RELIGIONS OF ROME

Volume 2 · A Sourcebook

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VOLUME 2

A Sourcebook

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Preface

'Religions of Rome' – the traditional, polytheistic religions of the city of Rome and its empire – have a history of over 1, 200 years. It is a history that stretches from the city's origins in the eighth century B.C. to the fifth century A.D., when Christianity was firmly and officially established as *the* religion of the Roman empire. This book draws on material from throughout this long period, arranging it largely by theme – gods, the calendar, temples, divination, religious officials, and so forth. Of course, the character of Roman religion changed enormously during that time, as Rome itself developed from a small village in central Italy to the capital of a world empire, incorporating a wide diversity of religious traditions and beliefs. This book recognizes those changes, but does not attempt to present a chronological account. For that the reader should turn to our companion volume, *Religions of Rome 1: A History*.

There is more at stake in this arrangement than simply a choice of chapter headings. By grouping the material thematically across the centuries, we are suggesting that (despite all the changes) the 'religions of Rome' did retain certain significant constants over their long history. We are suggesting, for example, that Roman sacrifice of the fifth century B.C. had something important in common with Roman sacrifice of the second century A.D.; and that it can be useful to consider these religious forms *synchronically*, across time, not only (as we choose to do in the companion volume) as part of a changing, *diachronic* development.

Any modern analysis inevitably simplifies the complex and changing set of cults, practices, beliefs and experiences that once made up the religions of Rome. So, in this book, the bulk of the material cited comes from the three central centuries of the whole period – the first century B.C. to the second century A.D. Although we have included important evidence from both earlier and later, our choice of entries reflects the facts of survival: more and richer evidence for Roman 'pagan' religion (Christian writings are another story . . .) survives from these three centuries than any other. But, in addition to this chronological bias, we have also (for reasons of space and coherence) focused largely on material concerned with the city of Rome and Italy. Again, not exclusively. We have tried to represent something of the complexity and diversity of the religious traditions of the Roman empire as a whole: we have illustrated, for example, the export of various aspects of central 'Roman' religion to the provinces, as well as the growth within Rome itself of religions (including

Judaism and Christianity) whose origins lay elsewhere in the empire. But we have not given a full account of the religious life of any Roman province; and we have considered the development of Judaism and Christianity, or other 'foreign' religions, mainly in relation to their interaction with Rome and traditional Roman religion (though we have illustrated the diversity of practice and belief within each religion).

Even so the process of selection has been difficult. Religion was embedded in almost every aspect of Roman life; and the range of source material is enormous – from the specifically religious/philosophical treatises of Cicero (*On Divination, On the Nature of the Gods*) and Lucretius (*On the Nature of Things*) to pious discussions of how divine anger might be appeased, or the joking appearances of the gods in Roman comic drama. Our guiding principle has been to use the texts we cite *argumentatively*, and to show that Roman religion was not a static body of doctrine, but a subject of debate, negotiation, definition and re-definition (explicitly or implicitly) for the Romans themselves. This does not mean that we have heavily weighted our selection towards those texts in which Roman authors self-consciously discuss their own religion. (We have not, in other words, filled the book with long extracts from Cicero and Lucretius.) Instead we have tried to put those specifically religious discussions in the context of the other ways (whether more casual, humorous or indirect) in which Romans represented religion to themselves. These other ways include polemic and attack, from both inside and outside the traditional 'pagan' system. We have often chosen to illustrate Christian polemic against traditional Roman beliefs and practices. This is not intended to be a judgement on Roman religion from a Judaeo-Christian viewpoint, but to stress that the interaction between traditional 'paganism' and Christianity is an important element in our understanding of *Roman* religion.

We hope that our readers will join in the argument and engage in debate with the texts that they read. These have been chosen to be a starting-point of discussion, not merely sources of 'information'. We have prefaced each extract with a brief introduction designed to alert the reader to some issues of interpretation involved, with notes on particular points of detail in the text; and there is a bibliography attached to most entries, with suggestions for further reading, both for beginners and more advanced students. ('Vol. 1, 000–000' indicates relevant discussion in our companion volume, *Religions of Rome* 1; an asterisk (*) marks out, where possible, a clear starting-point in English – though it is not necessarily the best treatment of the subject; figures in bold type (e.g. **2.1**) point to other related texts in the volume.) Further details of the authors of the ancient texts, the nature and date of their work, and available English translations are collected at the end of the book. It has been our aim to present each extract so that it can make useful sense on its own *and* open up further exploration of particular issues in Roman religion. Within each chapter the entries are grouped into sections indicated by the numbering. So, for example, the first section in Chapter 2 ('The deities of Rome'), **2.1**, is entitled

Gods in human form, and groups together a painting (**2.1a**), a piece of sculpture (**2.1b**), a 'pagan' text (**2.1c**) and Christian polemic (**2.1d**). The reader is invited to explore the connections between the entries in this particular section, as well as the relation between this section and those that follow.

The translations printed are our own (except in a few cases indicated). In turning the original language (mostly Latin or Greek, but occasionally another ancient language) into modern English, we have followed different principles on different occasions. In some difficult texts, where we have been concerned to render as closely as possible the sense of individual words and phrases in the original, we have opted for a relatively literal translation – even at the cost of some clumsiness of expression. In other cases, where we wish to capture the tone and general 'atmosphere' of the original, we have chosen a freer, more idiomatic style.

Not all our extracts are drawn from literary works, that is from the poetry, philosophy, history, oratory and drama that made up the 'high' literary culture of the Roman world. Some are much more technical or mundane documents, often inscribed on bronze or stone, or written on papyrus: the rulings of Roman law, lists of cult members, the regulations of the religious calendar. These documents have a very different 'style' from the literary extracts, as different a style (to use a modern Christian analogy) as a page from a marriage register would have from a chapter of the New Testament. We have given these non-literary documents a prominent place in the book. This is partly because, unlike most literary texts, they can offer some insight into the religious world of those outside the topmost echelons of the Roman elite (into the world, for example, of the lowly cult official). But it is also because of our concern with how Romans represented to themselves, defined and debated the nature of the religions of Rome. Even an apparently bald inscribed list of cult members was a loaded statement of group identity, a mechanism of incorporation and exclusion. These texts too are a focus of *debate*.

We have also included visual evidence – drawings and plans of temples, as well as photographs of paintings, sculpture and coins – side by side with texts. Images are (and were for the Romans) just as central as texts to the understanding of religious practice and belief. It is impossible, for example, to understand the conduct of Roman festivals without some understanding of the physical environment in which those festivals took place; impossible to understand the significance of Roman sacrifice if we concentrate exclusively on verbal descriptions, ignoring the visual representations in sculpture and on coins. We have therefore consistently treated our visual images as entries in their own right, with preface, bibliography and notes. Each one invites the reader to reflect on the relationship between visual and written images of Roman religion.

We imagine that different readers will use this book in very different ways. Some will consult a particular chapter or chapters, some just individual texts; and we have arranged the book so that there is no need to start at the beginning. In fact, for reasons that will become obvious, the first chapter on

the religion of early Rome is one of the most technically difficult, one which the newcomer to the subject is likely to find the hardest. Nonetheless, we hope that we have written more than just a *sourcebook* to be quarried; and that the interaction between ancient texts and interpretation amounts to a thematic *analysis* of Roman religion that complements the chronological treatment of our companion volume.

W.M.B.
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Conventions and abbreviations

Conventions

In the translations we have used the following conventions:

( ) are used to enclose the author's own parenthetical statements

[ ] indicate words that are missing in the original text

< > indicate words that we have added for clarity (e.g. dates)

* in the suggestions for further reading indicates a good starting-point in English (see further, Preface)

Italics have been used for Latin or Greek words, which are explained either where they occur or in the glossary at the end of this volume

Figures in **bold type** (e.g. **1.4b**) refer to other texts within this volume

Abbreviations

With the exception of the following works, we have used a fairly full form of abbreviation; any doubts about the exact form of periodical ritles will be solved with reference to *L'année philologique.* ,

AE *L'année épigraphique* (Paris, 1888–).

ANRW *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, edd. H. Temporini and W. Haase (Berlin, 1972–).

CIJ *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum*, ed. J.-B. Frey (Vatican, 1936–52). Vol. I repr. with addenda by B. Lifsbitz as *Corpus of Jewish Inscriptions* (New York, 1975).

CIL *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin, 1863–).

CIMRM *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithrae*, ed. M. J. Vermaseren (Leiden, 1956).

CSEL *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum.*

CTh *Codex Theodosianus* (Berlin, 1905).

EPRO *Etudes préliminaires sur les religions orientales dans l'empire romain* (Leiden, 1961–).

FIRA *Fragmenta Iuris Romani Anteiustiniani*, edd. S. Riccobono et al., 2nd edn (Florence, 1968).

ICUR *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae* (Rome, 1857).

IG *Inscriptiones Graecae* (Berlin, 1873–).

IGUR *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae*, ed. L. Moretti (Rome, 1968–).

ILCV	*Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*, ed. E. Diehl (Berlin, 1925–31).
ILLRP	*Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Reipublicae*, ed. A. Degrassi (Florence, 1957–63).
ILS	*Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, ed. H. Dessau (Berlin, 1892–1916).
Inschrif. Kyme	*Die Inschriften von Kyme*, ed. H. Engelmann (Bonn, 1976).
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies.*
MEFRA	*Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome: Antiquité.*
RE	*Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, edd. G. Wissowa, E. Kroll et al. (Berlin, 1893–).
RIB	*The Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, edd. R. G. Collingwood and R. P. Wright (Oxford, 1965).
ROL	*Remains of Old Latin*, ed. E.H. Warmington (Loeb Classical Library) (Cambridge, MA and London, 1935–46).
Sylloge^3	*Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, ed. W. Dittenberger, 3rd edn. (Leipzig, 1915–24).
Vidman, *Sylloge*	L. Vidman, *Sylloge inscriptionum religionis Isiacae et Sarapiacae* (Berlin, 1969).
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik.*

1 *Earliest Rome*

What was the character of the religion of the Romans in the period of the kings – from Romulus, the legendary founder in the eighth century B.C., to Tarquin the Proud, whose expulsion was said to have led to the foundation of the Republic at the end of the sixth century B.C.? This chapter sets out some of the evidence that has been used to answer that question. The material raises different, in some ways more difficult, problems than does the rest of the book: for these early phases of Rome's history we have no contemporary literary evidence, only the speculations of Romans living hundreds of years later, combined with the evidence of archaeology and a few early documents that set formidable problems of their own. A few of these survive in their original context (e.g. **1.6b**; **1.7b**), but most come down to us, quoted, or often misquoted and misunderstood, by later writers.

Modern scholars have sought to plug this gap by bringing into the discussion theories about the development of early societies in general, to try to make sense of the surviving clues. We start this chapter (**1.1**) by reviewing the evidence for one of the most famous of those theories: that the earliest Roman religion was a form of primitive 'animism', in which divine power was seen as widely diffused through natural phenomena, not located in superhuman beings (gods and goddesses); and that Rome only gained a mythology, with fully anthropomorphic gods and goddesses, by 'borrowing' them from the outside world (particularly Greece). We continue with a Roman account of the origins of their religious organization (**1.2**), followed by a series of texts which may preserve traces of some of the oldest rituals of Roman religion (**1.3** and **4**). The next sections explore different contexts of early Roman religion: first (**1.5**) literary and archaeological evidence for the religion of the early Latins (the inhabitants of the central Italian region of Latium, of which Rome was a part); secondly (**1.6**) the religious traditions associated with the Roman *gens* (family or clan). The final sections (**1.7–9**) are concerned with the evidence for the later regal period. Here we are now far better informed than earlier generations of historians, because of a whole series of dramatic archaeological discoveries which have shown that sixth-century Rome was a far more advanced and cosmopolitan society than anybody had suspected; and that the religious developments of this period must be seen in this cosmopolitan context, influenced both by the religion of the Etruscans and of the Greeks.

See further: Vol. 1, 1–18; Warde Fowler (1911) 1–247; Dumézil (1970);

Scullard (1981) 13–22*; Scheid (1985) 59–94; for the historical tradition of the earliest Rome, Heurgon (1973) 106–55; Cornell and Matthews (1982) 17–30*; Momigliano (1989); Cornell (1989)*; specifically for the Latin context, Alföldi (1965), with Momigliano (1967); Cornell (1996) 1–214*. For an accessible account of the archaeological material presented in this chapter, see Holloway (1994)*.

1.1 Before the gods?

One of the most influential theories of religion, fashionable earlier this century, held that anthropomorphic deities (almost wherever they were found) were a secondary development in the history of religion; the result of the animistic powers, that were once perceived as diffused through the natural world, gradually 'separating out' to form individual gods and goddesses, with particular names, genders and (eventually) life-stories. Roman religion, it was argued, represented an exception to this standard pattern; for it became atrophied before reaching the more 'advanced', anthropomorphic stage of the evolutionary process, remaining in essence animistic. In other words, the gods and goddesses that we may think of as defining Roman religion (see **chap. 2**) were not a native *Roman* phenomenon, but merely the result of a process of importation (mostly from Greece) still going on well into the Republic; while the original, native Roman tradition must be sought in surviving traces of an animistic conception of divine power.

This idea is to be found even in quite recent books, despite the fact that the evolutionary theories on which it was based were abandoned by anthropologists decades ago; and despite the fact also that the Latin words for 'god' and 'goddess', as well as the Latin names of at least some of the gods and goddesses, belong to the very earliest stages of the history of the Latin language, and must in fact go back to the Indo-European ancestors of the Romans. The very first Latin speakers in central Italy, that is, must already have had a vocabulary for superhuman beings of some kind, long before Rome itself was founded. The passages that follow have often been used in support of an animistic theory of early Roman religion – but, as we show, can be interpreted in quite different ways.

See further: Vol. 1, 10–18; Warde Fowler (1911) 1–63; Rose (1926) 43–62; Rose (1948) 9–49; Dumézil (1970) 18–46*.

1.1a *Gods without images*

In this passage, Augustine (writing in the fifth century A.D.) quotes the words of the Roman antiquarian Varro (first century B.C.), claiming that in the earliest period of their history Romans had no cult-statues or images of the gods and goddesses. This does not, however, prove (as it has sometimes been said to) that Rome originally had no gods; for, as Varro himself shows, it is perfectly

possible to have the conception of gods but not to have physical representations of them. Besides, interpretation of the passage as 'evidence' for early Roman religion is complicated by the nature of arguments that underlie it: Varro himself is using an image of primitive Roman life as part of philosophical theorizing on the nature of the gods; while Augustine is quoting Varro in order to make his own Christian points, interweaving his exposition of pagan philosophy with a Christian critique of it.

See further: Vol. 1, 10–11; Taylor (1931); Dumézil (1970) 25–8*; Martin (1987) 11–53.

Augustine, *The City of God* IV.31 (= Varro, fr. 13 (56) and 18 (59) Cardauns)

The same acute and learned author <Varro> says also that the only people to understand what god is are those who believe him to be the spirit governing the universe, through motion and reason.[1] In this respect, Varro fell short of the truth, because god is not in fact himself a spirit, but the author and creator of spirit, as of everyrhing else. But even if Varro did nor free himself from the bias imposed by tradition, he did at least recognize and recommend that men ought to worship a single god, the governor of the universe through motion and reason. The only issue between us and him concerns his saying that god is a spirit, and not saying the truth – that he is the creator of spirit. Varro also tells us that the Romans worshipped the gods without any images for a hundred and seventy years.[2] 'Had that custom been retained,' he says, 'the worship of the gods would be more reverently performed.' And among the evidence for this, he quotes the Jewish people.[3]

1. The view here attributed to Varro is that of the Stoics, who identified a single divine entity as the principle behind the working of the universe.
2. Varro dated the foundation of Rome to 753 B.C., so he means approximately 575 B.C. as the year of the introduction of the first image. It is possible that he is referring to some specific dated event; but in any case, this date for the first images (however Varro claimed to know it) corresponds very roughly to the period of the first statues known to us. (See 1.7.)
3. For Varro's knowledge of the Jews, see Nock (1959) 6 and 12.6a.

1.1b *The 'numina'*

The word *numen*, meaning 'nod' or 'divine power', is used hy Roman poers of the early Empire, such as Ovid, to indicate the mysterious presence of godhead in natural or man-made objects, in this case the boundary-stone – the *terminus*. According to animistic theories of Roman religion, Terminus was an example of the earliest form of Roman deiry: it was never represented in human style, but always seen as the divine power residing in the boundary-stone. And the word *numen* itself, following these theories, was the standard Latin term for the pre-anthropomorphic 'divinities' of the early period. In fact, the word hardly occurs in what survives of early Latin; and it is much more likely rhar it came to mean 'divine power' only in later literature, having had nothing at all to do wirh early forms of the gods.

See further: Vol. 1, 10–11; Wagenvoort (1947) 73–83; Rose (1948) 9–49; Weinstock (1949); Dumézil (1970) 18–31*; on Terminus, Piccaluga (1974).

Ovid, *Fasti* II.639–46

When night has ended,[1] the god who by his presence marks the divisions of the fields should receive his traditional reverence. You too, Terminus, have had divine power <*numen*> from ancient times – sometimes in the form of a stone, sometimes a stump buried in the field. The two farmers crown you from their opposite sides, each of them bringing you a garland and each a cake.[2]

1. On the morning of 23 February.
2. Ovid goes on to describe in detail the elaborate ritual involved in honouring Terminus, whose worship, he says, prevents not only neighbourly squabbling, but also the outbreak of wars between cities on boundary-issues.

1.2 King Numa's reforms

King Numa (reigning, according to tradition, 715–673 B.C.) was the successor of Romulus and was seen as the founder of the religious institutions of Rome. Romans of the late Republic knew of laws and rules attributed to him (see **1.3**; **3.1**) and various traditional tales concerning his life; but he was above all associated with the priestly colleges, as this passage illustrates (see **5.4a**, **8.1a** and **8.4a**). In fact, by the first century B.C., Roman writers could have had no direct evidence for what King Numa (if he really existed) did or did not do. The reforms that cluster round his name reflect the idea that the city needed a separate religious founder, as opposed to Romulus the first king (although Romulus himself is often made responsible for much of the religion as well; see **4.8a** and **5.2a**).

See further: Vol. 1, 1–4; Ogilvie (1970) 88–91; on the relationship between Numa and Romulus, Dumézil (1968–73) I.261–84; Belier (1991) 130–8.

Livy, *History* I.19.6–20.7

First of all he divided the year into twelve months according to the courses of the moon; but because the moon does not complete the thirty days in each month needed to fit with the cycle of the sun, so that six[1] days are missing compared to the full year, he arranged for intercalary months to be inserted so that after twenty years, when the full cycle of all the years had been completed, the days would come to correspond to the same position of the sun from which they had started.[2] He also fixed the days as lawful or unlawful for public business <*fasti* or *nefasti*>, thinking it would be useful to have some days on which no business could be brought before the people.[3]

(20.1) Next he turned his attention to the creating of priests: he himself was in fact conducting most of the rites, particularly those that now belong to the *flamen Dialis*. But because he realized that in such a warlike city more kings would be like Romulus than

like Numa and that these would go to war themselves, he protected the royal rituals from being thus neglected by creating a *flamen* permanently devoted to Jupiter;[4] he marked the office by the grant of special dress and an official chair of state <*sella curulis*> like the king's. He added two more *flamines*, one for Mars, one for Quirinus and also chose virgin priestesses for Vesta.[5] This priesthood originated at Alba and was not therefore alien to the founder of Rome.[6] So that these priestesses should be able to devote their whole time to temple service, he provided them with an income from public funds; he conferred a special sanctity on them by ritual obligations, including the keeping of their virginity. He also chose twelve *Salii*, to serve Mars Gradivus;[7] these were distinguished by an embroidered tunic with a bronze breastplate worn over it; their duty was to bear the heaven-descended shields, the *ancilia* as they are called, and to process through the city chanting hymns in time to a ritual triple-rhythm dance.

(20.5) Next, Numa appointed as *pontifex* Numa Marcius, son of Marcus, from among the patricians. He gave him full solemn written instructions about the ceremonies, specifying for each sacrifice the proper victims, the proper days and the proper temples and the way in which money should be raised to meet the expenses. He then subordinated all the other public and private religious ceremonies to the decision of the *pontifex* in order that the plebeians should have somewhere to seek advice; so he prevented confusion in the sacred law whether through the neglecting of the inherited rituals or by the adopting of foreign ones. It was the task of the *pontifex* to instruct, not just about the heavenly rites, but also about the forms for burying the dead and for placating the departed spirits, and also for recognizing and dealing with prodigies, whether from the lightning or from other signs.[8]

1. There is a problem here with Livy's arithmetic. The republican Roman year was in fact 354 days, 11 short of the right number. Livy evidently thought the right number was 12 × 30 = 360 days; he therefore reckoned, wrongly, that it was 6, not 11, days short.
2. Although 'intercalation' (the practice of inserting extra days into the calendar to keep it in line with the solar year) was part of the republican calendrical system (see 3.2 n.7), it is not likely that this goes back to the period of Numa.
3. This explanation for the origin of the days marked *fasti* and *nefasti* must be a later guess. Compare 3.1 (with 3.2 n.5), which offers a more intricate scheme of days.
4. For the *flamines* see Vol. 1, 19, 28–9; 8.1; 8.2d.
5. For the Vestals see Vol. 1, 51–4, 56–8; 8.4.
6. The settlement at Alba Longa was founded, according to Roman tradition, by Iulus, the son of Aeneas – and it was seen as the ultimate origin of a number of later Roman institutions. See 1.5a.
7. For the *Salii* see Vol. 1, 1, 43, 216; 5.4.
8. For the *pontifices* see Vol. 1, 24–6; 8.1a; 8.2a; 8.3. In fact, they have little to do with prodigies in the later Republic: for the usual procedures, Vol. 1, 37–9; 7.3.

1.3 The archaic triad: Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus

The three *flamines* created by King Numa (priests of Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus) have suggested that these three gods formed an ancient triad, who

would have been the leading gods of Rome until they were displaced by the, now more familiar, 'Capitoline' triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva (**1.9b**). This passage, confused and hard to interpret though it is, specifically links Jupiter (Feretrius), Mars and (Janus) Quirinus, and suggests that in the earliest period of the city's history these three gods may have been the recipients of the victory spoils, later to he monopolized by the Jupiter of the Capitol. (See, for example, the role of Capitoline Jupiter at the ceremony of triumph, **1.9a**; **5.8.**)

The information comes from an entry in an ancient dictionary which quotes directly from the records of the priests (the pontifical books) and ftom a law attributed to King Numa. However, the author of the entry seems to misinterpret the quotation: in part of the passage not given here, he implies a series of dated historical occasions on which Roman generals killed enemy leaders with their own hands and hence won the right to celebrate the special dedication of the spoils (*spolia opima*). But the words he quotes make it clear that this was wrong; they seem to be describing either a single ritual sequence in which a succession of offerings was made; or (more probably) three different rituals to be used in different situations. Whichever is the case, the recipienrs of the dedicarions are the three gods of the old triad, Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus, joined together in some specific sequence; and the dedicators those who won the spoils from enemy leaders.

See further: Vol. 1, 14–16; Dumézil (1941–5); Charles-Picard (1957) 131–3; Dumézil (1970) 166–8*; Rüpke (1990) 217–23; for a similar triad of male gods elsewhere in Italy, see **1.4b**; for *flamines* see **8.1** and **8.2d**.

Festus p. 204 (Lindsay) s.v. Opima spolia

[. . . ?spoils taken from the enemy leader are] not [always] placed at the temple of Jupiter Feretrius[1]: the evidence of this is in the pontifical books, which say that the public sacrifice for the first *spolia* should be an ox; for the second, the *solitaurilia*; for the third, a lamb;[2] there is also a law of King Numa Pompilius on the *spolia opima*, as follows:

The man under whose auspices the *spolia opima* are won in full battle should dedicate them to Jupiter Feretrius; he should sacrifice an ox; let him who took them [give three] hundred in bronze.[3] For the second spoils, let him sacrifice *solitaurilia*, whichever he wishes, at the altar of Mars in the Campus <Martius>. For the third spoils, let him sacrifice to Janus Quirinus a male lamb; let him who took them give one hundred in bronze.[3] Let the man under whose auspices they were taken make the piacular offerings to the gods.[4]

1. There is a break in the manuscript at this point; before the break the subject had been particular occasions of the dedication of the *spolia opima*.
2. The so-called 'first', 'second' and 'third' *spolia* were probably distinguished by the rank of the dedicator (see n. 4), as well as by the identity of the god who received the dedication. The author of this passage seems to be particularly concerned with where the sacrifices took place, although the pontifical books, as quoted, only specify the victims to be sacrificed. (The nature of the *solitaurilia* is not known, but it must be a specific combination of victims – maybe another version of the *suovetaurilia* (the sacrifice of a pig, ram and bull); see **6.3a**.)

3. This clause seems to refer to a gift of bronze, but it is not clear who is being said to 'take', or what he 'took'.
4. This law suggests that only the first spoils – the *opima* – were won and dedicated by the commander under his own auspices; the other two ought then to be those of lesser officers or common soldiers, fighting under the auspices of a superior officer: but the piacular offerings (that is those made to compensate for an error or mistake) are to be made by the commander, whatever the rank of the dedicator.

1.4 Early rituals

The ritual practice of early Roman religion is for the most part completely obscure. But occasionally a later writer (as in **1.4a**) quotes the words of a ceremony, claiming that they reflect the words used at a much earlier date. Or occasionally (as in **1.4b**) the chance discovery of an inscription may throw some light – directly or indirectly – on the rituals of the early city.

1.4a *Ritual of the 'fetiales'*

The fetial priests were concerned with rituals that marked the declaration of wars and the making of treaties. In this passage, Livy supplies a specific context for the origin of some of their priestly duties and law (the *ius fetiale*), by making King Ancus (Rome's fourth king; reigning, according to tradition, 642–617 B.C.) the inventor of their rituals for the declaration of war, and associating the invention with an ancient war against Rome's Latin neighbours. In fact, the text of the formula given here is very unlikely to go back to early times and is probably reconstructed by an antiquarian writer on the basis of the later ritual. But, with its set formulae to be performed at fixed points (boundary, town-gate etc.) it strongly recalls the ritual programme of (e.g.) **1.4b**; and the antiquity of the procedure in general (as opposed to the details of this account) seems to be confirmed by its similarity to the procedures of early Roman civil law. (Livy ascribes the origin of the fetial rituals for treaties to the reign of Tullus Hostilius (the third king); Livy, *History* I.24.)

See further: Bayet (1935); Latte (1960) 124; Ogilvie (1970) 127–36; Brunt (1978) 175–8*; Rüpke (1990) 97–117; Watson (1993); for the later history of the fetial rituals, **5.5d**.

Livy, *History* I.32.6–14

When the legate arrives at the frontier of those from whom restitution is demanded, he covers his head with a fillet (the covering is of wool) and says: 'Hear thou, Jupiter, hear ye, boundaries of – naming whatever nation they belong to – let divine law hear! I am the official herald of the Roman people; I come lawfully and piously commissioned, let there be trust in my words.' Then he sets forth his demands, after which he takes Jupiter to witness: 'If I unjustly and impiously demand that these men and these goods be surrendered to me, then never let me be a full citizen of my fatherland.' He recites these

words when he crosses the boundary-line, again to the first person he encounters, again when proceeding through the town-gate, and again when he enters the market-place, with only slight modification to the form and wording of the oath. If his demands are not met, at the end of 33 days – for such is the customary number – he declares war as follows: 'Hear thou, Jupiter, and thou, Janus Quirinus,[1] and all ye heavenly gods, and ye terrestrial gods, and ye infernal gods, hear! I call you to witness that this people – naming whatever people it is – is unjust and does not render just reparation. But regarding these matters we will consult the elders in our fatherland, how we may acquire our due.' Then the legate returns to Rome for the consultation. Without delay the king would consult the senators with words approximating these: 'having regard to those goods, disputes and causes of which the *pater patratus*[2] of the Roman people gave due notice to the *pater patratus* of the Ancient Latins,[3] and to the men of the Ancient Latins, having regard to those things which they have neither rendered, nor fulfilled, nor discharged, speak' – turning to the man whose opinion he would ask first – 'What think you?' Then he would reply: 'I hold that these things ought to be sought by a war of justice and sacred duty. So I agree and with my vote approve.' The others were then, in order of rank, asked the question; and when the majority of those present voted for the same opinion, war had been agreed upon. The usual procedure was for the *fetialis* to carry to the boundary of the other nation a spear of iron or fire-hardened cornel-wood, and in the presence of not fewer than three adult males, to say: 'Forasmuch as the tribes of the Ancient Latins and men of the Ancient Latins have committed act and offence against the Roman people, and forasmuch as the Roman people have ordained that war be declared on the Ancient Latins, and the senate of the Roman people has affirmed, agreed, and with their votes approved that there be war with the ancient Latins, I, therefore, and the Roman people, declare and make war on the tribes of the Ancient Latins and the men of the Ancient Latins.' Having said this, he would hurl the spear across their boundary. This is the manner in which at that time redress was demanded of the Latins and war was declared, and it has been accepted by subsequent generations.

1. Janus was the god of doorways and beginnings, and Janus Quirinus, in this context (cf. **1.3**), is the god of the beginning of war. Augustus in his *Achievements* (13) boasts that the doors of the temple of Janus Quirinus were closed three times during his Principate, meaning that peace was three times established in the empire.
2. A senator appointed as 'father' (*pater*) of a deputation to a foreign power.
3. The Ancient Latins (*Prisci Latini*) were the ancient peoples of the plain of Latium, who were believed to have attacked Rome shortly after the beginning of Ancus Marcius' reign. Their name is included here merely as the original example of Rome's enemies; when the formula was used on other occasions the appropriate name would be inserted. For Rome's relations with the Latins in general, see **1.5**.

1.4b *The Rituals of Gubbio*

The Romans shared much of their ritual (as they did their language) with their immediate neighbours, the Latins (see **1.5**); but we also have knowledge of

more remote communities in other parts of Italy who had similar religious traditions. The rituals translated here are recorded on bronze tablets of late republican date from Iguvium (now Gubbio) in Umbria about 150 km. north of Rome. They are written in the Umbrian language which is distinct from Latin, but close to the language (Oscan) of Rome's southern neighbours, the Samnites. All the same, the rituals described in such detail seem to show strong similarities with the accounts of early Roman practice (compare, for example, these formulae for establishing a *templum* with those in **4.4**; and, more generally, the structure of the prayers with **1.4a**, **5.7b** and **6.5**). Moreover, the Jupiter to whom this ritual is addressed formed part of a triad (Jupiter, Mars, Vofonius – all three with the additional title 'Grabovius') which is reminiscent of the Roman triad, Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus (**1.3**). Our knowledge of Umbrian is far from perfect and much of the translation, including, for instance, the names of the various birds mentioned, is uncertain. The possibility cannot therefore be ruled out that modern interpretations of the texts have been influenced by knowledge of Roman practices; that these interpretations do not, in other words, provide *independent* evidence for early Rome.

See further: Poultney (1959); Wilkins (1995); for the triad of gods, Dumézil (1970) 148–51; the officials mentioned, R. E. A. Palmer (1970) 48–56; the augural parallels, Linderski (1986) 2293–4.

Iguvine Tables VIa.1–31

The *arsfertur*[1] shall begin this ritual with observation of the birds – a green woodpecker and a crow on the right, a woodpecker and a magpie on the left. He who shall go to observe the calling birds[2] shall, seated, command the *arsfertur* from the hut as follows: 'Demand that I observe a green woodpecker on the right, a crow on the right, a woodpecker on the left, a magpie on the left, birds on the left, sacred calling birds on the left.' The *arsfertur* shall make the demand in these words: 'There observe a green woodpecker on the right, a crow on the right, a woodpecker on the left, a magpie on the left, birds on the left, sacred calling birds on the left, for me, for the city of Iguvium, for this station which has been established.' While the one who goes to observe the calling birds is seated in the chair, no one is to make a sound and no one else is to sit in the way until he who has gone to observe the calling birds has returned. If there is a noise or if anyone else sits in the way, he shall make the ceremony null and void.

(8) The *templum*[3] where the *arsfertur* remains for the sake of purifying the Mount[4], when established, is defined as follows: from the lowest corner, which is closest to the altar of the gods, to the topmost corner which is closest to the stones of augury, then from the topmost corner at the stones of augury to the city boundary, from the bottom corner at the altar of the gods to the city boundary. Then he shall make observations on both sides of the city boundaries.

(12) The city boundaries: from the stones of augury to the exits, to the observation post, to the fore-area of Nurpius, to the Vale, to the temple of Smurcia, to the house of

Miletina, to the third tower of the rampart; from the stones of augury to the avenue of Vesticius, to the garden of Rufer, to the house of Nonia, to the house of Salius, to the avenue of Hoius, to the gate of Padella.[5]

(15) Below these boundaries which have been written down above, he shall watch for a green woodpecker on the right, a crow on the right. Above these boundaries, he shall observe a woodpecker on the left, a magpie on the left. If the calling birds sing forth, he shall make the following announcement seated in the hut, and he shall call the *arsfertur* by name: 'A green woodpecker on the right, a crow on the right, a woodpecker on the left, a magpie on the left, birds on the left, sacred calling birds on the left, for you, for the city of Iguvium, for this station which has been established.' In all these rites for the lustration[6] of the people and for the purification of the Mount,[4] he shall hold the ritual rod. The vessels at the Trebulan Gates which shall be shown for the sake of purifying the Mount, he shall show them in such a way that fire be given to be kindled from fire. Likewise at the Tesenacan Gates, likewise at the Veiian Gates.

(22) Before the Trebulan Gates he shall sacrifice three oxen to Jupiter Grabovius. He shall speak these words as he presents the sacrificial cake: 'Thee I invoke in invocation, Jupiter Grabovius, for the Fisian Mount,[4] for the city of Iguvium, for the name of the mount, for the name of the city. Be favourable, be propitious to the Fisian Mount, to the city of Iguvium, to the name of the mount, to the name of the city. In the sacred rite, I invoke thee in invocation, Jupiter Grabovius, in reliance on the sacred rite I invoke thee in invocation, Jupiter Grabovius. Jupiter Grabovius, thee <I invoke> with this yearling ox as a propitiatory offering for the Fisian Mount, for the city of Iguvium, for the name of the mount, for the name of the city. Jupiter Grabovius, by the effect of the <ox>, if fire has arisen on the Fisian Mount or in the city of Iguvium due rites have been neglected, <let it count> as not intended. Jupiter Grabovius, whatever of your ritual has been omitted or sinned against or transgressed or injured or ignored, <if> in your ritual there is a failing seen or unseen, Jupiter Grabovius, if it be right that with this yearling ox purification be accomplished,[7] Jupiter Grabovius, purify the Fisian Mount, purify the city of Iguvium, purify the elders, the priests, Jupiter Grabovius, the lives of men and beasts, the crops. Be favourable <and> propitious with your peace to the Fisian Mount, to the city of Iguvium, to the name of the mount, to the name of the city. Jupiter Grabovius, keep safe the Fisian Mount, keep safe the city of Iguvium.'

1. The *arsfertur* (the Latin equivalent would be *adfertor*) is acting for the state and people of Iguvium and may be a magistrate, like the Roman consul or *praetor*, rather than a priest.
2. A second official, acting on demand from the *arsfertur*; his role seems to correspond to that of the Roman *augur* (see **4.4**), but he is not referred to by a title, but by a description of his role.
3. For the *templum*, see **4.4**.
4. The Fisian Mount is probably named after the local god, Fisus (who may have been concerned with the protection of oaths and pledges). Compare the role of the Alban Mount in the rituals of the Latins, **1.5a**.
5. These places (whose precise location is now unknown) are being used to define the city boundary.

6. In Roman religion rites of lustration were a regular ceremony of purification.
7. These are piacular sacrifices, see 1.3 n. 4.

1.5 Rome and the Latins

Early Rome had even closer religious links with her more immediate neighbours, the states who formed the 'Latin league'. These links are known to us (a) through myths implying that the foundation of Rome was linked with those of the nearby towns of Alba and Lavinium (Aeneas was said to have founded Lavinium, his son Iulus, Alba Longa, and their descendant Romulus, Rome itself; there was also a common mythical ancestor of the Latin peoples – King Latinus); (b) through the survival, into the late republican period and beyond, of religious rituals held in common between Rome and various Latin towns (such as the great festivals of all the Latins (Feriae Latinae) or the ceremonials carried out each year by the Roman consuls at Lavinium); and (c) through archaeological evidence (see below **1.5b** for Lavinium).

The Latins seem to have met – for religious as well as political or military reasons – at various sanctuaries, located outside different towns of the League (see **1.5a**; **1.5b(ii)**; **1.5c**; **1.5d**). It is generally assumed (by both modern and ancient writers – see, for example, **1.5d**) that the different location of these sanctuaries is to be seen as evidence that different states became leaders of the League at different points of history; but it may be, more simply, that the League (or some members of it) met at different places for different festivals.

See further: Cornell (1989) 264–74*; Cornell (1996) 48–60, 70–5, 105–13*; Ampolo (1993); for Latin cults in the imperial period, Vol. 1, 323–4.

1.5a *Alba Longa*

Alba Longa, founded according to Roman tradition by the son of Aeneas, was said to have been destroyed by the Romans under King Tullus, the third king of Rome (reigning, according to tradition, 673–642 B.C.). Its whereabouts is not known, but the sacrifice on the so-called 'Alban' Mount (now Monte Cavo) mentioned by Pliny in this passage continued into later times. Pliny's main point is to show how many once-flourishing cities had disappeared by his day (first century A.D.); but his list has been used by modern scholars to argue for an ancient 'Alban' League (centred on Alba Longa), which would have existed before the later 'Latin' League known to us in the fifth–fourth centuries.

See further: Vol. 1, Map 5; Alföldi (1965) 19–25, 236–46; for the membership lists, R. E. A. Palmer (1970) 10–14; Sherwin-White (1973) 7–15; Cornell (1989) 264–6*.

Pliny, *Natural History* III. 69–70

. . . and together with these,[1] the following were included among the 'Alban peoples', who were once accustomed to accept the sacrificial meat on the Alban Mount:[2] Albani; Aesolani; Accienses; Abolani; Bubetani <and twenty-five other names>. Thus of the peoples of ancient Latium, fifty-three peoples have disappeared leaving no trace.

1. Before this excerpt, Pliny has quoted some better-known names; the list of names from 'Albani' onwards was evidently as unfamiliar to him as it is to us.
2. The sacrifice and the sharing of the meat must have been a symbolic expression of the community that shared in the festival, but did not necessarily imply any political unity.

1.5b *Lavinium*

Unlike Alba Longa, the site of Lavinium is firmly identified (at modern Practica di Mare, 30 km. south of Rome). Excavations on the site have enabled scholars to link the mythical tradition of its foundation with the surviving remains.

See further: Vol. 1, 12, 13; Vol. 1, Map 5; Galinsky (1969) 141–90; Castagnoli (1972); Momigliano (1989) 59–61, 69–70.

1.5b(i) Aeneas' arrival in Italy

Lavinium was believed to have been founded by Aeneas when he landed in Italy. He was led there by a sow that bore thirty piglets (see Virgil, *Aeneid* III.389–93; VIII.81–5; also, 4.3c), standing, it was sometimes said, for thirty member cities of the Latin League. The tradition followed by Dionysius, however, is that thirty was the number of years that would pass before the founding of a better city, Alba Longa, by Aeneas' son Iulus.

See further: Alföldi (1965) 271–8*; *Enea nel Lazio* (1981) 157–62; Dury-Moyaers (1981); Dubourdieu (1989) 161–217.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* I.57.1

Aeneas sacrificed the sow with her young to his ancestral gods[1] on the spot where now stands the hut which the Lavinians hold sacred and make inaccessible to others. Then after commanding the Trojans to shift their camp to the hill, he placed the images of the gods in the best part of it and immediately made preparations for the building of the city with the greatest enthusiasm.

1. The Penates, the household gods, that he had brought with him from Troy.

1.5b(ii) The Altars at Lavinium

Excavations at the site of Lavinium in the 1950s and 60s revealed a row of thirteen imposing altars, stretching 50m. which would have stood in a great open sanctuary, outside the town. The earliest of these altars date back to the sixth century B.C. Not far away was a burial mound, which (at the end of the fourth century) was remodelled as a kind of shrine. This was probably the shrine,

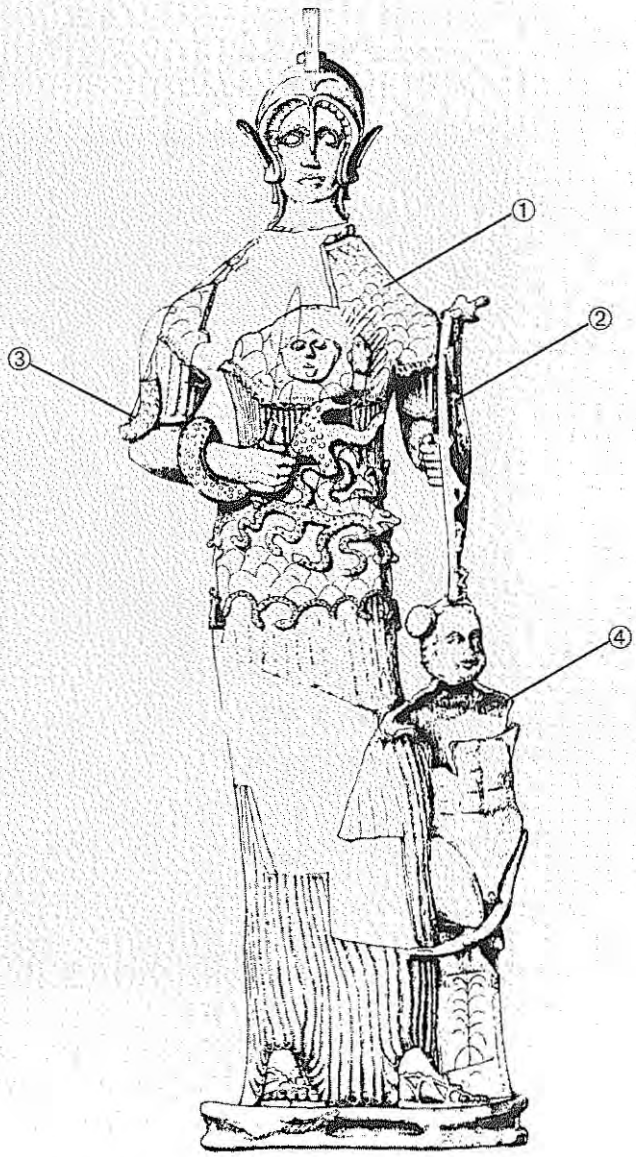
mentioned in literary sources, that was dedicated to Aeneas as founder of Lavinium. The archaeological evidence makes it very likely that this was an important cult-centre, connected with Lavinium's role as a sacred place for the Latins. After the fourth century B.C., however, its use gradually declined.

See further: Vol. 1, 1–3; Castagnoli (1975); *Enea nel Lazio* (1981) 169–77; for the shrine of Aeneas, Cornell (1977)*.

1.5b(iii) The Eastern Sanctuary: terracotta staue of Minerva

On the other side of Lavinium, another sanctuary has produced further evidence of religious activity from the sixth to the third century B.C. Many fragments of terracotta statues of Minerva (Greek Athena) were found in 1977, of which this is the largest and most complete (height, 1.96m.). It may be Athena as the patron-deity of Troy, who according to Strabo, V.34.5, had a statue at Lavinium. But the details of dress, armour and above all the figure of the Triton (a man with a fish's tail) at the goddess' side, suggest that this was a very specific Greek type – derived from Athena's sanctuary of Alalkomenai in Boeotia (central Greece) and evoking the legend of her birth from a stream called Triton close by.

See further: Castagnoli (1979); Dury-Moyaers (1981) 153–58 and figs. 44–7; *Enea nel Lazio* (1981) 187–271, esp. 190–3.



