Jupiter Latiaris instead. The importance of this ‘secondary’ triumph would then have diminished quickly in the second century BC, as was for example clear from the humble status of the last of our known triumphators, C. Cicereius (a former scribe of Scipio Africanus). Other interpreters have resisted this reading and have disputed that the Roman triumph served as a model for the Alban variant. They argued that the triumph on the *mons Albanus* had a longer history, as it probably was the place where the Latins celebrated common victories before the Roman dominance over the region. The first triumphator who appears in our sources, C. Papirius Maso, was a pontifex and thus would have had access to religious archives that preserved ritual history. As such, he could have revived, not invented, the ancient custom. As we have remarked before in this thesis, there is no way to prove whether it was Rome or the Latin cities that took the lead in the development of religio-political institutions in archaic Latium. Nonetheless, in this case, the longer and much better attested history of the triumph in Rome seems to support the idea that the...
triumphators on the *mons Albanus* used Latin Jupiter because of his association with Roman Jupiter – and not the other way around.\footnote{One could ask, for example, why the *Fasti* traced the Roman triumph back to the time of Romulus, while there was no similar projection in the Alban case and Papirius Maso is described as *primus in m[onte] Alban[o] triumphantivit*. On the much debated origins of the Roman triumph, in which most authors now recognize an defining Etruscan influence, see: Bonfante (1970) 49-66, Versnel (1970) 284-303, Rüpke (2006) 251-289, Beard (2009) 305-315.}

Both Jupiter Optimus Maximus and Jupiter Latiaris were strongly connected to the politics of the Roman state and their rites annually formed the beginning and the end of Roman war efforts. These common spheres of influence created overlap in the literary discourse, but also (partly) in cultic practices, as is most clearly exemplified by the *triumphus*. Finally, it should be added that both sanctuaries were linked visually as well. The Alban mount was – and still is – clearly visible from the Capitolium. Grandazzi even suggested that it formed the orientation point in the augural *spectio* from the Roman hill, while a corresponding augural *templum* on the *mons Albanus* would have been oriented towards Rome.\footnote{Grandazzi (2008) 599-600 and plate 20. He supports this by claiming that the *Via Latina* – which according to Rodríguez Almeida (2002) 11 defined the orientation of the *forma Urbis Romae* – was directed at the *mons Albanus* and led the augur’s *spectio* too. The hypothesis is supported by Simón (2011) 127-128.} As emphasized by Andrew Ziolkowski, this is mere speculation and is actually contested by a number of literary sources that describe the auspices as dependant on cardinal directions not topography (in particular, they looked east).\footnote{Such as Dion. Hal. 2.5.2-4. Ziolkowski (2011) 7-8.} Even without the augural aspect though, the high *mons Albanus* must have formed an obvious focal point in the city landscape of Rome. Pliny suggests that a reversed situation was possible as well, claiming that the triumphant general Spurius Calvinus made such a huge bronze statue of Capitoline Jupiter out of his Samnite war booty in 293 BC that it could be seen from the cult site of Jupiter Latiaris.\footnote{Such as Dion. Hal. 2.5.2-4. Ziolkowski (2011) 7-8.} This claim may be hard to substantiate topographically – if only because we do not know what the orientation of the remains on the *mons Albanus* was – but it is another example of the way both Jupiter sanctuaries were explicitly paralleled in our literary sources; a confrontation that was no doubt further stimulated by the sight lines that connected the sites.

