Man and animal in antiquity: votive figures in central Italy from the 4\textsuperscript{th} to 1\textsuperscript{st} centuries B.C.

by

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Abstract:

Human and animal votive figures in terracotta frequently appear together in the same votive deposits in central Italy. Using a catalogue of ninety-three sites, the relationship between man and animal from the 4\textsuperscript{th} to the 1\textsuperscript{st} centuries B.C. is being studied. The find combinations suggest that animal figurines formed an integrated part in the use of human figures, such as heads, statues, statuettes and anatomicals, in the towns and countryside alike. Apparently, man and animal were in several respects given similar religious attention. Three main aspects are discussed: fertility, human/veterinary medicine and sacrifice. The religious concern for the procreation of man as well as for his livestock was given a similar kind of expression, as suggested by the votive imagery. Concerning health, the votive figures may partly reflect an ancient past where the distinctions between human and veterinary medicine far from always were clear. Regarding sacrifice, man and animal formed opposite roles but possibly mutual objects of identification as well.

Various types of human and animal votive figures appear frequently in association with different kinds of cult places and sanctuaries in pre Roman and Roman central Italy.\footnote{Though existing already in the Archaic age, they become very common from the fourth to the first centuries B.C. During this period, they are mostly mouldmade in terracotta but sometimes they appear in bronze as well. The human figures show a large variety, comprising statues and heads of natural or almost natural size, small statuettes and anatomical figures, i.e. representations of various internal or external parts of the human body. The animal figures, on the other hand, are almost exclusively represented by small scale figurines and, less frequently, by parts of animals in natural or almost natural size. Cows, pigs and horses are most commonly represented, followed by wild boars and pigeons.\footnoteref{Note1} Several other species are represented as well, albeit in comparatively small numbers (Table 1).} In many cases, the moulds used for the manufacture of these terracottas are very worn. Concerning the human heads and statuettes, the resulting lack of details often makes it difficult to determine whether they are male or female. As to the animal figures, the features that remain after a heavy wear may show the shape of a quadrupede, without leaving any details revealing what particular kind of animal is being represented.

Together, these various kinds of terracottas form the typical content of the so called etrusco-latial-campanian type of votive deposit.\footnote{The type appears most frequently in the western part of central Italy, comprising Etruria, Latium and Campania.} In spite of the larger variations of forms of the human representations, compared with the animal ones,
A number of aspects will be considered. Of course, we cannot be certain that the content of many votive deposits. In most cases, feet are complete, given the lack of information as to the precise number of sites with such parts, as partial representations. As to the human figures, both statues and statuettes have been mentioned as representing the human figure as well as various kinds of anatomical votives. Regarding representations of animals, these are not common. However, although the list of sites with representations of animals presented in Table 1 comprises only 9 sites with such parts, as partial representations. As to the human figures, both statues and statuettes have been mentioned as representing the human figure as well as various kinds of anatomical votives. Regarding representations of animals, these are not common. However, although the list of sites with representations of animals presented in Table 1 comprises only 9 sites with such parts, it may not be complete, given the lack of information as to the precise content of many votive deposits. In most cases, feet are represented, mostly of cows. In one case, at the so-called temple of Minerva Medica on the Esquiline (No. 60), a hoove of a horse is rendered. Apart from feet, other parts may occasionally be represented, such as the head or the tongue of a cow.

Because of the many similarities, I intend to discuss further the relationship between man and animal as seen in this figurative votive repertory. As a point of departure, will be used a catalogue of sites with animal figurines appearing together with human figures in central Italy (Table 2). A number of aspects will be considered, starting with the find contexts where human and animal figures have been found together. Is it possible to see any particular find combinations when animal figurines are present which do not occur when they are absent?

Find context

As already mentioned, animal figurines occur mostly together with other kinds of figurative terracottas. Still, apparently, it does not seem that they can be associated with any particular kind of votive offering more than others. In Fig. 1, it is shown how often (% of total number of sites) various kinds of figurative and anatomical votives appear together with animal figurines, compared with how often these votives occur in all sites with any kind of anatomical votive. It can be seen, that most offerings show a pattern of distribution with regard to the animal figurines which is very similar to the pattern they show in general. In other words, the use of animal figurines seems to form an integrated part of the general use of (human) figurative votive offerings.

