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PRE-ROMAN ITALY
(1000–49 BCE)

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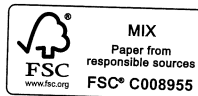
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CHAPTER 4

RELIGIONS AND RELIGIOSITY IN ITALY

OLIVIER DE CAZANOVE AND
EMMANUEL DUPRAZ

Two major difficulties—among many others—await anyone who attempts to describe the Italic religions comprehensively. To begin with, it is much better to speak of them in the plural than in the singular. Indeed, we are dealing with a multitude of specific religions, peculiar to each people, to each city—even if certain homologies can be identified among them and with the religions of the Greeks in southern Italy and with those of Rome (which must also be thought of in the plural). Moreover, and this is a second difficulty, we have only scraps of information about the Italic religions: rare and disconnected bits of data in an ocean of uncertainties. Literary sources are poor, late, and reflect the views of the “other”—an almost systematically biased view. Our most reliable sources of information, the only ones that are both contemporary and unfiltered (if not by our own modern interpretations), are epigraphy and archaeology. Under these circumstances, rather than attempting a systematic presentation that would necessarily be unsatisfactory, it is better to focus on two particularly representative topics, each in a given cultural area: first, the longest Italic inscription of religious relevance, which belongs to the Umbrian world—the *Tabulae Iguvinae*—and then the archaeologically known cult sites of the Oscan-speaking world, for which we have ever-increasing solid documentation.

4.1. A CASE STUDY: THE *TABULAE IGUVINAE*

The city of Gubbio (Lat. Iguvium) has provided exceptional documents for the analysis of the religious practices of an Umbrian city: the *Tabulae Iguvinae*, discovered in 1444. These seven bronze tablets contain the description of rituals to be performed by a religious college, the Atiedian Brotherhood (Tables I to IV, VI, and VIIa). Furthermore, Table V and the reverse side of Table VII (Table VIIb) include

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four internal regulations of the brotherhood. These texts contain approximately 4,400 words, providing the most precise description of rituals documented for ancient Italy, including those of the Roman cults.

These exceptional texts raise several questions. Although the tables are well preserved and their publication is on the whole unproblematic (the most accurate is that of Prosdocimi 1984), their linguistic analysis remains uncertain. They are written in Umbrian, a language of the Sabellian group of the Italic family and thus a relative of Latin. Through the reconstruction methods of historical grammar, it has been possible to propose an ever-more-detailed analysis of most forms, and a convincing overall translation. However, many lexical items remain obscure. Moreover, even when the literal meaning of a sentence is known, the exact religious implications and relevance of the corresponding acts may depend on idiosyncratic developments within Umbrian that we cannot assess. Often in the past, comparisons with Latin rituals have been suggested to elucidate Iguvine practices. They rest on the assumption that Iguvine and Roman cults shared the same religious categories. This is probable, but it is equally possible that at least in some cases the systems diverged. Another restriction is the limited knowledge we have of the Roman rituals themselves.

Two cautious translations and commentaries are those of Poultney (1959) and Prosdocimi (1978). More recent works are those of Ancillotti and Cerri (1996), Prosdocimi (2015), and Dupraz (2020, 2022). Untermann (2000) provides a complete dictionary of Umbrian and the other Sabellian languages. The ritual of Tables III and IV has been the subject of a thorough (and, on the whole, very convincing) linguistic analysis by Weiss (2010). The discrepancies between these works, however, show the number of uncertainties that affect the interpretation of the texts.

The *Tabulae Iguvinae* were probably engraved in the second century, at different times. Tables I to IV are written in what is called the Umbrian alphabet, derived from Etruscan models. They probably date from the first decades of the century, with Tables III and IV being slightly older than Tables I and II. Tables VI, VIIa, and VIIb are written in the Latin alphabet, and they likely date from the last quarter of the century. Table V is written in a different local variant of the Etruscan script (Va 1 to Vb 7) and in the Latin alphabet (Vb 8 to 18); it may be the most recent of the tables, engraved around 100 BCE. (For these different alphabets and the possible dating of the engravings see Prosdocimi 1984, 134–161; Maggiani 1984; Sisani 2001, 237–245; see also ch. 3, for more on writing systems.) The most convincing dating criteria, however vague, are the epigraphic ones—that is, the shapes of the letters.

