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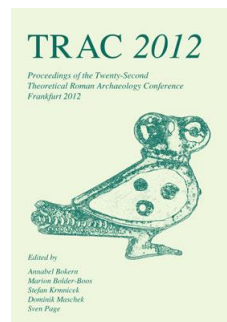
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Sacra Volsiniensia. Civic Religion in Volsinii after the Roman Conquest

Annalisa Calapà

Introduction

Most of the literary sources describe the history of Volsinii's encounter with the Roman power as a history of war, spoliation, and destruction. Livy tells us about the numerous fights that took place during the fourth century and in the first decades of the third century B.C. between the Etruscan city and Rome (Livy 5.31.32, 9.41.6, 10.37.1; see also Harris 1985). In 280 Ti. Coruncanus triumphed over Volsinii for the first time: probably in that period, the city fell under Roman control (Degrassi 1954: 98). Twenty years later, when serious internal struggles required Roman intervention, Rome sent another military expedition to Volsinii, sieged it and finally defeated it in 264 B.C. (Livy *Per.* 16; Val. Max. 9.1; Flor. 1.16; Oros. 4.5.3). According to Zonaras (8.7.4–8), the city was razed to the ground and refounded at a new site with the surviving citizens. The consul Fulvius Flaccus gained a triumph for this victory and dedicated to the Volsinian god Voltumna/Vertumnus – who was maybe introduced to Rome through *evocatio* – a temple on the Aventine, where a painting showed Flaccus wearing his triumphal garb (Festus, *Gloss. Lat.* 228; Prop. 4.2.3–4). The destruction and spoliation brought to Volsinii by the Roman conquest were emphasized by Metrodorus, who – probably with some exaggeration – maintained that the Romans had taken away two thousand statues from the city (Pliny *HN* 34.16.34).

In front of this apparent example of violent imposition of the Roman rule and of annihilation of the city identity, it seems at first surprising to find Roman Volsinii, in a passage of Tertullian, listed among cities with a strong local religious background (Tert. *Apol.* 24.8). Writing about cities known for their municipal, traditional cults, the Christian author states: 'These provinces that I mention are, I think, Roman; but their gods are not Roman; for they are not worshipped at Rome any more than the gods honoured in Italy itself by municipal deification – such as Delventinus at Casinum, Visidianus at Narnia, Ancharia at Asculum, Nortia at Volsinii (...)'. Tertullian refers to the civic religion of Roman Volsinii, mentioning one of its most known and important cults: that of the Etruscan goddess Nortia, worshipped in the city – as Livy testifies – already before the Roman conquest (Livy 7.3.7; see also Juv. 10.74–77; *CIL* VI, 537, I). The cult of Nortia can thus be regarded as part of what the lexicographer Festus, in a well-known passage, calls 'municipal rites' (*municipalia sacra*). Those rites, according to Festus (146), were owned by Italic cities 'originally, before the granting of Roman citizenship; the pontiffs desired that people continue to observe them and to practice them in the way they had been accustomed to from ancient times'. But how much of the Volsinian *sacra* had survived the Roman destruction of the city and the subsequent forced resettlement of its citizens? How, and to what extent, could religious identity be preserved in an Italic city which had been so strongly affected by the Roman conquest?

And more generally: how did the Roman intervention and the Romanization affect – directly and indirectly – the religious life of Volsinii?

The increasing amount of epigraphic and archaeological evidence in recent times has led scholars to look at the peculiarities of single areas and cities. What emerges is a greatly differentiated picture of Hellenistic and Roman Italy, which shows not only signs of rupture, but also continuity of Pre-Roman cults and cult places: especially. De Cazanove has emphasized this variety, deconstructing the previously popular concept of the Italic *solitudo* broken by the adoption of a new, basically undifferentiated Roman identity after the Social War (De Cazanove 2007; for an overview of recent research see Stek 2009: 9–16). Roman expansion in Italy, and later the integration of Italic peoples and cities in the Roman political and administrative system, have not always had the same impact on local cults and sanctuaries. However, the profound political and social changes that occurred during the Late Republic had also significant consequences on religious life that cannot be explained through a simple framework.