Summing up the results so far, not only the distribution (occurring regularly in the same votive deposits in central Italy), execution (mouldmade terracottas in large quantities, frequently made by worn moulds) and the way of representation (full figures as well as partial representations) appear to be similar for human and animal figures. The compositional pattern of both kinds of figures seems to be parallel as well. Animals appear always to have been a human concern, always important enough to be an object in the communication with the gods.

It is now time to look at the orientation of the cult places and sanctuaries where the finds have been made in order to discern if there were any preferences as to the orientation where animal figurines could form part of the ritual.

Orientation

As can be seen in Table 2, comprising ninety-three sites, these kinds of votives are very common in central Italy. As far as can be seen from the sites with a known orientation, urban finds (41.2%), are more frequent than rural ones (35.3%) and almost twice as common as extra urban ones (23.5%). Apparently, animal figurines were used as often in urban sanctuaries as in rural ones (Fig. 2).

This may seem surprising at first, since cows, pigs and sheep, all frequently represented, would foremost
be a rural concern. However, the relationship between urban and rural religion pertain a variety of aspects and considerations, suggesting anything but two separated spheres of religious life, each with a distinctive character of its own. In fact, anatomical votives found in towns may also show the concerns of a rural population, as suggested by Pensabene regarding finds from Rome. These may have been given by people from the country visiting the city, for instance, for the elections. If so, animal as well as human figures could have been dedicated at such occasions. Furthermore, food production, which in many different ways involved the most frequently represented animals (bovine animal and pig), was probably carried out in the vicinities of many towns, and partly within them as well, being a concern for large parts of the urban populations.

As pointed out by North, there was probably several circumstances that linked town and countryside together. If we may assume that there was a flow of immigrants from the countryside, increasing as time went by, a substantial number of the urban population would have been brought up in the country. This may have been the situation at any moment, given the death rates that could be anticipated for the immigrants living under primitive sanitary conditions. Even in the city of Rome, some part of the urban population probably farmed land in the vicinity, walking out in the fields every morning. If this was the situation in Rome, it could most certainly be found in other smaller towns as well, not to mention the pagi and vici.

To these points, made by North, I may add the Roman colonization as an important factor in uniting town culture with that of the countryside. Indeed, colonization can hardly be ignored when discussing the figurative votive terracottas of the Etrusco-latian-campanian type of votive deposit, since such finds are often considered to have been a concern not the least in the colonies. During the last centuries B.C., which are our main concern from the point of view of the figurative votive terracottas, all over central Italy colonies were founded either as new towns or in already existing ones with the newcomers living within them as well as outside. Of the two main categories of populations which are usually considered to have been recruited as colonists, proletarians from Rome and landless poor, the former group would have represented the transformation of people from city to smaller town, village or countryside. Furthermore, viritane assignations represented the distribution of land plots to individual farming families who did not form part of a larger colonization project. These probably lived in villae rusticae in the countryside as well.

To sum up the discussion so far, we have seen that not only the distribution, execution, the way of representation and the consummational pattern of human and animal figures are similar. After the discussion of the orientation of the sites, it appears that man and animal lived everywhere side by side, in the towns as well as in the countryside. Wherever man went to perform sacred rituals, the animals, following in his path, remained an important religious concern.

Function

Having thus considered a number of similarities between the two kinds of figures, it is time to turn to the question as to their function. If we look at the human figures, two main different ways of interpretation are usually considered, the one not necessarily excluding the other. On the one hand, it has been assumed that statues, heads, statuettes and male and female genitals may have been offered for the sake of fertility and procreation (Fig. 3). The female kourotrophoi statuettes and the swaddled babies could indirectly be related to this sphere as well. On the other hand, the large numbers of anatomical votives of both internal and external organs, would
suggest a therapeutical, medical concern (Fig. 4). In several cases, these two ways of interpretation coincide, for instance regarding human fertility and the well being of the offspring.

If we turn to the animal figurines, we may see that both ways of interpretation just mentioned could be applied to them as well. On the one hand, the procreation of the live-stock must have been of great importance for agricultural economy at any level. On the other, the well being of the existing animals must have been of equal importance. A veterinarian medicine is known from literary sources such as Cato, Columella and Varro. Thus, a medical/veterinarian function would represent a second possible function for the animal figurines. To these two possible functions, a third should be added: the figures could represent animal sacrifices, either as substitutes or commemorating rituals that actually had been carried out.

