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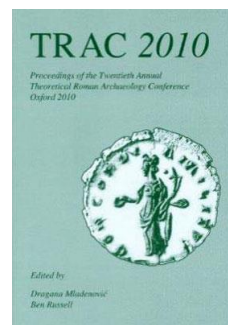
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In excelsissimo loco – An Approach to Poliadic Deities in Roman Colonies

Marion Boos

Introduction

The phenomenon of poliadic deities, that is of gods or goddesses who occupy a central position in the cult, theology and public representations of a city (*cf.* Bendlin 2001: 899–900), is not dealt with in a detailed way in any of the major studies of Roman deities and religion (Wissowa 1902; Beard *et. al.* 1998; Rüpke 2007). In the ancient orient, where the existence of poliadic deities is attested from in the third millennium B.C. onwards, they were considered as protective divinities of individual urban settlements (*cf.* Bottéro 1991: 217–245; Niehr 1998: 121; 124–125; Jursa 2004: 79–83; Sommer 2008: 101–106). Some of these gods over time attained a significance transcending their original city, as for example Ištar of Uruk or Marduk of Babylon. The main cult areas and temples of these oriental divinities were located in their respective cities, but they sometimes possessed places of worship in other cities as well – Ištar, for example, did apart from Uruk also have temples in Babylon and Assur. The oriental poliadic deities were always, however, strongly tied to their proper cities.

Within the framework of Greco-Roman antiquity, the term “poliadic deity” becomes less clear-cut. We know of some poliadic deities, such as Athena for Athens or Iuppiter for Rome, but scholarship on the history of local religion tends to focus not on individual deities, but rather on complex panthea of gods, especially since the welfare of a city and its territory, as well as the religious self-identification of the urban population, both in the Greek and in the Roman world, were dependent not on one but on several gods. Studies on poliadic deities are thus few in number and focus almost entirely on the Greek world (Brackertz 1976; Burkert 1995: 201–210; Guettel Cole 1995: 292–325; Hölscher 1999: 46–62; Kreutz 2007: 259–263). I shall try here to suggest a way of dealing with these deities which, as I hope to show, constitute an integral part of Roman religion.

Rome and Veii

The existence of poliadic deities in Roman cities is difficult to trace, as there are no ancient written accounts dealing explicitly with this phenomenon, and in contrast to Greek cities there are no epithets such as “Polieus” or “Polias” (for example Athena Polias, poliadic goddess of Greek Priene; *cf.* Rumscheid and Koenigs 1998: 106–139). For the Roman world, poliadic, or perhaps more accurately, tutelary deities can more often only be deduced from a city’s name or from literary sources indicating one deity’s primacy.

For Rome itself it was Iuppiter Optimus Maximus, together with his companions Iuno Regina and Minerva, who, as the Capitoline Triad, were considered the city’s tutelary deities (Simon 1990: 107–118; Canciani 1997: 421–423; Costantini 1997: 461–462; Beard *et al.* 1998: 59–60; Linke 2009: 339–358). Their temple on the Capitoline Hill is one of the city’s oldest sanctuaries – only the temples of Iuppiter Feretrius and Iuppiter Stator, both said to have been

consecrated by Romulus (Livy 1. 10. 5–7; 1. 11. 6) were earlier – and occupies the most prominent position within the city. Vitruvius generally recommends placing the sanctuaries for the cities' protective deities on the highest grounds, from which most of the city's ramparts can be seen: *Aedibus vero sacris, quorum deorum maxime in tutela civitas videtur esse, et Iovi et Iunoni et Minervae, in excelsissimo loco, unde moeniam maxima pars conspiciatur, aerae distribuuntur* (Vitr. *De arch.* 1. 7. 1). Thus, the aspect of visibility, most easily accomplished through an elevated position, seems to have played an important role for the sanctuaries of tutelary deities.

Livy's account of the Roman conquest of Veii suggests that this does not apply to Rome alone, but also to the cities of neighbouring peoples. When, after ten years of siege, the Roman dictator M. Furius Camillus launches the final attack on Veii, he invokes Iuno Regina of Veii to follow the Romans back to their city, which shall henceforth be hers as well, and promises her a sanctuary worthy of her grandeur (Livy 5. 21. 3: ... *Iuno Regina, quae nunc Veios colis, precor, ut nos victores in nostrum tuamque mox futuram urbe sequere, ubi te dignum amplitudine tua templum accipiat*). Iuno Regina, therefore, seems to have been the protective deity of Etruscan Veii, who was encouraged to abandon her city by means of *evocatio*. A few lines later Livy gives us the location of Iuno's temple in Veii: it was situated on the city's *arx* (Livy 5. 21. 10). After the sack and subsequent destruction of the city, the cult statue of the Veian Iuno Regina was transported to Rome and was kept in her new temple on the Aventine, which Camillus had consecrated (Livy 5. 22 3–7).