1. Athena's aegis (goatskin), with Gorgon's head and serpents – her standard and characteristic clothing.
2. Shield, with crescent moons and serpents – probably a specific reference to the Boeotian cult.
3. Three-headed snake, probably also a Boeotian element.
4. The Triton.

1.5c *The grove at Aricia*

Another early league of Latin towns was based near Lake Nemi, in the territory of the ancient Aricia, 30 km. south-east of Rome in the grove of Diana, home to the slave-priest (*rex hemorensis*) celebrated in Frazer's *Golden Bough*.

See further: Vol. 1, 3; Vol. 1, Map 5; Alföldi (1965) 47–56; *Mysteries* (1983)*; Cornell (1989) 272–4*; Blagg (1993).

1.5c(i) The foundation of the Arician League

We know about this league of towns only because the foundation document was included by Cato the Elder in his history of the towns of Italy, written in the second century B.C.; although this work of Cato is mostly lost, this particular passage from it was preserved by the fourth-century A.D. grammarian, Priscian, because he was interested in the linguistic form of one word. It is uncertain whether the Romans were members of this league or not.

See further: A. E. Gordon (1934) 1–4; Sherwin-White (1973) 12–13.

Cato, *Origins* fr. 58 (Peter) = 28 (Chassignet)

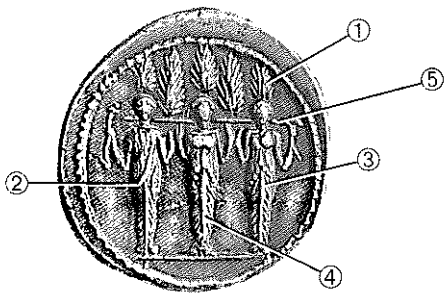
Egerius Baebius of Tusculum, the dictator of the Latins,[1] made the dedication of Diana's *lucus*[2] in the grove of Aricia. These peoples were the sharers: the people of Tusculum, Aricia, Lanuvium, Laurens[3], Cora, Tibur, Pometia, Rutulan Ardea . . .[4]

1. The title 'dictator' means the leading magistrate or commander; it may be significant that he comes from Tusculum not Rome, though the office might have been held by each member-city in turn.
2. *Lucus* probably means a sacred clearing in a wood; see 4.5; 4.11.
3. 'Laurens' refers to the people of Lavinium (1.5b).
4. Priscian stopped his quotation here because it was the form of this name on which he wished to comment; so the list might originally have been longer and might have included Rome as a member.

1.5c(ii) Coin *(denarius)* showing Triple Diana (43 b.c.)

This coin probably shows the cult-image of Diana from the grove. The three figures may represent three different aspects of Diana: the goddess as Diana the huntress; as Hekate, goddess of the underworld; and as goddess of the Moon. The coin was minted in Rome by P. Accoleius Lariscolus, whose family came from Aricia; on its obverse it carried an image of a bust of Diana.

See further: Alföldi (1960); Crawford (1974) no. 486.



1. Cypress grove probably evoking the grove at Aricia.
2. Diana with bow, as huntress.
3. Diana with poppy, as the Moon.
4. Central Diana, as Hekate.
5. Horizontal bar links the triple goddess.

1.5d *The sanctuary of Diana at Rome*

Rome attained hegemony of a Latin League reputedly in the time of Servius Tullius, sixth king of Rome (reigning, according to tradition, 578–535 B.C.). In Livy's account, it was the construction of a new federal sanctuary to Diana on the Aventine Hill – perhaps conceived as a rival to the sanctuary at Aricia – that secured the supremacy of Rome. It is an implication of the second half of Livy's story that the new order was sanctioned by divine approval, even though won by the priest's trickery.

See further: Vol. 1, 3; Vol. 1, Map 1 no. 19; Momigliano (1963a) 106–7; Alföldi (1965) 85–100*; Ogilvie (1970) 181–3*; Ampolo (1970); for the later influence of this sanctuary, **10.1**.

Livy, *History* I.45

When the size of the city had been augmented by the citizen body, and when domestic policy both civil and military had been shaped, Servius desired that Rome's power should be expanded not always by force but also by diplomacy. At the same time he sought to add something to the beauty of the city. Even by this early date, the temple of Diana at Ephesus was renowned; it was reputed to have been built by the contribution of the city-states of Asia.[1] Servius lavishly praised this unanimity and associated worship in the presence of the Latin nobles, with whom he was diligently seeking to establish hospitable and friendly relations, both in an official and unofficial capacity. By force of constantly reiterating the same theme, he at last prevailed upon them, and a temple for Diana was built at Rome by the Latin peoples in conjunction with the Roman people. This was an admission that Rome was the principal city,[2] a point which so many times had been disputed by force of arms.

(45.3) All the Latins seemed to have forgotten their preoccupation with this contention after having been defeated so often in armed struggle, when one of them, a Sabine, thought he saw the opportunity of recovering supremacy by devising a private strategy. In Sabine territory there was a heifer born on the property of a head of family, a creature of astonishing size and beauty; her horns were fastened up for many ages in the vestibule of the temple of Diana as a monument to the miracle that she had been. The heifer was regarded as a prodigy and seers predicted that the city whose citizens sacrificed her to Diana would become the seat of imperial rule; this prediction reached the ears of the priest of Diana's temple. On the first day that seemed favourable for sacrifice, the Sabine conducted the heifer to Rome, led her to the temple of Diana, and stationed her in front of the altar. There the Roman priest, moved by the great size of the victim about which he had heard so much, remembered the prophecy and addressed the Sabine with these words: 'What are you intending, stranger?' he asked, 'To offer a sacrifice to Diana in impurity? Do you not intend abluting yourself first with running water? The Tiber flows down in the valley.' The stranger, conscience-stricken, and wishing to perform all acts according to ritual so that the prophecy might be fulfilled by the event, immediately

went down to the Tiber. At once, the Roman priest sacrificed the heifer to Diana, an act which brought enormous pleasure to the king and to the city.[3]

1. The influence of the cult at Ephesus has often been dismissed as a later invention, but some contact with that cult or with a related foundation in the West at Marseilles (Massilia) is not impossible; recent discoveries (see 1.7 and 8) have indicated that sixth-century Rome was in touch with Greeks and other immigrants.
2. Servius' league centre may have been in rivalry with the league at Aricia, though it is much debated which came first. A bronze column stood within the precinct of the sanctuary of Diana, inscribed with regulations and with the names of the member communities; see Vol. 1, 3, 330.
3. For this element of trickery in dealings with the gods, see 7.1b, 7.1c.

1.6 Religion and the Roman *gens*

In early times the *gens* (family or clan) was probably a major focus of social, military and religious life. Although the religious traditions of the Roman *gens* seem later to have declined in importance, they did not die out altogether. For example, the religious associations of the *gens Iulia* (the family of Caesar and Augustus) took on great importance again in the first century B.C. (see 1.6a).

1.6a *Vediovis and the Julii*

The inscription on this late republican altar gives us one of our few substantial indications of the religious traditions of the aristocratic clans. The Julii claimed descent from Iulus, son of Aeneas and the founder of the royal line of Alba Longa (see 1.5a). Here the Julii, acting as a clan, record a dedication or sacrifice to the god Vediovis. It seems likely that Vediovis represented, at least for the Julii, the divine form of their founder, Iulus; for it was a Latin tradition that when founders were deified, they took on a new name – so, Romulus became the god Quirinus (2.8a); Aeneas, at least at Lavinium, became Indiges; Latinus the founder of the Latins became Jupiter Latiaris.

The inscription was found at the small town of Bovillae, which was believed to be near the site of Alba Longa; after the destruction of Alba itself, its cults were supposed to have been transferred there.

See further: Vol. 1, 89; Vol. 1, Map 5; Weinstock (1971) 8–12*.

ILS 2988; *ILLRP* 270

(On the front) Members of the Julian clan to Father Vediovis
(On the side) Altar for Vediovis
(On the back) Dedicated by the Alban Law

1.6b *A dedication from Satricum*

This inscription was found on a roughly worked stone (the inscribed face about 80 cm. by 15 cm.), discovered in excavations on the site of the temple of Mater Matuta at Satricum (about 50 km. south-east Rome). Probably dating to around 500 B.C., it records a dedication to Mars by the companions (*sodales*) of Poplios Valesios (in later Latin spelling, Publius Valerius). The text seems to suggest (as in **1.6a**) that Valerius' kinsmen and retainers were acting as a group, making a religious dedication on that group's behalf; and it has been related to passages in Livy (e.g. II.49.5) which imply that the members of a *gens* together with their clients might form a unit, moving around or even fighting battles together, perhaps sometimes outside the control of any particular city.

See further: Vol. 1, 67–8; Vol. 1, Map 5; Versnel (1980); Momigliano (1989) 97–8; Cornell (1996) 144–5*.

AE (1979) 136

The companions[1] of Poplios Valesios[2] set this up for Mars.[3]

1. The word (*sodales*) does not mean simply 'friends', but it does not refer exclusively to family members either; and it often means members of the same club or group or even priestly college. So here 'retainers' or 'clients attached to him on a permanent basis' is the likeliest interpretation.
2. A man of this name, Publius Valerius (Publicola), was the first consul of republican Rome; but it cannot be proved that this is the same man. The man named in this inscription may have come from Rome, Satricum or any other Latin city.
3. We do not know if there were any special links between Mater Matuta (a goddess associated with the dawn) and Mars in Satricum; but it is not unusual to find dedications to different gods in the same temple.

1.6c *Potitii and Pinarii*

According to Roman tradition (see Livy, *History* I.7.12–14), one of the most important cults of early Rome, that of Hercules at the Ara Maxima in the Forum Boarium, had originally been in the charge of two clans, the Potitii and the Pinarii, then of the Potitii alone. In this passage, Livy tells of a reform in the last quarter of the fourth century B.C., placing it in public charge. Although the development that Livy suggests, from family to public control, is historically plausible, the details of the story are not; and, in fact, the clan of the 'Potitii' – far from being a prominent family in early republican Rome – is otherwise unknown.

See further: Vol. 1, 68; Bayet (1926) 248–74; R. E. A. Palmer (1965); Dumézil (1970) 433–9*.

Livy, *History* IX.29.9–11

It was on Appius'[1] advice that the Potitii, a clan in which the priesthood of Hercules at the Ara Maxima had been hereditary, instructed public slaves in the rites of that worship

so as to turn over to them the maintenance of the cult. After this, as tradition has it, something extraordinary occurred, something that might well create religious terror about ever changing rituals from their established order; for although at the time of the reform there were twelve families of the Potitii, of which adult males numbered thirty, yet within a year every one of them, the entire clan, had died out. Not only was the name of the Potitii extinguished, but even the censor Appius was, owing to the enduring indignation of the gods, struck blind a few years later.[2]

1. Appius Claudius Caecus (Caecus = 'the blind'); held the office of censorship in 312 B.C., the consulship in 307 and 296. The end of this story (see also n. 2) offers an explanation for his name Caecus.
2. The story of the punishment visited on both the *gens* and the leading political figure suggests that the reform was resisted and resented; it would also (as Livy implies) have provided a useful warning against further religious reforms.

1.7 Greeks and Greek influence in Rome

Archaeological evidence, much of it newly discovered, shows that by the sixth century B.C. the Romans were exchanging cults, artistic skills and ideas with Greeks, Etruscans, even Carthaginians. These discoveries have overturned a view that scholars commonly used to hold, that Rome in its early centuries preserved in a pure form the original unchanging religion of the Latin race. The overall picture of Rome's foreign contacts at this date remains hard to reconstruct; but even the fragmentary state of the evidence provides important information on the history of individual sites.

1.7a *Servius Tullius and the temple of Fortuna*

Servius Tullius, the sixth king of Rome (reigning, according to tradition, 578–535 B.C.), was said to have founded a pair of temples in the city to Fortuna and Mater Maruta (see **1.6b** n.3). Excavations near the Church of St Omobono between the Forum and the Forum Boarium have revealed a pair of temples of exactly the right date, which may well be those of Servius Tullius.

See further: Vol. 1, Map 1 no. 23; Champeaux (1982–7) I.249–333; Coarelli (1988) 205–328; Momigliano (1989) 76–9*; *Grande Roma* (1990) 111–30; Richardson (1992) 155 and 246*.

1.7a(i) A literary account of Servius' temple

In this passage Dionysius describes a statue in the temple of Fortuna.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* IV.40.7

Another prodigy demonstrated that he <Servius> was beloved of the gods; it was as a result of this that the mythical and incredible ideas about his birth, which I mentioned before,[1] came to be accepted generally as the truth. For in the temple of Fortuna he had

built himself, there stood a gilded wooden statue of him that survived undamaged when a fire destroyed everything else around. Even today, although the temple and its contents were all restored after the fire, it is obvious that they result from recent art, but this statue is of ancient workmanship, as it was originally. It is still the object of veneration by the Romans.

1. *Roman Antiquities* IV.2; he was supposed to have been born after the miraculous appearance of a phallus in the hearth of the palace (see Vol. 1, 53).

1.7a(ii) Hercules and Minerva in the temple of Fortuna

This is a reconstruction of a statue group (1.4m high), found in the excavations near St Omobono; though in a fragmentary state, enough connections remain between the fragments to demonstrate the relative position of the figures. It represents Hercules and Minerva (identifiable by the lion-skin and helmet respectively); and the style clearly shows the influence of contemporary Greek art of the later sixth century B.C.

See further: Sommella Mura (1977); *Enea nel Lazio* (1981) 115–22; Cornell (1980) 84–5.

1.7b *Castor and Pollux*

The divine twins, Castor and Pollux, were also known as the Dioscuri, a name derived from the Greek 'Dios kouroi', or 'sons of Zeus'; and according to Greek legend were native to the city of Sparta. This inscription on a bronze tablet is a dedication to them found at Lavinium near the monumental altars (see **1.5b(ii)**). The text is written in archaic Roman letters (probably of the sixth to fifth centuries B.C.); but the form of the names and in particular the word 'qurois' (virtually a transliteration of the Greek word 'kourois') shows that it was to all intents and purposes a Greek inscription. It offers clear evidence of direct Greek influence in cult in central Italy in this early period, if not the presence of Greeks themselves at a major sanctuary.

See further: Vol. 1, 12; Weinstock (1960) 112–14*; Castagnoli (1975) 442–3; Dubourdieu (1989) 285–92.

ILLRP 1271a

To Castor and Pollux, the Dioskouroi.
<The original text, which is written from right to left, reads:>
Castorei Podlouqueique qurois

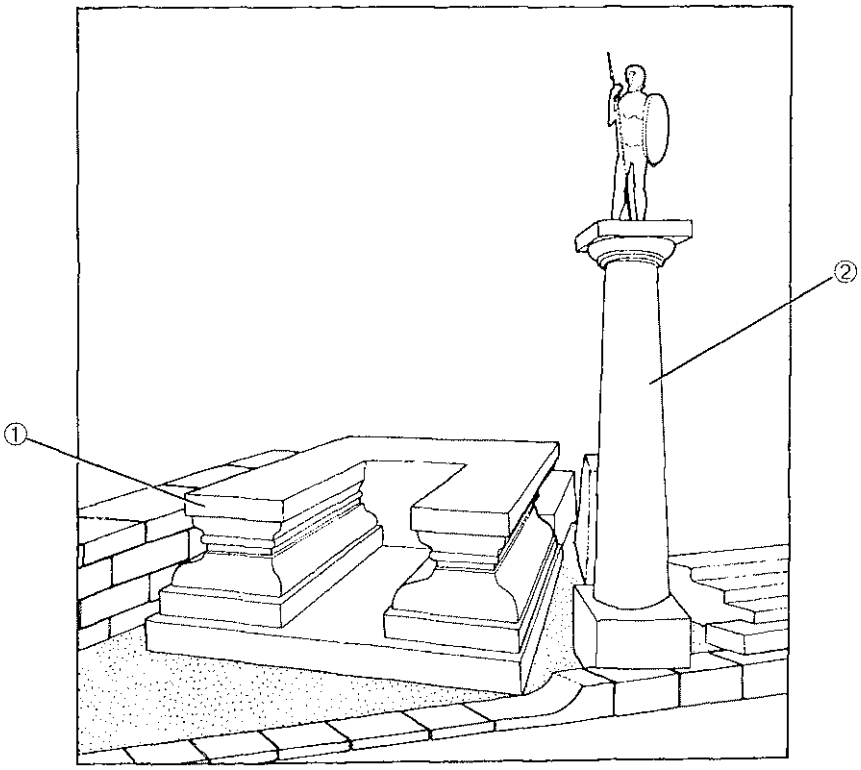
1.7c *The Volcanal*

In the Roman Forum, at the west end, in the area known as the *comitium* (4.7 n. 6.), was an ancient shrine of the god Vulcan – the Volcanal. It was covered by a later paving of the Forum, but excavations have revealed here also clear Greek influence.

See further: Vol. 1, 12; Coarelli (1983–5) I.161–78.

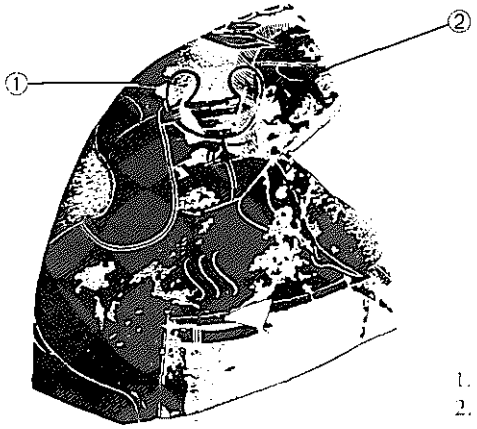
1.7c(i) Reconstruction of the Volcanal

The surviving archaeological traces, combined with literary evidence, suggest this possible reconstruction of the sixth-century Volcanal: an altar (1) similar in form to those discovered at Lavinium (**1.5b(ii)**); next to it a column (2), which probably held a statue.



1.7c(ii) Hephaestus at the Volcanal

This fragment of a Greek (Athenian) pot, 570–560 B.C., is the most ancient of the objects to be found associated with the Volcanal. It depicts the Greek god Hephaestus – who (as has always been known) was eventually 'identified' with the Roman Vulcan, as the god of fire and of metalworking – returning to Olympus, riding on a donkey. The presence of this fragment at the site suggests that the identification of the Roman with the Greek god, far from being late or literary, was made already in the sixth century B.C.



1. Hephaestus, carrying a cup.
2. The donkey's head – note the ears.

1.8 The arrival of the Sibylline Books (sixth century B.C.)

The Sibylline Books were a collection of written oracles kept at Rome under the charge of the *quindecimviri*, purportedly texts of the utterances of the Sibyl of Cumae, an inspired prophetess (**2.6c**; **7.5**). In this passage Dionysius relates the story of the coming of the Sibylline Books to Rome. However fanciful the details of this tale, it may nevertheless be significant that the story is associated not with Romulus or Numa, but with Tarquin (the fifth king of Rome, conventionally dated to 616–579 B.C., who was one of the 'Etruscan' rulers of the city – see **1.9**). For it was in this later period that Rome developed contacts with the Greek cities of South Italy, including the home of the Sibyl at Cumae, suggesting that the cult at Cumae *could* have had a direct influence on Roman developments.

See further: Vol. 1, 27, 62–3; Warde Fowler (1911) 255–7*; Gagé (1955) 24–38; Parke (1988) 76–8*.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* IV.62

There is a tradition that another exceptional piece of good fortune came to the city of Rome during Tarquin's reign, a blessing conferred by some god or power. This was not just a passing benefit, but one that saved Rome from disasters throughout its whole history. A foreign woman approached the tyrant and offered to sell him nine books of Sibylline Oracles; Tarquin refused to buy at her price, so she went away and burned three of the nine. Then she brought the six remaining ones and offered them for the same price as she had asked before. They thought her stupid and laughed at her, because she was asking the very same price for fewer books that she had already failed to get for more of them; but she just went off again and burned half those that were still left. Then she came back with the three remaining and asked for the same price once again. Tarquin, now becoming curious about the woman's purpose, sent for the *augures*, told them what had happened and asked them what he should do. They realized by certain signs that what he had rebuffed was a gift from the gods; so, they told him that it was a disaster that he had not bought all the books and advised him to pay the woman the whole price she was asking and to get the oracles that were still left. The woman handed over the books, told him to take the greatest care of them and vanished from human sight.

1.9 Etruscan Rome and the Capitoline triad

Ancient accounts of Rome's early history claim that towards the end of the regal period, in the sixth century B.C., the city was 'conquered' by the Etruscans, the neighbouring people to the north of Rome – and that the two Tarquins who ruled Rome as kings (Tarquin 'the Elder' (see **1.8**) and Tarquin 'the proud', the last king) were members of an Etruscan family. Whatever the

literal truth of this claim, it is certain (from archaeological and other evidence) that Rome fell under increasing Etruscan influence at the end of the regal period. It is during this period that we notice for the first time the presence of the so-called 'Capitoline triad' of deities (Jupiter, Juno and Minerva), whose pre-eminence almost entirely effaced the pre-Capiroline triad of Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus (**1.3**).

See further: Vol. 1, 3, 15–16, 39; Dumézil (1970) 283–310; Cornell (1996) 151–72*.

1.9a *The Roman triumph*

The origin of the triumph celebrated by the victorious Roman general (**5.8**) goes back to this final period of regal Rome – probably replacing as a victory celebration the old dedication of spoils (**1.3**). In this passage Pliny refers to the custom of painting the body (probably just the face) of the triumphing general with red paint, in the same way as the cult statue of Capitoline Jupiter was painted. This suggests a connection, albeit temporary, between the triumphing general and the leading deity of the Capiroline triad.

See further: Vol. 1, 44–5; Gjerstad (1967); Versnel (1970) 59–60 and 78–84; Bonfante (1970)*; Scheid (1986b) 221–30*.

Pliny, *Natural History* XXXIII.111–12

Verrius[1] lists authorities whom we must believe when they tell us that on festive days the face of the statue of Jupiter himself was painted with red lead and likewise the body of the triumphing general; that was how Camillus[2] had his triumph; according to this rule even in those days <the days of Verrius' authorities> it was the custom for red lead to be placed among the unguents at the triumphal banquet and the first duty of the censors was to place the contract for the red-leading of Jupiter.

1. Verrius Flaccus, the Augustan antiquarian (see **3.3b**).
2. Roman general of the fourth century B.C.

1.9b *The temple of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva*

In the early centuries of the Republic, the centre of Rome was dominated by the great temple of Jupiter on the Capitol (jointly dedicated to Juno and Minerva), which seems to have been on a far greater scale than other early temples. It was an Etruscan building and must have been intended (as this passage of Livy suggests) to express the power and dominion of the ruling dynasty. The republican tradition, however, later tried to claim this temple as its own – suggesting that, althougb built by the kings, it was not actually dedicated by them, but in 509 B.C. by the first ever consuls of the new regime.

See further: Vol. 1, 3, 15–16, 39, 60–1; Gjerstad (1960) 168–90; Boëthius (1978) 46–8*; Colonna (1981); Cornell (1996) 128–30*; for the Capitoline sanctuary as a model for other sanctuaries in the Roman world, **4.10**; **10.2c**.

Livy, *History* 1.55.1

After the recovery of Gabii,[1] Tarquin <the Proud> made peace with the Aequi, and renewed his treaty with the Etruscans. He then turned his attention to business at home. His first concern was that the temple of Jupiter on the Tarpeian hill[2] should be left as the monument of his reign and of his royal line; of the two Tarquinian kings, the father <the Elder> had vowed it, the son would have completed it.[3]

1. An early rival of Rome, 20 km. to the east.
2. The old name of the Capitol.
3. For the dedication of the temple, see Livy II.8.

2 *The deities of Rome*

Throughout Roman history, Roman religion was polytheistic: numerous deities were worshipped. Modern scholars, like the Romans themselves, may speculate on the origins of the very earliest of these gods, on how the polytheistic system began, or on what might have preceded it (see **chap. 1**). But this speculation should not obscure two clear and important facts: first, that there was already a complex system of polytheism as far back as we can trace the city of Rome; second, that at every period of (pagan) Roman history the Romans invented or imported new deities – while, at the same time, neglecting or even forgetting others.

This chapter starts from the most familiar image of Roman deities – the (super-) human form and character of the major gods and goddesses (**2.1**); but it moves on to consider other types of divinity within traditional Roman cult (**2.2**; **2.3**) and Roman debates and disagreements on the character of the gods (**2.4**), taking Vesta as a case-study of the variety of interpretations that could surround a single deity (**2.5**). The second part of the chapter is concerned with change and innovation. It looks at the different ways new deities were introduced to Rome (**2.6**), and in particular at the case of one eastern deity – Magna Mater (Cybele) (**2.7**); and it examines ideas surrounding the 'deification' of outstanding mortals (**2.8**). The final sections focus on Rome's incorporation of 'barbarian' deities from the western half of the empire (**2.9**) and different forms of monotheism in the Roman world (**2.10**).

2.1 Gods in human form

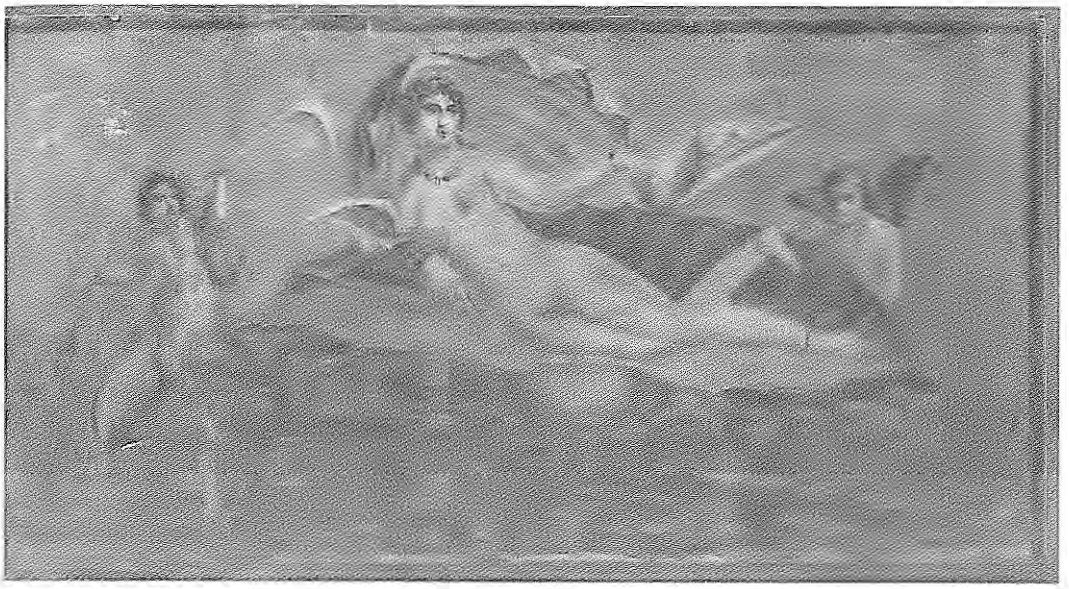
The standard modern image of Roman deities is as superhuman men and women. Endowed with life-like attributes, motivations and passions, they intervene (for good or ill) in the world of mortals – while also playing their part in a range of colourful myths and legends (mostly borrowed or adapted from the rich repertory of Greek mythology). This is a crude picture of the character and activities of Roman gods and goddesses. It is not 'wrong'; but, as we shall see, it is only one facet of the picture that the ancient evidence presents.

See further: for visual representations of Roman deities in painting and sculpture, Turcan (1988) 1; Simon (1990).

2.1a *Painting of Venus from Pompeii (third quarter of first century A.D.)*

The goddess of love is here shown almost as a female 'pin-up', displayed on the garden wall of a wealthy Pompeian house ('The House of Marine Venus'). The particular pose and setting allude to the myth of the Greek goddess Aphrodite, born from the foam of the sea. Height of painting, 2.43 m.; width 4.54 m.

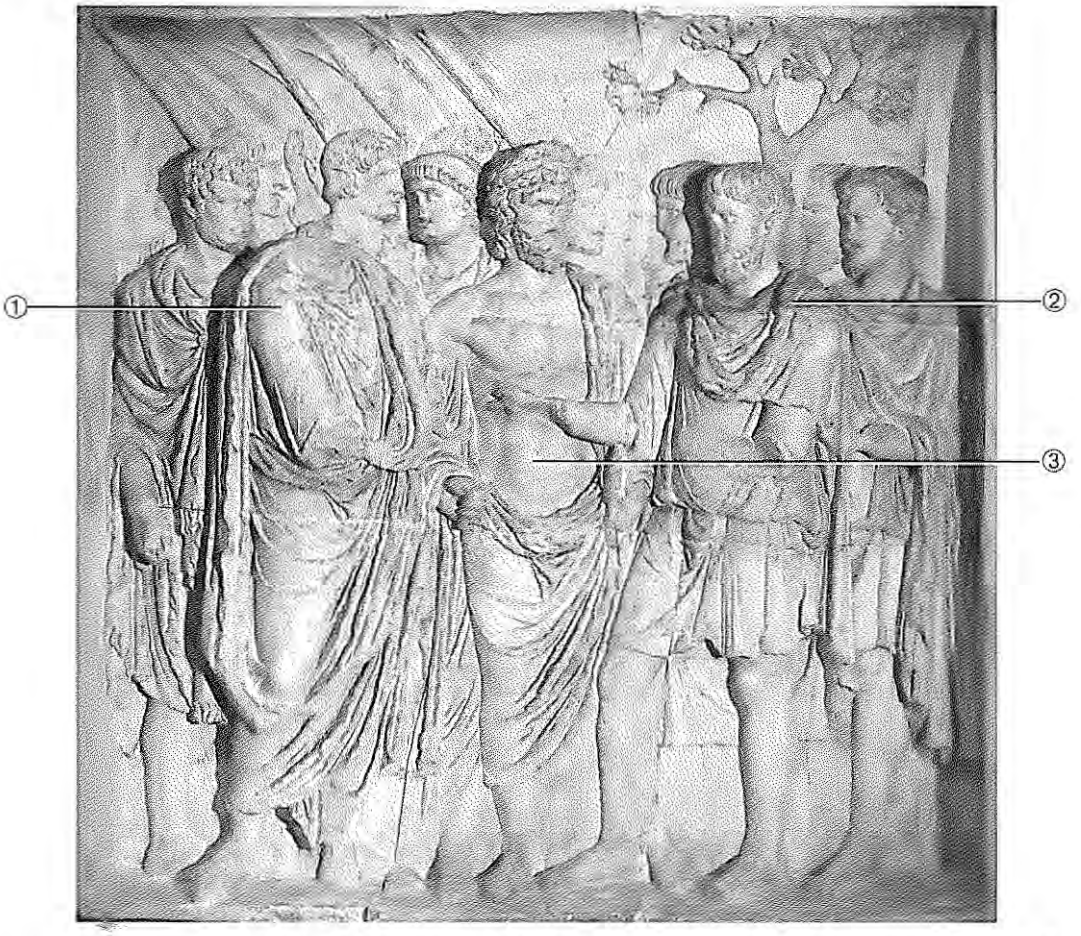
See further: for discussion of the Roman Venus and her 'equivalence' with Aphrodite, Dumézil (1970) 421–2*; Schilling (1982) 197–294; for the range of representations of Venus at Pompeii, where she was patron of the Roman *colonia*, M. Grant (1971) 92–5*.



2.1b *Jupiter and the emperor Trajan, from Trajan's arch at Beneventum (South Italy), A.D. 114*

Gods and goddesses were regularly associated with the vows, sacrifices and rituals accompanying Roman warfare. Although Roman historians only rarely suggest that the gods directly participated in the action, their supportive presence could be imagined and sometimes portrayed. On this panel (height 2.49 m.; width 2.67 m.) from Trajan's arch at Beneventum, Jupiter is shown literally standing alongside the emperor, sanctioning a treaty between Rome and barbarians.

See further: Vol. 1, 31–2; Fears (1981) 917–18*; Simon (1981) 5–6 and 12, n. 48; for the monument in general, D. E. E. Kleiner (1992) 224–9*; for an analysis of gods as 'citizens', and of their relations with magistrates, Scheid (1984) 51–7.



1. Trajan – figure now badly damaged. Right arm originally outstretched to join hands with barbarian leader opposite.
2. Barbarian (probably German) leader, distinguished by his beard, tunic (not toga) and laced boots.
3. Jupiter, naked to the waist, holding a thunderbolt in his left hand. (For Jupiter's role in the solemnization of treaties, see Livy, *History* 1.24.3–9 with Ogilvie (1970) 110–12.)

2.1c *Mercury introduces himself*

Gods sometimes appeared as characters on the Roman stage. Here, in the prologue of his play *Amphitryo* (*c.* 195 B.C.), Plautus offers a teasing, humorous portrayal of a god. Mercury is speaking; starting in mock formal style, he lists the benefits he offers to his audience, before explaining (more colloquially) who he is and why he has come.

See further: Dumézil (1970) 439–40, 492–3*; Combet-Farnoux (1980); for the role of the gods in Plautus' comedies, Schilling (1955).

Plautus, *Amphitryo* 1–25

According as you wish me, gladly granting you favour, to endow you with profit in all the purchasing and purveying of your wares, and to assist you in all your affairs; and according as you wish me to speed a happy outcome for you all in your matters of business both at home and in foreign lands and to increase for evermore with fine and glorious profit those endeavours which you have begun and those which you are about to begin; and according as you wish me to endow you and yours, every one, with glad tidings, bringing before you and proclaiming only those things which may contribute best to your common weal (for verily you have long known that it is an honour granted and bestowed upon me by the other gods that I should hold sway over messages and profit); according as you wish me to bless these matters, to strive that eternal riches may forever be in store for you . . . then let's just have a bit of hush for the show and you'll all give it a fair hearing. No short change here.

(17) Now I will tell you on whose orders I am here, why I have come – and ar the same time I'll introduce myself. I'm here on Jupiter's orders; Mercury's the name. My father sent me here to beg a favour from you – or I suppose you might say 'issue a command', because he knew that you would do whatever you were told. After all, he's well aware that you fear and dread him – as you're bound to fear Jupiter. All the same he asked me to put this request to you as a favour, ever so nicely, really politely.[1]

1. The favour turns out to be that they ensure the dramatic prizes are awarded fairly and there is no hired applause for any individual actor – particularly as Jupiter himself is to appear as a character in the play.

2.1d *Christian ridicule of pagan gods*

Christian polemicists poured scorn on the apparently *human* characteristics of traditional deities, on the inconsistencies of their portrayal, and on the immorality of the myths attached to them. Immoralities of pagan gods are a particular theme of 12.7a (i-ii). Here Minucius Felix pedantically tries to expose the absurdities in the presentation of those traditional deities.

See further: Vol. 1, 227, 261, 310; R. P. C. Hanson (1980) 920–4*.

Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 22.5–23.1

What? Don't their very forms and features betray the absurdity and indignity of your gods? Vulcan is lame and crippled; Apollo for all his years is beardless; Aesculapius sports a full beard even though he is the son of the ever-youthful Apollo. Neptune has blue-green eyes; Minerva eyes like a cat; Juno like an ox. Mercury has winged feet; Pan is hoofed; Saturn[1] has his feet in chains. Janus in all truth has two faces, as if he could walk backwards. Diana is sometimes a huntress with her skirt tucked up high; while at Ephesus[2] she is loaded with breasts and teats; and as Trivia[3] she is a dreadful creature with three heads and many hands. Why, your own Jupiter himself sometimes stands beardless,

sometimes is set up bearded. And when he goes under the name of Hammon[4] he has horns; when he's Capitolinus, then he wields thunderbolts; when Latiaris,[5] he is drenched in blood; when Feretrius, he is not heard.[6] In fact, not to go through the whole crowd of Jupiters any longer, his strange manifestations are as numerous as his names. Erigone hanged herself with a noose, to shine as Virgo <the Virgin> among the stars.[7] Castor and his twin die in turn so that each may live.[8] Aesculapius is struck by lightning so that he may rise to godhead. Hercules, to cast off his human mortality, is burnt up on the fires of Oeta.[9] (23) These are the stories and falsehoods that we both learn from ignorant parents, and (worse still) elaborate ourselves, in our own studies and learning – especially in the works of poets, who have used all the influence they can to distort the truth itself.

1. According to Graeco-Roman myth, the father of Jupiter – overthrown as 'king of the gods' by his son. In the course of the conflict, Jupiter bound his feet.
2. For images, and discussion, of 'many-breasted' Diana (Greek Artemis) of the Ephesians, see Fleischer (1973).
3. For Diana as Trivia (Greek Hekate), see 1.5c(ii); Virgil, *Aeneid* IV.511; Alföldi (1960).
4. A native deity of Egypt and North Africa commonly identified with Jupiter. Representations of Jupiter-Hammon show him with ram's horns.
5. Jupiter Latiaris was a major deity of the Latins, worshipped at the Alban Mount (1.5). Christian writers claimed that a human victim was sacrificed to him at the Feriae Latinae (12.7a(ii)); Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 30; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* I.21).
6. The Latin text is uncertain here. According to Roman tradition (see Livy, *History* I.10), a victorious general who had killed an enemy commander in single combat dedicated his spoils to Jupiter Feretrius in his temple on the Capitol. See 1.3.
7. According to myth, she killed herself when she found the body of her murdered father; she was then taken into the sky as the constellation Virgo.
8. In one version of their myth, Castor and Pollux were said to have 'shared' immortality with each other, alternating half the year in the Underworld and half on Mount Olympus.
9. The gods Aesculapius and Hercules were believed to have been born mortal – Aesculapius gaining immortality only after being struck by Jupiter's thunderbolt; Hercules after being taken up to heaven from his funeral pyre on Mount Oeta.

2.2 Deities of different types

The character of Roman deities was much more varied than any simple picture of larger than life personalities, with their almost human attributes and adventures, might suggest. Some deities had no closely defined personality and remained outside the traditions of myth and legend. Although, to us, they may seem more 'shadowy' for that reason, they were not necessarily less important in Roman terms.

2.2a *Statuettes of the Lares*

Lares, protecting spirits of place, were worshipped in various contexts: in the house, at the crossroads, in the city (as guardians of the state). The Lares 'familiares' (gods of the house and its members) are the best known of these –

receiving offerings, sacrifices and prayers within the household, and commonly appealed to as the protectors of its safety and prosperity. But no mythological stories attached to them; nor were they defined as individual personalities.

Small statuettes of Lares were a common feature of Roman houses – presumably standing in the *lararium* (see 4.12). The standard, hardly varying, form of these statuettes serves to emphasize the group character of the Lares and their broad homogeneity, rather than any personal individuality.

See further: Vol. 1, 185; Dumézil (1970) 340–4* (on the history and significance of the Lares); for details of the statuettes illustrated (left, from Gaul, ht 0.14m.; right, from Italy, ht 0.15m.), see Turcan (1988) 1 nos. 117 and 115.

1. *Rhyton* (drinking horn).
2. *Patera* (libation bowl).
3. Dog-skin tunic, often associated with Lares (see Plutarch, *Roman Questions* 51).

2.2b *A prayer to Robigo*

Many Roman deities were associated with traditional agricultural activities, with the protection of crops and the prosperity of flocks and herds. Among these was Robigo – the personification of mildew (or wheat 'rust') which damages the growing wheat. In describing this goddess's festival in April (the Robigalia, see **3.3a** and **3.3b** n.12) Ovid includes a version of a prayer to Robigo. This prayer implies that what mattered about the goddess was essentially her potentially destructive power that demanded propitiation. She was not defined by a complex set of attributes, activities and legends. In fact, even her gender remained indeterminate – other Roman authors treating 'her' as a *god*, Robig*us*.

See further: Vol 1, 45–7; Scullard (1981) 108–10*.

Ovid, *Fasti* IV.905–32

When I was once returning to Rome from Nomentum on this day <25 April>, a crowd of people dressed in white blocked my path in the middle of the road. A *flamen* was on his way to the grove of ancient Robigo,[1] to throw the entrails of a dog and the entrails of a sheep onto the sacrificial flames. I went up to him straightway, to find out about the rites that he was to perform. Your *flamen*, Quirinus,[2] uttered these words: 'Cruel Robigo, do not injure the young wheat; let its tender tip quiver on the surface of the ground. I beg you allow the crop, nurtured under heaven's propitious stars, to grow until it is ripe for harvest. Yours is no gentle power. The wheat which you have marked, the sorrowful farmer counts as already lost. Neither winds nor rain harm the wheat so much, nor does the nip of the white-glistening frost so fade it, as when the sun scorches the wet stalks. Then is the occasion for your anger, dread goddess. Forbear, I pray you, and take your rough hands from the harvest; and do not harm the farmer's work. It is enough that you have the power to do harm. Attack first not the tender crops, but harsh iron. Destroy first what can destroy others. It would be more useful for you to seize on swords and harmful weapons. There is no need for them; the world is at peace. Now let the hoe, the hardy mattock and the curved ploughshare – country tools – gleam bright; but may the weapons of war be stained with rust, and when anyone tries to draw a sword from its sheath, may he feel it stick through long disuse. But do not ravage the wheat; and may the farmer always be able to pay his vows to you in your absence.'

1. The festival of Robigo took place in a sacred grove (see 4.5 and 4.11) on the road leading north-east from Rome to the town of Nomentum (see **3.3b** n.12).
2. The priest who conducted the rites was the priest of the god Quirinus (*flamen Quirinalis*): see 1.2 and Vol. 1, 15–16, 19.

2.2c *The deities of the marriage bed*

In theory every activity at Rome might be protected by its own minor deity. Augustine parodies this tendency by listing all the trivial gods and goddesses

that oversaw the Roman wedding and the consummation of marriage. The passage (intentionally) makes the divine involvement look absurd. But there is in fact no reason to suppose that the deities listed here played any significant part in everyday Roman religious experience. Most of them are not known from any other source. Augustine may well have found them all collected in the work of some pagan scholar – as part of an academic exercise in theology, rather than as any reflection of everyday practice.

Other extracts from Augustine's critique of pagan deities are given at **13.9**.

See further: Vol. 1, 227, 261, 310; Warde Fowler (1911) 158–64; Dumézil (1970) 33–8*.

Augustine, *The City of God* VI.9

When a man and a woman are joined in marriage the god Jugatinus <from *jugare* = to marry> is called in. That may be tolerable. But then the bride has to be led home. So the god Domiducus <from *domus* = home; *ducere* = to lead> is called in too. And to keep her at home, there's the god Domitius. To see that she stays with her husband, the goddess Manturna <from *manere* = to stay> is thrown in as well. Is anything more needed? Spare our human modesty! Once some decent privacy has been arranged, just let the natural urge of flesh and blood do the rest. Why is the bedroom packed with a crowd of deities, when even the bride's attendants withdraw? The reason for this crowd is not to increase our concern for modesty by their imagined presence, but so that with their help the bride may lose her virginity without any difficulty – even though she has the weakness of the female sex and the timidity of any novice. That's why the goddess Virginiensis <from *virgo* = virgin> turns up, and farher-god Subigus <from *subigere* = to tame, subdue>, mother-goddess Prema <from *premere* = to overpower>, the goddess Pertunda <from *pertundere* = to penetrate>, and Venus and Priapus. What is this? If a man needed to be helped by the gods at all as he laboured away at this task, would not one god be enough, or just one goddess? Would Venus on her own not do? She after all is said to derive her name from the fact that a woman cannot cease to be a virgin without violence.[1] If there is any shame among humans, unlike gods, won't the married couple be so overcome by embarrassment when they think that so many deities of both sexes are around, that he will fail to perform, while she struggles all the more? Besides, if Virginiensis is there to untie the virgin's girdle; if Subigus is there to make her give in to ber husband; if Prema is there to keep her down, once she has been overpowered, so that she doesn't move; what is there for Pertunda to do here? She might as well blush and make her exit. Let the husband have something to do too. For it's a real disgrace that anyone aparr from him should perform the act <i.e. penetration> that is her name.

