

DONATA SARRACINO, Depositi votivi del Lazio meridionale. Pratiche religiose e identità culturale tra il IX e il V secolo a. C. *Archeologia Classica – Supplementi e Monografie*, volume 16. L’Erma di Bretschneider, Rome, Bristol 2020. € 230,-. ISBN 978-88-913-0860-3 (Paperback). € 176.92. ISBN 978-88-913-0856-6 (E-book). 332 pages with 7 illustrations in colour, 140 b/w figures and 16 plates.

The book by Donata Sarracino, *Depositi votivi del Lazio Meridionale*, aims to present the current state of knowledge and current perspectives of study on places of worship in southern Lazio between the first Iron Age and the beginning of the fifth century BC. The book consists of four chapters: The first chapter is devoted to concepts and methods (pp. 11–16); the second chapter describes the investigated region (pp. 17–26); the third chapter is a catalogue of all votive deposits, as well as sacred and religious sites in the investigated region (pp. 27–252); and the fourth chapter presents concluding considerations on the evidence (pp. 253–264). The analysis of votive deposits, including any isolated finds of a votive nature, makes it possible to discuss the archaeology of the sacred not only for southern coastal Lazio, a better known and investigated area, but also for the inland, especially the areas that gravitate on the Sacco-Liri river system as a natural route of communication between Etruria, Latium Vetus, and Campania.

The book presents the doctoral thesis of Donata Sarracino, completed at the University of Rome la Sapienza in December 2012. Its publication was delayed by various personal reasons of the author and in conjunction with the lockdown due to COVID restrictions, which limited the opportunity to update and revise the original manuscript. This may explain some important absences, such as the recent work by Jörg Rüpke and Susanne Rau on religion and urbanity (RÜPKE/RAU 2020), as well as the large DFG funded project “Religion and Urbanity: Reciprocal Formations” (FOR 2779) hosted by the *Max Weber Centre for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies* at Universität Erfurt which was renewed for another five years until 2026 (<https://www.uni-erfurt.de/max-weber-kolleg/forschung/forschungsgruppen-und-stellen/forschungsgruppen/kolleg-forschungsgruppe-religion-and-urbanity-reciprocal-formations-for-2779> [last access: 15.04.2024]). In general, however, Sarracino’s work misses references to more theoretically based models of sanctuaries, especially from the Mediterranean Iron Age and Antiquity, such as François de Polignac’s model of urban, extra-urban, and boundary sanctuaries in Greece, and their role in the creation and maintenance of urban institutions (DE POLIGNAC 1984; DE POLIGNAC 1995; DE POLIGNAC 2005). Since its publication, de Polignac’s model has been successfully applied to many geographical and chronological contexts in antiquity – sometimes consciously, sometimes even unconsciously. Therefore, even if it is not applicable to the specific case-study, it would have been worthwhile to mention de Polignac’s model and explain why it would or would not have worked.

Nevertheless, Sarracino discusses at length at the beginning of the book the topic of the “cult” itself and the various potential material connotations of a “votive deposit”. Also commendable is the monumental attempt to bring together all available evidence for southern Lazio, including Latium Adiectum and the Sacco-Liri valley, into a rich catalogue which constitutes the most substantial and praiseworthy part of the work. Sarracino consciously adopts the general definition of a “votive deposit” to indicate the general “accumulation” of religious material that can sometimes take on specific forms and typologies that are found only in a ritual/religious context, and sometimes can also be domestic but become religious for the specific context. In fact, according to Sarracino, votive and religious deposits can take on different forms: she analyses the way in which the space is delimited, the way in which the offerings are deposited, and the typology of the eventual container. She avoids the use of Latin or Greek terms because they might be misleading or too specific. She

generally distinguishes between primary and secondary deposits and between unitary or repeated depositions, although she admits that these distinctions are purely formal and that votive deposits can be used in different ways at different times. She also distinguishes between various kinds of natural “sacred” places used for the special deposition of some material, such as a river, a palus, a lake, and a cave; as a consequence of the act, both the place and the material are said to assume a sacred, religious character.

As the author correctly emphasises, both in the literary sources and in the material culture, the studied area shows significant population dynamics as an area of passage between Etruria and Campania and southern Italy in general. It also exhibits important similarities to the material culture of Latium vetus, the region around Rome, such as at the necropolis of Carinara and Gricignano D’Aversa, in Campania, and further in Archaic/historical times having seen the invasions of the Volscans and Samnites. The region studied was an important area of transit and a primary communication route that served as an alternative, but also a complementary route to the coastal route through the Pontine plain. A series of transversal axes between the coast and the mountains, along with other routes, such as the Sacco-Liri valley, which were linked to the transhumance routes, crossed this primary route and constituted the connections between the Apennines and the coastal area since protohistoric times. This is a geographical-cultural sector of considerable importance in pre-Roman Italy, characterised by a complex picture of population dynamics, which now, thanks to this book, can become the subject of further possible different readings.

For this reason, too, it is a sensible choice by Sarracino to use a catalogue sheet similar to those used by Repertori (BELARDELLI et al. 2007; BELARDELLI/PASCUCCI 1996). Each sheet/votive deposit includes eight sections. The first section includes the cartographic references, the toponym, the town, and the province to which it is related. The second section covers the location, the ancient settlement to which the votive deposit is related, the type of relation to the settlement – urban, sub-urban, or extra-urban (where this distinction was not possible, the author decided to adopt natural descriptions such as plane, valley, slope, hilltop, or even more generic, a cult place in the territory) –, the relation to the road network, the relation to natural features, and the relation to other cult places. In the third section, the definition and the type of votive deposit are described according to the criteria illustrated above. In the fourth section, the reader can find the year and occasion of discovery, the circumstances of recovery, the description of the context, the recovered materials, their dating, the first edition, and the place of conservation of the materials. The fifth section provides contextual information such as the presence of structures and/or templar buildings, or other sporadic, architectural material. The sixth section provides literary or epigraphic evidence for some of the contexts; the seventh section relates to the cultic nature of the votive deposit and the discussion of the deity to which it is dedicated, and if it has persisted into the medieval/modern age. Finally, the eighth section closes the sheet with observations and a bibliography.