Table I and Tables VI and VIIa provide two versions of the same two rituals, which can be defined by the Latin categories of *piaculum* and *lustratio*, respectively. The texts in Table VI and VIIa are much longer, because they include not only descriptions of the actions to be performed, but also the texts of several long prayers (*piaculum*: VIa 1 to VIb 47; *lustratio*: VIb 48 to VIIa 54). The texts in Table I generally correspond to what is found in the longer versions of both rituals without the prayer texts (*piaculum*: Ia 1 to Ib 9; *lustratio*: Ib 10 to 45). The prayers are only alluded to in the shorter versions of Table I. Both the longer texts of Tables VI and VIIa and the shorter text of Table I are derived

from a common archetype, itself an adaptation of two earlier independent descriptions of the *piaculum* and the *lustratio*. In the case of the *piaculum* and the *lustratio*, therefore, the existence of the two different versions makes it possible to tentatively reconstruct the history of the texts from the earliest redactions to the engraved versions of the second century, shedding significant light on the seemingly endless process of revision to which ritual descriptions were subjected in ancient Italy (Rix 1985, 27–34; Dupraz 2011).

Several stylistic features suggest that the texts of the prayers were already present in the archetype, perhaps even in the original versions, and were secondarily suppressed in the shorter versions of both rituals in Table I. Furthermore, the writers of the archetype added the description of various complementary operations not mentioned in the original versions, although they were probably already performed by the priests (see fig. 4.1).

The complex formation of the extant versions shows that ritual descriptions, however precise, may omit important elements because the writers considered the corresponding acts to be secondary or self-evident—that is, not in need of explication. This places important limits on our interpretation of the rituals: what is not mentioned is not necessarily absent or facultative in the performance.

Table IIa was engraved on behalf of the same brotherhood magistrate as Table I, as a colophon indicates. It contains the description of a compensatory ritual in the case of a mistake in the performance of a ritual declaration (IIa 1 to 14; see Weiss 2010, 41–44 for this interpretation). It also includes the prescriptions for the ritual of the *huntia*, the annual sacrifice of a puppy (IIa 15 to 44). The date for this ritual is determined each year anew, as for the Roman *feriae conceptivae*. Table IIb is devoted to the annual ritual of the *semenies tekuries* (IIb 1 to 29), though the overall interpretation of this ritual is still debated. Tables III and IV, which are not opisthographic (unlike all the other tables), describe a complex annual sacrifice to two divinities—one male, **Puemune Puprike**, and the second a subordinate female, **Vesune**—preceded by a secondary sacrifice to Jupiter. The ritual of Tables III and IV should probably be interpreted as a new year ceremony, as Weiss has shown (2010, 217–244; see also Dupraz 2022, 401–625). The *semenies tekuries* and the ritual of Tables III and IV take place on fixed days in the Iguvine calendar, like the Roman *feriae statiuae*.

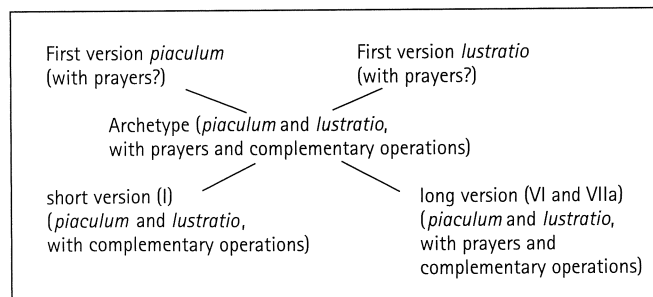


FIGURE 4.1 *Piaculum* and *lustratio*: historical development of the texts.