In the *Fasti Triumphales* there is one last reference to the *mons Albanus*, many years after the final triumph took place: on January 26\textsuperscript{th} in 44 BC, Julius Caesar is recorded to have celebrated an *ovatio ex monte Albanino*.\footnote{Plin. NH 34.43: *Fecit et Sp. Carvilius Iovem, qui est in Capitolio, victis Samnitibus sacrata lege pugnantibus epectoralibus eorum ocreisque et galeis. Amplitudo tanta est, ut conspiciatur a Latiari love.* (Spurius Carvilius also made the Jupiter that stands in the Capitol, after defeating the Samnites in the war which they fought under a most solemn oath; the metal was obtained from their breastplates, greaves and helmets, and the size of the figure is so great that if can be seen from the cult site of Jupiter Latiaris.) Loeb translation with minor adaptations.} An *ovatio* was a minor triumph, which was celebrated when the formal conditions – a decisive victory in a war and a certain number of *of enemies* slain, for example – were...
not met and the Senate denied an official triumph.\textsuperscript{860} As an important difference with the other instances on the Fasti, Caesar is reported to have held the ovation \textit{ex} (from) not \textit{in} (on) the Alban mount. Cassius Dio provides an explanation for this, when he narrates that Caesar – as part of the exceptional privileges that he acquired in the last year before his death – was allowed to ride back to the city on horseback after performing the rites of the \textit{feriae Latinae}.\textsuperscript{861} That was clearly against normal procedure, since generals who were awarded an \textit{ovatio} had to walk into town. In Caesar’s case, it was even more remarkable, because he was a \textit{dictator} at the time and \textit{dictatores} were not allowed to be on horseback at all.\textsuperscript{862} The ovation of 44 BC was different in other ways as well: coming from the \textit{feriae Latinae}, the Senate was most likely (and contrary to custom) in the procession and instead of the required \textit{toga praetexta} and myrtle wreath, Caesar probably sported the \textit{toga picta} (the purple and embroidered dress of the \textit{triumphator}) and laurel wreath he was allowed to wear since 45 BC.\textsuperscript{863} Moreover, there was no victory to be celebrated in 44 BC – not even a minor one. All these innovations are presented in the sources (especially in Cassius Dio) as part of Caesar’s accidental or deliberate flirtations with the kingship and, after having ended the ovation with the final sacrifice to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Caesar significantly found his statues adorned with crowns.\textsuperscript{864}

During the descent from the Alban mount, the \textit{dictator} was also hailed as king for the first time, and although according to our sources rejected the title, Stefan Weinstock has argued that the \textit{ovatio} after the \textit{feriae Latinae} represented a deliberate and strategic stage in Caesars royal aspirations.\textsuperscript{865} He had been careful to attend to the \textit{feriae Latinae} before, even during the hasty preparations for the war against Pompey in 49 BC.\textsuperscript{866} In that year, the celebration was curious: Caesar was not one of the consuls, and the sacrifice took place in December, while the elected consuls had already performed the sacrifice earlier in the year. It is uncertain if the ceremony was performed as an \textit{instauratio} (because of a ritual error in the earlier procedures) or as a special honour awarded by the Senate, but in any case it shows the continued attention of Caesar for the

\textsuperscript{860} Versnel (1970) 165-172, Beard (2009) 62-63. After Valerius Maximus (2.8), it is often assumed that there was an official minimum of 5000 enemies that had to be killed before a triumph was awarded, but Beard (2009) 209-211 questions the authority of this rule (and some of the other rules from the \textit{ius triumphale}), claiming that Valerius was assembling and combining various (conflicting) practices from the Republic.

\textsuperscript{861} Cass. Dio 44.4.3: \ldots μετά τε τὰς ἀνοχὰς τὰς Λατίνας ἐπὶ κέλητος ἐς τὴν πόλιν ἐκ τοῦ Ἀλβανοῦ ἐσχάλαυνεν (‘and after the \textit{feriae Latinae} to ride from the Alban mount into the city on horseback’).

\textsuperscript{862} Liv. 23.14.2; Plut. \textit{Fab}. 4.2. The \textit{dictator} appointed a \textit{magister equitum} (master of the horse), strictly subordinate to him and could only be on horseback went he went out of the city, to go to war.

\textsuperscript{863} Cass. Dio 43.43.1; Suet. \textit{Caes}. 45.2. For the dress of the \textit{triumphator} see: Beard (2009) 225-230.

\textsuperscript{864} The bibliography surrounding the aspirations of Caesar and their relation to religion is large, but sees as an introduction: Wardle (2015) 100-111.

\textsuperscript{865} Weinstock (1971) 320-331. These events lead up to the more famous incident during the Lupercalia of 44 BC (February 15\textsuperscript{th}), during which Antony offered a royal diadem to Caesar and hailed him as king. Caesar refused the title and had the diadem sent to the Capitoline temple.

