THE MARSI: THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN IDENTITY

by

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DEDICATION

For everyone who made my stay at Boise a marvelous and unforgettable experience. Anes, Amaias, Olatzs Miren, Mikel, Iker, Juan, Andres, Maria, Usue, Arantxa, Aintzane, Ander, Irati, Tim, Cristina, Sofia, Borja, Jon Ander, Ibai, Israel, Marta, Simon, Julia, Iñigo, Jon, John... The whole Basque Community cannot fail to appear in this long list, particularly, the entire team of the Basque Museum and the Basque studies professors, Nere and Ziortza, who deserve a very special acknowledgement. To this end, a last mention to all the students, either in the Euskera classes or at BSU that suffered my broken English.

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Last, but not least, I want to highlight a scholar to whom I owe a lot: Cesare Letta. My work may be read as a reaction against his postulates, and in a way, it is. However, this study would not be possible without all his previous work, which it is simply outstanding. The following thesis aims to offer a more nuanced approach to Marsian identity, but as he himself posed “la realtà storica non è mai semplice e i nostri sforzi per interpretarla raramente possono ricorrere con successo a linee nette, contorni definiti e tinte forti e unite.”

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ABSTRACT

Up until now Marsian cultural identity has been approached from an old-fashioned theoretical angle of *autoromanizzazione* (“self-Romanization” or “emulation”). This perspective was one response to the unsatisfactory explanation of the previous paradigm (“Romanization”) to assess the incorporation faced by pre-Roman people. Nonetheless, current scholars have found the “self-Romanization” approach untenable. This view changes the scope of the agency from Roman to Native in the assimilation process of the Italians in the Roman culture, turning the whole influence into the Native elites, but all of it has an irremediable ending of exactly the same cultural convergence. Besides, the concept is still a top-bottom approach and the knowledge of the final outcome of the process obscures our judgment, taking for granted cultural behaviors as Roman when those are not necessarily Romans or vice versa.

This work aims to criticize the modern approach of the 1970s epistemology reassessing the Marsian identity in a new light reconsidering the degree of the Roman agency, as it was more than it was previously thought. Nonetheless, the high degree of the Native agency in the structuration of the Marsian ethnicity cannot be neglected, because Marsian identity was a malleable ethnic concept to channel collective supralocal efforts by indigenous elites. The work offers a new way of understanding the Marsian culture refracted through the imperialistic lens of Roman authors.

Keywords: Marsi, Rome, Identity formation, Ethnography, Settlement pattern.

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INTRODUCTION

Samnium, Samnium, Samnium... it seems that Central Italy and Samnium for the archaic period have become equivalents in the last thirty years. Without any doubt the Samnites were the most significant *ethos*¹ of the Apennines area during the archaic period. Many ancient and modern historical reconstructions pointed out the former assumption. Following Livy's path,² Edward T. Salmon quotes "...[T]he two people [Samnite and Rome] had an instinctive and possibly a conscious inkling that peninsular hegemony was the prize for which they were contending."³ Salmon's book triggered a new wave of interest towards the people of Central Italy. Owing to the timing, the 1970s, the epistemological thought of that period greatly affected the theoretical approach to the people of the Central Apennines. In fact, these mid-20th century authors wrote history "from their [Central Apennines] people point of view."⁴

This work will deconstruct the previous modern studies about Marsi offering a new and more nuanced approach to understand Marsic culture and identity throughout the available Roman sources mingled with the material culture of the area. The previous idea

¹Ethos is a Greek word meaning character. It evolves and Greek sources called ἦθος, ἔθος to ethnic constructions. Ethos can be defined as a firm aggregate of people historically established on a given territory, possessing in common relatively stable particularities of language and culture, and also recognizing their unity and difference from other similar formations (self-awareness) and expressing this in a self-appointed name (ethnonym). T.Dragadze, cited by Stephen Bourdin, *Les peuples de l'Italia préromaine: identités, territoires, et relations inter-ethniques en Italia centrale et septentrionale. Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et Rome*, 350 (Rome: École française de Rome, 2012), 705.

²Liv. 8.23.9: *Samnis Romanusne imperio Italiam regat, decernamus*

³Edward T. Salmon, *Samnium and the Samnites*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 214. Regarding the Second Samnite War, and following Livy's anachronistic view in n.3.

⁴ Salmon, *Samnites*, IX.

of a pristine identity prior to Roman conquest is untenable. That is why, this thesis will not be a story told from their own point of view, because in the words of Greg Woolf “decolonizing does not mean redressing the balance.”⁵ Decolonizing is to deconstruct presentism and historical clichés, approaching the past more accurately and constructing a new account, while not taking any of the sides, either Roman or Native.

Despite the Samnitic obsession, the Central Apennine region was much more heterogeneous: the Frentani,⁶ the Aequi, the Paeligni, the Vestini, the Marrucini, the Praetutii, the Umbrians, and last but not least, the Marsi. The complex mosaic of those so-called warrior-like tribes⁷ has been of central interest for the study of the Roman Mediterranean Empire, because after the conquest of Italy by 264,⁸ these people were the backbone of the Roman army in the conquest of the Mediterranean.⁹ After two centuries of alliance, but prior to the *Italicii* enfranchisement in the Roman citizenship body, some Italians undermined the Roman authority by driving a war between the *socii* (Rome’s allies) and Rome (91-88 BC), a conflict known as the Social War. The bitter struggle, later considered a civil war by the Romans,¹⁰ is a controversial topic due to debate over the causes of the war and discrepancies in the sources. Even if the real aims of the insurgents remain uncertain, the study of *socii* is necessary, not only for the sake of understanding the war but to have a better comprehension of the formation of Augustan *Tota Italia*.¹¹ It is not

⁵ Greg Woolf, *Tales of the barbarians: Ethnography and Empire in the Roman West* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 2.

⁶ Strab. 5.4.2: Strabo states that Frentani were Samnites ethnically but Strabo puts them apart.

⁷ The polarized ideas Uncivilized/Civilized, Urban/Rural or Roman/ Barbarous cannot be longer sustained.

⁸ All dates are in BC unless otherwise specified

⁹ Polyb. 2.24: List of the available census for the army.

¹⁰ Flor. 2.6: *illud civile bellum fuit*: Sen. *Controv.* 10.5.

¹¹ “*iuravit in verba mea tota Italia*” Elena Isayev, *Migration, mobility and place in Ancient Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 140. According to Isayev this refers to the insurgent idea of Vitellius/Italia.

clear whether the concept refers to a propagandistic rhetoric or it represents the Italian peninsula as a single coherent political body,¹² at a time when the Marsi were Marsi but also Romans¹³.

This thesis focuses primarily on applying historical and archeological questions to the evidence of the Marsi, particularly related to cultural identity and settlement patterns during the first millennium BC in Marsica, a geographical area located in Abruzzo, Central Italy. Regarding the political structure of the Marsi, Adriano La Regina and Cesare Letta pose two different ideas. La Regina¹⁴ points out a national character for the ethnic group known as Marsi, while Letta¹⁵ advocates for a federal one. Both, national and federal, are anachronistic terms. La Regina envisions the Marsi as a uniquely structured central power and Letta argues that the Marsic people were a political power aggregated from different *oppida*¹⁶ to the *nomen*¹⁷ with no central permanent authority. Notwithstanding, the two views are modern approaches that need to be updated, because both envisioned the Marsi as a static well-defined political body, which they were not.

This work will analyze the existing evidence to see the outsider (Roman) agency in the formation of the Marsian ethnic group as a political entity, and questions whether there is evidence of a traceable distinct ethnic identity in the material culture. In the light of new

¹² Arnaldo Marcone, "Tota Italia," *MEFRA* 129, 1 (2017): 55-64.

¹³ William Harris, "Quando e come l'Italia divenne per la prima volta Italia? Un saggio sulla politica dell'identità," *Studi Storici* 48, 2 (2007): 309.

¹⁴ Adriano La Regina, "I Sanniti," in *Italia omnium terrarum parens*, ed. Milano Scheiwiller (Milano: Vanni Scheiwiller, 1989), 301-313.

¹⁵ Cesare Letta, "Antinum. Naissance et décadence d'un municipe romain mineur de l'Italie centrale," *SCO* 55 (2009): 69-89.

¹⁶ *Oppida* is a Latin plural name of *oppidum* used by sources to refer to fortified cities. It usually refers to the main administrative center of a territory (*urbs*). No normative way to distinguish *urbs-oppidum* could be ideological, in Bourdin, *Les peuples de l'Italia préromaine*, 427.

¹⁷ *Nomen* is to name a group of the same name, in this case an entire ethnic group. Bourdin, *Les peuples de l'Italia préromaine*, 197.

ethnic approaches we cannot understand a well bounded and static nature for an ethnic group, which were changeable and situational identities. So this thesis posits that the Marsic identity was a Greco-Roman categorization, renegotiated and resignified continuously.

Historiography

The appeal of the Marsi as a study case derives from the particular blend of modern and historical concerns. Since the turn of the 21st century studies of ancient Italian ethnic groups have witnessed an outstanding increase.¹⁸ Unlike traditional approaches, scholars addressed broader questions such as state formation or settlement patterns from a regional perspective. This thesis aims to explore the cultural identity of Iron Age people in the latterly known geographical area of Marsica as well as analyzing how those identities were negotiated by examining their settlement pattern.

The Marsi were an ethnic group who left no written sources, nevertheless this *ethos* appears in the Greek and Roman sources. These outsider sources allowed the Marsic name to survive throughout time, becoming a perfect historical antecedent for many medieval and modern societies. The actual geographical area inhabited by the classical Marsi is called Marsica,¹⁹ which is a modern geographical name for a region of Abruzzo. During medieval and modern ages the *Condi* of Marsi, the bishop of Marsi and the Fucino Lake²⁰ have helped to preserve the Marsian name, resulting in a historical fossilization. As a result

¹⁸ Bradley, *Ancient Umbria*. Elena Isayev, *Inside Ancient Lucania: Dialogues in History and Archeology* (Institute of Classical Studies: London, 2007) & Rafael Scopacasa, *Ancient Samnium: settlement, culture, and identity between history and archaeology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹⁹ The actual boundaries do not match with the classical ones.

²⁰ Simonetta Segenni "Il territorio dei Marsi e il Fucino negli studi antiquari dalla seconda metà del XVIII secolo all'inizio del XIX secolo," in *Il Fucino e le aree limitrofe nell'antichità. Il Convegno di Archeologia*, Avezzano 2001, 371-386.

of the *Condea* and bishopric, the awareness of the Marsian had already risen in the 17th century when Febonio wrote the *Historiae Marsorum*.²¹ After Febonio's work, De Sanctis wrote during the Enlightenment about the city of Antino, one of the cities that became a *municipium* during the Late Republic,²² demonstrating consciousness of memory of the Marsi. The interest increased due to the works regarding the drainage of the Fucino Lake in the last quarter of the 19th century. In this case, attention was first directed to emperors who had previously tried to drain the lake: Claudius, Trajan and Hadrian.²³ Consequently, the drainage of the lake uncovered many archeological artefacts increasing awareness to study who the Marsi were in the late 19th century. The archeological collection found in the drainage work still constitutes the best archeological collection to study the Marsi, and it is named after the main figure of the modern drainage: Alexandre Torlonia.²⁴

However, all these works were limited by their adherence to the classical accounts, which suited their own present, and it was not until the work of Letta *I Marsi e il Fucino nell'antichità* in 1972 when a serious scholarly analysis was carried out. Letta's work was too focused on pastoralism and still too reliant on Roman sources. Following the mentality of the 1970s, Letta regarded the Marsi as a cohesive fixed group. Notwithstanding, the book is still a good reference serving its initial purpose: to prompt further research on Marsic people. The book started a new line of inquiry followed by Grossi and Letta himself.

²¹ Mutio Phoebonio, *Historiae Marsorum* (Neapolis, 1678).

²² Dominico De Sanctis, *Dissertazioni. III, Antino, città e municipio dei Marsi* (Ravenna, 1784).

²³ Suet. *Claud.* 20-21, 23. & Cass. Dio. 40.11.5; 61.33.5; Plin. nat. 36, 15, 124; Hist. Aug, Vita di Adriano 22.12.

²⁴ Adele Campanelli (Ed.), *Il tesoro del lago. L'archeologia del Fucino e la collezione Torlonia* (Pescara: Carsa, 2001).

In addition, the Marsi were, after Samnites and Etruscans, the third Italic *ethos* having their own regional account, bringing attention towards Marsians in the 1970s.

Since Letta's 1972 monograph the bulk of evidence has considerably grown. Archeological survey has identified new Bronze and Iron Ages sites, which are synthesized in the *Carta archeologica della Marsica*.²⁵ Not only has knowledge of the archeological material increased, but also literature revision and theoretical frameworks have been proposed to look at Greco-Roman sources. Emma Dench²⁶ and Gary Farney²⁷ put forward new ways of reading Roman sources. The fact that Romans and Greeks had a culturally constructed literary tradition to refer to others is already known. However, Dench demonstrates that those constructions are not one-way inventions. Non-Romans also engaged actively in the creation and reception of such constructions. Italians and others alike, exploited them for their own benefit. Besides, the use of ethnic labelling had been part of the Roman political arena since the 2nd century. Although those categorizations came from the cultural exchange produced by the Roman expansion, they must be considered within the Roman political game.

Epigraphy from the modern area of Marsica has undergone much rethinking too. Sandro D'Amato along with Letta²⁸ reviewed all the available epigraphy from modern Marsica. Other study areas, including religious and military examples have also been subject to new evaluation. Despite the fact that Letta has been amending many of his old

²⁵ Giuseppe Grossi & Umberto Irti, *Carta archeologica della Marsica (dalla preistoria al medioevo)* (Avezzano: DVG Studio, 2011).

²⁶ Emma Dench, *From Barbarians to New Men. Greek, Roman and modern perceptions of peoples of the central Apennines* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

²⁷ Farney, *Ethnic Identity*.

²⁸ Cesare Letta & Sandro D'Amato, *Epigrafia della regione dei Marsi* (Milano: Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1975).

assumptions such as for example the big pastoral influence through the examination of new evidences, he still argues a quick Marsic introduction into the Roman sphere. The fast adoption of Latin, namely *caso cantovios* (see chapter 2.2) shows strong ties within Roman and Marsic elites²⁹. Besides, the big Marsic presence in the Roman Senate has helped to nourish Letta's assumption about the rapid integration of the Marsian elite due to their fast "self-Romanization."³⁰ As proposed by this thesis, the evidence can be read in a different way. Letta's approach has been to apply a coherent relation to all available data, creating a single coherent lineal system in which Marsic people have a cultural continuation from the Iron Age until the Roman period. Nevertheless, this idea has been shaped by his nativist view, where they only flipped the focus from Rome to Native elites, arguing an *autoromanizzazione*, or "self-Romanization," explained in the next section.

In opposition to the ethnic grouping as a political cohesive entity, Guy Bradley³¹ has noticed that during the 4th and 3rd centuries individual communities prioritized individual expression rather than the unified ethnic names that appear in ancient sources. Ethnic names originated from fluid military and political alliances tagged by Romans. However, the phenomenon is not one-sided, because Natives also played an active role in creating those ethnic labels. Emic and etic interactions, based upon socio-historical elements, constructed those identities, where the belonging to a group was continuously renegotiated. Although no one questions the existence of ethnic identities during the 4th or

²⁹ Cesare Letta, "Il contributo dell'epigrafia alla conoscenza del territorio degli antichi Marsi," in *Ricerche archeologiche a San Potito di Ovidoli e le aree limitrofe nell'antichità e nell'alto medioevo* (Budapest, 24 novembre 2000), ed. D. Gabler and F. Redő, (L'Aquila: REA Edizioni, 2008), 9–23

³⁰ Timothy P. Wiseman, *New men in the Roman senate, 139 BC-AD 14* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), *passim*.

³¹ Guy Bradley, *Ancient Umbria. State, Culture and Identity in Central Italy from the Iron Age to Augustan Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

3rd centuries, the 1st century Augustan division into regions highly affected modern scholarly views. The devised ethnic names of the 1st century created a false view of static and cohesive entities. Most of the Greek-Roman authors wrote about the Marsi in this period, developing stereotypes that were attached to previous times. By the 1st century, the Marsic *ethos* was embedded in the Roman political arena, which is the main issue in order to study the Central Apennine ethnic unity that Romans tagged as Marsi.³²

There is almost no general work about Marsi in the English language. The bulk of the available modern literature about the Marsi is in Italian. The few English written productions are a short chapter, *The Marsi*, written by Letta in *The People of Ancient Italy* volume³³ and the renowned work of Emma Dench about Greco-Roman perspective of Italic peoples³⁴ where the Marsi were essential but only secondary actors beneath Samnite preeminence. We cannot forget the last contributions of Tesse D. Stek,³⁵ who argues in his works for an increasing Roman influence through the colony of Alba Fucens in the Marsic territory. Consequently, this thesis will provide an English language reference work for academic research on the Marsic people.

³²Gary D. Farney, *Ethnic Identity and Aristocratic Competition in Republican Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). The book analyses the use of Etruscan and Sabine identity to publicize elite families in the Roman political arena. However, if they were not, we will not be able to discuss those ethnic names either.

³³ Letta, "The Marsi."

³⁴ Dench, *From Barbarians*.

³⁵ Tesse D. Stek *Cult Places and Cultural Change in Republican Italy: A Contextual Approach to Religious Aspects of Rural Society after the Roman Conquest* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009). Tesse D. Stek "Early Roman colonization beyond the Romanizing agro-town: village patterns of settlement and highland exploitation in Central Italy," in, B. Düring & T.D. Stek, *The Archaeology of Imperial Landscapes* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2018), 145-172.

Theoretical Framework

When discussing ancient identities, the problems of applying presentistic views arise. In order to overcome historical bias a successful approach is essential. That includes developing a clear definition for the cultural changes of the societies we are dealing with. This thesis will admit the concept of cultural exchange process as a valid alternative paradigm for the self-Romanization or emulation model used to approach the Marsi. As we are dealing with cultural questions about an ethnic group, ethnicity should be explained too.

The cultural exchange process is a framework for understanding identities and culture development as an iterative process of exchange between different agents continuously creating something new. It is a multi-dimensional process that understands a society as a system where all agents participate in the cultural transformation. The cultural behaviors emerging from it should be understood in its local and global context. Regarding group identities, it is perfectly summarized in the following words by Woolf “the dynamic creation of new cultural identities is the most frequent outcome of the interaction between Roman and Native cultures.”³⁶

The use of this concept derives from the failure of other paradigms to explain the Roman acculturation process properly. Each proposed framework poses miscellaneous challenges, but due to its strong neutrality and as a valid modern concept to explain the cultural interaction, this thesis will apply the cultural exchange model depicted above.

³⁶ Greg Woolf, *op.cit.* (1997), 339- 350.

The first word used by scholars to define the acculturation process was “Romanization.” The “Romanization” is a paradigm³⁷ to explain the cultural convergence that happened in the Roman World. According to this late 19th- early 20th century idea, the Roman Empire integrated and acculturated the conquered people, suggesting a top-bottom hierarchical acculturation. This concept had its roots in the British Colonial epistemology. The interpretation of a uniform Roman society became the perfect model to justify the creation of a uniform British Empire. Due to the colonialist and anachronistic scope of the model, and its deterministic outcome, according to which everything ended up being culturally Roman, alternative models have been proposed, namely from a postcolonial angle.

The first responses against the unsatisfactory model of Romanization were the ones coined by the French school, “resistance”³⁸ (*résistance*) and the “self-Romanization”³⁹ (*autoromanizzazione*) proposed by the Italian school. The idea of resistance reverts the “Romanization” model idealizing Natives, and claiming an ability to hold previous cultural behaviors. Likewise, the “self-Romanization” concept is an inversion of the Haverfield’s model. There is a slight shift in the agency on the “Romanization” from Romans to Native elites, but all of it has an irremediable ending of cultural convergence led by the elites. The concept of “self-Romanization” remains alive in the Italian atmosphere⁴⁰, and it has been

³⁷ Francis Haverfield, *The Romanization of Great Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1915).

³⁸ Marcel Bénabou, *La résistance africaine à la romanisation* (Paris: Maspero, 1976).

³⁹ Paul Zanker(ed.) *Hellenismus in Mittelitalien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1976).

⁴⁰ Nicola Terranato, “The Romanization of Italy: Global Acculturation or Cultural Bricolage?,” in *TRAC 97: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference*, ed. C. Forcey, J. Hawthorne, & Witcher, (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1998), 20-27.

once and again applied to approach Marsic studies. That is why it is so necessary to apply a new framework to Marsic studies from a different paradigm.

Those two nativist models did not suffice for Anglophone scholarship, and the discussion against the deterministic model of “Romanization” in the Anglophone world has been an ongoing topic since the seminal work of Millet.⁴¹ Millet reworks the classical “Romanization” model, and places the motion of change in the hands of natives. He argues a “native-led emulation” of *Romanitas* to profit from the Roman Empire. This work prompted a still-lasting and fructiferous debate that led to the rebuke of the use of the “Romanization” model. Many other terms have been suggested instead. Mattingly⁴² placed the idea of the “Discrepant Experience.” According to this theory, each individual, characterized by its own worldview, experienced Roman imperialism differently. Mattingly targets non-elites, but even though he offers some of those experiences through the material record, it is hard to apply it on the field. Another term is “Creolization,” proposed by Jane Webster, drawing on Caribbean and American archeology. Creolization is a process in which a variety of indigenous traits are synchronized with a culture that initially dominates the native one. Ultimately, both create a sort of a hybrid culture.⁴³ Despite the widespread use of some of these approaches, there has not been a model that has got a consensus of the scholars. All of the models contain their own flaws.

⁴¹ Martin Millett, *The Romanization of Britain. An essay in archaeological interpretation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁴² David. J. Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

⁴³ Jane Webster “Creolizing the Roman Provinces,” *AJA*, 105 (2001), 209-25.

According to John Versluys, most of the so-called British postcolonial critics are anti-colonial approaches. They are reactive against “Romanization,”⁴⁴ but despite this fact, he admits the usefulness of its critique so that he aims to incorporate the postcolonial criticism with previous 20th century approaches. Versluys accepts the impossibility to reconstruct the past separated from our present, but historical questions should be addressed from an archeological viewpoint as well. Therefore, the search for a proper theoretical angle to explain the cultural transformation, where global and local context could be properly incorporated is needed.⁴⁵ In fact, the search for the right paradigm offered rewarding ideas such as the ones offered by Woolf. He has pointed out the necessity to go beyond the dichotomy of natives versus Romans,⁴⁶ acknowledging that it is something almost impossible, because both terms were relative categories to the extent that depending on the context one could *become Roman*.⁴⁷ This does not mean the differences between Provincials, Italians or properly Romans did not matter, but we are tackling fluid and permeable cultural identities influenced by Roman power. Even though it is an important force, Roman power is not the only agent of this transformation,⁴⁸ and so the framework of the cultural exchange model, where all the agents are included, bears out as the most valid paradigm.

⁴⁴ Miguel J. Versluys, “Understanding objects in motion. An archaeological dialogue on Romanization,” *Archaeological Dialogues* 21, 1 (2014), 1–20.

⁴⁵ Ibid. “Roman visual material culture as globalising koine” in Martin Pitts & Miguel J. Versluys (Ed.), *Globalisation and the Roman world. World history, connectivity and material culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 141-174.

⁴⁶ Greg Woolf, “Beyond Romans and Natives,” *World Archaeology*, 28, 3 (1997), 339- 350.

⁴⁷ Ibid. *Becoming Roman: The origins of Provincial civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁴⁸ Ibid, “The Roman Cultural Revolution,” in Italy and the West. Comparative issues in Romanization, ed. Simon Keay & Nicola Terranato (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 173-186. Woolf coined the term Roman Cultural Revolution.

The second main theoretical issue is to define what ethnicity is. This concept encompasses all the phenomena associated with an identification with an ethnic group, especially the ways in which individuals interplay with ethnic groups, or interaction among the groups themselves. In order to create an ethnic group, one needs to possess a minimum of similarities: geographical proximity, customs, ancestry, origins or kinship. On the basis of those traits, the group pertinence is stressed by themselves or by others whom they co-exist. Finally, the perception of those cultural characteristics that are rooted in ongoing daily practice and historical experience allows an individual to self-conceptualize himself as pertaining to a broader group in opposition to others.⁴⁹

Ethnic studies have been subject to presentism pressures since the 18th century. The creation of nation-states has obscured the way to approach ethnic entities. Against colonialist ideas that took for granted a natural being, or the existentialist nature of ethnic groups, ethnicity is clearly a cultural construct not a racial one. We have to bear in mind that an ethnic category is not a uniform political level that is born, lives and dies as a single exact same coherent unit. Barth⁵⁰ posed that ethnic identity is not more than a situational creation, where border and belonging are negotiated. This belonging is enhanced or downplayed whenever the context requires it.⁵¹ Yet, belonging to the group is not so optional, it requires some basic elements. The necessary roots can only be stretched until a certain point, because it is rooted in a previously existing economic and social context.⁵²

⁴⁹ Sian Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing Identities in the Past and Present* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 13. The definition given by Jones of Ethnicity, ethnic group and ethnic identity is followed.

⁵⁰ Fredrik Barth, "Introduction," in *Ethnic groups and boundaries: the social organization of culture difference*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1969), 9-38.

⁵¹ Orlando Patterson, "Context and Choice in Ethnic Allegiance: a Theoretical Framework and Caribbean Case Study" in *Ethnicity: Theory and experience*, ed. Nathan Gazer & Daniel P. Moynihan (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1975), 305-349.