The ritual descriptions follow two different patterns. The *piaculum*, the *lustratio* (in both versions), and the compensatory ritual are described in an integrated, concise manner. Except for the exhaustive text of the prayers in the long versions of the *piaculum* and the *lustratio*, and the secondarily added prescriptions pertaining to complementary operations, these descriptions mainly contain short formulaic injunctions concerning the introduction of the rituals and each of the successive animal sacrifices. The *piaculum*, the *lustratio*, and the compensatory ritual involve, respectively, eight, four, and six animal sacrifices.

The *huntia*, the *semenies tekuries*, and the ritual of Tables III and IV, on the other hand—which include one, three, and two animal sacrifices, respectively—provide long and detailed instructions for the entire ritual. This information is recorded almost systematically according to the order of the corresponding acts within the ritual. Therefore, these texts allow for tentative reconstructions of the sequence of operations involved in a sacrifice at Iguvium.

Moreover, one of the general regulations of the Atiedian Brotherhood (Va 14 to Vb 7) gives insight into the categorization the priests developed for sacrifices, even listing the donations the sacrificing priest received after each phase of any sacrifice. The designations for the phases also appear in several of the ritual descriptions. The first phase was expressed by the verb *ampentu* (which may correspond to Latin *immolare*, at least in structural terms), and it involved the transfer of the animal from its owner to the worshipped god (Weiss 2010, 164–175; Dupraz 2015). Then the animal was slaughtered, a trivial operation probably performed by assistants—no explicit explanation is devoted to this phase of the sacrifice in the regulation described in Va 14 to Vb 7. Next, the flesh of the slaughtered animal was effectively offered to the relevant god, as indicated by the verb *purtuvitu* (semantically comparable to the Latin *porricere*), which refers to the second main phase of the sacrifice. The third and final phase was called *subra spafu*. This seems to involve the washing of the sacrificing priest's hands and some of the vessels used during the sacrifice. It also refers metonymically to various operations performed at the end of the rituals (Dupraz 2016). After the sacrifice proper, a banquet of the brotherhood took place: the corresponding verb is *çersnatur furent*.

Several texts mention the sequence of parallel sacrifices that form a close unit—a triad. The first six sacrifices in the *piaculum* consist of a triad before three of the city gates and a triad behind these same gates. The first three sacrifices in the *lustratio* are presented in the same fashion, whereas the last one is separated from them by an explicit transition. The last three sacrifices in the compensatory ritual also seem to form a triad. These four triads provide a significant perspective on the complexity of ritualistic thought in Iguvium. In fact, the age, sex, and species of the animals, the way they are to be slaughtered, the color of their hides, and the nature of the non-bloody offerings sacrificed with them are important structural data in the constitution of the triads. They correspond in some cases to the sex and epicleses of the divinities themselves. There are complex stylistic, referential, and theological parallelisms and oppositions between the various sacrifices of a triad. They should probably not be systematically interpreted

in a symbolic way; rather, they correspond to a structural principle of asymmetrical construction.

The tables provide insights into the cultic pantheon of Iguvium (Prosdocimi 1991, 478–498). The sacrifices before the city gates in the *piaculum* are offered to Jupiter, Mars, and **Vufiune**, whose name may be etymologically linked with Latin *liber* (“free”), and compared on a semantic level with the Latin theonym *Quirinus*, if the latter is the god of the *curiae* of Roman citizens. Thus, the tables provide an important remnant of Indo-European (?) trifunctionality in Italy. Other gods are divinized abstractions. The triad of sacrifices within the *lustratio*, for instance, first mentions a male divinity, **Çerfe Marti**, whose name is linked with the Latin *Ceres*. The epiclesis **Marti** indicates a theological subordination to *Mars*. The following two sacrifices are offered to two female divinities, **Prestate Çerfe** and **Tuse Çerfe**. The common epiclesis **Çerfe** is a sign that they in turn are subordinated to **Çerfe Marti**, which is pleonastically evidenced by the genitive of the latter’s theonym, **Çerfe Marties**, determining **Prestate Çerfe** and **Tuse Çerfe**. Both the names **Prestate** and **Tuse** are divinized abstractions, referring respectively to “protection” and “terror”—that is, to both of the functions the Martian god **Çerfe Marti** fulfills, with regard to the territory of the city of Iguvium and to its enemies. The importance of *Ceres* or her male pendant is often attested in Sabellian Italy. These cults seem to be far more important in Sabellian pantheons than in Rome, although it is difficult to assess the exact theological and ritual functions of the Sabellian *Ceres* (for more on *Ceres*, see ch. 47, sect. 47.6).