1. Augustine refers to a derivation of Venus' name from *vis*, 'force' or 'violence'.

2.3 The deification of abstract ideas

From at least the fourth century B.C., and probably much earlier, a range of deities was introduced who personified particular qualities or forces in Roman life: Concordia (Concord); Fides (Faith); Spes (Hope) etc. These were commonly represented visually in anthropomorphic form (**2.3b**); but in other respects they remained unpersonalized abstractions.

See further: Vol. 1, 62, 69, 90; Mattingly (1937); Dumézil (1970) 397–406*; Fears (1981)*.

2.3a *Why abstract qualities are deified*

In Cicero's dialogue *On the Nature of the Gods* the character of Balbus offers the following explanation of 'personified abstractions'. It is part of an argument (based explicitly on Stoic philosophy) which is intended to prove not only that the gods exist, but also that they care for mankind.

See further: for Stoic theology, Long and Sedley (1987) 323–33*; Gerson (1990) 154–67.

Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* II.60–2

The wisest men of Greece as well as our own ancestors defined and named many other kinds of gods after the great benefits they bestow – with good reason. For they believed that whatever brought great advantage to the human race could come about only through divine benevolence towards men. So sometimes they called what was produced by a god by the name of the deity itself – as when we refer to 'wheat' as Ceres, or to 'wine' as 'Liber'. This explains that line of Terence <*The Eunuch* 732>:

> without Ceres and without Liber Venus is cold.

Or sometimes, conversely, a deity is named after a particular quality that contains some powerful force, like Fides <Faith> and Mens <Mind>. We can see shrines on the Capitol recently dedicated to this pair by Marcus Aemilius Scaurus, while Fides had been consecrated before that by Aulus Atilius Calatinus.[1] You can see the temple of Virtus <Virtue> as well, and the temple of Honos <Honour> restored by Marcus Marcellus, but dedicated many years before in the Ligurian War by Quintus Maximus.[2] And what of Ops <Wealth>, what of Salus <Safety>, what of Concordia <Concord>, Libertas <Liberty>, Victoria <Victory>? In the case of all these things, because they have such force that they could not possibly be controlled except by a god, the quality itself has been designated divine. In the same category the names of Cupido <Desire> and Voluptas <Pleasure> and Venus Lubentina <Venus of Pleasure> have been consecrated. They may be corrupting and unnatural qualities (although Velleius[3] thinks otherwise), yet those very vices often have a stronger impact on our character. Accordingly, those deities who gave rise to various benefits owed their deification to the size of the benefits

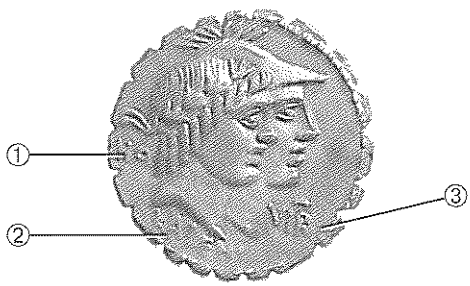
they bestowed; and indeed those names that I just mentioned make clear the power that resides in each god.

1. Cicero does not make the sequence of events entirely clear here. It seems that Scaurus had recently *restored* these two temples, both founded in the third century B.C. (the temple of Fides by Calatinus). According to tradition, there was a yet earlier temple of Fides (perhaps on the same site) founded by King Numa (see, e.g., Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* II.75.2; Plutarch, *Life of Numa* 16.1). See Platner and Ashby (1929) 209, 339; Richardson (1992) 151, 251.
2. Cicero is referring here to what was by his day a joint temple of Honos and Virtus. Marcellus added an extra shrine of Virtus to the existing temple of Honos; the dual foundation was dedicated in 205 B.C. For the controversy over this dedication, see Vol. 1, 105.
3. Velleius, another character in the dialogue, represented the Epicurean point of view – often parodied as simple hedonism and the pursuit of pleasure.

2.3b *Coin (denarius) showing Honos (Honour) and Virtus (Virtue), 70–69 B.C.*

Honos and Virtus (and other idealizing abstractions) could be seen as the personification of the special qualities of the Roman elite – Honos symbolizing success in a political career, Virtus the valour associated with military prowess. Their representation here no doubt served to advertise the excellence (in their own eyes) of the magistrates who issued the coin. The reverse of the coin (not illustrated), showing a personification of Italy and Rome, probably celebrated the final reconciliation of Rome with her Italian allies after the Social War (91–87 B.C.).

See further: Crawford (1974) 413, no. 403; Turcan (1988) I no. 128; for an earlier pairing of Honos and Virtus, see **2.3a**, with n.2.



1. Ho: abbreviation of 'Honos'.
2. Kaleni: shortened form of Q. Fufius K/Calenus, one of the magistrates who issued the coin. The name of the other issuing magistrate appears on the reverse.
3. Vitr: abbreviation of 'Virtus'.

2.4 Roman debate on the character of the gods

Discussion of the nature of the gods, and vehement criticism of supposedly naive views on the character and activities of pagan deities, were not restricted to Christian polemicists. From at least the first century B.C., pagan Roman writers engaged in debate on the gods' form and appearance, on their intervention in human affairs, on their moral standing, even on their very existence. This debate was partly influenced by the intellectual challenge of the different

'schools' of Greek philosophy, which were increasingly well known in Rome from the late Republic on. But it was in part a debate inherent in the traditions of Roman polytheism itself: the existence of numerous deities of very different types encouraged speculation on how these deities were to be classified, ranked and understood.

Other extracts of philosophical discussion of this kind are given at **13.2**.

See further: Vol. 1, 150–3; Rawson (1975) 230–7*; Rawson (1985) 298–316; Brunt (1989).

2.4a *An argument for the anthropomorphic form of the gods*

The character of Velleius (see **2.3a**, n.3) in Cicero's dialogue *On the Nature of the Gods* argues, from the standpoint of Epicurean philosophy, that the form of the gods must resemble the human figure.

See further: (for discussion of Epicurean theology) Long (1974) 41–9*; Long and Sedley (1987) 139–49.

Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.46–8

Concerning the appearance of the gods we have both the hints offered by nature as well as the teaching of reason. It is clearly due to nature that all people of all races conceive of the gods in none other but human form. For in what other shape do they ever appear to anyone, either awake or asleep? But not to reduce everything to the most basic concepts, reason itself proves the same thing. For it seems logical that what is naturally the highest form of existence, whether because of its supreme happiness or because of its immortality, should also be the most beautiful. And what arrangement of limbs, what cast of features, what shape or form can be more beautiful than the human? You Stoics at least, Lucilius,[1] (for my friend Cotta[2] here says now one thing, now another) tend to portray the skill of the divine creator by describing not only the utility but also the beauty of all the parts of the human figure. But if the human figure is superior to the form of all living things, and a god is a living thing, then a god surely has the most beautiful form of all; and since it is agreed that the gods are supremely happy, and that no one can be happy without virtue, and that virtue cannot exist without reason, and that reason can be found nowhere but in the human figure, then it must be conceded that the gods have human form. But this form is not really corporeal, but merely resembles a human body; it does not have blood, merely the semblance of blood.

1. Lucilius Balbus; see **2.3a**.
2. The third main character, C. Aurelius Cotta (see **2.4b**).

2.4b *Arguments against the anthropomorphic form of the gods*

Later in the same dialogue the character of Cotta criticizes Velleius' views. Cotta speaks from the standpoint of a philosopher of the Academic school, committed to sceptical enquiry rather than to attaining certain knowledge.

See further: Beard (1986); for particular discussion of the sceptical stance of the Academic school of philosophy, Long (1974) 88–106; Wardman (1976) 161–4*; Schofield, Burnyeat and Barnes (1980).

Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* I.77, 81–2

Consider now what each argument amounts to. For it seems to me that in your own arbitrary fashion you are leaping to an entirely improbable conclusion. First of all has there ever been anyone so blind in investigating these matters as not to see that human shape has been assigned to the gods for one of two reasons: either by the cunning strategy of philosophers, so they might more easily turn the minds of the ignorant away from improper conduct and towards the observance of the gods; or else by superstition, so that in worshipping statues devotees might believe that they were approaching the divine presence itself? But poets, painters and craftsmen have fostered these ideas too. For it was not easy to depict gods in movement or in the throes of action except by imitating the human form. And another contributory factor may have been that common belief about man's superior beauty over other species. But do you not see, as a student of the natural world, what a plausible matchmaker nature is, almost a pimp of her own charms? Do you imagine there is any creature on land or sea that is not most attracted by its own kind? If this were not so, why would a bull not long to couple with a mare, or a stallion with a cow? Do you think that an eagle or a lion or a dolphin prefers any shape to its own? Is it any wonder then if nature has taught man in the same way to think nothing more beautiful than their own kind? And this is the reason that we think gods resemble human beings . . .

<Various arguments against the anthropomorphic form of the gods are produced.>

(81) Besides, Velleius, what if it turns out to be a completely false assumption that the only form that suggests itself to us when we think of god is the human form? Will you still in that case go on defending your absurd position? Maybe it is true that we Romans have that image of god, as you say; because from childhood we have been familiar with Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Neptune, Vulcan, Apollo and the other gods in the form that painters and sculptors have chosen for them; and not only in overall form, but also in attributes, age and dress. But this is not the case for the Egyptians nor the Syrians nor almost all the barbarian races. For amongst them you would find beliefs about the divinity of certain animals more firmly established than our own reverence for the most holy temples and statues of the gods. For we have seen many shrines despoiled by our people, and statues of the gods removed from the holiest sanctuaries, but no one has ever even heard tell of a crocodile or an ibis or a cat dishonoured by an Egyptian. What then do you conclude? Presumably that the Egyptians regard that holy Apis bull of theirs as a god? Just as much, I'd swear, as you believe in the divinity of that Juno Sospita of your own native town – the one you never see, not even in your dreams, without a goat-skin,

spear, shield and shoes turned up at the toe.[1] But the Argive Juno does not appear like that, nor the Roman. So it follows that Juno has one appearance for the Argives, another for the people of Lanuvium, another for us. And in just the same way the appearance of our Jupiter Capitolinus is quite different from the Africans' Jupiter Hammon.[2]

1. Velleius came from Lanuvium (a town 30 km. south-east of Rome), where there was a famous cult of Juno Sospita (the Saviour), represented in the guise of a warrior; see Vol. 1, 82–3. For illustrations, see Turcan (1988), 1 nos. 23–8.
2. See **2.1d**, n. 4.

2.4c *Where do the gods live?*

Epicurean philosophy held that the gods existed, but that they were remote from the human world, and not concerned with humankind. Lucretius' poem *On the Nature of Things*, written in the first century B.C., was devoted to explaining the main tenets of that philosophy. Further extracts from the poem are given at **2.7e** and **9.6a**.

See Long (1974) 41–9*; Long and Sedley (1987) 139–49.

Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* V.146–67

This too it is impossible for you to believe – I mean that the holy dwellings of the gods exist in any part of our world. For the nature of the gods, fine as it is and far removed from our senses, can only barely be discerned by the intelligence of the mind. And since it eludes any touch or blow from our hands, it should not be able to touch anything that we can touch. For what cannot itself be touched, cannot touch. So therefore their dwellings must also be different from our own dwellings, fine to match their bodies – as I shall prove to you later at some length. To go on to say that it was for the sake of human beings that the gods decided to fashion the glorious structure of this world, and that it is proper for that reason to praise it as a work of the gods which is deserving praise; and to think that it will be everlasting and eternal, and that it is wrong ever to disturb from its place by any force what was established for the human race in perpetuity by the ancient wisdom of the gods, or to attack it with argument and to overthrow it from top to bottom – to invent this, Memmius,[1] and other errors of this type, one after another, is an act of sheer folly. For what benefit could our gratitude confer on those immortal and supremely happy beings that they should attempt to carry out anything for our sake?

1. The addressee of the whole poem; probably Gaius Memmius (*praetor* 58 B.C.).

2.5 Interpretations of the goddess Vesta

Individual Roman deities could be interpreted in a great variety of different ways. A god that for one Roman was simply the hero of a series of extravagant mythological exploits could for another symbolize the most abstract of philo-

sophical principles; or, more likely, the same person could give the same deity quite different senses in different contexts. Ovid's account of the goddess Vesta well illustrates the range of possible interpretations. It is, of course, a highly literary treatment: very few Romans in 'real life' would ever have thought all these things about Vesta – certainly not all at the same time. But it gives a clear sense of how widely diverse the 'meanings' of a deity could be.

See further: Brelich (1949); Dumézil (1970) 311–26*; Guarducci (1971); Hommel (1972).

Ovid, *Fasti* VI.249–300, 319–48

Vesta, grant us your favour. It is in homage to you that we now open our mouths, if we may come to your sacred festival. I was deep in prayer. I felt the presence of the heavenly deity, and the glad earth radiated a purple light. Not of course that I actually saw you, my lady (none of the usual poets' lies here![1]), and it was not in any case proper that a mortal should look upon you; but my ignorance and my errors were corrected spontaneously, without the aid of any instructor.

(257) It is said that Rome had celebrated the Parilia[2] forty times when the goddess, the guardian of the flame, was received in her temple. It was the work of the peaceful king, the most god-fearing character ever born in the Sabine land.[3] The buildings you now see roofed in bronze, in that long distant time you would have seen roofed in thatch, and the walls were woven with tough osiers. This little spot which now supports the Hall of Vesta was then the great palace of unshaven Numa. Yet the shape of the temple, as it still exists today, is said to have been the same as in those early days, and a good reason underlies that choice of shape.

(267) Vesta is the same as the earth. Perpetual fire constitutes them both. Earth and the hearth both stand for her dwelling place.[4] The earth is like a ball, resting on no support; its enormous weight hangs on the air that stretches beneath. Its own rotation keeps the sphere in balance, and it has no angle that might push it in one direction. And seeing that it is placed in the centre of all things and touches no side more or less, if it were not spherical in shape, it would be nearer to one side than another, and the universe would not have the earth as its central weight. It is just like that globe that stands suspended by Syracusan skill in its enclosed space, a small model of the vast vault of heaven; and there too the earth is equally distant from top and bottom – its spherical shape ensuring that position.[5] The appearance of the temple <of Vesta> is the same: it has no projecting angle; a dome protects it from the showers of rain.

(283) Why, you ask, is the goddess tended by virgin priestesses?[6] I will discover the proper reasons for this also. It is said that Ceres and Juno were born of Ops[7] from the seed of Saturn; Vesta was the third daughter. The first two married; and both are said to have borne children. Of the three only one remained who refused marriage. Is it surprising if a virgin goddess delights in a virgin priestess and allows only chaste hands to enter her sacred rites? Think of Vesta as nothing other than living flame, and you see that

no substance is born of flame. Rightly, therefore, is she a virgin goddess – who produces no seed, nor takes any, and loves the company of virgins.

(295) Fool that I was – for a long time I believed that there were statues of Vesta. Then I learned that there are none under the curved dome. An undying flame is hidden in that temple, but there is no image of Vesta herself nor of the fire. The earth stands by its own force. The name Vesta comes from 'vi stando' <'standing by force'>. The explanation of her Greek name may be similar.[8]

> <Ovid continues with more etymologies of the goddess Vesta and of the hearth (*focus*). Then he describes the rituals of Vesta – including the custom of hanging loaves on an ass; and he offers the following explanation.>

(319) Shall I pass on, or shall I tell of your disgrace, red-faced Priapus?[9] It's a short story – but a big laugh. Cybele,[10] whose brow is crowned with a coronet of towers, invited the immortal gods to her party. She invited the satyrs too, and those rustic deities, the nymphs. Silenus[11] was there, though no one had asked him. It is forbidden – and it would take too long – to tell of the banquet of the gods. The night was spent in heavy drinking, without sleep. Some of them wandered here and there in the valleys of shady Ida, others lay down and rested their limbs on the soft grass, some played, some were overtaken by sleep, others linked arms and stamped the green grass with the triple beat of their swift feet. Vesta lies down; and carefree takes her peaceful rest, just as she was, her head laid on the turf. But the red-faced keeper of the gardens[12] is chasing nymphs and goddesses; backwards and forwards he turns his wandering steps. He spots Vesta too. It is not clear whether he thought she was a nymph, or knew it was Vesta; he himself says he did not know. Anyway, he gets up hopes of sex and tries to creep up on her secretly, tiptoeing forward with racing heart. As it happened, old Silenus had left the ass, on which he had ridden, on the banks of a gently murmuring stream. The god of the long Hellespont[13] was just going to lay hold of her, when the ass let out an ill-timed bray. Frightened by the deep voice, the goddess jumped up. The whole crowd rushed over, but he managed to escape through the midst of the hands that wanted to catch him. It is the custom in Lampsacus to sacrifice this animal to Priapus, saying, 'We give to the flames the innards of the tell-tale ass.' It is he, goddess, that you adorn with a necklace of loaves, in memory of his services. Work ceases; the mills are empty and silent.[14]

1. The Latin here is a pun – which could equally be translated '*long live* the poets' lies'. The joke is that in other parts of the poem Ovid himself tells just such lies – claiming a direct sighting of (even interview with) a deity. (See, e.g., *Fasti* VI.1–100.)
2. That is forty years after the foundation of the city. See 5.1.
3. Numa, who reputedly came from Sabine country.
4. Here, and throughout this passage, Ovid plays with different etymologies of the goddess and her attributes. So, for example, 'fire' constitutes both 'the hearth' (literally) and 'the earth' (etymologically – the Latin 'terra' (earth) deriving from 'torrere' (to roast, parch, burn)). He is also probably alluding to the role of fire as a 'designing principle' in Stoic explanations of the world and world order (see Long and Sedley (1987) 274–9).

5. The Greek scientist Archimedes constructed a model which showed the relative movements of the sun, moon and planets. Originally at Syracuse, in Sicily, it was brought to Rome in 212 B.C.
6. See 8.4.
7. Goddess associated with abundance of crops. See Pouthier (1981).
8. Ovid suggests that the name of Hestia (the Greek equivalent of Vesta) may derive from the verb 'hestanai' (to stand).
9. God associated with fertility. Commonly represented with a large erect phallus and reddened face.
10. See 2.7.
11. Like the mythical satyrs, part-man, part-animal. Often pictured as a drunken follower of Bacchus.
12. Statues of Priapus were commonly placed in gardens.
13. Priapus had a famous cult at Lampsacus on the Hellespont.
14. Reference to the celebrations of the festival of Vesta (Vestalia), which included a holiday for bakers and millers.

2.6 The incorporation of new deities

It is a distinguishing feature of Roman religion that it constantly incorporated new gods and goddesses. This was not necessarily the consequence of the Romans perceiving some inadequacy in their existing deities – the consequence of a simple search for a more 'satisfying' religious experience. It is better seen as a feature of the flexibility and adaptive capacity of an 'open' polytheism: new deities reflected Rome's changing social, political and military circumstances; they responded to new manifestations and new interpretations of divine power.

See further: Vol. 1, 61–4, 79–84; North (1976)*.

2.6a *The 'evocatio' of Juno of Veii*

The process of Roman conquest often involved the Roman assimilation of the gods of the conquered people. One particular ceremony (known as *evocatio*, literally a 'summoning away') attempted to win over to the Roman side the protecting deity of an enemy city *before* the Romans had conquered. The Roman general would offer the enemy god a cult and temple in Rome – so depriving the enemy of their divine protection, while at the same time incorporating a new deity into the Roman pantheon. Here Camillus in 396 B.C. addresses the patron deity of the Etruscan city of Veii – known to the Romans as Juno. For a later example of *evocatio*, see **10.3b**.

See further: Vol. 1, 34–5, 62; Basanoff (1947); Dumézil (1970) 424–7*; Ogilvie (1970) 673–5*; Le Gall (1976); Rüpke (1990) 162–4.

Livy, *History* V.21.1–7

A huge crowd set out and filled the camp. After consulting the auspices, the dictator[1] went out and ordered the soldiers to take up arms. 'It is under your leadership,' he said,

'Pythian Apollo, and inspired by your majesty, that I proceed to destroy the city of Veii. And I vow to you a tenth part of the spoils. To you also, Juno Regina, who now lives in Veii, I pray that after our victory you will accompany us to our city – soon to be your city – to be received in a temple worthy of your greatness.'[2] Following these prayers, he proceeded to attack the city with vast numbers from every side, in order to distract attention from the real danger that threatened them from the tunnel.[3] The inhabitants of Veii were unaware that they had already been abandoned by their own seers and by foreign oracles; unaware too that already some of the gods had been invited to partake of the plunder, while others had been entreated to leave their city and were turning their eyes towards the temples of the enemy for their new homes, and that they themselves were now living the day that was to be their last. Not having the slightest suspicion that the walls had been undermined by a tunnel and that the citadel was already teeming with the enemy, they ran armed to the ramparts, each man for himself, wondering why it could be that, when for so many days no Roman had moved from his station, they should now be recklessly rushing at the walls, as though struck with sudden madness.

1. Camillus, holding the short-term, emergency office of 'dictator'.
2. As Juno Regina (Queen Juno), after the Roman victory, she received a temple and cult on the Aventine hill at Rome .
3. The Romans were undermining the city wall of Veii.

2.6b *The 'speaking god'*

The incorporation of a new deity could be a matter of debate or controversy – as in this story (part history, part myth) of the introduction of the 'speaking god' in 391 B.C. The controversy here is concerned with social status – particularly with the religious authority of a man outside the governing class that traditionally controlled Rome's relations with the gods.

See further: Basanoff (1950); Ogilvie (1970) 698*.

Livy, *History* V. 32.6–7; 50.5

In the same year Marcus Caedicius,[1] a man of plebeian rank, reported to the tribunes that in the still of the night on the 'Nova Via' < 'New Street'>, where the shrine now stands, above the temple of Vesta, he had heard a voice, more distinct than that of any human being; and this voice, he said, ordered him to tell the magistrates that the Gauls were approaching. But the warning was ignored, as often happens, because of the lowly status of the informant and because the Gauls were a far distant race and so little known. And not only did they reject the warnings of the gods, as fate drew nearer, but they also sent away from the city the only form of human help they had with them – namely Marcus Furius.

<After the end of the war against the Gauls, Livy concludes his report of the 'speaking god'.>

(50) A proposal was brought forward to propitiate the voice that had been heard during the night before the Gallic War, announcing the disaster – and had then been disregarded. So a temple was ordered to be established on the 'Nova Via' to Aius Locutius <the 'sayer and speaker'>.

1. The name Caedicius means 'teller of disaster' (Latin 'dico', 'I tell' and 'caedes', 'disaster') – an appropriate invention, no doubt, to fit the story.

2.6c *The Sibylline Books and the introduction of Aesculapius*

A consultation of the so-called 'Sibylline Books' often lay behind the introduction of new deities during the Republic. These 'books' were a collection of written oracles often referred to after natural disasters or prodigies (see **1.8**; 7.5). On several occasions (and particularly frequently during the third century B.C.) these oracles recommended the import of a god or goddess from the eastern Mediterranean, as a means of propitiating the divine anger that a prodigy implied. In 292 B.C. a consultation of the books led to the introduction of Aesculapius.

See further: Vol. 1, 69–70; Map 1 no. 27; Dumézil (1970) 443–4; North (1976) 8–9*; Parke (1988) 136–51, 190–215*.

Livy, *History* X.47.6–7; Summaries XI.

The year had been successful in many respects; but that hardly amounted to a consolation for one particular disaster – a plague that devastated both the city and the countryside. It was a calamity now more like a portent, and the Books were consulted as to what end or what cure the gods might offer for the disaster. The advice discovered in the Books was that Aesculapius should be brought to Rome from Epidaurus; but in that year, because the consuls were engaged with the war, nothing was done about it, except that a *supplicatio* to Aesculapius was held for one day.

<Two or three years later the plague still raged.>

(Summaries XI) Since the city was suffering from the plague, ambassadors were sent to bring the statue of Aesculapius from Epidaurus to Rome; and they carried off a serpent, which had slipped aboard their ship and which – so it was generally believed – contained the true spirit of the god. When it had gone ashore onto the Tiber island, a temple of Aesculapius was established in that very spot.

2.7 Magna Mater (Cybele) and her cult

One of the most notorious deities introduced to Rome from the East was Magna Mater (literally 'the Great Mother'), also known by her Greek name Cybele. A native deity of Asia Minor, her image (not an anthropomorphic

statue, but a black stone, probably a meteorite) was brought to Rome from her shrine at Pessinus (in Phrygia) in 204 B.C., during the war against Hannibal; it was accompanied by her cult officials, who included the eunuch (reputedly self-castrated) priests, the *galli* (8.7). Shortly after her arrival, the goddess was given a temple at the very heart of the city (on the Palatine hill) and her rituals were gradually incorporated into the official calendar (see 3.3a n.2; 3.3b; 5.6a and b; 6.7). Even so, for some Romans, Magna Mater and her priests became a symbol of terrible 'foreignness' – a warning perhaps that Roman willingness to import new religious forms had gone too far.

See further: Vol. 1, 96–8, 197–8; Map 1 no. 13; Graillot (1912); Vermaseren (1977a)*; Sfameni Gasparro (1985); Turcan (1989) 35–75.

2.7a *The introduction of Magna Mater*

The introduction of the goddess followed a consultation of the Sibylline Books and of the oracle at Delphi, which had laid down that the goddess should be welcomed into the city 'with due hospitality' by the 'best man at Rome' (Livy, *History* XXIX.11.6). Livy's account of the arrival of her image from Asia gives us a rare glimpse of the kind of ceremonial that could accompany the incorporation of a new deity.

See further: Bremmer (1987); Thomas (1984) 1502–8*; Gruen (1990) 5–53.

Livy, *History* XXIX.14.5–14

There followed a discussion on the reception of the Idaean Mother,[1] for not only had Marcus Valerius Flaccus, one of the envoys, arriving in advance, reported that she would be in Italy almost at once, but there was also recent news that she was already at Tarracina.[2] It was a decision of no trivial importance which occupied the senate: who was the best man in the state. Every man would certainly have preferred a clear-cut victory for himself in this contest to any military commands of civic distinctions, whether granted by vote of the senators or the people. They judged that Publius <Cornelius> Scipio (the son of the Gnaeus Scipio who had been killed in Spain) then a young man not yet of the age to become *quaestor*, was the best of the good men in the whole state. I would gladly pass on to later writers what virtues influenced them in this judgement, if only it had been handed down by those closest to those who remembered the events; but I will not interpose my own opinions by speculating about a matter obscured by antiquity. Publius Cornelius was ordered to go to Ostia with all the matrons to meet the goddess. He was to take her from the ship in person, and when she had been brought ashore, to hand her over to be carried by the matrons. After the ship had reached the mouth of the river Tiber, just as he had been ordered, he sailed out into the open sea on a ship, received the goddess from the priests and brought her to land. The leading matrons of the state received the goddess. Among them, one name – that of Claudia Quinta[3] – stands out.

Her reputation which, as tradition records, was previously doubtful, has made her chastity more famous because of her scrupulous performance of her duties. The matrons passed her <sc. the goddess' image> on from hand to hand, from one to the other without a break, while the whole city turned out to meet her. Incense burners had been set before the doors along the route that she was being carried, and burning the incense they offered prayers that she should enter the city of Rome willingly and propitiously. They brought the goddess into the temple of Victory which is on the Palatine the day before the Ides of April.[4] That day was a festival. Crowds of people brought gifts for the goddess to the Palatine, and there was a *lectisternium*, and games which were called the Megalesia.[5]

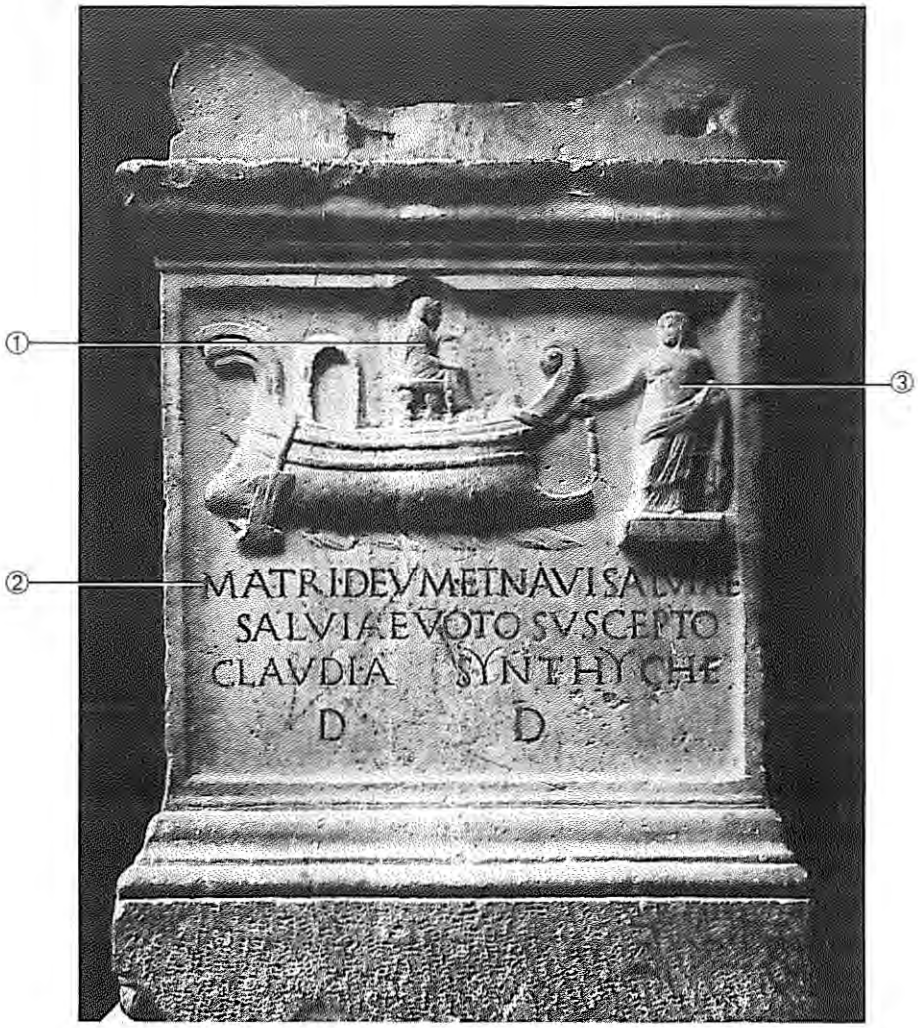
1. Title of Magna Mater, derived from Mount Ida, her traditional 'home', near Troy in Asia Minor.
2. Coastal town about 100 km. south of Rome.
3. See below **2.7b**.
4. The black stone remained in the temple of Victory until her own temple was dedicated in 191 B.C.
5. For the Megalesian Games, see **3.3a** (with n. 2) and **b**. The title 'Megalesian' is derived from the Greek 'Megale Meter' (= Great Mother).

2.7b *The Miracle of Claudia Quinta*

The version of Livy (**2.7a** above) only hints at any very special role having been played by Claudia Quinta, regarding her as no more than one of the matrons, if a particularly scrupulous one. Cicero, writing earlier than Livy, also regarded Claudia as a matron but gives no indication that she had had a dubious reputation, rather contrasting her as a model of chastity with the unspeakable vices of Clodius' sister Clodia, whom he is attacking in the speech (*On the Response of the Haruspices* 27). In later versions, however, the story is developed more dramatically. For the Augustan poets, Claudia has become a lady with an unfair reputation for immorality, who redeems herself by miraculously pulling the goddess to safety, when the boat carrying the black stone is grounded on a sand-bank (e.g. Ovid *Fasti* IV. 247–348). In the final stage, Claudia becomes a Vestal Virgin, who had been suspected of breaking the rule of chastity, but whose miracle triumphantly vindicates her virginity. 'She took off her sash', wrote Herodian in the third century A.D. (*History* I.11) 'and threw it onto the prow of the ship with a prayer that, if she were still an innocent virgin the ship would respond to her. The ship readily followed, attached to the sash. The Romans were astounded, both by the manifestation of the goddess and by the sanctity of the Virgin'.

This first-century A.D. altar from Rome shows Claudia Quinta pulling in the goddess' boat (height, 0.87m.; width, 0.59m.; depth, 0.51m.).

See further: Vol. 1, Map 2 no. 5; Bömer (1964) 130–51; Vermaseren (1977a) 41 and 57*; Wiseman (1979) 94–9*; Gérard (1980); Coarelli (1982) 42–6.



1. A seated statue, rather than the black stone of most accounts.
2. Dedicatory inscription: 'To the Mother of the Gods and to the Saviour Saviour <word repeated on the stone> Ship, having undertaken a vow, Claudia Synthyche gave this altar'. Even the ship itself that brought the goddess safely to Rome seems here to be treated as a deity – or at least is the recipient of the vow alongside Magna Mater herself.
3. Claudia Quinta.

2.7c *Magna Mater in her chariot*

There were many different forms in which Magna Mater was represented – from the celebrated black stone to the regal goddess shown in this bronze statuette from Rome, dating to the second century A.D. (height, 0.56 m.; length, 1.04 m.).

See further: Vermaseren (1977a) 71–6*; (1977b) 39 (for full details of this piece); Turcan (1988) 1 nos. 82–6.

1. Turreted crown; a symbol of her role as protectress of cities. See **2.7e**; Ovid, *Fasti* IV.219–21.
2. In her right hand she holds a *patera*; in her left a tympanum (see **2.7e**, with n.5).
3. Lions – a standard accompaniment of the goddess, elsewhere shown on her lap or resting at her feet. See **2.7e**; Ovid, *Fasti* IV.215–18.

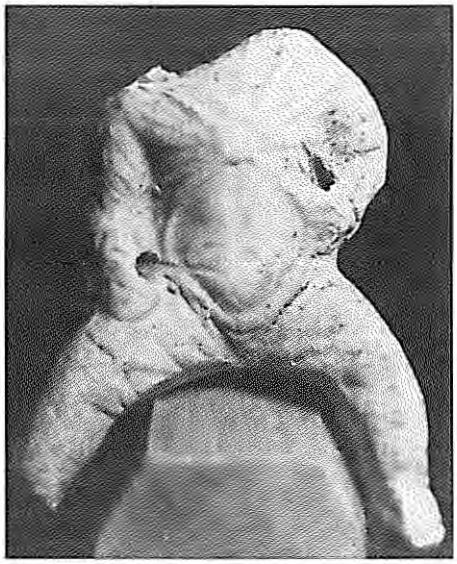
2.7d *Attis*

Closely associated with Magna Mater is the figure of Attis – who (according to most versions of his myth) castrated himself after being driven into a frenzy by Magna Mater, jealous of his affection for another woman. He was not only the mythical prototype of the eunuch cult officials, the *galli* (**8.7**), but also the focus of a series of rituals that were part of public Roman ritual by the early Principate. For hymns to Attis, see **12.7e (iv)**.

It has been thought that Attis was introduced considerably later than Magna Mater; that it was only in the Empire that this aggressively 'oriental' deity was admitted to Rome. But excavations on the site of the Palatine temple of Magna Mater have produced numerous statuettes of Attis (such as those illustrated) from early phases (second to first centuries B.C.) of its occupation.

See further: Vol. 1, 97–8, 164–6; Lambrechts (1962), with review by North (1965); Vermaseren (1966); (1977a) 41–3, 113–24*; for the archaeological material, Romanelli (1963); Vermaseren (1977b) 11–36.

a) height 0.12m., width 0.04m.



(b) height 0.06m., width 0.05m.

(c) height 0.15m., width 0.05m.

2.7e *Magna Mater as the Earth*

Like other deities, Magna Mater was interpreted in numerous different ways. Here Lucretius treats her as an allegory of the Earth and explains her attributes in terms of that allegory.

See further: West (1964) 103–14*; Jope (1985).

Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, II.581–628

In this connection you should also keep in mind one other fact, sealed and treasured in your memory: there is nothing, whose nature is clearly visible to us, that consists of one type of element only, and nothing that is not formed from a mixture of different kinds of particle; and the more powers and qualities any particular substance has, so it shows us that there are within it elements of very many different types and shapes. First, the earth contains the primordial matter from which the springs, rolling down their coolness, constantly replenish the vast sea; and it possesses the matter that gives birth to fire. For in many places the earth's surface smoulders and burns, and from its depths the eruptions of Etna[1] blaze furiously. Then too it has the capacity to bring forth shining crops and bounteous orchards for the races of men, and to furnish rivers and leaves and bounteous pastures for the breed of wild beasts that roams the mountains. That is why this one

thing has been called Great Mother of the Gods, Mother of the Beasts, and creator of the human body.

(600) She it is whom the ancient and learned poets of Greece celebrated, as a goddess seated in her chariot, driving her twin-yoked lions; and so they taught us that the great world hangs in spacious air, and that the earth cannot rest on earth. They gave her wild beasts in her yoke – because children, however fierce, are necessarily tamed and subdued by the devotion they owe to their parents. And they surrounded her head with a turreted crown, because the earth, fortified in chosen places, upholds cities. So adorned with this emblem, the image of the divine mother is carried through the wide world with terrifying effect. She it is whom the different nations, by their ancient religious custom, hail as 'the Idaean Mother',[2] and they give her a retinue of Phrygians as her escort, because they claim that corn was first created in those parts <i.e. Phrygia> and spread from there over the whole world.[3] They assign her eunuchs as priests,[4] because they want to show that those who have defied the power of their mother and have been found ungrateful to their parents must be thought unworthy to bring forth living offspring to the realms of light. Taut drums thunder beneath their palms, and round about the curved cymbals crash; and horns blast in a raucous strain, while the hollow pipe stirs the heart with its Phrygian tune.[5] And they carry before them weapons, symbols of their mad frenzy, to strike awe into the ungrateful hearts and impious minds of the rabble with dread for the goddess' majesty. So, when first she rides through mighty cities, silently bestowing wordless benefaction on the human race, they strew every path of her route with copper and silver, pouring out riches in extravagant largess; and overshadowing the Mother and her retinue of attendants, they shower her with rose blossoms.

1. Sicilian volcano.
2. See 2.7a, n.1.
3. A Latin word play underlies this idea – 'fruges' = 'fruits of the earth'/ 'Phryges' = 'Phrygians'.
4. A reference to the *galli* (8.7).
5. The rituals of Magna Mater were commonly accompanied by the loud music of tympana, cymbals and flute; see 2.7c.

2.8 From human to divine: becoming a god

Some Roman gods had a human origin. The pantheon not only expanded by incorporating new, 'foreign' deities. Other gods were created by *deifying* mortal men and women. The deification of the founders of Rome provided a mythical precedent for this crossing of the boundary between divine and human status; but it was only with the deification of Julius Caesar and the emperors who followed him that it became a regular practice.

See further: Vol. 1, 31, 140–9, 206–10, 253–6.

2.8a *Romulus – founder into god*

According to one well-known Roman tradition, Romulus (the legendary founder of the city of Rome) was incorporated at his 'death' among the gods. Livy records this tale, while also including other, more cynical, versions of the 'apotheosis'. The belief that Romulus became a god was at least as old as the third century B.C.; it is referred to, for example, in the writing of Ennius (239–169 B.C.). But it was a particular focus of interest and debate in the second half of the first century B.C., when it could be taken as a prototype (either as justification or critique) for the deification of Julius Caesar and, later, Augustus.

See further: Vol. 1, 4–5; Burkert (1962); Dumézil (1970) 247–9*; Ogilvie (1970) 84–5; Weinstock (1971) 175–7*; Porte (1981); for Ennius' account, see his *Annals* (in *ROL* 1) 63–4, 114–15, 116, 117–21.

Livy, *History* 1.16

When these deeds, worthy of immortality, had been accomplished, one day he gathered the men together on the Campus Martius, near the marsh of Capra, to hold a review of the citizens under arms. Suddenly a storm blew up with great claps of thunder and covered the king in such a thick cloud that he became completely invisible to the gathering. From that moment on Romulus was no more on earth. The Roman troops eventually recovered from their panic, when a bright and peaceful sunny day returned after the confusion of the storm. But when they saw that the king's chair was empty, although they believed the senators who had been standing nearby and claimed that he had been swept up aloft in the blast, they nevertheless kept a sorrowful silence for some time as though overcome with the fear that they had been left as orphans. Then, when a few men gave the lead, they all decided that Romulus should be hailed a god,[1] son of a god, king, and father of the Roman state. And in prayers they begged his grace, beseeching him to be favourable and propitious towards them and ever to protect his descendants. I believe that there were some men, even then, who privately claimed that the king had been torn apart at the hands of the senators.[2] For this story too, obscure as it is, has spread. But men's admiration for him, as well as the strength of their fear, has given the other version greater weight. And it is said that it received added credence by the device of one man. For, when the citizens were troubled by the loss of their king and in hostile mood towards the senate, Proculus Julius,[3] a man of considerable authority, so it is said, even though reporting a strange occurrence, came forward to address the assembly. '*Quirites*,' he said, 'Romulus, the father of this city, suddenly descended from the heavens this morning at first light and made himself known to me. I was overcome with fear and awe, and stood in front of him beseeching him in prayer that it should be lawful for me to gaze upon him. And he said, "Depart. Proclaim to the Romans that the gods so wish it that my Rome should be the capital of the whole world. So let them foster the art of war and let them convey to their descendants that no human strength can resist

the arms of Rome." He made this pronouncement,' he said, 'then departed on high.' It is extraordinary how much credence was granted to the man's story and how the grief felt by the people and army for the loss of Romulus was assuaged by belief in his immortality.

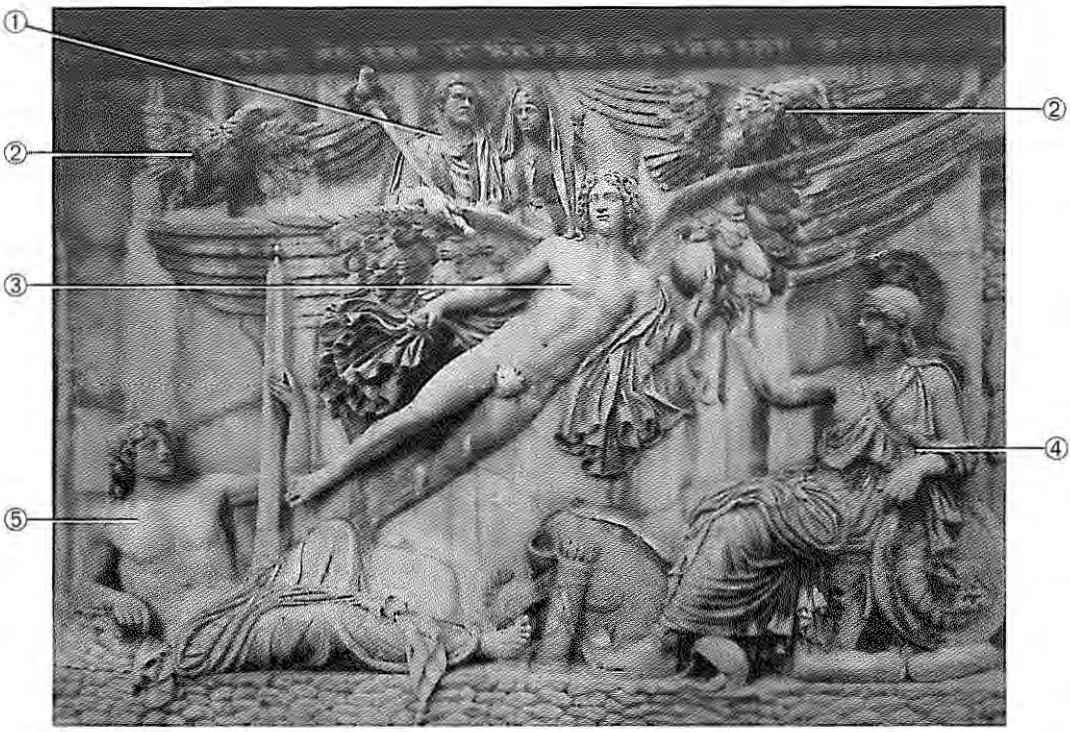
1. Romulus, in his status as a god, was given the title Quirinus – so identifying him with one of the oldest Roman deities (see **1.3**; Vol. 1, 4–5, 148–9).
2. This detail could hardly fail to be reminiscent of the fate of Julius Caesar.
3. The prominence of Proculus *Julius* is significant – a (no doubt legendary) member of the Julian family, the family of Caesar and Augustus.