Considering the number of parallels between the two kinds of figures, observed above, it may not seem surprising that their function may have been similar as well. It is only in the possibility of associating the animal figurines with sacrifice that a difference may be discerned. Although human figures frequently can be related to such a ritual as well, they probably in most cases represent the performing part.\(^{16}\) I intend to discuss below the three possible interpretations each at a time, starting with fertility.

Fertility and procreation

Starting with a brief discussion on the human figures, we shall look at the heads and statues. Since they often represent youths or young men and women, they have been associated with the initiation into manhood and marriage respectively, a rite de passage. In Rome, this transformation took place, as far as the young men were concerned, at the Liberalia, when they acquired the duties and rights of a Roman citizen.\(^{17}\) Among the latter, the right to marry and have children were one of the most important, for the individual as well as for the community as a whole.

The Liberalia is often considered to have originated from an ancient fertility feast held in Lavinium, during which a phallos was carried around on a cart in the countryside. It was held in honour of Liber and Libera, the former presiding over the male seed and the latter over the female.\(^{18}\) The feast originally concerned the procreation of the entire peasant community, the plants, the men as well as their animals.\(^{19}\)

For the girls, the corresponding initiation took place at the feast in honour of Anna Perenna, with the considerable difference that no other rights were bestowed on the young woman than to marry and beget children.\(^{20}\)

In Lavinium, Liber was worshipped for a whole month. At the East sanctuary, large numbers of male and female heads and statues have been associated with the initiation of young men and women at the Liberalia and the feast in honour of Anna Perenna respectively.\(^{21}\) Of course, votive male and female genitals could be associated with fertility as well, whether in association to the rites de passages or not. As to the uteri, small balls made of fired clay have been found inside, made visible by x-ray photography.\(^{22}\) Since the ancient medical science does not appear to have comprised the knowledge of the female egg, but rather to have considered two kinds of semen, a male and a female, it seems reasonable to assume that the clay balls, given their comparatively large size, were representing the embryo. The reason for adding these invisible renderings would, as the most likely explanation, have been to express a wish to get pregnant or, possibly, to have a successful pregnancy.\(^{23}\)

Concerning the animal figurines, it is, first of all, a reasonable assumption that several were given in order to promote new generations (Fig. 5). We can probably exclude some represented wild species from such a function, for instance, wild boars or birds. The procreation of the live-stock, on the other hand, must have been one of the most important concerns in the agricultural food production. In his treatise On Agriculture, Varro, writing when the votive terracotta figures still may have been in use, mentions four important points to observe after the purchase of livestock, pasturage, breeding, feeding and health.\(^{24}\) It is interesting that breeding is considered second in importance only to the pasturage. In the vo-
This improvement was not visible unless the figurine was thoroughly examined. Therefore, it would seem unlikely that it was made by the craftsman in order to improve the general appearance and thereby to get a better prize. Instead, it would seem more reasonable that the location of the genitals were marked in order to emphasize the message and intention of the gift. Furthermore, some figurines of sows were rendered with distended udders, which could express a wish for healthy and reproductive animals.26

As with the human figures, it is uncertain what was the character of the dedication of the gift. This problem is relevant whatever function it may have had. It could have been intended as a thank offering, an offering as an exchange or as an act of prayer for divine support not yet received. In either case, the figurine should be considered as a personification of the same upon which the offerer wishes to bring divine protection.27

A (veterinary) medical/therapeutical function

Looking at the second possibility, a medical function, I shall start with the human figures. They have been given a comparatively large amount of consideration in previous studies and will therefore receive a brief treatment here.28 Whereas there is a variety of possible interpretations concerning statues, statuettes and heads, by far the most important significance of the anatomical votives, internal organs, limbs and other parts of the human body, would seem to have been a medical concern. They may have represented a gratitude for a cure already received, or expressed a prayer for a healing or recovery, either on behalf of the votary himself or for a relative or friend. Although pathological signs are very rare on the anatomical votives, this may have more to do with the fact, already mentioned, that they were mouldmade. Still, signs of phimosis may have been observed on some votive male genitals, and the presence of small knobs on some uteri have been interpreted as fibroid tumours.29 Alternative interpretations are sometimes mentioned, such as feet representing a journey, hands the gesture of prayer, and genitals representing fertility.30 Such functions can be far from excluded, but a medical/therapeutical function still remains the most important one.