The function of the *Tabulae Iguvinae* as written documents is controversial (see Sisani 2001, 246–255). Their engraving presupposes a long tradition of written regulations and ritual descriptions. It remains obscure why the decision was made to record these texts not only on perishable materials, but also on monumental bronze tables—a felicitous choice that determined their preservation. Comparable written traditions must have existed in most of the ritual colleges of ancient Italy, not least in Rome itself, but they did not result in bronze copies of the texts. Whatever the explanation for this anomaly, once the first tables were engraved, they may have been regarded as prestige models for later generations of priests, to be followed when economically possible.

The use of the Latin alphabet in Tables Vb, VI, and VII should perhaps not be considered an indication of the overwhelming diffusion of the Latin language itself. Maggiani and Nardo (2014), and Benelli (2016) have convincingly shown that in Umbria the local epigraphic tradition favored innovation. The use of the Latin alphabet should probably be seen as a prestige graphic innovation comparable to others, and not simply as the adoption of a Roman model in a phase of linguistic decline. Just as the adoption of a new variant of the Etruscan script in Table Va 1 to Vb 7 is not a hint that the Etruscan language was becoming more widespread in Iguvium at this late period, the use of the Latin alphabet may simply indicate a new epigraphic experiment rather than an actual language shift.

The *Tabulae Iguvinae* are textual documents. Neither their original archaeological context nor the location and nature of the ritual areas they mention are directly documented. They cannot be put in immediate relationship with the other

archaeological or epigraphic data pertaining to Iguvium. The work of Sisani (2001) is an attempt to identify the toponyms of the tables in the urban and rural landscapes. On the basis of such proposals, interesting hypotheses can be developed regarding the contents of the cults, although it should be emphasized that these proposals must remain tentative.

4.2. THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF CULTS: SANCTUARIES OF THE OSCAN-SPEAKING WORLD

Progress in the exegesis of ritual protocols and sacred laws is a source of increased knowledge about the Italic religions, but these texts remain few (*ImIt*) and new discoveries are rare. Apart from isolated inscriptions, the last large corpus to have come to light—containing mere dedications, not normative texts—is the series from the sanctuary of Mefitis at Rossano di Vaglio, most of which was found fifty years ago (Lejeune 1990; for more on Mefitis at Rossano di Vaglio, see ch. 12, sect. 12.7). Archaeological discoveries of sites and materials are, however, unceasing, and the development of preventive archaeology is contributing an ever-increasing share (for instance, during the installation of pipelines or wind turbines in Lucania: Russo 2006). Some of these new discoveries provide information of a religious nature, whether they are community sanctuaries, testimonies of domestic worship, or tombs. However, due to lack of space, and because this is a very specific topic that has been extensively dealt with elsewhere, it will not be discussed here.

A point of vocabulary and method must be mentioned before proceeding. For convenience, “cult site” and “sanctuary” are used here as quasi-synonyms. Nevertheless, the modern concept of a sanctuary as it is understood today—that is, as a place of worship in its entirety, with a temple (but not always), as well as an altar, a sacred area, and sometimes secondary buildings and a surrounding wall—does not have an equivalent in Latin (*templum* and *fanum* have other meanings) or in the Italic languages. The word *sakaraklúm* on the *cippus* of Abella—one of the longest and most famous Oscan inscriptions, dating back to the second century, which regulates the joint possession of a cult site of Hercules by two Campanian cities, Nola and Abella—is translated as “sanctuary” in Pulgram’s important contribution (1960), whereas in earlier scholarship, from Mommsen to Vetter, it was rendered as “temple.” The term *sakaraklúm* is also attested at Pietrabbondante, perhaps also at Valfortore among the Frentani, and on one of the *iuvilas* inscriptions at Capua. In fact, the *cippus Abellanus* mentions first the *sakaraklúm herekleís* and then the *herekleís físnú*, presumably considering the temple itself from two different points of view (Cazanove 2017; see, however, Marchese 2013). In the same way, another famous sacred law of republican Italy, in the dedication of the temple of Jupiter Liber at Furfo, dated July 13, 58 BCE (*CIL* 9.3513; Laffi 1978), mentions first an *aedes* and then a *templum*, with the same referent. Thus, the vocabulary used in ancient