\textsuperscript{866} Caes. \textit{BC} 3.2.1. Cf: Lucan. 5.400-402.
feriae Latinae, which is also clear from the fact that he made his adopted nephew C. Octavius (the later Octavian) praefectus urbi feriarum latinarum causa in 47 BC.\textsuperscript{867}

According to Weinstock, this devotion should not surprise us. The celebration of the Latin festival on the mons Albanus fitted well within the dynastic claims of the gens Iulia, which traced its ancestry back to Iulus, who is normally identified as Ascanius, son of Aeneas and founder of the royal dynasty of Alba Longa.\textsuperscript{868} Since 45 BC, Caesar is reported to have worn the red boots of the Alban kings, which were a clear reference to this background.\textsuperscript{869} The Trojan ancestral claims of the later Julio-Claudian emperors – firmly connected to Aeneas’ divine mother Venus – are well known and well-studied, but Caesar was by no means the first to exploit the theme.\textsuperscript{870} From coins and literary fragments, it is clear that the Iulii associated themselves with Ascanius, Alba Longa and Venus from the second century BC onwards.\textsuperscript{871} In Bovillae, the Iulii advertised a different divine theme: they set up an altar for Vediovis – a somewhat ambiguous god who is mostly identified as a young Jupiter – on behalf of their gens and ‘in accordance with Alban law’.\textsuperscript{872} Here, we see a new indication that the town of Bovillae was strongly associated with the traditions surrounding Alba Longa; we may even speculate that the legendary claims and familial strategies of the Iulii contributed a great deal to the establishment and continuity of the link.

The mythical and religious ties between Julius Caesar, the mons Albanus and the Latin festival are not always straightforward. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to see, with Weinstock, how the celebration of the feriae Latinae provided a great opportunity for Caesars political and religious

\textsuperscript{867} Nic. Dam. V. Caes. 5.13.
\textsuperscript{868} There are different versions of the myth explaining the relation between Aeneas, Ascanius and Iulus. In Vergil’s Aeneid (1.267-271) Iulus is the son of Aeneas and Creusa, whose name was changed into Ascanius after arrival in Italy. The earliest version of the myth appears in a fragment of Cato (fr. 9 – ed. Peter), where Ascanius takes on the name of Iulus after slaying Mezentius (king of the Etruscans of Caere) on the battlefield. Other versions relate that he was first named Euryleon (Dion. Hal. 1.65.1), or that he was the son of Aeneas and Lavinia (Liv. 1.1.11), who could be distinguished from an older Iulus who was the son of Aeneas and Creusa (Liv. 1.3.2). For Caesar’s personal involvement with this ancestral tradition and his attention to the traditions of early Rome, see: Smith (2009) 249-264. For the earlier development of the Aeneas myth and its arrival in Italy: Gruen (1992) 6-51. Cf. pages 154-155, notes 658-660 for the list of Alban kings.
\textsuperscript{869} Cass. Dio 43.43.2.
\textsuperscript{871} It was the branch of the Iulii Caesares that first advertised the Trojan ancestry, which is for example visible in the coins of moneyers S. Lucius Caesar in 129 BC (RRC 258) and L. Iulius Caesar in 103 BC (RCC 320). The claim was probably well-known to Roman elites by the time Cato wrote his Origines. See further: Erskine (2001) 17-23, Farney (2007) 53-60, Badian (2009) 11-22, Hekster (2015) 240-250.
\textsuperscript{872} CIL XIV 2387: Vediovei Patrei / gentelles Iuliei // Vediovei aara // lege Albana dicata. The altar is in almost 1 meter in length and height and can be dated partly because of the attempt at archaized spelling and the (inconsistent) doubling of vowels that was introduced by the poet and grammarian L. Accius (170-86 BC). It is now kept in the gardens of Palazzo Colonna in Rome. Weinstock (1971) 8-12, plate 2, Badian (2009) 14-15. On Vediovis, who also appears as Veiovis in the sources: Radke (1965) 306-310, Lipka (2009) 138-139, where the multiple associations between Jupiter and Vediovis are explained.
ambitions. The multiple references to Jupiter, the relation between the rites and Roman political authority, the symbolic initiation of (justified) warfare and the links to his ancestral (and regal) roots in Alba Longa, may explain Caesars continued interest the festival. Weinstock assumes that the celebrations – much like all of Caesars religious and political activities, especially in the year before his death – formed part of a calculated autocracy and the establishment of a kingship, in ‘a grand scheme which cannot have been planned by anyone else except Caesar himself’.873 This seems fairly overstated and the book is rightfully controversial; the narratives could have also been shaped by later authors explaining and rationalizing Caesars rise and fall. Apart from Caesars personal motivation however, the continued attention of the Iulii to the *feriae Latinae* – which is also expressed by Augustus’ presence on the mountain and the creation of the *Fasti* – gave a new dimension and significance to the rites. It seems likely that in this period, the diverse narratives concerning the history of the cult of Jupiter Latiaris, concerning consular authority in Rome and concerning Roman military supremacy in Latium and beyond, came together and were (more firmly) connected with the legendary history of Alba Longa.874 *The feriae Latinae* established a relation between origin myth, religious history and contemporary cult practice that was not only valuable for the Iulii but that turned out to be lasting: the festival showed how Latin history was part of Roman history and vice-versa.