The *arx* of Etruscan Veii lies on the southern height of the city plateau, now called Piazza d'Armi (Steingraber 1981: 490–491). The temple of Iuno Regina has not yet been securely identified, but foundations of a temple of moderate dimensions (c. 8.07 × 15.35 m) dating to the first half of the sixth century B.C. have been found next to a larger, rectangular structure and a cistern, indicating that this was a second, greater temple (many Etruscan temples had a cistern in their precinct, as in the Portonaccio temple just outside the city walls of Veii, cf. Steingraber 1981: 483–485). A votive deposit near the rectangular structure adds to the supposition that the Piazza d'Armi was indeed the sacral centre of Etruscan Veii.

The Romans did not always transfer a city's patron deity to Rome, particularly when they did not destroy the conquered city but instead made it a colony. We shall now turn to a couple of colonies in order to show that poliadic deities can be identified in various types of settlements. A good example of an early settlement is Satricum, where the tutelary deity can be deduced from literary sources, and where the sanctuary itself has also been identified.

Satricum

Satricum, located on the road from Antium to Velitiae about 50 km south-east of Rome, was settled already in the ninth century B.C., though only in the area of the hill upon which later the *arx* was built. In the sixth century, the settlement took on an urban character; it expanded towards the west and south, encompassing an area of c. 36.6 ha (Maaskant-Kleibrink 1987: 35). At this time it was probably under Etruscan influence but in the fifth century it became Volscian. In the course of the Roman-Latin conflicts of the fourth century B.C., Satricum was conquered and retaken several times. In 377 it was burned down by the Latins, after the Volscians had entered into a separate peace with the Romans (Livy 6. 33. 4). In 348 B.C., Satricum was refounded and rebuilt by settlers from Antium, but only three years later, in 346 B.C., it was again conquered by the Romans (Livy 7. 27. 5–9; Plin. *HN* 3. 68). Even though

they were then *cives Romani* (Livy 9. 16. 2), the inhabitants of Satricum again seceded from Rome during the second Samnite War (Livy 9. 12. 5) and were punished: the leaders of the defection were executed and the city received a strong garrison (Livy 9. 16. 2–10). There are no literary reports on the further history of the city. The settlement was abandoned at the time of Pliny (Plin. *HN* 4. 68).

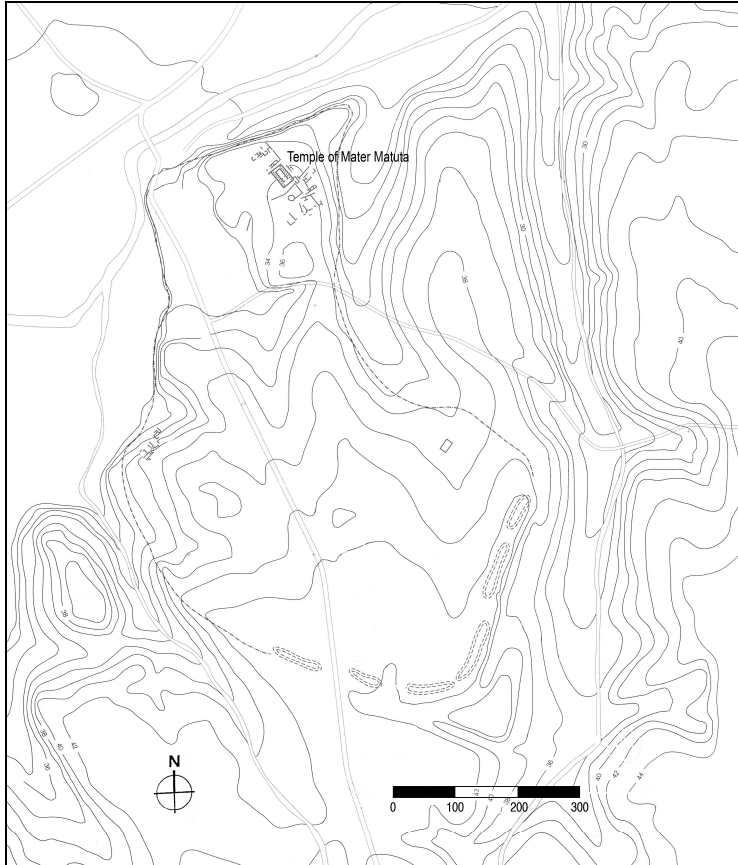


Figure 1: Plan of Satricum (after Lackner 2008: 374).