Italy does not really allow us to distinguish between “temple” and “sanctuary,” and it is questionable whether the very concept of a sanctuary as an all-encompassing whole was even conceivable at that time (the dedication inscriptions list the different parts of the place of worship—temple, altar, porticoes, and so on—one after the other, without grouping them under a common label).

4.2.1. The Problem of the Early Stages of Italic Cult Sites

It is very difficult to identify the archaic cult sites of the Italics as such. A recent repertory of non-Greek places of worship in southern Italy in the archaic period highlights all the difficulties of the exercise and points out how uncertain its distribution maps are (Mastronuzzi 2005). In fact, we know how to recognize Italic cult sites only when they begin to resemble Greek or Roman shrines, from the point of view both of the offerings deposited there (what comes first to mind are the terracotta and metal statuettes that archaeologists generally consider to be the standard gift to the gods) and of the architecture (that is, when the Italics begin to build easily identifiable temples, in the “Greek” or “Roman” way; the well-known case of the temples of Samnium, built essentially from the second century onward, is particularly clear in this respect: La Regina 1976; Morel 1976; Tagliamonte 2007).

Despite this aporia, explanatory models have nevertheless been developed to elucidate the place of the gods in the early stages of pre-Roman Italy. Thus it was long accepted as a truth that the Italics, who were believed not to have known cities, could not have possessed either the civic centers or the urban temples that were an essential part of them. Places of worship, according to this theory, could only be separated from the settlements: they were at the intersection of several communities or of a community living in villages (Torelli 1977; Bottini 1988; La Regina 1991; Masseria 2009). Conversely, if cult sites were *intra muros*, they would have been attached to an aristocratic residence. They would have been, in short, *sacra gentilitia* (and it may also be questioned whether it is legitimate to use this Roman concept, which Livy [5.52.3–4] applied to the cults of the Fabii and extended to the rest of Italy). In any event, it is easy to recognize in this idea of the cult’s origin within the clan to which it originally belonged a theory that has had many variants and whose most systematic exposition can be found in Fustel de Coulanges’s *The Ancient City* (1864; Momigliano 1984).

In pre-Roman Lucania there are two residential contexts from different periods that have been interpreted in this way. For the archaic period, a magnificent excavation at Torre di Satriano (Osanna 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014; Osanna et al. 2009) uncovered what was called an *anaktorion*, built in the years 560–550 to replace an apse building. This could represent the replacement of one aristocratic group by another, the latter controlling the ceremonies and practices of commensality that took place within the residence. For the fourth century, complex B of Roccagloriosa—exemplarily published (Fracchia and Gualtieri 1989)—is articulated around a paved courtyard with an *aedicula* in one

corner. The *aedicula* was found filled with statuettes and miniature vases. According to the authors, the ceremonies that took place around it went beyond the strict domestic framework to include a larger group than the inhabitants of the house alone (Gualtieri and Fracchia 1990).

Two things are happening now that, taken together, might challenge this apparently simple line of direct evolution from the “*sacra gentilitia*” to the public cults: new directions are being taken by researchers (Capogrossi Colognesi 2002; Tarpin 2002; Stek 2009) that criticize the *pagus-vicus* system (and thus the idea that indigenous people lived in scattered settlements, without any civic organization worthy of the name), and constant progress is being made in archaeological fieldwork and surveys that increasingly invalidate the idea that the indigenous sites have nothing to do with the cities, mitigating the divide between “Italy of the cities” and “Italy of the non-cities” (a distinction made by Toynbee 1965). But it is still too early to say—without wanting to decide, we will just say for the moment that there are alternative models that go in a completely different direction.