2.8b *The deification of the Emperor Antoninus Pius and his wife Faustina (A.D. 161)*

From the time of Caesar and Augustus onwards, emperors and some of the members of their immediate families were the most frequent category of recruits to the Roman pantheon (**9.2**; **9.3b**; **10.5**). After the death of an Emperor, the senate would take a vote as to whether or not he had been a deserving ruler, who should be formally recognized as a god, though of course the wishes of the dead man's successor would in reality have played a great role in making of the decision. From Caesar onwards, the name of the new god or goddess – *divus* Augustus, *divus* Claudius and so on – was formed by adding *divus* or *diva* to their name.

This relief (height, 2.47m.; width, 3.38m.) once stood at the base of a column erected in honour of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, who died in A.D. 161. In it, Antonius is depicted being carried upwards to join the immortal gods; with him is his wife Faustina, who had in fact died, and so become a *diva*, twenty years before him. They are seen together being transported upwards on the back of a strange figure with huge wings, leaving the symbols of the city of Rome beneath them. For the great sequence of Roman temples to the *divi*, see Vol. 1, 253; the new *divus* and *diva* had their joint temple in the Forum, where it still stands; see **4.7** n.1.

See further: for the apotheosis and deification of emperors, Vol. 1, 206–10, 318, 348–63; Hopkins (1978) 197–242*; Price (1987); for the sculpture, and the (lost) column, Vogel (1973); D. E. Strong (1988) 197–8*; D. E. E. Kleiner (1992) 285–8*. Note also the sculpture showing the apotheosis of Sabina, the wife of the emperor Hadrian: Vogel (1973) pl. 47; Price (1987) 94, fig. 16; D. E. Strong (1988) illustration 111.



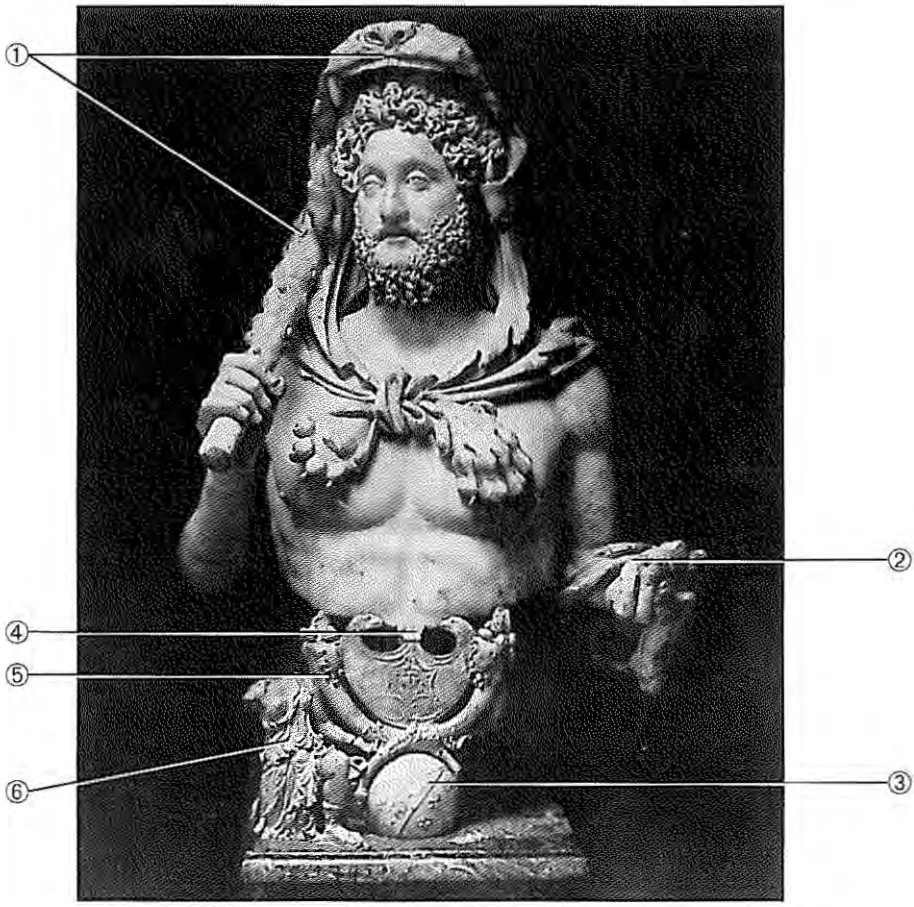
1. Antoninus and Faustina. Antoninus carries a sceptre with an eagle at its head – an attribute of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and carried by a general on the day of his triumph. The sceptre in Faustina's hand is a modern restoration.
2. Two birds, their heads restored (probably correctly) as eagles. As well as being a symbol of divine and imperial power, eagles were commonly released from the top of the funeral pyres of emperors and were believed to take the ruler's soul to heaven (**9.3b**).
3. Winged figure transporting Antoninus and Faustina to the heavens. He carries a globe, zodiac and snake – the zodiac displaying the signs of March, the month of the death and consecration of Antoninus. His exact identity is uncertain. See Vogel (1973) 33–8.
4. Female figure in military dress, probably a personification of Roma (Rome). For the goddess Roma, see **10.3a**, and Vol. 1, 158–60.
5. Figure, perhaps symbolizing the Campus Martius in Rome, the usual location of imperial funerals. He carries an obelisk, which may be intended to represent the obelisk at the centre of Augustus' great sundial – a distinctive monument in the Campus Martius.

2.8c *The emperor Commodus (A.D. 176–192) as Hercules*

Although they received 'official' deification only after their death, Roman emperors were often very closely associated with gods, even during their lifetime; their status merged with that of the divine. This statue of Commodus (which originally stood in one of the emperor's properties in Rome) may well have been produced in his lifetime. He is represented with the attributes of Hercules – suggesting a close connection between emperor and god, or (if the viewer chose to take it that way) that, in some senses, he really 'was' the god. Hercules was a particularly appropriate symbol of the ambivalence of the

emperor's divine status; for Hercules himself was originally, so it was said, a mortal hero who *achieved* the rank of a god at his 'death'. Height, 1.18 m.

See further: for the association of Commodus and Hercules, Vol. 1, 210; Beaujeu (1955) 400–10; Speidel (1993); for the sculpture and its context, Stuart Jones (1926) 139–42*; Fittschen and Zanker (1985) 85–90; *Tranquille dimore* (1986) 37–56, 88–91; D. E. E. Kleiner (1992) 276–7*.



1. Club and lionskin of Hercules.
2. In Commodus/Hercules' hand, the golden apples of the Hesperides – which Hercules retrieved as one of his labours.
3. Globe, surrounded by a zodiacal band – showing Taurus, Capricorn and Scorpio. The exact reference of these signs is uncertain; they presumably alluded to particularly important dates in Commodus' life and career. See Hannah (1986).
4. Crescent shield, with points ending in eagles' heads: a type particularly associated with Amazons, the mythical race of warrior women. Towards the end of his life Commodus took the title Amazonius.
5. Crossed cornucopiae, heaped with fruit, symbolizing plenty.
6. Female figure, perhaps an Amazon; the matching figure on the right is lost.

2.8d *Euhemerism: a theory of the human origin of the gods*

One strand of ancient philosophical thinking argued that all the major gods of mythology had a human origin; that the gods had been great kings or benefactors, deified on their death by a grateful people. This idea was particularly associated with the name of Euhemerus, whose Greek account of the mortal descent of the gods (written 311–298 B.C.) was translated into Latin by the poet Ennius. 'Euhemerism' later, of course, played into the hands of Christian opponents of paganism, who saw it as a pagan admission that their gods were not really gods. Here the Christian Lactantius quotes a 'euhemeristic' account of the death of Jupiter.

See further: Drachman (1922) 110–13*.

Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 1.11.44

So if we grasp the fact that – judging by his deeds and character – Jupiter was a man and ruled as king on earth, it only remains now to investigate his death as well. In Ennius' *Holy History*, once he has described all the deeds carried out by Jupiter during his life time, he has this to say at the end: 'Then, after Jupiter had travelled around the earth five times, divided his rule between his friends and relations, bequeathed laws and customs to men, provided corn and done many other good deeds, he was endowed with immortal glory and renown and left his friends eternal memorials of his reign. In extreme old age, he departed this life in Crete and went away to join the gods; and his sons, the Curetes, tended and adorned his body. His tomb is in Crete in the town of Cnossus, a place said to have been founded by Vesta; and on his tomb there is an inscription in archaic Greek letters, reading ZAN KRONOU – that is, in Latin, "Jupiter son of Saturn".'

2.9 Rome and 'barbarian' deities

The expansion of the Roman empire beyond the Graeco-Roman heartland of the Mediterranean brought the Romans into contact with a yet wider range of 'native' deities. This contact between Roman and native religions often resulted in the merging of the different traditions and their various gods and goddesses. This process (now sometimes referred to as 'syncretism') was not new. The early contacts between Rome and the Greek world had, after all, resulted in that range of equivalences between Roman and Greek deities that we now take for granted (Zeus and Jupiter; Aphrodite and Venus; Hermes and Mercury etc.). But wider expansion of the empire led to a process of syncretism on a much wider scale.

See further: Vol. 1, 339–48; Février (1976); R. L. Gordon (1990c)*.

2.9a *Caesar's view of Gallic gods*

To many Romans it no doubt seemed self-evident that 'native' gods fulfilled the same functions as their own; and it was in these terms that they made sense of the often very different, 'foreign' religious traditions of their newly conquered territories. In this passage describing native Gallic religion, Caesar writes of the gods of the Gauls as if they were just the same as Roman gods.

For an alternative Roman view of the independence and difference of native deities, see Tacitus, *Germania* 43.3.

See further: Vol. 1, 117; Clavel-Lévêque (1972); P.-M. Duval (1976); Carré (1981); Wightman (1986)*; for the character of Caesar's account of Gaul in general, Drinkwater (1983) 10–11*.

Caesar, *Gallic War* VI.17

Among the gods, they worship Mercury[1] in particular. There are numerous images of him; they claim that he is the inventor of all crafts, the guide for all roads and journeys; they consider that he has especial power over money-making and trade. After him, they worship Apollo[2] and Mars[3] and Jupiter[4] and Minerva.[5] On these deities they have roughly the same views as the other nations – that Apollo dispels sickness, that Minerva bestows the principles of arts and crafts, that Jupiter holds sway in heaven, that Mars controls wars. It is to Mars that, after deciding to enter battle, they normally vow whatever spoils they may take in the conflict.

1. The Gallic god Teutates.
2. The Gallic god Belen.
3. The Gallic god Esus.
4. The Gallic god Taranis.
5. The Gallic 'equivalent' is uncertain.

2.9b *Dedications to Mars Alator and Nudens Mars from Roman Britain*

Syncretism was not an innocent process. Its effect was, at least in the long term, to erode the identity of the native deity – to *sub*merge rather than merge. These two dedications to Mars in combination with a British god display very different degrees of 'Romanness' in their layout, iconography and artistic style. But both are written in Latin and both suggest (with their reference to the standard Roman practice of fulfilling a vow) that the native deity is being subsumed within Roman traditions.

See further: Henig (1984) 50–5*.

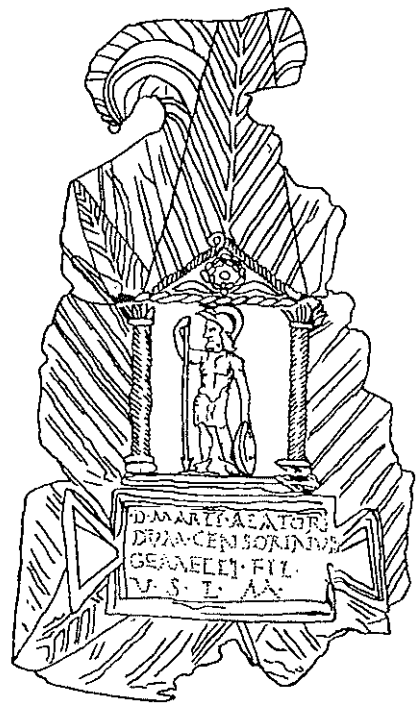
(i)

Pectillus[1] gave to the god Nudens Mars[2] the votive offering which he had promised.

RIB 307

Bronze plaque (original height 0.11m., width 0.6m.) from Lydney Park, Gloucestershire.

(ii)



To the god Mars Alator Dum[3] Censorinus, son of Gemellus[4] willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.[5]

RIB 218

Silver plaque (height 0.19m., width 0.10m.) from Barkway, Hertfordshire.

1. Though given a Latinized form, a native name.
2. The Latin text abbreviates 'Mars' to just the letter 'M'.
3. The sense of 'Dum' is unclear. Perhaps it is another title for the deity; or perhaps a shortened form of another name of the dedicator (?Dumerius).
4. Both Censorinus and Gemellus are well attested Latin names.
5. The final phrase is written as a standard Latin abbreviated formula – VSLM, 'votum solvit libens merito'.

2.10 One god: pagans, Jews and Christians

It was always possible within the traditions of Roman paganism to regard one deity as supreme above all others – whether Jupiter, Isis, some abstract concept of 'fate', or whichever. This might amount just to a fairly crude rank ordering of deities (Jupiter was the most 'important' god, the 'father' of gods – see

12.6a), but it could involve much more philosophical ideas of divine power or of a single divine spirit in which all the various gods and goddesses, even all living things, shared. Modern scholars have called these ideas '*heno*theism', from the Greek *heis theos*, 'one god'. Henotheism was in some respects similar to Jewish or Christian '*mono*theism', but there was a crucial difference. Henotheism merely implied particular devotion to one god or divine power, without denying the existence of the others. Both Judaism and Christianity insisted that their god was the only god; no others existed.

See further: Vol. 1, 255–9, 286–91; Nock (1933); Liebeschuetz (1979) 277–91; MacMullen (1984) 17–24; Lane Fox (1986) 34–5*; Versnel (1990).

2.10a '*What is god?*'

These verses, written in Greek, were discovered inscribed high up on the city wall of Oenoanda (in modern Turkey). They date to the third century A.D. and were apparently the words of an oracle (probably the oracle of Apollo at Claros – also in Turkey) responding to the question: 'What is god?'. Despite their similarities with Christian ways of conceptualizing god, these are the words of a pagan deity and pagan priests.

See further: Robert (1971); Hall (1978); Lane Fox (1986) 168–71*.

G. E. Bean, 'Journeys in Northern Lycia', *Denkschrift Oesterr. Akad. der Wiss. Phil-Hist Kl.* 104 (1971), no. 37.

'Self-born, untaught, motherless, unshakeable,
Giving place to no name, many-named, dwelling in fire,
Such is god: we are a portion of god, his messengers.'
This, then, to the questioners about god's nature
The god replied, calling him all-seeing Ether:[1] to him then look
And pray at dawn, looking out to the East.

1. In Greek 'ether' was the pure air of the highest atmosphere, where the gods lived. In several Greek accounts of the origins of the world, ether is also one of the elements out of which the universe was formed.

2.10b *The ass-headed god*

Some pagans ridiculed both Jewish and Christian notions of god, claiming (for example) that the Christians worshipped the sun, an ass' head or the wooden cross as their deity. This graffito (height 0.39m., width 0.35m.) from part of the imperial palace on the Palatine (probably third century A.D.) appears to make fun of a Christian called Alexamenos – showing him worshipping a figure with an ass' head on a cross. For Christians at the imperial court, see 12.7c(i).

See further: Dinkler (1967) 150–3; Clarke (1974) 216–18*.

V. Väänänen, *Graffiti del Palatino* (Helsinki, 1966), I no. 246

1. Text (in Greek) 'Alexamenos worships god'.

2.10c *One god, invisible*

Here Minucius Felix responds to pagan criticisms of the Christian god.

See further: Wilken (1984) 83–93, 102–4, 181–3*; on particular aspects of the arguments offered, Altmann (1968) – man as the image of god; Ferguson (1980) – the 'spiritualization' of sacrifice.

Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 32.1–6

Do you imagine that we are hiding the object of our worship if we have no shrines and altars? What image of god could I make, when, rightly considered, man himself is an image of god? What temple could I build for him, when the whole of this world that is crafted by his handiwork could not contain him? And should I, a person living in rather

more spacious surroundings, imprison the force of his majesty, so great as it is, within a little temple? Surely it is better that he should find a shrine dedicated to him in our minds. Surely it is better that he should find a place consecrated in our hearts. Shall I offer to god sacrifices and victims which he provided for my use, and so throw his generosity back at him? That is a mark of ingratitude, since the offering that is acceptable to god is a good heart, a pure mind and innocent thoughts. So, to cherish innocence is to pray to god; to cherish justice is to make a libation to god; to refrain from deceit is to propitiate god; to save another man ftom danger is to slay the best victim. These are our sacrifices, these our holy rites of the Lord. In our religion justice goes hand in hand with faith.

(4) But, you argue, the god that we worship we neither show nor see. In fact that is the very root of our faith in god – that we are able to perceive him without being able to see him. For in his works and in all the movements of the world, we recognize his ever present virtue: when it thunders, when it lightens, when the flashes strike, when the clear day returns. Nor should you be surprised rhat you cannot see god. For everything is driven, shaken and set in motion by the wind and the breezes, and yet the wind and rhe breezes are invisible to our eyes. We cannot look upon the sun, which gives the capacity of sight to everyone. Our vision is dazzled by its rays, the observer's power of sight is blunted, and if you look at it too long, all eyesight is destroyed. Well? Could you possibly bear to look upon the very creator of the sun, that source of light, when you turn yourself away from his flashes, and hide from his lightning? Do you desire to see god with the eyes of your body, when you can neither observe nor hold your own soul, thanks to which you live and speak?

3 *The calendar*

The official state calendar was a central institution of Roman religion, and it was regulated throughout Roman history by the *pontifices*, one of the major colleges of priests. The sequence of religious festivals defined in the calendar created the basic rhythm of the Roman year. In some respects similar to the modern western calendar (in which the *religious* festivals of Christmas and Easter are also turning-points in the *secular* year), the Roman calendar organized the use of time, including the timing of public and secular business, through religion.

Calendars inscribed on stone or painted on walls were publicly displayed in Rome itself and in other towns. As we shall see in this chapter (and attempt to decode), they presented a vast amount of information in a highly schematic form. For the historian of religion, they not only indicate the dates of major rituals; but they also provide comments on the content and interpretation of those rituals – as well as indications (when compared over time) of the additions and changes to the sequence of festivals.

Besides the official, Roman state calendar, other calendars regulated the business and religious activities of particular local communities, army units or religious associations. These often drew on the official calendar, selecting some of its major festivals but adding notices and other information or rituals particularly relevant to the group concerned. They are important illustrations of local variations in religious practice.

This chapter starts from an explanation of the basic principles of the Roman calendar (**3.1**) and a reconstruction of the overall layout of the earliest surviving calendar from Italy (**3.2**). In **3.3** four versions of the month of April, drawn from different calendars, are compared – showing variations over time and in relation to the function of the calendar; while **3.4** and **3.5** are two calendars with very specific emphases – the calendar of a group of priests of the imperial cult, and of a unit of the Roman army. Finally, two calendars of the second half of the fourth century A.D. offer two contrasting images: **3.6**, the development of a Christian calendar at Rome, focused on the commemoration of martyrs; **3.7** a slightly later calendar from Italy, still focused on (mainly local) traditional celebrations.

See further: Fraschetri (1990) 5–41; Dupont (1992) 188–218*; Rüpke (1995); Beard (1991) on writing and religion; Markus (1990) 85–135 on time and Christian identity.

3.1 The Calendar and religious celebrations

Some Romans believed that their calendar went back to the time of Numa, who was credited with most of their religious institutions (1.2). The following passage from Macrobius is probably derived from a treatise on the calendar by Cornelius Labeo, writing in the second half of the third century A.D. It lays out the complex system of classification built into the Roman calendar, assigning different religious and secular functions to different days of the year.

See further: Mastandrea (1979) 14–73, with Mansfeld (1983).

Macrobius, *Saturnalia* I. 16.2–6

Numa divided the year into months and then divided each month into days, calling each day either 'festival', 'working day' or 'half-festival'.[1] The festivals are days dedicated to the gods; on the working days people may transact private and public business; and the half-festivals are shared between gods and humans. Thus on the festival days there are sacrifices, religious banquets, games and holidays. The working days include 'lawcourt days' <fasti>,[1] 'assembly days' <comitiales>,[1] 'adjournment days', 'appointed days' and 'battle days'. The half-festivals are not divided into subgroups, but each is divided into hours at which legal judgements may or may not be pronounced; for when the victim is being slain no legal business may be carried out, but in the interval between the slaying of the victim and the placing of the offering on the altar such business may be done, although it is again forbidden when the offering is being burned. We must therefore discuss more fully the division of days into festivals and working days.

The celebration of a religious festival consists of the offering of sacrifices to the gods or the marking of the day by a ritual feast or the holding of games in honour of the gods or the observance of holidays. There are four kinds of public holidays: either 'fixed', 'movable', 'extraordinary' or 'market days'. In the fixed holidays all the people share; they are held on days in set and appointed months; they are noted in the calendar, and have fixed observances. The chief examples of fixed holidays are the Agonalia, the Carmentalia and the Lupercalia.[2] Movable holidays are those which are proclaimed annually by the magistrates or priests, to be held on days which may or may not be set days, for example, the Feriae Latinae[3], the Feriae Sementivae, the Paganalia, and the Compitalia.

1. Each of these types of day is marked by different letters on the surviving versions of the calendar: see 3.2 (especially n.5). 'Festivals' are also of course marked.
2. See 5.2.
3. See 1.5 (introduction).

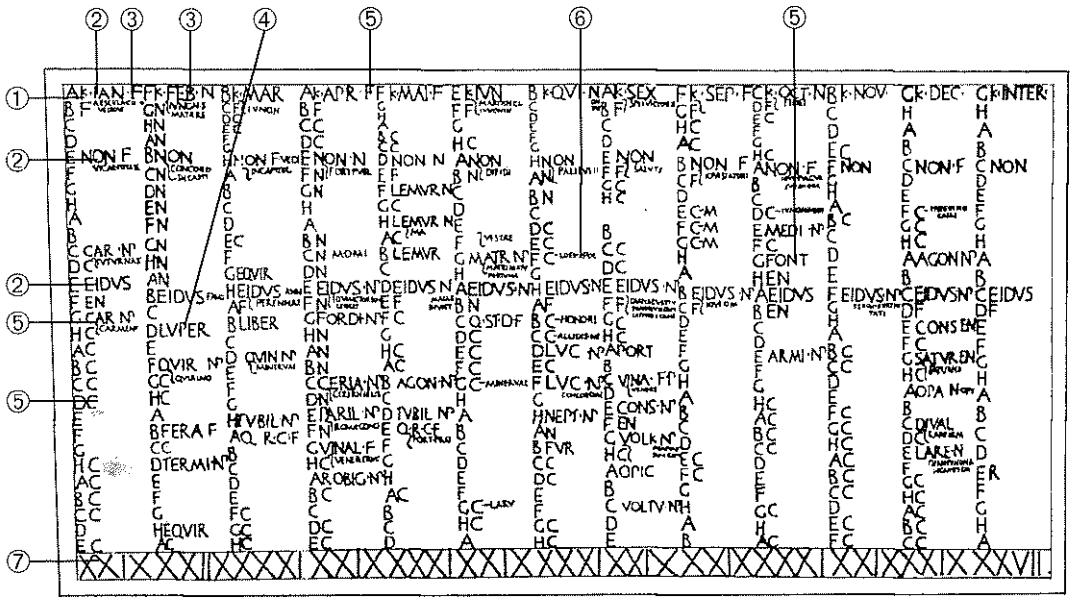
3.2 The republican calendar: Antium (84–55 B.C.)

This is the earliest surviving Roman calendar, painted on plaster, from a Roman *colonia* just south of Rome. Although not from the city of Rome itself,

it appears to copy very closely the official Roman calendar – reflecting (as we illustrate further below: **10.2**) the close religious ties between *coloniae* and the mother city. We print here a partially restored version of the calendar; the original is fragmentary and some gaps still remain. The text shows how the calendar presented in a complex, coded form a considerable amount of information: not just on the names and lengths of the months and the character of the days (as described by Macrobius, **3.1**), but also on particular religious festivals, their timing and location. The size of the original (1.16 by 2.5 m.) suggests that it was inrended to he easily legible.

See further: Vol. 1, 5–8; Vol. 1, Map 5; Michels (1967); Dumézil (1968–73) III.331–7; Scullard (1981) 38–48*; R.L. Gordon (1990a) 184–8.

Degrassi (1963) 1–28



1. In the first column, a sequence of letters (A-H) marking eight-day periods with a market day on the ninth. For the seven-day week see **3.3d**.
2. In the second column, letters indicating the (notional) lunar phases of the month: K (Kalends) on the first (the new moon); NON (Nones) on the fifth or seventh (the first quarter); EIDUS (Ides) on the thirteenth or fifteenth (the full moon). Dates were calculated by counting retrospectively and inclusively from these points: for example, 2 Jan. = 4th day before Nones of January; 26 May = 7th day before Kalends of June.
3. Abbreviated names of the months: IAN., FEB. etc.
4. Public festivals are given, abbreviated, in capital letters, e.g. LVPER (Lupercalia). The scheme of these major celebrations marked in capitals is thought to go back to a much earlier Roman calendar which predated the founding of the Repuhlic.
5. Letters indicate the availability of the day for public husiness: F (*fastus*) signify days on which courts could sit ('lawcourt days', **3.1**); C (*comitialis*) on which public assemblies could meet or courts could sit ('assembly days', **3.1**); N (*nefastus*) on which no assembly could meet or court sit; NP (of uncertain meaning, perhaps *nefastus publicus*) with no courts or assemblies, and usually designating the great public festivals ('festivals', **3.1**);

EN (*endotercisus*) marked a day which was N in the morning but F at other times ('half-festivals', 3.1).

6. Notations in small letters provide extra information concerning holidays, games, or the foundation dates and location of temples. E.g. Loed. Apol. (*ludi Apollini*), 'games to Apollo'. Cf. 5.7 on games.
7. The number of days in each month. The total is only 354 days. The final month (the 'intercalary' month) was to be inserted when necessary to keep the calendar in proper step with the solar year. See 1.2.

3.3 The calendar of Rome: the month of April

There follow extracts from four calendars for the month of April, a month which happens to be well preserved in the extant calendars. These texts range in date from the first century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. and illustrate how the Roman calendar changed, especially in the imperial period – incorporating, for example, celebrations of the emperor and his family side by side with rraditional festivals of rhe state.

We have added the modern days of the month in diamond brackets. For the main abhreviations see 3.2.

See further: Vol. 1, 5–8; Wissowa (1912) 574–5* (for convenient tabulation of these calendars; the whole book is invaluable for Roman festivals); Scullard (1981) 96–115* (for details of all the festivals recorded for the month); Wallace-Hadrill (1987).

3.3a *Calendar from Antium (84–55 B.C.)*

This is a fully restored version of the month of April taken from the Antium calendar (3.2).

ROL IV. 454–9; Degrassi (1963) 8–9

<1> A [K<alends of> AP]R<IL>. F
<2> B F
<3> C C
<4> D C
<5> E NON. N. To Public Fortune[1]
<6> F N
<7> [G] N
<8> [H N]
<9> A [N]
<10> B N
<11> C N. To Great Idaean Mother of the Gods[2]
<12> D N
<13> E EIDUS. NP. To Jupiter Victor to Jupiter Libertas[3]
<14> F N
<15> G FORDI<CIDIA>. NP[4]
<16> H N
<17> A N
<18> B N
<19> C CERIA<LIA>, N[P].[5] To Ceres, Liber, Libera
<20> D N
<21> E PARIL<IA>, N[P].[6] Rome founded
<22> F N

<23> G VINAL<IA>. F. To Venus Erucina[7]
<24> H C
<25> A ROBIG<ALIA>. NP[8]
<26> [B] C
<27> [C C]
<28> D C
<29> E C

29 <days>

1. The anniversary of the dedication of one of the three temples of Fortune on the Quirinal Hill (Ziolkowski (1992) 40–5).
2. The anniversary of the dedication of the temple of Magna Mater on the Palatine in 191 B.C. (Vol. 1, 96–8). For the games (4–10 April) see Wiseman (1974) 159–69; 2.7a; 8.7a.
3. The anniversary of the dedication of the temples of Jupiter Victor vowed in 295 B.C. and Jupiter Libertas vowed in 246 B.C. (Ziolkowski (1992) 91–4, 85–7).
4. The festival of the Fordicidia involved the sacrifice of a pregnant cow (*forda*) to Tellus, the Earth, when the earth was heavy with the new crop; the theme of fertility was repeated in the Cerialia, four days later. The ashes of the calves were used to purify the people at the Parilia (5.1a).
5. The festival involved the sacrifice of a pregnant sow; the release of foxes carrying burning torches in the Circus Maximus; horse races, and a *lectisternium* at the temple. The one day of games in the Circus was preceded in the early Empire by seven days of theatrical performances; note the change of programme in **3.3d** (Ovid, *Fasti* IV.679–712; Bayet (1951); Le Bonniec (1958) 114–23, 312–41). As the calendar also notes (in smaller letters), the temple to Ceres and her two children was dedicated on this day in 493 B.C.
6. A pastoral festival which was associated with the foundation of Rome (Vol. 1, 174–6; 5.1).
7. Although the Vinalia was said by many ancient authors to be a festival of Jupiter (see **3.3b** n.10), Venus also was associated with the day. Two temples to Venus Erucina (Venus as worshipped at Eryx in Sicily) were (probably) dedicated on 23 April, in 215 and 181 B.C. (cf. bibliography in **3.3b** n.10).
8 See **3.3b** n.12.

3.3b *Calendar from Praeneste (A.D. 6–9)*

This calendar was inscribed on marble columns in the forum at Praeneste (modern Palestrina) south-east of Rome (cf. **4.9** for a reconstruction of the site; Vol. 1, Map 5), and it survives in a very fragmentary state (parts of January, March, April and December remain). The comments and interpretations of individual festivals are here much more detailed than in the Antium calendar. They probably derive from the work of Verrius Flaccus, ex-slave of Augustus and tutor to his grandsons, who wrote a scholarly commentary on the Roman calendar, and who may have come from Praeneste; they offer an important illustration of the ways individual festivals were interprered in the early Empire.

Degrassi (1963) 126–33

[April is from] Venus, because she [with Anchises was the mother of Aeneas], the king [of the Latins], from whom the Roman people sprang. Others derive the word from 'aperilis', because in this month crops, flowers and animals, and the earth and seas open up <aperiuntur>.[1]

<1> C Kalends of April, F. Women in great numbers worship Fortuna Virilis, lower status women even in the baths, because there men bare exactly that part of their body by which the favour of women is sought.[2]

<2> [D II] II F

<3> [E I] II C

<4> [F] Day before, C. Games to Great Idaean Mother of the Gods. They are called the Megalensia because the goddess is called 'Megale' <Greek for Great>. Reciprocation of dinners among the nobility habitually occurs in great numbers, because the Great Mother was summoned in accordance with the Sibylline Books and changed her place from Phrygia to Rome.[3]

<5> G Nones, N. Games to Fortuna Publica on the Hill nearer Rome.[4]

<6> H VIII NP. Games. Holiday because on this day Gaius Caesar son of Gaius [conquered] king [Juba] in Africa.[5]

<10> D [IIII], N. For two days the principal sacrifice is made to Fortuna Primigenia. On each day her oracle is open; the *duoviri* sacrifice a calf.[6] Games in the Circus. To the Great Idaean Mother of the Gods on the Palatine, because on that day a temple was dedicated to her.

<11> E [III], N.

<12> F Day before, [N. Games to Ceres].

<13> G Ides, [NP. Games].

<14> H XIIX, N. [Games].

<15> A XVII, For[dicidia, NP. Games . . .] Oscan and Sabine [word . . .]. Aulus Hirtius, Gaius Caesar's [colleague in power, won at Mutina, whence to] our day [one supplicates Victoria Augusta].[7]

<16> B XVI, N. Games[. . .]

<17> C XV, N. Games.

<18> D XIIII, N. Games.

<19> E XIII. Cerealia NP. Games in the Circus.[8]

<20> F XII, N.

<21) G XI. Pa[rilia NP . . .] They leap over fires [. . .] At the beginning of the year [shepherds . . .] is restored.[9]

<22> H X, N.

<23> A IX Vinalia, F. To Jupiter [. . .] gave [. . . An offering of all the new wine to Jupiter] was dedicated. [When the Latins were hard pressed] by the Rutilians in war, because Mezentius king of the Etruscans demanded as terms, if he came to their assistance, an offering of wine every year.[10] Julia Augusta and Tiberius Augustus dedicated a statue to their father *divus* Augustus at the theatre of Marcellus.[11]

<24> B VIII, C. Tiberius Caesar put on the *toga virilis* when the consuls were Imperator Caesar for the seventh time and Marcus Agrippa for the third <27 B.C.>.[11]

<25> C VII Robigalia, NP. Festival of Robigo on the via Claudia at the fifth milestone, to

prevent rust <*robigo*> from damaging the crops.[12] A sacrifice and games are held for both older and younger runners. It is a celebration for pimps because the previous day is for prostitutes.

<26> D VI, F. *Divus* Caesar added this day to the calendar.

<27> E V, C.

<28> F IIII, NP. Games to Flora. Festival by decree of the senate because on this day [an image] and [altar] of Vesta was dedicated in the house of Imperator Caesar Augustus, *pontifex maximus*, when Quirinius and Valgius were consuls. On the same day a temple of Flora, who presides over the growth of things, was dedicated because of a failure of the crops.[13]

<29> G III, C. Games.

<30> H Day before, C. Games.

30 <days>

1. The entry for April starts with a discussion of the etymology of the month's name.
2. This entry records women offering to Fortuna Virilis (the Fortune of Men) on 1 April. Other sources, however, suggest two rituals took place on that occasion: women of the elite worshipping Venus Verticordia (Venus 'who turned the hearts of women to chastity') and women of low status bathing in men's baths, wearing myrtle wreathes, perhaps in honour of Fortuna Virilis. Some scholars have suggested that this inscription (if only by a simple error of the stone cutter) has somehow conflated these two ceremonies (See Champeaux (1982–7) I.375–95).
3. See **3.3a** n.2.
4. See **3.3a** n.1.
5. A festival in celebration of Caesar's victory at Thapsus in 46 B.C.; note that the calendar here suppresses the fact that this was (in part) a victory in civil war, over the Pompeian party, by mentioning only the foreign enemy, Juba.
6. 'Primordial' Fortune was the principal cult of Praeneste, and famous for its oracle. There was a temple in Rome to the goddess from 194 B.C., near that of Fortuna Publica, but the title of the magistrates (*duoviri*) and the mention of the oracle (not found in Rome) show that this entry relates to Praeneste (Vol. 1, 89; Champeaux (1982–7) I.24–38).
7. See **3.3a** n.4. Mutina was the first victory of Octavian against Antony in 43 B.C.
8. See **3.3a** n.5.
9. See **3.3a** n.6.
10. At the Vinalia new wine (*vinum*) was offered to Jupiter. The myth that partly survives in this entry was intended to explain the ritual (see also Ovid, *Fasti* IV.863–900). It depicted conflict between Aeneas, son of Venus, and Mezentius, leader of the Etruscans, who agreed to help Aeneas' enemies the Rutulians (under Turnus) in return for wine; Aeneas instead vowed the wine to Jupiter. It is a myth of sovereignty, rather than the opening of the new wine; there was a second Vinalia, on 19 August, which was associated with the growing vines and the announcement of the date of the grape harvest. For associations with Venus see **3.3a** n.7 (Schilling (1982) 91–115, 248–62; Dumézil (1970) 183–6; (1975) 87–97, 105–7).
11. The entry was added early in the reign of Tiberius.
12. A dog and a sheep were sacrificed to Robigo. The fifth milestone may once have marked the boundary of Roman territory (Ovid, *Fasti* IV.905–42). Cf. Vol. 1, 45–7, and **2.2b** for the deity Robigo.
13. Originally the festival of the bringing of the first ears of grain to the goddess Flora was of movable date (*feriae conceptivae* – see **3.1**). In 238 B.C. a temple was built by the

Circus Maximus and the festival became fixed on this day. By the first century B.C. the games lasted six days, until 3 May (Ovid, *Fasti* v.183–378; Le Bonniec (1958) 197–202; Ziolkowski (1992) 31–3). The Augustan festival of Vesta was established on the same day in 12 B.C. (See Vol. 1, 189–91).

3.3c *Almanac from Rome (first century A.D.)*

This 'almanac' was inscribed on four sides of a large stone, with zodiacal signs (Aries for April) at the head of each month. It is quite different from the official state calendars. Although it notes a few festivals (here, for example, the Parilia), it does not include an entry for each day – recording instead information on the structure of the month and its days.

See further: Broughton (1936); translation of whole text in Sherk (1988) 253–6.

ILS 8745; Degrassi (1963) 288

Month of April.
Thirty days.
Nones on the fifth.
Day of 13½ hours;
Night of 10½ hours.
Sun in Aries.
Prorector: Venus.
Sheep are purified.[1]
Sacrifice to Pharia,
also the Sarapia.[2]

1. The Parilia, 21 April (3.3a n.6; 5.1).
2. Isis Pharia, named after the Pharos or Lighthouse of Alexandria. On the Serapeia (Sarapia) see 3.3d n.7. Probably, neither of these festivals were part of the 'official' calendar at this date (Vol. 1, 250–1).

3.3d *The Calendar of Filocalus (A.D. 354)*

This calendar, which forms part of a book presented to a senator in A.D. 354, records the public religious festivals of Rome; 3.6 is a Christian calendar in the same book. There are some significant changes from the earlier examples. The days for public business are no longer recorded (apart from two senatorial meetings). On the other hand, two extra columns of letters have been added: the first running from A to K marking the lunar cycle; the second, a seven-day sequence from A to G. This 'week' emerged from rural Italian contexts onto official calendars in the first century A.D. Also recorded is some astronomical information (Egyptian days; the Sun moving into the Bull); as well as festivals dating back to the republican and earlier imperial periods. This suggests (though it does not of course prove) that these traditional festivals were still being celebrated in fourth-century Rome.

See further: Vol. 1, 378–80, 382–3; Stern (1953); Salzman (1990)*; note also Salzman (1990) 242–5 on the Calendar of Polemius Silvius (A.D. 448–9).

Degrassi (1963) 245

Month of April

30 days

<1>		G	C	Kalends of April	Veneralia.[1] Games. Stated meeting of senate.
<2>		A	D	IIII Nones	
<3>	B	B	E	III	Birthday of god Quirinus.[2] Circus shows with 24 races. Egyptian day.[3]
<4>		C	F	Day before	Megalesian games.[4]
<5>		D	G	Nones	Games.
<6>	C	E	H	VIII Ides	Games.
<7>		F	A	VII	
<8>		G	B	VI	Birthday of Castor and Pollux.[2] Circus shows, with 24 races.
<9>	D	A	C	V	Games.
<10>		B	D	IIII	Megalesian games. Circus shows, with 24 races.
<11>		C	E	III	Birthday of *divus* Severus.[5] Circus shows, with 24 races.
<12>	E	D	F	Day before	Games of Ceres. Circus shows, with 24 races.
<13>		E	G	Ides	Games. Stated meeting of senate.
<14>	F	F	H	XVIII May Kal.	Games.
<15>		G	A	XVII	Games.
<16>		A	B	XVI	Games.
<17>	G	B	C	XV	Games.
<18>		C	D	XIIII	Games. Sun in Taurus.
<19>		D	E	XIII	Games of Ceres. Circus shows, with 24 races.
<20>	H	E	F	XII	
<21>		F	G	XI	Birthday of the city.[6] Circus shows, with 24 races. Egyptian day.[3]
<22>		G	H	X	
<23>	I	A	A	IX	
<24>		B	B	VIII	
<25>		C	C	VII	Serapia.[7]
<26>	K	D	D	VI	Birthday of Marcus Antoninus.[8] Circus shows, with 24 races.
<27>		E	E	V	
<28>		F	F	IIII	
<29>	A	G	G	III	
<30>		A	H	Day before	Games of Flora.

1. Veneralia means a festival of Venus. See **3.3b** n.2 for worship of Venus Verticordia on this day.
2. The birthdays and games were added to the calendar at some point after the early first century A.D.
3. Egyptian day: an astrological term, first attested in the fourth century A.D., of which little more is known.
4. See **3.3a** n.2; **2.7a**. Each month in this calendar is illustrated; the illustration for April (shown here from a sixteenth-century manuscript), which depicts a male dancing in front of an image of (perhaps) Attis, probably evokes the Megalesia (Salzman (1990) 83–91). Figure: *c.* 0.20 m. high.

For another illustration from this calendar, see **5.3b**.

5. Septimius Severus, deified A.D. 211.
6. The Parilia is now referred to simply as the Birthday of the City; see **5.1c**.
7. This festival may have been introduced in A.D. 217 with the building of a temple to Serapis on the Quirinal (Vol. 1, 383), but the festival is already found in the first-century A.D. almanacs (**3.3c**).
8. Marcus Aurelius, born A.D. 121.

3.4 A calendar from Cumae (A.D. 4–14)

This fragmentary calendar, inscribed on stone, from the South Italian city of Cumae, is very different in type from those given in 3.2 and 3.3. It records neither the days for public business nor the traditional festivals of Rome. Instead it has selected from the Roman calendar events in the career of the Emperor Augustus (here called 'Caesar') from his birthday in 63 B.C. and his assumption of the *toga virilis* in 48 B.C. down perhaps to the dedication of the temple of Mars Ulror in 2 B.C. (see 4.2); birthdays of members of Augustus' family are also recorded. The calendar may well not have been an official document of the town of Cumae, but specifically connected with the imperial cult – perhaps the calendar of the local *Augustales* (8.6).

See further: Fishwick (1987–) II. 1, 490, 509–10, 517.

ILS 108; Degrassi (1963) 279

<19 Aug.>	[XIIII Kal. Sept.][1]	[On this day Caesar] entered his first consulship. [*Supplicatio* . . .]
<4–22 Sept.>	[. . .]	[. . . On this day] Lepidus' army went over to Caesar. *Supplicatio* [. . .]
<23 Sept.>	[VIIII Kal. Oct.]	Birthday of Caesar. *Immolatio* of animal to Caesar,[2] *supplicatio* to Vesta.
<7 Oct.>	Nones of Oct.	Birthday of Drusus Caesar. *Supplicatio* to Vesta.
<18 Oct.>	XV Kal. Nov.	On this day Caesar put on the *toga virilis. Supplicatio* to Spes <Hope> and Iuventas <Youth>.
<16 Nov.>	XVI Kal. Dec.	Birthday of Tiberius Caesar. *Supplicatio* to Vesta.
<15 Dec.>	XVIII Kal. Jan.	On this day was dedicated the altar of Fortuna Redux who brought back <*reduxit*> Caesar from overseas provinces. *Supplicatio* to Fortuna Redux.
<7 Jan.>	VII Ides Jan.	[On this day Caesar] first took up the *fasces* *Supplicatio* to Jupiter Sempiternus <the Everlasting>.
<16 Jan.>	[X]VII Kal. Feb.	On this day Caesar was named Augustus. *Supplicatio* to Augustus.[2]
<30 Jan.>	[III Kal. Feb.]	[On this day the altar of Peace was dedicated.] *Supplicatio* to the *imperium* of Caesar Augustus guardian [of the Roman empire . . .]
<6 Mar.>	[Day before Nones Mar.]	[On this day Caesar] was appointed *[pontifex] maximus. Supplicatio* to Vesta, to the Penates the public gods of the Roman people, the *Quirites.*
<15 Apr.>	[XVII Kal. May]	[On this day Caesar won his first victory.] *Supplicatio* to Victoria Augusta.
<16 Apr.>	[XVI Kal. May]	[On this day Caesar was first] saluted [Imperator.][3] *Supplicatio* to Felicitas of the empire.