⁵² G. Carter Bentley "Ethnicity and practice" *Comp. Stud. Soc. Hist.* 29, 1 (Jan. 1987), 24-55.

Considering all of the above, ethnicity is clearly a malleable concept that can be altered to please material or political goals, but it must be grounded in an already existing reality. Ethnic identity involves a sense of belonging by individuals with similar characteristics such as tradition, cultural heritage, rituals, language, etc. These cultural traits are chosen to stress similarities or differences so as to confront the “other.” Therefore, ethnic belonging is mostly stressed whenever the political circumstances require it, and some characteristics could be stressed or downplayed depending on the needs of each context.

On this basis, one of the main question will be to analyze the cultural identity of people living in Marsic areas along with analyzing how social networks and identity were negotiated in light of Roman involvement, which played a significant role in the configuration of a Marsic identity.

To prove my thesis, the divisions of the chapters of my work are as it follows: **Chapter one: Introduction**, presents the theoretical framework and employed methodology to carry out the study. **Chapter two, Locating the Marsi**, discusses the ancient sources and archeological evidence for the Marsic people. **Chapter three, The Material Culture of Marsica**, considers all aspects of “Marsic” culture with regards to political organization, religion and gender systems. **Chapter four, Marsi over Roman Sway**, investigates the Roman-Marsic relations from the 4th century to Augustan time (1st century), while **chapter five, The Settlement Pattern in Marsica: From *ocres-necropolis* to the *municipia***, focuses on the settlement pattern evolution from the late Bronze/Iron Age until Roman municipalization. Finally, **Conclusion, A New view for the**

Marsi, briefly outlines the new directions the study has taken overall in the last years, and where the need to further study the subject lays.

This thesis blended published archaeological data and literary sources. It also contains anthropological theory as well as ethnographic studies of the modern and ancient world. Unfortunately, I did not have the chance to conduct any field investigation. Therefore, this will be a historiographical research updating the state of the question about the Marsi to English and modern bibliography in general.

CHAPTER TWO: LOCATING THE MARSI

It is a difficult challenge to confirm a connection of ethnic identity between communities living in the area defined by the Romans as Marsica with people presented as Marsians in the ancient sources.⁵³ To start, in the late 1st - early 1st century AD Strabo and Pliny drew a picture of a clear-cut Marsica in the middle of the Italian peninsula, but this regional definition did not necessarily exist in previous centuries. Additionally, there are no existing sources in which the Marsi are the focus of the narration. Most of the references are brief allusions to them in the context of broader discussions. Lastly, when writing those accounts, the authors were embedded in a world where meanings of identities shifted continuously. Considering all available sources that give definitions of Marsi are by outsiders, what can those depictions tell us about the emic definition of the Marsi themselves? The following chapter attempts to explain who the Marsi were beyond these mentions in the Latin literature.

2.1 Ethnogenesis within mythology: a situational construct

The next section attempts to look into classical literary sources, and if possible, to find out the origin of the Marsic people. It is important to note that most of the references about Marsi are from cultural outsiders and anachronistic.

The first literary mentions of the Marsi derive from Greek authors. Referring to 225, but writing around the first quarter of the 2nd century, Polybius mentioned the Marsi

⁵³ Isayev, *Inside Ancient Lucania*, 9.

as another Central Italian ethnic group [Fig. 1], along with the Marrucini, Frentani and Vestini.⁵⁴ Marsi appeared in the obscure poem, *Alessandra*, written by Lycophron around the mid-3rd century. The poem connects the Marsi with the lake of the Marsi, Phorcus.⁵⁵ Both are

Figure 1. Map of Italy circa 300. Salmon, Samnites, 25.

insignificant references of the name Marsi inserted in a greater narrative, not rendering much inside about it. Whereas the Lycophron poem connects the Marsian territory with Odyssey genealogies (or Trojan myth), and hence with Capua,⁵⁶ the Polybius text should be understood in the light of the Roman expansion. Because, even though Polybius was Greek in origin, he wrote his work in Rome. This demonstrates how the Roman expansion process led to a growing Roman desire to better understand local groups of the Central Apennines. In consequence, Marsians are better known by the 2nd century in the Roman society.

Unfortunately, those first and scarce references do not shed much light into the boundaries and origins of Central Apennine people. Any attempt to identify Marsic origins

⁵⁴ Pol. 2.24.12: Μαρσῶν δὲ καὶ Μαρρουκίων καὶ Φερεντάνων, ἔτι δ' Οὐεστίνων πεζοὶ

⁵⁵ Lyc. 1275: λίμνης τε Φόρκης Μαρσιωνίδος (Marsionid lake of Phorce). It is a huge discussion regarding the chronology of Lycophron. I will follow the 270-240 proposed by Arnaldo Momigliano, "The Locrian Maidens and the date of Lycophron's *Alexandra*," *The Journal of Roman studies*, 39. 1-2, (January 1945), 49-53.

⁵⁶ Letta, "I legami tra i popoli italici nelle 'Origines' di Catone tra consapevolezza etnica e ideologia," in *'Patria diversis gentibus una'? Unità politica e identità etniche nell'Italia antica*, (Civildale del Friuli, Fondazione Canussio, 20-22 settembre 2007), ed. G. Urso (Pisa, ETS 2008), 171-195

and boundaries during 4th- 3rd centuries would be a modern construction. In 1972, Letta sought to find the onset of Marsi;⁵⁷ he embraced imperial stereotypes espoused by classical authors. On this account, Letta proposed that the Marsi were a semi-nomadic race because of the mobility required to exploit lands for pastoralism, which is the pastoral archetype. In addition to this misconception, the Marsi never existed as a political cohesive entity. Modern literature shows that local identities have been more significant than ethnic affiliation, regardless of how permeable ethnic grouping was during the 1st millennium.⁵⁸ However, Roman hegemony, particularly after the Second Punic War, decisively shaped Central Italic identities, making them less fluid and more focused geographically.⁵⁹ As a result, one wonders if there is any reality behind those ethnic groups before Roman involvement or instead, if those are a Roman invention. If real, one main issue would be to acquire an accurate breadth of Roman involvement in the redefinition of Italic groups.

Regarding Marsian origins stories, some derive directly from Roman authors. Others have been created by modern scholars, but those theories have always been backed up by literary and archeological evidences. On the whole, two classical literary traditions can be distinguished

Figure 2 CN. GEL. Crawford,
Roman Republican Coinage
(Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1974):
265.

from the Republican Period.⁶⁰ The oldest one stems from the work *Origines* of Cato the Elder, the famous Roman senator, around the first half of the 2nd century. Ganeus Gellius

⁵⁷ Letta, *I Marsi*, 43-86, sp. 48-52; 65-76.

⁵⁸ Scopacasa, *Ancient Samnium*, *passim*.

⁵⁹ Michael P. Fronda, *Between Rome and Carthage: Southern Italy during the Second Punic War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁶⁰ Fest. L89.

represents the second literary tradition in the second half of the same century [Fig. 2].⁶¹ To be more precise, none of these two accounts survived on their own and they are known thanks to latter quote attachments. Priscian, a 6th century AD grammarian, quoted Cato.⁶² According to him, Cato stated that the Marrucian name came after the Marsians, creating a link between both *ethne*. Gellius has been quoted more often, particularly in the work of Pliny and Solinus.⁶³ Both offered divergent versions. Pliny states that Marsays, a Lydian leader,⁶⁴ founded the first city of the Marsi, Archippe. Solinus follows a similar history, but he adds that the city of Archippe was submerged by the Fucino Lake.⁶⁵ Solinus also narrates that Marsi are the offspring of the king Iasone, a son of Medea and a grandson of Aeeta. Aeeta, a Greek Goddess, was the mother of Circe, Angitia and Medea. While singing sorcery songs, Circe established the *Circeios*, and Angitia set her home in the bank of the Fucino lake practicing the science of healing people.

Aside from the statement that Marrucini derived from the Marsi, we cannot glean much more information from Cato with regards to Marsian origins. In general, Letta argues that Cato in his work *Origenes* elaborated a framework to explain that the origin of all the Italian political groups, including cities and ethnic groups alike, was Italy.⁶⁶ When putting together Marsi and Marrucini, Cato invented the story to support his ideological angle,

⁶¹ There are three different Gellius in the sources, and it is not a hundred per cent sure that the traditions belongs to the *triumviri monetalis*. Tim Cornell, *The Fragments of Roman historians Vol. 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 252-3.

⁶² Prisc. *Inst.* 53: *Marsus hostem occidit prius quam Paelignus, propterea Marrucini uocantur, de Marso detorsum nomine.*

⁶³ Sol.1.6 *ut Gellius tradidi*; Sol.1.27. *C. Coelius [...]* dicit. *C. Coellis* has been identified as C. Gellius; Pliny. *NH.* 3. 108 *Gellianus auctor est*

⁶⁴ Plin. *NH.* 3.108: *lacu Fucino haustum Marsorum oppidum Archippe, conditum a Marsya duce Lydorum*

⁶⁵ Sol. 2.6.: *Archippen a Marsya rege Lydorum, quod hiatu terrae haustum dissolutum est in lacum Fucinum*

⁶⁶ Cesare Letta. "I legami tra i popoli Italici nelle *Origenes* di Catone tra consapevolezza etnica e ideologica," in , *'Patria diversis gentibus una'? Unità politica e identità etniche nell'Italia antica*, ed G. Urso (Pisa: Canussio, 2008), 171-195.

coherently manipulating the past, practicing the so-called antiquary invention. Cato was writing after the Second Punic War, when Rome was expanding to the East. In his works, he built an Italo-Roman unity grounded on Italic *fides* and *mores*, where he was highlighting the Italic austerity and their warrior-like nature.⁶⁷ To support his position, Cato omitted any Greek origin tradition to Italian people, connecting all these groups with the Sabina. However, he kept the Trojan myth out, which was not synonymous for being Greek.⁶⁸ Cato proposed that the first people of Italy, the *Aborigenes*, came from the Sabina. In the work of Cato, the Sabines became ancestors of most of the groups in Italy, hence, all the Italian groups could benefit from the positive features attached to the Sabines, which in the Catonian framework were the most faithful and austere people in Italy.⁶⁹ The Marsi, nevertheless, did not have any direct quotation in the *Origines* in regards to a Sabine origin, but according to Letta there is a possibility that Marsi descended from the Sabines.⁷⁰

In a similar trend, the Hernici descended from the Marsi according to Festus.⁷¹ This is not the only time when ancient sources connect Marsi and Hernici.⁷² Both testimonies are likely to be an antiquarian invention as well. Nonetheless, modern historiography tends to relate the Marsi with the *Ver Sacrum* on account of those stories. Besides, the similarity between the name of Marsi and the God Mars has led to strengthen the connection of Marsi

⁶⁷Cesare Letta, “L’ «Italia dei mores romani» nelle Origines di Catone,” *Athenaeum* 72, 3-30, (1984): 416-439.

⁶⁸Letta, “I legami tra I popoli.” 191. Troya symbolized an opposition against Greeks.

⁶⁹Farney, *Ethnic Identity*, 250-60. Sabines positive features mid-2nd century onwards, before they had bad propaganda

⁷⁰Letta, *I Marsi*, 26: The homonym city of Marruvium in Sabina (Dio. Hal. 1.14.4). *Ibid.* “L’ «Italia dei mores romani»,” 422.

⁷¹ Fest., 89 L: *Hernici dicti a saxis, quae Marsi herna dicunt*. Discussion in Letta, *I marsi*, 48.

⁷² School. Verg. Veron. Aen.VII.684: *Audiendum est quod sic etiam Marsi lingua sua... hernas vocant...Hernica...Hernici sunt. Anagniam habitant Marsirum coloni. Hernica ergo quasi Marsica*. Also see. Letta, *I Marsi*, 48.

towards the sacred spring stories.⁷³ The sacred springs or *Ver Sacrum* were religious practices of ancient Italian people. In a time of hardship, all the offspring born in that year were dedicated to a God, usually to Mars. Once old enough, a totemic animal will lead them, establishing in a new place and giving birth to a new race or ethnic group. For example, Grossi, drawing on 6th century archeological evidence, asserts that an “Umbro-Sabelic” migration to the Fucino area caused the origin of the Marsi.⁷⁴ Conversely, Devoto states that the Marsi originated from a *Ver Sacrum* migration but aside from the Sabines.⁷⁵ However, the historical value of the sacred springs is now disputed. Whereas some scholars notice the preservation of ancient population movements in those stories, others argue that they are a contemporary reconstruction of the past in order to suit the present political situation by the use of mythological tools.⁷⁶ This thesis inclines towards this last idea.

Regardless of their veracity, what is rare in those accounts is that they do not fit the Greco-pattern of storytelling. Instead, those stories follow an old Italic native tradition.⁷⁷ Although accounted for by Greco-Roman sources, they represent “local self-definitions as well as playing their part within Greek and Roman perspectives.”⁷⁸ As they are present definitions of the past suiting those actual needs over any historical reality⁷⁹ these passages cannot tell much about the real onset of Marsi.

In the case of the stories attached to Gellius we cannot know much in regards to the Marsian origins neither. Letta argues that in the 2nd half of the 2nd century, Gellius

⁷³ Letta, *I Marsi*, 26.

⁷⁴ Giuseppe Grossi, *Il territorio del Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo dell'antichità* (Civitella: Alfedena, 1988), 65-70 & 123-6.

⁷⁵ Giacomo Devoto, *Gli Antichi Italici* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1969), 198-200.

⁷⁶ Massimiliano di Fazio “Religions of Ancient Italy” in *The Peoples*, 153.

⁷⁷ Dench, *From Barbarians*, 185-92.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 193-7.

synthesized all available traditions concerning Marsic origins. That is how he justifies the divergent accounts preserved in Solinus and Pliny, each one belonging to a different period and cultural context,⁸⁰ but they do not offer any grounds for possible further studies in this direction.

The accounts of Cato and Gellius follow a similar pattern. The Greekness of the stories is not clear and they acquire Trojan features instead. As far as the quotes that have survived in his ethnographic work, the Marsi received from Gellius an eponymous founder, Marsayas. The Lydian king founded the city of Archippre, the first city of the Marsi, which was engulfed by the lake Fucino.

Letta and Grossi noted a sustained local oral history in the preservation of the incident of the flooded city of Archippre,⁸¹ archeologically attested in the village of Ortuchio, which was abandoned after the Fucino swallowed it around the turn of the millennium.⁸² Both follow Grifoni and Radmilli's suggestion that argues in favor of an uninterrupted oral tradition of the same cultural group from the Bronze Ages to Roman times. Radmilli and Grifoni drew the theory of the cultural continuation due to the high frequency of the use of the caves, such as Grotta Maritza from the Neolithic until Hellenistic period.⁸³ However, to acknowledge the practices as pertaining to the same cultural group is highly unlikely due to the high mobility of the period.⁸⁴ That high

⁸⁰ Letta, *I Marsi*, 57.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, *I Marsi*, 42. Letta. "The Marsi," 509-10.

⁸² Giuseppe Grossi, "Forse la saga adombra la sorte del grande villaggio eneolitico di Ortuchio," in *Storia de Ortuchio I*, ed. U.Irti et al. (Rome: Universita degli Studi dell' Aquila 1985), 57-9.

⁸³ Renata Gifroni, & Antonio M. Radmilli, "La Grotta Maritza e il Fucino prima dell'età romana," *R.Sc.Pr.*, 19 (1964): 1-75.

⁸⁴ Isayev, *Migration*, 192.

mobility, especially after the 4th-3rd centuries, was responsible for the different Italian groups to create a notion of the ethnic entities as ancestral groups.

Although Sisanni does not support the cultural continuation at all, he notes the historical value of the story of the floated city. Archippre appears again in Virgil's *Aeneid*. On this occasion, Archippre is the king who commands Umbro, the valiant warrior-priest of the Marruvians. Umbro was able to dominate the serpents' art that confers the ability to make serpents sleep and cure their bites. After his death the *dux and sacerdos* rested near the Fucino lake in the grave of Angitia.⁸⁵ The name of the hero, Umbro, suggests a clear connection between Umbrians and Marsians to Sisanni. A name that correlates with the Etruscan river named Ombrone. Linking this story with the Gellius accounts, Sisani points out a Lydian heritage (Marsayas, Circe), matching the Marsi and the Umbri within an Etruscan cultural domination influence.⁸⁶

The Marsic ethnogeny stories contain mythological features, nevertheless, there is nothing exceptional about it. The Greek-Roman accounts, even the sacred spring stories, placed ethnic groups into the mythological narration to justify their existence. Grounded in mythology, each *ethos* was located in regards to others with their particularities and similitudes, which were stressed whenever needed.⁸⁷ All the stories were obviously invented to explain the present, shaped from a desired ideological angle to create claims of kinship and connections. Marsic ethnogeny stories follow the same path. In the case of the

⁸⁵ Verg. *Aen.* 7.750-755; Serv. *Aen.* 7.750

⁸⁶ Simone Sisani, "Gli Umbri:prospettiva storica," in *Entre archéologie et histoire: dialogues sur divers peuples de l'Italie préromaine*, ed. M.Abersson, M.C.Biella, M. DI Fazio & M. Wulschleger (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 197 ff. Against Fabio Stok, "Onomastica/ Toponomastica Virgiliana," in *L'onomatica dell'Italia Antica*, ed. Paolo Poccetti (Rome: École française2009), 554-5.

⁸⁷ Dench, *From Barbarians*, 190-5.

Marsi, Marsayas, Medea, Circe and Angitia are the main mythological features to sustain their origins. Mythology conveys meaning for Roman, Hellenic or Native audiences. In this case, we are dealing solely with Roman texts. Therefore, Marsians are placed in Roman eyes associated with Medea, Circe, Angitia or Marsayas conferring certain features. However, the Natives also took advantage of it. The elites exploited it in the Roman political arena (chapter 2.3.1-2), and common people benefited with it too (chapter 2.3.3). This work does not neglect the existence of activities such as snake-charming or witchcraft, that really were going on in Ancient Marsica, but the real meaning in a Roman setting or in Marsica were likely not much alike.⁸⁸

The appearance of the very well-known mythological figures such as Medea and Circe, for example, allows people to understand that Marsians were familiar with both supernatural powers and the abilities of sorcery and witchcraft. Angitia is closely related with snake charming as well as with healing powers and Marsayas confers a Lydian and hence an augural identity.⁸⁹ Similarly, Marsayas links Marsic people with the god *Apolo*, who was worshipped in the Fucino area at least by the 3rd and 2nd century.⁹⁰ The fact that there is epigraphical evidence seems to nourish the link between the existing mythology and ritual practices, even though these parallels need to be done very cautiously.

It is important to bear in mind that each classical author chooses the pieces to suit their own agenda, merging different traditions and constructing new views concerning the spring of the Marsi. Therefore, authors' attitudes towards the genesis stories are an

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁸⁹ Cic. *De Div.* 1.132: non habeo denique nauci Marsum augurem

⁹⁰ Michael H. Crawford, *Imagines Italicae: a corpus of Italic inscriptions* (London: Institute of Classical Studies University of London, 2011), 333.

intentional recreation of their own time and agency, through mythology suiting the present with the past. Although as we have seen, stories are invented if they want to be effective to convey meaning, they should be believed or accepted up to a point. That is why these narratives were grounded in the Hellenistic mythology, which was a familiar account for everyone.

Ethnogeny stories do not illuminate the origins of Marsic people. The literary evidence cannot help to clarify the onset of Marsi, because none of the writing was contemporaneous. They bring to light the present situation under the needs of each authors' present, their ideologies and momentaneous relations of political entities, not much more. The emergence of the Marsi cannot be seen as originating from a certain original ethnic point as a people migrating and creating new groups.⁹¹ All the narrations that we have dealt with are situational constructions based upon Greek-Roman mythology to suit the needs of each author to locate the Marsians in the wider Roman and Mediterranean World.

2.2 Native Categories

This section deals with the self-allusions from people who lived in the area known as Marsica during the Imperial period. The inscriptions found in the area, without more evidence than their localization, have been automatically assumed to pertain to the Marsi.⁹² Although there is an inscription bearing *Mar tses*, we cannot really speak about a clear-cut and consistent political group in the area. We have to bear in mind that people's belonging to a community has been fluid.

⁹¹ Bourdin, *Les peuples de l'Italia préromaine*, 137.

⁹² Bourdin, *Les peuples de l'Italia préromaine*, 56: Many times they are directly attached to Marsi due to geographical scope.

Perceptions about Marsi have been solely focused on the view of others. If it ever existed, no Marsic literature has been retrieved. Few surviving evidences, epigraphy and coinage, allude to the self-conscious identity of the groups in the region, but the attached Greek-Roman ethnic category and the unique self-conscious indigenous reference seem to be consistent. At the time Lycophron was writing about the Μαρσιωνίδος (Marsionidos),⁹³ there is a contemporaneous inscription, which bears *Mar tses* [Fig. 3] known as Caso Cantavious inscription.

Figure 3 Caso Cantavio inscription. Campanelli, *Il tesoro*, 145.

The above mentioned inscription written in a rudimentary Latin and now gone is the metallic part of a belt, which was found in 1877 after the drainage of the Fucino lake. On the belt, a Marsic general offers (Caso Cantovio/s Aprufclano) on behalf (*pro l(ectio)nibus*) of his Marsic (*Mar/tses*) legions a victory to *Actia* (Angitia). It has been hypothesized that *Mars tses* were fighting alongside Romans (*socieque*). Therefore, there has been much discussion concerning the exact place of Casantonio (*Casontoni*). Peruzzi argued that it was in Lucania,⁹⁴ but La Regina presented an alternative solution locating the place on the battle of Sentinum.⁹⁵ This discussion lies in the difficulty to translate *apur finen calicom*, which could be *Italicom*⁹⁶ as well as *Gallicom*.⁹⁷ Wherever the battle was, the main

⁹³ Lyc. 1275 Φόρκης (Forkus)

⁹⁴ E. Peruzzi, "Testi latini arcaici dei Marsi," *Maia* 14 (1962): 117-140

⁹⁵ La Regina, "I Sanniti," 399-400.

⁹⁶ Crawford, *Imagines*, 331.

⁹⁷ La Regina, "I Sanniti," 399-400.

question is that this early 3rd century Latin inscription has been seen in the light of an early incorporation of the Marsi within the Roman World. Marsi were still independent and had their own culture,⁹⁸ but now they were permanent *socii* of Romans. Against the perspective of an early incorporation new insights will be considered in the 4th chapter.

Another striking question regarding the epigraphic evidence of Marsica is that except for one written in the Marsic language, all the epigraphical body, which began to appear in the 3rd century, was in Latin.⁹⁹ The only inscription in Marsic language is a late 2nd century religious offer to the *Di Novensides* belonging to the territory of Marruvium,¹⁰⁰ which should be analyzed as part of a conscious cultural revival of Marsian identity previous to the Social War.¹⁰¹ This theory raised by Letta, which fits too perfectly in his lineal account of Marsian history, has been contested. Local languages was preferred rather than Latin in many religious dedications in Etruria or Picenum. The use of the vernacular language could be the norm in the *Di Novensides* offering.¹⁰²

The employment of Latin and its “rustic” terminology in Marsica¹⁰³ has been considered as a clear indication of Roman cultural assimilation of the Marsian elites, who were keen to use Latin.¹⁰⁴ Conversely, Stek connects most of the inscription to the Latin colony of Alba Fucens.¹⁰⁵ Irrespective of Stek’s theory, there are other places where the

⁹⁸ Devoto, *Gli Antichi*, 110.

⁹⁹ Letta “Antinum,” 72. Antinum table used to be regarded as to be in Marsic language.

¹⁰⁰ Crawford, *Imagines*, 333

¹⁰¹ Letta, “I marsi dal iii sec. a.c. all’alto impero nelle iscrizioni della collezione graziani di alvito” in *Le epigrafi della Valle di Comino*, Atti del primo convegno epigrafico cominese, ed. H. Solino (Abbazia di Casamari, 2005), 5.

¹⁰² Stek, *Cult Places*, 168. Novensides seems to be a Roman God.

¹⁰³ Devoto, *Gli Antichi*, 131.

¹⁰⁴ Stek, *Cult places*, 158-68. Stek argues that most epigraphy was linked to Alba Fucens, hence no marsic epigraphy could be found. On the contrary, Letta, *I marsi* and “The marsi,” 514 states an auto-Romanization.

¹⁰⁵ See 3.1

use of the Latin does not mean the adoption of Roman culture. The case of Puglia is elucidating. Katherine Lomas has argued that the use of Latin did not mean an acculturation of the elite to a Roman style *per se*. Instead, Latin was a better instrument to communicate in the larger Mediterranean world, functioning as a globalization force.¹⁰⁶ The use of one language or another is not confined as a marker of an ethnic identity; the receptors and the purpose of the script should be considered suggesting other forms of social affiliations such as elite status or membership to a certain social group. There has not been found any epigraphy near the Fucino shore prior to the 3rd century so that the lack of a previous epigraphical tradition can explain the use of Latin.¹⁰⁷

Despite the absence of early epigraphy, La Regina encompasses the Marsi as pertaining to a Sabine cultural sphere¹⁰⁸ in the first half of the 1st millennium. Sabines inhabited the whole Centro-Italian area. The basis of Regina's argumentations are three mid-5th century funerary slabs or *stelai* found in Penna Sant'Andrea in the latter Picenum area that bear the word *safin-*. The *stelai* seem to be funerary monuments to commemorate the deeds of those who were buried there.¹⁰⁹ With a similar function in the nearby area of Sant'Omero, there is another epigraphical group chronologically similar bearing the word *púpún-*. Regina states that these two words trespass local character,¹¹⁰ negotiating boundaries between two communities with the *safin-* community going down until South Italy. *Púpún* are the community of Picentes and *safin-* are the community of Sabines and

¹⁰⁶ Kathryn Lomas, "Language and identity in ancient Italy: responses to Roman conquest," in *Creating Ethnicities and identities in the Roman World*, ed. K. Lomas, A. Gardner, & E. Herring (London, Institute of Classical studies, 2013), 71-92.