In the case of Volsinii, the destruction of 264 B.C. is obviously to be seen as a major watershed in the city's history. Anyway, we should take care not to overemphasize its effects by placing an exaggerated emphasis on the alleged decline of civic religion, as MacIntosh Turfa apparently does in a recent article (MacIntosh Turfa 2007: 63). Roman settlers, as well as native Etruscans, would continue to worship in the ruins of many such (Etruscan) shrines, now concentrating on the healing aspects rather than the civic affiliation of the cults). In the passage discussed above, Tertullian reminds us that in Roman Italy cities still had their own *sacra*, a specific geography of cults and cult places. Private and public religious acts were performed by citizens in the sanctuaries of the city and of its territory; local cults and rites were organized autonomously (Fratesantonio 2003: 70 ff.; for the 'polis-religion' model see Derks 1998; Woolf 1998; Scheid 1999; Bendlin 2000). The religious landscape of Volsinii, of course, underwent several transformations in the time following the Roman conquest, adapting to political and urban changes: however, religious continuity can be detected as well. The epigraphic and archaeological record, which shall be reviewed and discussed in this paper, allows us to partially reconstruct this process and to recognize some features of the *sacra* of Roman Volsinii.

Cults and sanctuaries of Volsinii Veteres after 264 B.C.

Before turning to the Volsinian cults attested after 264 B.C., it will be useful to rapidly summarize the history of the Romanization of the city. Volsinii, Etruscan Velzna, is referred to in literary sources as one of the most important and prosperous Etruscan cities (Val. Max. 9.1 ext. 1; Flor. 1.16; Pliny *HN* 2.139). The *communis opinio* places in the city territory the *fanum Voltumnae*, the federal sanctuary of the Etruscan League (Stopponi 2002: 110–111). The identification of Volsinii with modern-day Orvieto was already proposed in the nineteenth century; scholarly debate on the issue has continued up until the second half of the twelfth century, with some researchers identifying Orvieto with the ancient Salpinum, others placing Etruscan Volsinii/Velzna on the site

of Bolsena (for a discussion of the debate see Steingraber 1981; Della Fina 2003). In the last decades, the thesis that Orvieto should be identified with ancient Volsinii has prevailed. The archaeological evidence from the city points to a time of prosperity in the Archaic and Classical periods: the decline of the settlement during the Hellenistic Age coincides with the growth of nearby-located Bolsena. Moreover, remains of a fortified wall were discovered in Orvieto in the 1960s, finally providing evidence matching Zonaras' account of the conquest of Volsinii and thus invalidating one of the main arguments which had been cited against its identification with Orvieto (Steingraber 1981; Camporeale 2003).

The Volsinian territory extended north to the Paglia river and to the south-west along the east coast of the lake of Bolsena, including a considerable amount of rural settlements and *castella* (Vander Poppen 2008: 198–216; Bruschetti 2010). After the conquest and destruction of the city in 264 B.C., the urban centre of Volsinii was moved to Bolsena, as attested by numerous Roman Imperial inscriptions found in the area (see for instance *CIL* XI, 2702 and 2710a, which refer to the *respublica* or *civitas Volsiniensium*). Thus, what had been a minor settlement in the Volsinian *ager* became the centre of the new city (Steingraber 2010). After the Social War, the city became a *municipium* and was placed in the tribe Pomptina. Triumviral and Augustan colonization and land distribution are not attested in the sources. Actually, the Volsinian epigraphy shows a certain degree of continuity in family names and a relative stability of the local elite (Cristofani 1966; Torelli 1982; Harris 1985: 155–156). Surveys conducted in the whole area have identified a large number of rural sites, suggesting that during the Late Republic and the Imperial Age the Volsinian territory was still densely populated and cultivated (Stopponi 1999; Bruschetti 2010). The river port of Pagliano, situated at the confluence of the Tiber and Paglia river, played an important role in the local economy from the Late Republic to the fourth/fifth centuries A.D. (Morelli 1957; Bruschetti 2009; 2010). In the new centre of Volsinii Novi/Bolsena, excavations led by the *École Française* in Rome revealed wide portions of the city in the area of Poggio Moscini, with a number of large public buildings – like a basilica on the forum, an amphitheatre and a bath complex – dating to the Imperial Age (Gros, Balland, Goudineau *et al.* 1981–1995). In the Trajanic period, the construction of the *via Traiana Nova*, that connected Volsinii Novi to Clusium, gave to the city further economic impulse (Steingraber 2010). The site declined at the end of the third/first half of the fourth century A.D.

By exploring the evidence about Volsinian cults and cult places after the Roman conquest, we can start from Volsinii Veteres. In what follows I will refer to the 'old' and the 'new' Volsinii – located respectively at the sites of modern Orvieto and Bolsena – with the conventional names of Volsinii Veteres and Volsinii Novi, frequently used in modern research.