Most of the ancient city has been destroyed due to re-allocation of agricultural land in the 1960s; apart from several necropoleis only the *arx* situated on the south-eastern height, a temple in the lower part of the city and the remains of a villa on the northern slopes have been excavated (Fig. 1). On the gods of Satricum there is only scant information. One sanctuary, however, is mentioned several times: the temple of Mater Matuta on the *arx*. When the city was burned down by the Latins in 377 B.C., only the Mater Matuta sanctuary remained unscathed. But this was not due, as Livy relates, to any reverence for the goddess on part of the Latins, who reportedly torched both houses and other temples, but rather to a gruesome voice issuing from the sanctuary, threatening terrible things against the marauders if they did not withhold the fires far from the sacred area (Livy 6. 33. 4–6). Thirty years later, when the

Romans captured the region for good, they too burned the city to the ground but kept the fires away from the temple of Mater Matuta (Livy 7. 27. 8). The temple's survival and the fact that Livy finds it worth mentioning testify to the significance of the sanctuary.

The archaeological finds confirm the prominent position of the Mater Matuta sanctuary at Satricum (cf. Maaskant-Kleibrink 1987: 31–35; Maaskant-Kleibrink 1992: 108–146; Gnade 2002: 30–49). On the hill serving as *arx* and on which are located the oldest traces of settlement, the excavators discovered votive pits with objects from the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., as well as fragments of clay antefixes and terracotta roof tiles, which indicate the existence already at this time of a temple – called Temple 0 – occupying an area c. 6×12 m. This temple was possibly preceded by an even older, open sanctuary.

The first large stone construction, Temple 1, was erected in the sixth century B.C. In its foundation, the excavators discovered a small deposit of votive offerings, probably belonging to Temple 0, in which the latest objects can be dated to around 535 B.C. Fragments of wooden panelling indicate a Campanian roof. The temple, c. 17×27 m, was a *peripteros sine postico* with a tetrastyle facade and eight columns on the long sides. The so called Votive Deposit II probably belongs to this temple (*contra* Gnade 2002: 49, who interprets it as a dump). The deposit contained numerous votive terracottas, among them several anatomical votives, a large amount of ceramics as well as a small altar in the form of a sand clock, on which a male figure with four wings in the typical bent legged *Knielaufschema* pose is portrayed.

The last and largest temple on the *arx* was erected in the first half of the fifth century B.C. This Temple 2 was constructed as a *peripteros* of c. 21×34 m, with 4×8 columns. The late Archaic roof was decorated with antefixes of Silen- and Iuno-Sospita heads. There were also antefixes of harpies and satyrs with maenads. Acroteria decorated the ridge of the roof and portrayed numerous gods and pairs of gods: Iuppiter, Apollo and Diana, Minerva and Hercules (Lulof 1996: 34–119). A third votive deposit on the *arx* probably belongs to Temple 2. The finds date to the mid-Republican era and feature ceramics, votive figurines and anatomical votives, terracotta heads *capite velato* and *capite aperto*, masks, bronze statues, an amber scarabaeus, faience and clay lamps. It is unclear for how long this temple stood. There seems to have been a certain decline in the second half of the fifth century, when part of the *arx* became a necropolis (Maaskant-Kleibrink 1992: 101–105; Gnade 2002: 49–50), but given the turbulent history of Satricum prior to its final conquest by the Romans, this is hardly surprising. In the fourth and third centuries the sanctuary flourished again. Livy speaks of a lightning bolt that is supposed to have struck the Mater Matuta temple in 207 or 206 B.C. (Livy 28. 11. 2), and a cippus with a dedication by one of the Cornelia *duumviri* dedicated to Mater Matuta dates around 90 B.C. (*CIL* P 1552), so the sanctuary must have been in use at least until the first century B.C. The cippus was found in the area of the sanctuary, indicating that this was, indeed, the temple of Mater Matuta. This identification is further supported by another find from the area: a Gnathia-skyphos datable to around 300 B.C. with a votive inscription to the goddess (Heldring and Stibbe 1990: 229–233).

The special significance for Satricum of the sanctuary of the Mater Matuta is undeniable. The continuity of the sanctuary from the Iron Age, its frequent occurrence in the literary sources and the fact that the Romans after the conquest and conversion of Satricum to a colonial city continued to maintain the temple, all lead to the conclusion that this was the tutelary deity of the settlement – even if it is not explicitly referred to as such. The votive inscription of the *duumvir*, as well as the attention which Livy accords to the temple, make it probable that the goddess retained this position even in Roman times. It was only after the decline of the city itself that the sanctuary lost its importance.

The sanctuary's elevated location on the city's *arx* corresponds with the situation in Rome and with Vitruvius' account of placing temples of protective deities *in excelsissimo loco*, from where most of the settlement area could be seen. As in Archaic Rome, the temple lies not in the centre of the settlement, but close to the city walls.