In Chapter Four, Sarracino synthesises the evidence presented in the catalogue and draws some conclusions. The chapter is called “Final Reflections”, although it is more of a series of “remarks” rather than a full consideration of the material analysed in the light of a specific theoretical or methodological approach. For her narrative, the author adopts the same geographical order presented in the catalogue. In the higher Sacco Valley, later to become *Ager Signinum*, there is a large presence of Orientalising and Archaic sanctuaries at all major settlements of the area: Segni, Civita D’Artena, Muracci di Crepadosso, and Colli S. Pietro. Particularly interesting is that in the sacred area at Colle Maiorana, according to Colonna (reported by Sarracino), there might have been a boundary sanctuary between Latins and Hernici. Muracci di Crepadosso and Colli S. Pietro seem to also be

territorial sanctuaries which were located at the centre of major terrestrial routes between Latium and the south.

In the Hernici area, the urban sanctuary of Anagni in Contrada Capitolo S. Lucia is worth mentioning. It was used already from the 8th century BC, and therefore probably linked to the creation of the civic identity of the early urban community. Some other sacred areas are known within the settlement of Anagni, but probably worthier of mention is the federal, extra-urban sanctuary of Osteria della Fontana, already identified with the *Lucus Dianae* (mentioned by Livy), as well as the sacred mountain area of Sgurgola and M. Acuto. At the latter one, in particular, a terracotta head typical of Etruscan-Latin-Campanian style sanctuaries was found, which can most likely confirm the importance of internal Lazio in the diffusion of the type. Urban sanctuaries are also attested at Veroli, which shares similarities with Anagni, and both might be connected to the stipulation of the Foedum Cassianum between Latins and Hernici, and Aletrium, which were active at least since the Archaic Era.

The greatest developments concern the middle Liri Valley, where 16 cult places have been identified. Their organisation within the territory is not clear because the settlement organisation itself is still partially unknown. However, they seem to be linked with water resources and divinities and appear to be located mostly on ancient transhumance routes, which maintained their vitality well into the Roman period, where some sites are mentioned among the *Indices Nundinarii*, i. e., sites that have the right to host a market, which in turn confirms the close link between sanctuaries and marketplaces.

In the coastal area of Latium, it is worth mentioning the sacred hut of Velletri SS. Stimate, located beneath the temple and considered one of the earliest urban cult places in Latium together with Satricum, Lavinium, and Ardea, where similar situations are attested. Also worth noting are the sacred areas of Diana and Fortuna at Algido, mentioned by literary sources, and the cult activity at Maschio d'Ariano, which has only been investigated in the last few decades. According to Sarracino, and it is not unlikely, probably all of the mountainous area covered by forest was sacred to the cult of Diana, but later only one site prevailed over the others.

In the Pontine Plain, there is the rich site of Satricum, as well as the rural sanctuaries of Campoverde, Tratturo Canio', and Colle Rotondo, which are all situated on important regional and interregional routes of communication, with the first two cases dating back to the Iron (Campoverde) and even Bronze Age (Tratturo Canio'). A similar strategic position should also be recognised for the archaic cult places at Mezzagosto and Monte Corbolino/Norba. In the area of the Aurunci people, the urban model is absent. We have the sanctuaries of Marica and Panetelle at the mouths of the Garigliano and Savone rivers, respectively, both of which represent points of reference, organisation, and demarcation of territory for their communities, and were then later occupied by the respective colonies of Minturnae and Sinuessa.

Sarracino concludes her book with two interesting notations about the "Latinisation" of southern Latium attested by the presence of small metal statuettes of kouroi and korai (already amply studied by Giovanni COLONNA (1970), miniature pottery vessels, and archaic terracotta decoration in the Etruscan-Latin-Campanian style. This confirms the existence of a sort of central Italian Koine', which makes it difficult to recognise different ethnic groups in the area solely based on the material culture. As already mentioned above, Sarracino's work partially lacks a theoretical and methodological underpinning in the final analysis of the studied material. However, it is a praiseworthy work and a monumental effort in collecting and making such an enormous amount of coherently and carefully presented evidence and material available for scholars and the public alike, and which will moreover be the basis of further studies and research.

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In den vergangenen 30 Jahren hat sich der Forschungsstand zur römischen Okkupation Schottlands grundlegend verändert. Es ist nicht nur eine intensiviertere Forschung an den römischen Militärplätzen zu konstatieren, sondern es wurden auch Studien zu den Interaktionen oder gar Konflikten mit den einheimischen, nicht-römischen Gesellschaften vorangetrieben (zusammenfassend hierzu HUNTER 2016). Die Aufnahme des Antoninuswalls im Jahr 2008 in die UNESCO-Welterbestätte „Frontiers of the Roman Empire“ (mit den damit verbundenen Vorbereitungs- und Aufwertungsarbeiten) hat zweifellos mit zu dieser Intensivierung und dem Perspektivwechsel beigetragen (BREEZE 2009).

Nach aktuellem Forschungsstand präsentiert sich die römische Okkupationsgeschichte Schottlands komplexer und vielschichtiger als bisher angenommen. Die früheren, teils ausschließlich aus den Schriftquellen (insbes. Tacitus, Agricola) konstruierten Modelle werden allmählich ergänzt oder gar in Frage gestellt. Schottland verfügt zudem über eine nationale Archäologiestrategie,