Turning to the animal figurines, a medical/therapeutical function is clearly suggested by the archaeological evidence. For instance, several animal figurines were dedicated to the so called sanctuary of Minerva Medica in Rome, including a representation of a hoove of a horse.31 It would hardly have made sense to honour the assumed goddess with a sacrifice represented solely by the foot of an animal. Nor could it, of course, have served the purpose to promote the animal’s fertility. The only remaining reasonable explanation is that it was offered for veterinary/therapeutical reasons.

However, such a finding tells us nothing about the character of the ancient veterinary medicine. Of the written sources concerning the Roman tradition during the period we are dealing with, Cato is, no doubt, the most relevant one. Native from Tusculum in Latium and living between 234 and 149 B.C. his work De Agricultura discusses farming as it was practiced in central Italy during a period when the popularity of the figurative votive terracottas may have reached its peak. Still, the question as to the relevance of this evidence for a discussion on the animal votive figurines must first be discussed.

Although we may probably assume that the proprietor of a farm like Catos’ did not concern himself with mass produced votive figurines, it should be kept in mind that the slave run type of farm was a novelty. On the other hand, the practical, veterinary, medical and religious advise that Cato gives probably goes back on a tradition much older than the farm type. No doubt, everything is not old, but the medical considerations that we are interested in most likely are, considering their partly magical character, as will be seen below. Therefore, for the many smallholders that still existed in Catos’ days and who probably stood for a large part of the mass consumption of votive terracottas, the partly magical medical/veterinary remedies and rustic religious cult practice delivered in the book (in De Agricultura) were probably a concern of theirs as well. In fact, oddly enough, the Preface makes reference to the type of colonus, the peasant farmer working on his farm, although the book itself discusses a larger farm.32 Maybe it reflects the possibility that some of the information given in the treatise went back on the agriculture as practiced on the traditional smaller Roman farm. To sum up, it would seem that the information concerning the ancient Roman veterinary medicine given in De Agricultura could be relevant for our discussion.

Possibly, one of the reasons for the dedication of cows’ feet is revealed in a passage concerning a remedy for keeping the oxen from wearing their hoofs out: the bottom should be smeared with liquid pitch before they were driven anywhere on the road (Fig. 6).33 In fact, Cato’s priorities when it comes to treating animals are partly similar to those concerns that appear from the votive repertoire. In altogether six different chapters, Cato discusses veterinary medicine.34 In no less than five of these, the oxen are the sole concern. Various potions are...
proposed for them. Superstitious or magical considerations are mentioned. For instance, the man who gives the potion is repeatedly instructed to stand upright, as must the oxen as well. In Chapter 102, the ingredients in a liquid mixture against snakebites is discussed, which should be inhaled in the nostrils. The same remedy is recommended for a man, if necessary. Of course impossible to prove but reasonable to assume, snakebites may have been one of the causes for the dedications of some of the votive representations of cows’ feet.

The persistent concern with the well being of the oxen seems understandable, since they were used in the fields and therefore needed in the vegetal food production as well as for any kind of transport. The single instance when Cato discusses veterinary medicine without mentioning the oxen, is when a treatment is proposed for keeping sheep from getting the scab. There was even a feast held by the occasion of the oxen resting day. Possibly, there is reason to believe that the representations of cows’ feet were often intended to be the feet of oxen rather than any kind of bovine animal, since any injury on the former would seriously have hampered the agricultural work. Maybe, this circumstance contributed also to the large number of figurines representing bovine animals, being the most popular votive figure.

On the other hand, it should be kept in mind that the agricultural work carried out at Cato’s farm does not give a complete picture of the agricultural food production. In fact, despite its title, it deals only with some aspects. For instance, since cows or their milk are never mentioned, it has been assumed that the oxen were bred somewhere else. The horse does not seem to have been important on Cato’s farm, although the building of a stable is mentioned. Probably, it was used only by the landowner. Another interesting similarity between Cato’s writings and the use of votive figures is the mutual disinterest in animals such as asses, mules and poultry.