Luni

Luni, ancient Luna, lies 17 km north-west of Carrara, on the small coastal strip between the Apuan Alps and the sea. Founded in 177 B.C. as a Roman citizen colony (Livy 41. 13. 4), Luni was located close to the earlier military camp *Portus Lunae*, which must have been established in the third century B.C. (Livy 34. 8. 4) but of which no traces survive. As opposed to Satricum, Luni did not have a history of conflict with Rome. The archaeological remains excavated so far all date to the Roman period. The city walls form an almost regular rectangle of *c.* 560 × 438 m; only the southern corner is irregular due to the topography of the area (Fig. 2). The settlement itself is mainly built on flat land. The Via Aurelia traverses the city from the south-eastern to the north-western gate and intersects the *cardo maximus* in the centre of town, where the forum of Luni and its capitolium are situated (Lackner 2008: 115–118). The overall street grid is mostly regular.

The fact that the colony had a tutelary deity is clearly shown by its name: Luna, after the Roman moon goddess. It is as yet unclear why the moon goddess played such a significant role, but the earlier military camp *Portus Lunae* also reveals her importance in this area, which must go back to an older tradition unknown to us today.

In the northern part of the city lie the remains of a large temple, apart from the capitolium at the forum the only Republican sanctuary identified in Luni (Bonghi Jovino 1973: 653–691; Bonghi Jovino 1977: 413–452). It is a tetrastyle temple on a high podium which measures *c.* 16 × 20.5 m. It is built of local stone and was erected, like the capitolium, soon after the foundation of the colony. The temple was accessed through a linear street coming from the south-western, coastal city gate – the temple thus forms the endpoint of a long line of sight. This impression is increased by the fact that the ground is sloping towards the coast, so the sanctuary is in a slightly elevated position. In Julio-Claudian times the sanctuary precinct was paved and enclosed with porticoes.

Because of its tripartite cella the temple was first thought to be a capitolium, until the temple at the forum was discovered. Since then it has been called simply the “Grande Tempio”. Inscriptions or votive offerings revealing the deity worshipped here have not been found. However, there are several terracotta statues from the temple's pediment, which indicate that it was dedicated to Luna: in the centre of the largest group of pediment statues one can see a female in a long robe with one breast uncovered, sitting on a throne. Unfortunately, the head is missing. To her right stands a naked young man with a kithara, to her left another man in a cloak, a cornucopia in his left arm. Two female figures in long robes are flanking the group (Durante and Gervasini 2000: 70). The kithara player can easily be identified as Apollo, whereas the man with the cornucopia is perhaps the Genius of the colony. The central figure was originally interpreted as Minerva. A Minerva with a bare breast, however, seems very unlikely. As Apollo is at her side, it is most conceivable that the goddess is somehow connected with him. Anna Maria Durante and Lucia Gervasini suggest, therefore, that the goddess is either Diana or Luna (Durante and Gervasini 2000: 70). A Diana with a long robe would, however, be an unusual depiction of Apollo's sister, whereas Luna is often represented

in this manner, sometimes even with one breast uncovered (for example on a coin dating to around 189–180 B.C., or on the tondo on the Arch of Constantine in Rome, *cf.* Gury 1994: 527, fig. 52 and 53b). Thus, Luna seems to be the most plausible deity here, which makes the “Grande Tempio” the sanctuary of Luni’s tutelary deity.

As there is no hill within the city precinct, the temple could not have been built on true high ground, yet its grand architecture, the high podium and the long, linear street leading from the coastal city gate all the way through to the opposite side of the city could be interpreted as making up for this. So again this sanctuary displays features that are also known from the temple of the tutelary deity of Satricum: monumentality, long continuity from the city’s foundation to its decline and a prominent position. In addition, it is also close to the city wall, like the capitolium of Archaic Rome and the Mater Matuta temple of Satricum.

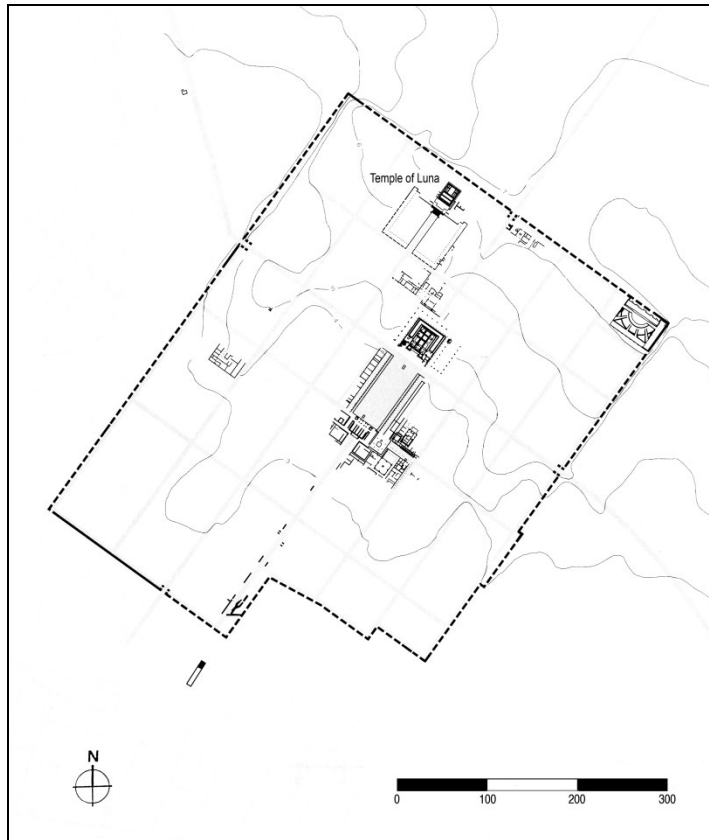


Figure 2: Plan of Luni (after Lackner 2008: 356).