¹⁰⁷ Michel Aberson & Rudolf Wachter, "Ombriens, Sabins, Picensiens, peuples sabelliens des Abruzzes in *Entre archéologie et histoire*, 194.

¹⁰⁸ La Regina, "I Saniti," *passim*.

¹⁰⁹ Scopacasa, *Ancient Samnium*, 34.

¹¹⁰ See. Chapter 3.1 The word Nerf and *touta* refer more likely to the local sphere rather than a bigger scope.

Samnites.¹¹¹ Later, these two communities were separated by different names in the historical accounts.¹¹² This assertion relies on the idea of the validity of the existence of sacred springs stories. As we have seen in the previous section, sacred springs answer to a momentaneous need to stress closeness or distance, and they are not an indication of real events. Any use of them to be useless to recreate the historical past.

Apart from epigraphy the other direct self-representation that has survived up until our days are the engraved names in the coinage of Social War.¹¹³ Coinage is a recurrent finding into the archeological record of the Fucino area, but it seems none of the recovered coins were minted there. Most were coinages come from other regions. During the Social War a banner appeared in which most Marsi were under: *Italia* in Latin and *Viteliu* in Oscan. The label encompassed a broader common purpose, which the ones inside chose to stress their geographical similitude and everything it meant to be an Italian at the time, referring to people.¹¹⁴ The concept of *Italia* is a very vexed area from which we cannot get much clear information. What is clear is that it is a concept that groups the insurgents against Rome. However, the inscriptions in the coinage evolved in the latter stage of the war from *Vitelu* to the *safin*- label. By this time the Marsi were no longer in war against Rome.¹¹⁵

Up until now, the recovered material does not support the existence of any communal identity in terms of ethnic belonging. As almost all works involving Centro-

¹¹¹ La Regina, "I Saniti," 131-33.

¹¹² Dench, *From Barbarians*, 204-205.

¹¹³ For more information on the whole coinage body of the Social War: Alberto Campana, *La monetazione degli insorti italici durante la Guerra Sociale (91-87 a.C.)*, (Soliera: Apparuti, 1987).

¹¹⁴ M. Pobjoy, "The first Italia," in *The Emergence of State Identities in Italy in the First Millennium BC*, ed. Herring and Lomas (London: Accordia, 2000), 191.

¹¹⁵ Maybe some warlords kept fighting against Rome under *Safin*- banner, but far from Marsic territory, which was under Roman control.

Italian identities, it raises the question of how significant was the ethnic belonging for local people.¹¹⁶ Paradoxically, the only time in which an ethnic name appears in a Native setting is in a particular circumstance: when Roman and Marsic people interplay. This strengthens my thought that the ethnic name only comes in place whenever dealing with Rome.

2.3 Cultural Stereotypes

The aim of the next section is to attempt a thorough examination of the Marsian archetypes in the classical sources. The idea of the Marsi as a unified entity comes from Roman sources, as well as other outsider writings that set descriptions of Marsic cultural identity. Although the first references refer to the 3rd century, detailed depictions of Marsic images took place from the Late Republic onwards. The ideological angle and political agenda of Roman and Greek authors has shaped the meaning of being a Marsi. It is essential to bear in mind that most of the available references to their cultural identity, albeit describing a time before the incorporation in the Roman world, have occurred once Marsi were Romans. As a consequence, the context of the writings should be understood under the Roman political arena,¹¹⁷ where ethnic identities deployed certain features to gain political advantage creating different stereotypes: fierce warriors or Snake-Charmers. These two are the most recurrent ones. However, the exact same activity could be exploited in a positive or negative way; thus, the Roman cultural constructions pose an ambiguous meaning.

¹¹⁶ Scopacasa, *Ancient Samnium*, 41.

¹¹⁷ Farney, *Ethnic Identity*, *passim*.

2.3.1 The Best Warriors

Marsi are recurrently represented as a fierce warrior from the 2nd century onwards in the classical texts. Unlike the rough and aggressive negative Samnite warlike stereotype, *montani atque agrestes*,¹¹⁸ positive traits of a brave warrior are consistent in the Marsic case.

Chronologically, the archetypes were produced in two main periods. Ennius and Cato are the first authors referring to Marsi as valorous warriors. Both mention Marsi in a military setting, but the references are too skewed to get any clear context. The second period belongs to the Late Republic or Imperial period. On this occasion, Virgil clearly states the ferocity of the Marsian warrior.¹¹⁹ Pliny calls the Central Apennines tribes *gentes fortissimam*¹²⁰ and Strabo emphasizes the braveness of those small but brave *ethne*, who lived in the mountains.¹²¹ In the 4th century, Vegetius¹²² copied the same stereotypes created by Republican and early Imperial authors.

Although the classical sources clearly enhance the warlike nature of the Marsi, it raises the question whether the image was consistent with reality. According to Tagliamonte,¹²³ mercenary activity was an essential economic activity in the Central Apennines since Archaic times. Material culture is very suggestive in this respect. The *Caso Cantavio* belt is a piece of evidence that suggests the Marsic tendency to war. The *lec(tion)ibus Mar tses* led by a warlord (Chapter 2.2 and 4.1) fought alongside Roman

¹¹⁸ Dench, *From Barbarians*, 127.

¹¹⁹ Virg. *Georg.* 2.167.

¹²⁰ Plin. *NH*, 3.106.

¹²¹ Strab. 5.4.2

¹²² Veg. *mil.* 3.

¹²³ Gianluca Tagliamonte *I figli di Marte : mobilità, mercenari e mercenariato italici in Magna Grecia e Sicilia* (Rome: L' Erma di Bretschneider, 1994). Although he has a groundbreaking insight he still relies too much in the shepherd idea of central Apennine societies.

legions. Another warlord was identified by Bourdin. This 5th century lord was buried in Carthage, and his name *PQY* could be related to the concurrent name *Pacuis* in the Central Apennines area.¹²⁴ Besides, all the coinage, mostly Greek, found in the votive offerings is a clear indicative of payments in exchange for mercenary services. Despite the evidence in hand, war and consequential mercenarism were endemic phenomena in the Ancient World.¹²⁵ The warrior-like idea was a willfully created image by the Roman sources to form an aura around what it was meant to be a Marsi and used in the Roman political game.

We can distinguish at least two phases in the Roman construction of the Marsian warlike nature. After the Punic Wars, Romans and Italians seem to have good understanding between themselves. In fact, Cato's *Origenes* was an attempt to legitimize and justify those good relations. In the atmosphere of the 2nd century cooperation, the Marsian allies were envisioned as brave soldiers but still separate from Romans. The second period corresponds to a very different historic circumstance. In the aftermath of the Social War, Marsian people needed to be incorporated within the Roman citizenship body. However, the incorporation took a long time and the stereotypes appeared in the period of Augustus reign. In this case, Marsians were still second-class Romans. To overcome the situation and to place themselves as a worthy candidate into the Roman politics, the Marsian elites did not avoid the Marsian identity. They emphasized it.

Imperial authors created an idea of a pristine barbarian to support the incorporation of the newly joined citizens, and the Marsians were within one of those pure people.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Bourdin, *Les peuples de l'Italia préromaine*, 567.

¹²⁵ Arthur M. Eckstein, *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate war and the Rise of Rome* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2006).

¹²⁶ Dench, *Romulus' asylum. Roman Identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2005), 63-9.

Roman ethnography usually characterized small farmers in the height stage of the civilization of human development.¹²⁷ Therefore, contrary to the Roman view of cities, being subject to corrupted vices, the mountainous Central Apennine environment was the perfect place to display the image of austere and brave soldiers. Moral excellence and the mountainous area¹²⁸ went hand in hand to represent the Marsians as rural rough but faithful farmers,¹²⁹ and in consequence the best soldiers that Rome could have.

The idea of the good warrior has evolved from two very different historical contexts, which are perfectly summarized and connected in the words of Appian, “No victory with or without the Marsians.”¹³⁰ Although savage and barbarous,¹³¹ Marsians have been faithful before the Social War, and they continued to be afterwards.

2.3.2 Snake-charming¹³²: Beyond Roman fantasy

When Roman sources are referring to Marsi, the Marsi snake-charmer is another recurrent image. Sometimes the above mentioned warrior idea merges together with the snake charming one. According to Virgil, the Marruvian warrior-priest, Umbro, had healing powers through snake venom. Umbro also mastered the cure of snake bites. Following this image of warrior-priest, Letta suggests that during the Social War, Marsians exploited both ideas, especially the sinister aspect of snake-charming, to cause havoc within the Roman troops.¹³³

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, *From Barbarians*, 113.

¹²⁸ Juv. 3.168-9.

¹²⁹ Dench, *From Barbarians*, 127. Environmental determinism, especially in Strab.5.4.2.

¹³⁰ App. *BC* 1.46. πρότερον οὔτε κατὰ Μάρσων οὔτε ἄνευ Μάρσων γενέσθαι θρίαμβον

¹³¹ Dion. Hal. 1.89.3 Even with barbarous influence Roma did not barbarize.

¹³² I consider snake-charming and snake-bite healing as the same activity.

¹³³ Letta, *I Marsi*, 99.

Letta's idea is a modern recreation of the two most repeated stereotypes in regards to Marsi, but it encapsulates perfectly how perceptions can be manipulated depending on the interests of the receptor and emisor. Scholars have stressed the outsider feature of the snake-charming activity in Rome.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, the aim of the section is to understand the difference between the image of snake-charmers in the Roman mind and in the indigenous territory of Marsica.

The oldest and only republican mention of snake-related activity stems indirectly from Gnaeus Gellius, mentioned in Solinus.¹³⁵ In this excerpt, the Marsi owed Angitia the ability to cure snake bites. The rest of the references belong to the Imperial period. According to Silius Italicus, Marsic chanting makes snakes fall asleep, and they use the same songs and herbs to heal the viper's bites.¹³⁶ The curing ability of snakes is once and again stressed in different references. Galen grants to the Marsi the knowledge to heal through the snake-venom.¹³⁷ For Pliny, the Marsian, like the African Psylli, were able to frighten the snakes using their bodies,¹³⁸ while following barbarian practices Aulus Gellius states that the Marsi retain the power over the snakes by practicing endogamy.¹³⁹ In a more mocking setting, Lucilius states that the Marsian songs could make the snake explode too.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁴ Dench, *From Barbarians*, 174.

¹³⁵ Sol. 2.28.

¹³⁶ Sil. Ita. *Pun.* 8, 495-500/

¹³⁷ Galen 8. 150K 11.143K 12.316-7K,

¹³⁸ Plin. *NH.*28.30

¹³⁹ Gell16.11.1-2

¹⁴⁰ Lucil. 575-6 M.

Marsian priests were also present in the 3rd century *ludii*. During the reign of Elagabalus the Marsian priests gathered and unleashed snakes onto the crowd before the games began¹⁴¹.

Although Piccaluga¹⁴² proposed that the snake-charming was a cultural attempt to demonize the Marsi because of their fierce resistance to Roman conquest, the wide range and high repentance of the snake-related curing ability and snake-charming suggest that it was not a Roman invention. Even though it does not demonstrate any steady snake charming practice, the material record of Marsica is tantalizing because of the high snake related iconography. For example, there are some *cippus* with snakes during the Imperial Period, and the sculpture of Angitia and a snake found in 1883 by Fernique [Fig. 4] is very suggestive. The worship of Angitia is widely registered in the Marsian and Central Appenine¹⁴³ area and sources clearly attached snake activity to Angitia. Furthermore, Medea and Circe, which were supposed to convey magic related activities with snakes, are also

Figure 4 Angitia. E. Fernique, “Bronze representant Angitia” *Gazette archéologique* 8.1 (1883): 224

connected with Angitia. In doing so, Roman sources relate Mediterranean known magic figures with indigenous magical activities. However, the Roman understanding and Native meanings may differ. While Marsi were apparently synonymous with snake-charming at

¹⁴¹ Aelius Lampridus, 23. 2.

¹⁴² G. Piccaluga, “I Marsi e gli Hirpi. Due diversi modi di sistemare le minoranze etniche,” in *Magia: studi di storia delle religioni in memoria di Raffaella Garosi*, ed. P. Xella (Roma: Bulzoni 1976), 207-231

¹⁴³ Dench, *From barbarians*, 159 f.

Rome, within Marsic society those with powers over snakes were apparently a restricted group.”¹⁴⁴

This restricted group, the preachers of Angitia,¹⁴⁵ were sponsored by local elites during the Imperial period. Connection between Angitia and snake-charming is not clear cut before the ascension of Augustus to power. The denomination of Angitia herself has an Imperial period Latin contamination of the name *Anguitia* from *anguis*, which means serpent.¹⁴⁶ In fact, it is possible that the cult of Angiti was redefined during the Late Antiquity and Imperial time to serve contemporary purposes. Whatever was the connection between serpents and Marsi before Marsian incorporation, it became an eminent priesthood in Marsica and a political tool during Imperial times. The priesthood was likely designed for individuals, which were eminent enough in the Marsian community but not as important as to jump into the Roman political arena to ascend through Roman offices, because even though the Marsian snake power could give you a magical aura the endogamy practice also posed negative and outsider images. Conversely, Marsian senators benefited from the magical aura that suggested to be a Marsi.

The snake related activity provides the candidate with a mixture of attributes, in which positive or negative meanings can be stressed in front of an electorate. The now tamed Marsians still posed the aura of ancestral activities to use the snakes to their own benefit. On the contrary, an opponent could stress the alien and sinister features that involved those activities.

¹⁴⁴ Dench, *From barbarians*, 24.

¹⁴⁵ Letta, *I Marsi*, 140 ff.

¹⁴⁶ Dench, *From Barbarians*, 159.

2.3.3 Negative Stands: The Night Witches.

After analyzing the positive traits attached by classical sources to the Marsi, now we will focus on the very sinister and negative archetypes. Some Late Republican and Imperial authors did their best to incorporate Marsians in the Roman citizenship body as pristine barbarians; pure, austere and brave farmer-soldiers, there were nonetheless negative mentions as well.

Even though there are not any negative aspects attached to the image of Marsian warriors in the sources, the environmental determinism that has been used to enforce the unpolluted pristine barbarian concept could also work the other way around. The mountain *topoi*, especially with Samnites, functioned to produce an alien savage idea of Central Apennine people. Even though many references did not survive, the Marsi have been cataloged as barbarous at some point by classical sources as well.¹⁴⁷

In relation to snake charming, the meanings are ambivalent as well. They have been shaped to demonstrate a positive or negative aspect of the activity depending on the political angle. These ambiguous approaches indicate that the concepts shifted depending on the ideological angle of the ethnographer. It is worthwhile to remember that most of the references to these two images have been mostly exploited by elites.

Now we will focus on the very sinister and negative archetypes of the Marsi in the Roman sources. This section will argue that most of the negative images in classical sources in regards to Marsi refer to lower socio-economic classes, and not to elites.

In addition to Snake-charmers and warriors, Marsians were associated with sinister magic related activities. Cicero talks about the Marsic Augur, who quotes Ennio referring

¹⁴⁷ Dion. Hal. 1.89.3

to the influx of outsider groups practicing foreign magic around the circus.¹⁴⁸ The love-elegy and fortune tellers are another recurrent images referring to the Central Apennine people in general¹⁴⁹ and Pliny talks about some *strigae*, who were mythological birds.¹⁵⁰ According to Ovid, these *strigae* were a Marsian specialty.¹⁵¹ Following those magical skills, Dench attributes to the Marsi into “the familiar repertoire of ‘night witches.’”¹⁵²

By the Imperial period these figures are associated with old and ugly females, which are considered as mock figures in the classical literature. Yet, the consideration of the Central Apennine as a place where these sinister people come from stems from the 3rd-4th century and Social War enmity,¹⁵³ particularly with the alien and bloody secret Samnite sacrifice to form the linen legion in *Aquilonia* around 293.¹⁵⁴ In the Roman thought structure, the division between religion and magic was blurred and it was clearly a cultural construct. The Roman elite practiced magical activities. Nevertheless, depending on the alien feature and potential political influence of the practices, those elites culturally determined which magic was within or outside the societal norms.¹⁵⁵ The sinister and alien practices attached to Marsians are not risky because they are Marsians. They are dangerous because the practitioners are low socio-political strata people, with no chance to revert their circumstances and ascend in the Roman society. On this basis, gender played a big role in

¹⁴⁸ Dench, *from barbarians*, 161; Cic. *De Dic.* 1.132. Maybe the Marsic adjective is Ciceronian glossary and not Ennius; Letta, *I marsi*, 89. Letta, erroneously, sees in it an attack against the anti-oligarchy Marsi. Marsi were not in favour or against oligarchy, they were already within Roman political arena. Each individual was adapting to gain political favor taking the most convenient side.

¹⁴⁹ Dench, *From barbarians* 166. Hor. *Epodes* 5.27

¹⁵⁰ Pliny. *NH* 11.232. More information in Dench, *From Barbarians*, 166.

¹⁵¹ Fasti 6.142: *nenia Marsa* Discussion in Dench, *From Barbarians*, 166. Other reading: *nenia falsa*.

¹⁵² Dench, *From barbarians* 166.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁵⁴ Liv. 10.38.3.-13.

¹⁵⁵ Dench, *From barbarians*, 167 ff.

the construction of the night witches. Women were a group limited to the power behind a man. Therefore, magic could be very attractive for them. Besides, the female biology was alien enough in a patriarchal society to construct taboos around menstruation, virginity or childbirth and attach a magical meaning to it.¹⁵⁶

Regardless of the reasoning behind the denigration and annoyance present in the Roman sources in regards to the culturally constructed sinister aspect, these practices contained a degree of mystical power. The practitioners profited from those Roman construction for their own benefit. They perpetuated and exploited these images with economic purposes in an effort to make money.¹⁵⁷ Another element that Dench brings to the table is the idea of the night witches and marginal groups as potential scapegoats. Dench finds very tantalizing the relation between night witches and the *striagae*. She felt that in the small Central Apennine society the range of the potential targets to blame if something goes wrong were not as rich as in Rome. As a result, the existence of possible scapegoats fits into the Marsian's own elite interest.¹⁵⁸

Overall, the Marsian archetypes present in the classical sources, positive or negative alike, correspond to the use of existent stereotypes but suiting it to the needs of the author. For example, the Marsian environment can be transformed as an idyllic place where uncorrupted people live, or on the contrary, it can be transformed into the dwelling of savages. Those negative or positive traits worked to create an acceptance or denial into Roman society. Notwithstanding, the recipient of the clichés were not passive agents who

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

only received a tag from an outsider group. They acted in consequence and exploited them as suited for themselves as well.

2.4 Conclusion

After looking into the classical sources and existing self-perceptions we can conclude that the Marsic *ethos* is a social construct created by both Greco-Roman society and also from within Marsic society. Sources can only provide a partial and highly affected picture of what it meant to be a Marsi. Communities ascribed to Marsic labels have been fluid. Although the Marsian name existed in the 3rd century associated with a lake, the existing static view of a Marsic community described by the sources should be denied, because they correspond to Late Republican and Imperial periods. Otherwise, Native self-allusion demonstrates that local identities have been prominently much more important than ethnic grouping, at the very least until the Second Punic War. In this regard, we will analyze in the next chapter if a cultural distinctive Marsic identity has ever existed.

CHAPTER THREE: THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF MARSICA

After identifying the culturally constructed view of the Marsi in Greek-Roman sources, chapter three presents the main Iron Age archeological evidence from the Fucino Basin. The archeological research has been focusing on graves, settlement patterns and epigraphy. The recovered materials, practices as well as cult sites reveal the integration of local communities within a broader Mediterranean network, rather than an isolated cultural environment. The cultural trends of Fucino encompassed the valley, Central Italy and even in some cases a Mediterranean wide world. Therefore, the region was characterized by fluid and overlapping cultural spheres, with regional trends and its connection with larger cultural networks, without any clear-cut distinctive Marsic cultural identity. This chapter presents the archeological evidences of socio-political organization, gender role and religion over the Fucino area, containing insights in regards to cultural exchange.

3.1 Socio-Political Organization of the Marsic Communities

The focus of this section is to provide a glimpse of the socio-political organization of the Marsi from the early Iron Age until the Roman era. In the early Iron Age period, people living in Marsica were organized in communities grouped around powerful, strong, elite individuals, instead of a structured central ethnic entity. The individual private agency of elites, preeminent in the archaic period, was reshaped under Roman hegemony, which eventually incorporated all people within Italy under her rule.

Evidence for larger political units in the Italian peninsula differs from area to area. For example, the number of sources for Etruria and Latium are abundant, the Central

Apennine region and the Fucino Basin area in particular did not have as much evidence in comparison. This dissimilarity tended to underpin the idea that mountainous areas were less developed than the coastal plain. Rather, it is just a dualistic view between urban and non-urban society.¹⁵⁹ Although the spatial distribution of the living places directly affects the socio-political organization, the following section does not attempt to reanalyze different settlement strategies. Instead, evidence for the socio-political organization of the Marsi will be examined.

Figure 5 Central Italian Iron Age sculpture map. Rafaella Papi, "Un frammento inedito di scultura Italica in abruzzo," *Quaderni dell'istituto di archeologia e storia antica* 2 (Roma: Viella, 1981): 11.

¹⁵⁹ Graeme, Baker. "The archeology of Samnites Settlement in Molise" *Antiquity*, 52 (1977): 20 ff.

Figure 6 Devil's Leg. J. J. Basile. "The Capestrano warrior and related monument of the seventh to fifth centuries B.C.," RAHAL, 26 (1993), 19.

Since the 1970's new archeological sites have been discovered in the Fucino area, shedding some light on the very poorly known early Iron Age. One site in particular should be highlighted: La Giostra di Amplero. It is here that *Il Gamble de Diablo* or Devil's Legs [Fig. 6] was discovered but with no archeological context.¹⁶⁰ The mid-5th century sculpture matches typologically with similar monuments discovered within the Central Italian area. The similarities between Devil's Legs and the well-known Capistrano Warrior (below) suggests that people living in Amplero were under the same

cultural horizon known as *Safin* discussed in the previous chapter, containing similar socio-political structures.

The Capistrano Warrior is a 2.09-meter stone sculpture found in 1934 and dated in the late 6th century. The monumental figure was originally seen as a member of royalty. New approaches, nevertheless, favor an alternative perspective: a local warlord leader.

Figure 7 Capestrano Warrior J.J. Basile. "The Capestrano warrior," 12.

¹⁶⁰ Giuseppe Grossi. "Topografia Antica della Marsica (Aequi-Marsi e Volsci): quindici anni di ricerche, 1974-1989". In *Il fucino e le aree limitrofe nell'antichità*, Atti del I convegno di archeologia (Avezzano: Archeoclub della Marsica 1991), 229; Amalia Faustoferri, "The Devil's Legs and the Marsi," in *Warriors and Kings in ancient Abruzzo*, ed. Maria Ruggieri (Pescara: Carsa 2007), 100 ff.

The Capistrano warrior [Fig. 7] bears a paleo-sabelic inscription of the word *Raki*, which has been interpreted as king. In addition, in one of the Penna Sant 'Andrea's *stelae* discussed in the previous chapter, appears another denomination, *Nerf*, interpreted as princeps. Scholars theorized that during the Archaic period the small communities belonging to the *Safin* area were led by warlords known as *Raki* (*Rex*) or *Nerf* (*Princeps*).¹⁶¹ La Regina's theory of *Raki*, deriving from Latin *reges*, is contested,¹⁶² but Terrenato's¹⁶³ idea of small warlords depicted as feudal lords is strongly supported in academic literature. Regardless of the label, the concept is noteworthy: small communities commanded by warlords.

According to 20th century scholars, by the 4th century, small clans led by warlords merged, creating the ethnic groups depicted by classical sources. Salmon and La Regina¹⁶⁴ based upon the sketchy evidence for *touta*, which is repeated over and over in Central Italian epigraphy, theorized that the Samnites formed a League of at least four independent organized structures, or *toutas*, only grouping together to fight. The model was an aggregative view of *nomen-touta-pagus-vicus* and highly influenced ideas of the socio-political structure of the Marsi. As a result, La Regina proposed that the Marsi formed a single "national" *touta*.¹⁶⁵ However, Letta has demonstrated that *touta* should not be read in this broader scope but in a local context,¹⁶⁶ *touta* probably meaning community.

¹⁶¹ La Regina, "I Sanniti," 302 ff.

¹⁶² Crawford, *Imagines*, 196-201.

¹⁶³ Nicola Terrenato "The deceptive archetype: Roman colonialism in Italy and postcolonial thought," in *Ancient Colonization: Analogy, Similarity and Difference*, ed. H. Hurst and S. Owen. (London: Bloomsbury 2005), 66.

¹⁶⁴ Salmon, *Samnium*, 77-84.

¹⁶⁵ La Regina, "I Sanniti," 300 f.

¹⁶⁶ Cesare Letta, "Dall' "oppidum" al "nomen": i diversi livelli dell'aggregazione politica nel mondo osco-umbro," in *Federazioni e federalismo nell'Europa antica*, ed. Luciana Aigner (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 1994), 387-406.