Scanty archaeological remains, as well as sixteenth-century local chronicles mentioning Roman buildings, could suggest that Volsinii Veteres was modestly repopulated during the Late Republic and the Imperial Age (Della Fina 1999). Nevertheless, the destruction of the city in 264 B.C. apparently led to the decline of most urban sanctuaries. The famous Belvedere temple, such as a temple located in the

vicinity of Via San Leonardo and a temple located under the Dome, shows no traces of frequentation after the early third century B.C. (Stopponi 2010). The archaeological evidence, along with some Etruscan inscriptions, attests that all these cult places were somehow related to the cult of Tinia, the Etruscan deity who can be identified with the Roman Jupiter (Belvedere temple: TLE 270 (*tinia calusna*); Via S. Leonardo: Roncalli 1985, TLE 258 (*tinia tinscvil*); Duomo: CIE 4920, TLE 259 (*tinia ti[nscvil]*)). An altar with an Etruscan dedication to Tinia was also found in the temple excavated under the church of San Giovanni Evangelista (CIE 4919). In this case as well, cult activity in Hellenistic and Roman times cannot be proved. From the complex comes actually a very small fragment of a monumental Latin inscription (CIL XI.2, 7311a). The fragment could hypothetically be linked with a frequentation of the area in the Imperial Age, but certainly is not sufficient to prove that the site retained its cultual function in this period.

What happened, then, to the cult of Tinia, which seems to have figured prominently in the Volsinian *sacra* (Roncalli 1985; Capdeville 1999)? One reasonable hypothesis would be that it was transferred to the new settlement of Volsinii Novi and we would expect to find in the Roman city equally relevant evidence of the worship of Jupiter. However, we are faced here with the limits and the problematic nature of our sources. From the territory of Volsinii Novi comes a Latin dedication to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus, set up by the Roman consul Publius Cornelius Priscus Valerinus and probably dating to the second century A.D. (Eck 1999 n. 2). The identity of the dedicant points to a private cult, maybe practiced in one of the numerous country estates of the territory. We can also mention an altar found in Orvieto, reused in the doorpost of a modern house, which bears a dedicatory inscription to Iuppiter Ciminius (CIL XI, 2688). The epithet of the god refers to the Mount Ciminus, a mountain located south-east of Volsinii. We do not know where the altar was originally situated, although a location in the proximity of the mountain seems likely (*cf.* Latte 1967: 79; *ThesCRA* 4: 280–281). It is thus difficult to directly link this typical *Höhenkult* with the urban cult of Tinia attested in Volsinii Veteres before 264 B.C. The lack of substantial evidence of an urban cult of Jupiter in Volsinii Novi could obviously be explained with the fragmentary nature of our sources: however, the question of its possible decline, continuity or transformation must for now remain open.

Among the extra-urban Volsinian sanctuaries attested for the time before the Roman conquest, we can examine the case of the famous funerary sanctuary of Cannicella, south of Orvieto, where the so-called ‘Cannicella Venus’ comes from. The identity of the main deity worshipped in the sanctuary is unknown. A number of votives depict Pan/Faunus and Hercules; an Etruscan inscription mentioning the goddess Vei was also found (Andrén 1967: 41–85; Colonna 1987). Some of the findings coming from the sanctuary date back to the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., but most of the numerous architectural terracottas and votives can be dated to the fourth and third centuries B.C. The evidence related to the period following the Roman conquest, however, appears to be less conclusive: a Late-Republican and Imperial building phase are attested, but for this period we have no more proof of the cultic function of the complex (Colonna 1987; Stopponi 2010).

In another extrurban sanctuary of Volsinii Veteres, on the other hand, we find a remarkable example of religious continuity. At the site of Campo della Fiera, to the west of the city of Orvieto, excavations conducted by Simonetta Stopponi uncovered evidence of temple buildings dating back to the Archaic age, that were renovated during the Late Republican and Imperial period (Stopponi 1999; 2002; 2009; 2011). It is worth pointing out that the sanctuary did not simply ‘survive’ to the Romanization as rural cult place for the devotion of a lower, less urbanized population, as a previously popular interpretation model would suggest. The evidence, including the remains of a good quality infrastructure and the portrait of a Roman Emperor, is indicative of a monumental sanctuary. The deity worshipped at Campo della Fiera is still unknown, but the location and the characteristics of the cult place could support its identification with the *fanum Voltumnae* (Stopponi 2002).