### 4.9 Conclusions

Jupiter Latiaris was, from the perspective of our Roman sources, the quintessential example of a Latin god. The name of the deity, his festival (the *feriae Latinae*), and the location of his sanctuary – towering high above the lakes of the Alban hills and visible from the entire region, including the sanctuaries of Juno Sospita and Diana Nemorensis – underline the centrality of the cult. As was shown through the analysis of the literary sources, the celebrations of the *feriae Latinae* were perceived as a direct heritage of the Latin past; in the sacrificial feast, the ancient bond between Rome and the Latin cities was relived and renewed. This constituted an important moment in the Roman ritual year: not only did representatives of the Latin villages come to the hilltop to worship, but all of Rome’s magistrates were also obliged to participate in the proceedings. The consuls established a date at the beginning of their office and only after the rites had been performed correctly, could they leave the city for their troops in the provinces. In this way, the Roman wars of conquest – in which enemies were turned into allies – were always preceded by the symbolic celebration of Rome’s first religious and political bonds with the Latins.

---

873 Weinstock (1971) 270.
874 Cf: Smith (2012) 275-278.
On the specifics of this past however, there is little consensus in the sources. Roman authors debated whether the cult was a Roman initiative, instituted by Tarquinius Superbus long before the Roman domination over the region was an accomplished fact, or whether it was a a pre-Roman celebration of Latin tribes, of which Rome later took control. As modern scholars we may immediately recognize the many forms of anachronism that are preserved in the literary discourse, but – as I have argued – it would not be a valid approach to smooth out these discrepancies and try to identify the ‘real’ origins of the cult on the Alban mount. In the context of the growing Roman empire, the explanation and justification of the feriae Latinae through historical and historicizing narratives was an intrinsic part of the festivities themselves, as it provided a model for Roman relationships with the outside world.

When we move from the mythical origins of the cult to the cult practice during the Roman Republic and empire, the literary discourse is, to a certain degree, supported by the material sources. The mountain was made accessible by a long and well-constructed road and on the hilltop itself, a large wall may have – at least from the second century BC – surrounded the temenos. Moreover, reports in the archival sources suggest that the archaeological landscape was not always as desolate as it appears at the moment. The order of the Passionists, the monks who inhabited the hill from the 18th century onwards, seem to have destroyed and removed remains from the site unhindered in a series of building campaigns. As the analysis above has demonstrated, their accounts are full of interpretation problems, but the drastic building activity has dramatically changed our view of the sanctuary. Whereas we cannot identify a religious structure in the scarce remains we have at the moment – the largest structures date to the second century AD and seem to have belonged to a house rather than a sanctuary building – the discovered walls and votives reported by the monks appear to point to a ritual use of the hill. This is circumstantial yet important evidence, and new excavations on the monte Cavo may well contribute considerably to our knowledge of the layout of the sanctuary. Still, even with these methodological issues taken into account, the material evidence for the cult of Jupiter Latiaris can be considered meagre. The parts of the hilltop on which it was possible to excavate systematically (such as the convent garden) only produced a few traces of religious activity; the almost complete lack of votive material is striking, especially in the light of other cults in the region like that of Diana Nemorensis and Juno Sospita. Even if we imagine the cult place as an open air sanctuary, this apparent lack of community and elite involvement is puzzling.