<12 May>	[IIII Ides May]	[On this day the temple of Mars was dedicated??] *Supplicatio* to Mars' Moles <i.e. the Might of Mars>.
<24 May>	[VIIII Kal. June]	[Birthday of Germanicus Caesar.] *Supplicatio* to Vesta.
<[. . .]>	[. . .]	[. . . *Supplicatio* to ???], Mars Ultor, Venus [Genetrix <Ancestress>].[4]
<[. . .]>	[. . .]	[. . .] *Supplicatio* to Jupiter.
<[. . .]>	[. . .]	[. . .]

1. The starting-point of this calendar is uncertain: evidently not 1 January, but some time in July or August.
2. Sacrifice directly 'to' the living emperor, rather than 'on his behalf' or 'for his well being', would have implied his divinity and would thus have been unacceptable in the official religious practices of the city of Rome: Vol. 1, 208–10.
3. It was an ancient Roman practice for troops to acclaim a victorious general as 'Imperator'. In addition, the word became established as part of imperial nomenclature.
4. The date does not correspond to the dates for sacrifices to Mars Ultor or Venus Genetrix at Rome, but could be the birthday of Julius Caesar (12 July). See Vol. 1, 199–200.

3.5 A military calendar from Dura Europus (A.D. 223–227)

This papyrus calendar of an auxiliary cohort of the Roman army, stationed on the eastern frontier, consists mainly of records of imperial anniversaries, from Julius Caesar to the reigning emperor Severus Alexander. Many of these are the same anniversaries as are recorded on official Roman calendars (3.3) or are celebrated in the written records of the Arval Brothers at Rome (4.5; 6.2) – suggesting that this calendar was dependent on a central Roman source. We give the dates of the imperial birthdays and accessions in diamond brackers, though the birthdays normally entered the calendar only once the person acceded to the throne.

See further: Vol. 1, 324–8; Fink, Hoey and Snyder (1940) give a detailed commentary.

Fink, Hoey and Snyder (1940); *Dura Final Report* V no.54; R. O. Fink, *Roman Military Records on Papyrus* (American Philological Association, 1971) no.117.

<1 Jan.>	Kal. Jan.	[. . .]
<3 Jan.>	III Nones Jan.	Since vows are fulfilled and undertaken both for the welfare of our Lord Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander Augustus and for the eternity of the empire of the Roman people, [to Jupiter Optimus Maximus an ox, to Juno Regina a cow, to Minerva a cow, to Jupiter Victor] an ox, [to Juno Sospes? a cow, . . . to Mars Pater a bull, to Mars Victor] a bull, to Victoria a cow [. . .]
<7 Jan.>	VII Ides Jan.	[Because honourable discharge with the enjoyment of

		<customary>] privileges [is given to men who have served their time] or <because> salary is paid [to the soldiers, to Jupiter Optimus Maximus an ox, to Juno a cow, to Minerva] a cow, to Salus a cow, to Mars Pater a bull [. . .]
<8 Jan.>	VI Ides Jan.	For the birthday of the *diva* [. . .], to the *diva* [. . .] a *supplicatio.*
<? Jan.>	? Ides Jan.	For the birthday of Lucius [. . .] Caesar <*c.* A.D. 190>, [. . .] of Lucius [. . .] Caesar.
<24 Jan.>	VIII Kal. Feb.	For the birthday [of *divus* Hadrian <A.D. 76>, to *divus* Hadrian an ox.]
<28 Jan.>	V Kal. Feb.	For the [. . . and] very great Parthian victory of *divus* Severus <A.D. 198> and for [the accession of *divus* Trajan <A.D. 98>, to Victoria] Parthica a cow, to *divus* Trajan [an ox.]
<4 Feb.>	Day before Nones Feb.	For the accession [of *divus* Antoninus Magnus <sc. Caracalla>] <A.D. 198> a *supplicatio,* to *divus* Antoninus Magnus an ox.
<1 Mar.>	Kal. Mar.	For the [birthday] ceremonies [of Mars Pater Victor, to Mars] Pater Victor a bull.
<7 Mar.>	Day before Nones Mar.	For the accession [of *divus* Marcus Antoninus and *divus* Lucius Verus] <A.D. 161>, to *divus* Marcus an ox, [to *divus* Lucius] an ox.
<13 Mar.>	III Ides Mar.	[Because] the Emperor [Caesar Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander] was saluted *imperator* <A.D. 222>,[1] to Jupiter an ox, [to Juno a cow, to Minerva a cow . . .] to Mars an ox; because Alexander our Augustus was saluted *imperator*[1] [for the first time] by the soldiers [of the Emperor Augustus Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander <A.D. 222>, a *supplicatio* . . .]
<14 Mar.>	Day before Ides Mar.	Because Alexander our [Augustus] was named [Augustus and Father of the Country and] *pontifex maximus* <A.D. 222>, a *supplicatio,* [to the Genius of our Lord] Alexander [Augustus a bull . . .]
<19 Mar.>	XIIII Kal. Apr.	For the day of the Quinquatria,[2] a *supplicatio*; until 10 days before the Kalends of April. <23 March>, *supplicationes.*
<4 Apr.>	Day before Nones Apr.	For the birthday of *divus* Antoninus Magnus <A.D. 188>, to *divus* Antoninus an ox.
<9 Apr.>	V Ides Apr.	For the accession of *divus* Pius Severus <A.D. 193>, to *divus* Pius Severus an ox.

<11 Apr.>	III Ides Apr.	For the birthday of *divus* Pius Severus <*c.* A.D. 145>, to *divus* [Pius] Severus an ox.
<21 Apr.>	XI Kal. May	For the birthday of the Eternal City Rome, [to the Eternal City Rome a cow.][3]
<26 Apr.>	VI Kal. May	For the birthday of *divus* Marcus Antoninus <A.D. 121>, to [*divus* Marcus] Antoninus [an ox.]
<7 May>	Nones May	For the birthday of *diva* Julia Maesa <*c.* A.D. 180?>, to [*diva*] Maesa [a *supplicatio.*]
<? May>	VI. Ides May	For the Rose festival of the standards, a *supplicatio.*[4]
<12 May>	IIII Ides May	For the circus games in honour of Mars, to Mars Pater Ultor a bull.
<21 May>	XII Kal. June	Because *divus* Severus was saluted *imperator*[4] by [. . .] <A.D. 193>, to *divus* Pius Severus [. . .].
<24 May>	VIIII Kal. June	For the birthday of Germanicus Caesar <15 B.C.>, a *supplicatio* to the memory of Germanicus Caesar.
<31 May>	Day before Kal. June	For the Rose festival of the standards, a *supplicatio.*[4]
<[9] Jun.>	[V] Ides June	For the Vestalia, to Vesta Mater a *supplicatio.*
<[26] Jun.>	[VI Kal.] July	Because our Lord Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander was named Caesar and clothed in the *toga virilis* <A.D. 221>, to the *genius* of Alexander Augustus a bull.
<[1] Jul.>	[Kal.] July	Because Alexander our Augustus was designated consul for the first time <A.D. 221>, a *supplicatio.*
<? Jul.>	? Nones July	For the birthday of *diva* Matidia <*c.* A.D. 68>, to *diva* Matidia a *supplicatio.*
<[10] Jul.>	[VI Ides] July	For the accession of *divus* Antoninus Pius <A.D. 138>, to *divus* Antoninus an ox.
<[12] Jul.>	[IIII Ides] July	For the birthday of *divus* Julius <100 B.C.>,[5] to *divus* Julius an ox.
<[23] Jul.>	[X Kal.] Aug.	For the day of the Neptunalia, a *supplicatio* <and> an *immolatio.*
<[1 Aug.]>	[Kal. Aug.	For] the birthday of *divus* Claudius <10 B.C.> and *divus* Pertinax <A.D. 126>, to *divus* Claudius an ox; [to *divus* Pertinax] an ox.
<[5 Aug.]>	[Nones Aug.]	For [the circus games] in honour of Salus, to Salus [a cow.]
<[? Aug.]>	[? Kal. Sept.	For] the birthday of Mamaea [Augusta] mother of our Augustus <*c.* A.D. 200?>, to the *Juno* of Mamaea Augusta [a cow.]
<[. . .]>	[. . .]	[. . .]

<? Aug.>	[? Kal.] Sept.	For the birthday of *diva* Marciana <*c.* A.D. 48>, [to *diva*] Marciana [a *supplicatio.*]
<[31] Aug.>	[Day before] Kal. Sept.	[For] the birthday [of *divus* Commodus <A.D. 161>, to *divus*] Commodus [an ox.]
<[7?] Sep.>	[VII ?] Ides Sept.	[. . .]
<[. . .]>	[. . .]	[. . .]
<[18] Sep.>	[XIIII Kal.] Oct.	For [the birthday of *divus* Trajan <A.D. 53?> and the accession of *divus* Nerva <A.D. 96>, to *divus* Trajan an ox, to *divus* Nerva an ox.]
<[19 Sep.]>	[XIII Kal. Oct.]	For [the birthday of *divus*] Antoninus [Pius <A.D. 86>, to *divus* Antoninus an ox.]
<? Sep.>	[? Kal.] Oct.	For the birthday of *diva* Faustina <*c.* A.D. 100 or 125>, to *diva* Faustina a *supplicatio.*
<[23] Sep.>	[VIIII] Kal. [Oct.]	For the birthday of *divus* [Augustus] <63 B.C.>, to *divus* Augustus [an ox.][6]

1. See 3.4 n.3.
2. An ancient ceremony of the purification of armour (Wissowa (1912) 144; Scullard (1981) 92–4*).
3. The Parilia – see **3.3d** n.6 and **5.1c**.
4. A ceremony in which the military standards were grouped by the altar and decorated with crowns of roses in the presence of the troops. The significance of the festival is uncertain (cf. Hoey (1937); Fink, Hoey and Snyder (1940) 118–20; Vol. 1, 326; 3.7).
5. I.e. Julius Caesar.
6. The calendar here becomes extremely fragmentary and impossible to translate, but it certainly continued to the end of the year.

3.6 The calendar of the martyrs of Rome (A.D. 354)

In the same book that included the traditional Roman calendar of Filocalus (**3.3d**) was also a Christian calendar of the martyrs of Rome. This provides a unique insight into the calendar of the fourth-century church. Although there was also a cycle of ceremonies centred on Easter (whose movable date excluded it from the calendar) celebrations at the places of burial of local martyrs provided a central focus for the identity of the Roman church; only three non-Roman martyrs are mentioned and even these seem also to have had memorials in Rome. The identity of the martyrs ranges from the famous (Peter and Paul; five bishops of Rome) to the obscure (Abdon or Semnes) about whom almost nothing is known. This organized commemoration of martyrs probably goes back only to the second half of the third century A.D.; there are no first- or second-century martyrs in the calendar, with the exception of Peter and Paul, whose cult was reorganized in the third century (**12.7f(iii–iv)**). The celebrations of the martyrs took place in cemeteries, here named after some adjacent road or other landmark, or after the name of the original owner. And it was the

demands of these celebrations that led to the first monumental Christian buildings – that is congregational basilicas at the places of burial (see e.g. **4.15c**).

See further: Vol. 1, 378–80; Map 4 (for the location of the roads and cemeteries); Kirsch (1924); Delehaye (1933) 262–99; Valentini and Zucchetti (1940–53) II.17–28 (commentary); Markus (1990) 125–35*; see also Farmer (1987) on the major martyrs.

L. Duchesne, *Liber pontificalis* (Paris 1995) I.10–12; T. Mommsen, *Chronica minora* (Berlin 1892) I.71–2

<25 Dec.>	VIII Kal. Jan.	Christ was born at Bethlehem in Judaea.
<20 Jan.>	XIII Kal. Feb.	<Anniversary> of Fabianus in cemetery of Callistus, and of Sebastian in Catacumbas cemetery.
<21 Jan.>	XII Kal. Feb.	<Anniversary> of Agnes in cemetery on the Nomentana road.
<22 Feb.>	VIII Kal. March	Anniversary of Peter in relation ro the seat.[1]
<7 Mar.>	Nones of March.	<Anniversary> of Perpetua and Felicitas in Africa.[2]
<19 May>	XIIII Kal. June	<Anniversary> of Parthenius and Calocerus in cemetery of Callistus, when Diocletian was consul for the 9th and Maximian for the 8th time <A.D. 304>.
<29 June>	III Kal. July	<Anniversary> of Peter in Catacumbas cemetery, and of Paul in cemetery on Ostian road, when Tuscus and Bassus were consuls <A.D. 258>.[3]
<10 July>	VI Ides July	<Anniversary> of Felix and Filippus in cemetery of Priscilla; of Martialis, Vitalis and Alexander in cemetery of Jordani; of Silanus in cemetery of Maximus (the Novatians have stolen this Silanus as martyr); of Januarius in cemetery of Praetextatus.[4]
<30 July>	III Kal. Aug.	Abdon and Semnes in cemetery of Pontianus near 'the bear with a cap'.
<6 Aug.>	VIII Ides Aug.	<Anniversary> of Xystus <i.e. Sixtus> in cemetery of Callistus, and of Agapitus and Felicissimus in cemetery of Praetextatus.
<8 Aug.>	VI Ides Aug.	<Anniversary> of Secundus, Carpoforus, Victorinus and Severianus at Albanum. And on Ostian road at the seventh artillery emplacement <anniversary> of Cyriacus, Largus, Crescentianus, Memmia, Juliana and Ixmaraedus <i.e. Smaragdus>.
<10 Aug.>	IIII Ides Aug.	<Anniversary> of Laurentius at cemetery on Tiburtine road.[5]

<13 Aug.>	Ides of Aug.	<Anniversary> of Hypolitus at cemetery on Tiburtine road and of Pontianus in cemetery of Callistus.
<22 Aug.>	XI Kal. Sept.	<Anniversary> of Timoteus on Ostian road.
<28 Aug.>	V Kal. Sept.	<Anniversary> of Hermes in cemetery of Basilla on old Salarian road.
<5 Sep.>	Nones of Sept.	<Anniversary> of Acontius at Portus,[6] and of Nonnus, Herculanus and Taurinus.
<9 Sep.>	V Ides Sept.	<Anniversary> of Gorgonius in cemetery on Lavicana road.[7]
<11 Sep.>	III Ides Sept.	<Anniversary> of Protus and Iacintus in cemetery of Basilla.
<14 Sep.>	XVIII Kal. Oct.	<Anniversary> of Cyprian in Africa. At Rome it is celebrated in the cemetery of Callistus.
<22 Sep.>	X Kal. Oct.	<Anniversary> of Basilla on old Salarian road, when Diocletian was consul for the 9th and Maximian for the 8th time <A.D. 304>.
<14 Oct.>	Day before Ides of Oct.	<Anniversary> of Callistus on Aurelian road at third milestone.
<9 Nov.>	V Ides Nov.	<Anniversary> of Clemens, Sempronianus, Claudius (?) and Nicostratus in cemetery by Cavalry Base.[7]
<29 Nov.>	III Kal. Dec.	<Anniversary> of Saturninus in cemetery of Traso.
<13 Dec.>	Ides of Dec.	<Anniversary> of Ariston at Portus.[6]

1. An enigmatic entry, which may commemorate the day Peter became first bishop of Rome.
2. See **6.8b**, **7.9b**.
3. The text here is generally emended on the basis of later calendars to read: '<Anniversary> of Peter on the Vatican and of Paul on Ostian road, and of both at the Catacombs, when Tuscus and Bassus were consuls <A.D. 258>.' But the emendation is not necessary and the text may accurately reflect the situation in 354 (Pietri (1976) 1.366–80). For these memorials see **4.15c**; **12.7f(iii–iv)**.
4. These seven were later believed to he seven sons of one Felicitas. Novatians, followers of one Novatian consecrated as a rival bishop of Rome in A.D. 251, were deemed 'schismatics'; this is the earliest known case of the theft of relics.
5. See further **13.8**.
6. Portus was a town on the coast, at the mouth of the Tiber near Ostia, about 30km. from Rome.
7. Probably 'At the Two Laurels' (Map 4 no.21).

3.7 Calendar from Campania (A.D. 387)

This, the last extant inscribed calendar just preceded the emperor Theodosius' removal of official status from non-Christian festivals. But already there was no sacrifice to a god, nor use of a temple specified in the calendar. The details are, however, unclear. Romanus was probably the priest of the province of

Campania in southern Italy, but the role of Felix is obscure (he seems to be a junior official directly responsible to the emperor).

The calendar shows the variety of purely local rituals and the sanctioning of these (maybe minor) festivals by the authority of the emperor himself. The places mentioned are all in the vicinity of Capua, and the inscription may have been put up in the amphitheatre there. We cannot tell over what region the calendar was valid, whether for the whole province or only for the region of Capua.

See further: Vol. 1, 383 n.51; Mommsen, *Gesammelte Schriften* VIII (1913) 14–24; Peterson (1919) 41–4; Cochrane (1940) 330–1*.

ILS 4918; Degrassi (1963) 283

During the administration of Romanus Junior priest
a calendar of the emperors as follows:

<3 Jan.>	III Nones Jan.	*Vota.*
<11 Feb.>	III Ides Feb.	Genialia.[1]
<1 May>	Kal. May	Purification at Casilinum by the river.[2]
<13 May>	III Ides May	Rose festival in the amphithearre.[3]
<25 July>	VIII Kal. Aug.	Purification at the river at the road to the temple of Diana.[4]
<27 July>	VI Kal. Aug.	Procession at road of lake Avernus.[5]
<15 Oct.>	Ides of Oct.	Harvest of Acerusa.[6]

By order of the emperors Felix fulfilled his vow painstakingly 10 days before the Kalends of December when the consuls were Valentinian (for the third time) and Eutropius <22 Nov. A.D. 387>.

1. These games, held also in Rome, are first attested in the fourth century A.D. They may have been associated with the *genius* of the Roman People.
2. Lustration of the growing crops. Casilinum (modern Capua) lay on the river Volturnus.
3. For rose festivals see 3.5 n.4 and Salzman (1990) 96–9.
4. Purification marking the end of harvest, at the river Volturnus near the temple of Diana Tifatina.
5. Lake Avernus was supposed to lead to the Underworld. Cf. 4.11 n.3.
6. The festival, at nearby Lake Acherusia (Acerusa), was connected with the vintage.

4 *Religious places*

This chapter examines the physical context of Roman religious activity. It aims to show that temples, altars, sacred precincts and groves were more than just a 'backdrop' to religious ceremony, but were themselves (in their layout, design, decoration) an important part of religious experience, bearers of religious meaning. To put it at its most simple, a different context meant a different religious experience. The chapter starts with the physical context of traditional Roman civic cult (4.1–5), comparing this with the temples of the cult of Mithras (4.6). It then looks at the wider 'religious geography' of the city of Rome (4.7–8), as well as sanctuary sites in Italian towns and countryside (4.9–11). Finally, after the 'private' religious space of the home (4.12) and tomb (4.13), it considers Jewish synagogues (4.14) and Christian churches (4.15).

4.1 The Roman temple-building

In its simplest form a Roman temple-building (*aedes*) was a 'house' for a statue of a deity. It was not primarily a centre for a congregation or a place of worship. Most ritual associated with the temple (particularly animal sacrifice) took place in the open air – often around an altar, which stood outside the building itself. The *aedes* (at least in the case of the smaller temples of the city of Rome) may normally have been closed and inaccessible to the public.

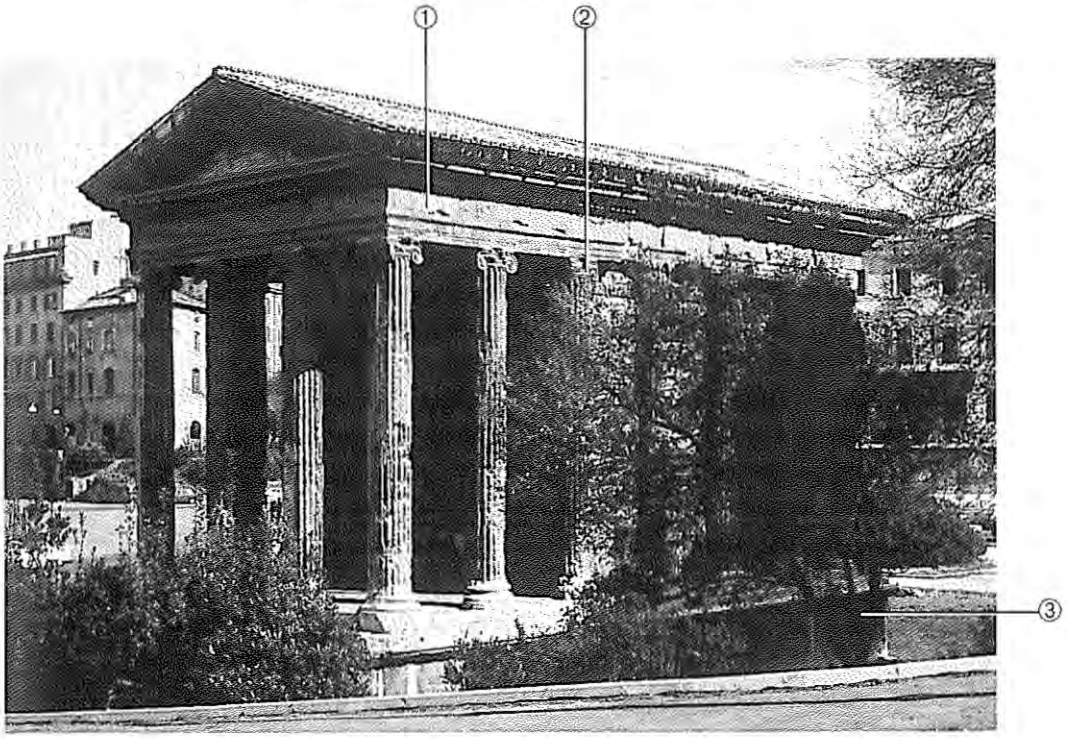
See further: Stambaugh (1978)* and I.M. Barton (1989)*. For the distinction between an *aedes* and a *templum*, see 4.4.

4.1a *The temple of Portunus at Rome*

The small temple of Portunus (a god connected with the harbour) was founded in the fourth or third century B.C. Its present appearance dates to the late second or first century B.C. (with considerable later restorations, including conversion into a church in the ninth century A.D.). In antiquity it would have looked much less austere than this photograph suggests – with a complete coating of white stucco, as well as a decorative frieze in stucco (showing candelabra and festoons).

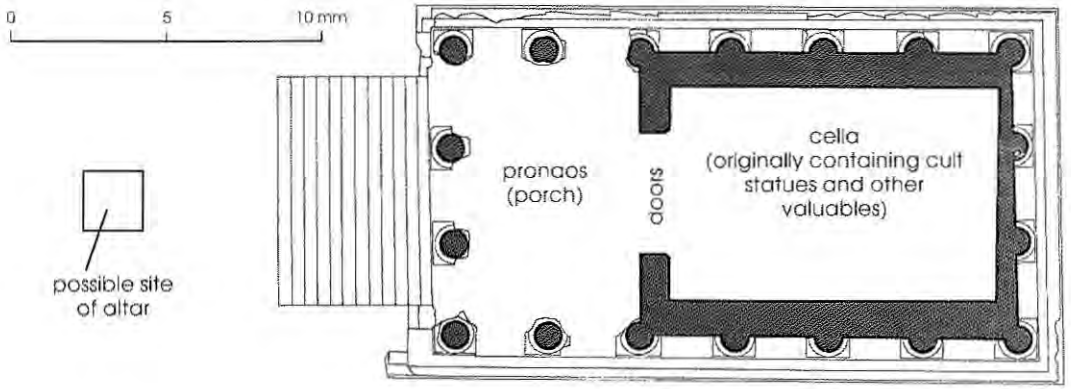
See further: on the temple of Portunus (once wrongly identified as the

temple of Fortuna Virilis), Vol. 1, Map 1 no. 22; Fiechter (1906), Coarelli (1980) 320–2; Colini and Buzzetti (1986); on other forms of Roman temple-buildings, and differences between traditional Italic (Etruscan) temples and their Greek equivalents, Kähler (1970); Boëthius (1978) 35–64, 156–78*; Castagnoli (1984); Stambaugh (1988) 215–18*.



1. Position of original stucco frieze.
2. Surrounding columns at the rear set into the wall of the *cella* (see **4.1b**).
3. High platform (*c.* 3 metres). Steps at the front give access to the temple.

4.1b *The temple of Portunus – ground plan*



4.2 The temple of Mars Ultor (the Avenger) and the Forum of Augustus

From the late Republic on, there was a series of exttavagant building programmes in the city of Rome. Often centred on a temple, they were in part designed to enhance the claims to power of the politician or emperor who founded them: the theatre of Pompey, for example, with its temple of Venus Victrix (Giver of Victory); the Forum of Caesar with its temple of Venus Genetrix (the Ancestress). By far the best documented of these is the Forum of Augustus with its temple of Mars Ultor, which (at least according ro later Roman tradition) was vowed by the future emperor Augustus in 42 B.C. before the battle of Philippi (fought against the assassins of Julius Caesar). It was dedicated in 2 B.C.

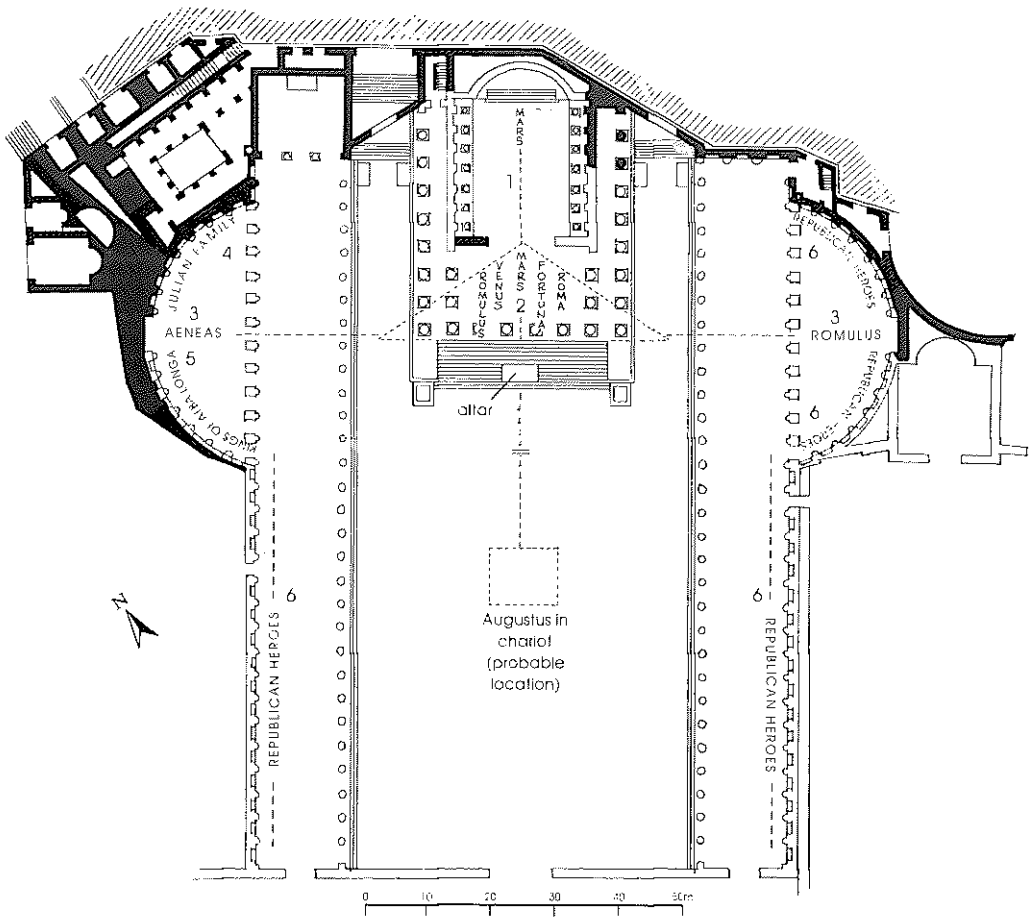
See further: Vol. 1, 122–3, 145, 199–201 (for the developments of Pompey, Caesar and Augustus); Vol. 1, Map 1 no. 9; Zanker (1968); Walker and Burnett (1981) 29–32*; *Kaiser Augustus* (1988) 149–99; Zanker (1988) 194–205, 210–15*; Herbert-Brown (1994) 95–108; for Augustan temple building in general, see Vol. 1, 196–201; Gros (1976).

4.2a *Plan of the Forum of Augustus and its sculptural decoration*

The character of the Forum of Augustus was partly traditional, partly highly innovative. The basic plan of a temple set on a high platform at one end of a paved precinct had traditional Italian roots. But the elaborate colonnades, semi-circular *exedrae* (apsed bays) and many of the decorative details (all faced in white or coloured marble) owed rheir inspitation to rhe Greek world. Most striking of all was the profusion of sculpture throughout the whole scheme.

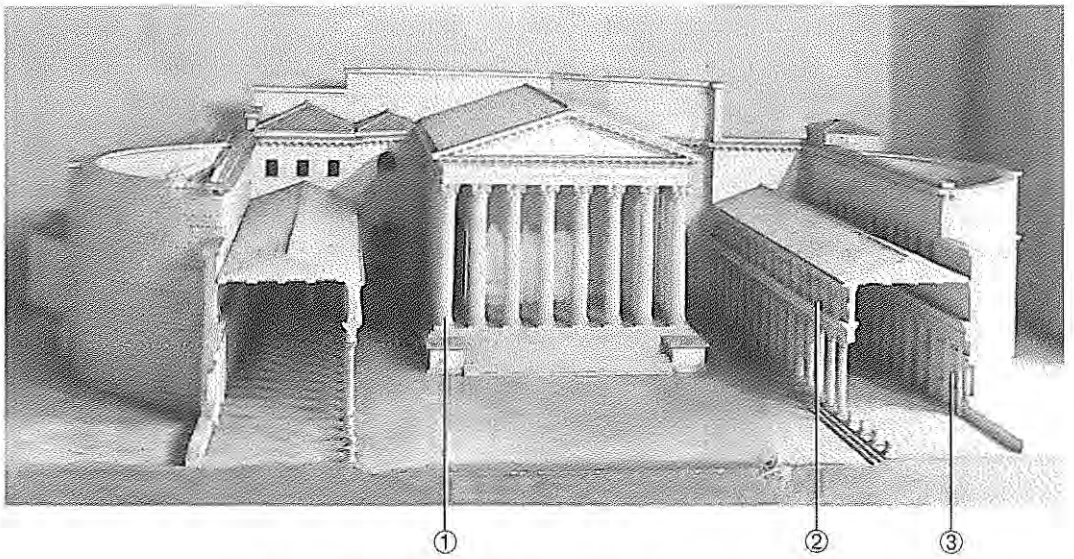
There was only one statue of Augustus himself, in a chariot in the centre of the Forum. But it was he who provided the link between all the other varied sculprute. Statues of Venus, for example, in the temple *cella* and on the pediment, called to mind the claims of the emperor's family to be descended from the goddess. The central cult image of Mars Ultor alluded ro the god's protection of Augustus' family – particularly Mars' role in avenging Caesar's murder; while a statue of Julius Caesar (now *divus* Julius) must also have stood somewhere in the temple, asserting rhe divine status of Augustus' adoptive father.

Most of the sculpture is now lost. For surviving traces, see notes below. For a long poetic account which provides the basis of a reconstruction of the sculptural scheme, see Ovid, *Fasti* v.545–99.



1. The cult statue. It has also been suggested that there were cult statues of Venus and of *divus* Julius that stood on either side of that of Mars Ultor. For this possibility see Vol. 1, 331–3 fig. 7.2a. Also kept in the *cella* of the temple were the Roman standards captured by the Parthians at their victory at the battle of Carrhae (53 B.C.) and recovered by Augustus in 20 B.C. These standards gave another sense to Mars' role as avenger.
2. Sculptural group in temple pediment. In addition two reclining figures filled the corners – usually identified as personifications of the river Tiber (right) and the Palatine Hill (left). Some small-scale versions of the pedimental group survive. Note, especially, a first-century A.D. sculptural relief showing the whole facade of a temple, probably to be identified as Mars Ultor, Vol. 1, fig. 4.5.
3. The *exedrae* 'balance' in direct opposition statues of the two legendary founders of the Roman race: Aeneas, son of Venus and ancestor of Augustus' family; and Romulus, son of Mars.
4. Statues of Augustus' ancestors, the Julii.
5. Statues of the legendary rulers of Alba Longa – the city founded by Aeneas on his arrival in Italy and predating Rome itself.
6. Statues of the most distinguished generals and statesmen of the Republic. Underneath each was an inscribed summary of the man's career (an *elogium*). For the surviving fragments of these inscriptions and statues, see Zanker (1988) 210–15*; Degrassi (1937) 1–36; (1939) (for surviving Latin texts of the inscriptions).

4.2b *Reconstruction of the temple and Forum*



1. Each of these columns was over 16 metres tall.
2. The upper storey is supported by caryatids (female figures) modelled on those from the Erechtheion (shrine of Erechtheus) on the Athenian Acropolis.
3. The statues of the republican heroes stood in niches along the rear wall of the colonnade.

4.2c *The temple and its uses*

Like most Roman temples (see below 4.7), the temple of Mars Ultor was not solely what we would think of as a 'religious' building. Many different kinds of public activities took place in the temple, as well as in the open area in front of it.

See further: Stambaugh (1978) 554–6*.

Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 29

His <Augustus'> reason for building the Forum was that the size of the population of the city and the large number of legal cases seemed actually to demand a third Forum, as the two existing ones[1] did not have sufficient capacity. So it was opened to the public rather hastily, before the temple of Mars Ultor was completed, and it was arranged that trials of the standing jury courts should take place there, separately from other cases,[2] as well as the process of selecting jurors by lot. He had vowed the temple of Mars itself during the campaign of Philippi which he had undertaken to avenge the murder of his father. Therefore he ordained that the senate should meet in this temple when it was discussing wars and triumphs; that those who were leaving for their provinces on military command should be escorted in procession from it; that those who had returned after victory in war should bring the symbols of their triumphs to it.[3]

1. The Roman Forum (see 4.7) and the Forum of Caesar.
2. These standing courts had been established in the early first century B.C. to deal with a range of major offences, including extortion in the provinces, poisoning and treason. Other trials continued to take place in the Roman Forum, particularly in the Basilica Julia (see 4.7).
3. It is unclear whether Suetonius means part of their booty or the 'ornaments' (such as laurel wreaths) that might be granted to a successful general on his return.

4.2d *The emperor Claudius in the Forum of Augustus*

The following anecdote (told as a jibe against Claudius' gluttony) gives a sense of how the different functions of the Forum and temple, sometimes conveniently, juxtaposed.

Suetonius, *Life of Claudius* 33

He <Claudius> had an enormous appetite for food and drink, no matter where he was or whatever the time of day. Once, when he was hearing law cases in the Forum of Augustus, the smell reached him of a meal being prepared for the *Salii*[1] in the temple of Mars nearby. Leaving the tribunal[2] he went up to the priests and reclined at the table with them.

1. See 5.4.
2. The raised platform from which Romans acting as judges heard legal cases.

4.3 Altars and the Augustan Ara Pacis (Altar of Peace) at Rome

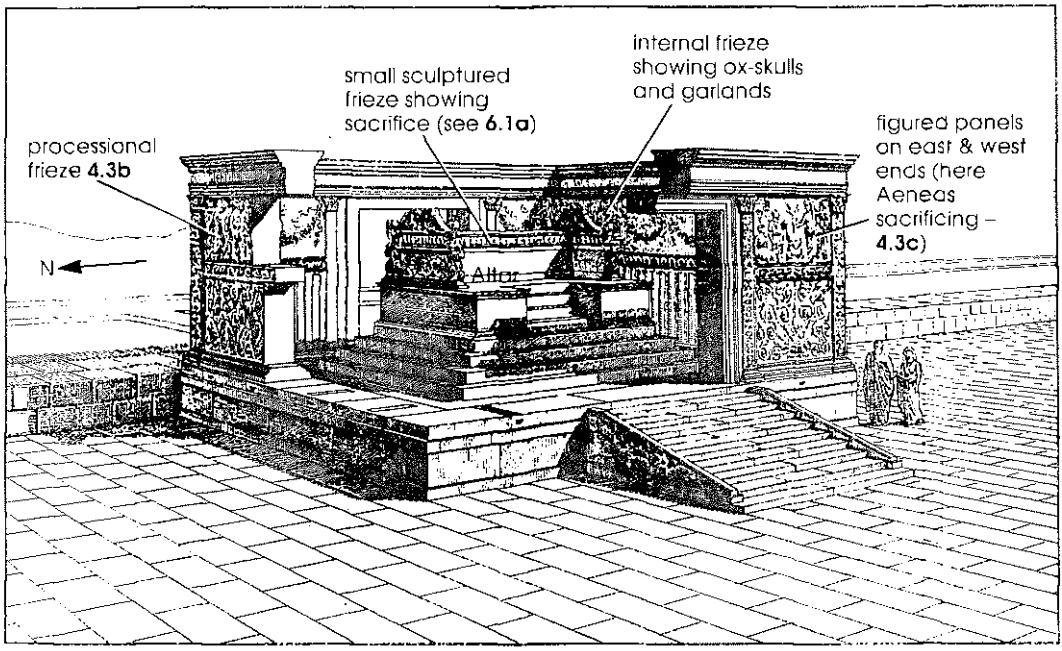
Most religious sites were on a much smaller scale than the grandiose 'show temples' of the city of Rome. A place of sacrifice might simply be an altar, perhaps within its own precinct wall, but entirely in the open air, with no *aedes* at all. Though unusually lavish in its sculptural decoration and strongly influenced by classical Greek forms, the Ara Pacis (vowed 13 B.C., dedicated 9 B.C.) well illustrates one such type of structure.

See further: Vol. 1, 204 fig. 4.6, 331–6; Toynbee (1953)*; Torelli (1982) 27–61 (Ara Pacis) and 63–88 (Ara Pietatis ('of Piety')*; D.E. Strong (1988) 80–3*; Zanker (1988) 120–3, 179–83, 203–4; Elsner (1991); D. E. E. Kleiner (1992) 90–9; Billows (1993); for possible Greek predecessors, Thompson (1952); D. E. E. Kleiner (1978). Another part of the sculpture from the Ara Pacis is illustrated at **6.1a**.

4.3a *Reconstruction of the Ara Pacis*

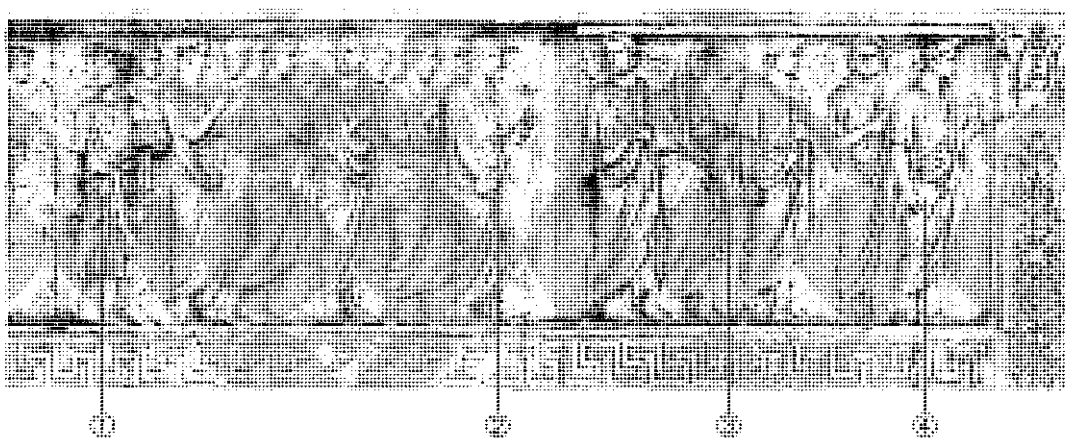
Panels from the altar were found in a series of discoveries between the sixteenth century and the major excavation of its site in the 1930s. It has been reassembled along the lines of reconstruction shown here. (Width 11.68 m.; depth 10.56 m.)

See further: G. Moretti (1948), for details of the excavations of the 1930s (and earlier discoveries).



4.3b *Processional frieze from the Ara Pacis (north side)*

The friezes on the precinct walls evoke the processions that would have taken place in 'real life' around the sides of the precincts, leading up to the altar irself – and perhaps, more specifically, that procession which took place on the day the alrar was first consecrated. On the surviving secrion of the south frieze, several members of the imperial family (including Augustus himself) have been identified. On rhe section of the norrhern frieze illustrared here are members of various priestly colleges (see 8.1–3). (Height 1.55m., width 9.70m.)

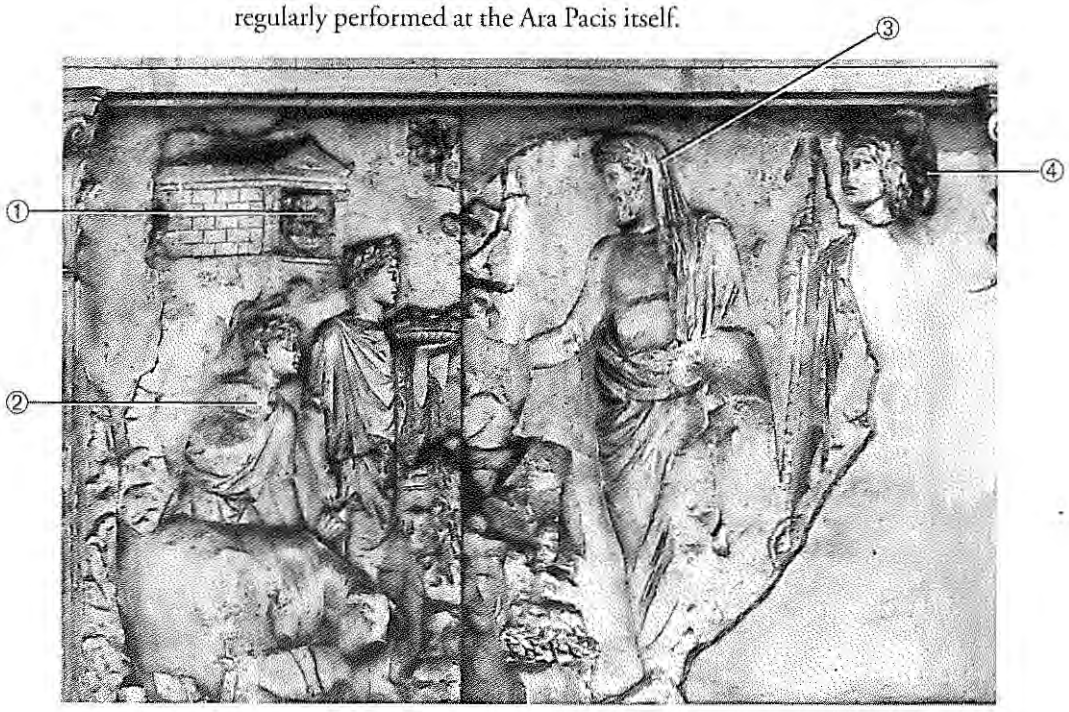


Note: there are major areas of modern restoration in the upper part of the frieze.