The political organization of the communities around the Fucino is then a very vexed topic. It is further complicated by the appearance of various magistracies in the epigraphical record. The only magistracy that does not seem to cause debate now is the *meddix*, which by no doubt is an Italic institution. The *meddix* was a chief magistracy of a local community among *Safin* and Oscan societies. He was annually elected by a community within its aristocracy. One or two *Meddices* (*Meddix* in plural) appear on the famous bronze-sheet of Antinum, dated to the middle of the 3rd century. At the end of the Antinum inscription, a mysterious name of another magistrate arises: *cetur*.¹⁶⁷ The role of this magistracy is not very clear. There have been different readings to explain it, from the chief in command of the Marsian community to a Roman magistracy to mediate between Marsians and Romans.¹⁶⁸

Letta argues for an utter Marsic nature for the magistracies, because he has created a politico-administrative federal model where *Oppida* were the major entity governed by *meddices*.

At the top, as a Marsic federal leader was the cited *cetur*. At the bottom, attached to an

Figure 8 Map of the vici in Marsic area. Modified from Stek, *Cult Places*, 156.

¹⁶⁷ Crawford, *Imagines*, 333. pa.ui.pacuius.medis / vesune. Dunom.ded / ca.cumnios cetur

¹⁶⁸ Cesare Letta "Un lago e il suo popolo" in *Il tesoro del lago*, 144-5. See another suggestive proposal suggesting a temporary Roman garrison, in Stek, *Cult places*, 161.

oppidum and enjoying great autonomy, were the *quaestors*¹⁶⁹ the main office of the *vici*, which were small settlement agglomerations that encompassed a few farmsteads with a central public space (see Chapter 5.2) [Fig.8]. Similar to the *cetur* magistracy the exact function of *quaestor* is not well understood. As the office was clearly related to the management of funds at a local level, parallels between Roman *quaestors* and Marsian ones have been drawn. According to Letta, Marsian elites did a “nimesi (culturale) o adeguamento”¹⁷⁰ respecting the Italian original institution of the *vicus* but borrowing Roman names. Letta’s ingenious reconstruction is grounded on an idea that the entire epigraphical body is cohesive, so that, the Marsi were organized in a *federal* layout¹⁷¹: *nomen (cetur) – oppida (meddix)- vici (quaestor)*¹⁷².

On the contrary, Stek, cautiously, suggests that the *vici* did not belong either to Roman, Marsic or Latin communities. He posits that the early period of the Roman colonization process had influenced the socio-political organization of the territory. In his view, the *vici* were new communities with a proper name without necessarily being Marsic, Latin or Roman. Instead of proposing a single coherent model, as proposed by Letta, he argues that the existence of separate or parallel developments is the result of competition between new communities with newcomers, and indigenous people. These new communities or *vici* were intending to become or appear Roman by writing in Latin.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Stek, *Cult places*, 162. Q(ua)estur(es) / V(ibus) Salv[i(os)] / M(arcus) Paci(os) / Pe(tro) C(e)rv(i)os).

¹⁷⁰ Cesare Letta, “Tradizioni religiose e romanizzazione tra le popolazioni italiche minori dell’Appennino centrale,” in P. Amann (ed.) *Kulte – Riten – religiöse Vorstellungen bei den Etruskern und ihr Verhältnis zu Politik und Gesellschaft* (Wien, 4.–6. 12. 2008)(Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2012), 380.

¹⁷¹ Letta. “The Marsi,” 513 f.

¹⁷² Letta, “Antinum,” *passim*.

¹⁷³ Stek, *Cult Places*, 154-160.

What is clear is that the existence of a major political binding power such as a big Roman or Marsic authority is very unlikely to exist in Marsica in the 4th-3rd centuries. Local authorities were still major political agents over the community, whilst external influence began to shape the representation of local people. Once Roman power increased, communities around Fucino faced greater pressure in the 3rd -2nd century onwards to group together to respond and benefit from Roman alliance. Leaders of the communities, who are clearly from the aristocracy that appears in the inscriptions began to align together under a common interest, so that more structured powers took shape. Rather than permanent, it was an *ad hoc* institution to face war. Hence, a sense of community began to appear among the collated groups, and they chose a supralocal name that had been labelled from within as well as from outside to stress the similarities that join them whenever suited. Finally, the influence of Rome affected the political evolution as we can see with the outcome of final incorporation under Roman structure of the Late Republic with the creation of municipalities and its magistracies: *quattuorviri* or *duumvir*, reshaping the whole political structure in the aftermath of the Social War (see. 5.3 chapter).

3.2 Aristocracy and Gender in the Funerary Record

By examining the funerary record the next section attempts to answer whether a particular Marsic identity can be discerned. However, attempting to identify identity through material culture poses big challenges. What the funerary record shows is heterogeneity suggesting a complex relationship with nearby communities along communication axes, namely valley ones. Likewise, new studies have been carried out regarding the role of marginal groups, offering a rethinking of the social role of women

during the Iron Age. Women were not passive agents subject to a male, they were active participants in the society and significantly influenced the everyday life of the community.

Although new discoveries have improved our knowledge of political organization and settlement trends in ancient Marsica, the funerary record provides by far the greatest amount of Iron Age source material. The world of death and burials is always challenging to analyze. There is no literary source to ascertain whether an object is Marsic, Roman nor Latin. Besides, similar material culture does not indicate one identity or another, just as a dissimilar material record does not necessarily suggest a contraposition. It only entails connectivity with one place to another. Similarly, the surviving record provides us with a small grasp of the whole picture probably focusing on high-standard groups.

In general, the funerary record of the Fucino region consists of stone-circle tumulus graves, linked to fortified hillforts. A particular type of grave goods, *stolai* or decorated

Figure 9 Celano Paludi. D' Ercole, *If Fucino* 2001, 170.

bronze disk, were produced first in the Fucino area and will be discussed more in depth below. The earliest examples of this type of tumulus grave date to the late Bronze Age, *circa* 1000 at the village of Paludi-Celano. The excavators discovered 7 tumuli delineated by stones and *circa* 5 meters of diameter [Fig. 9]. Cist

graves were in the middle of the tumuli containing one supine inhumation individual in

each one: 3 females (T. 1-2-4), 2 children (T.5-6) and a masculine (T.3). The adult female (40-60 years old) tombs contain each one a bronze fibula with double-folding meandering arch. A child of 2-3 (T.5) years old inhumed with a twisted fibula. Also in this tomb (T.5) was a female, with a folded fibula, and two bronze spiral rings at her left hand. It has similarities with tomb 2, and there is a chance that both tombs contained an adult female with a child.¹⁷⁴

From the Early Iron Age-Orientalizing period, there are only two sites on the later Marsic territory. One circle burial dated to the Early Iron Age was found in Le Pergole, Pescina. In Camarino, Lecce dei Marsi, there are two more graves dated to the Orientalizing period. In Pescinas' burial and in one of the Camarinos' tombs the bodies had a jar at their feet. The three graves lack any other form of pottery.¹⁷⁵ This is a common feature at the necropolises of the latter Aequian and Marsian territory. Some broken pottery was dispersed or deposited inside a pit around burials, but the phenomenon shows a certainly distinguishable *Fucense* koine.

Figure 10 Scurcola Marsicana. *Accontia Ritualita*, 355.

¹⁷⁴ Aa.Vv., "Insediamento e necropoli dell'età del Bronzo di Celano," in *Il fucino e le aree limitrofe nell'antichità*, Atti del I convegno di archeologia (Avezzano: Archeoclub della Marsica 1991). Consentino *et al.* Il villaggio delle Paludi di Celano: gli scavi 1996 e 1998. *Il fucino e le aree limitrofe nell'antichità*, Atti del II convegno di archeologia (Avezzano: Archeoclub della Marsica 2001), 154-198.

¹⁷⁵ Emanuella Ceccaroni, "Interventi archeologici nella Marsica negli anni 2010-14: scavi preventive e ricerche programmate della Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici dell'Abruzzo," in *Il fucino e le aree limitrofe nell'antichità*, Atti del IV convegno di archeologia (Avezzano: Archeoclub della Marsica 2016), 242 ff. Two other sites (Pratovecchio, Celano and Villa d' Oro, Pescina) have been found with no skeletal remains, but with a similar jar.

The absence of pottery is another recurrent feature in the necropolis of Piana Palentini in Scurcola Marsicana [Fig. 10]. Archeologists have brought to light thirty-one cist graves distributed in thirteen tumuli of 4-11 meters in diameter. The site was operative from the 9th to 5th century, and includes female and males, adults to newborns. The infants are usually located near the big tumuli, and in most tumuli, namely the big ones, the females are in the center. Whereas adult males have weapons, “warrior burials,” females and infants burial contain ornaments, namely spindle whorls and fibulas.¹⁷⁶

Figure 11 Corvaro. V. Accontia, *Ritualità*, 356.

The earliest of the three phases at Covaro’s grand tumulus also dates to the 9th-7th centuries. With a diameter of 46 meters and 360 graves [Fig. 11]. Alvino sees here a monumental cemetery representing a community or a *gens*, identified by an extended family.¹⁷⁷ Due to the typology of *tombe a circolo* and the way in which it had expanded we can locate this cemetery within Salto Valley *koine*. The first period seems to consist of an 11 meter diameter tumulus destroyed afterwards to make space for new graves. The

¹⁷⁶ S. Consetino, Vincenzo D’Ercole & S. Agostini. “L’eta del Ferro nel Fucino: nuovi dati e puntualizzazione,” in *Il fucino* 2001, 182-204.

¹⁷⁷ G. Alvino, “Il tumulo di Corvaro di Borgorose,” in *Gli Equi tra Abruzzo e Lazio*, ed. S. Lapenna (Sulmona: Synaps, 2004), 61–76.

earliest graves are specially warrior type males with iron spears. The second period, 6th-5th centuries, follows a similar pattern with almost no pottery and the same predominant burial of males with weapons. However, unlike Scurcola, some jars were located at the feet of certain individuals in the first two phases. The third phase, 4th-1st centuries, is the most interesting one (below).

Scurcola Marsicana ceased to exist in the 5th century. Until the 3rd century, the quantity of burials decreased abruptly, all over the area. During the same time, new monumental buildings appear all over Central Italy. It is a symptom of elites finding new ways to assert and represent their authority. The new way includes directing wealth towards the construction of public buildings such as shrines. We can locate here the first phase of the sanctuary of Luco dei Marsi in the 4th century as well as the altar of Amplero in the 5th.¹⁷⁸

In a closer look into Salto Valley necropolises (Barrea, Opi ...), Scopacasa noticed fewer graves at this time, but they were much more lavish than before. He theorized that between the 6th-3rd centuries a decaying aristocracy was recalling an old-fashioned way of exclusive status and elite legitimacy. The growing restriction of access to formal burials then was an attempt to make cemeteries much more exclusive. To reassert their social exclusivity, these individuals linked themselves with old time burials, which were very visible on the landscape. Yet, this “traditional” burial ideology lost against new ways of

¹⁷⁸ See chapter 3.3 the sanctuary located in Luco dei Marsi & chapter 5.1. The site of Amplero.

evergetism and it ended by 200.¹⁷⁹ Interestingly, Corvaro is the sole exception. Graves are far more numerous than before and weapons disappeared suggesting a new cultural pattern.

Considering all the discussed funerary evidence, the fact that males were buried with weapons and women with ornaments has created a polarized picture in the minds of 20th century researchers. Social roles were assigned automatically following classical accounts. Livian tradition has not only stressed the *montani atque agrestes*¹⁸⁰ idea within the modern mindset, but it has made scholars focus on adult warrior males alone. As a result, women in centro Italian society are regarded as “the maids of the mountains,”¹⁸¹ a reference to Samnite women, but extendible to the whole of Central Italy.

It is worth stopping here to rethink the assumptions historiography has made with regards to the recovered funerary assemblages and its historical preconceptions. While the recurrent appearance of weapons attached to males echoes the historical image of a warrior society, the picture should be overcome. Weapons, instead, can be seen as emblems or symbols representing a cosmopolitan aristocratic ideology to legitimize their authority in terms of military prowess.¹⁸² Fortunately, since the 1990’s women and children have received a much closer attention. Now they are regarded as perpetrators of familial groups, because from the 7th century onwards women own their funerary ideologies. For example, in the cemetery of Scurcola women were buried in the center of the tumulus.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Rafael Scopacasa “Falling behind: access to formal burial and faltering elites in Samnium (central Italy),” in *Burial and Social Change in First-Millennium BC Italy: approaching social agents*, ed. Elisa Perego & Rafael Scopacasa. (Oxford: Oxbow, 2014), 227-248.

¹⁸⁰ Livy. 9.13.

¹⁸¹ Salmon, *Samnites*, 57.

¹⁸² Scopacasa, *Ancient Samnium*, 86-7. Weapons are clearly emblems of power, and not a mirror of reality.

¹⁸³ Tagliamonte *I figli*, 46.

The role women played did not stop there and should be further emanated to fully understand their real agency in society.¹⁸⁴ Religion seems to be the main role fulfilled by women in the Marsian society. Amy Richardson demonstrates that grave goods make references to social role aspirations.¹⁸⁵ The excavation carried out by Ceccaroni in the necropolis located among the localities of Cretaro, Chiusa dei Cerri e Brecciaro di Avezzano uncovered eighteen graves divided into three areas

Figure 12 Iron head ring.
E.Ceccaroni. “Archeologia preventiva nella Marsica: lo scavo del/a necropoli in localita Cretaro-Chiusa dei Cerri-Brecciaro di Avezzano (A.Q).” *Quaderni di archeologia d’Abruzzo* 1 (209) [2011]: 19.

that probably used to be tumuli. Thirty-nine women were buried in a span of two centuries, 7th-5th,¹⁸⁶ and seem to be “special.” Fourteen out of eighteen graves contained *stolai* (below) and iron rings on the women’s heads [Fig. 12] suggesting to Ceccaroni a sacral role in society, probably priestesses.¹⁸⁷ However, the meaning of the funerary assemblage is still unclear.

¹⁸⁴ Amalia Faustoferri, “Women in Warrior societies,” in *Burial and Social change*, 107.

¹⁸⁵ Amy Richardson, “Montani atque agrestes” or Women of substance? Dichotomies of gender and role in Ancient Samnium, in *TRAC 2008: Proceedings of the Eighteenth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2009), 127-141.

¹⁸⁶ Emannuella Ceccaroni, “La necropoli in loc. Cretaro-Brecciaro di Avezzano (AQ): primi dati e nuove prospettive.” *Quaderni di archeologia d’Abruzzo* 2 (2010) [2012]: 341–346. 9th century C14 datation contested (342).

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* Continuità e trasformazione nel territorio fucense: dalla necropoli di Cretaro agli insediamenti romani nell’*ager albensis*, in *Il fucino e le aree limitrofe nell’antichità*, Atti del III convegno di archeologia (Avezzano: Archeoclub della Marsica 2011), 229-239.

The real significance of Cretaro lies in the bronze discs or *stolai*. Excluding very

Figure 13 Stolai. E.Ceccaroni.
“Archeologia preventiva. 19.

few sites, the bronze discs were generally regarded as being male breastplates: *kardiophylakes*. The huge quantity associated with women helped to overcome past opinion, changing the whole perspective. Now *stolai* are considered female apparel. The first appearance of bronze discs occurs around the 8th century in Fucino, spreading over all the area. In Cretaro all known types of the bronze discs have been found, hence; refuting the idea that any one typology

refers to a particular ethnic group. Instead, they refer to a supralocal elite identity. In addition, discs bear fantastic animals that remain unchanged during the Orientalizing and Archaic periods [Fig. 13]. The representations are considered insignia of power. The Capestrano warrior, as well as similar sculptural figures, contains identical fantastic animal marks.

We know that gender is highly defined by class and wealth, but the females' social standing is not restricted to the relation of those women to a male. They are not maids of warriors alone. While grave goods can indicate status and wealth, we now know thanks to the female torso of Capecetrano [Fig. 14] that those women had an active engagement in the society. The statue itself is too fragmentary to provide glimpses of the meaning of objects as

Figure 14 Torso of Caspestrano. J. Basile. *The Caspestrano warrior*, 9.

Figure 15 Breast of Amplero. Grossi, in *Il fucino IV*, 324.

insignias

of real distinctiveness.¹⁸⁸ However, the act of having a statue is already indicative of a prominent placement in Italian Iron Age society. Another not very well-known statue, the “torsetto di Amplero,” faces similar issues as well. It was found in the later Marsic areas, near Collelongo [Fig. 15]. The Amplero

torso has been linked with the individual of Devil's Leg, but again we should consider the

statue as another sign of status. Women buried in the center of tumuli women having statues, and “special” women with a likely sacred role suggest a new funerary ideology

¹⁸⁸ Faustoferri, *Women*, 103.

during the Orientalizing and Archaic times in Italy where women were much more prominent than previously thought, and not just maids of the warriors.

The funerary record of Fucino is consisted on the funerary record of the Central Italian area with the tumuli culture. Scurcola began around the turn of the first millennium, and lasted until the 5th century. Indeed, the cultural integration of the Fucino area with the rest of Italy is clear when the wealth was directed to these sanctuaries. Corvaro's second phase also ends up in the 5th century, therefore at first it follows the same pattern. Then, it follows a very different pattern, and it can be the intention of a sub-elite group to claim a glorious past heritage. The new discoveries and the reassessment of the evidence has allowed a new perspective in the societal role of women and the evidence sustains the thesis that they were much more active in the social life of the community.

3.3 Religion. The Major Deity of The Marsi.

This section explores what we know about Marsic religion. Epigraphical and literary evidence allows scholars to grasp certain aspects of the sacred world of the people living in the area. First, it assesses the sanctuaries as a place to negotiate identity. Then, the chapter follows with the aim to present Angitia's worship in a sharper perspective, arguing that Angitia was made the principal Goddess of Marsi during the Late Republic onwards.

Figure 16 Votives. Campanelli, *Il Tesoro*, 58.

Cult practices are first noticed archaeologically in ex-voto offerings. An ex-voto is a votive offering to a divinity. This kind of votive dedications have happened since the very beginning of the 1st millennium in the Fucino area. The earliest votives have been identified in two pre-historical sites: Grotta Maritza (Ortuchio) and Di Ciccio Felice (Avezanno). Both are archeological sites in a cavern that contain human activity from the Paleolithic until Hellenistic period. Simultaneously, outside of the caverns appear sites containing votive offerings. For example, in Luco dei Marsi, there is votive activity 7th-6th century onwards. Many of the places that contain votive activity, such as the one in Luco, later became into archeologically identifiable sanctuaries around the 4th-3rd century in the Fucino basin.

In those shrines are first noted the deities worshipped by people around the lake. There is no doubt that all are Mediterranean deities. However, a scholarly discussion arises regarding the deities' origin and how they have been introduced in the area. We can classify them as Italian, Greek or even Roman. The most recurrent of all deities is Angitia. The earliest evidence comes from the already discussed, and now lost, *Caso Cantavious* belt in the early 3rd century, which bears the name of *Actia*, or Angitia, and she is considered to be an Italian goddess. There are another two recurrent Italian goddesses: Giove, and Vesuna. The first one can be found in at least two epigraphs around the lake bearing the names of *Iue* and *Ioue*.¹⁸⁹ The second is attested around the area several times, but the most famous attestation is a piece of bronze found in the *oppidum* of Antino,¹⁹⁰ a piece lost and then recovered by the Louvre Museum in 1897. Also lost is a 3rd century inscription found

¹⁸⁹ Letta, *Tradizioni*, 381.

¹⁹⁰ Crawford, *Imagines*, 333.

in Pescina that bears the name of the God *Purcefro* in dative, corresponding to an *interpetratio* between the maritime Greek god Phorcus and the lake Fucino,¹⁹¹ who is attested in the territory of Aielli in the 3rd century. There is another mysterious inscription recovered in the territory of Ortucchio with the theonymus *Ponas*. Letta, who considers it an Italian God, conceives Ponas to be a derivation of the god Purcefer.¹⁹²

There are three Greek original gods: Dioscuri, Apollo and Ercole. Dioscuri and Ercole bear similarities with the Phorcus case. Both deities appear linked to Giove. In a mid-3rd century epigraphy found in the sanctuary at San Manno, Dioscuri is mentioned along with the name of *Iouies pucles* (The son of Giove).¹⁹³ In Trassaco, there is a similar attestation of the name of the son of Giove, but this time next to the god Ercole.¹⁹⁴ According to Letta, this is the way to incorporate and assimilate both Greek deities in the Native belief system.¹⁹⁵ Instead, the case of Apollo is different. In Trassaco is an offering, c.200 that reads as it follows: *c.cisiedio/Aplone/ded(ed)*, “C. Cisiedius gave this to Apollo.” In this case Apollo is on his own,¹⁹⁶ suggesting a similar significance of Apollo as in the rest of the Mediterranean.¹⁹⁷

The above mentioned religious framework follows mostly the interpretations of Letta’s readings. According to Letta, the Marsic pantheon does not have almost any interferences with Roman religious beliefs, even though it contains Greek and Campanian influences. In this line, Letta admits that the god Victoria, and only Victoria, which is

¹⁹¹ Letta, *Tradizioni*, 384.

¹⁹² Letta, *Tradizioni*, 381 & 384.

¹⁹³ Letta, *Tradizioni*, 384-5.

¹⁹⁴ Letta, *Tradizioni*, 386-7.

¹⁹⁵ Letta, *Tradizioni*, 386, *passim*.

¹⁹⁶ Nicholas Zair “languages of Ancient Italy,” in *The peoples*, 129.

¹⁹⁷ Stek, *Cult Places*, 162. Stek considers it a God coming from the nearby colony of Alba.

dedicated twice in Trassaco during the late 3rd – early 2nd century,¹⁹⁸ has a Roman origin, but neglects any other Roman sway. New readings nonetheless have suggested more Roman influence than previously thought. The only inscription written in the Marsic language, which uses Latin alphabet, is dated in the late 2nd century. Found in San Bennedeto dei Marsi is an offering to *Di Novensides*.¹⁹⁹ Although Letta argues an Italian nature for it, Stek has demonstrated that it is more a Roman deity.²⁰⁰ In a similar fashion, *Valetudo*, attested in two inscriptions in Lecce dei Marsi, is considered a Roman deity by Prosperi Valenti.²⁰¹

Most of these names appeared in inscriptions derived from sanctuaries, which are key locations to negotiate group and individual identities. Letta saw the continuation of the cult happening in these places in the light of a cultural continuation of the same group since the Bronze Ages to Roman times.²⁰² The recurrent utilization of the site is significant, however to characterize the site as belonging to the same cultural group feels too suited to modern historical assumptions: the idea of an ancestral Marsic group, which existed from early Iron Age up to the Roman incorporation. Societies during the Iron Age were very mobile, not only persons were moving, but identities were being redefined every moment too. Therefore, the idea of group continuity follows the pattern of a fixed identity, which is not supported by recent studies suggesting a fluid nature of group identities.

¹⁹⁸ Letta, *Tradizioni*, 386.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, & “The Marsi,” 513.

²⁰⁰ Stek, *Cult Places*, 160.

²⁰¹ Prosperi Valenti, *Valetudo. Origine ed aspetti del culto nel mondo romano*, (Roma: Studi pubblicati dall’istituto italiano per la storia antica 67, 1998), 61- 75.

²⁰² Letta, “The Marsi,” 510.

What is clear is that sanctuaries become archaeologically visible in the Fucino Basin from the 4th-3rd century onwards. It happened exactly at the same time when new strategies of elite assertion were going on in Central Italy. The practice to direct wealth to more common spaces clearly indicates that the shrines were constructed by internal forces suggesting a communal organization. Stoddart and Whitley regarded a similar process in Umbria and the Gubbio basin in Crete. The archeological record shows a shift of wealth in Crete from the big individual *tholos* tombs to the creation of rural sanctuaries simultaneously with the appearance of larger political units. According to them Umbria faced a similar process²⁰³ and an equal process can be seen in the Marsian area as well. Alongside the 4th century monumentalizing process, during the late 2nd – early 1st century sanctuaries faced other lavish building activity that coincides with the previous years of the Social War. Regarding this, one major question arises: Were the shrines indicative of an ethnic common cult in the Fucino area?

In the theory of Letta to understand the Marsian *ethos*, the sanctuaries were hierarchically ordered, and in the very top of the Marsian federation as the central or “national” sanctuary was the temple of Angitia in Luco dei Marsi, functioning as such before the 4th century. In his view, the monumentalization process of the previous years of the Social War corresponds to a revival of the Marsian identity to fight Rome.²⁰⁴ Against this framework that considers sanctuaries, and especially the temple of Angitia, as an

²⁰³ Simon Stoddart & James Whitley “Ritual without text,” in *Territory, Time and State. The archeological development of the Gubbio basin*, ed. Caroline Malone & Stoddart (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 142-152.