Cults and sanctuaries of Volsinii Novi

The epigraphic record seems to reflect the decline of Volsinii Veteres and of its urban sanctuaries after 264 B.C. Of the approximately 400 Latin inscriptions found in the Volsinii area, only a very small amount – mostly funerary inscriptions – comes from Orvieto. Thirty-one Latin inscriptions are related to the religious life of Roman Volsinii: only one of them, the already discussed dedication for Iuppiter Ciminius – which was not found *in situ* – was found in Orvieto. Therefore, all inscriptions which provide us with information about the *sacra* of Volsinii in Roman times come from Volsinii Novi or from the *ager*. In this category fall dedications, as well as texts mentioning local priesthoods, colleges and cult places. Some of them can be related with certainty to sanctuaries which are archaeologically attested, or can help reconstruct the location of other cult places with some reliability.

As the excavations of the École Française have shown, building activity on Poggio Moscini, the forum of Volsinii Novi, began in the third century B.C., directly following the destruction of Volsinii Veteres. We can therefore assume that cultic inscriptions found in this area are related to sanctuaries that were constructed *ex novo* in the centre of the new city. The only exception could be a small shrine that various scholars have related to the Bacchic cult, which could have been destroyed after the *senatus consultum* of 186 and then obliterated by two Roman *domus*. However, the real function and the dating of the buildings under the *domus* are hotly disputed (De Cazanove 2000; Jolivet–Marchand 2003; Timperi 2006). For this reason, I prefer not to include this complex in the present analysis of the Volsinian *sacra*.

Two dedications come from the plateau of Mercatello, where the Flavian amphitheatre was located. The first one is an ex-voto to Venus inscribed on a small marble basis (*CIL* XI.2, 7274). The second dedication attests the rebuilding of ‘the base and the small temple of Silvanus’ (*basem cu[m] aedicu[la] Sil[vani]*) and was recovered, as the *CIL* states, ‘along with a broken cult statue’ of the god (*CIL* XI, 2698). In Volsinii, Silvanus also appears as the tutelary deity of a funerary college, carrying the epithet ‘Geminus’ (*CIL* XI, 2721). Dorcey (1992: 31–32) proposes that it could allude ‘to the double-faced

god Janus who, as guardian of doorways, complements Silvanus' domestic side'. The epithet 'Geminus' could therefore refer to the role of the god in protecting boundaries.

Other sanctuaries have been discovered in the proximity of Poggio Moscini. At Poggio Casetta, north of the forum area, rests of a small shrine with architectural terracottas and *aes grave* from the third and second centuries B.C. were found; later phases of frequentation of the cult place are not attested (Bloch 1950; Steingraber 2010). Unfortunately, we do not know the name of the deity worshipped at Poggio Casetta, nor can we advance any hypothesis about the reasons that could have led to the apparent decline of the cult place. On the other hand, at the nearby located sanctuary of Pozzarello the archaeological material attests the frequentation of the site from the third century B.C. to the third century A.D. The Pozzarello sanctuary seems therefore to have had an important place in the Volsinian *sacra*: because of its significance Ettore Gabrici, who first excavated it, identified it with the sanctuary of Nortia (Gabrici 1906; *Acconcia* 2000). The epigraphic and archaeological evidence seem actually to suggest a different interpretation. The votives found at Pozzarello included bronze figurines, small cups and reproductions of pincers and knives: similar materials are known from sanctuaries of fertility goddesses (Acconcia 2000). Moreover, from the sanctuary come two Latin votive inscriptions to Ceres, set up by members of the *gens Paetia* (*CIL* XI, 2682; *AE* 1948, 119). Ceres may have been honoured also in a fragmentary dedication found in the *ager*, set up by a member of the famous Volsinian family of the Rufii Festi (*CIL* XI.2, 7272; for the Rufii Festi see also Matthews 1967). Other inscriptions found at Pozzarello are unfortunately poorly preserved (*CIL* XI.2, 7276; 7277a; 7277b). It is thus possible to recognize Ceres as the main goddess worshipped at Pozzarello, even if conclusive proof is still lacking. It is interesting to note that the Etruscan goddess Vei – who was assimilated with Ceres – could have been worshipped also at the Cannicella sanctuary.