As can be seen from the above discussion, Cato offers examples of an identical medical/veterinary treatment of man and animal. There can hardly be any doubt that the main reason for this similar treatment is that a slave as well. As can be seen in the paper by Santillo Frizell in this volume, veterinary and human medicine may even have had a common origin within the religious sphere of early healing cults associated with water springs. The parallel use of anatomical human and animal votive terracottas could in that case partly mirror an ancient folk medicine where the distinctions between the treatments of men and animals far from always were clear.

Sacrifice

In the two previous functions of the votive figures, discussed above, man and animal seem to have been treated similarly in many respects. As to the third possible function, sacrifice, the situation appears to be somewhat different. Now, they appear to have obtained opposite roles with the man carrying out the animal sacrifice. Starting with the man’s role, for reasons already mentioned, human figures such as heads and statues, have been associated with the initiation into manhood at the Liberalia, when the youth acquired the duties and rights of a Roman citizen. For young women, the corresponding initiation concerned marriage. At least for the men, one of the most important rights acquired concerned the performance of sacrifices. As a part of the initiation rite, the initiand carried out his first sacrifice, dressed in the toga virilis capite velato. Indeed, the figures frequently represent the votaries capite velato, apparently in the act of sacrificing or praying, according to the Roman tradition.

In this context, it may seem fit to draw attention to a possible original significance of the velatio capitis, as suggested by Freier. According to this view, the velum signified the skin of a previous sacrificed animal. Thereby, the person who carried out the sacrifice may have identified himself with the victim. If so, the practice would seem to correspond to a particular ritual significance which has been called vicarious association. It has been recognized as a world wide phenomenon in sacrificial practice especially when associated with rites of passage. The sacrificial victim plays the part of the initiate, but since the victim has first been identified with the donor of sacrifice, the donor is by vicarious association, the victim has first been identified with the donor of sacrifice, the donor is by vicarious association, the victim has first been identified with the donor of sacrifice, the donor is by vicarious association, the victim has first been identified with the donor of sacrifice, the donor is by vicarious association. The sacrificial victim plays the part of the initiate, but since the victim has first been identified with the donor of sacrifice, the donor is by vicarious association. The sacrificial victim plays the part of the initiate, but since the victim has first been identified with the donor of sacrifice, the donor is by vicarious association. The sacrificial victim plays the part of the initiate, but since the victim has first been identified with the donor of sacrifice, the donor is by vicarious association.

Rather than polarizing man and animal into opposite roles, the animal sacrifice would in that case in a paradoxical sense seem to bring the parts together.

That votive figures in general were given as substitutes for a kind of object or creature it represented seems reasonable considering, for instance the terracotta representations of various kinds of fruit, which were offered as well. The large number of figurines representing pigs found at the sanctuary of S. Nicola di Albanella at Paestum appear most likely to have represented animal sacrifices, since this kind of sacrifice was particularly associated with Demeter. Some human figurines represent votaries carrying the sacrificial animal. The fact that the remains (bones) of sacrificial animals found in association to a sanctuary correspond to the species represented in the votive imagery may occasionally be used as evidence, for instance at Norba, where figurines of cows and bones of cattle were found in the same deposit. Sacrificial bones and animal statuettes do not often appear together in the same votive deposit, which
could indicate that real and substitute sacrifices were not combined. However, the kinds of animals that were preferred as sacrifices in a region probably had important roles in the rural economies. Therefore, the figurines could represent a particular concern for the fertility and health of these species as well. In other words, the correspondence of the animals that are represented in the votive imagery with those that were sacrificed, does not necessarily indicate substitute sacrifice. There seems, for instance, to be little evidence for substitute sacrifice of the suovetaurilia. Although this seems to have been a widespread practice, figurines of pigs, sheep and cattle in combination seem to appear only in a few cases in northern Latium.