1. A priestly attendant (*camillus*) carrying a jug and incense box, decorated with a tripod and flute players. The tripod, the symbol of Apollo, suggests that this figure is an attendant of the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*, whose main priestly duty concerned the prophetic Sibylline Books (see **1.8**, **2.6c**, **7.5a**). Over the attendant's arm is a fringed towel (*mantele*), used by priests at sacrifice.
2. This figure (and several others) carries a sprig of laurel, a plant widely used in religious ritual and also a symbol of victory.
3. Attendant carrying an incense box, decorated with a scene of animal sacrifice.
4. *Lictor*, carrying the *fasces*, the symbol of official power in Rome.

4.3c *Relief of Aeneas on the Ara Pacis*

On the right of the main steps one of the best preserved sculpted panels shows Aeneas sacrificing a sow on his arrival in Italy (see **1.5b(i)**; Virgil, *Aeneid* VIII.81–5) (height 1.55m., original width 2.44m.). This primitive scene (note, for example, the crude stone altar) evokes not only the mythical origins of Rome, but also the origins of the Roman ritual of sacrifice – a ritual no doubt regularly performed at the Ara Pacis itself.



1. The Penates (the household gods brought by Aeneas from Troy) watch over the sacrifice from their *aedes*.
2. Two *camilli* represented in the same way as their contemporary Augustan equivalents (e.g. in **4.3b** above).
3. Aeneas, sacrificing in Roman style – that is, with head covered, in contrast to the Greek practice of sacrificing with bare head. He wears a toga without a tunic, believed by the Romans to be the oldest form of Roman dress.
4. Fragmentary figure, probably Aeneas' son, Ascanius (Iulus).

4.4 The Roman *templum*

The English word 'temple' (meaning 'temple-building') has a different range of meanings from the Latin *templum*, from which it is derived. *Templum* in Latin was used in at least three distinct (though interrelated) senses: (1) to refer to an area of the sky within which signs from the gods were observed; (2) to refer to a piece of 'inaugurated' space on earth – a place from which the auspices (see 7.2) might be taken; and so (3), in a more general sense, to refer to a place that was perceived to be in a special relationship with the gods (overlapping with our own sense of 'temple').

One of the formulae used by the priests (*augures*) in defining a *templum* on earth (2) is recorded by Varro. Already in Varro's day this augural formula must have been obscure to many readers or listeners, and his 'explanation' (mainly concerned with the precise words employed) is almost as difficult to understand as the formula itself.

See further: Catalano (1978) 467–79; Linderski (1986) 2256–96*; Scheid (1993a); and, on the linguistic details of the formula, Norden (1939) 3–106; L. R. Palmer (1954) 64–6*. See also, for a wider use of the term *templum*, 9.**1d**.

Varro, *On the Latin Language* VII.8–10

On the earth[1], *templum* is the word used for a place marked out by particular formulae for the purposes of augury or taking the auspices. The same formulae are not used everywhere. On the *Arx*[2] they run as follows:[3]

> Let the boundaries of my temples <*templa*> and wild lands <*tesca*> be as I shall declare them with my words.
> That tree of whatever kind it is which I deem myself to have named, let it be the boundary of my temple and wild land to the right.
> That tree, of whatever kind it is, insofar as I deem myself to have named it, let it be the boundary of my temple and wild land to the left.
> Between these points <sc. I have established the temples and wild lands> by means of directing <*conregione*>, viewing <*conspicione*>, reflecting <*cortumione*>, as far as I have been most rightly aware of it within this limit.

In creating this *templum* it appears that trees are established as the boundaries, and within those boundaries the areas established where the eyes may take their view, that is where we may gaze <*tueamur*>. The word *templum* is derived from the word 'to gaze' <*tueri*>, and so likewise is the word 'to contemplate' <*contemplare*>, as in the line from Ennius' play *Medea*:

> Contemplate <*contempla*> and see the temple <*templum*> of Ceres on the left –

'Contemplate' <*contempla*> and 'view' <*conspice*> seem to mean the same thing. So it seems to be for this reason that, when he is making a *templum*, the *augur* says 'by viewing'

<*conspicione*>, where he wants to define the view <*conspectus*> of the eyes. When they say 'viewing' <*conspicione*>, they add 'reflecting' <*cortumione*>, a word which comes from the vision of the heart <*cor*>; for *cor* is the root of *cortumio*.[4]

He <the *augur*> adds that *templa* are to be *tesca* <wild lands>,[5] which, according to those who have written dictionaries, means that they are sacrosanct. This is incorrect. For the senate house[6] is a temple and it is not sacrosanct. But the notion that a temple <*templum*> is a consecrated building <*aedes sacra*> seems to have stemmed from the fact that in the city of Rome most consecrated buildings are temples <*templa*> and at the same time sacrosanct and from the fact that some places in the countryside which are the possession of a particular god are called *tesca*.[7]

1. Contrasted to the *templum* of the sky, discussed by Varro in the previous section.
2. An area of the Capitoline hill at Rome, regularly used for observing signs from the gods.
3. The original text of this formula is very uncertain. It has become distorted in its transmission from antiquity (as medieval scribes made frequent mistakes in copying such archaic and obscure sentences); but it may well have been 'distorted' even by the time Varro was writing. Our translation attempts only to give some general idea of the content of the formula.
4. Varro is speculating on the meaning of the words at the end of the formula. He tries to relate the root of the word ***templum*** to words for watching, gazing and viewing; hence his stress on 'con***templ***ate', even though it is not used in the formula.
5. The text of the Latin is uncertain here. We have translated the version usually given in modern editions; but the apparent equation of *templa* with *tesca* hardly seems to make sense.
6. As well as most of the buildings we call 'temples' (together with their precincts) and some altars, the senate house and *rostra* (speaking platform) in the forum were inaugurated *templa*.
7. Varro here draws the distinction between the sense of *templum* as 'inaugurated space' and the different, but overlapping, category of 'sacred buildings'.

4.5 The grove of the Arval Brothers

A religious site might incorporate a wide range of structures besides a temple-building, altar and precinct. The cult centre of the Arval Brothers was in a woodland clearing (*lucus*) a few kilometres outside Rome and included not just an *aedes* with a statue of the goddess Dea Dia, but also a bath building, *tetrastylum* (a building with four columns – here used as a dining-room), a shrine of the imperial cult (*Caesareum*), and a circus building (for races). The surviving record of the rituals shows how the priests, in performing the different elements of their ceremonies, moved between different parts of the site and irs different buildings. This extract records the second day of the festival of Dea Dia, 19 May A.D. 87.

See further: Vol. 1, Map 4; for the nature of the cult and its inscribed record, Beard (1985)*; Scheid (1990); for an account of excavations on the site, Broise and Scheid (1987); (1993); for sacred groves (often associated with temples, even in the city of Rome itself), Coarelli (1987) 16–19, 165–85; Cazanove

and Scheid (1993). Another extract from this priestly record is given below, 6.2.

CIL VI.2065, col. 2, lines 15–40; *ILS* 5037

In the consulship of Caius Bellicus Natalis Tebanianus and Caius Ducenius Proculus <A.D. 87>, 14 days before the Kalends of June <19 May>, in the grove of Dea Dia, in the mastership of Caius Julius Silanus,[1] with Caius Nonius Bassus Salvius Liberalis taking charge, the Arval Brothers performed the sacrifice to Dea Dia. Caius Salvius Liberalis, who was acting in the place of the master, Caius Julius Silanus, in front of the grove sacrificed onto the altar two expiatory pigs in expiation for polluting the grove and the work to be carried out there;[2] then he sacrificed a cow as an offering to Dea Dia. Caius Salvius Liberalis Nonius Bassus, Lucius Maecius Postumus, Aulus Julius Quadratus, Publius Sallustius Blaesus, Quintus Tillius Sassius sat down in the *tetrastylum* and feasted off the sacrifice, and taking up their *togae praetextae* and their wreaths made of ears of corn with woollen bands, they ascended the grove of Dea Dia with attendants clearing the way and through Salvius Liberalis Nonius Bassus, who was acting in place of the master, and through Quintus Tillius Sassius, who was acting in place of the *flamen*,[3] they sacrificed a choice lamb to Dea Dia and, when the sacrifice was complete, they all made a libation with incense and wine. Then, when the wreaths had been brought in and the statues perfumed,[4] they made Quintus Tillius Sassius annual master from the coming Saturnalia to the next, likewise they made Tiberius Julius Celsus Marius Candidus *flamen*; then they went down to the *tetrastylum*, and there reclining in the dining-room they feasted in the presence of the master, Caius Julius Silanus; after the feast wearing a veil and sandals, with a wreath woven with roses, with an attendant clearing the way, he ascended above the starting gates[5] and gave the signal to the four-horse chariots and the leapers, with Lucius Maecius Postumus presiding, he honoured the victors with palms and silver wreaths. On the same day at Rome, in the house of the master Caius Julius Silanus, the same people who were in the grove dined.

1. The head of the priesthood, appointed yearly, was known as the master (*magister*).
2. Expiation was required whenever the sacred grove was disturbed, trees were cleared or cut down or when forbidden materials (for example, iron) were brought in. See 6.2.
3. The *flamen* was an official of the priesthood, ranking lower than the master.
4. At this point they are in the temple-building itself.
5. Sc. of the circus. The day ended with chariot racing.

4.6 The cult centres of Mithras

The physical setting of ancient religions helped to define their character and meaning. In striking contrast to official state religion, the cult of Mithras was associated with small dark, often underground, congregational places of worship – commonly known as 'caves' (*spelea*). In the theology of the cult, the form

of the caves (often decorated with zodiacal signs and symbols of the natural elements) represented an image of the cosmos itself.

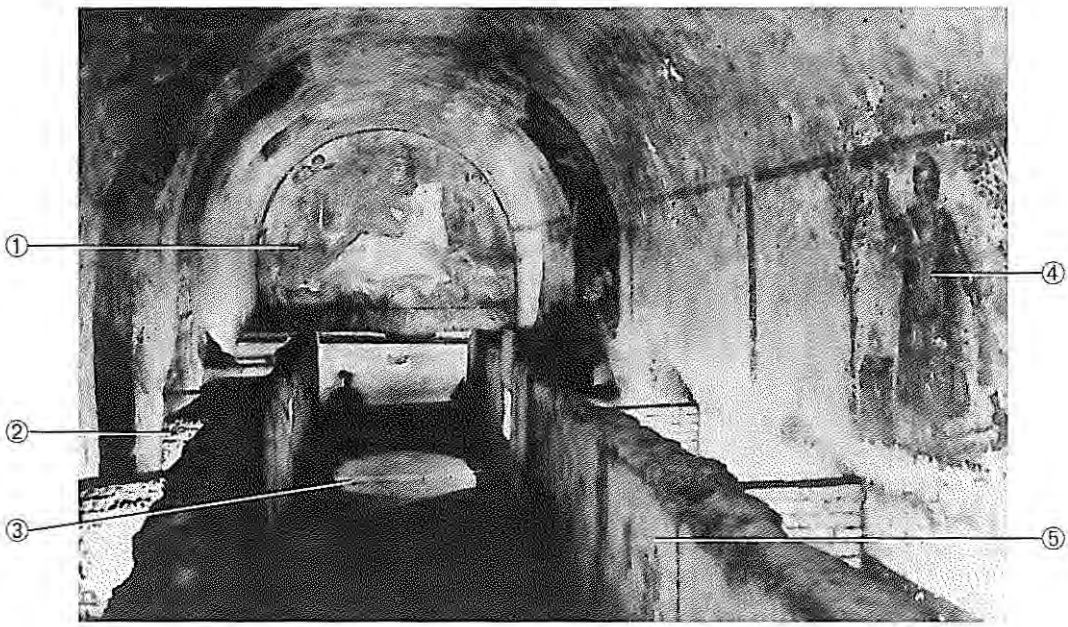
The standard modern term for these cult buildings – 'Mithraeum' – is a recent scholarly invention. The ancients had no such specific term, but used (in a non-technical sense) the terms *templum* and *aedes*, as well as *speleum*.

See further: Vol. 1, 266, 279–80, 282–3, 285–6; Vermaseren (1963) 43–66*; R. L. Gordon (1976); Beck (1984) 2013–48*; Lavagne (1988) 678–95; R. L. Gordon (1989). For photographs of Mithraea in Rome, Nash (1968) 69–85; in Ostia, Becatti (1954). Further documents of the Mithraic cult are given below, **12.5** (note especially the temple plan, **12.5a**).

4.6a *Cave of Mithras at S. Maria Capua Vetere (South Italy)*

This Mithraeum, established in the early second century A.D., was apparently in use until the middle of the fourth century. Situated underground, it was approached through a series of ante-rooms, which entered the 'cave' itself in the south-east corner, just off the photograph to the left. Length, 12.27 m.; width, 3.49 m.

See further: Vermaseren (1971); Beck (1984) 2020–1*.



1. Painting of Mithras killing the bull (see **12.5b**). Directly facing this image, at the other end of the Mithraeum (not shown here), is a painting of the Night, in a chariot. This opposition between, at one end of the temple, the light of Mithras (who is often associated with the Sun) and, at the other, the dark of the night helps to establish a symbolic orientation of the temple (Mithras/east versus Night/west) – which is the reverse of its actual orientation which places the painting of Mithras in the west. See further n. 4.
2. Side benches for worshippers (now lacking the upper surfaces); an indication of the 'congregational' aspect of Mithraism.

3. Water basin and well. For the symbolism of the natural elements in Mithraea, see R. L. Gordon (1976).
4. Painted figure of Cautes and (facing on the opposite wall) Cautopates (see 12.5g – with the illustration 12.5b). These figures commonly, as here, mark out the 'conceptual south' of the Mithraeum (Cautes), and the 'conceptual north' (Cautopates) – whatever the actual orientation of the temple. See Hinnells (1976); Beck (1977).
5. Along the front of the benches were painted scenes of initiation. Here an initiate kneels between two senior members of the cult. The figure on the left is perhaps holding a burning torch against the initiate's face.

4.6b *An attack on the Mithraic cave*

For Christian critics of Mithraism the strange character of the cave was a clear sign of the cult's shamefulness.

Firmicus Maternus, *On the Error of Pagan Religions* 5.2

In their male deity[1] they <the followers of Mithras> worship a cattle thief[2] and relate his cult to the power of fire, as his prophet[3] handed down to us, saying: 'You who are initiated in the theft of the bull, you who take the right hand of the glorious Father.'[4] They call him Mithras. They transmit his rites in hidden caves so that, at all times buried in the foul gloom of the darkness, they may avoid the grace of the shining and serene light. What an appropriate sanctuary of the god!

1. The preceding paragraph discussed a female fire god of Persia – from where the cult of Mithras was believed to derive. See Vol. 1, 277–8.
2. A slighting reference to Mithras as ox-stealer (see 12.5g n.6).
3. Perhaps Zoroaster. See below 4.6c and Vol. 1, 280.
4. A quotation in Greek from a Mithraic text, apparently addressing a cult initiate. The Father is the most senior of the Mithraic grades of initiation – see, for example, 12.5a; 12.5c(ii), (iii), (iv).

4.6c *The allegory of the cave*

The idea of the cave as an image of the cosmos is found in ancient philosophical writing – as, for example, in Porphyry's treatise which offers a complex allegorical interpretation of Homer's description of the cave of the Nymphs (*Odyssey* XIII.102–12). In this passage Porphyry elaborates his interpretation partly on the basis of a mystical reading of the Mithraic cave.

See further: Vol. 1, 277–8; on the importance of Porphyry's work for our understanding of Mithraism, Beck (1984) 2053–4*. For a further extract from this text, bibliography and fuller background to the work, 12.5g.

Porphyry, *On the Cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey* 6

The Persians too initiate candidates, giving a mystical account of the passage of souls down <sc. into the world> and out again and they call the place where this initiation happens a 'cave'. Zoroaster,[1] as Euboulos tells us,[2] was the first to dedicate a natural cave

in the nearby mountains of Persia, a cave surrounded by flowers and furnished with springs,[3] in honour of Mithras, the maker and father of all. The cave was for him an image of the cosmos which Mithras created, its interior symmetrically arranged with symbols of the elements and regions of that cosmos.[4] After Zoroaster it became the custom among others to perform ceremonies of initiation in caverns and caves, either natural or artificial. Just as they consecrated temples, shrines and altars to the Olympian gods, sacrificial hearths to terrestrial deities and heroes, and ritual pits and trenches to the gods of the underworld, so they dedicated caverns and caves to the cosmos, and likewise to the nymphs too on account of the water that pours down in caves or bursts forth in them.

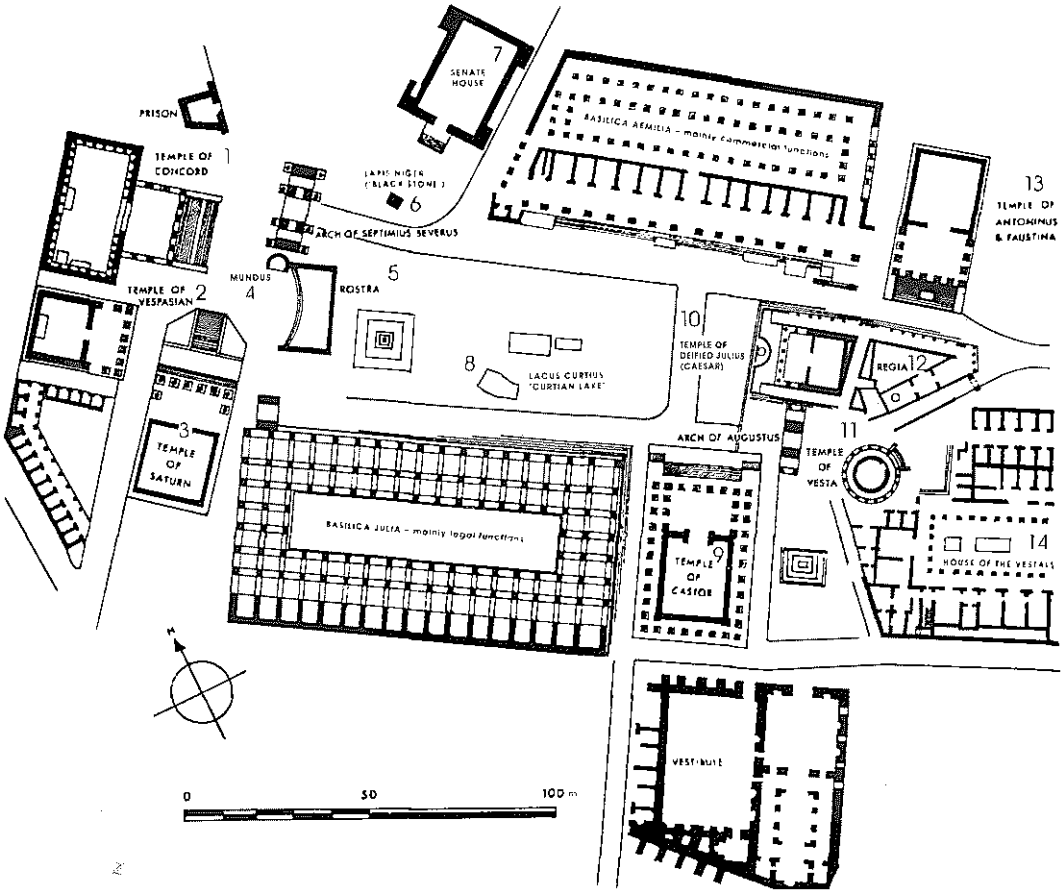
1. Founder of Persian religion, Zoroastrianism.
2. See 12.5d, n.2.
3. Note the basins in 4.6a above, n. 3. Water vessels were a common element in Mithraic iconography; see 12.5a n. 1; 12.5g n. 4.
4. For a detailed analysis of the cosmic imagery of a Mithraic cave, see R. L. Gordon (1976), decoding the complex zodiacal and cosmic symbolism of the Mithraeum of Sette Sfere at Ostia.

4.7 Religious space and the Roman Forum

Religious buildings were found throughout the city of Rome. But some areas had particularly strong religious associations. The Roman Forum, the traditional centre of *political* life was also an important *religious* focus for the city. Here were not only many temple buildings – from some of the most ancient foundations of the city (such as the temple of Vesta, plan no. 11) to the later temples of deified emperors (2, 13). There were also buildings connected with various priesthoods (12, 14), other monuments marking out places of legendary religious significance (6, 8), as well as the senate house (7) and *rostra* (speaking platform) (5) – which were both inaugurated *templa* (see 4.4). The character of the whole area, and the function of some individual buildings (1, 3, 9), illustrate the overlap of 'religious' and 'political' activities at Rome.

See further: Vol. 1, 39, 189–91, 253–9, 382; Vol 1, Map 1 no. 11; Platner and Ashby (1929), and Richardson (1992) (under individual monuments); Dudley (1967) 73–119; M. Grant (1970)*; Coarelli (1983–5); Patterson (1992) 190–4.

Simplified plan of the imperial Roman Forum (late second century A.D.)



1. Founded in 367 B.C.; frequently restored. Used for meetings of the senate (e.g. Sallust, *Catiline* 46 and 49); contained many famous works of art (e.g. Pliny, *Natural History* XXXIV. 73, 77, 80, 89).
2. Completed under the emperor Domitian (A.D. 81–96).
3. Said to have been founded in the last years of the monarchy or beginning of the Republic; frequently restored. Housed the state treasury (*aerarium Saturni*) probably in a strongroom inside the high platform.
4. Also known as the *umbilicus* (navel) of the city. It was thought of as the central point of Rome and as 'gateway' to the underworld. On three days of the year it was said to be 'open' (*mundus patet*) and offerings were thrown in. Its original form is unknown, but by the third century A.D. it had been monumentalized into a small round shrine. See 4.8a (on the origins of the *mundus*). For the complex tradition and the possibility that there were other *mundi* at Rome, Scullard (1981) 180–1*; Coarelli (1983–5) I.199–226.
5. Started by Julius Caesar, replacing the earlier *rostra* a little to the north.
6. Square section of black paving stone marking the spot of an ancient shrine of Vulcan, concealed under later pavements. For the form and significance of this shrine, see 1.7c and Vol. 1, 12.
7. Founded by Julius Caesar, replacing the republican senate house (curia Hostilia) a little to the west.

8. Shallow stone basin marking the spot where (according to one story) a young Roman warrior, Marcus Curtius, once sacrificed himself to the gods leaping into a great chasm which had opened up in the Forum; see Livy, *History* VII.6.1–6. According to Suetonius (*Life of Augustus* 27) men threw offerings into the Lacus Curtius (the Curtian Lake) for Augustus' welfare.
9. Founded after the miraculous appearance of Castor and Pollux at the battle of Lake Regillus (499 B.C.). For a restoration by Verres (74 B.C.), see Cicero, *Against Verres* II.1.129–53. An important location of many of the political struggles of the late Republic (e.g. Appian, *Civil Wars* I.25; Plutarch, *Life of Sulla* 33; Cicero, *Against Piso* 11); also used as a safe deposit (Juvenal xiv.260–2). See Strong and Ward Perkins (1962); Nielsen (1993).
10. Temple built on the site of Caesar's funeral pyre; dedicated 29 B.C. See Weinstock (1971) 391–8.
11. Foundation attributed to the earliest kings of Rome; frequently restored. Contained the sacred hearth of the city and a number of sacred objects, including a statue of Athena (the Palladium) reputedly brought from Troy by Aeneas and a phallus (Pliny, *Natural History* XXVIII.39). There was no cult statue.
12. The 'royal house'. According to tradition, originally the house of Numa; later used as the headquarters of the *pontifex maximus* and contained the archives of the pontifical college. See F. E. Brown (1935).
13. Dedicated to the deified empress Faustina (died A.D. 141); her husband, Antoninus, was added to the dedication after his death and deification in A.D. 161 (see **2.8b**). Converted into a church in the seventh or eighth century A.D.
14. For the history of the building, see Scott (1993a); (1993b) and **8.4b** below, for the statues of the priestesses found within their residence.

4.8 The *pomerium*, the sacred boundary of the city

The city of Rome itself, as a whole, had a particular religious status; and its boundary was defined by a line known as the *pomerium*. The distinction between the territory inside and outside this boundary is most clearly reflected in military activity: the military authority (*imperium*) of a Roman general was valid only outside the *pomerium* and all military affairs (even discussions between the senate and a serving general) were excluded from the territory within that boundary; the *comitia centuriata* (that 'centuriate assembly', whose origins lay in the military organization of the city) met, unlike other voting assemblies, outside the *pomerium*. But this military aspect was related to other, religious, distinctions. For example, the temples of most 'foreign' cults were, at least in early Rome, located outside the *pomerium*, and the *pomerium* formed the boundary within which magistrates operating in the city could take the auspices, and so establish correct relations with the gods.

See further: Vol. 1, 177–81; Catalano (1966); (1978); C. R. Whittaker (1994) 21–5*. On the technical problems for a magistrate crossing the *pomerium*, 7.2; for the boundary of a Roman *colonia*, **10.2b**.

4.8a *Romulus establishes the 'pomerium'*

The Romans traced the origin of the *pomerium* to the very act of foundation of Rome: it was the furrow ploughed by Romulus to mark out the extent of his new city.

Plutarch, *Life of Romulus* 11.1–4

He <Romulus> then set to building his city. He summoned from Etruria men who were used to giving detailed prescriptions according to certain sacred laws and formulae, and to acting, so to speak, as expounders of holy ritual.[1] A circular pit was dug near the area that is now the *comitium*[2] and in it were deposited offerings of all the things whose use is thought proper according to human custom, or is rendered necessary by nature. And in the end, each man threw in a small piece of earth, brought from his native country, and they mixed it all together. They call this pit the *mundus*, the same word that they used for the heavens.[3] Then they marked out the city around it, as if marking out a circle from the point of a compass. And the founder put a bronze blade on his plough, yoked up a bull and a cow, and himself drove them on, drawing a deep furrow around the boundary – while his followers had the task of pushing back inside the city all the clods of earth that the plough turned up and not letting a single one lie outside. It was with this line that they marked out the course of the wall, and it was called the *pomerium*, a contracted form of 'post murum', 'behind' or 'next to the wall'.[4] And where they intended to put in a gate, they took the ploughshare out of the ground, lifted the plough over and left a space.

1. The Romans believed that the *pomerium*, and many other of their religious traditions, owed their origin to 'Etruscan ritual' (see Vol. 1, 60–1). The *pomerium* was certainly not a specifically Roman institution – being found in other cities of central Italy; see, e.g., Varro, *On the Latin Language* v.143.
2. A circular area in front of the republican senate house. Plutarch here offers a different version from others (including Tacitus, below 4.8b) who locate the centre of Romulus' foundation on the Palatine hill.
3. See 4.7 n. 4. Note again the association of a religious place on earth with the heavens. Like the Latin word *templum* (4.4), *mundus* referred both to an earthly shrine and to the heavens, or even the cosmos as a whole.
4. A common Roman etymology of the word. See Varro, *On the Latin Language* v.143; Antaya (1980).

4.8b *The original 'pomerium' and its extensions*

As Rome grew, the *pomerium* was seen essentially as a religious boundary – not as a marker of the city's defences or of the edge of the built-up area. But its position changed over time, as it was 'extended' on several occasions in the late Republic and early Empire. Tacitus, in discussing these extensions, regards its original line as a matter of antiquarian speculation.

See further: Vol. 1, 177–8 and Maps 1–3; Labrousse (1937); Syme (1978)*; Richardson (1992) 293–6*.

Tacitus, *Annals* XII.23–4

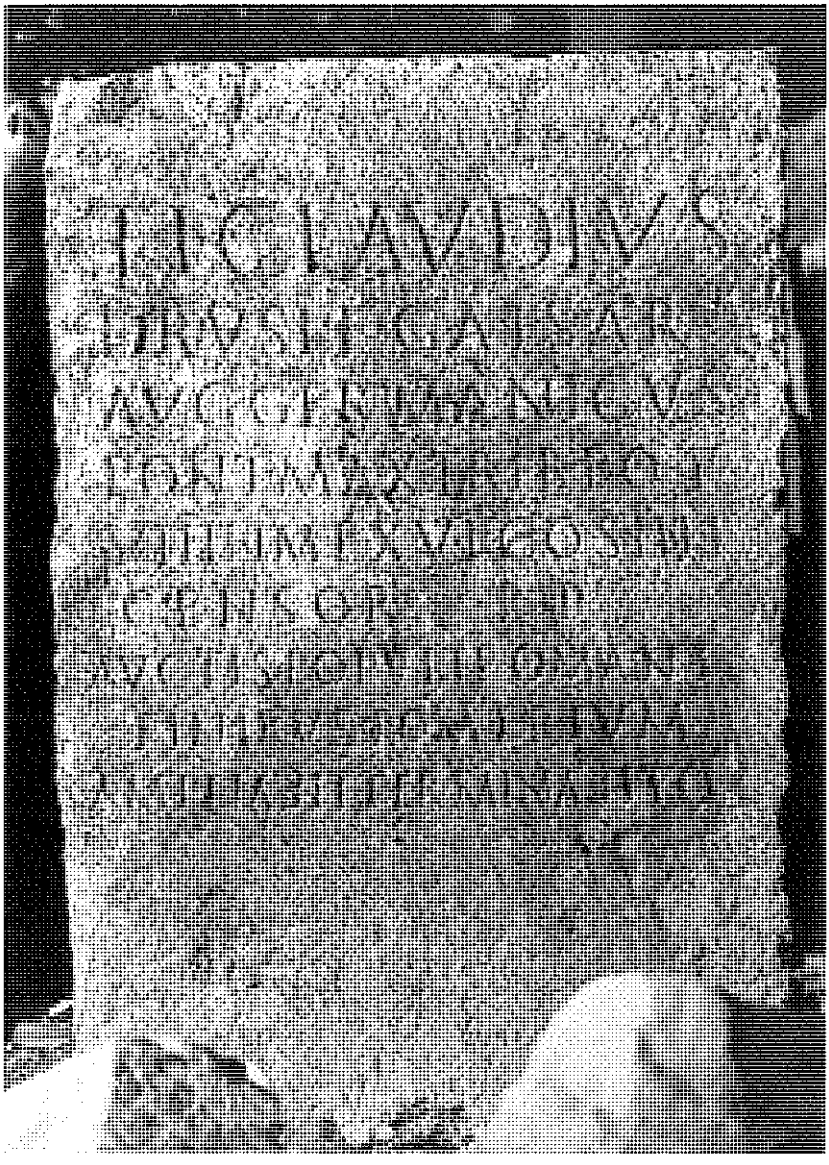
The emperor <Claudius> also extended the *pomerium*, according to the ancient custom by which those who have enlarged the empire are also allowed to expand the boundaries of the city.[1] But, apart from Lucius Sulla and the deified Augustus,[2] Roman generals had not exercised this right, even after the conquest of great nations. (24) Various different stories are told about the vanity or the renown of our kings in this matter. But I think that the original foundation and the plan of the *pomerium* established by Romulus is a reasonable subject of enquiry. The furrow to mark out the town was started from the Forum Boarium (where we see the bronze statue of a bull),[3] because that type of animal is yoked to the plough. It was drawn so as to include the Great Altar of Hercules; and from that point boundary stones were set at regular intervals along the foot of the Palatine hill up to the altar of Consus, then to the old meeting place of the *curiae*, then to the shrine of the Lares and after that to the Roman Forum.[4] The Forum and the Capitol were added to the city, it was believed, not by Romulus but by Titus Tatius.[5] Later the *pomerium* was extended with the growth of Rome's fortunes. The boundary, as it was then set by Claudius, is easy to recognize and is recorded in public documents.[6]

1. Note the direct connection between the religious traditions of the city and Roman political and military success. Claudius probably justified his action by his addition of the province of Britain to the empire – although there was some uncertainty about precisely how the 'ancient custom' Tacitus refers to was to be interpreted (Seneca, *On the Shortness of Life* 13.8; Griffin (1976) 401–6).
2. On the supposed Augustan extension, see Vol. 1, 178 n.36.
3. A famous landmark in the Forum Boarium (Cattle Market) – a statue plundered from the Greek island of Aegina.
4. Tacitus suggests a line centred on the Palatine hill: the Great Altar of Hercules (Ara Maxima) and the altar of Consus to the south; the shrine of the Lares and the meeting place of the *curiae* (subdivisions of the early Roman tribes) almost certainly to the north – though the exact sites are unknown. We do not know if this is correct. For an attack on the idea of a 'Palatine *pomerium*', see Magdelain (1976), with earlier bibliography.
5. The Sabine king who, according to legend, shared power with Romulus.
6. Either archives or inscriptions, such as 4.8c below. The Claudian extension included the Aventine hill and part of the Campus Martius (Field of Mars) within the *pomerium*.

4.8c *Boundary stones of Claudius' 'pomerium'*

A few of the well over 100 boundary stones (*cippi*) set up by Claudius to mark bis extension of the *pomerium* still survive. Although such *cippi* had no doubt played some part in defining the course of the *pomerium* in earlier periods, it would be wrong to imagine that the line was always so clearly demarcated. It was a reflection of Claudius' self-aggrandizement (and perhaps also his antiquarian interests) that be chose to display the route of his pomerial exteusion so prominently.

See further: Vol. 1, 177–8; A. E. Gordon (1958–65) 1.95–6, nos. 95–7; (1983) 118, no. 43*.



height: 1.90m.
width: 0.70m.
depth: 0.47m.

The text reads:

Tiberius Claudius Caesar, son of Drusus, Augustus Germanicus, *pontifex maximus*, holding tribunician power for the ninth time, hailed *imperator* sixteen times, consul four times, censor, father of his country – having enlarged the territory of the Roman people, he extended and marked out the boundaries of the *pomerium*. On top: *pomerium*.

On the side: CXXXIX <i.e. 139th stone in the series>

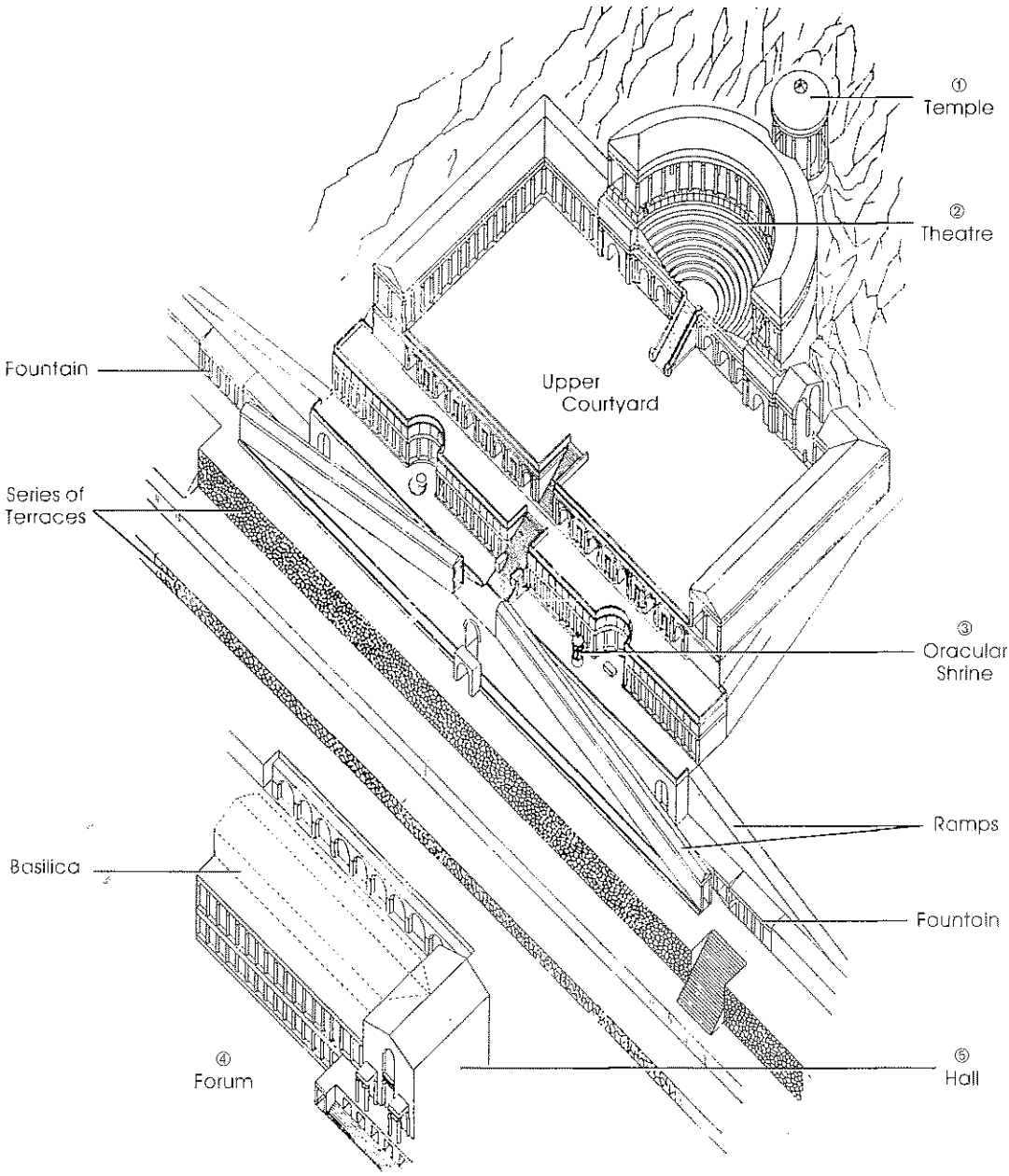
4.9 Sanctuaries of Latium: the temple complex of Fortuna Primigenia (Primordial Fortune) at Praeneste

From the second half of the second century B.C., the region around Rome (Latium) saw the development of a series of lavish sanctuaries. These were, strictly speaking, the achievement of the local towns that sponsored and maintained them. But their characrer was largely determined by a number of factors which affected Rome and the towns of Latium alike: the increasing wealth that flowed into all of central Italy as a result of Roman conquests; growing contact with the architecture (and architects) of the Hellenistic Greek world; the easy availability of concrete, which made possible some of the most ambitious architectural schemes. These sites were very much part of the cultural and religious world of Rome – particularly so after tbe grant of full Roman citizenship to the Italians in 90–89 B.C.

Tbe magnificent sanctuary at Praeneste (40 km. south-east of Rome and today called Palestrina) is a development of the second century B.C., probably close to the end of the century, though the precise date of construction is still debated. Before the grand terrace was built, we know that there had been, on part of the site, a temple of the goddess Fortuna Primigenia (Primordial Fortune) – according to the local myth the mother of Jupiter and Juno – and, on another part of it, one of the most famous and wealthy oracles of Italy. The oracle was consulted by sending a child down into a deep pit; the child brought up wooden tablets (*sortes* i.e. lots) with mysterious lettering on them; these were then handed to an expert for interpretation.

The temple, at the top of the hill, was incorporated into a Renaissance palazzo now the Museum, within which parts of the original building can still be seen. The terracing, which incorporates the oracular part of the site, was also built over in medieval times and was only exposed again after the town was bombed during the Second World War. The upper part of the complex illustrated is 113.20 m. wide; the distance from the temple to the oracular shrine, 120 m.; to the basilica (part of the public buildings of the town), 236 m.

See further: Vol. 1, Map 5; on these sanctuaries in general, Boëthius (1978) 159–78* (though wrongly dating most of the sanctuaries to the period after 80 B.C.); Gros (1978); Sear (1982) 24–7*; Coarelli (1987); on the sanctuary ar Praeneste, Fasolo and Gullini (1953); and on its cult, Cicero, *On Divination* II.85–7; Brendel (1960); Champeaux (1982–7) I.3–147; an extract from the surviving inscribed calendar from Praeneste is given above, 3.3b.



1. The Temple of Fortuna Primigenia was believed to mark the spot where honey had once miraculously flowed from an olive tree. It probably contained a gilded statue of the goddess.
2. The connection between temple-buildings and theatres was a traditional one, found commonly in Rome and central Italy. See Vol. 1, 122–3; J. A. Hanson (1959).
3. A small circular structure covered a deep pit which contained the wooden tablets. The statue group, of Fortuna with Jupiter and Juno, mentioned by Cicero (*On Divination* II.85), probably stood on the base in the apse.

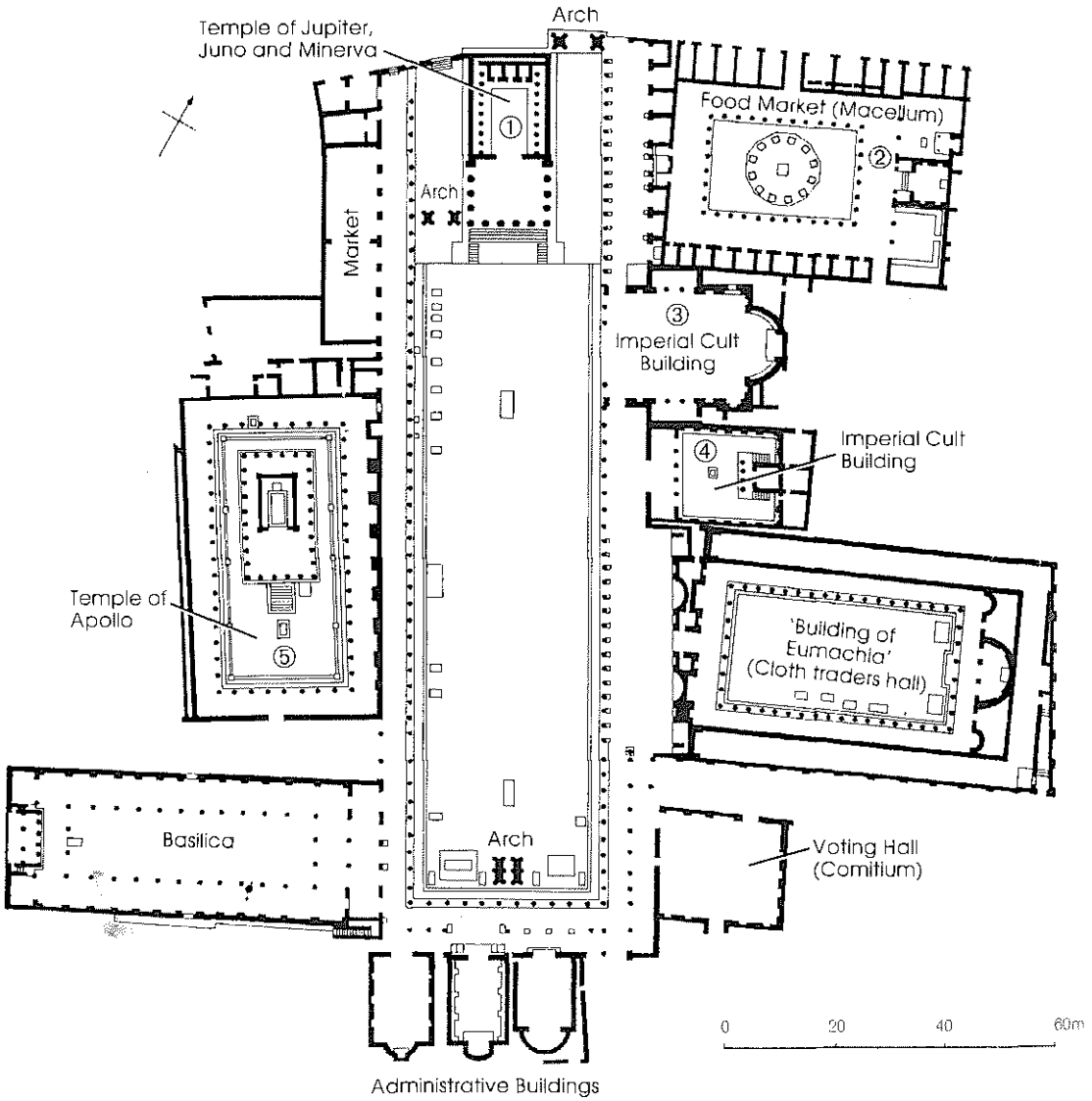
4. The civic centre of the town of Praeneste. Although it was redeveloped as part of the major scheme in the late second century, this area was not (as has sometimes been thought) a specifically sacred 'lower sanctuary'. In the forum was an open hall (*exedra*) with a fountain, on which the Praenestine calendar (**3.3b**) was inscribed.
5. The function of this room is uncertain. It was probably used for some of the 'civil functions' of the forum. But the presence here of a mosaic with scenes of the Nile and Egypt has suggested to some that it was a shrine of Isis (see, for example, Coarelli (1987) 79–82).