As in many other cult places of Central Italy, 'secondary' deities could have shared the sacred space with the divinity to which the sanctuary was dedicated. In fact, from Pozzarello comes a cippus dating to the third or second century B.C. with an Etruscan dedication to Selvans (TLE 900; see also Colonna 1966; De Simone 1984). If we admit that a connection between Selvans and Roman Silvanus existed, the inscription on the cippus may suggest that the Volsinian cult of Silvanus – which has been previously mentioned – had roots in the pre-Roman religious traditions of the city. Examining the evidence relating to Selvans and Silvanus, Dorsey (1992: 10 ff.) sees no conclusive proof of a connection between the two gods. However, he could have overestimated the significance of some elements, for instance the difference in iconography (Selvans depicted as a youth, Silvanus as an old man). Visual representation of Etruscan gods is often ambiguous, and one could remind that Tinia, whose connection with Iuppiter is undisputed, appears in Etruscan artifacts sometimes as mature man, other times as a beardless youth (Thomson De Grummond 2006: 53 ff.).

Other dedications dating to the Imperial Age were found in the Volsinian territory, attesting the cults of Diana (which appears in the city also as tutelary goddess of a funerary college of public slaves: *CIL* XI, 2683; 2720; possibly 2682a), Mithras (*CIL* XI, 2684), Hercules (*CIL* XI, 2687) and the Nymphs (*CIL* XI, 2691). A dedication

to Bona Dea, which has been erroneously attributed to the sanctuary of Pozzarello (Acconcia 2000), was also found (Eck 1999, n. 1). Colonna (1987) suggests that the cult of Bona Dea may have been already practiced at Cannicella. These dedications could have belonged to rural sanctuaries – either private or public –, but it is impossible for us to reconstruct their provenance.

The epigraphic record also shows evidence of the imperial cult. Augustales are mentioned in an honorary inscription reused in the bell tower of the church of Santa Cristina in Bolsena (*CIL* XI, 2710a). Two imperial freedmen, both *procuratores*, figure prominently as benefactors, financing building activity related to the Emperor worship. One of them, Germanus, built a *Caesareum et omni cultu exornavit*; Hyacinthus, on the other hand, restored *sua pecunia* a shrine of Apollo Augustus, which was maybe dedicated originally by an Epaphroditus. Both inscriptions were found by a farmer in the proximity of Castiglione in Teverina, east of the Lake of Bolsena (*CIL* XI.2, 7270; 7271). We cannot establish if the temples mentioned here were private cult places located in an imperial estate or if they were public sanctuaries. By all means, Germanus and Hyacinthus were most probably part of a large group of wealthy freedmen, who administered or owned estates in the flourishing agricultural landscape of Volsinii and took part in the public life of their new community with generous donations.

We can now turn to Nortia, which Tertullian mentions as a prominent municipal deity of Volsinii, still worshipped in the Imperial Age. According to Livy (7.3.7), year nails were driven in the temple of Nortia in Volsinii, in the same manner as it was usually done in Rome in the chapel of Minerva in the Capitoline temple. These similarities in ritual practice suggest that the Etruscan goddess was somehow assimilated to Minerva: this seems to be confirmed by a dedication to Minerva Nortina found in Visentium, a Roman municipium on the west side of the lake of Bolsena (Gasperini 1959: 38–40, fig. 5–7). As a goddess of fate, Nortia was also assimilated with the Roman deities Fortuna and Necessitas (Schol. Juv. 10.73; Hor. *Carm.* 1.35.17; Mart. Cap. 1.88). It is therefore worth noting that in Roman Volsinii Nortia is still worshipped with her original name, as attested by a number of inscriptions. The goddess is mentioned in two ex-votos set up in the Imperial Age, respectively by C. Larcus Agathopus and by Primitivus, a public slave (*CIL* XI, 2685; 2686). Another, unfortunately fragmentary inscription refers to the temple of Nortia (*[t]empl[um] deae N[orti]ae*) and was found at Poggio Moscini, in the forum area (*CIL* XI.2, 7287). The surviving fragments seem to match the text of an honorary inscription for a prominent personality from Volsinii (third century A.D.), identified by Torelli as a member of the family of the Rufii Festi (*CIL* XI, 2699; Torelli 1971: 489–501). If both inscriptions refer to the same person, as generally believed, it can be assumed that this Rufius Festus had restored or refurbished the temple of Nortia, which most probably had an important place among the Volsinian sanctuaries.