²⁰⁴ Letta, “The Marsi,” 513.

example of tribal organization, I will argue that the sanctuary of Angitia was made the “national” sanctuary beginning the second half of the 1st century, and not before.²⁰⁵

Angitia was an Italian goddess associated with snake-charming activities. Her cult is widespread around all Central Italy. It appears in the Iguvine Table, and also in some inscriptions and *ex-voto* offerings in the area of the Sabines, Vestine and Isernia.²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the main sanctuary of Angitia is located on the southwestern shore of the Fucino lake, in the actual Luco dei Marsi. After the Social War, Luco became one of the three *Municipia* of Marsi: *Anxinati-Lucense* or *Anxa*. By the Augustan period, recent excavations suggest that *Anxa* was a preeminent sanctuary in the area. The first cultic evidence belongs to 7th century pottery. Then, 6th and 5th centuries witnessed the deposition of some iron swords and bronze helmet, now pertaining to the Torlonian collection. Irrespective of the votive, the complex really began to exist in the 4th century. In this line, archeologists uncovered three main phases of edification on the complex of Luco: 4th century, late 2nd century, and late 1st BC early 1st AD. According to Grossi, during the first Samnite Wars (343-340), the hillfort above and the sanctuary were connected with a monumental wall. By the 2nd century two main sanctuaries were functioning together. Either Temple B or C were built in Italic fashion. The first one was Temple B built in the late 3rd century along with the first urbanization of *Anxa*. It had a podium with two *cellae* divided by a wall, a big column in the *pronaos*, and constructed in polygonal masonry. Temple C is a smaller building constructed in *opus incertum* with three inner rooms. During late 2nd and early 1st century, both structures were remodeled. Two marble statues of the

²⁰⁵ Bourdin, *Les peuples de l'Italia préromaine*, 259.

²⁰⁶ Dench, *From Barbarians*, 160.

Rhodian school, which have been identified by Demeter and Kore were also discovered on site and date to the same time period,²⁰⁷ as does a monumental terracotta statue of lazial elements associated to Angitia [Appen. B.]. Those last statues are important to ascertain the cosmopolitan value of the place, making clear that the Hellenistic trends were incorporated. Unlike other Italian shrines the cult of Angitia survived throughout the Social War. A big monumental temple with two chambers, Temple A, was constructed in the late 1st BC - early 1st AD century, abandoning, in favor of the new one, the previous temples, B and C [Appen. A], which became manufacturing areas.

What we understand when referring to a sanctuary as federal, means that it is the political center of a group, where each member after lending their autonomy complies with the consensus attached by the whole group. According to Letta, the archaeological complex of *Anxa* constitutes the major socio-political center of Marsi. It was a federal place to congregate and celebrate *ethos* assemblies as well as worship as a group to Angitia. However, there is no clear evidence to support it, and the centrality of Angitia in the configuration of the ethnic group already has an underlying assumption: The existence of an ethnic group as one political entity from the 4th century onwards.

A closer look at the Angitia's archeological complex, either epigraphy or literature, has never pointed out any federal character of the sanctuary before the Imperial period, what is essential to verify the federalism of any sacral complex.²⁰⁸ The main arguments to consider Angitia as the federal goddess are the archaeological materials recovered in the site, where the over discussed offering of Caso Cantavios is the master piece. That votive

²⁰⁷ Grossi, *Carta archeologica*, 502.

²⁰⁸ Bourdin, *Les peuples de l'Italia préromaine*, 340.

and especially the weapons found within the sanctuary complex have been regarded as dedication of enemies' weapons to the goddess.²⁰⁹

Even though there is a reference of Dion Halicarnassus about a city built by Remus, *Anchisa*,²¹⁰ the literary mentions, in which Angitia is linked to the Marsi began the 2nd century onwards. The earlier quote allows Letta to assert that the sanctuary of Angitia was one of the main sanctuaries of Central Italy since the 4th century. The supposed grandiosity of the site helps to presuppose a bigger significance other than a religious sphere alone. Following this idea, Letta regarded it as the political center of the Marsi by that period already.

Nevertheless, there is not any source pointing out the sanctuary of Angitia as the political center of the Marsi *per se*. First of all, the weaponry deposited in the sanctuary did not necessarily belong to the enemy. In addition to regular weapons, miniature size armament is pretty common in the deposit. Therefore, the weapons are not only to be read on a military basis. Instead, and as it happens in the burial sites, they could represent the social status of the depositor. Weapons were a symbol of power and the better your offer, the better your social standing could be. Furthermore, 4th century onwards down to the 1st century, many Hellenistic style anatomic terracotta votive elements became noticeable. Therefore, linking these two votive elements, we can assert that there were pilgrimages to the site. Rather than a Marsic federal pilgrimage, it has more likely to do with the healing characteristics of the goddess.

²⁰⁹ Grossi, *Carta archeologica*, 503.

²¹⁰ Letta, *I Marsi*, 60. Dio. Hal. 1.73. 3: Ἀγχίστην δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ προπάτορος Ἀγχίσου (Anchisa, after his grandfather Anchises).

Roman sources speak of Angitia and the Marsi on very few occasions in the same context. The first one is a Gnaeus Gellius quotation recorded by Solinus during Imperial time (See Chapter 2. 1.) dated in the second half of the mid-2nd century. The three daughters of Aeetes: Circe, Medea and Angitia are placed in Central Italy, and Angitia will be *vicini* or neighbor of Fucino, whereas the son of Medea Jason will reign over the Marsi. In a similar passage, Pliny addresses to Circe alone when talking about the serpent ability of Marsi.²¹¹ The clearest example that links Angitia with the Marsi is a passage in the 7th book of the *Aeneid*. The king Archippe sent Umbro, a Marruvian, - the main city of the Marsi during Imperial times- priest to the battlefield, despite his abilities to heal from snakes, Umbro died of a Trojan sword. Angitia mourned him in the burial near the lake of Fucino.²¹²

On this basis, Roman sources really began to connect Angitia with the whole *ethos* during the Imperial times. Although Gellius wrote before the Social War, his passage is most likely corrupted by Solinus rewriting. Besides, Angitia is one of the few big sanctuaries that survived the Social War. Therefore, Scheid wonders whether it was a deliberate Augustan policy to appropriate ancient Italian cults and make them Roman.²¹³ However, rather than Roman appropriation, the worship of Angitia was stressed at the request of local elites to sell Marsic identity better into the Roman political arena without

²¹¹ Plin. *Hist. Nat.* 7. 15 *only simile et in Italia Marsorum genus durat, quos a Circae filio ortos ferunt et ideo inesse iis vim naturalem eam. et tamen omnibus hominibus contra serpentes inest venenum*

²¹² Virg. *Aed.* 7.750. *Quin et Marruvia venit de gentes sacerdos, fronde super galeam et felici comptus oliva. Archippi regis missu, fortissimus Umbro, vipereo generi et graviter spirantibus hydris spargere qui somnos cantuque manuque solebat. Mulcebatque iras et morsus arte levabat. Sed non Dardaniae medicari supidis ictum evaluit, neque eum iuvere in vulnera cantus somniferi et Marsis quaesitae montibus herbae. Te nemo Angitae, vitrea te Fucinus unda, te liquidi flevere lacus*

²¹³ J. Scheid, *Rome et les grands lieux de culte d'Italie*, in *Pouvoir et religion dans le monde romain*, ed. A. Vigourt et al., (Paris: PUPS, 2006) 75-86.

forgetting about the sheer economical impact of the shrine and the cult. Local communities embellished the sanctuary with the creation of a new temple, Temple A. Besides, it is only in the Imperial period that snake iconography arose in the Marsica, thereby, Marsian elites were enforcing the association of Angitia's powers with Marsians.

Even though Letta tries to strip almost all the Roman sway, the Marsian pantheon bears much more Roman influence than previously thought. In fact, the Roman Hegemony was essential in the configuration of Angitia as the leading goddess of the Marsic people. Angitia became vital for the structuration of Marsic identity. Yet, it happened in a new era, when Marsic identity and Roman identity were blending together.

3.4 Conclusion

After thoroughly reviewing the material culture of Marsica, we cannot speak about a particular Marsian distinguishable ethnic identity before the incorporation of the Marsi in the Roman political body. The remains in the area suggest a cosmopolitan world with regional distinctiveness. Nevertheless, those differences are not an obstacle to distinguish elites who were integrated within Centro Italian and Mediterranean networks.

Communal communities were the intended target of the cultural program of those elites, but the evidence does not support the formation of coherent and structured political groups beyond the single community, not at least until the 1st century.

CHAPTER FOUR: MARSI OVER ROMAN SWAY

In antiquity, inter-state clashes were not simple power struggles between cohesive groups. However, in favor of my narration's understanding, the next chapter will treat ethnic groups as cohesive bodies. Although ethnic identities had key meanings for an individual or a community, specifically after the Second Punic War, they were not an obstacle as a means of gaining certain objectives.²¹⁴ The aim of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, it deals with the Roman author's history concerning Rome and Marsi as political entities from the 4th to 1st centuries. Secondly, it exposes insights about the complex nature of alliance and private agency of Marsian and Roman elites.

According to Roman tradition, Marsic conquest was limited to a couple of campaigns. By the end of the 4th century, in the context of the conventional Second Samnite War, Marsi faced Romans for the first-time siding, along with the Paeligni and the Samnites in 308.²¹⁵ The Marsi were subdued by Rome in 302. Then, both communities began an alliance, which sided Marsi with Rome until the Social War. The idea of this alliance is crystalized in Appian words, "No Victory No defeat with or without Marsi."²¹⁶

4.1 Approaching the Sources

In analyzing interactions between Marsi and Rome, the biggest problems are the scarcity of literary mentions and that all of them were written from the Roman perspective.

²¹⁴ Vell. 2.16.2: His personal gain was above his ethnic identity in Velleius Paterculus during Social War.

²¹⁵ Liv. 9.41. *ni Marsi eo primum proelio cum Romanis bellassent.*

²¹⁶ App. BC 1.46. See Chapter 3.1 for the Marsic warrior-like stereotype. πρότερον οὔτε κατὰ Μάρσων οὔτε ἄνευ Μάρσων γενέσθαι θρίαμβον

During the Middle Republic, Marsi are only mentioned in a couple occasions, most of the time, appearing along with other ethnic categories from the Augustan period Fourth Italian Region: Paeligni, Marrucini, Aequi [Fig. 17].²¹⁷

Despite the shortage of sources in the Mid-Republican period, a bigger obstacle for

Figure 17 Augustan IV province. Modified from Salmon, *Samnites*, Italy circa 300.

historical records is the reliability of the given accounts. Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* contains the most complete account of the Mid-Republican period. Others like Diodorus, Polybius or Appian narrate interesting passages too. However, the reliability of the historical record for the Mid- Republic is at stake, because the narration of Roman intervention in Central Italy is at least 200 years later than the described period. Moreover, Roman historical tradition began in the very late 3rd century with Fabius Pictor. Thus, it raises the question of what sources Livy used to ground his work.

Since Badian²¹⁸ argued that most of Livy's early story, down to the 2nd century, was an invention, it has been a hotly debated topic. According to hypercritical school, a historiographical tradition denying almost all Livian tradition, there was no veracity in any

²¹⁷ Pol. 2.24; Pliny 3.106.

²¹⁸ Ernst Badian, "The early historians," in *Latin Historians*, ed. Thomas Alan Dorey (London: Routledge, 1966), 11.

episode unless proven otherwise. This school argues that Livy and his peers did not ground their writing on contemporary records they were referencing. Current scholarship advocate for a more sophisticated approach. All of them agree that Roman accounts contain bias, but some are more prone to their truthfulness (conservative) than others (skeptical),²¹⁹ who see more pro-Roman distortion within.²²⁰

Even though Bradley posits that the use of ethnic labels as a means of understanding the history of Italy before its unification is artificial,²²¹ Oakley argues that most Roman writers certainly drew on 4th century Greek historians. Besides, at Augustan's time, Rome was still full of 3rd and 2nd century monuments and inscriptions. It is likely, then, that Livy, and the annalistic historians, who probably had access to the familiar tradition of Roman *nobiles*, had grounded their account in this historical memory. Then, albeit with much precaution, Livy could be useful to study and check certain types of information.

Those sources present only the Greco-Roman view, and even though archeology helps to reassess trustworthiness of Greek-Roman sources, the scarce and blurred archeological evidence have made historical sources unavoidable to approach Marsic political relations. Besides, archeological evidence should be analyzed in its own context and archeological material should not be used to fit within the historical narrative per se.²²²

²¹⁹ Fronda. *Between Roman and Carthage*, 7.

²²⁰ Scopacasa. *Ancient Samnium*, 120.

²²¹ Gary Bradley, "State, cities, and tribes in Central Italy," in *The emergence of state identities in Italy in the first millennium BC*, ed. Edward Herring and Kathryn Lomas (London: Accordia, 2000), 123ff. "States, cities and tribes in central Italy. Bradley regard this discussion basing on more ancient times. However, it seems fair to apply his view to 4th and almost until the end of 3rd century.

²²² Isayev, *Inside Ancient Lucania*, 141 f.

Despite all these flawed sources and war-based accounts, classical sources provide a good chance to approach to 4th-1st Central Apennine history. Looking further critically into the passages, it is possible to discern some glimpses of socio-political dynamism.

4.2 The New View: From Roman Domination to Roman Presence.

This section deals with the first encounters of Marsi and Rome during the 4th and 3rd centuries. Instead of two fixed political units, the group relationships rested on private territorial warlords depicted in the 3rd chapter. The main idea is to highlight the private agency of the elites creating alliance networks throughout Central Italy.

The context of the first encounters between Romans and Marsians has been an ongoing topic. During the next section, concerning the 4th and 3rd centuries, I will follow the thesis of Albert Eckstein. Eckstein argues that Italy was a warlike anarchic environment in which war was inherent. No international law regulated anything, and alliances shifted constantly, thus, political entities needed to fight in order to survive.²²³

²²³ Eckstein, *Mediterranean Anarchy*, *passim*.

Figure 18 Central Italy, circa 300 Stek. Cult places and cultural exchanged, 25

The first encounter between Marsi and Roman happened in the anarchic environment of the Latin War²²⁴ around 340.²²⁵ According to Livy, Marsi and Paeligni let a Samnite-Roman army pass through their territory to wage war against Latin and Campanians. It seems that Samnite-Romans and Marsi were on favorable, or, at least, neutral terms. If Livy's excerpt is to be trusted,²²⁶ it shows the volatile nature of ethnic borders, where even the Romans of the 1st century had issues discerning the territories of the various *ethos*. The territory attached in the excerpt to Marsi and Paeligni seems to be the one that would belong to Volsci, Aequii or Sidicini [Fig.18].²²⁷

²²⁴ Romans and Samnites were enemies a couple years before being allies.

²²⁵ Livy. 8.6.8; *consulesque duobus scriptis exercitibus per Marsos Paelignos que profecti adiuncto Samniun exercitus ad Capuam*

²²⁶ Stephan P. Oakley *A commentary on Livy. Books VI-X, Vol.II* (London Clarendon Prss, 1998): 15. Oakley argues in favor of the reliability of the passage

²²⁷ *Schol. Veron. Ad Aen.*, VII, 683.

A Roman senate debate recorded by Livy in 325 records the second reference to Marsi. Rome waged war against Vestini because she was fearing a reaction that did not happen against herself of Marsi, Paeligni and Marrucini.²²⁸ This is probably a corrupted passage in which the Social War and the grouping of those *ethos* in the Augustan Fourth region constructed an idea of affinity. Livy stressed the disposition of all those *ethne* to war, lying underneath the idea of warrior-like people. On account of the passage, Letta argued that those people were a military league, the Sabellic League. Nevertheless, Letta himself later dismissed such theory.²²⁹

There is another hypothetical event in Titus Livius's narration, around 323, in which Marsi were involved. Livy speculated about what would happen if Alexander the Great invaded Italy. Livy included Marsians among Roman allies.²³⁰ Once again, Livy was applying his view down to the 4th century, where he saw Marsi as trustworthy allies.

In 310, a Roman consul went through Marsic territory with no consequences,²³¹ suggesting the same neutral or favorable terms of the previous pass of 340. Contrarily, in 308 Livy recounts that Marsi sided against Rome with Samnites.²³² On the other hand, Diodorus writes that Marsi were Roman allies.²³³ What is striking here is not the contradiction of the different traditions, but how Livy treats this event. Livy tries strongly

²²⁸ Livy. 8.29. *Quid illum facturum fuisse, si, quod belli casus ferunt Marsque communis*

²²⁹ Letta, *I Marsi*, 64. Letta argues in favor of the Sabellic League. Cesare Letta "Aspetti della romanizzazione in area marsa: il centro di ampero" in *Comunita indigene e problemi della romanizzazione nell'Italia centro-meridionale (IV-III sec. Ac. C.)*, ed. John Mertens & Roger Lambrechts (Bruxellas-Rome: Institut Historique Belge de Rome, 1991), 159-60. Dismissed the Sabellic league theory.

²³⁰ Livy 9.19. *Latium deinde omne [...] et Marsis Palenisque [...] aut socios ualidos Romanis aut fractos bello inuenisset hostes*

²³¹ Livy 9.38. *concurrunt, protinus inde Etruriam per Marsos ac Sabinos petitori*

²³² Livy 9.41. *ni Marsi eo primum proelio cum Romanis bellassent.*

²³³ Diod. Sic. 20. 101. 5: Ὁ δὲ δῆμος ὁ Ῥωμαίων πρὸς τε Μαρσούς καὶ Παλιγνούς, ἔτι δὲ Μαρρουκίους, συμμαχίαν ἐποιήσατο

to minimize the defection of Marsi. This minimization goes in hand with the ideal of the years after the *Bellum Marsicum*, that Marsi have been the most loyal allies: “No victory no defeat with or without Marsi.” Whichever happened, both traditions agree that Marsi signed a *foedus* with Rome in 304.²³⁴

Following the *foedus*, Rome established the colony of Alba at Aequian territory in 303-2. In 302 or 298²³⁵ Rome set the colony of Carseoli, again in Aequian territory. On this occasion, the Marsic people revolted. According to Livy, M. Valerius Maximus, after being nominated dictator, beat the Marsi in a battle and took over the strongholds of Milonia, Plestina and Fresila. Thus, Rome compelled the Marsi to surrender some portion of their land again, and a new treaty was signed.²³⁶

The *Fasti Triumphalis* accounts the celebration of a triumph by M. Valerius Maximus over the Marsi and the Etruscans. In 302, Marsi likely allied with the Etruscans in a suggestively still anarchic environment, where Marsic autonomy was clear. Some chapters later, in 294, Livy recounts how the stronghold of Milonia was under Samnite orbit. Romans attempted and conquered the place.²³⁷ This Samnite conquest was to ensure the position in the Salto Valley according to Letta.²³⁸ There is not any direct evidence to support this logic assumption, because ethnic identity was not the main grouping entity.²³⁹

²³⁴ Livy. 9.45; *ut Marrucini Marsi Paeligni Frentani mitterent Romam oratores pacis petendae amicitiaeque*

²³⁵ Was the colony established before or after the war? The *Fasti triumphalis* suggest that the triumph over Marsi was celebrated in 301.

²³⁶ Livy. 10.3.2.: *profectus dictator cum exercitu proelio uno marsos fundit compulsis deinde in urbes munitas, Miloniam, Plestinam, Fresiliam intra diez paucoscepit et parte agri multatis Marsis foedus restituit*

²³⁷ Livy. 10.34. *Postumius Miloniam oppugnare adortus ui primo atque impetur [...] Samnitium caesi tria milia*

²³⁸ Letta, *Un lago*, 140.

²³⁹ Fronda. *Between Roman and Carthage*, 1-53. Another discussion is also possible based upon the interregional and interstate rivalries analyzed in depth by Fronda for the late 3rd century during The Punic wars in Italy.

In a fluid and volatile environment, Milonia's aristocracy could have chosen to shift sides and join the Samnites.

Everything accounted in the previous paragraphs is the small glimpse recorded by classical sources concerning Roman-Marsic political relation during the 4th and early 3rd century. What seems clear is that communities grouped beyond Marsic name in the 1st century were by the early 3rd century under Roman influence. However, the dynamics of the interactions between both powers are not clear enough and some of old assumptions need re-examination.

Up until now, scholars have automatically linked Roman domination with the obligation to provide troops. The inscription of *Caso Cantavios*²⁴⁰ fits perfectly within the narrative that after Rome had certain people under her foe, they were required to contribute troops for the *alae*. However, the inscription does not necessarily mean a hierarchical alliance between the Marsians and Romans; it has been a modern interpretation of the Latin word *socique* of the inscription (Chapter 2.2.1).

Unfortunately, classical sources do not provide much information about Roman and Italians treaties. There are some technical words, such as *aequum* and *iniquum*. *Iniquum* means an unfavorable treaty, which bound the defeated party to Rome, defining Romans superiors, who can apply their authority as wished. On the contrary, *aequum* recognized both parties equally maintaining the sovereignty and bonding both sides to defend or assist the other.

²⁴⁰Letta, *Un Lago*, 140. More info in Crawford, *Imagines*, 140.

Although sources did not directly tell us about whether Marsian treaties were *iniquum* or *aequum*. Letta argues that the Marsic treaty was *iniquum*,²⁴¹ because Rome took Marsian lands out in 302. Notwithstanding, to consider the treaties of Rome in regards to the duality *aequum/iniquum* is an error. It is a dichotomy created by modern scholars, thus *aequum/ iniquum* cannot be applied to Roman experience.²⁴² Pierre Sanchez and Anthony-Marc Sanz consider both terms as a diplomatic rhetoric word. Sanchez and Sanz state that the treaties differ over time, and the power relation of each party determines the obligation of each one.²⁴³ Unlike traditional scholarship has interpreted, an *iniquum* does not mean that they had more burden providing more troops or supplies; on the contrary, an *aequum* treaty carries out less burden and more benefits.

There are not any references to *aequum* or *iniquum* treaties with regards to the Marsi, nor is there information about how Romans recruited Marsic contingents. Ancient scholars tend to assume that once under a *foedus*, allies had to provide troops, since Dionysius of Halicarnassus²⁴⁴ dictated that a *foedus* implies military assistance. However, there is no indication of legal obligation. Recently, Rich convincingly presents that formal treaties existed between Rome and her allies, but not in subordination.²⁴⁵ Rome was another power surrounded by similar states, and allies did not take part in subordination, allies participated whenever their interested match with the Romans. Indeed, more than a

²⁴¹ Letta, *I Marsi*, 91.

²⁴² Maria Floriana, "International relationships in the Ancient World" *Fundamina* 20, 1, (Jan. 2014): 191 f.

²⁴³ Pierre Sanchez and Anthony-Marc Sanz, "Le rôle des foedera dans la construction de l'Italie romaine," in *L'Italia centrale e la creazione di una Koine cultural? I percorsi della romanizzazione*, ed. Michel Aberson, Maria Cristina Biella, Massimiliano di Fazio, Pierre Sanchez & Manuela Wullschledger (New York: Peter Lang, 2016), 36-37.

²⁴⁴ Dion Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 6.95.2

²⁴⁵ John Rich "Treaties, allies and the Roman conquest of Italy," in *War and peace in Ancient and Medieval Europe*, ed. Philip de Souza & John France (Cambridge: Cambridge University press 2008), 51-75.

domination, the shift and revolts accounted by Livy seems to refer to an early Italian environment where alliances and common enterprises are temporal and not subject to Roman domination. Those complex alliances relied on aristocratic social relationships to seek mutual interest enterprises (chapter 3.1). As Allan Kent states, “such relations facilitated military cooperation among different Italian communities, supplementing any existing formal alliances. After all, even formal alliances relied heavily on individuals to act as guarantors.”²⁴⁶

Roman anachronistic passages have obscured earliest encounters, but reading into their lines we can assert that Rome was another Italian state in a multipolar world when entered in contact with Marsi. The *Peer polity interaction*²⁴⁷ theory can be applied to this first period: Equal communities surrounded Rome and changes were driven by competition and interactions between such communities. The policy of incorporating allies beyond common interests led Rome to be able to become the hegemon of Italy by the middle of the 3rd century. For this time, the theory of *core and periphery* suits much better. This theory states that interactions among unequal forces of the same single system are responsible for changes, so Roman behavior had a much higher impact on the cultural change. Although the Italian communities preserve their nominal autonomy, in practice, there was ‘a steeply unipolar hierarchy of Italian states’ structured around Rome.²⁴⁸ Rome was the strongest city, the hegemon of Italy, so her interest was prevalent. Allies look at

²⁴⁶ Patrick Allant Kent, “Reconsidering *Socii* in Roman armies before Second Punic Wars” in *Process of Integration and identity formation in the Roman Republic*, ed. Saskia T. Roselaar (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012): 81.

²⁴⁷ Colin Renfrew “Introduction, in *Peer polity interaction and Socio-Political Change*, ed. Colin Renfrew & J. F. Cherry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1-18.

²⁴⁸ Fronda. *Between Roman and Carthage* 28.

Rome differently, they seek her power or avoid it. By the end of the 4th century, Marsic people seemed to constitute, at least for the Romans, an *ethos*, which was under Roman influence. We cannot assume that the Marsi were already a constituted *ethos* or had been a simple military alliance²⁴⁹ that after being defeated by Rome began to group beyond this name to present themselves in more favorable terms in front of Rome.

4.3 The 3rd Century: Hannibal and Roman Military cControl: *ex formula togarum*.

The Second Punic War was a major turning point on Roman relations towards Italians allies. After the Rome-Carthaginian encounter, Italians were strongly tied to Rome. At the same time, as Rome grew stronger, Roman power offered better opportunities. One of these opportunities was the participation in joint military operations, so we will analyze how Romans and Italian connections were organized through the army.

The loss of chapters 11-20 of Livy's book leaves us with little information regarding the period in the wake of the Second Punic war.²⁵⁰ After the War of Pirro and the First Punic War, Romans began to fight over all the Mediterranean. There is no evidence for or against Marsic participation with Rome outside Italy before the Second Punic War. However, to find evidence suggesting the participation of Marsic contingents on the broader Mediterranean fighting as mercenaries²⁵¹ or Roman peers would not be odd.²⁵² From the 260's onwards, Rome began to manipulate the idea of Italia for her own

²⁴⁹ See problems of the roots for ethic creation *a priori* or after alliances in Stephane Bourdin, *Les peuples de l'Italia préromaine*, 300.