At Timpone della Motta (Francavilla Marittima), north of Sybaris, the Dutch mission discovered Temple V (with a first phase of wooden poles and a second of bricks, dated respectively to the last quarter of the eighth century and the middle of the seventh century) under one of the parallel buildings of the Athenaion; it is a large hut with an apse and a loom (the loom weights have an unusual decoration and weight). The hut has been interpreted as a sacred building with a hearth (Kleibrink 1993, 2005). Although the interpretation of the Timpone della Motta site (shrine, inhabited area, and necropolis) has been used mainly in the ongoing controversy regarding the Greek colonial phenomenon in the west, and in particular the relations between Greeks and Italics (Attema 2008), it is clear that the analysis of the sequence of Temple V’s phases is also fundamental for understanding the early phases of religious architecture in southern Italy.

Moreover, the celebration of cult does not automatically imply a monumental sanctuary. There were open-air cult sites as well as natural sanctuaries (for more on sacred spaces, see ch. 33; the lake and ravine sacred to Mefitis at Amsanctus is a magnificent example, and we will return to it later). Nevertheless, one must avoid falling into the trap of a primitivist vision of the Italic religions. In this regard it must be recalled that the place described by Livy (10.38) where the Samnite Linen Legion took the oath, inside the camp established at Aquilonia in 293, cannot be considered the archetype of Italian open-air sanctuaries, as is sometimes believed. On the contrary, it is enclosed and also covered with linen. In fact, Livy’s description is only an erudite extrapolation based on Roman realities: the legionary camp and the *praetorium* within it—the *praetorium*, the “tent of the general,” whose famous description by Polybius (6.41) corresponds exactly to Livy’s.

4.2.2. Cultic Practices

What types of practices could have been housed in these sanctuaries? What can be said about the external forms of cultic performance (fundamental in ritualistic religions

such as those of Rome and of the Italics: Scheid 1985; Lacam 2010)? Going further, can we try to penetrate the intentions and attitudes of the religious actors? First it is necessary to devote a few words to the gods, since it can be argued that, until a time not too far past, the study of the religions of ancient Italy (including those of Rome and the Etruscans) was essentially limited to the analysis of their pantheons (Evans 1939; Radke 1965; Dumézil 1974). We have overcome this overly theocentric point of view. More emphasis is now placed on cultic practices and on the spaces in which they took place. Some Italic peoples, it is true, had their own gods, some of which were also venerated in multi-ethnic sanctuaries and in Rome itself, such as Feronia (Di Fazio 2013). Other divinities, common to the entire Mediterranean area, seem to have enjoyed particular popularity in the Apennine interior, such as Hercules (although the attestation of bronze statuettes representing him does not automatically imply the presence of a sanctuary, as Stek 2009 rightly points out; for more on Hercules, see ch. 46). More generally, we must not exaggerate the few Italic gods we know by making them omnipresent figures in a given cultural area.

As for the cult of the goddess Mefitis, present in various places in Hirpinia, Lucania, and Campania, and then transported to Rome and the Po Plain, I have already criticized the widespread tendency that could be called “pan-Mefitism,” in which sanctuaries of this goddess are seen everywhere, artificially creating a kind of monotheism in southern Italy: a tendency that is perceptible both in terms of the history of religions and archaeology. Putting aside questionable identifications that are not well founded (for lack of textual evidence), we must return to the cult sites of the goddess that are known for certain: first, the *Amsancti valles* in Hirpinia, a natural site with extraordinary physical characteristics (carbon dioxide emissions in a sulfurous lake)—it was by far the most famous Mefitis sanctuary in ancient times, before it was somewhat eclipsed by the (modern) reputation of the other main site of Mefitis worship, at Rossano di Vaglio, following productive excavations beginning in the late 1960s. The problem of the relationship between the two sanctuaries remains open (as well as their relationship with the other attestations of the goddess’s cult): does Amsanctus represent the epicenter of her cult? Are there connections, hierarchies, or points of contact between the various sites of Mefitis worship? What is the impact of these cult sites on the surrounding communities? Nevertheless, Mefitis is only one element in a larger religious system.