Pompeii

Pompeii, on the Bay of Naples, is one of the most intensely studied sites of ancient Italy. Laid out on a spur formed by a lava flow to the north of the mouth of the Sarno River, it was, over

the course of time, inhabited by Oscans, Greeks, Etruscans, Samnites and Romans, before it was destroyed in the volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79. Founded by Oscans in the seventh or sixth century B.C., the city was under strong Greek and Etruscan influence, indicated by pottery imports and graffiti (Cristofani 1991: 7–20). In the fifth century it came under Samnite control and was forced to become an ally of Rome after the Samnite Wars (Livy 9. 38. 2). In the Social War, Pompeii was besieged by Sulla's nephew and finally surrendered in 89 B.C. (App. *B. Civ.* 1. 50). The dictator Sulla then made it a Roman veteran colony in 80 B.C. and gave it the name of *Colonia Cornelia Veneria Pompeianorum* (Cic. *Sulla* 62), replacing the city's former poliadic deity – Apollo – with his personal patroness, Venus.

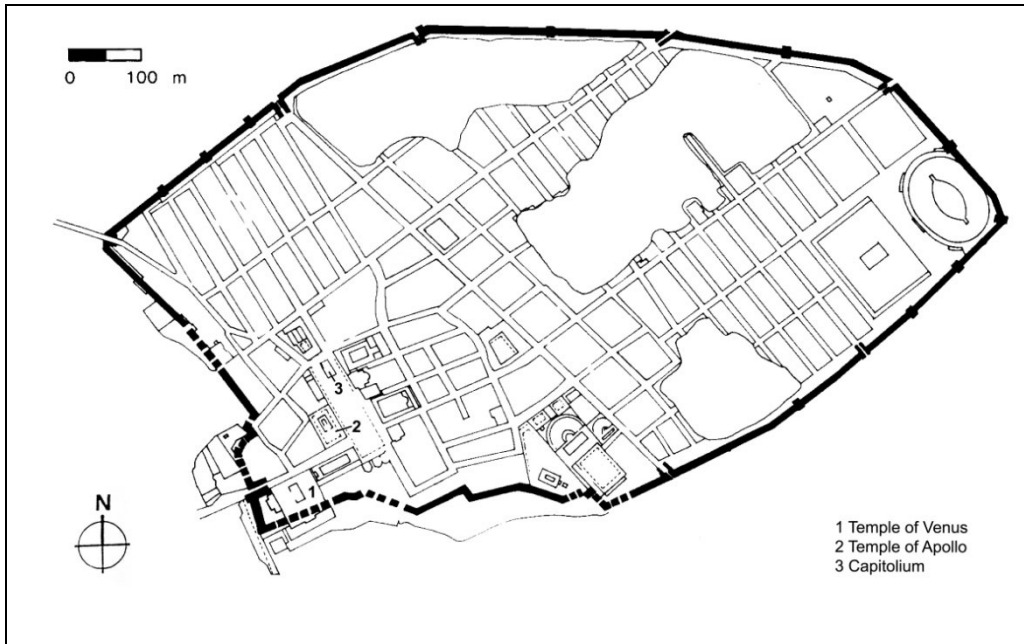


Figure 3: Plan of Pompeii (after Laurence 2007: 21).

Her sanctuary, built right after the *deductio* of the colony, is located in the south-western corner of the city (Fig. 3), which was the oldest part of the settlement (for a detailed description of the building see Mau 1900: 270–308). To build the sanctuary, the Romans had to take down part of the city wall and construct an artificial platform on high substructures right above the harbour. It must have been intended to be conspicuous from the sea (Small 2007: 186–187). The platform, which was enclosed on three sides by porticoes, measured 67×55 m. In the centre of the platform, the temple was erected. It was 29.2 m in length and 15.1 m in width and thus only little smaller than the capitolium at the city's forum (Mau 1900: 273; Dickmann 2005: 49–50). Apart from its foundations, little survived of the original building. It was renovated in the Early Empire and was then in great parts destroyed in the earthquake of A.D. 62. The repairs were still under way when the volcanic eruption buried the city. In addition, most of the marble spoils have fallen prey to looting.