Conclusions

Above, human and animal votive figures have been considered as parallel phenomena. The point of departure for the discussion has been a catalogue of ninety-three sites where both kinds of figures appear together. They suggest that man and animal were given a very similar religious attention in town and countryside alike. Function and significance were therefore in all likelihood in several respects similar. Both can probably be associated with a procreative as well as a medical/therapeutical sphere. The view that animals and men were treated on an equal footing in the latter sphere may be indicated by the literary evidence provided by Cato’s De Agricultura, though the reason for this may to a large part have been that the men were slaves. As to the animal representations, a third significance should be considered: they may have been substitutes for animal sacrifices or, possibly, dedicated as commemoratives of sacrifices already carried out. Some human votive figures probably represent votaries performing animal sacrifices, whether or not the velatio capitis originally may have substituted the skin of a previously slaughtered animal, which by vicarious association may have served to purify the votary. As regards the medical and the procreative sphere, they seem partly to have overlapped each other. Associated with fertility was the hope for a successful deliverance of men and animals alike, a concern which also would seem to be related to the medical/therapeutical sphere. Put together, the votive imagery in Central Italy may reflect old traditions regarding medical and veterinary concerns in early cult practice.

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Much of the discussion in this article is based on a list of sites with animal figurines presented in Table 2. It derives from a catalogue comprising approximately 250 sites with anatomical votives which will be presented in a forthcoming publication of the votive anatomical and figurative terracottas from Tessennano, housed in the Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities at Stockholm. The present list is hardly complete, but the finds included probably constitute a substantial and, in all likelihood, representative number. No doubt, there probably exists some finds of animal figurines appearing without any association with human figures. Although I have not searched for such finds, there is reason to believe that the number of sites is not large. Votive figures, including the animal ones, occur mostly in deposits and less frequently as sporadic, single finds.

The information concerning the species represented in the votive repertory is based on published reports of excavated finds. These reports are often brief and hardly exhaustive. In many cases, votive animals are mentioned without any specification as to which species. Therefore, the various kinds of animals and the number of locations where they have been found, listed in Table 1, are most likely far from complete either. However, there may be some reason to believe that the proportions are representative. Studying the finds from Museo Provinciale Campano at Capua, Pesetti (1994, 32) found the same order of frequency, beginning with cows, followed by pigs and horses. Discussing votive deposits in Latium Vetus, Bouma (1996, Vol. 1, 239) obtained approximately the same results, cattle being the most frequently represented kind of animal, followed by sheep and pigs. However, the conclusion that horses are comparatively rarely represented in Latium is not supported by the presented data. Within a total of 36 latial sites with animal figurines, horses occur in 15 cases, whereas sheep appear only at 9 sites (Bouma, ibid.). Considering that pigeons and wild boars are not discussed, the representativity of animals in the votive imagery seems to be the same in Latium as in the rest of Central Italy.

Comella 1981.

Apollo (no. 27, 52, 56 and 83), Apollo Medicus (nos. 10 and 78), Diana (nos. 49, 52, 56, 61, 65, 72 and 74)), Apollo and Diana (no. 3), Ceres (no. 39, 81), Liber (no. 39), Ceres and Liber (no. 4), Jupiter (no. 17, 28 and 49), Juno (no. 28, 33, 34, 38 and 71), Minerva (no. 41, 49, 61 and 65), Jupiter, Juno and Minerva (nos. 9 and 68), Hercules (no. 26, 28, 61, 70 and 74), Mater Matuta (nos. 26 and 65), Mars Ultor (no. 28), Vesta (no. 28), Aesculapius (nos. 32 and 62), Aphrodite (nos. 37, 49, 52, 56 and 61), Turan (37), Castor and Pollux (no. 39), Vesperna (no. 39), Feronia (no. 43), Dea Marica (no. 46), Mercury (nos. 49 and 65), Lares (no. 49), Vertumnum (no. 49), Bacchus (no. 49 and 81), Leda (no. 52), Thesan (no. 57), Tinia (no. 57), Suris (no. 57), Magna Mater (no. 60).

Pigeon, dolphin and mask of a lion (no. 28); elephant and deer (no. 48); Hoove, possibly of a deer (no. 55); wild boar (no. 60); pigeons, 1 wild boar, 1 lion, wild boars (no. 64); Pigeon (no. 67); wild boar (no. 73); Birds (no. 80). See also Bevan 1986.