The sanctuaries of the Italic peoples are obviously polytheistic, as was the rule in the ancient world. Many deities surround Ceres at Agnone (Del Tutto Palma 1996) and Mefitis at Aeclanum or Rossano di Vaglio (among them, Hercules, now attested here by a statue base bearing a dedication, published by Nava and Poccetti 2001). Whenever sufficiently detailed documentation is available, the religious landscape turns out to have been more complex and varied than one might have thought. At Civita di Tricarico (Cazanove 2004), the largest known Lucanian settlement (47 ha), a shrine in the center of the plateau was presumably dedicated to Athena-Minerva (a head of the goddess made of Greek marble was found there); there is another temple on the acropolis to a still-unknown deity, while at its foot a peripheral cult site offered a dedication to Fatuus (close to the Latin Faunus; see Rix 1993). A few kilometers farther north, the small

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temple of San Chirico Nuovo—planimetrically identical to the first phase of the shrine of Minerva—was devoted to a female divinity. The lower part of a full-size terracotta statue and two large statuettes of the Artemis Bendis type survive.

The central act of the cult for all these divinities is the sacrifice. Unfortunately, archeozoological studies on the sacrificial animals are still lacking, but there are a number of altars that provide information. The largest of them is that of Mefitis in Rossano di Vaglio. It is in fact the largest altar in Italy and Sicily, with the sole exception of the gigantic altar of Hieron at Syracuse. Rossano di Vaglio is not the stone version of an indigenous place of worship in the open air, as is sometimes thought, but a local version of an altar with a court (*Hofaltar*), following the Greek tradition (Cazanove 2016). A portico surrounds a paved courtyard on which the altar stands—a rational organization that accommodates the animal sacrifices and the washing of the slabs soiled by multiple killings. In the other great sanctuary of Mefitis, at Amsanctus in Hirpinia, the victims were killed by asphyxiation. In fact, a large number of pig's jaws have been found in the stream bed, where carbon dioxide stagnates. In this particular case, the deviation from the sacrificial norm is explained by the natural features of the site (Cazanove 2003).

The offerings deposited in the sanctuaries of the Oscan-speaking world show an apparent adherence to widely diffused models: above all, ceramics and weapons (the most notable case is that of Pietrabbondante, but there are others: Tagliamonte 2002–2003). And, especially from the fourth century onward, small votive terracotta plastic female statuettes and busts are found in southern Italy (as in Timmari: Lo Porto 1991). In the following century, anatomical ex-votos also appear from time to time (in Schiavi d'Abruzzo, Fresagrandinaria, Villalfonsina, San Buono, Vacri, etc.), but they are only a few peripheral and clumsy imitations (sometimes turned, and not unmolded) of the votives produced in large numbers at the same time in Latium, southern Etruria, and northern Campania. The anatomical ex-voto, contrary to what has sometimes been argued (Beard, North, and Price 1998, 69; Glinister 2006), does not belong to the range of Italic offerings; it enters it only marginally and belatedly, thanks to what must be called the expansion of the Roman presence on the peninsula—even if the much criticized concepts of “Romanization” and “colonization” remain subject to debate, including in religious matters (Bispham 2006; Pelgrom and Stek 2014; for more on anatomical votives, see ch. 49).

It is necessary to go further. We must also understand the logic of the gift itself in Italic religiosity—the underlying conceptual framework. The typical form of dedication in the Oscan language, attested in Lucania (Rossano di Vaglio and Paestum) as well as in Samnium and its surroundings (northern Campania and Hirpinia, and among the Paeligni and Vestini), is *brateis datas*, “for grace received.” It emphasizes the favor granted by the divinity before it is reciprocated by the devotee's offering: a logic very different from that of the Roman votive pact, which instead asserts a contractual obligation. In this respect, we can compare two inscriptions from the Paelignian territory, from the area surrounding Sulmona. The first one insists twice on the concept of divine grace: “Ovia Pacia, to Minerva, for grace received (*bra[te]is datas*), because she gave her the grace (*bratom*) she had asked for for her and her children” (*ImIt*). The