Filippo Coarelli first pointed out that the cult of the new poliadic deity was partly based on an earlier cult of Venus Fisica (Coarelli 1979: 94), a goddess deriving from the Samnite goddess Mefitis (Mambella 1992: 400–401). Unlike Greek Aphrodite, she was not worshipped as goddess of love and fertility, but was a healing goddess, a goddess of springs and a guarantor of treaties; she also had a chthonic and oracular character. As poliadic deity of Pompeii Venus is represented wearing a long robe, carrying a tiara and a sceptre.

As in the case of Satricum, Luni and Rome, the city's patron deity is placed in a prominent position close to the city walls, where it can be seen already from far off. Even though Venus was made poliadic deity of Pompeii by the Romans after they conquered the city, the appearance of a long continuity of the cult was achieved by connecting the new patroness to the old cult of Venus Fisica. The foundation of the sanctuary in the oldest part of the city may have added to the pretence of old age. In size, the temple of Venus is slightly smaller than the capitolium, however the sanctuary precinct even exceeds the sanctuary of Apollo – hardly surprising, as it had to replace Pompeii's former poliadic deity (Fig. 3).

The Charter of Urso

The official assignment of a poliadic deity to a city, as seen in Pompeii, is also known from the so-called *Lex Ursonensis*, the constitution of the Spanish city Urso, which constitutes the only intact foundation charter of a Roman colony. The city, which had long been one of the centres of Lusitanian resistance against the Romans, sided with the Pompeians in 45 B.C., so Caesar planned as punishment the establishment of a Roman colony in the city (Caes. *B. Hisp.* 22. 2; 26. 3 – 26. 6; 41. 3; 42. 1). The founding took place shortly after his death. The Charter of Urso contains some information on the sacral features of the city (Crawford 1996: 400–417). It was the duty of the magistrates to establish the number of holidays, to determine which cults would be public and which priests should conduct the *sacra publica*. Their duties also included the financing of the cults and cultic activities. Of the cults which the colony was to acquire, however, only two are explicitly mentioned: the Capitoline cult of Iuppiter, Iuno and Minerva, and a cult for Venus, who was also to be the protective deity of the newly founded colony. This can be deduced from the addition *Colonia Genetiva Iulia* to the city's name, honouring Venus Genetrix, divine ancestress of Caesar and the *gens Iulia* (Rüpke 2006: 43–44). According to the Charter, the city magistrates were to finance one day of feast and games for Venus, whereas the Capitoline Triad was to receive three days (Crawford 1996: 417). This indicates that although Venus was the colony's patron deity, the patron deities of the Roman state were at least as important, or even more so. The archaeological evidence from Luni and Pompeii, where the Capitoline temples were slightly bigger than the temples of the poliadic deities, points in the same direction. The poliadic deities were the most prominent within their respective cities, but the tutelary deities of Rome and the Roman state still came first.

Identifying poliadic deities and their sanctuaries: Signia and Cosa

The temple of Urso's patroness Venus has not yet been identified, so we do not know whether or not it was similar to the sanctuaries of Rome, Satricum, Luni and Pompeii. The following examples of Signia and Cosa outline the possibilities and limits of identifying poliadic deities and their sanctuaries by means of the sanctuaries' size, decoration and position.

Signia, roughly 50 km to the east of Rome, is located on the edge of the Sacco valley, on a ridge of the Monti Lepini. From this position the city was able to control the Via Latina leading from Rome. The city was supposedly founded by Tarquinius Superbus (Livy 1. 56. 3; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4. 63. 1), but the earliest archaeological finds – remains of fortifications on the highest hill of the city, the *arx* – suggest a date closer to the turn of the fifth century B.C. This also corresponds to the report in Livy that a colony was founded in Signia in 495 B.C. (Livy 2. 21. 7).

The city wall of Signia is almost 5 km long and encloses an area of *c.* 48 ha, though not the entire area was developed (Fig. 4). Since the site is still inhabited, little has been excavated. Temples have been identified on the *arx* as well as in the south-western part of the city, by the Porta Maggiore. The location of the forum, on the other hand, is disputed (Lackner 2008: 179–182).