²⁵⁰ The period of 292-221 is lacking in Livy.

²⁵¹ Bourdin *Les peuples de l'Italia préromaine*, 568. An inscription (CIS 5984) bearing PQY in Carthage to a mercenary leader recall to a *Pacuies*. Also Bourdin, *Ibid.*, 711 talks about mercenaries. V-III centuries coins found in Marsic territory suggest also the realization of such activity.

²⁵² Livy 28.25. marsi volunteer to go to Africa in 205. Liv. 33, 36, 10. Marsic presence in Gaul in 196.

benefit.²⁵³ Rome was strong enough to maintain peace at home and launch herself in imperialistic, profitable adventures. The extension of Roman power throughout the Mediterranean clashed into the Second Punic War.

During the Second Punic War, Livy accounts that Hannibal devastated Marsic territory in 217²⁵⁴ and then after retiring from Rome, in 211, Hannibal marched through it again.²⁵⁵ Both events should cause resentment against Rome among Marsic people, because Rome was not strong enough to keep the peace in the Italian peninsula. However, all Abruzzo people “remained firmly loyal to Rome throughout the Second Punic War.”²⁵⁶ Proximity to the Latin colonies of Alba Fucens, Carseoli, Sora and Rome herself prevented the shift towards the Punic side. Besides, since the establishment of the Latin Colonies, they did not seem to suffer any Roman intrusion, enjoying great autonomy. Unlike other areas, Marsi did not suffer any serious intra-state and regional inter-state stress, and Marsic aristocracy was probably sharing with Rome a “community of interest.”²⁵⁷

The victory of Rome in the Second Punic War catalyzed and established Rome as the most powerful state in the West Mediterranean. After the war, Rome subdued Macedonia and began to introduce herself in the Eastern side of the Mediterranean. The loyalty of the Marsic elite improved the relations with the Roman *nobilitates*, increasing the above mentioned “community of interest.” The unsuccessful strategy of Hannibal to

²⁵³Eleanor Jefferson, “Problems and audience in Cato’s *origenes*” in *Process of Integration and identity formation in the Roman Republic*, ed. Saskia T. Roselaar (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012): 325-326.

²⁵⁴ Livy. 22.9: *Marsos inde Marrucinosque et Paelignos deuastat*

²⁵⁵ Livy. 26.11. *inde Albensi agro in Marsos, hinc Amiternum Forulosque uicum*

²⁵⁶ Fronda, *Between Rome and Carthage*, 292. *Contra* Plut. *Vit. Fab.* 20. There is a suggestive passage of a Marsic soldier, who thought to defect. Although it seems more a moral history, who afterwards praised the same soldier and enhanced the marsic bravery and valor.

²⁵⁷ Fronda, *Between Rome and Carthage*, 49.

make allies disaffected the Roman side, and the big ally's manpower allowed Rome to overcome Carthage.

How Romans drafted Italian manpower is not clear. Rome had an equal size of allies raised along with each legion.²⁵⁸ In this regard, sources talk about a *formula* or *ex formula togatorum*. Although a relation between a formula and recruitment is clear, it is not well understood. The scarce references to a *formula* are related exclusively to Latin colonies,²⁵⁹ and *ex formula togatorum* appears only once in an epigraphy of a *lex agraria* around 110.²⁶⁰ Diverse interpretations have been proposed regarding the *formula*. On a basic level, *ex formula togarum* have been interpreted as a formal manpower census from where Romans recruited allies. Nevertheless, this conception seems more a modern creation, because as we have already discussed, there is not any clear-cut association between Italian *foedus* and Roman recruitment. While treaties dictate military assistance, there is not any formal obligation. As discussed above, military alliances did not rely on formal and obligatory systems in the 4th and late 3rd centuries. However, Polybius' census demonstrates a Roman consciousness of the available manpower. As Allan Kent states, "Whether or not built in some way on a legal precedent, by the time of the Second Punic War the Italians were under a de facto obligation to provide men for Roman armies upon."²⁶¹ This obligation mainly fell to Latin colonies, which had been the main recruitment pool.

²⁵⁸ Livy 8.8.14 *alterum tantum ex latino dilectu adiciebatur*

²⁵⁹ Livy 22.57.10; 27.10; 29.15.13.

²⁶⁰ Michael, H. Crawford, *Roman Statutes* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1996), no. 2.1: the allies and those of the Latin name in the land of Italy from whom [the consuls] are accustomed to demand soldiers *ex formula togatorum*

²⁶¹ Patrick Allant Kent, "The Italians in Roman armies," in *The peoples of Ancient Italians*, ed. Gary Farney & Guy Bardley (Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 261.

By the 2nd century, Italians were keen to participate in overseas adventures. Rome was stronger to demand allies. Besides, now Italians and Romans shared a “community of interest.” This prominence of Rome from the second half of 3rd century onwards helped to fix the territory of different *ethos*. In addition, grouping together under an ethnic category, Italians could lobby and control their own territory as well as manpower better.

4.4 The 2nd Century: Integration or Segregation?

The 2nd century has been characterized by the enormous expansion of Rome and Italians engaged actively in the imperialistic Roman business. This section will deal on the exact nature of the relations of Italians in relation with Rome. The analysis of Italo-Roman connection can be discerned especially within elites’ connections: Italian *negotiatores*, the major Italian temples, and also in the Roman army. The main idea beyond is that the connections cannot be regarded as simple as integration or segregation. Although a big push towards cultural homogenization happened, human power relations are much more complex.

From 205 onwards, Marsic clearly took part in Roman overseas adventures.²⁶² Abruzzo people constituted the backbone of Roman *socii alae* in the conquest of the Mediterranean.²⁶³ However, the Roman army was not the unique cause of Marsic mobility. During 2nd century, Marsi people were among the Italian *negotiators*²⁶⁴ too. Owing to 2nd century overseas close relations between Italics and Roman, modern scholarship tended to

²⁶² Livy 28.45. *Scipio cum ut [...] Marsi Paeligni Marrucinique multi uoluntarii nomina in classem dederunt.*

²⁶³ Liv. 33, 36, 10. Marsic presence in Gaul in 196.

²⁶⁴ Adela Barreda “Gentes Italicas en Hispania citerior (218-214 d.C.),” (PhD diss, University of Barcelona, 1999) shows how there are similar names between Fucino Lake based people and among Hispanus Ulterior ones, namely two names: In Cartago ova Turulli; In Greece M. Attius Peticius Marsus (in 48 BC.) In Letta, *Un lago*, 2001, 146.

address an integration process. Indeed, throughout the Mediterranean, namely in the East, Roman and Italians formed a single body.²⁶⁵ Besides, the Roman army has been considered as the most cohesive element in which Italian allies and Romans interacted. Within Italy, *hospitium* and *amicitia* relations among elites attested in the literary and archeological record nourish the union. Following the same path, archeology attested a similar cultural pattern in the building of monumental architecture across Italy, which was the main exponent of the “self-Romanization” according to 20th century archeologists.

Recently, all those ideas have undergone re-examination. Latin language and Roman culture did not conquer Italy until the Augustan era.²⁶⁶ Latinized Italians not only kept their identities and languages alive until the 1st century, but also they reinforced them. Thus, integration or not, aristocracy malleably constructed and renegotiated ethnic identity on the basis of their own interests.

Regarding material culture, Roman and Italians followed similar cultural patterns. Building monumental temples was a local way to assert power, instead of a “self-Romanization” act. The “federal” sanctuary in Luco dei Marsi underwent a re-building process during the 2nd century,²⁶⁷ and that time the Marsic elite was undergoing an act of self-affirmation. Besides, the same building pattern of the Romans did not necessarily mean that they were delivering the same message. In fact, the Marsi were re-creating a message in opposition to Rome rather than assimilation.

²⁶⁵ Saskia T. Roselaar, “Introduction” in *Process of Integration*, 8.

²⁶⁶ There is not only attestation of Oscan language in Augustan Rome, even current days in Southern Italy there is the Griko with around 60.000 speakers Francesco, Pier. *Minoranze etniche e linguistiche*. (Cosenza: Bios, 1998).

²⁶⁷ Campanelli, *Il Tesoro del Lago*. Temple B corresponds to this period; see also the sanctuary constructed in Amplero. Letta, *Aspetti della romanizzazione, passim*.

Money to carry out the building activity came from overseas Italian activities.²⁶⁸

Those Italian *negotiores* were surely protected by Romans. Nevertheless, Rome was not following any state directed business to profit directly from Italian *negotiators*. Rosellar has proven that Romans only acted militarily by request of Italians, and after considering their needs. A Roman intervention took place mostly where Roman and Italian interests collated.²⁶⁹ Thus, Rome kept her interests as a priority, although Italians indirectly benefited from her activity.

In regards to the army as an element to integrate Italians in the Roman world, Pfeilschifter²⁷⁰ has drawn a very negative perspective. Pfeilschifter points out that each ally served within their own contingents, and had little contact with legionaries. Even the corps of *extraordinarii*²⁷¹ would not have much contact with Romans. On the contrary, Patterson suggests that those *extraordinarii* Italians would create links among Roman and Italians but also among Italians themselves.²⁷²

There is no literary or archeological evidence about those plausible links among Italians; although the coordination during the Social War suggests the contrary.²⁷³ In turn, Roman and Italian links evidence between the 3rd-2nd century are numerous. Those connections, called *hospitium*, were a means of reciprocal relationship between individuals from different communities, often extended over many generations. The basic function was

²⁶⁸ Scopacasa, *Ancient Samnium*, 78. It was a pre-condition never a catalyst.

²⁶⁹ Saskia T. Roselaar, “” in *Process of Integration*, 157f.

²⁷⁰ R. Pfeilschifter, “The Allies in the Republican Army and the Romanisation of Italy,” in *Roman by Integration: Dimensions of Group Identity in Material Culture and Text*, ed. R. Roth & J. Keller (Portsmouth: RI, 2007), 27–42.

²⁷¹ Pol. 6.26.6–9. Crème de la crème of allies, probably aristocratic. They camp near from the commandant.

²⁷² Patterson, “Contact, Co-operation, and Conflict in Pre-Social War Italy” in *Process of Integration*, 217f.

²⁷³ Secretly send envoys and exchange of *hostes* App BC 1.38: κρύφα τε διεπρεσβεύοντο συντιθέμενοι περὶ τῶνδε καὶ ὁμηρα διέπεμπον ἐς πίστιν ἀλλήλοις.

to provide hospitality away from home, and it was recorded, as proof of friendship, in a *Tessera hospitalis*. One of the best-known examples is a ram's head in bronze found in Trassaco [Fig.19]. A local Marsi, Titus Staiodius, hosted the Roman notable named Titus Manlius. We can assume this was the Staiodius copy displayed in his house, or as a recent theory suggests in a local sanctuary.²⁷⁴ Even though, Letta assigned a late 3rd century chronology to the artefact, now he favors a more recent one, the 2nd century.²⁷⁵

Figure 19. A *Tessera Hospitalis*, Patterson, “Elite networks in pre-Social War Italy,” in *L’Italia central*, 55.

This is not the unique evidence of friendship among Marsi and Roman aristocrats. Classical sources make references to Poppaedi Silo²⁷⁶ and Vettius Scato,²⁷⁷ who were two of the leaders of Marsi in the so-called *Bellum Marsicum*., who had very strong ties with Romans in the eve of the Social War.

The 2nd century witnessed an extensive expansion in which Romans and Italians per *motu proprio* collaborated and benefited alike from the Roman Empire. Now peninsular

²⁷⁴ Licia Luschi “L’ ariete dei Manlii. Note su una tessera hospitalis dal fucino,” *SCO* 54 (2008): 137-46.

²⁷⁵ 3rd century chronology in Letta & D’amato, *Epigrafia della Marsica* (Milan: Goliardica 1976), 216-17. 2nd century in Letta *Un Lago*, 2001, 152-53.

²⁷⁶ Plut. *Vit. Cat. Min.* 2.1-4. Druso hosted Silo. Diod. 37. 15.2 Marius greeted Silo like a kinsmen.

²⁷⁷ Cice. *Phillipics* 12.27 Cn.Pompeius, Sexti [...] P. Vettio Scatone, duce Marsorum [...] ‘Quem te appellem?’ inquit. At ille: ‘Voluntate hospitem, necessitate hostem’

elites were closer to each other, and so all Roman and Italians together worked in a more tied system. However, integration did not mean equality. The unequal and harsh treatment in the army, the abuse of Roman magistrates, the Gracchian reform or the lack of political influence in Rome were reasons for Italian disaffection with the Roman state in the late 2nd century.

4.5 Bellum Marsicum and the Creation of Tota Italia.

The 1st century can be described as the century of the Roman Civil Wars. It began with the Social War and ended, after facing three major civil fights, with the victory of Augustus over Antonius in Actium. That is why Augustus became the first of the interminable list of emperors. This last section of this chapter challenges the view that Italians acted as a unified block during the Civil Wars providing an insight into how intra-state and interregional clashes affected allegiances in the above depicted outline.

The attested strong friendship between Italians and Roman did not prevent the Social War from happening. Lomas states that weaker ties are more effective to flourish group relationships,²⁷⁸ arguing that the close relation among Italo-Roman aristocracies rather than prevent the outbreak of Social War provoked it.

The Social War, or sometimes called the Marsian War, is a difficult event to analyze. One of the difficulties of this analysis lies in the blurred evidence to ascertain the desires of the *socii*; even the trigger of the war is unknown.²⁷⁹

Recent approaches rather than a sudden *ad hoc* war argue more for a failure in the negotiations between the Roman Senate and Italian aristocracy. Silo's march towards Rome with ten thousand soldiers and the sudden appearance of Gaius Domitius²⁸⁰ was a planned encounter in which Rome seemed keen to negotiate.²⁸¹ However, whatever the reason, those contacts failed and a full-scale war erupted.²⁸²

Figure 20 Ethnic distribution of Italy before the Social War. Dart, *Insurgent*, 8.

²⁷⁸ Kathryn Lomas "The Weakest Link: Elite Social Networks in Republican Italy" in *Process of Integration*, 210-213.

²⁷⁹ Revision on Christopher J. Dart, *The Social War, 91 to 88 BCE: A History of the Italian Insurgency against the Roman Republic* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

²⁸⁰ Diod. Sic. 37.15.

²⁸¹ Fiona Tweedie "The *Lex Licinia Mucia* and the *Bellum Italicum*" in *Process of Integration*, 129.

²⁸² Appian *Bell. Civ.* 1.34.1; 1.39.1.

Figure 21 A Bull goring a wolf. Vitelu inscribed.

To face the war, Italians organized a parallel state with the center in Corfinum, which was named Italia;²⁸³ Insurgents drew ITALIA/VITELIU [Fig.21. & 22.] banners in their coinage too. This is a group under a banner. An objective they shared in opposition to Rome.²⁸⁴ A call for the *libertas* and escape from

Roman abuses. Nevertheless, this aggregation of forces

was

based upon formal but also personal ties, where allegiances were not necessarily determined by ethnicity.²⁸⁵ Silo's figure was essential in the agglomeration of Italian

Figure 22 Italia engraved in the coin.

forces. He appears to be the most prominent figure within the Italics: *Dux et auctor* (leader and author) of the Social War.²⁸⁶ Insurgents split their army in two: The Marsic side, under Silo's consular command and Samnite group with Papius Mutilus in front.²⁸⁷

Insurgents almost defeated Rome during the first onslaught, but after some victories²⁸⁸ and terrible losses,²⁸⁹ by 88 Marsian forces surrendered. From this point

²⁸³ Diod. Sic. 37.2.9.

²⁸⁴ Bourdin, *Les peuples de l'Italia préromaine*, 782.

²⁸⁵ Vell. Pat. 2.16: Velleius great-grandfather, Minatius Magius of Aeclanum, an hirpini who raised a legion and remained loyal to Rome.

²⁸⁶ C.J. Dart, "Quintus Poppaedius Silo dux et auctor of the Social War," *Athenaeum* 98, 1, (2010), 111-126. Vell. Pat. 2.15.1: Velleius says that Silo was the one encouraging Italians to revolt.

²⁸⁷ Diod. Sic 37. 2.6; The Italian constitution argues that other nine commanders had imperium too. However, these two had *summon imperium*.

²⁸⁸ App. *Bell. Civ.* 41: Vettius Scato defeat Roman forces; App. *Bell. Civ.* 44 & Liv. Epit. 73 Scato again killed a Roman consul Rutilus, and Livy associate this victory to Marsi; App. *Bell. Civ.* 50: Roman general Porcius Caton killed by marsians.

²⁸⁹ App. *Bell. Civ.* 1.46: 6000 Marsian slain; App. *Bell. Civ.* 1. 47. Lafrenius one of the generals died in battle.

onwards, the allies' question, how to incorporate the allies in the Roman body, was incorporated within Roman political arena. Enfranchisement lasted long, shaping the First Roman Civil War and even the revolt of Spartacus.

The reason for the delay was that the Roman who could grant citizenship would become the champion of those people, acquiring too much power. By the 80's onward, Marsian leaders, as all Italians, were in the middle of clashes between rival political factions in Rome called the "First Civil War." Italians were not pro-*optimates* or pro-*populares* parties,²⁹⁰ as all aristocracies they would go to bed with the most profitable party. Marius and Cinna tried to ensure Italian groups and issued coins in favor of them.²⁹¹ It is clear that most of the Samnites and Lucanians were on the Marius side.²⁹² In 87, allies who surrendered, Marsians among them, were promised citizenship by Marius. However, Plutarch accounts that Sulla tried twice to attract Marsians by offering his protection. In this game, intra-state rivalries and practical choices affected the loyalty of Marsi. Unfortunately, the lack of evidence makes it impossible to analyze those rivalries and choices that Marsic aristocracy did those years, but it would be good to remember that from this point onwards Marsians are no longer independent from Rome.

After 70 all Italians were equals and officially embedded within Roman patronage system. Municipalization began to emerge and those cities became hubs for political promotion. Marsi also needed new networks to link themselves to Rome. Those could be at city level with the *Patrones*, but most of the links kept being of a personal nature, and not all Marsi, not even people from the same *municipia* followed the same political

²⁹⁰ Letta, *I marsi*, 90. Letta argues that the Marsi were in the anti-oligarchy party.

²⁹¹ Robert Rowland, "Numismatic Propaganda under Cinna," *TAPhA*, 97 (1966), 408 ff.

²⁹² App. 1.68.

factions.²⁹³ For instance, in a passage of Caesar we notice how a Marsic and Paeligni turned from the contingent of Domitius Ahernorbarbus to Caesars.²⁹⁴ On the other side, just at the same time in Africa occurred the opposite. Two Marsic centurions deserted from Curio's to Attius Varius, which was on the side of Caesar.²⁹⁵ This only strengthens the idea of a very volatile and shifting allegiances within Roman politics where local and regional dispute could affect highly.

Finally, at the time of Octavian's appeals to Italian unanimity in 32 against Egypt (Marcus Aurelius), Augustus was promoting a sense of unity of all Italy. Recalling *Tota Italia* as a single coherent political structure was new for the different Italian communities. By this time, ethnic identities were nothing else than an attractive political tool in the Roman political arena.

4.6 Conclusion

During the 4th century, the Marsians, an ethnonym given by Greek and Roman sources, was a military alliance of communities living around Marsica to wage war against other Italian states in the multipolar world they were living in. By the mid-3rd century, Rome was on top of a steeply unipolar hierarchy of Italian states, becoming the hegemon of Italy so that the relationship between the two entities changed.

After the initial struggles between Marsians and Romans around the late 4th - early 3rd century, the later infringed a severe punishment upon communities labeled as Marsians by the creation of the colonies of Alba Fucens, Carseoli and Sora. Even though Marsian communities maintained some lands, in which Romans didn't intervene, the

²⁹³ Caesar *Bell. Civ.* 2.29.

²⁹⁴ Caesar *Bell. Civ.* 1.20.

²⁹⁵ Caesar *Bell. Civ.* 2.27.

Roman power was present throughout those Latin Colonies. These settlements surely helped in the configuration of a more traceable group, because it fixed the territory of the Marsi.

The Marsians themselves, appropriated and used the name given by Romans, especially to benefit from the Roman Mediterranean Empire in the aftermath of the coming of Hannibal to Italy. The adherence of Marsians to Rome allowed the Marsian elite to profit highly from the Roman Mediterranean Empire. The above mentioned shared “community of interest” worked perfectly and helped to the Marsians themselves to come together to group their interest in order to negotiate better deals with Rome, defining a clearer ethnic group.

In the eve of the Social War, the attested strong friendships between Marsian and Roman elite does not bear any doubt about a long lasting partnership, which ended up in a war due to their political differences. In this war, the banner of Italia/Vitelu was used to group together everyone who opposed Rome, but the early surrender of the Northern allies in which Marsians were included shows the different agenda followed by the allies.

By the second half of the 1st century, when the Marsians were Romans, the Marsian banner bore quite a different meaning. It is this time when the Marsica depicted by the sources was portrayed as a cohesive entity in the turn of the Republic and the Principate. This period the Marsian identity was fixed and received meanings that have obscured our understanding of previous periods: pristine warrior-like people. This idea was used in the Roman Political Arena by Marsian elites to differentiate themselves from other Italians, as an advertising strategy.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE SETTLEMENT PATTERN IN MARSICA: FROM *OCRES-* NECROPOLIS TO THE MUNICIPIA

By the mid-1st century, Letta argues convincingly that Marsic territory included three main *civitas* out of the five *municipium* depicted by Pliny.²⁹⁶ The archeological remains of the area seem to be consistent with Letta's theory, but still it raises the question of when and how the city model urbanization came to be in the Marsic territory. Ancient sources and modern scholarship argue that the Central Apennines had a non-urban character during the proto-history. However, recent studies suggest urbanization should not only be grounded in the *polys*-model, because effective alternative models also emerged.²⁹⁷ The next chapter presents an alternative urbanization model to the classical city-urban idea around Fucino Lake, covering the chronological span of the 1st millennium from the first "urban" models to the aftermath of the Social War, ending with the clear-cut urbanized Marsica presented by the sources. It is right to assert that most people lived in the hilltops during the Iron Age, which was part of endogenous social developments of Centro Italian communities and not because of Roman aggression. After the Roman intrusion in Marsica, in the turn of the 3rd century, some settlements arose again at the foot of the mountains suggesting a change that lasted until the mid-1st century. It is around the Augustan time that the so-called *municipia*, a proper *polys* model, began to appear forming from the

²⁹⁶ Cesare Letta "'Oppida," "vici," e "pagi," in area Marsa," in *Geografia e istoriografia nel mondo classico*, ed. M. Sordi (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1988), 228-233.

²⁹⁷ Scopacasa, *Ancient Samnium*, 160-1.

aggregation of previously existent habitation. Since the turn of the 3rd century, Roman power directly interacted with Marsians affecting the configuration of their identity, which began to become more fixed and visible, and ended up forming as we can read it in the sources with the municipalization process.

5.1 The Rise of The Ogres-Necropolis Model

This section starts out by providing a general outline of the material evidence to analyze the settlement trend from Paleolithic to Bronze-Iron Age transition. Then, it follows by addressing the *ogres-necropolis* paradigm, which is the model of habitation proposed for the protohistoric period in the Fucino area. According to this habitation model, the many hilltops in the area have been inhabited since the 8th century and they are connected to the necropolises in the plains of the mountains. Besides, the section will discuss this model under the concept of “low-density urbanization.”

Figure 23 Hilltops in Marsica. Grossi in *Carta Archeologica*, 189.

The *ocres-necropolis* model is a theory based on archeological surveys throughout Marsica, which has identified a large number of fortified hilltop centers [Fig. 23].²⁹⁸ According to Grossi, the fortified upland habitation centers were connected to the necropolises found in the plain of the valley. Whereas people occupied the uplands of the hills for habitational and defensive purposes, they buried their dead in the plains, enforcing the attachment of the community forming a coherent spatial relation between *ocres* and necropolises. Grossi, based upon the chronology of the first grave goods found in Scurcola or Corvaro, underpins that this pattern arose around the 8th century.²⁹⁹

The term *ocres*, *ocer* in singular, refers to the many hilltops found in Marsica. The Italian historiography, in relation to the Marsi, calls these hilltops *ocres*. In the bronze of Rapino, a bronze attached to the Marsian neighbor Marrucini, refer to the hilltop as *ocres*. Then, it is reasonable to believe that Marsi used a similar terminology as well.³⁰⁰ It differs from the *oppidum*, in the sense that the term of *oppida* contains more material evidence to support a continuous settlement, in addition to more features of communal elements. On this basis, the term *ocres* will be used mostly in this section to refer to many of the small hillforts, while *oppida* will be used more often in the second part, when the hilltops offer an uninterrupted dwelling evidence.

On the other hand, low-density urbanization is a set of different features that helps to classify a site on the basis of some criteria. Rather than rigid standards, such as size, population or economic, these are based on the hinterland and the landscape structuration

²⁹⁸ Grossi, *Carta Archeologica*, 180-5.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁰ Philip Baldi, *The foundations of Latin* (New York : De Gruyter, 2002), 127. .Aes Rapinum, *Aisos pacris toutai maroucai lixs asignas ferenter auiatas toutai maroucai ioues patres ocre tarin cris iouais. Agine.*

capacity of the center. The *ocres* did not necessarily have to be a habitation center. The complex can also be a high status or ritual enclosure, where power and social relations are negotiated.³⁰¹

The Fucino area has been a major pole of attraction for humans since the Upper-Paleolithic. The lake offered a rich environment for different hunter-gatherer groups. The first villages arose during the Neolithic in the plain of Ortucchio. One of the main sites, Ortucchio, survived and developed throughout the Chalcolithic until the Bronze Age, forming the so-called Ortucchio culture around 2200 BP,³⁰² which was interrupted around the 10th century.