Among the offices of the Rufius Festus who was honoured in Volsinii, we find the position of *praetor Etruriae XV populorum*. We know another *praetor Etruriae* from Volsinii, who held the consulship in the middle of the second century A.D.: an inscription honouring him was found at Poggio Moscini in 1980 (*AE* 1980: 426). This title – like the one of *aedilis Etruriae* – was conferred to Romans of various ranks and provenance,

who played an important role in the activities of the restored Etruscan League (Liou 1969; Torelli 1971). The Etruscan League of the ‘Twelve Peoples’ of Etruria was renewed in the Early Imperial Age, probably on Augustus’ initiative: it included fifteen Etruscan cities and was clearly concerned only with religious ceremonies and spectacles (Torelli 1971). The famous rescript of Spello of the Emperor Costantine, which refers to religious ceremonies held in Volsinii in virtue of a *prisca consuetudo*, has generally been linked by scholars to the celebrations of the renewed League (CIL XI, 5265=ILS 705; see also Sensi 1999, with extensive bibliography). If this reconstruction is correct, we can assume that Volsinii – such as Tarquinia with its *elogia Tarquiniensia* (Torelli 1975) – was one of the cities where the emphasis on ancient local Etruscan traditions was particularly strong.

Conclusions. Contextualizing religious change and continuity

The case of Volsinii offers an interesting contribution to the scholarly debate on the impact of Roman conquest and Romanization on the religion of Italic cities. Military resistance, and even the destruction and forced refoundation of the city, did not lead to the eradication of local cults. The violent conquest of Volsinii and the forced resettlement of its citizens had obviously direct consequences on religious life: however, change and continuity in local religion during the late Republican and Imperial Age were determined by more complex factors. As we have seen, topography, society and economy of the city provide the general framework for analyzing religious change, allowing us to get a better understanding of how this change occurred.

The Roman conquest had an impact on Volsinian cults especially by reshaping the space where these cults were performed. Despite the fragmentary and sometimes problematic nature of our sources, it seems that the vitality of urban sanctuaries in Volsinii Veteres was particularly compromised by the refoundation of the city at a new site and by the resettlement of the population. The development of Volsinii Novi led to the emergence of a new sacred topography, shifting the focus of cultic activity toward the new city. In Volsinii Veteres, most of the cult places were not in use anymore after the conquest. Extrurban sanctuaries in the area, like the sanctuary of Cannicella, could have lost their cultic function. On the other hand, the sanctuary of Campo della Fiera was renovated after the conquest and still enjoyed popularity in the Imperial Age. The hypothesis of its identification with the *fanum Voltumnae*, if proved to be correct, would obviously explain the centrality of this cult place in Roman Volsinii, where the celebrations of the League of the ‘Fifteen Peoples’ still marked the cultural and religious life of the city.

In Volsinii Novi, the refoundation provided new spaces for the civic cults and consequently led to the decline of cult places at the site of the old city. The vitality of the new centre, and maybe the frequentation of cult places in this area, were probably reinforced by the strategic location of the city on the Via Cassia and later on the Via Traiana Nova. The political transformations which occurred after the Social War led to the formation of a new ‘religious landscape’, where new elements – like the Emperor

worship – coexisted with traditional cults. Temples were probably erected in and around the newly built forum area of Poggio Moscini. The cult of Nortia – and possibly other *municipalia sacra* (the cult of Vei/Ceres?) – apparently found a new place in Volsinii Novi. On the hypothesis that the temple of Nortia was originally an urban sanctuary located in Volsinii Veteres, we can reasonably assume that after the resettlement the city authorities decided to have the temple rebuilt in a new location. However that may be, it is worth noting that Volsinii could autonomously reorganize its cults and cult places, and that pre-Roman cults could become part of the public religion of the refounded city.

In this process of adaptation of local religion, social and economic factors were also crucial. In Volsinii, a flourishing agricultural and trade economy is attested during the late Republican and Imperial Age, and the impact of veteran settlements and colonization on local society was apparently not as strong as in other cities. These aspects may well have created favourable conditions for the persistence of traditional civic cults. A very different situation can be found, for instance, in Veii. After the war against Rome, the city became depopulated and various veteran settlements were established in the area in the late Republican period. The Augustan creation of the *Municipium Augustum Veiens* allowed for a modest revival, but Early Imperial Veii, as Liverani (1987: 143–162) states, was nevertheless a city where the Etruscan element had completely disappeared.

The specific cultic environment and the peculiarities of a city could also have made a difference. The prestige of Volsinii as prominent religious centre of the Etruscan League, whose sacred ceremonies were revitalized during the Imperial Age, may have contributed to the persistence and to the vitality of traditional cult places, such as the sanctuary of Nortia and possibly the *fanum Voltumnae*.

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