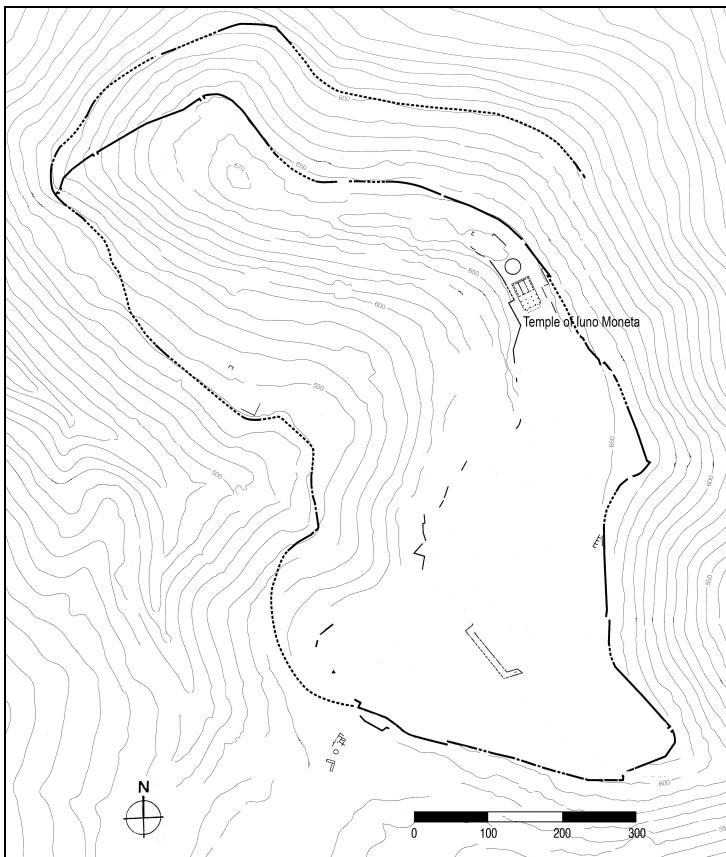


Figure 4: Plan of Signia (after Lackner 2008: 377).

Written sources on ancient Signia are extremely sparse overall. The city usually appears to have supported Rome during the latter's conflicts with its neighbours (Livy 7. 8. 6). During the

civil war, however, the city sided with Marius and was therefore occupied by Sulla (Plut. *Sulla* 28. 4).

As opposed to the case of Satricum, we have no literary sources on the sanctuaries in Signia. Votive offerings for Iuno Moneta, Fortuna, Hercules, Diana and Silvanus are attested in inscriptions. In the absence of written information on the local calendar or cults, how is one to identify a poliadic deity for Signia?

Three sanctuaries of Signia have been determined thus far. The sanctuary of Hercules is located in a small area before the southern gate. It was thus extra-mural and can hardly be considered a candidate. We have another temple in the southwest of the city, by the Porta Maggiore, probably dedicated to Fortuna. The city's largest sanctuary, however, is situated on the *arx*, the so called Pianillo Hill, which at 670 m constitutes the highest point within the city (Cancellieri 1992: 67–88). Fragments of terracotta antefixes from the second half of the sixth century B.C. as well as a series of terracotta sculptures from the early fifth century B.C. indicate an early use of the area. The architectural pieces may be part of an early sanctuary (Cifarelli 2003: 129–174). Just below the peak of the hill there is a manmade space of c. 300 × 80 m, dominated by a truly imposing temple of 25 × 40 m (Cancellieri 1992: 78–82; Cifarelli 2003: 44–68). It was erected in the late third or early second century B.C. Three metres of its polygonal podium still remain. The rising walls in *opus quadratum* were made of tufa and the cella was tripartite. Due to this tripartite division, the temple was initially considered to be a capitolium (Delbrück 1903: 13), but then two inscriptions were discovered which contained dedications to Iuno and Iuno Moneta, so it is now considered to be a temple of Iuno Moneta.

There can be little doubt that the sanctuary on the Pianillo was of great importance to the colony. Its age, size and prominent position would indicate that the site was the cult place of the city's protective deity, which would then have been Iuno Moneta. As firm evidence is lacking, however, this must remain a hypothesis.

The Latin colony of Cosa was founded in 273 B.C. on the Tyrrhenian coast, about 145 km north of Rome (Plin. *HN* 3. 51; Vell. Pat. 1. 14. 6). It is situated on a hilltop, fortified with strong city walls that were erected in the colony's early years. There seems to have been no previous settlement on the site. In 197 B.C. Cosa received reinforcements from Rome, because the city had suffered tremendous losses during the Hannibalic War (Livy 32. 2. 7; 33. 24. 8). After this, the city seems to have flourished, as many buildings date from the second century B.C. Around 70 B.C. the city was destroyed, possibly because of pirate raids, but was re-settled in Augustan times. Cosa's heyday, however, was never reached again. As written sources are sparse, we do not know much about the city's history after the Augustan reinforcement. Harbour and fishing bay came out of use, maybe due to a violent storm that led to a silting up of the fishing canals (Bourgeois 1987: 44–57). Rutilius Claudius Namatianus, who passed the site in the fifth century A.D., records that the city was deserted (Rut. *Namat.* 1. 285).

The highest of the city's hills is occupied by a grand temple (Fig. 5), which was built in the second quarter of the second century B.C. but had an earlier predecessor (Brown *et al.* 1960: 49–110; Brown 1980: 51–56; Fentress 2000: 21–22). With a width of 23.2 m and a length of 31.7 m the temple is truly monumental. Its 2.88 m high podium is mainly made of local sandstone, with a few slabs of limestone. The temple was most likely tetrastyle. The cella, built in *opus incertum*, was tripartite, with a wider middle room and two narrower side rooms.