Figure 24 Level of lake Fucino. Campanelli, *Il lago*, 3.

The breakup of the culture of Ortucchio during the early-Iron Age was caused by the rise of the Fucino Lake level [Fig. 24]. As already discussed in a previous chapter, an echo of the engulfment of the village can be found in the legend of Archippre.³⁰³ However,

³⁰¹ Tom Moore, "Beyond Iron Age 'towns': examining Oppida as examples of low-density urbanism," *OJA*, 36, 3 (2017): 295-298.

³⁰² Letta, *The Marsi*, 509.

³⁰³ Sol. 2.26. Verg. Aen. 7.752.

villages that were not swallowed by the lake were also abandoned. In fact, the nearby area of the lake was not reoccupied again until about the 3rd - 2nd century. The environmental reasoning alone is not an accurate explanation for the forsaking of the lacustrine area. “Non puo spiegarsi con il semplice innalzamento del livello delle acque determinate dalla nuova variazione climatica di tipo subatlantico, ma deve ricondursi anche ad alter cause, forse di natura socio-economica, che portarano a nuove strategie insediative.”³⁰⁴ Aside from natural causes, the other traditional explanation for the abandonment of the old settlement pattern has been the socio-political competition. The growth of populations tended to make groups more competitive as a means to gain control over resources. In addition, looting was likely a main socio-economical practice of Iron Age societies. Thereby it is not surprising that a similar process of occupying hilltops happened all around Europe³⁰⁵ aggregating scattered populations within the newly formed hilltops.

Archeological survey has brought to light new evidence supporting a major population growth beginning in the Bronze-Iron Age transition. Fifty-six sites have been discovered throughout the shore of the lake during the turn of the 2nd to the 1st millennium. Fifteen are in the plain of the lake and another forty-one are located above 664 meters. The level of the water clearly played a role in the new settlement strategies, because the fifteen perilacustrine sites were submerged by the early years of the 1st millennium. In a way the survival of the other sites depended on the level of the lake. Regardless of this fact, the different archeological remains suggest a heterogeneous strategy in the exploitation of the

³⁰⁴ Irti, *Carta Archeologica*, 94. “The simple rise of the water level caused by the new sub-Atlantic climatic change cannot explain the [forsaking of the lacustrine area], but it must trace back to other causes, perhaps of a socio-economic nature, which lead to new settlement strategies.”

³⁰⁵ Greg Woolf, “Rethinking the oppida,” *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 12, 2, (1993): 223-234.

resources. We can distinguish three main settlement typologies therein: perilacustrine, terraces near the lake, or far from the lake the hilltops.

The first typology corresponds to the fifteen sites that are located in a range of 655-664m height. They are Eneolithic-Bronze Age sites, which were forsaken once the level of water rose. In between the chronology of the first and second typology, the Celano-Paludi site should be highlighted. The village was operative since the Eneolithic to the First Iron Age until the 9th century. It is located at a height of 664m so that the village depended on the level of the lake. Inhabitants of the village adapted by building houses above the water, and the 700 timber stakes found on the site are a clear indication.

When the archeological record of Celano-Paludi ceased, not so far from there, at 673m, there is another habitation area called Celano-Pratovechio.³⁰⁶ It suggests that Paludi's inhabitants continued living in the newly formed village. The site contains an occupation level during the First Iron Age. Despite the discovery of two burials of Orientalizing period, no habitational evidence has been found there for the 8th and 7th century.³⁰⁷

Regarding the Orientalizing period (8th-7th centuries), the archeological remains suggest a second typology. People occupied the nearby area of the lake at a height of 670m or above. Recently, new sites such Pescina-Villa d'Oro or Ruggero³⁰⁸ both at 700m have been found, but the sites of Cerchio-Ripa (668m) and Avezzano-Tara (674m) can be

³⁰⁶ S. Consentino "L' eta dei metalli nel territorio di Cerchio: puntualizzazioni su dati da scavo e da ricognizione," in *Il Fucino e le aree limitrofe nell' antichità. Terzo Convegno di archeologia in ricordo di Walter Cianciusi (Avezzano, 13-15 novembre 2009)* (Avezzano: DVG/Print, 2011), 155-167.

³⁰⁷ S. Consentino & G. Mielli, "Riflessioni sulle scelte insediative nella conca del Fucino nel corso dell' eta del Ferro," in *Il Fucino IV*, 195.

³⁰⁸ Irti, *Carta Archeologica*, 217.

considered the most prominent. Cerchio was frequented during the Late Bronze and First Iron Age, when the archeological testimony was interrupted around the 8th century. The recovered material in Tara indicates that the site was operational from the 7th century, and even during the archaic period, but in this case, it operated as a necropolis instead.³⁰⁹

The third and last habitation strategy can be found in a much higher area, 900m or above. These sites are at least 5km away from the lake and on the top of a hill controlling all the area on their sight. Pottery, albeit not enough to undertake a conclusive result regarding the chronology of the area, have been identified in Monte Cimari (1108m), Monte Felice (1030m), Monte Castello (1242m), Monte Uoma (1301m)³¹⁰ or recently in Massa d'Albe-Valle del Bicchero (1600m).³¹¹ Unfortunately, only one hilltop has been fully excavated, La Giostra di Amplero, which will be analyzed below. Regarding the lack of evidence, we cannot know for sure the third typology site function. They could be structures to control the territory as well as defensive structures, or even the temporary habitation remains of the pastoralism practice.³¹² However, Grossi has pointed out the possibility that many of the third typology sites could belong to the *ocres-necropolis* model. In this model, Grossi connects the hillforts with necropolises in the plain.

When La Regina,³¹³ for the whole Apennines, and Letta, more particularly focused on the Fucino area, undertook the task to study the area, none of the necropolises discussed in the previous chapter were discovered. We had to wait until the 1980's. Traditionally, it

³⁰⁹ Consentino & Mielli, "Riflesioni," 199-202

³¹⁰ Irti, *Carta Archeologica*, 94 f.

³¹¹ Irti, "Nuovi insediamenti pre-protoistorici nel bacino del Fucino. Aggiornamento della Carta Archeologica," in *Il Fucino*, 220.

³¹² *Ibid.*, *Carta Archeologica*, 96.

³¹³ Adriano La Regina, "Notta sulla formazione de centri urbani" in Area sabelica, in *La cita Etrusca e Italica preromana*, ed. Irti (Bologna: Imola, 1970), 191-207.

was believed that Native settlement patterns followed a *pagus-vicus* organizational structure, where *pagus* was understood to gather and administer one or more *vici*. Salmon called *pagus* “the immemorial Italic institution.”³¹⁴ Since the *pagus-vicus* model cannot be applied to the Iron Age period, Grossi proposes a new model: the above mentioned *ocres-necropolis* model.

Indispensable for this model was the excavation of La Giostra di Amplero, which began in 1969 and lasted until 1985. La Giostra is an *ocer* located in the community of Collelongo on the top of La Giostra mountain. The strategic hillfort that controls the access from the small valley of Cantone and Tristeri at a height of 1022-32m contains a 3rd century polygonal wall of around 350m.³¹⁵ Within its walls were found everyday objects such as grindstones, tiles, and metallic waste that date to the 6th century. It demonstrates that the habitation was in fact on small hilltops like this during the Archaic period. Hence, these places were more than a mere military outpost or temporal habitations.³¹⁶ In addition, there is a temple from around the 80s-60s³¹⁷ suggesting that the *ocer* was not only a habitational place but an important sacral space as well.

As we said, the *ocres-necropolis* model is a theory based on archeological surveys throughout Marsica, which has identified a large number of fortified hilltop centers around Marsica.³¹⁸ According to Grossi, the fortified upland habitation centers were connected to the necropolises found in the plain of the valley. Whereas people would occupy the uplands

³¹⁴ Salmon, *Samnites*, 79.

³¹⁵ Maurizio Paoletti, “L’insediamento di amplero (collelongo e ortucchio) dall’età preromana al tardoantico: sintesi delle ricerche,” in *Il territorio del parco*, 209-249.

³¹⁶ Letta, “The Marsi,” 511.

³¹⁷ Fulvia Donati, “Il santuario della Giostra nella Valle di Amplero presso L’Aquila: una rilettura del programma decorativo” in *Villas, maisons sanctuaries et tombeaux tardo-republicains: Decouvertes et relectures recentes*, ed. B.Perreir (Rome: Quasar, 2007) 357-376.

³¹⁸ Grossi 1991, 001, 2011

of the hills for habitational and defensive purposes, they would bury their dead in the plains, enforcing the attachment of the community and forming a coherent spatial relation between *ocres* and necropolises. Grossi, based upon the chronology of the first grave goods found in Scurcola or Corvaro, underpins this pattern, which arose around the 8th century.³¹⁹ The similar pottery and metal typology that can be found in the grave goods and in the *ocres* helps to nourish the relationship between the people buried in the cemetery and the ones dwelling in the hilltops. However, the earliest remains in La Giostra di Amplero date back only until the 6th century. Although excavations within the walls have brought to light huts and metallic waste, revealing that small-fortified centers were also permanently occupied,³²⁰ no earlier habitational evidence can be linked to the *ocres* yet. However, it is essential to note that they were not simply acting as emergency shelters or military garrisons.³²¹ Apart from the *ocres*, there are very few (only two) identified habitational sites in the plain: S. Angelo in Luco dei Marsi and S. Maria di Vico in the commune of Avezzano.³²²

Although new discoveries could reshape the actual framework, the *ocres-necropolis* model explains the habitation strategy carried out by communities before the appearance of *vici* in the 3rd century. What is clear is that the *ocres* system was already functioning by the 6th century, and the network was in place for sure by the 4th century.³²³ However, two main questions arise regarding identity and urbanization: did these *ocres*

³¹⁹ Grossi, *Carta Archeologica*, 180-5.

³²⁰ Letta, "The Marsi," 511.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

³²² Grossi, *Carta Archeologica*. 185. Grossi suggests some plain sites in the nearby water stream could survive until the Archaic period.

³²³ Letta, "The Marsi," 511.

pertain to a unified single community? Can we consider the *ocres* as the emergence of urbanization models in the region?

Despite the fact that La Giostra de Amplero is a small hilltop³²⁴ covered by a polygonal shape wall of 350m, the hubs and remains show that a larger group had come to live together. Unfortunately, we lack enough tangible evidence to discuss the socio-political atmosphere of the site, and answer the first question. However, we can hypothesize that people living in an *ocres* were aware of belonging to at least that community, in which the leaders of the upper strata of the society were buried in shared burial sites. The necropolis of the Piana Palentini in Scurcola-Marsicana is a good example.

Regarding the inquiry about urbanization, the area shows much lower population densities than the Tyrrhenian area. Archeological evidence seems to nourish the idea of an early urbanization model in Etruria,³²⁵ where by the Archaic period classic *polys* style can be distinguished. Conversely, we can only identify the cited *ocres* in the Marsic area. Since Greg Woolf³²⁶ argued that hillforts cannot be considered as an indication of urbanization, there has been much discussion on this topic. New approaches have reassessed what we can consider urban or not,³²⁷ and the low-density urbanization concept will be used to explain the urbanization model of Marsica.

As well as the *polis* paradigm, the creation of hillforts is an alternative response to social complexity throughout the Iron Age, which should be understood as a whole. *Ocres* were not an *ad hoc* creation. They are a response to external political and economic forces.

³²⁴ Grossi, *Carta Archeologica*, 414f.

³²⁵ General view in Corinna Riva, *The Urbanization of Etruria. Funerary Practices and Social Change, 700–600 BC* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010).

³²⁶ Woolf, “*Rethinking the oppida*,” *passim*.

³²⁷ Tom Moore, “Beyond Iron Age,” 287-292.

Hillforts, as cities, were located in nearby major route ways (water and commercial). However, unlike a *polis*, it does not necessarily need to be centralized at all.³²⁸ For example, Amplero would contain the major conglomerate of dwellings, but it would not be the only place of inhabitants. Production would not be centralized either, but as the metal waste suggests, specialization was happening inside. Communal elements, which are one of the best indications to infer urbanization, emerged before the 3rd century. Although the walls were constructed around the 3rd century,³²⁹ Letta states that wooden palisades were in place before, implying communal defensive structures.³³⁰ Besides, the 3rd century also witnessed the construction of a cistern as a means to store water for communal consumption as well as the construction of a three *cellae* temple.

Ocres system was not a response to Roman aggression.³³¹ It erupted long before Roman involvement within Marsica, and the extension of the phenomenon could be motivated by developments within Italic people or seen as part of a larger Mediterranean trend,³³² constituting clearly the first evidence of urbanization models. Therefore, the *ocres* system is another form to respond to social complexity considering local topography and societal forms in relation to the Tyrrhenian area.

5.2 The impact of the Roman presence: Alba Fucens.

The second section analyzes the Roman presence within the territory around Fucino. By examining the case of Alba-Fucens, the main argument of the section will be

³²⁸ *Ibid.* 296 ff.

³²⁹ Letta "Amplero," 169 ff.

³³⁰ Letta, "The Marsi," 511.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

³³² Stek, "Material culture, Italic identities and Romanization of Italy," in *Blackwell Companion to the Archeology of the Roman republican Period*, ed. Evans DeRose (Oxford: Blackwell, 2013), 342-3.

that the Roman presence highly affected the structuration of the Marsian identity from the end of the 4th century onwards. First, the Roman presence helped to define the territorial layout of the Marsi. Second, all of the epigraphically identifiable *vici* pertain to the Latin colony instead of being Marsic.

The *vicus* is a Latin denomination for an institution that organizes socio-politically a non-urban area aggregating separate settlements with a central space. In the case of Rome, and some colonies too, a *vicus* organizes an area attached to the city. In an Italian setting, the *vicus* has been traditionally envisioned as pertaining to the *pagus-vicus* pattern. However, as already mentioned in the previous section, the *pagus-vicus* model has faced a

historiographical shift. In this model, sanctuaries were the main centralizing spaces for the structuration of the society. Big sanctuaries corresponded to tribal, while *pagus* and then *vicus* contain smaller sanctuaries.³³³ Currently, there is no doubt that the model arose around the 3rd century,³³⁴ but the question remains whether it belongs to indigenous or Latin people. Therefore, it is still a very

Figure 25 Roman colonies on Central Italy. Stek, Early Colonialism, 157.

³³³ *Ibid.*, “Questions of cult and continuity in late Republican Roman Italy: “Italic” or “Roman” sanctuaries and the so-called *pagus-vicus* system, in *Religiose Vielfalt und soziale integration*, ed. M. Jehne, B. Linke and J. Rupke (Heidelberg: Verlag Antike, 2013), 137-162.

³³⁴ Letta “Oppida,” 225-8.

contested model and term. In this section, we will define the model as if it were a Roman administration unit. We will be referring to the *vici* that have epigraphy, which are only five in Marsian territory, and I will consider them as Latin [Fig.25].

Traditional historiography has downplayed Roman influence around the Fucino area.³³⁵ However, new approaches suggest a much higher Roman sway over communities of the area. The impact of Rome in Marsica was not exclusively of an external power, who could militarily influence the zone. Rome established a couple of colonies near the Marsian territory, shaping and isolating the Marsi from the rest of the tribes and opening up the way to a more territorially definable Marsica. Furthermore, according to some scholars, Rome populated certain areas of Marsic territory with Latin status people, which highly impacted the cultural and settlement pattern during the 3rd-2nd centuries. Classical sources do not speak of any colony in Marsian territory. Yet, there were three main colonies in the nearby area: Alba Fucens, Carseoli, and Sora. Whereas the former two were established in the Aequian territory, Sora lies beyond Valle Roveto, in Volscian territory.³³⁶ Although in Aequian territory, when Carseoli was set, ancient sources narrate an upheaval of Marsi, as a consequence Marsic territory was seized if the former is to be believed.³³⁷

This section will discuss the colony of Alba Fucens because it is one of the most prominent colonies in the Central Apennines and the best explored of the three above mentioned colonies by modern scholars. Moreover, the ever loyal colony has been

³³⁵ Letta, *I Marsi*, *passim*. Letta, "The Marsi," 509-517.

³³⁶ Livy. 10.1.2: *Sora agri Volsci fuerat*

³³⁷ Livy. 10.3.2.

mistakenly considered Marsic by classical sources and it makes it more appealing to discuss.³³⁸

Near the current town of Massa d'Albe the remains of the ancient city of Alba Fucens lie on top of a little hill. According to Livy, the colony was settled by 6000 colonists in 303.³³⁹ Although there are still not enough clues to draw a conclusive assessment, the city of Alba was not likely an *ex novo* establishment. Appian mentions a previously existing Aequian town³⁴⁰ and Mertens nourished the idea of a previous settlement given the favorable location of the hill to control the whole plain.³⁴¹ The archeological works yielded finds of 4th century black-gloss pottery³⁴² and the first phase of the forum dates to the 4th century³⁴³ as well as the the city walls, although the former assumption has been questioned.³⁴⁴ What seems clear is that the colony was established in the late 4th century, but the flourishing Imperial Alba cannot be taken for granted at this early stage.

The reassessment of the early colonial impact throughout the mid-republic is not limited to emphasizing its impact in the allies territory. New perspectives have arisen concerning the early colonization and a new wave of scholarship argues in favor of abandoning Roman focused narration and relies more on archeological data, placing the first colonies into perspective.³⁴⁵ First, the literary sources should be re-examined.

³³⁸ Sil. Pun. 8. 506. Some authors even confused Alba as being a Marsic city.

³³⁹ Livio 10.1.1-2: *Albam coloniae deductae. Albam in Aequos sex milia colonorum scripta.*

³⁴⁰ App. Hann. 39.

³⁴¹ J. Mertens, "Alba Fucens," *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 6, 2. (1988): 87-104.

³⁴² *Ibi*, 100 f.

³⁴³ Stek, "Early Roman," 145-172.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ Stek, "Questions," 140-145.

Secondly, the idea of colonies as a mini-replica of Rome and the standardized practice should be abandoned.³⁴⁶ Finally, the agency of the colonization process is at stake too.

A heated debate is going on in the recent scholarship in regards to the use of the sources to examine early Roman colonial studies. The colonial establishment chronology provided by the Roman sources and the quantities of the colonists deployed have faced re-examination. In fact, the 6000 colonists that Livy talks about seems to belong to a Livian exaggeration.³⁴⁷ During the 1980's, Brown, following the assumption made by Aulus Gellius that all colonies were emulations of Rome, created an idea that all latin colonies followed and even tried to improve the Roman topography. He coined the term "colonial kit" to explain the standardizations of colonial practice.³⁴⁸ Nevertheless, archeological work helps to understand how variable the colonial experience was in different geographical, political and socio-economical settings. Therefore, the term proposed by Brown, the colonial kit, cannot be applied to explain the colonial territorial layout. Finally, Bradley suggested for the middle republic that private warlords seized land and distributed it among followers.³⁴⁹ Instead of a state directed enterprise, the Roman colonization can be seen in the light of private elite agency.

This new examination wave abdicates for the first colonies a much higher influence than previously thought in the ethnic labellings of the Natives. Colonies helped in defining the ethnic groups in the region. Marsian and Aequian identities had a territorial delimited

³⁴⁶ E. Bispham, "Coloniam deducere: How Roman was Roman colonization during the Middle Republic?" in G. Bradley and J. P. Wilson (ed.), *Greek and Roman colonization: origins, ideologies and interactions* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2006), 73–160.

³⁴⁷ Livio 10.1.1-2: *Albam coloniae deductae. Albam in Aequos sex milia colonorum scripta.*

³⁴⁸ F. Brown, *Cosa, the making of a Roman town* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980).

³⁴⁹ G. Bradley "Colonization and identity in republican Italy" in *Greek and Roman colonization*, 161-87.

boundary to focus on creating and negotiating their own physically separated identities. Besides, the colonial landscape was not limited to the city, the colony consisted of a sparse organization of the landscape in its territory that was previously seized. The colony acted as the center and the *vici* as satellites.

Fluidity into the ethnic belonging of communities in the early and middle republic is a matter of fact. The establishment of Alba Fucens between Aequian and Marsic territory, according to what sources tell us, fixed the ethnic boundaries of the two groups, becoming Alba's territory the south-east frontier for the Aqueians and the north-west one in the case of the Marsi.³⁵⁰ Despite the fact that the establishment of the colony helped in the definition of the ethnic groups, it was not a sudden phenomenon. The fluidity of the communities kept evolving, and identities that we know in the Imperial period were not equal to the identities going on in the 3rd century. However, Roman sway over indigenous people imposing the colony clearly affected the final outline of the known Marsian territory.

The second main outcome of the Roman influence is that Alba established the *vici* that contain the Latin epigraphy in their sanctuary around the Fucino Lake. In 2009, Stek already proposed the possibility that the *vici* were Latin settlements.³⁵¹ In a recent chapter, Stek enforces his previous assertion

Figure 26 *Vici* in Marsica. Stek, “Early Colonialism,” 163.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 157.

³⁵¹ Stek *Cult Settlement*, 158-168.

and he considers all the *vici* near the lake as pertaining to the settlement organization of Alba Fucens.³⁵² Following the thesis of Ercole,³⁵³ who has acknowledged, after a geomorphological analysis, that lacustrine and plain areas were too wet to be inhabited or seeded, she proposed that the *vici* were strategic settlements to facilitate the pastoralism roads [Fig. 26]. The new settlement model was a result of the establishment of the Latin colony. According to Stek, this new trend fits in the variability and adaptationality of the colonies to local topography and needs. The lack of agricultural lands and a flourishing pastoralist economy pushed the establishment of this new type of settlement.

The Roman sway, throughout the colony of Alba, decisively shaped the layout of the settlements pattern and roads over the Fucino area, as well as the economy and identity formation. It helped to define a territorial boundary for the latter Marsica and in addition provided the Marsians with an exogenous identity to confront.

5.3 Vici: Latin or Marsian?

This section presents the *oppida-vici* pattern, a system that will attempt to explain the settlement pattern during the 4th and 1st centuries. It was established after the Roman domination and lasted until it was replaced by the municipalization model.

The *oppida-vici* pattern sustains that the settlement is organized and centered in *oppida*, each one containing a certain amount of small *vici*. The system was theorized by Letta³⁵⁴ and he argues that Marsians followed a federal political organization within the *ethos* after the Roman conquest. On the top, there was an annually elected magistrate, *cetur* (2.2.1), to deal with Rome. Then, the *oppida* were the major political and settlement hubs.

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ T. Ercole, 2014, *Archéographie de la région du Fucino (Italie centrale)*. PhD thesis: Paris- Sorbonne.

³⁵⁴ Letta "The Marsi" 513-4.

At the bottom, albeit subject to an *oppida* but with great autonomy, were the *vici*. According to Letta, after the Roman involvement the socio-political atmosphere calmed down and Marsians came down from the previous *ocres*. Some of them became *oppida* by this time. In the plains and slopes, attached to the *oppida*, emerged the *vici*.

Following Letta's theory, Marsian people descended to the plain from the previously discussed *ocres*. As a result, most of the *ocres* became temporal settlements. In contrast, others evolved from *ocres* to *oppida* during the 4th and 1st century,³⁵⁵ becoming the major settlement and political entities of the area. Two of the best case studies are the already discussed La Giotra di Amplero and Antinum, in Valle Roveto. The recovered evidence from La Giostra has been presented in the previous section, and even though there is partial evidence to suggest a continuous habitation, La Giostra most certainly acted as a religious space. In the other case, Antinum, which later will become a *municipium*, shows activity from the 5th century onwards. By the end of the 4th century, there is enough evidence to consider Antinum an *oppidum*.³⁵⁶ In addition, there is an inscription from the mid-3rd century that mentions a *medis*, which is the major local magistracy and the above mentioned *cetur* (2.2.1), which would be the major political magistracy according to Letta. These magistracies enforce the idea that *oppida* were the major political hubs.

Regarding the *vici*, seventeen archeologically identified small non-urban agglomerations have been located in Marsica.³⁵⁷ Unfortunately, as long as there is not an epigraphy that states clearly that there were *vici*, we cannot refer to them as such. The chapter has already discussed the five identified *vici* with Latin written epigraphy. They

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁶ Letta, "Antinum," *passim*.

³⁵⁷ Letta, "Oppida," 219.

have been treated as pertaining to the Latin colony of Alba Fucens. But, in 2006 a new epigraphy was discovered in the northeast side of the Fucino lake in Cerchio, called *Vicus Eidianus*.³⁵⁸ The *vici* spread all over the country and due to its wide territorial expansion, Letta argues that they cannot be Latin. According to Letta, “It is difficult to believe that practically all the country was reduced to *ager Romanus*,”³⁵⁹ thus he considers the *vici* as pertaining to Marsic people.

By considering Letta’s assertion, it makes sense to believe that not all the agglomerations in the area were Latin. Natives needed territory where to be able to live. The localization of some of the agglomerations right below of the hillforts suggests that they most likely do not belong to Latin status settlements. In addition, the cohabitation among different status people in a Roman city is clearly attested, and it should not be different for rural areas. Boundaries are not clear cut in the Roman world and the cohabitation among people of different privileges and status would not be anything new. Similarly, to narrow the argument to assign Marsian or Latin identity for the settlement is too presentistic. Although the socio-political power of the small agglomerations follows the orders of the Latin colony or a hypothetical Marsian federation, people living around the *vici* did not need to be of the same status.