4.10 The forum at Pompeii

As Roman power and Roman citizenship spread throughout Italy, so too did Roman religion. The town of Pompeii in Campania is a clear example of this: its earliest history (about which there is little evidence) perhaps belongs to the Greek-speaking world of south Italy in the sixth century B.C., but it was certainly inhabited by local Oscan speakers as it grew into a fully developed town in the third to second centuries B.C., though, just like Rome itself, much under the influence of contemporary Greek culture. Only after the Social War (91–87 B.C.) did the inhabitants receive Roman citizenship and, partly because they have taken the anti-Roman side in that war, their city was chosen in 80 B.C. as the site for a *colonia* of Roman retired soldiers. So the Pompeii we see today – as it was at the time of its destruction in A.D. 79 – is a rich mixture of Greek, Roman and local Campanian styles and traditions.

The plan of the Pompeian forum illustrates this diversity. The temple of Apollo, a major cult of pre-Roman times, still occupies a prominent position at the heart of the city; but the temple of Capitoline Jupiter, the classic mark of the Romanised community, dominates the forum itself. It is a more controversial question how far the space of the forum had also been taken over by the monuments of the worship of emperors. This has been suggested, but as we argue in nn. 3, 4 below, the indications are not secure. If they are right, we should note (a) that this Italian city apparently had a cult building for Augustus during his lifetime, but (b) that these imperial monuments are far from being grand enough to compete in scale with either Jupiter or Apollo.

See further: M. Grant (1971) 15–109 (for excellent pictures); Ward-Perkins and Claridge (1976) esp. 15–46, 55–61*; Zanker (1987) 26–33; Richardson (1988) 88–99, 138–45, 191–210, 261–76. Mau (1899) is still useful. For religion in Roman *coloniae*, see below **10.2** and Vol. 1, 328–36. The transformation of religious and civic space in the eastern part of the Roman empire is discussed by Price (1984) 133–69, 249–74.



1. The form of the building and its dedication to the 'Capitoline triad' (note the partitions at the rear of the *cella* to accommodate *three* cult statues) date from the early years of the veteran *colonia* – probably replacing an earlier temple whose exact appearance and dedication is unknown. This temple is a conscious reflection of the religious traditions of the city of Rome itself and dominates the forum, as if the whole of the open piazza were its precinct. For the Capitolium in Rome, see 1.9b; and in other parts of the Roman world, 10.2c.
2. At the far (eastern) end of the market a central shrine, approached by a series of steps, was probably connected with the imperial cult. Among the statues that once stood here was, almost certainly, the figure of an emperor – for fragments of an arm with a globe, symbol of sovereignty, have been discovered. The area just north of this is a small unroofed court with an altar, possibly the meeting-place for a college of priests.
3. The walls of this building included niches for numerous statues and a central pedestal (in the apse) similar to the *lararium* of a private house (see 4.12) – suggesting that this

building may have been (as it is often called) a 'shrine of the city Lares'. The links between the public Lares and the *genius* of the emperor (see Vol. 1, 184–6) could further suggest a connection with the imperial cult. None of this is certain. For the idea that the building was a library, see Richardson (1988) 273–5.

4. The decoration on the surviving altar (the civic crown, two laurel trees, the *clipeus virtutis* (honorific shield) – see Vol. 1, 186 and fig. 4.3) clearly links this temple with the imperial cult. Although often known as the 'Temple of Vespasian', the building dates to the Augustan period.
5. Votive material on this site suggests a cult building of Apollo from the sixth century B.C.; but the preserved form of the temple dates from the second century B.C. The cult of Apollo was the major *pre*-Roman cult of the town, with links with the Greek world. The *cella*, for example, contained an egg-shaped stone, an *omphalos* – a model of the *omphalos* at Delphi, the 'navel of the world'.

4.11 The grove of Albunea and its oracle

The religion of Italy was not simply an urban phenomenon. The countryside also contained important cult-centres, often associated with natural springs, woods or woodland clearings (*luci* – see above 4.5). One such shrine is described by Virgil – an oracle of the god Faunus at a place called Albunea, amidst sulphurous springs. Although a poetic account, it may be inspired by cults in the region of modern Solforata (near ancient Lavinium, **1.5b**) whose name clearly derives from the sulphurous exhalations that once distinguished the area. Inscriptions found there (commemorating the Fates) suggest that it may have been the site of an oracular shrine.

Much the same procedure is described in a passage from Ovid's *Fasti*, IV 649–72, which is certainly influenced by Virgil's text, but also shows some differences. The King in question this time is Numa, who goes through the same rituals and receives a similar spoken response from Faunus in a dream; however, the result this time is not straight advice, like that offered to Latinus, but a ridding answer ('let one heifer give up two lives at the sacrifice') requiring interpretation by Numa's friend the nymph Egeria; the outcome is the setting up of one of the Roman festivals, the Fordicidia – the sacrifice of a heifer in calf.

See further: Vol. 1, 13; Tilly (1947) 103–11*; Guarducci (1955); R. E. A. Palmer (1974) 79–171; Cazanove and Scheid (1993). For the inscriptions, *ILLRP* 10–12; Guarducci (1946–8).

Virgil, *Aeneid* VII.81–101

The king,[1] troubled by the portents, goes to visit the oracle of Faunus, his prophet father, and consults the groves beneath lofty Albunea – greatest of forests, resounding with its holy cascade and exhaling its deadly vapour from the darkness. Here the Italian tribes and all the land of Oenotria[2] seek counsel in times of uncertainty. Here the priest brings offerings, lies beneath the silent night on the outspread fleeces of the sheep killed in sacrifice and woos slumber; he sees many visions flying about him in wondrous fashion

and hears voices of all kinds, as he holds converse with the gods and addresses Acheron in deepest Avernus.[3] Here then too the venerable Latinus himself came to seek counsel; and after duly sacrificing a hundred sheep laden with wool, he lay couched on their hides and outspread fleeces.[4] Suddenly from deep in the grove a voice came: 'Seek not to join your daughter in marriage to a man of the Latin race, o my son, and trust not in the wedding that is to hand. Strangers will come to wed our daughters and carry their name into the stars by union with us. The descendants of this line shall behold the whole world turning obediently beneath their feet – wherever the sun looks down upon in its course.'[5]

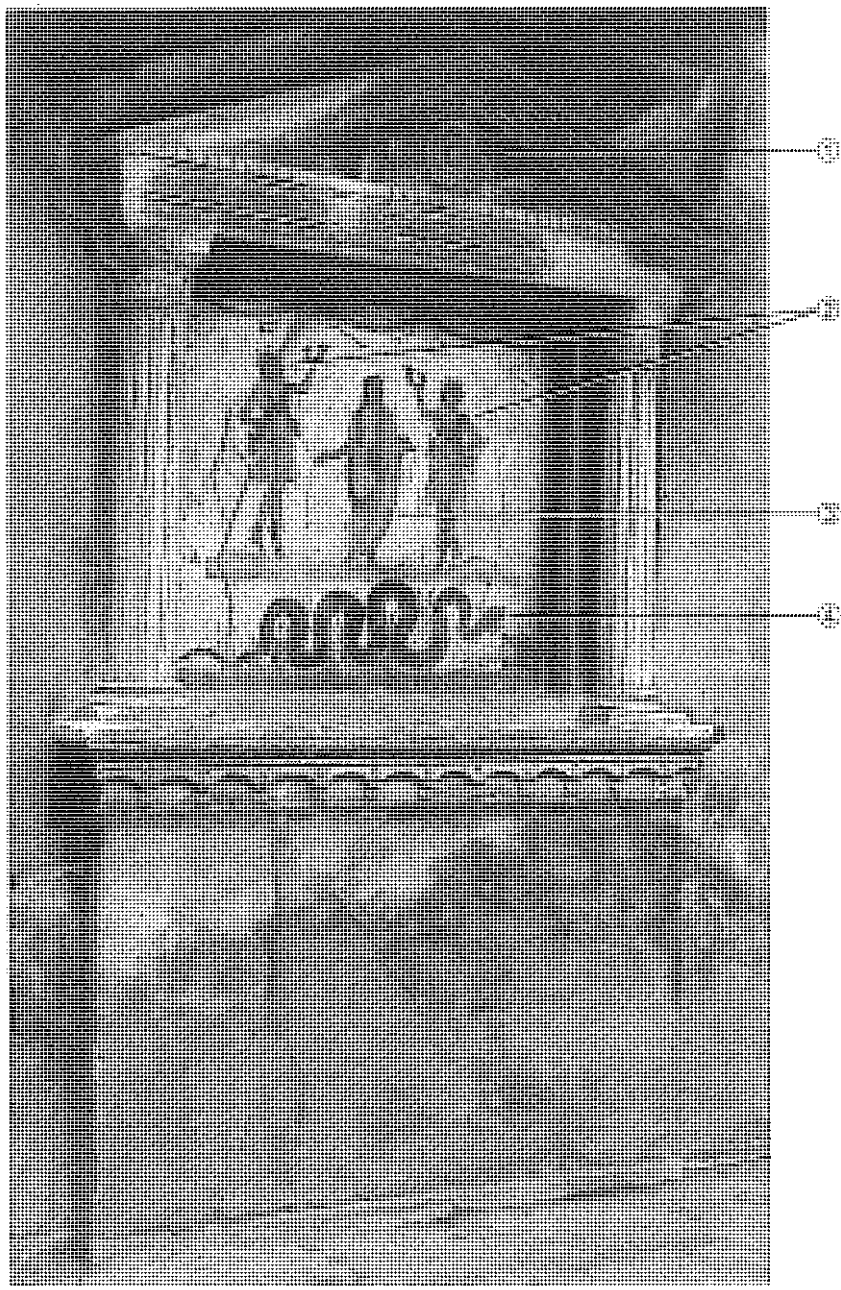
1. Latinus, king of the Latins. Many apparently conflicting myths surround his name. For Virgil, he was son of the god Faunus – a deity connected with woods and the divine sounds heard in them, often (though not here) identified with the god Pan.
2. Oenotria was an ancient name for the 'toe' of Italy.
3. Avernus is a name given to the underworld, and Acheron to one of its rivers (here standing for the powers of that world). See 3.7 n. 5.
4. The practice described is similar to the custom of incubation at Greek oracles: the enquirer went to sleep at the oracle, often wrapped in the skin of a sacrificed animal, and received the answer to their enquiry in a dream. This used to be thought to be a tradition unknown in early Italy and so introduced into the narrative by Virgil for particular literary effect, in conscious imitation of Greek practice. Recent studies, however, have suggested a 'native' Italian practice of incubation; see Vol. 1, 13 n.32.
5. This amounts to a warning that Latinus should betroth his daughter to a foreigner (that is, Aeneas), not to the Italian prince Turnus who had been seeking her hand. For oracular voices mysteriously coming from woods, see Cicero, *On Divination* I.101.

4.12 Religion of the home: the household shrine

The Roman house itself was the centre of family and private religion. In richer and middle-ranking houses a common feature was a shrine of the household gods – now conventionally known as a *lararium* (from the *Lares*, see 2.2a), although there is no evidence that this was the standard ancient term. Commonly found in the central court (*atrium*) of a house, or sometimes in the kitchen, these shrines contained paintings or statuettes of household gods and other deities; they might also include (in a wealthier house) commemorations of the family's ancestors. We assume – although there is little firm evidence for this – that these shrines would have formed the focus of family rituals and sacrifice conducted by the head of the household (*paterfamilias*).

This *lararium* from the small *atrium* in the House of the Vettii (one of the richest houses of Pompeii) is one of the most elaborate, highly coloured (and, no doubt, expensive) shrines in the town. (Total height 3.70 m., height of niche 1.30 m., width 0.50 m.)

See further: Vol. 1, 48–51; Orr (1978)*; for Pompeian material, Boyce (1937); Ward-Perkins and Claridge (1976) cat. nos. 210, 220, 222–6*; for material from the Italian colony on Delos, Bulard (1926); and, for commemoration of ancestors, Reynolds (1971) 142–4.



1. Blue tympanum – with symbols of sacrifice: centre – *patera*; right – knife; left – ox-skull.
2. Painted figures of Lares, against a white background. They carry (as often) a drinking horn (*rhyton*) and wine-bucket (*situla*). See **2.2a**.
3. The *genius*, dressed in a toga, and with veiled head, holds a *patera* in his right hand and an incense box in his left – as if offering sacrifice.
4. A serpent – moving towards offerings of fruit etc. on a small altar (far right). Serpents are a common motif on *lararia*, probably symbolizing the earth's fertility, and so the prosperity of the household.

4.13 The house-tomb and its rituals

The Roman tomb took many forms, from the grand mausolea of the emperors to simple burials marked (if at all) with just a broken pot. During the second and third centuries A.D. a distinctive form of 'house-tomb' was popular in Rome and the surrounding area among the middle ranks of Roman society – skilled craftsmen, tradesmen and the like. These show clearly the religious status of the tomb: how it provided a place for the rituals associated with the dead, as well as a final resting-place; and how the 'owners' of the tomb might try to protect it against encroachment or against being used by those who did not bear their family name.

See further: Toynbee (1971)*; Hopkins (1983) 201–56*; von Hesberg and Zanker (1987); and (for the legal problems associated with the religious status of tombs) Crook (1967) 133–8*. On particular cemeteries with house-tombs: Calza (1940); Toynbee and Ward-Perkins (1956) 1–124; Meiggs (1973) 455–70; Pellegrino (1984).

4.13a *House-tombs at Isola Sacra – exterior*

The cemetery at Isola Sacra, serving the Roman town of Portus (on the coast, about 30 km. from Rome – see Vol. 1, Map 5), includes over 100 excavated tombs. The three illustrated here date from the early second century A.D.; the total width of the three facades is *c.* 12.5 m.

For a full description, Calza (1940) nos. 78–80, pp. 336–40.

1. Tomb entrance, *c.* 1.4m. high. It would normally have been closed with a wooden door, framed in iron and clad in lead.
2. Masonry couches – for feasting. A funeral feast was held at the tomb on the day of the funeral, and another on the ninth day afterwards. Other meals might be taken at the tomb through the year, as relatives and friends commemorated the deceased on their birthday and on public festivals concerned with the dead – such as the Parentalia (Scullard (1981) 74–6).
3. The inscription (flanked by two small windows) survives:

(Thylander (1952) A 25)

To the spirits of the departed. Quintus Appius Saturninus, son of Quintus, built this for himself and for Annia Donata, his well-deserving wife, and for their children and ex-slaves, male and female, and for their descendants. This tomb shall not follow the heir, and may the right of sale not be allowed either to those to whom I have left it, or to Donata. Width 10 feet, length 12 feet.

The last part of the text protects the tomb against future sale or 'alienation' – ensuring that it does not pass to an heir outside the family, but that (as implied in the earlier part), if the direct family line dies out, it should pass to the ex-slaves of the household, who would use the same family name as their original masters. The dimensions of the tomb to which these conditions apply are carefully specified.

4. Inscription:

(Thylander (1952) A 61)

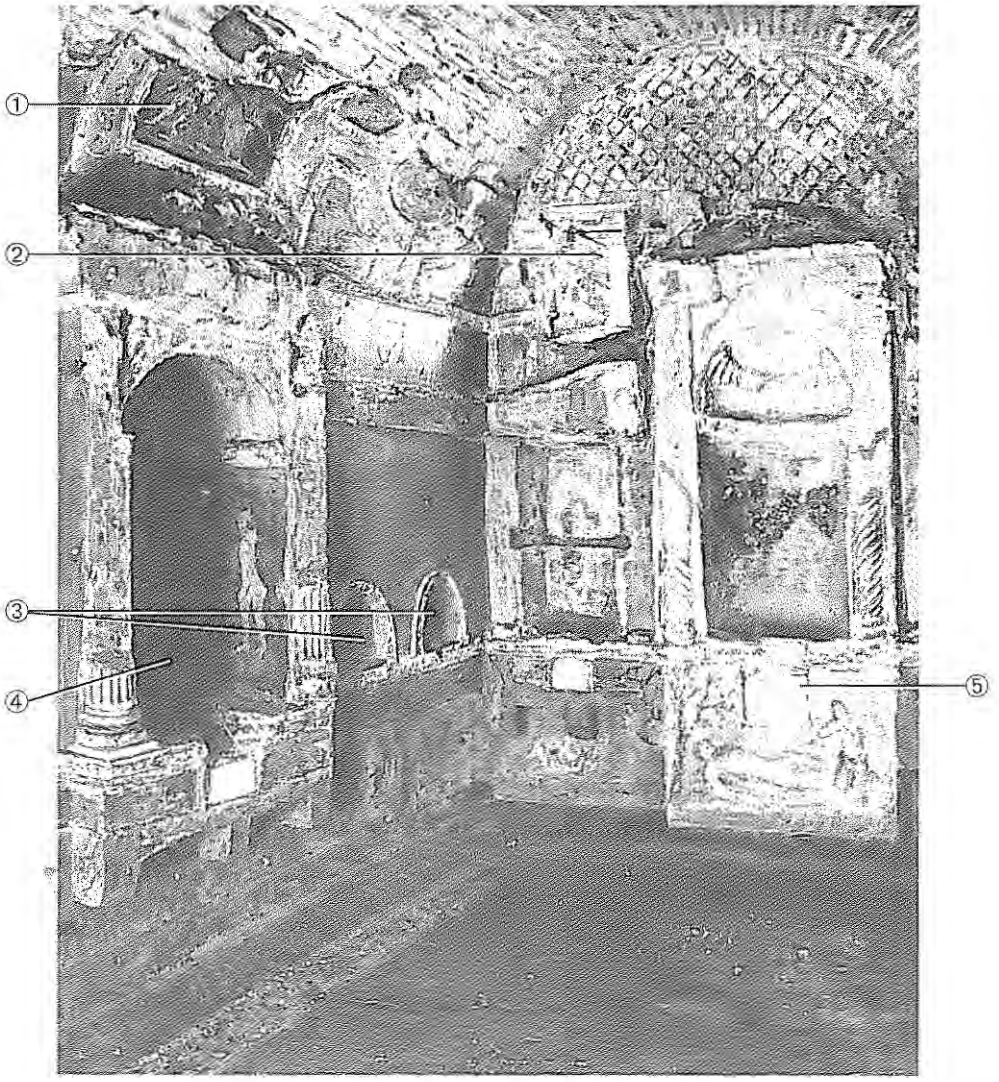
To the spirits of the departed. Tiberius Claudius Eutychus built this for Claudia Memnonis, his well-deserving wife, and for himself and their children, and for their ex-slaves, male and female, and for their descendants. There shall be right of approach and to move around the tomb. This tomb shall not follow the heir. Width 15 feet, length 15 feet.

5. Two terracotta plaques showing: (a) a boat with oarsmen (b) a grain mill driven by a horse (Meiggs (1973) plates xxviii (a) and (b)). Eutychus was perhaps a grain merchant.

4.13b *House-tomb at Isola Sacra – interior*

House-tombs were intended to hold multiple burials – sometimes as many as 100 cremation niches. Illustrated here is the inner chamber of one of the grander tombs at Isola Sacra (middle of the second century A.D.). A second, outer, room included not only more burials, but also an oven for the preparation of funeral meals.

For full description, Calza (1940) no. 87, pp. 113–17, 345–8.



1. Richly coloured stucco, covering basic structure of brick.
2. Window.
3. Small niches for cremation urns. (In some tombs there were also larger, long niches for inhumations.)
4. Inside this larger niche were painted scenes from Greek mythology – Cassandra pursuing Ajax, Odysseus and Diomedes.
5. The inscription underneath the niche commemorates a woman (Varia Servanda), whose ashes were placed here.

   To the spirits of the departed. Ampelus and Ennychis erected this from their own money for Varia Servanda, the daughter of Publius (Thylander (1952) A 270).

   She is also named on inscriptions above the outer doors of the tomb (Thylander (1952) A 268, 269).

4.14 Jewish synagogues in the Roman Empire

Already before the Roman Empire period began, Jewish communities had spread out from Palestine throughout the Mediterranean area, as far as Rome and Italy and even further west. We call these Diaspora communities, literally meaning communities of the 'dispersion'. For all Jews their symbolic centre was in Jerusalem and particularly in the Temple, which was the only site in which the traditional sacrifices could take place; the Temple's prominence in Jewish thought and emotions continued – and still continues – despite the destruction of the actual building by the Romans in A.D. 70. (See Vol. 1, 223 fig. 5.2.)

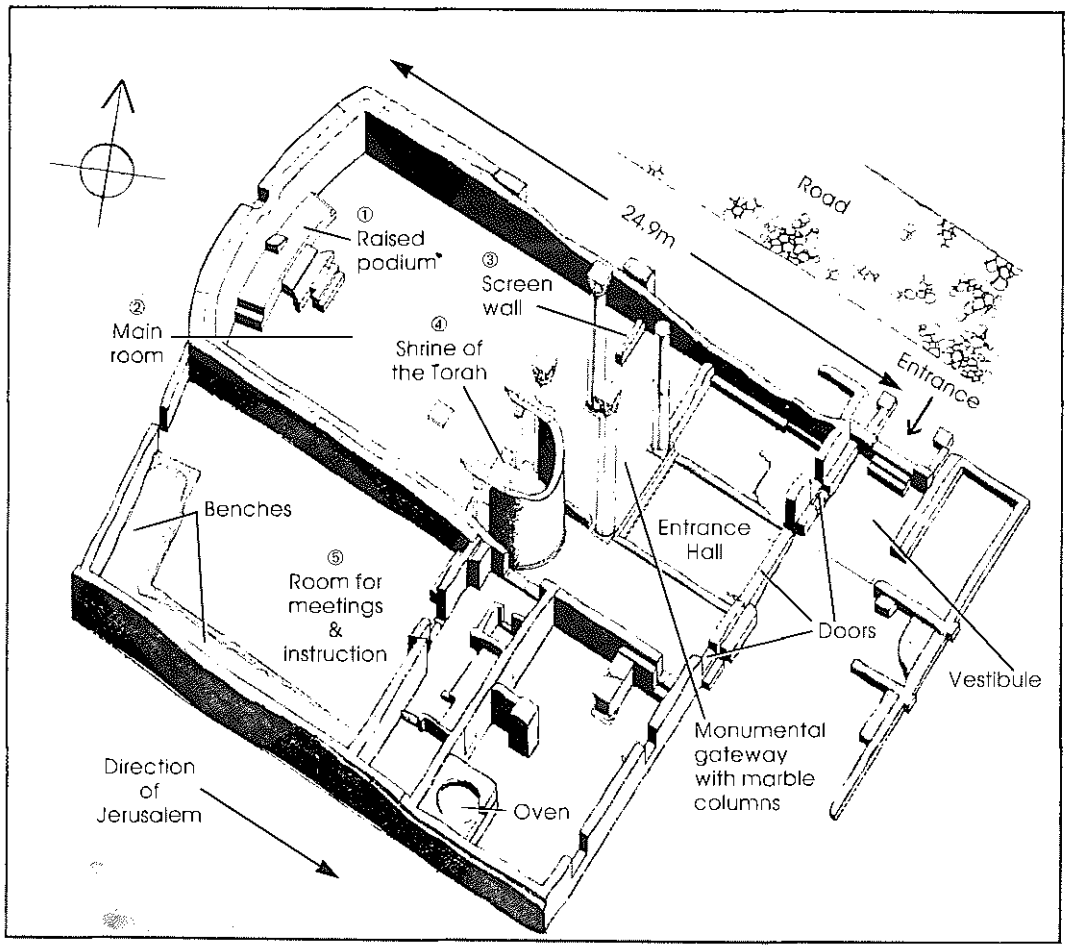
The synagogue could never replace the Temple, but it undoubtedly played a crucial role in the maintenance of Jewish practice throughout the Empire and beyond. Its origin is debated, but there is no doubt that there were synagogues both in Jerusalem itself and the Greek cities of the eastern Mediterranean by the time of Jesus and Paul, as the New Testament texts show. Later, when whole districts of Alexandria were Jewish, the synagogues were to provide a target for anti-Jewish rioting. The form and decoration of these buildings varied across the Empire, according for instance to the size and wealth of the particular community, or to the degree of local acceptance of, or hostility towards, the Jews – sometimes a distinctive building might be inadvisable, while elsewhere synagogues might be both distinctive and central and in some cases adapted from an earlier civic building. There were nevertheless features that were shared by many synagogues: an orientation towards Jerusalem; a shrine for Torah (The first five Books of the Bible, containing the Jewish Law); space set aside for teaching and instruction; a platform *(bema)* from which the Law could be read out.

See further: Vol. 1, 266–7; Gutmann (1975); Kraabel (1979); *Age of Spirituality* (1979) 390–4; Shanks (1979)*; Gutmann (1981); Leaney (1984) 145–8*; L. M. White (1990) 60–101. For other evidence on Jewish religion, see 12.6.

4.14a *The synagogue at Ostia*

This synagogue is the only one firmly identified and excavated in the Italy of this period, though the existence of others, including some in Rome, is known from literary sources and from inscriptions. It falls into the category of those that were prominent and public in character; although it is definitely outside the town of Ostia proper, it is both distinctive and very close to a gate and the walls. The surviving remains belong to the building as it was remodelled in the fourth century A.D., though the earliest phase that can be detected dates from the first century A.D.

See further: Vol. 1, Map 5; Squarciapino (1961–2); (1963)*; (1965); Shanks (1979) 162–9*.



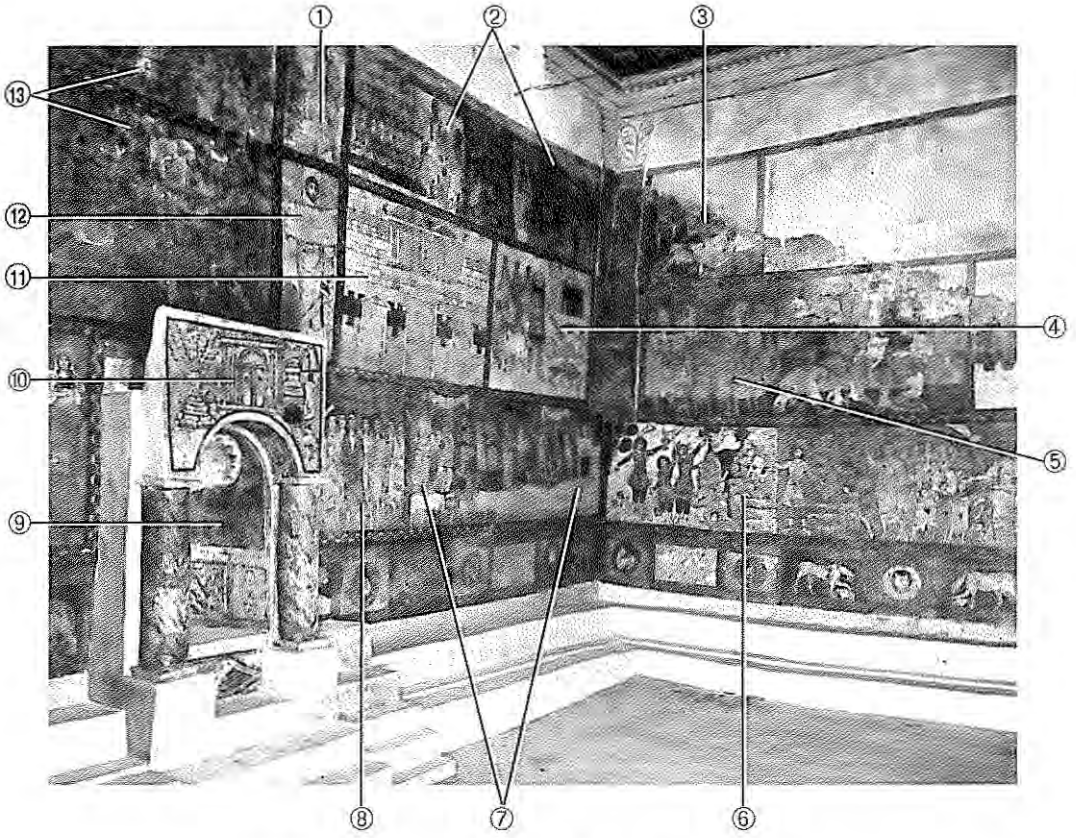
1. Perhaps the *bema*; or a seat for senior members of the community.
2. In material used to repair the floor, a late second-century A.D. inscription was found, recording (in Greek) the construction of a container for the sacred Law. (See n. 4)
3. This wall, originally rising to the height of the column capitals, screened the main room of the synagogue from the entrance hall.
4. Inserted in the very last phase of the synagogue, demolishing an earlier screen wall. Its decoration includes distinctive Jewish symbols (the *menorah* or seven-branched candlestick, rams' horns, etc. – see **12.6d(iv)**). Before this addition, the community may have used a portable Torah shrine (perhaps that referred to in the inscription, n. 2).
5. The very wide benches (perhaps suitable for sleeping) have suggested that this room could have served as a hostel for Jewish travellers.

4.14b *Synagogue at Dura Europus, Syria – main room, with Torah shrine*

This building is the best preserved of all early (pre-fourth century) synagogues; and is unique for the wealth of its surviving painted decoration, illustrating scenes from the Bible, stories apparently drawn from works of biblical interpretation and commentary and a variety of Jewish symbols. The synagogue

itself developed from a private house converted to religious use in the late second century A.D. It was enlarged and decorated in A.D. 244/5; but only ten years later it was filled in (along with other buildings along the western wall of the city) in an attempt to strengthen the ramparts, under threat of siege. The original dimensions of the room were 13.65 m. × 7.68 m.; it is now reconstructed in the National Museum at Damascus.

See further: Kraeling (1956); Neusner (1964); Gutmann (1973); Perkins (1973) 55–65; Shanks (1979) 78–96*; Gutmann (1984) 1313–42. For Jewish representational art in general, Goodenough (1952–68); *Age of Spirituality* (1979) 366–89.



1. Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3).
2. Single panel showing the crossing of the Red Sea, the drowning of the Egyptians and the exodus from Egypt (Exodus 12–14). Moses appears three times, in much larger scale than the other figures.
3. Jacob's dream (Genesis 28. 10–17).
4. The Ark in the land of the Philistines. Various panels show scenes from the history of the Ark of the Covenant. Here (as in I Samuel 5 and 6) the captured Ark, shown on an ox-cart, wreaks destruction wherever the Philistines take it.
5. Battle of Eben-ezer (I Samuel 4.1–11) at which the Ark (shown left) fell into the hands of the Philistines.
6. Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37). A long panel stretching the whole

length of the north wall, divided into various sub-scenes. On the left, a representation of the Lord's instruction to Ezekiel that he should prophesy over dry bones and bring them to life. Note the various parts of dismembered bodies and the hand of the Lord coming from the sky.

7. Single panel showing the discovery of Moses in the river and (on the right) Pharaoh giving instructions that all male children of the Hebrews should be killed (Exodus 1.8–2.9). Note on the left Pharaoh's daughter naked in the river, holding Moses – who is then handed to his Hebrew mother (above left).
8. Samuel anoints David, as first King of Israel (1 Samuel 16.1–3).
9. Torah shrine.
10. The temple of Jerusalem; to the left a *menorah*; to the right Isaac on the pyre awaits sacrifice by Abraham – while below stands the ram which will be substituted for Isaac (Genesis 22.1–19).
11. Probably the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem – a safe resting-place for the Ark. (For the debate on the interpretation of this panel, see Kraeling (1956) 105–13.)
12. Moses (or? Ezra; or? Joshua) reads the Law.
13. Two panels overpainted several times between A.D. 245 and 265; probably showing David and Jacob.

4.15 The architecture of Christianity

In the century after the emperor Constantine (A.D. 307–37) the Christian church developed new forms of religious architecture – forms that have survived in the design of Christian churches to the present day. But in its earliest years, no doubt partly from fear of persecution, Christian worship and teaching seems to have taken place in inconspicuous settings. The so-called 'house-churches' of the early Christian era were simply converted private residences, perhaps sometimes just one part of a larger apartment block. It was only at the end of the third century, and particularly under the support of Constantine, that Christians sponsored conspicuous public places of worship; and they adopted for many of these the architectural form of the traditional civic basilica (commonly associated with the political, legal and commercial functions of the Roman city – see 4.7). What had been the audience chamber of judges and emperors, now became the audience chamber of Christ and his bishops.

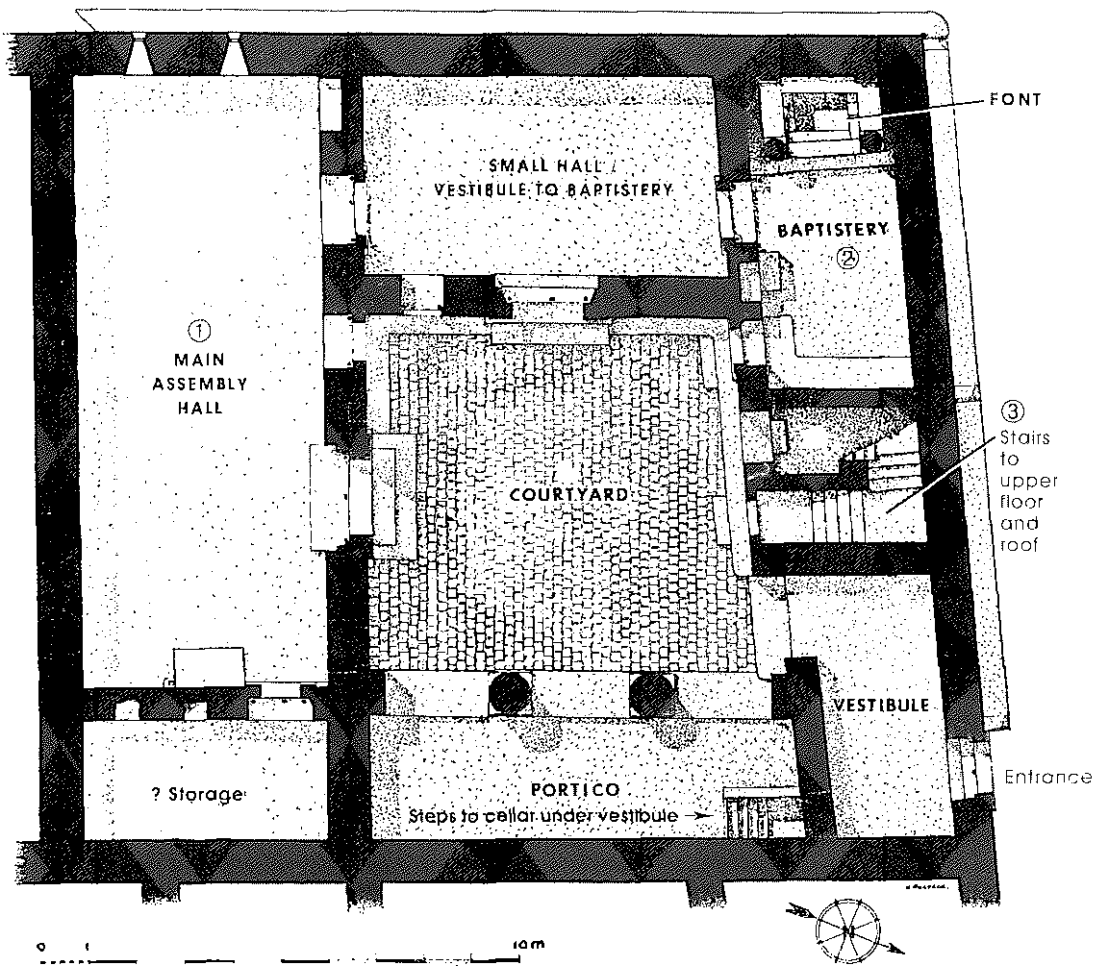
See further: Vol. 1, 368–9, 376–7; *Age of Spirituality* (1979) 640–99; Krautheimer (1979) 23–96*; Krautheimer (1980) 18–58; Mango (1986) 35–56*; L. M. White (1990) 102–39; for house-churches, Pietri (1978); for the development of the Christian basilica, Ward-Perkins (1954); Krautheimer (1967).

4.15a *The house-church at Dura Europus (Syria) – ground plan*

This house, originally built in the early third century A.D., underwent minor alterations, probably in the 240s, to become a Christian centre. It was destroyed in the 250s, in the same operations that buried the synagogue (4.14b). From the outside, it remained indistinguishable from the neighbouring houses, which

continued in domestic use. The house-churches in Rome and elsewhere (known almost entirely from literary evidence) probably followed much the same pattern.

See further: Kraehling (1967).



1. Converted from two separate rooms in the earlier private house. Its exact function is unknown – but it would accommodate up to about seventy-five people (with the leader of the community perhaps using the platform at the eastern end). Much of the earlier decoration of the private house (including a plaster frieze with Bacchic symbols) survived the conversion.
2. The only room with distinctive Christian decoration. The walls are painted with scenes from the Old and New Testament (including David and Goliath, Christ healing the paralytic, Christ walking on water). The presence of a font (itself decorated with figures of the good shepherd and Adam and Eve) makes the identification as a baptistery certain.
3. The only upper room is above the baptistery, created at the time of the conversion, when the ceiling of the baptistery was lowered.

4.15b *The contents of a house-church at Cirta, North Africa – A.D. 303*

This document is apparently part of an official record of actions taken by the pagan authorities against a church in Cirta (the modern town of Constantine) during the emperor Diocletian's so-called 'Great Persecution'. The list of confiscated property provides unique and detailed evidence for the material possessions of such a church at this period.

See further: on the background to this persecution, Vol. 1, 242–4; Frend (1965) 477–535; on various aspects of the history and character of the document itself, Turner (1926); Barnes (1975); Lancel (1979); Barnes (1981) 44–61. For a further (though abridged) extract, see Stevenson (1987) 273–5 and Jones (1970) 332–5 (describing the persecutors' visits to the homes of the 'readers', demanding that they hand over their texts).

'Gesta apud Zenophilum', *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* XXVI (1893) 186–8; J.-L. Maier, *Le dossier du Donatisme* I (Texte und Untersuchungen 134, Berlin, 1987) 217–21

In the eighth consulship of Diocletian and the seventh of Maximian <A.D. 303> on the fourteenth day before the Kalends of June <19 May>, from the records of Munatius Felix, high priest for life,[1] mayor of the *colonia* of Cirta. Arrived at the house where the Christians used to meet, Felix, high priest for life and mayor [of the town], said to Paul the bishop: 'Bring out the texts of the law and whatever else you have here, as has been instructed, so that you can obey the order.'

Paul the bishop said: 'The readers[2] have our texts, but we will give you what we have here.'

Felix, high priest for life and mayor [of the town] said to Paul the bishop: 'Point out the readers or send for them.'

Paul the bishop said: 'You know them all.'

Felix, high priest for life and mayor of the town said: 'We do not know them.'

Paul the bishop said: 'The municipal office knows them, that is the clerks Edusius and Junius.'

Felix, high priest for life and mayor of the town said: 'Leaving aside the matter of the readers, whom the office will point out, give us what you have.'

Paul the bishop, and Montanus, Victor Deusatelius and Memorius the priests remained seated; Mars and Helius deacons stood by, as did Marcuclius, Catullinus, Silvanus and Carosus under-deacons. Januarius, Meraclus, Fructuosus, Miggin, Saturninus, Victor [son of Samsuricus] and the other diggers [brought forth the objects].[3] Victor son of Aufidius made the following brief record: two gold cups, also six silver cups, six silver jugs, a silver vessel, seven silver lamps, two candlesticks, seven small bronze candelabra with their lamps, also eleven bronze lamps with their chains, eighty-two women's tunics, thirty-eight cloaks, sixteen men's tunics, thirteen pairs of men's shoes, forty-seven pairs of women's shoes, nineteen rustic belts <?>.[4]

Felix, high priest for life and mayor of the town, said to the diggers Marcuclius, Silvanus and Carosus:[5] 'Bring out what you have.'

Silvanus and Carosus said: 'We have put out everything that was here.'

Felix, high priest for life and mayor of the town, said to Marcuclius, Silvanus and Carosus: 'Your answer is entered in the record.'

After some empty cupboards were found in the library, Silvanus then brought out a silver vase and a silver lamp, which he said he had found behind a chest.

Victor son of Aufidius said to Silvanus: 'You would have been dead, if you had not found them.'

Felix, high priest for life and mayor of the town, said to Silvanus: 'Look more carefully, to make sure nothing is left here.'

Silvanus said: 'Nothing is left; we have put everything out.'

And when the dining-room was opened, they found there four storage jars and six chests.

Felix, high priest for life and mayor of the town, said: 'Bring out the texts that you have so that we can obey the instructions and order of the emperors.'

Catulinus brought out one very large volume.

Felix, high priest for life and mayor of the town, said to Marcuclius and Silvanus: 'Why have you given only one volume? Bring out the texts you have.'

Catulinus and Marcuclius said: 'We have no more, because we are under-deacons. But the readers have the volumes.'

Felix, high priest for life and mayor of the town, said to Marcuclius and Catulinus: 'Point out the readers.'

Marcuclius and Catulinus said: 'We do not know where they live.'

Felix, high priest for life and mayor of the town, said to Catulinus and Marcuclius: 'If you don't know where they live tell me their names.'

Catulinus and Marcuclius said: 'We are not informers. Here we are. Order us to be killed.'

Felix, high priest for life and mayor of the town, said: 'Arrest them.'

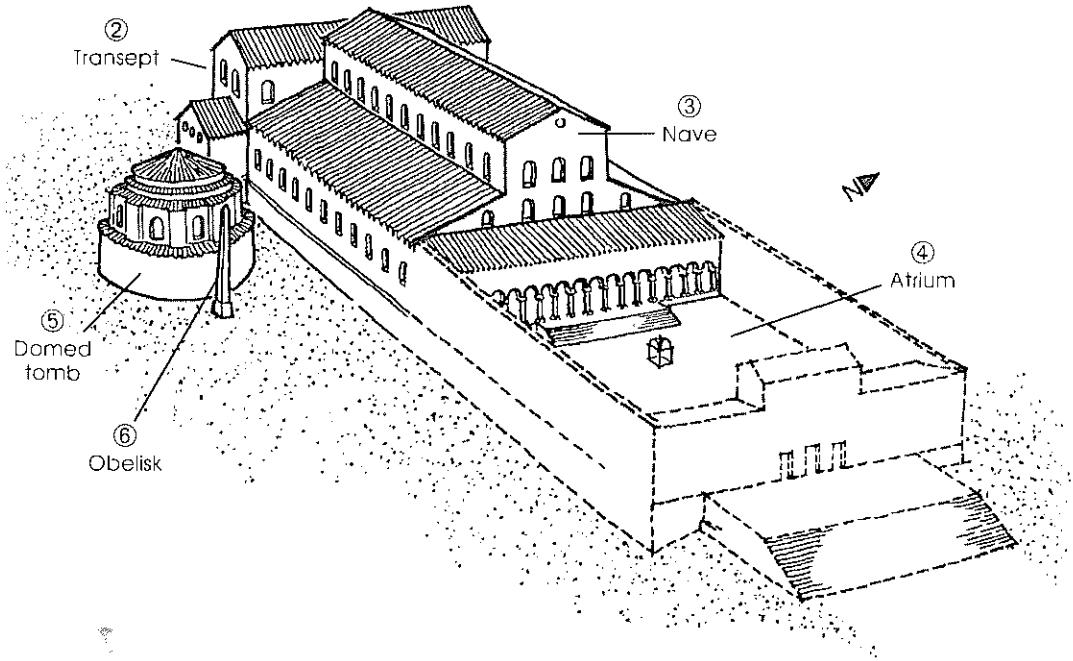
1. Senior official (*flamen perpetuus*) of the imperial cult in the province.
2. Junior clergy, whose main job was to read from the Bible.
3. They buried the Christian dead.
4. The disparity between men's and women's clothing may perhaps suggest that women were in the majority in this Christian community (see Lane Fox (1986) 310). The clothing is not necessarily that of the worshippers; it may have been kept in the church for distribution to the poor (Barnes (1981) 23).
5. Presumably an error. They are elsewhere referred to as under-deacons.