The wooden entablature was decorated with terracottas, which were first divided into five groups, but a revision by Rabun Taylor now puts them into only two main groups: one from the time of the temple's original construction (*i.e.* 175–150 B.C.), and another from Augustan times, when the colony was reinforced (Taylor 2002: 59–83). The original terracottas show

mainly floral decoration. One fragment of a beam end depicts Hercules, the other shows Ganymede's abduction. Older architectural terracottas, originating from the temple's predecessor, were found in the temple foundations and nearby. Among these were antefixes showing the heads of Minerva and Hercules.

Because of its tripartite cella and its location on the *arx*, the excavator, Frank Brown, thought this temple to be a capitolium, comparing the *arx* of Cosa with the *arx* of Rome, reconstructing Cosa as a small image of Rome. The temple's predecessor Brown interpreted as a temple of Iuppiter (Brown *et al.* 1960: 19–24, 103–108; Brown 1980: 25–26).

Brown's interpretation has only very recently been challenged by Edward Bispham, who rightly pointed out that there is actually no evidence for an identification of this temple as a capitolium (Bispham 2006: 95–105). A tripartite cella does not constitute a capitolium, as can easily be seen in Signia, where the Iuno Moneta temple had also been interpreted as a capitolium, until the dedicatory inscriptions to Iuno and Iuno Moneta were found. A location on the highest spot of a city also will not do. In the only colonies where there are capitolia – citizen colonies like Ostia, Tarracina, Minturnae or Luni – those temples are to be found in the colonies' centres, along the *decumanus maximus* and near the forum. In fact, there is no evidence at all that could possibly tell us what deity was worshipped on the *arx* of Cosa. But we might suspect that it was Cosa's protective deity: possessing a large temple on the city's oldest sacred site and being situated at the city's most prominent position, where it was best seen from afar. However, as in the case of Signia, a secure identification is not possible.

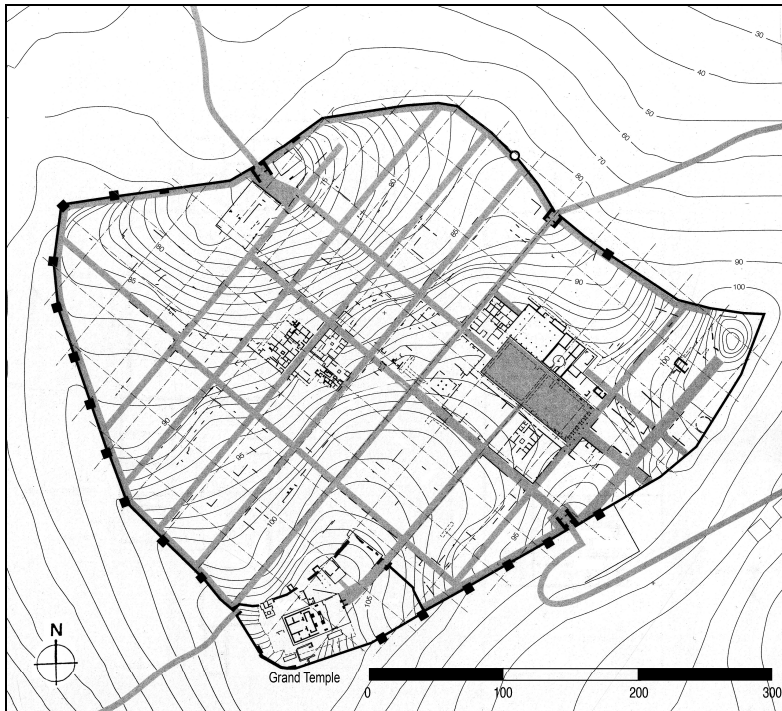


Figure 5: Plan of Cosa (after Lackner 2008: 347).

Conclusions

Evidence for tutelary deities in Republican times is found in different types of colonies, indicating that the phenomenon was shared by many different communities and constituted an important part of both Roman and their neighbours' religion. The importance of those poliadic deities is supported by the general tendency to place their sanctuaries in particularly prominent positions and, if possible, in a conspicuous location where they were visible from far off, as can be observed in Rome, Luni and Pompeii. This is confirmed by the emphasis on visibility in the Vitruvius passage quoted above.

In cases like Rome, Luni and Pompeii the existence of poliadic deities can be detected rather easily through written sources or even the city's name, whereas in Satricum the combination of written and archaeological evidence allows at least a reasonable assumption. In places like Signia or Cosa, where we can only suspect from archaeological and topographical considerations, the identification of sanctuaries of poliadic deities becomes much harder. Therefore, these identifications must remain hypothetical.

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