second, in Latin, is a well-known graffito from the sanctuary of Hercules Curinus: “For the August holidays, o Holy Curinus, we prepare things worthy of you. In fact, it is appropriate to fulfill the due vows (*debita vota solvere*). . . . But you, in the same way, make a vow to Hercules Curinus Victor, if you want everything to go according to your desire” (Guarducci 1981). It is clear that we are dealing with two different religious cultures (more than two centuries probably separate the inscriptions). The relationship with the divinity is not conceived in exactly the same way—the Oscan dedication insists on the grace received. The Latin graffito emphasizes the obligation to fulfill the vow once the request has been granted. We find the same conceptual attitude in the Latin republican formula *donom dat lubens merito*, which appears from the first half of the third century (Panciera 1990).

4.2.3. The Long Survival of Italic Cult Sites

It has long been accepted that cult sites in the Italian interior disappeared more or less rapidly with the Roman conquest. A closer analysis of the stratigraphy and material now leads in a completely different direction. It is clear that the construction (or reconstruction) of a temple only gives a date for the beginning (or resumption) of religious attendance. But this attendance can continue for a long time without leaving any monumental traces, or leaving only very slight traces. Among other examples, the small temple of Feronia at Poggio Ragone (Loreto Aprutino) in Vestinian country (Sanzi Di Mino and Staffa 1996–1997), dating back to the second century, continued to be used until the first half of the third century CE, as shown by coins and lamps. Before it was buried definitively by a landslide, part of the religious furniture was grouped inside the locked cella.

The situation is similar for Temple C of the sanctuary of the Marsian goddess Angitia at Luco dei Marsi, on the shore of the Fucine Lake. In the cella of the temple, four statues were found, one male and three female. One in particular, of terracotta, has enjoyed deserved fame since its discovery in 2003 (Liberatore 2007). They were transported from Temple B nearby, during the reign of Gallienus, before being reburied by a flow of earth (Campanelli 2008).

A third case, much more famous, is that of Pietrabbondante. It was long postulated, on the basis of the archaeological data then available, that the sanctuary was abandoned after the Social War (Cianfarani, Franchi Dell’Orto, and La Regina 1978, 453; La Regina 2014, 187). Excavations in recent years have revealed new buildings, in particular a large domus with a canonical plan, which has been interpreted by La Regina as public (figs. 12.9a and 12.9b); in any case, it continued to be used as a private residence until the middle of the second century, and even beyond (La Regina and Scaroina 2010, 4–6). An even more recent discovery, still unpublished, is that of a square *sacellum* destroyed after 406. Twenty kilometers from Pietrabbondante, the altar of the small temple of Schiavi d’Abruzzo reveals a striking cult continuity: the stratigraphy makes it possible to distinguish fifteen phases from the second century BCE to the fourth century CE (Aquilano 2006; for more on Pietrabbondante, see ch. 12, sect. 12.6).

There are similar cases in Etruria, where even small places of worship in the interior remained in use longer than one might expect. Thus the chapel of Vetralla (Macchia delle Valli), miraculously well preserved with its cult statue, ritual furniture, and ex-votos, remained in use from the second century to the time of Trajan (Scapaticci 2010). In short, the long-dominant idea of the depopulation, including the religious desertion, of the Italian countryside, and in particular of the mountainous areas, at the end of the republic and in the imperial era—in short, of a divine *Italiae solitudo* parallel to the human *solitudo* (Brunt 1971, 345–375)—proves to be invalid, or at least to be highly nuanced. Admittedly, this attendance continued mostly in modest forms, sometimes at the limit of visibility (Cazanove 2011), with the exception of the municipal cults (*municipalia sacra*: see Festus, *Gloss. Lat.* 146 and Torelli 2015) and some large sanctuaries, preserved and promoted in the overall framework of the Augustan reorganization of Italy (Scheid 2006).

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