1 See note 1.
2 Milky way
3 Ceres (no. 39, 81), Liber (no. 39), Ceres and Liber (no. 4), Jupiter (no. 17, 28 and 49), Juno (no. 28, 33, 34, 38 and 71), Minerva (no. 41, 49, 61 and 65), Jupiter, Juno and Minerva (nos. 9 and 68), Hercules (no. 26, 28, 61, 70 and 74), Mater Matuta (nos. 26 and 65), Mars Ultor (no. 28), Vesta (no. 28), Aesculapius (nos. 32 and 62), Aphrodite (nos. 37, 49, 52, 56 and 61), Turan (37), Castor and Pollux (no. 39), Vesperna (no. 39), Feronia (no. 43), Dea Marica (no. 46), Mercury (nos. 49 and 65), Lares (no. 49), Vertumnum (no. 49), Bacchus (no. 49 and 81), Leda (no. 52), Thesan (no. 57), Tinia (no. 57), Suris (no. 57), Magna Mater (no. 60).

Pigeon, dolphin and mask of a lion (no. 28); elephant and deer (no. 48); Hoove, possibly of a deer (no. 55); wild boar (no. 60); pigeons, 1 wild boar, 1 lion, wild boars (no. 64); Pigeon (no. 67); wild boar (no. 73); Birds (no. 80). See also Bevan 1986.

1 No 8 Anagni; No 24 Cerveteri Manganello; No 38 Lavinium Thirteen Alps; No. 60 Rome Minerva Medica; No. 75 Tarquinia; No. 77 Tessennano; No 82 Vei Portonaccio; No. 87 Via Tuscolana; No 88 Velletri Soleluna.
2 For heads, see Mazzolani 1975, E223-224, fig. 403. D403-405,303, fig. 379.
3 See note 1.

6 Pensabene 1979, 221f. For an opposite view, see Ödegård 1997, 134f.
4 North 1995, 139.
North 1995, 139.


See for instance, the situation at Cosa in Etruria, which is the best known colony from an archaeological point of view. See Brown 1980.


For instance, in association to the sanctuary of Graviscae, large numbers of uteri and swaddled babies were found, Comella 1978; Comella 1986.

However, the possibility that human statuettes in some cases may have served as substitutes for human sacrifice has been considered (Girardon 1995, 37).


For Liber presiding over human, animal as well as vegetal seed, see Pailler 1988, 564f.

Torelli 1984, 27f.

For the most thorough discussion, see Torelli 1984, where the finds from the East sanctuary at Lavinium is being discussed, including male and female heads and statues. For the association of votive heads and statues to initiation, see also D’Ercole 1990. See also Söderlind 1997 for a discussion on a female type of votive head.

Büggieri 2000, 85, figs. 8-9.

Tufra 1986, 230.

Alterae partes quittor sunt, cum iam emeris, observandae, de pastione, de fetura, de nutricatu, de sanitate. Varro De Agr H, 1, 16.

I observed these improvements when examining the finds from the deposit at Muracci di Crepadosso myself at the local museum in Artena. I thank the museum’s director Dott. Angelo from the deposit at Muracci di Crepadosso myself at the local museum in Artena. I thank the museum’s director Dott. Angelo

Cassieri & Lutazzi 1985.

See also Girardon 1995, 64.

Girardon 1995, 64.


For feet and hands, see Tufra 1986. For genitals, see below. See also Girardon 1995, 72-79.

Lo Guzzo 1976.

Astin 1978, 190.

Cato De Agr 72.

Cato De Agr 70, 71, 72, 96, 102, 103.

Cato De Agr 71, 72.

Cato De Agr 96.

There were no corresponding feasts for mules, horses or asses, Cato De Agr 138.

Or oxen. In most cases, the distinction is not possible to make owing to the wear of the moulds or possibly for the reason that no distinction were intended. All figurines of cattle were certainly not oxen. In some cases, it is clear that a bull is being represented, for instance Costantini 1995, Tav. 27, f.

Brehtau 1933, xxi.

Cato De Agr 14.

The same economic way of reasoning is shown by Varro.

Ubi suoles cibum concoquere et lotium facere, hinc bibito quantum suoles sine periculo.

For a discussion on the character of sacrifice, see van Straten 1981.

This interpretation is very widespread. See, for instance, Breitenstein 1941, nos. 788 and 83, fig. 98; Phillips 1965, 527; La Regina 1975; Lo Guzzo 1976; Marinucci 1976; Cristofani 1978, 195; Pensabene 1979, 218f.; Comella 1981, 793; Comella 1982, 32-40; Hofter 1985, 121; Potter 1989, 49; D’Ercole 1990, 24; Comella 1993, 420; Costantini 1995, 23 and Carafa 1996.