In this chapter, I have suggested that we can explain this relative lack of visible votive activity by looking at the specific ritual context for the worship of Jupiter Latiaris. Not connected to a particular municipium in Latium Vetus and without a (detectable) visual representation, the god
perhaps attracted fewer individual worshippers throughout the year than other cults in the region and primarily became manifest during the days of the *feriae Latinae*. This does not make the worship in any way less relevant, and it is important to realize that many of the ritual elements that were key characteristics of the *feriae Latinae* – such as the sacrificial slaughter of a bull and a ritual prayer – may have left little trace in the material record; it was the actions themselves and the people involved that evoked the Latin past. Shifting our attention from the structural remains to the ritual procedures at the site, also allows us to recognize a fairly distinguished cultic organization, in which we can detect several of the actors participating in this process of memory making. First of all, there is the involvement of the Roman state, as represented by the consuls. As we have seen, the *feriae Latinae* constituted one of the defining moments of consular authority in Rome, and their guidance over the rites is recorded by the formula *Latinae fuerunt* in the *Fasti feriarum Latinarum*. The calendar, found on the hilltop itself and put up in the Augustan period, forms an important link between the literary tradition, the cult practice and the landscape in which the cult was celebrated. The inscribed memory also shows how the later emperors presented themselves in line with the religious authority of their consular office. This connection seems to have been particularly relevant for Caesar, Augustus and later Julian emperors, whose attachment to the rites is especially well documented and who could boast an ancestral link to the mythical landscape of Alba Longa. I have argued, in line with earlier interpretations by Weinstock and Smith, that Caesar was well aware of the religious and political significance of the *feriae Latinae* and consciously exploited the symbolic associations for his own benefit. Vice-versa, the traditions surrounding the cult – most notably the connection between Jupiter Latiaris, the Latin allies and their relation to mythical Alba Longa – may have taken on a new significance by the attention of the Iulii.

It was not only the presence of Rome’s highest elite, however, that shaped the cult practice on the Alban mount. Through an analysis of mostly epigraphic sources, I have identified a priestly organization that connected the rites to a larger group of worshippers and religious officials in the Alban hills, but also – and very explicitly – to the past of that area. In the case of Jupiter Latiaris and the *feriae Latinae*, I have analysed the presence of sacerdotes Cabenses, pontifices and dictatores Albani, salii Albani and virgines Vestales Albanae. Although not all of these priestships can be decisively connected to the cultic proceedings of the *feriae Latinae*, the reference to the *arx Albanae* does seem to locate them on the Alban mount, which makes a connection to the rites for Jupiter Latiaris plausible. Remarkably, almost all of our epigraphic testimonies date from the second and third centuries AD. We cannot determine with certainty whether the late proliferation of ancient titles was a direct heritage from the Latin past or a later archaistic invention, but what we can observe is a society that was well aware of its religious heritage and engaged with it directly. From the available evidence, we
unfortunately cannot deduce much information on what these officials actually did on the hilltop, but the picture that emerges of their social and political background allows us to formulate some general hypotheses on the position of the priests. Whereas the *salii Albani* and the *sacerdotes Cabenses* appear in our record with relatively modest public careers, the function of *dictator* was – as we have seen earlier for the *dictatores* in Lanuvium – a distinguished post, perhaps awarded to a rich outsider as an homage or a sign of gratitude. Furthermore, it is striking that the priesthoods connected with the Latin cults seem to have had a distinct appeal for members of the equestrian class. In the material discussed above, many of the men combined their Alban function with a position as augur in the imperial colleges (in the *Etrusca disciplina*), which was another way for *equites* to distinguish themselves in the religious domain. Wissowa’s suggestion that this focus was the result of Augustus’ reform of the urban priesthoods in the city of Rome – which were available only to men of senatorial rank – needs to be substantiated through further research, but we may tentatively conclude that, for ambitious *equites* looking for ways of associating themselves with traditional Roman state religion, the ostensibly ancient priesthoods surrounding the cult on the Alban mount were as close as one could get.