Once discussed the *vici* question and proposed that not all of them belonged to Alba Fucens, the next paragraph will clarify some points in regards to the *oppida-vici* system. First, the Roman sway over the system needs a reassessment, because even though Letta

³⁵⁸ Letta “Un’offerta per Ercole. L’ iscrizione del Thesaurus di un santuario vicano da Cerchio (AQ),” in *Il Fucino III*, 264. C(aios) Deidio(s) Pe(tronis) f(ilius) et Ve(ttios) Alfio(s) Pu(blii?) f(ilius) magistres veci Eidi(ani?) Hercolo locaveront

³⁵⁹ Letta, “The Marsi,” 514.

assigns the Roman conquest as a catalyst of the socio-political stability that lead to the establishment of the *vici*, the Roman involvement is even greater. Next, even though there is a clear political hierarchization, the *oppida-vici* pattern was not subject to any federal power, and the idea of the power functioning similar to a feudalistic system is very appealing.

According to Letta, the Roman conquest of Italy allowed the new system to be born. Although Rome seized some lands, they left huge autonomy to Marsians, providing the socio-political stability to locate downhill. Letta is not mistaken when he assumes the huge impact of the Roman domination over Italy. In fact, the Roman control allowed a higher degree of integration. The domination promoted the establishment of a much more organized large scale pastoralism in Central Italy.³⁶⁰ However, the Roman involvement throughout the Latin colony was much higher. Yet, this involvement boosted and connected more the local people, and the economical competition encouraged the internal Native forces to develop new infrastructures to assert their authority.

The *oppida* and *vici* faced a time of more monumental construction during the 3rd century. The archeology complex of Luco dei Marsi was built 4th century onwards, and one of the temples within the city walls in La Giostra has been dated to the 3rd century. The archeological survey in Amplero has uncovered many communal elements that are from the 3rd century. Finally, most of the altar and water tanks of the *vici* have also a 3rd-2nd century chronology.

Monumental construction during the 3rd century shows that the elites are clearly directing the wealth towards these types of communal elements to justify their position

³⁶⁰ Stek, *Cult Places*, *passim*.

benefiting the community. Internal forces promoted the establishment of new agglomeration and the development of new bigger structures. The territory was more organized and this fact can be clearly attested in the territory of Antinum or in La Giostra di Amplero. For example, Antinum acted as the major settlement of its zone from the 4th century onwards and the *vici* in the nearby shows that they were connected to it, being dependant on Antinum, and not the colony of Alba. Conversely, there is some habitational evidence in La Giostra, but rather than a major dwelling area, the two big sanctuaries and the appearance of many sites in the slopes of the mountain shows how La Giostra acted as a centralizing sacred area for the communities around. In both cases, we see how internal forces are directing wealth towards the creation of communal and central elements in the hilltop, and in the smaller scattered agglomerations as well. All reconstructions show how hierarchical the society was, and many *vici* were clearly subject to *oppida*. However, the existence of any binding power above as the ethnic unity seems more a presentistic creation.

The idea of a federal political structure that affects the settlement pattern should be reconsidered. Letta's main idea to suggest this stable organization was the dealing with Rome, nevertheless, any Roman manpower imposition has been re-examined, and until the end of the 3rd century there is no evidence of clear Roman control. As discussed in the previous section, the Marsian identity was a way to channel collective efforts. This identity was probably recalled whenever necessary, and it was not ever a well-rounded entity. Therefore, the agency of local communities should not be dismissed.

In conclusion, the *oppida-vici* system is still valuable enough to explain the settlement pattern in Ancient Marsica. However, it needs a more nuanced approach. The

nature of the *vici* remains still quite open, because it is much more complex than to regard each one as Latin or Marsian agglomerations, and the presence of Rome throughout Alba cannot be overlooked, because it was determinant.

5.4 The Aftermath of the Social War: The Municipalization.

The last section addresses the process of the municipalization, and henceforth how the Late Republican-Imperial period Marsica was created. First, it deals with the nature and chronology of the process, then it discusses the effects of the process in the creation of a Marsic identity within Rome. This process led to a geographically and culturally definable Marsic identity by the Imperial period.

The *municipium* is a Latin term referring to a self-governing community or city, with its own magistracies. It was inserted in the Roman legal framework. To be a *municipium* involved a certain status and privileges such as autonomous legal jurisdiction and voting rights. However, in matters of foreign affairs they were subject to Rome. After the Social War, the huge quantity of new Roman status people led to a municipalization process, so that the Italian municipalization was the process of incorporating the newly created legal-administrative cities during the 1st century in Italy. In the aftermath of the Social War, all Italians below the Alps were automatically granted Roman citizenship. In order to reorganize the socio-juridical status of all communities in Italy, the Roman senate issued municipal grants to certain cities reshaping the network of the whole peninsula. It has been regarded as an urbanization process of places traditionally known as non-urban

spaces. Nevertheless, the territory of Marsica, as the whole *Region IV Augusta*, had kept a scattered dwelling layout even in the Imperial period.³⁶¹

In the case of Marsica, classical sources provide a corrupted view concerning the Roman *cives* in its territory. Pliny is the main source stating the existence of five *municipia* “Marsorum Anxatini, Antinates, Fucentes Lucenses, Marruvini. Albensium Alba ad Fucinum lacum.”³⁶² Pliny also comments about the existence of the *municipium* of Alba in the nearby area of the Fucino, which was not considered to be Marsi.³⁶³ Festus and even Silius Italicus brand Alba as a Marsian city³⁶⁴ and Marruvium as the chief city of the Marsi “Marruvium [...] urbibus est illis caput.”³⁶⁵ Finally, Strabo presents Marruvium as a city, πόλεις (polis), pertaining to the IV Region Augusta.³⁶⁶

Although Pliny named five different cities, there are three cities according to Letta, who reread the text: Antinates (Antinum), Marruvium (Marruvini Fucentes) and Lucenses Anxantini (Lucus Angitiae or Anxa). So far the existence of three big cities is aligned by the archeological record.

According to Letta, the municipalization process began right after the Social War as a Roman imposition.³⁶⁷ Letta argues that, Antinum,³⁶⁸ Marruvium³⁶⁹ and even Lucus Angitiae³⁷⁰ were granted the municipality in an early phase, because both had a *quattronviri*

³⁶¹ Strab. 5.4.2: τὰ μὲν οὖν ἄλλα κωμηδὸν ζῶσιν, ἔχουσι δὲ καὶ πόλεις ὑπὲρ μὲν τῆς θαλάττης τό τε Κορφίνιον καὶ Σούλμωνα καὶ Μαρούιον καὶ Τεατέαν

³⁶² Plin. 3,106.

³⁶³ Livio 10.1.1-2: *Albam coloniae deductae. Albam in Aequos sex milia colonorum scripta.*

³⁶⁴ Fest. 4L *Albesia scuta dicebantur, quibus Albenses, qui sunt Marsi generis, usi sunt* Sil. Pun. 8. 506-7: *Interiorque per ufos Alba sedet*

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 505-6.

³⁶⁶ Strab 5.4.2.

³⁶⁷ Although the whole Marsica was under the Sergia tribe, which did not need to do much with a previous reality.

³⁶⁸ Letta, “Antinum,” 76.

³⁶⁹ Letta & D’amato, *Epigrafi*, 93 f. *III viri i.d.*

³⁷⁰ Bispham, *From Asculum to Actium*, 49-51.

constitution rather than a *duoviri* one. No *quattuoviral* communities were founded later than 49, but Bispham based upon Marruvium peripheral location posits to locate Marruvium establishment around the 50s. He grounds his argumentation in the lack of proof regarding municipalization in the Social War period insurgents' area during the Imperial period.³⁷¹ In addition, Bispham suggests that the establishment of *quattuoviral* institutions could be due to the fact that by the time of the establishment in the 50s it was already a well-constituted community.³⁷²

This demonstrates how the whole network was not in place right after the end of the Social war, and in fact, the municipalization process did not end entirely until the Augustan period. Besides, it shows how the new *municipia* were not *ex novo* establishments, despite the fact that all of them followed very different trends.

The first municipalization trend refers to Marruvium. Prior to the constitution of the city, the existence of a *vicus* linked to an *oppidum* has been theorized, Rocca Vechia (Pe). The city evolved from that *vicus*, but it was not the only *vicus* available to become a *municipium*. However, the ideal location and the agency of the Marsic aristocracy played a fundamental role in the structuration of the *municipium*.³⁷³ The city was located on the east bank of the Fucino Lake in a nodal point in the middle of the fluvial valleys of Salto, Liri and Aniene, in addition to being next to the most prominent emissary of Fucino, the river Giovenco. It was a flat space with enough terrain for agriculture, with water, fishing

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 315

³⁷² La Regina, "Nota sulla formazione dei centri urbani in area sabellica," in *Studi sulla città antica: Atti del Covegno di studi sulla città etrusca e italica preromana*, ed. Aa.VV. (Bologna: Istituto di Bologna, 1970), 203. La Regina argues that Marruvium municipalization did not happen until the second half of the 1st century AC.

³⁷³ Chiara Blasetti, "Survey nel territorio del municipium di Marruvium (San Benedetto dei Marsi - Abruzzo). Risultati preliminari," in *Analysis archaeologica. An International journal of Western Mediterranean Archaeology*. Vol 2. (Roma: Quasar, 2016), 145.

and located in the middle of transhumance roads.³⁷⁴ We can infer from the archeological data that the territory was growing in economic significance between the 2nd -1st century.³⁷⁵ In addition to the geographical features, the elites pushed for its designation as a *municipium* because of their own interest. Something that happened after the 50s.³⁷⁶

Figure 27 *Cippus, Letta & D' Amato, Epigrafia, 176.*

On account of a 2nd century *cippus* AD “F(ines) p(opuli) Albens(is) Angiti(ae) et Marso(rum)[Fig. 27],”³⁷⁷ we can infer where the Western limit of the city was, because it was limited by Alba and Luco dei Marsi. Blasetti, based on the centuriation outlook of the landscape, posits the occupation of an allegedly wide area for the territory of the colony in the Imperial period [Fig. 28].³⁷⁸

The second trend corresponds to Antinum. The city was located 9km southwest from the Fucino Lake at a height of 900m. Antinum was an *oppidum* with archeological remains from the 5th century onwards and permanent habitation evidence was present since the 4th century³⁷⁹. The city was established right

Figure 28 *Territory of Marruvium c. 1-1 AC. Blasetti, “Survey,” 137.*

³⁷⁴ Blasetti, “Survey,” 133 ff.

³⁷⁵ Letta “Due letti funerari con rivestimento in osso da Aielli (AQ)” *SCO*, 39 (1990): 281-309.

³⁷⁶ See footnote n. 370.

³⁷⁷ Letta & D’amatto, *Epigrafia*, 176.

³⁷⁸ Blasetti, “Survey,” 135.

³⁷⁹ Letta, “Antinum,” 69.

at the top of an old *oppida*, taking over all the *vici* in the surrounding area, which flourished economically in this phase too. The reasons for the choice to establish the city has a lot to do with previous habitation dynamics, but namely with the Marsian elite agency. The old *oppidum* was located in the middle of major cross routes between the Lazio and Centro Italy. Lumber³⁸⁰ and transhumance were the main economic activities, because it was not the best place for agriculture. A closer look to the epigraphical body suggests a change over the elite families in Antinum in the aftermath of the Social War. The old leaders such as *Pacuvii*, *Cominii*, and *Gavii* disappear completely from the epigraphical body. Instead, new names appear: *Novii*, *Petronei*, *Spedii*.³⁸¹ The new Marsian elite lobbied in favor of this location, where they had their interest on.

The third and last trend is the establishment of the city next to a significant sanctuary, *Lucus Angitiae* or *Anxa*. Similar to *Marruvium*, the city was next to a stream, the *Almo* River, and on the shore of *Fucino* Lake. Notwithstanding, *Anxa* was located in the exact opposite site, in the southwest bench. In a similar vein to *Antinum*, *Anxa* was established over a former *oppidum*, *M. Penna* in a 30-h. area.³⁸² The establishment of *Anxa* as a *municipium* could be avoided incorporating all its *territorium* to bigger cities such as *Marruvium* or *Alba Fuens*, but the well-known sanctuary complex played a big role in the creation of the *municipium*. *Scheid* argues that there was a Roman habit of appropriation of the conquered cult areas to serve Roman purposes.³⁸³ Although an appealing assessment, the rationale behind the municipalization of *Anxa* is more likely economic, which is

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 82. A timber corporation “*dendrophori*” was present in the Imperial period.

³⁸¹ Letta, “*Antinum*,” 80 f.

³⁸² Letta “*Oppida*,” 228.

³⁸³ J. Scheid, “*Rome et les grands lieux de culte d’Italie*, ” in *Pouvoir et religion dans le monde romain*, ed. Vigourt, A, X. Lorient. Béranger-Badel & B. Klein (Paris: PUPS 2006), 75.

perfectly sustained by the reconversion of temple B and C from sacred spaces to economic ones.

Despite the fact that the municipal reorganization fostered a huge urbanization process, a city is nothing without rural areas and less in the Roman period, when the economy was still very agriculture based. The *municipium* was the center of the territorial organization, nevertheless *vici* still kept certain autonomy,³⁸⁴ but always as a part of the city *territorium*. Regarding the new municipal structure, Letta talks about an alien imposition in the aftermath of the Social War.³⁸⁵ Contrarily, Bispham states “broader political significance of municipalization” was “located in its provision of political and public structures which to a certain extent met the needs and aspirations of Italians.”³⁸⁶ Obviously politics heavily influenced the outcome.³⁸⁷ Nevertheless, many Italian elites willingly led and expended huge amounts of wealth in the creation of new cities in Centro-Italy. The same elites thereby provided the Marsian cities with monumental elements: a forum, temples or theater. By the monumentalization process, the elites reaffirmed their status, gaining prestige to compete in the municipal political arena for local offices.³⁸⁸ In addition, local competition allowed the jump into the Roman senate³⁸⁹.

The new municipal system rendered a new Roman idea of Italy. This idea created a huge competitiveness throughout the whole peninsula, fostering active regional

³⁸⁴ Letta “Oppidum.”

³⁸⁵ Letta, “The Marsi,” 515. The urban model was superimposed on old structures according to Letta.

³⁸⁶ Edward Bispham, *From Asculum to Actium: The municipalization of Italy from the Social War to Augustus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 51 f.

³⁸⁷ It raises the question of the Italian aspirations in the Social War.

³⁸⁸ Letta, “The Marsi,” 516.

³⁸⁹ Wiseman, *New men*, *passim*.

rivalries.³⁹⁰ At this time, rivalries were divided at least in three layers. The first one was within the city itself. Prominent families fought for municipal *offices*. The second was among *municipia*, where cities competed over the control of boundaries and natural resources.³⁹¹ The last one was in the Roman Senate, where elites competed with the rest of their Italian and Roman peers. This new idea of Italy was the reason that ethnic competition was enhanced in the 1st century.³⁹² Introducing Italians into the Roman political arena triggered the need to distinguish Italians from one another as a means to succeed in Roman politics. The process encouraged the genesis of warrior and witchcraft archetypes discussed in the second chapter, by providing a meaning to what it was to be a Marsi. Therefore, elite competition and advertising strategies ended up helping in the creation of a geographical fixed Marsica inhabited by the Marsi during the Late Republic and Imperial periods. Hence, Marsic identity developed in this period especially in opposition to other Italian ones.

Overall, the municipalization process was slow and happened due to the incorporation of Italians in Rome, but led by the Italians themselves rather than Rome. However, Roman agency should not be denied in the process, because Roman senators decided who to favor. The previous settlement trend also affected the formation of the *municipia*, because a population was needed to establish one and as archeological diachrony suggests pre-Roman settlement patterns were respected. Marsian *municipia* were established in previously inhabited areas. Besides, rather than a contextual process

³⁹⁰ Dench, Emma. *Romulus asylum, Roman identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 176.

³⁹¹ In order to avoid confusion some frontier marks were set (See the *cippus* Fig.27).

³⁹² Dench, *Romulus asylum*, 176.

happening on account of the Social War, the slow pace of the process hides a more structural logic. Economic forces were crucial in the development of the system and the geographical position of the cities in Marsica supported this assertion. Therefore, local elite agency and the economic rationale were the two most important features in the configuration of the so-called *municipia*, along with the previous *vici* established in the area.

5.5 Conclusion

Despite the fact that the classical *polys* system did not evolve until the turn of the 1st millennium, the geographical area of Marsica faced an urbanization process much sooner, around the 6th century. It started with the first communal construction of *ocres* and necropolises. Afterwards, even though some of these communities still lived in the hillforts, some new communities, *vici*, began to appear at the foot of the mountains and around the lake. Although their identity is not clear, the formation of a more populated settlement landscape helped to create the later formation of the traditional *polys* style *municipia*. The cities still relied on previous smaller autonomous structures to organize their own territory, which were some of the mentioned *vici*. In addition, the *municipia* evolved from previous existing habitation hubs, demonstrating a strong continuity in the space of dwelling.

The differentiation between the city and previous habitation models is not clear cut. Rome is divided in different *vici*, and the urban layout of some cities are not well known during the Hellenistic period. In fact, Rome itself faced a huge reformation under the reign of Augustus³⁹³ and many of the Italian *municipia* matured in the turn between the Republic and Empire as well. Alternative models to the *polys* showed that they were as efficient as

³⁹³ Suet. *Augus.* 29.1; Cas. Dio. 56.30.3.

cities to organize in social, economic and political levels, thereby the centralizing tools worked in both cases, and the distinction between urban and high densely populated non-urban spaces is nothing but blurred. Both are intrinsically connected within the same system, and if we want to distinguish them, we should avoid the polarization of rural/non-rural ideas, which is nothing more than an outdated approach created in our modern minds.

CONCLUSION: A NEW VIEW FOR THE MARSI

la realtà storica non è mai semplice e i nostri sforzi per interpretarla raramente possono ricorrere con successo a linee nette, contorni definiti e tinte forti e unite. — Letta, *Tradizione*, 387.

According to the classical sources and followed by modern scholars, Rome prevailed over Marsian society in 304 and 294.³⁹⁴ Despite maintaining their ancestral tribal culture, the Marsic people also survived as a unified political entity being loyal Roman allies, up until tired of Roman abuse, when they rebelled against Rome followed by other Italians sharing a similar set of grievances. Afterwards, even after the Marsi lost the war, Romans admitted them into their citizen body imposing the Roman alien urbanization model of municipality, leading the Marsi to become Roman citizens.

The above-mentioned narration stems from the period of the 1970s, and it is an account that involves, inaccurately, the survival of a single coherent Marsian political structure under the shadow of Rome but acting as a free people maintaining their own unified ancestral culture. It represents a time when scholars adopted and applied a theoretical framework that only flipped the previous historical approach from the view of the conquerors (Romanization) to those conquered (self-Romanization). In applying a new paradigm, this thesis approaches the evidence quite differently by proposing the following: first of all, Marsian identity was a malleable concept driven by collective efforts at a regional level whenever it was suitable to the political aspirations of the elites. Secondly, unlike the previous *laissez-faire* idea of Roman involvement, the degree of the Roman

³⁹⁴ Livy 9.41; 9.45; 10.34. Diod. Sic. 20. 101. 5

sway over the change of the Marsian identity is much higher than previously believed. Finally, the urbanization in terms of municipalization was not a Roman imposition. Of course, political circumstances highly affected and accelerated the process, because the unification of Italy was indispensable to establish such a municipal system. Nevertheless, the driven forces of the process were mostly endogenous.

The existence of a previous Marsic identity cannot be refuted. However, the view in which we have envisioned Marsi during the Hellenistic period must change. The model created by Letta and Grossi tying Marsic identity back as a cohesive group descending from early Iron Age groups should be re-assessed. Ethnicity in general, and Marsic identity in particular was a channel to drive collective efforts, such as war or raids, at a regional level. The sentiment of union nevertheless is not recurrent, because it lacks a permanent structured political organization, and the union came to play in certain particular times: whenever needed by the elites.³⁹⁵ Despite the fact that no permanent political group ever existed known as Marsi, the ethnic identity existed. Even though this was fluid and contextually stressed.

The only clear geographically definable Marsic identity was formed after the embodiment of people living near the Fucino Lake during the Late Republican and Imperial period into the Roman structure. The formation of this coherent identity matches with the time that most of the classical sources were writing about the Marsi. As a result, the context in which the Roman sources recorded the history of Marsi has obscured the approach

³⁹⁵ Scopacasa, *Ancient Samnium*, 164 f: "... with the work I do not want to deny the existence of ethnic identity as a channel to drive collective efforts at regional level. However, the sentiment of union only comes to play on certain times, and it was not a recurrent union with a structured political organization."

through the written sources to examine earlier periods, because the meaning of what it was to be a Marsi was different.

In both historical moments, before and after the incorporation of the Marsi, Marsic identity was stressed in opposition. First, it was in opposition to Rome, and then, once within the Roman society, it was stressed against other Italian identities. Although the first assumption, the formation of Marsic identity in opposition to Rome, was acquired by previous scholarship, this thesis looks at it in a very different model. My arguments try to reject the modern view of “self-Romanization” present in the study of Marsic identities even today. According to this view, Marsic elites imitated Roman forms as a means to perpetuate their power, and only when Rome was not suiting their needs revived the old ancestral culture to face Romans. However, the Central Italian process of cultural exchange was more diverse than this binomial idea of cultural dominance versus Marsi. Local aristocracies exerted their power having in mind Roman authority, but following much wider Mediterranean fashions, in which even Rome was within, and adapting them as suited to their own contemporary needs.

The rich archeological material of Marsic territory renders, as this thesis has demonstrated, an unavoidable opportunity to rethink the old-fashioned models applied to Marsi by modern scholars. One good example is the primitive mountainous society that has a cultural continuity from the Iron Ages. It creates a dichotomy of civilization-barbarian ideas that intrinsically carry within other polarities, for example the rural-urban and pastoral-agricultural ones.³⁹⁶ All of them should be rejected, because they do not permit to see the whole spectrum that shows the always challenging archeological record.

³⁹⁶ Isayev, *Ancient Lucania*, 189.

Of course, to find the most accurate explanation of the process, much heated debate as well as re-assessment and re-examination are necessary to get closer to the difficult reconstruction of the historical reality. Therefore, this thesis untangles the obscure historical reality by the creation of new accounts regarding these illiterate societies who dwelled in the Central Apennines.

My research has mainly focused on the elites or sub-elites at most so that new accounts for other groups could provide new ways to approach the people of Central Italy, even though one wonders if there is enough evidence to address these groups. The upper strata is referenced because almost all of the available material and literary sources are making allusion to them.³⁹⁷

In this thesis, we have noticed how evidence can be successfully manipulated to support opposite views, thus it is indispensable to encourage further studies to untwist the present state of this field of study. Recently, researchers are focusing on comparative studies. A good example of this is the new volume edited by Bleda Düring and Stek.³⁹⁸ In the case of the Marsi, it would be interesting to compare the integration of other periphery identities into an Empire. Following with comparative studies, Stek is also the leader of an archeological project named “Hidden landscapes of Roman colonization.”³⁹⁹ This project assesses the archeological visibility regarding hilltop and marginal areas. The outcome of the project, if positive, could be applied to the Marsian case. The project could offer a new

³⁹⁷ It always raises the question whether there is enough evidence to approach other groups.

³⁹⁸ Bleda Düring & Tessa Stek, *The archeology of Imperial Landscape. A comparative Study of Empires in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

³⁹⁹ “Hidden landscapes of Roman colonization,” The Royal Nederland Institute in Rome (KNIR), accessed March, 24, 2019, <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/research/research-projects/archaeology/hidden-landscapes-of-roman-colonization>.

groundbreaking perspective to construct a new view of the Marsian settlement pattern. Finally, the examination of archeological data retrieved cannot be forgotten. The scrutiny of the epigraphic collection in 1975⁴⁰⁰ and the Torlonia collection in 2001⁴⁰¹ helped us to understand better the material remains in the Fucino area along with creating a reliable catalog to look into those materials. Further studies could focus on specific materials, for example, coins, weapons or fibulas in general. The archeological material record is immense and each item needs an examination of its own. Daniela Muscianese's doctoral dissertation⁴⁰² concerning votive elements could be a good example to follow. It provides good insight into the economic impact of the votive as well as the non-elite local people's attitudes towards religion.

In sum, this work is a new approach to the cultural identity of the Marsi. It attempts to criticize the previous uniform cultural model created by 20th century authors by applying a more complicated theoretical framework. Marsians were not a political structure all along from the 4th century down to the 1st century; instead, it was a continuously negotiated supralocal malleable identity that could be stressed in particular periods.

I wanted a perfect ending. Now I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next. Delicious ambiguity. — Gilda Radner, *It's always something* (New York: Avon, 1989), 268.

⁴⁰⁰ Letta & D' Amato, *Epigrafia*

⁴⁰¹ Campanelli, *Il tesoro*.

⁴⁰² Daniela Muscianesi Claudiani, "Depositi votivi e luoghi di culto dell'Abruzzo italico e romano: quattro casi di studio" (PhD. diss., Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore Milano, 2012).

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APPENDIX A

Grossi, *Carta Archeologica*, 507.

APPENDIX B

Grossi, *Carta Archeologica*, 502.