The velum was used not only by priests but also by laymen and women (see Freier 1965, 74f., 83, 102-119). There is no reason for Holter’s view that only the rims of male votive heads represent the velum (see Hofter 1985, 121). Women covered their heads as well (see Freier 1965, 118).

Freier 1965, 45, 74, 103.

Leach 1976, 84.

See, for instance, Castagnoli et al. 1975. Votive statues frequently hold fruits in their hands, apparently in the act of bringing them to the deity. See Costantini 1995, Tav.

Cipriani 1989.

See, for instance, Torelli 2000, cat. No. 297, 630.


This is, however, suggested by Bouma (1996, Vol. I, 239).

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Table 2. List of sites in central Italy with animal figurines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Site Description</th>
<th>Animal Figurines</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ALATRI URBAN SANCTUARY</td>
<td>1 cow</td>
<td>Della Setta 1918, 213. (Fenelli 1975, 246, no. 2. Rizzello 1980, 175. Comella 1981, 740f.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ALBANO: COLLE DEI CAPOCCIINI</td>
<td>Extra urban sanctuary 4 bulls and c. 10 cows. 1 bear</td>
<td>(Chiarucci 1993. Bouma 1996, Vol III, 10, no. 5a.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Type of Finds</td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>CIVITA CASTELLANA (FALERII VETERES) VIGNALE LARGER TEMPLE</td>
<td>4 quadrupedes and a pigeon (Fenelli 1975, 247, no. 27. Comella 1986. Turfa in press, no. 41c.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Animals and Objects</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>LUCERA 4 Cows, wild boars, pigs</td>
<td>(Fenelli 1975, 249, no. 43. D’Ercole 1990. Turfa in press, no. 77.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAGIONE (VID TRASYMENSKA SJÖN)</td>
<td>Urban Animal figurines</td>
<td>(Fenelli 1975, 249, no. 45. Comella 1981, 722f.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARZABOTTO SUBURBAN</td>
<td>4 animal figurines</td>
<td>(Miari 2000, 216-230. Turfa in press, no. 11a.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PALESTRINA. SOUTH WEST OF THE TOWN</td>
<td>Extra urban Animal figurines</td>
<td>(Fenelli 1975, 249, no. 57. Comella 1981, 738f.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PALESTRINA. Porta San Francesco</td>
<td>Extra urban Pigs</td>
<td>(Fenelli 1975, 248, no. 38. Comella 1981, 738f.)</td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>ROME. LA SALARA Urban</td>
<td>1 large dog, 1 goat, 1 head of an elephant</td>
<td>(Bouma 1996, Vol III, 92, note 979.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>SALERNO (MARCINA?)</td>
<td>Wild boars, pigeons. Cockerels</td>
<td>(Fenelli 1975, 250, no. 70.)</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>SAN GIULIANO (BARBARANO ROMANO)</td>
<td>Animal figurines</td>
<td>(Comella 1981, 728f.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>SATRICUM. NORTH OF THE CITY Extra urban</td>
<td>Wild boars. Sheep. Cows</td>
<td>(Della Seta 1918, 318f.)</td>
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<td>Page</td>
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<tr>
<td>74.</td>
<td>SOVANA From a votive deposit at the necropolis Animal figurines in bronze (Bianchi Bandinelli 1929, 36f. 126f. Pfiffig 1975, 86. Comella 1981, 726f. Turfa in press, no. 31.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>75.</td>
<td>TARQUINIA. ARA DELLA REGINA Extra urban 1 horse. 1 cow. 2 feet of quadrupeds (Comella 1981, 728f. Comella 1982.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>76.</td>
<td>TEANO. LORETO Animal figurines (Fenelli 1975, 251, no. 82. Comella 1981, 752f.)</td>
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<td>77.</td>
<td>TESSENNANO Rural 39 animal figurines including 1 hoove of a cow, cows, 1 bull, 1 pig and 1 bird. (Unge-Söring 1994. Costantini 1995.)</td>
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<td>81.</td>
<td>VEII CAMPETTI. EXCAVATION 1969 11 cows. 1 goat (Comella &amp; Stefani 1990.)</td>
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