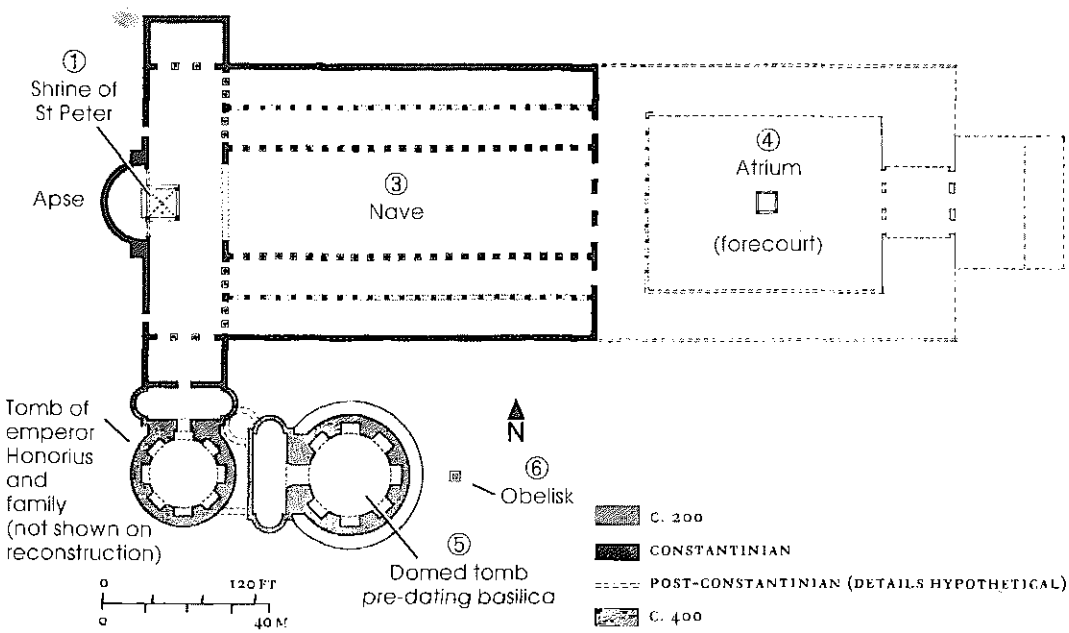
4.15c *The basilica of St Peter in Rome: plan and reconstruction of the early church*

Early in the fourth century (probably in the mid 320s A.D.) Constantine began work on a large basilica on the site of St Peter's tomb, where the faithful might

come to venerate the apostle. At the same time the building was to serve as the centre of a Christian cemetery and the focal point of funeral rituals. The main church, the largest of Constantine's foundations, survived until the sixteenth century, when New St Peter's (the present building) was erected.

See further: Vol. 1, 376–7; Vol. 1, Map 4 no. 61; Toynbee and Ward-Perkins (1956) 195–252*; Krautheimer, Corbett, Frazer (1977) 165–285.



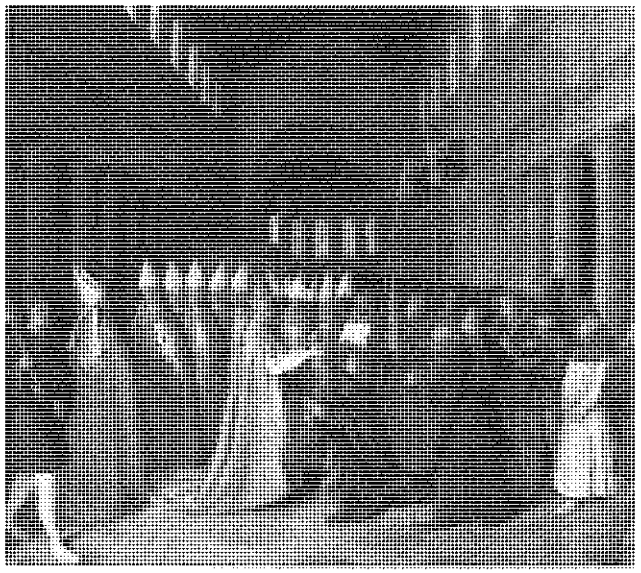


1. Incorporating the earlier shrine of St Peter and his (supposed) tomb, venerated on this site since the second century (Vol. 1, 376–7; **12.7f(iii)**). Although most of the tombs in the old Vatican cemetery were levelled or filled in to provide a firm platform for the new church, the top of Peter's shrine was left visible and newly decorated. Above it the shrine was marked out by a balustrade and covered with a canopy supported by four distinctive spiral columns (the inspiration for Bernini's great 'baldacchino', which stands on this site in New St Peter's). See Ward-Perkins (1952) and the representation of the shrine on a fourth-century ivory casket (Ward-Perkins (1952) plate 1).
2. An unusual feature in a basilica church of this date (where the aisles of the nave normally carried right through to the apse-end). Here it was probably intended to provide more ample space for the faithful around the shrine.
3. Used itself as a burial place in the fourth century. The original altar (probably portable) may have stood at the end of the nave, in front of the shrine. This was the original location of the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (Vol. 1, fig. 8.2).
4. In use by the end of the fourth century, but not finally completed until the early sixth century.
5. Left intact when the basilica was constructed; later (like the fifth-century tomb of Honorius next to it) converted into a chapel. Finally used as a sacristy, it was incorporated into New St Peter's and only demolished in 1777.
6. Surviving from the adornment of the first-century A.D. circus that stood on this spot; in 1586, moved to the piazza in front of St Peter's (where it still stands).

4.15d *Fifteenth-century view of the interior of Old St Peter's*

In a series of illustrations of important events in French history, the fifteenth-century artist Jean Fouquet painted the scene of the crowning of the emperor Charlemagne (A.D. 800) in Old St Peter's. Although the figures are drawn from the artist's imagination, the representation of the interior of the church is probably fairly accurate. Fouquet had almost certainly visited St Peter's between 1443 and 1447, and it had then little changed since the period of its foundation.

See further: Krautheimer, Corbett, Frazer (1977) 222–3.



5 *Festivals and ceremonies*

Ritual solemnity, formal processions, prayers, sacrifice. All these had an important part to play in Roman religious festivals. But so also (just as in our own culture) did less solemn activities: theatrical performances, racing, gift-giving, eating and drinking. Roman festivals were, in fact, strikingly diverse. Some were part of the regular cycle of celebrations prescribed in the Roman calendar (see **chap. 3**); others (although taking place on specific dates, at regular intervals) were never included in that formal calendar of festivals; some were public affairs, involving widespread popular participation; others took place privately, with no 'official' ceremonial; some had an origin lost in the earliest history of the city; others were 'invented' in much more recent, well-documented times. There was no one type of Roman religious celebration.

This chapter concentrates on the festivals that took place in the city of Rome itself: starting from major celebrations of the official religious calendar (**5.1–4**), and the contradictory images of conservatism and innovation in those celebrations (**5.5**), it moves on to the ceremonies of 'oriental' deities (**5.6**), to the religious ceremonial of the games (**5.7**) and the triumph (**5.8**). These specifically *Roman* celebrations were, however, just one small part of the religious rituals of the Roman empire as a whole and they were not systematically exported to (or imposed on) conquered provincial communities. Roman soldiers and some Roman citizens resident in the provinces would probably have observed the major religious festivals of the capital with some sacrifice or celebration (note, for example, the religious observances of the Roman *coloniae* – **10.2**; or of army units – **3.5**). But generally a visitor to a provincial town in Greece or Gaul would not have found the festivals of the city of Rome reproduced on provincial territory; instead a varied range of local ritual customs were practised even under Roman political control.

See further: for brief discussion of all major traditional festivals, Warde Fowler (1899); Scullard (1981)*; for full citation of ancient sources for each regular festival, Degrassi (1963); for *Roman* celebrations outside Rome, Vol. 1, 320–39.

5.1 The Parilia

The festival of the Parilia took place annually on 21 April (see **3.3**). It was a ritual concerned with the well-being of flocks and herds, and also, by the late

Republic, associated with the anniversary of Rome's foundation – as the birthday celebration of the city itself. It is tempting to think of this double significance in terms of a chronological development, from pastoral to political ceremony, and, if that is the case, it shows clearly how an individual festival could take on radically new meanings, even when there was no marked change in the details of the ritual performed. But in fact, the political aspect of the festival may be as old as its pastoral aspect.

See further: Vol. 1, 174–6; Beard (1987); on the deity Pales, Dumézil (1969) 273–87; (1970) 380–5; on the myth and 'reality' of an early Roman pastoral society, Ampolo (1988).

5.1a *The festival and its origins*

Ovid here describes some of the rituals of the Parilia, claiming that he himself has performed the ceremony. His description appears to refer both to ceremonies taking place in the city (at which he himself participated) and those celebrated at a local or village level. Ovid also offers various explanations for the origin of the Parilia – ending with an allusion to Rome's foundation.

Ovid, *Fasti* IV.721–46, 783–806

Night has gone and dawn is appearing. I am called upon to tell of the Parilia – and not called in vain, if kindly Pales grants her favour.[1] Kindly Pales, please grant your favour to one who sings of shepherds' rites, if I show dutiful respect to your festival. I can assure you, I have often myself borne along, with loaded hands, the ashes of the calf and the beanstalks – the sacred materials of purification; I can assure you, I have personally leapt over the fires, arranged three in a row, and the moist laurel has sprinkled its drops of water over me.[2] The goddess is moved and grants her favour to my work. My ship is leaving its dock; now my sails find their fair wind. Go, people, and bring from the virginal altar the materials of purification. Vesta will provide them; by Vesta's generosity you will be pure. The blood of a horse will make up those materials, together with the ashes of a calf; the third ingredient will be the empty stalk of a hard bean.[3]

(735) Shepherd, purify your well-fed sheep as dusk first falls.[4] First sprinkle the ground with water and sweep it with a broom; decorate the sheep-pen with leaves and branches fastened upon it; deck out the door and cover it with a long garland. Make blue smoke from pure sulphur, and let your sheep bleat when she is touched by the smoking sulphur. Burn up the wood of male olive trees, pine and juniper; and let the laurel singe and crackle in the middle of the hearth. Put a basket of millet with the millet cakes; the country goddess takes especial pleasure in this kind of food. Add her favourite morsels and a pail of milk, and when the morsels have been cut up, pray to sylvan Pales, with an offering of warm milk.

<After the words of the prayer (asking Pales to protect the cattle and sheep) and further description of the ritual, including the leaping

through the flames of the bonfires, Ovid considers the origins of the festival.>

(783) I have described the custom; it remains for me to set out its origin. The multitude of explanations causes a doubt, and holds back my project at its very start. Devouring fire purifies everything and burns the impurities out of metals; so for that reason it purifies the sheep and their shepherd too. Or is it because those two irreconcilable deities, fire and water, are the opposing principles that make up everything? And for this reason our ancestors joined these elements together and thought it right to touch the body with fire and drops of water? Or is it because the origin of life is contained in these elements, that people regard them as particularly important – and because the exile loses them, because they turn a bride into a wife?[5] I hardly believe so. There are those who would imagine that the reference is to Phaethon[6] and Deucalion's flood.[7] Some also say that, when shepherds were striking rock against rock, a spark suddenly sprang forth; the first spark died, but the second was caught in straw. Is this the reason for the flame at the Parilia? Or did this custom rather derive from the piety of Aeneas, who was given a clear passage by the flames even in his defeat?[8] Or is it not closer to the truth that, when Rome was founded, orders were given that the household gods be transferred to the new houses; and that, in changing their homes, the farmers set fire to their country houses and the cottages they were about to leave and leapt through the flames with their cattle too? It is a practice that continues even now on your birthday, Rome.[9]

1. The deity associated with the festival is here treated as a goddess (though other accounts imply that Pales was male). Compare the uncertainty over the sex and character of Robigo, **2.2b**.
2. The ceremony appears to involve lighting bonfires, scattering materials of purification in the flames and leaping over the fires.
3. *Ideally* (though it could not have been the case in practice, at least not for all participants) the material of purification was supposed to be made by the Vestal Virgins (see 8.4). The ingredients included the ashes of the unborn calves (sacrificed at the ceremony of Fordicidia, 15 April – **3.3a** n.4) and the dried blood of a horse (sacrificed at the ceremony of the October Horse, 15 October).
4. At this point, with the address to the 'Shepherd', Ovid seems to move on to the rural version of the festival; see Vol. 1, 175.
5. A man exiled from Rome was formally 'deprived of fire and water'; when the new bride entered her marital home, she was offered fire and water.
6. In Greek mythology, the son of Helios (the sun); he attempted to drive his father's chariot, but was unable to control it and would have set the world on fire had not Zeus/Jupiter put him to death with a thunderbolt.
7. The Greek 'equivalent' of Noah; according to mythological accounts, he survived a world flood by building an ark.
8. Aeneas escaped safely from the blazing city of Troy.
9. Ovid has by now worked round to explanations connected with the founding of Rome. In the following passage he offers a lengthy account of the story of Romulus and Remus.

5.1b *Pastoral festival to political celebration*

Here Plutarch attempts to rationalize the different associations of the Parilia. He suggests two chronological changes: (a) the development of a *pre*-Roman pastoral festival into a festival commemorating the foundation of the city; (b) the introduction of animal sacrifice into a festival which had originally been 'bloodless' (see 6.4).

Plutarch, *Life of Romulus* 12.1

Now it is generally agreed that the foundation of the city took place eleven days before the Kalends of May <21 April>. And this day is celebrated by the Romans with a festival, which they call the birthday of their country. In the beginning, so it is said, they sacrificed no living creature – but thought that they should keep pure and bloodless the festival commemorating the birthday of their country. However, even before the city's foundation, they had a herdsmen's festival on that day and they called it 'the Parilia'.

5.1c *The Festival of Rome*

In the second century A.D., the Parilia gained the alternative title 'Romaia' ('Festival of Rome' – see 3.3d and 3.5, both under 21 April). In this passage Athenaeus evokes the noisy celebrations that accompanied the rituals of Rome's birthday.

See further: for the developments under Hadrian, Vol. 1, 257–8; Beaujeu (1955) 128–33.

Athenaeus, *Table-talk* VIII.361 e-f

While the conversation was continuing in this kind of way,[1] right then throughout the whole city was heard the resounding note of the pipes, the clash of the cymbals and the beat of the drums, accompanied by singing. It turned out that it was the festival of the Parilia, as it used to be called – now known as the Romaia, to commemorate the foundation of the temple of the Fortune of the City of Rome by the universally greatest and most cultured emperor Hadrian. That day is celebrated each year as a special occasion by all the inhabitants of Rome and by those staying in the city.

1. The dramatic setting is a dinner-table conversation in a house at Rome.

5.2 The Lupercalia

The festival of the Lupercalia (marked in calendars on 15 February) presents us with even more difficult problems of interpretation than the Parilia. Ancient accounts of what happened during the ritual do not vary much – though they do not agree on the route taken by the naked, or near-naked runners, who raced around the city. But writers offer very different, sometimes contradictory,

accounts of the religious significance of the ceremonies. These differences were themselves a cause of interest and bafflement to those Romans who looked on their own religious traditions with an antiquarian or academic eye. But it would be wrong to imagine that for most participants at the festival 'problems of interpretation' were at issue. At any celebration (of this or any other festival) there was no doubt a profusion of individual views, understandings and explanations. That profusion only becomes 'problematic' if we (or the Roman analysts) attempt to reach a single authoritative account of the significance of the ritual.

See further: Vol. 1, 47 and n.143; Harmon (1978) 1441–6*; Hopkins (1991)*.

5.2a *The peculiarities of the Lupercalia*

Besides describing some of the (to him) stranger aspects of the festival, Plutarch offers two different explanations of its significance: that it is a ceremony of purification; and/or that it is a commemoration of the myth of Romulus and Remus and their suckling by the wolf.

Plutarch, *Life of Romulus* 21.3–8

The Lupercalia, to judge from the time of its celebration, would seem to be a festival of purification. For it is performed on the inauspicious days[1] of the month of February (a name which may be explained as meaning 'purificatory') – and in early times they used to call the day itself 'Febrata'. But the name of the festival has a sense equivalent to the Greek 'Lycaea' <feast of wolves>, and because of that it seems to be exceedingly ancient, going back to the Arcadians under Evander.[2] In fact this is the generally accepted explanation; for it is possible that the name is derived from the she-wolf <'lycaina'>.[3] Moreover we see that the *luperci*[4] start out on their circuit of the city from the place where Romulus is said to have been exposed.[5] But what actually happens in the festival makes it hard to hazard a guess about its origin. For they sacrifice goats; then two boys of noble family are brought forward – and some touch their foreheads with a bloody knife, and others immediately wipe off the blood using wool soaked in milk. Once they have been wiped, the boys must laugh. After this, they cut the goat skins into strips and run about naked but for a belt around their waist, striking anyone in their path with the thongs. And women of childbearing age do not try to escape the blows, believing that they help towards fertility and easy childbirth.[6] A distinctive feature of the festival is that the *luperci* sacrifice a dog as well.

(6) A certain Butas,[7] who wrote of the mythical origins of Roman customs in elegiac verse, says that the followers of Romulus, once they had defeated Amulius,[8] raced joyfully to the spot where the she-wolf suckled the twins when they were babies; and that the festival is conducted as an imitation of that race, and that the boys of noble family run:

> Striking those they meet – as long ago, with sword in hand,
> From the town of Alba, Romulus and Remus ran.

And he suggests that the bloody sword is applied to their foreheads as a symbol of the

slaughter and danger of that time; and the cleansing with milk is a reminder of how the twins were nourished. Caius Acilius,[9] on the other hand, writes that before the foundation of the city Romulus' companions once lost their flocks; they prayed to Faunus and then ran off to find them – naked, so that they should not be troubled by sweat. And this, he suggests, is the reason that the *luperci* run around naked. As for the dog, one might say (if it really is a purificatory sacrifice) that it is sacrificed as a means of purification. For the Greeks also in rituals of purification bring out puppies and in many places practice what they call 'periskylakismoi'.[10] But if they perform these rites as a thank offering to the she-wolf, for the saving and nourishing of Romulus, it is not without reason that a dog is sacrificed. For the god is the enemy of wolves – unless, by Zeus, the animal is being punished for annoying the *luperci* when they run their course.

1. The days marked N (*nefastus*) in the calendar; see **3.1**.
2. According to Roman myth, the first king to settle on the site of Rome; he had migrated from Arcadia in Greece. The Romans regarded this 'pre-Roman' Rome as the origin of some of their most ancient religious traditions; see Vol. 1, 2–3.
3. The wolf who suckled the twins.
4. The priests who conducted the ceremony; they formed two colleges, the '*luperci Quinctiales*' and the '*luperci Fabiani*'. Their total number and length of service is unknown. By the late Republic they included not only men of high status (such as Mark Antony, see **5.2h**), but also ex-slaves.
5. Plutarch implies here that the *luperci* ran in a circle around an area of the city (probably the Palatine hill, the limit of the earliest Roman settlement), starting from the so-called 'Lupercal' (the cave where Romulus and Remus were found by the wolf). This circular course has suggested to many scholars that the ceremony was the equivalent of a 'beating the bounds' of the earliest city. But see **5.2d**.
6. Some scholars have seen this association with fertility as the central significance of the festival.
7. A Greek poet whose history of Rome has not survived.
8. The usurper king of Alba Longa, who exposed the twins.
9. Second-century B.C. Roman author, who wrote a history of Rome (now lost) in Greek.
10. The Greek term means a ritual in which a *puppy* ('skylax') was carried *around* ('peri').

5.2b *Caesar and the Lupercalia*

The most famous celebration of the Lupercalia took place in 44 B.C., when Mark Antony used the occasion to offer Julius Caesar a royal diadem – and so also the title and position of king. It is possible that Antony chose the Lupercalia as the time to make his offer simply because it was a well-attended festival, where some of the many onlookers might be expected to applaud the gesture. But it is also possible that there was a more specific reason for his choice of the Lupercalia. Some modern scholars have suggested that in earliest times the festival was concerned with the conferral and confirmation of royal power, and that Antony's actions in 44 B.C. indicate a recollection of that original significance.

See further: Gelzer (1968) 320–2*; Dumézil (1970) 349–50; Weinstock (1971) 331–40; Alföldi (1974) 86–106; Dumézil (1975) 157–60.

Plutarch, *Life of Caesar* 61.3–4

Caesar was watching these ceremonies,[1] seated on the *rostra* on a golden throne, dressed in triumphal costume.[2] Antony was one of the runners of the sacred race; and in fact he was also consul. So he rushed into the Forum – the crowd parting to make way for him – and offered to Caesar the diadem[3] he was carrying, entwined with a wreath of laurel. There was some applause, not very hearty, but desultory and contrived. But when Caesar pushed it away, the whole people burst into applause; and a second time just a few applauded when Antony repeated the offer, but everyone did when Caesar refused it. So the experiment failed,[4] and Caesar rose and ordered the wreath to be taken to the Capitoline temple.[5] But it was noticed that his statues were dressed up in royal diadems. So two of the tribunes, Flavius and Marullus, went and tore them off; then they searched out those who had first hailed Caesar 'king' and carried them off to prison.

1. The Lupercalia.
2. That is, the costume of a victorious general on the day of his triumph – see **1.9a**; **5.8**.
3. Diadems were the distinctive attribute of kings of the Hellenistic Greek East – a symbol of foreign monarchy, in conflict with the traditions of republican Rome.
4. The implication is that this event was staged by Antony and Caesar to test public opinion.
5. That is, he sent the diadem to Jupiter Optimus Maximus – whom he said (according to Dio, XLIV.11.3) was the 'only king of Rome.'

5.2c *The Lupercalia as a festival of the dead*

The Lupercalia fell within the period of the Parentalia (13–22 February), the major Roman festival concerned with the dead. Some comments by ancient authors (such as this passage of Varro on the derivation of the name 'February') suggest that the Lupercalia could be seen in the context of the underworld and of the spirits of the dead.

See further: Michels (1953)*.

Varro, *On the Latin Language* VI.34

Two months were added to these:[1] the first is called 'Januarius' after the god who comes first in order;[2] the second, as the same writers claim, is called 'Februarius' after the gods of the underworld <*di inferi*>, on the grounds that these deities are offered sacrifice at this time of year. I prefer to think 'Februarius' is named after the Day of Purification <*dies februatus*>, because the people are purified <*februatur*> on that day – that is the naked *luperci* go round the ancient Palatine city, which is surrounded by human flocks.[3]

1. That is, to the original ten months of the Roman year, March to December.
2. Janus; for his priority in ritual see, for example, the invocation (starting from Janus) in **6.6a**.
3. This sentence has been the subject of much discussion. It has commonly been seen as a reference to the circular course of the *luperci* around the city, purifying (by striking with the lash – see **5.2a**) the people who stood round about. Michels (1953), however, not accepting the circular route (see **5.2d**), suggests that the 'human flocks' are to be

understood as the flocks of *the dead*, who during February 'besieged' the city. The purification performed by the *luperci* was thus the purification of the city from the pollution of the dead.

5.2d *The route of the luperci*

The idea that the Lupercalia represented a 'beating of bounds' around the ancient city limits of Rome depends on assuming that the *luperci* ran literally in a circular course *around* the area of the earliest settlement. Several ancient sources, as we have seen, imply that route. But here Augustine refers to their running *up and down* the Sacred Way. The different route suggested involves a different view of the ritual's meaning.

See further: Michels (1953)*.

Augustine, *The City of God* XVIII.12

For people also[1] explain the ascent and descent of the *luperci* along the Sacred Way[2] in this way, saying that they represent the men who made for the mountain tops on account of the floods, and returned again to the low-lying ground when the floods subsided.

1. Augustine has been discussing cults instituted to commemorate the deliverance of the human race from flood.
2. The road running through the Forum up to the Capitoline. Michels (1953) lays much stress on the fact that the Forum was the ancient burial ground of the city – see 5.2c.

5.2e *The Lupercalia and the Christians*

The Lupercalia continued to be celebrated into the fifth century A.D. At the very end of that century, the bishop of Rome prohibited Christians from taking part; but his ruling was contested by some Christians who considered that the traditional ritual should continue to be carried out. In this passage the bishop replies to his critics among the Roman elite, accusing them of inconsistency.

See further: Vol. 1, ix–x, 388; Green (1931); Pomares (1959); Holleman (1974); and (on whether the bishop concerned is, as is usually assumed, Gelasius I or his predecessor Felix III) Y.-M. Duval (1977).

Gelasius, *Letter against the Lupercalia* 16

But what do you yourselves say – you who defend the Lupercalia and claim that it ought to be celebrated? You yourselves are devaluing the festival; you are making its cult and its solemnity cheap and common. If the spurning of the Lupercalia has brought adversity upon us,[1] the fault is yours; for although you consider the festival particularly beneficial, you reckon it is to be celebrated carelessly, and with much less reverence and piety than your ancestors in paganism celebrated it. For in their day nobles themselves took part in the running, and married women received the lash, appearing naked in public. It is you who committed the first offence against the Lupercalia. It would have been better not to

carry it out at all, than to celebrate it wrongly. But you have abandoned this cult that you think is so venerable and important for our well-being to common, vulgar characters, the down-and-outs, men of the lowest birth.

1. One of the main arguments used by the bishop's opponents was that the banning of the festival had brought disaster on the city.

5.3 The Saturnalia

The Saturnalia (marked in the calendar on 17 December) had both a public and a well-known private aspect. Alongside the formal sacrifice and banquet at the temple of Saturn (7.3a n.8), the festival involved private parties (sometimes extending over several days) and the exchange of gifts. The festival remained popular in the third and fourth centuries A.D. – and its customs became incorporated into the Christian celebrations of New Year and Christmas.

See further: Vol. 1, 50 and n.154; Balsdon (1969) 124–6*; Dupont (1992) 203–5*; Versnel (1993) 136–227.

5.3a *The topsy-turvy world of the Saturnalia*

Religious festivals sometimes gave licence to disrupt (temporarily) the established social rules and hierarchies. One of the best-known aspects of the private Saturnalia was the privilege of wining and dining that was briefly extended to household slaves. In this passage, Macrobius interrupts the dialogue of his *Saturnalia* (whose dramatic setting was – as the title suggests – this particular festival), with news of the slaves' dinner party.

Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.24.22–3

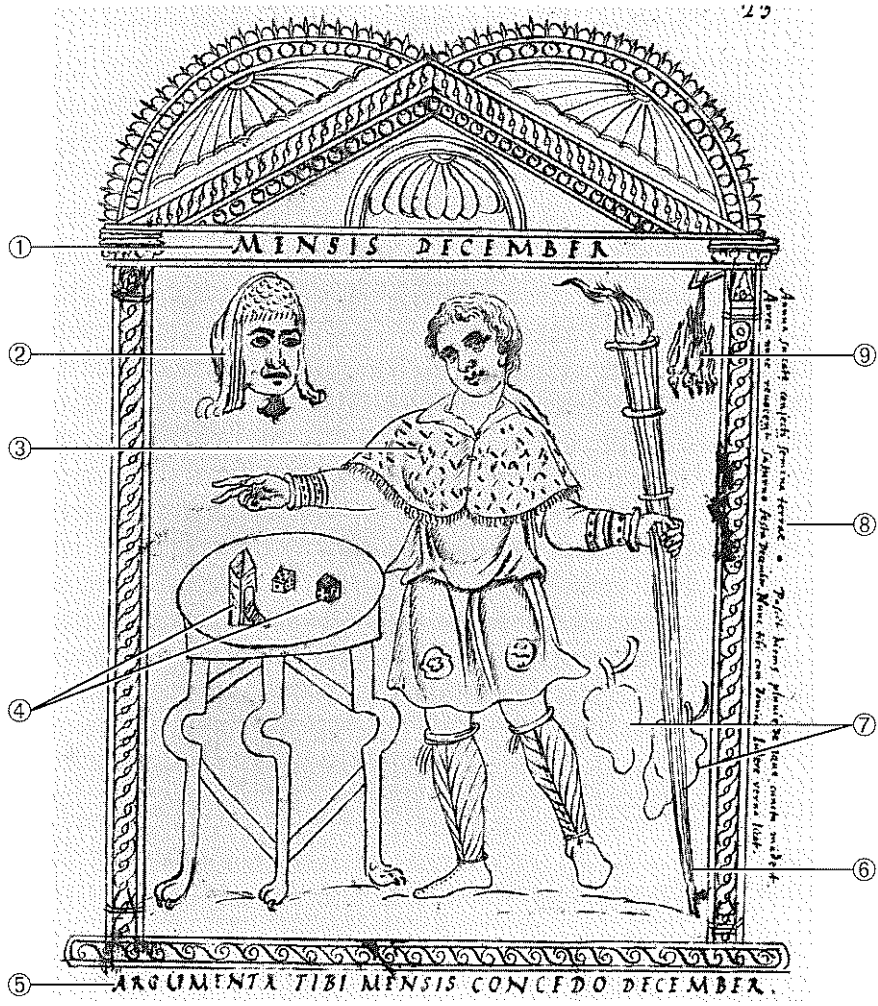
Meanwhile the head of the slave household, whose responsibility it was to offer sacrifice to the Penates, to manage the provisions and to direct the activities of the domestic servants, came to tell his master that the household had feasted according to the annual ritual custom. For at this festival, in houses that keep to proper religious usage, they first of all honour the slaves with a dinner prepared as if for the master;[1] and only afterwards is the table set again for the head of the household. So, then, the chief slave came in to announce the time of dinner and to summon the masters to table.

1. Some ancient writers even suggest that the masters waited on the slaves at this meal.

5.3b *The party spirit*

In the calendar of Filocalus (see 3.3d) the illustration for the month of December depicts a Saturnalian party-goer. This version is taken from a seventeenth-century manuscript copy of the calendar. Height of figure, *c.* 0.20 m.

See further: H. Stern (1953) 283–6; Salzman (1990) 74–6*.



1. 'The month December'.
2. Mask – alluding to games of disguise played at the festival. Although the mask resembles a theatrical mask, there is no evidence of any public theatrical performances at this time.
3. The costume of this male figure has been variously interpreted. The short tunic has been taken to indicate a slave – and so one of the principal participants of the festival. Alternatively, he has been seen as dressed simply in the normal winter costume of a country dweller.
4. Dice with the dice-tower, through which the dice were thrown – a reference to the gaming and gambling associated with these celebrations.
5. 'I grant the subjects of the month of December to you.'
6. The torch alludes to the night-time (as well as day-time) celebration of the Saturnalian parties.
7. Heart-shaped objects, not clearly identifiable.
8. Four lines of verse:
   'Behold winter nourishes the seed thrown each year into the ploughed earth; all is wet with rain sent from Jupiter. Now let December call once more the golden festival for Saturn. Now you, slave, are allowed to play with your master.'
9. Birds hanging – the catch of winter-hunting; perhaps also a Saturnalian gift.

5.3c *Escaping the Saturnalia*

Not everyone at Rome enjoyed holidays. For some, in fact, it was a mark of status to parade a detached attitude to this kind of popular jollification. Here Pliny, describing the layout of his villa, offers his own view of the Saturnalia.

Pliny, *Letters* II.17.23–4

Then there is an ante-chamber and a bedroom built to face the sun, which catches the first rays in the morning and keeps the light (albeit obliquely) until past midday. When I retreat into these rooms, I feel that I am really quite away from my own house; and I take great pleasure in this – particularly at the Saturnalia, when the rest of the place resounds with merry shouts in the free spirit of the holiday. For in this way I do not interrupt my household's amusements, nor they my work.

5.4 The *Salii* and their rituals

Some religious festivals at Rome were connected with Rome's activities in war. The priests known as the *Salii* performed their ritual dances and songs through the streets of the city over several days in both March and October – months which marked (in the primitive community of early Rome) the beginning and end of the annual campaigning season. These ceremonies continued even when Roman military operations extended well beyond the summer months.

See further: R. Bloch (1960) 134–41*; Ogilvie (1970) 98–9*; for a critique of the idea of a 'war-cycle' of rituals, Rüpke (1990) 22–7; for the rituals on the declaration of war, see 1.4a; 5.5d, and on military victory 5.8.

5.4a *Dancing warriors*

Dionysius describes the costume and dances of the *Salii*. Writing primarily for a Greek audience (and in order to argue that Roman religious institutions derived from Greece – see 5.7a), he attempts to show that the rituals can best be explained by relating them to Greek myth and practice.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* II.70.1–5

The sixth part of his religious legislation was devoted to those whom the Romans call *Salii*.[1] Numa himself appointed them from among the patricians, choosing the twelve most handsome young men. Their sacred objects are kept on the Palatine hill, and they themselves are known as the *Palatini*. For the *Agonales*, who are called by some the *Salii Collini*, and whose sacred repository is on the crest of the Quirinal, were appointed after Numa's reign by the king Hostilius, in fulfilment of a vow that he made in the war against the Sabines.[2] All these *Salii* are a kind of troupe of dancers and singers of praise in honour of the gods of war. Their festival takes place around the time of the Panathenaea,[3]

in the month called 'Martius' <March>. It is conducted at public expense, over many days, during which the *Salii* lead their dances through the city to the Forum and the Capitoline hill, and to many other places, both public and private. They are dressed in embroidered tunics clasped with bronze belts, and crimson-striped robes edged with purple, fastened with brooches; these robes are called 'trabeae', a distinctively Roman garment and a mark of the greatest honour amongst them. On their heads are set so-called 'apices', high caps narrowing into the shape of a cone, that the Greeks call 'kyrbasiai'. Each one of them has a sword hanging from his belt, and in his right hand wields a spear or a rod or some other such weapon, and in his left holds a Thracian shield. This is like a diamond-shaped shield, drawn in ar the sides to form two hollows[4] – just like those carried, it is said, by the men amongst the Greeks who perform the sacred rituals of the *Kouretes*.[5] And the *Salii* are, if you translate the title into Greek, *Kouretes*; at least that is my opinion. Their Greek name derives from their time of life, because they are 'young men' <Greek: 'kouroi'>; their Roman name from their spirited movements. For the Latin word for 'to jump' and 'to leap' is *salire*. And for the same reason they call all other dancers *saltatores*, deriving the word from the *Salii* – because in their dancing there is much leaping and springing. Whether I have made a correct interpretation in giving them this title, anyone who wants will be able to judge from the actions they perform. For in their armour they make rhythmic movements to the sound of the flute, sometimes in unison, sometimes in turn; and they sing some traditional hymns while dancing. And it was the *Kouretes*, if we are to judge from ancient stories, who first established dancing and displays of movement under arms and the ringing that comes from shields struck by daggers.[6]

1. This passage is part of a review of the religious foundations of Rome's second king, Numa (1.2) – listed under eight separate headings.
2. Dionysius refers to the two sub-groups of *Salii* (*Palatini* and *Agonales/Collini*), whose origins were attributed to two different kings – the second group to Tullus Hostilius, the third king of Rome, following his victory over the enemy Sabines.
3. Dionysius uses the title of the great Athenian festival of the goddess Athena to refer to the Roman Quinquatrus (19–23 March), the festival of Minerva (the Roman equivalent of Athena).
4. See 5.4b.
5. A cult association from Mt Ida on the island of Crete, who brandished shields, performed war dances and sang ritual chants.
6. Dionysius is here referring to the *mythical* Kouretes (the legendary antecedents of the Cretan cult association). According to tradition, they protected the infant god Zeus by banging and clashing their shields – so drowning his cries and concealing his whereabouts from his father Kronos, who was intent on swallowing him.

5.4b *The Salian shields ('ancilia')*

The most distinctive feature of the *Salii* were their figure-of-eight shields (*ancilia*) – which, according to a later passage of Dionysius (*Roman Antiquities* II.71.1), were worn by the priests themselves and also (as shown on this fourth- or third-century B.C. gemstone, 0.013 m. × 0.017 m.) carried along by their

servants, suspended on rods. The shields were apparently identical; but amongst them was one which, according to tradition, had fallen directly from heaven into the palace of Numa – the others being made to match in order to confuse potential thieves.

See further: Beard (1989) 42, 49; for archaeological details and other representations, Schäfer (1980).

1. In Etruscan script, 'Appius alce' ('Appius gave this'). The use of Etruscan language could suggest that the gem-engraver had in mind one of the groups of Salian priests that existed in other towns of central Italy, rather than those of Rome itself.

5.4c *The Salian hymn*

The hymn sung by the *Salii* in the course of their dancing had become by the first century A.D. a byword for archaism and unintelligibility – as this passage from Quintilian's handbook on rhetoric remarks.

See further: R. L. Gordon (1990a) 188–9, on the importance of unintelligibility; for the surviving Latin fragments of the hymn, K. Buechner, *Fragmenta Poetarum Latinorum* (Leipzig, 1982) 1–4.

Quintilian, *Education of an Orator* I.6.40–1

But one should exercise restraint <in the use of archaic words>, neither employing them often, nor for show. For there is nothing more irritating than affectation. And they should not be dredged up from a period long gone and forgotten – words like *topper* <'forthwith'>, *antigerio* <'mightily'>, *exanclare* <'to endure'>, *prosapia* <'stock'>, and the language of the hymn of the *Salii*, which is now hardly understood by its own priests. But religion forbids those words to be altered, and we must treat them as holy objects.[1] But as for a speech, on the other hand, whose main virtue is clarity – how faulty must it be, if it needs an interpreter?

1. In fact there were changes in the formula: the senate decreed that the name of the emperor Augustus should be inserted; and Marcus Aurelius included the name of his dead son. These insertions are a clear indication that despite the unintelligibity (and despite Quintilian's strictures) the hymn retained symbolic significance. For the image of conservatism in Roman ritual more generally, see 5.5a.

5.5 Ritual conservatism and innovation

Roman religious ritual can be characterized as *both* rigidly conservative *and* extraordinarily open to innovation. Alongside a stress on strict adherence to the traditional rules of religious observance, the history of Roman religion was marked by novelty and change: not only the introduction of new festivals for particular deities or changes in the interpretation of festivals, but also new *forms* of ritual, and *adaptations* of ritual performance to fit changing circumstances. The passages that follow explore this paradox – starting from an expression of the importance of the exact performance of the prescribed ritual formulae, then contrasting this with two particular types of innovation in ritual, the *lectisternium* (5.5b and c) and changes in the fetial ritual (5.5d).

See further: Vol 1, 32–4; North (1976)*.

5.5a *Scrupulous observance*

In discussing the general question 'do words have power?', the Elder Pliny draws on examples from Roman religion. He notes, in particular, the importance attached to repeating the prescribed formulae of prayers or sacrifice without any alteration or omission. In principle at least, whole ceremonies could be required to be repeated if minor errors in pronouncing the formulae or in other ritual actions occurred.

See further: Köves-Zulauf (1972) 21–34; North (1976) 1–5*.

Pliny, *Natural History* XXVIII.10–11

In fact a sacrifice without a prayer is thought to have no effect, or not to constitute a proper consultation of the gods.[1] Besides, one kind of formula is used in seeking omens, another in averting evil, another for praise. We see too that senior magistrates make their prayers using a precise form of words: someone dictates the formula from a written text to ensure that no word is omitted or spoken in the wrong order;[2] someone else is assigned as an overseer to check <what is spoken>; yet another man is given the task of ensuring silence; and a piper plays to prevent anything else but the prayer being audible. There are records of remarkable cases of both types of fault – when the actual sound of ill omens has spoilt the prayer, or when the prayer has been spoken wrongly. Then suddenly, as the victim stood there, its head <that is, a part of the liver> or heart has disappeared from the entrails, or alternatively a second head or heart has been produced.[3]

1. Suggesting public belief in the *power* of words.
2. See, for example, 5.7b line 123; 6.6a; 10.1c.
3. These abnormalities of the entrails would make it an ill-omened sacrifice – simply because (as Pliny claims) the prayer had been incorrectly recited. See 13.2.

5.5b *The first 'lectisternium'*

The *lectisternium*, a banquet given to, and in honour of, the gods was first celebrated in the early fourth century B.C. and was incorporated into several major festivals. It is likely that the custom was introduced to Rome from the Greek world, where such banquets were well known. Although Livy's description here of the first Roman celebration of a *lectisternium* does not make its origin explicit, various features of his account (some of the deities honoured and the role of the Sibylline Books – see **1.8**; 7.5) strongly suggest a Greek background.

See further: Vol. 1, 63; Taylor (1935); Gagé (1955) 168–79; Dumézil (1970) 567–8*; Ogilvie (1970) 655–8.

Livy, *History* V.13.5–8

When they managed to find neither the cause nor any means of ending the incurable plague of that winter,[1] the Sibylline Books were consulted by decree of the senate. The *duoviri sacris faciundis*[2] celebrated the first *lectisternium* ever held in the city of Rome, and for eight days they appeased Apollo and Latona and Diana, Hercules, Mercury and Neptune,[3] with three couches spread as magnificently as it was then possible to furnish. The rite was also celebrated in private houses. Throughout the whole city doors stood ajar, everything was left out in the open to be shared by anyone who wished, and they say that all visitors – whether known or unknown – were welcomed hospitably, while people exchanged friendly and courteous words with their enemies, setting aside their quarrels and disputes. Prisoners too were freed from their chains for those days; and afterwards they felt scruples about imprisoning those whom the gods had helped in this way.

1. A plague had broken out in the middle of Rome's war against the town of Veii. All the earliest *lectisternia* were carried out in response to plague.
2. This priesthood of two men (*duoviri*) is the earliest form of the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*.
3. The precise combination of deities is a puzzle. But note that Apollo and Latona (Greek Leto, Apollo's mother) is a distinctively Greek pairing; and that Apollo is commonly associated with healing and protection from plague.

5.5c *Goddesses at the banquet*

This marble sculpture probably represents two goddesses at a *lectisternium*. Although discovered in the region of Praeneste (near Rome – see **4.9**), the deities have been tentatively identified as the two Fortunae (Fortunes) associated with the neighbouring town of Antium. Height, 0.50 m.

See further: Brendel (1960); Champeaux (1982–7) I.152–5.

1. Each goddess is supported on two poles – on which they would have been carried.
2. Probably the couch (*pulvinar*) for the sacred banquet. However, the presence of the snake (often a religious symbol of the home – see 4.12) has suggested other interpretations – for example, that this is intended to represent a marriage bed, under the protection of the Fortunes.

5.5d *Changes in the fetial ritual for declaring war*

The fetial ritual for the declaration of war (see 1.4a) provides a striking example of radical change in the performance of a particular ritual. The traditional procedure involved the ferial priests travelling to the borders of the enemy territory and hurling a spear into it. As Rome's territories grew and her enemies became more distant (often hundreds of miles away across the sea), this practice could hardly be sustained. This passage (taken from an ancient commentary on Virgil's *Aeneid*) reflects the later character of the fetial ritual, while offering a perhaps fanciful explanarion of how exactly the change was made.

See further: Vol 1, 132–4; McDonald and Walbank (1937); Oost (1954); Rawson (1973a); Rich (1976) 56–60, 104–7*; Rüpke (1990) 105–7.

Servius, *On Virgil's Aeneid* IX.52

When thirty-three days had elapsed after they had demanded redress, the fetial priests used to hurl a spear against the enemy.[1] But later, in the time of Pyrrhus,[2] the Romans were going to wage war against an overseas enemy and could find no place for the *fetiales* to perform this ritual for declaring war. So they arranged for one of Pyrrhus' soldiers to be captured, and they made him buy some land in the area of the Circus Flaminius[3] in order to fulfil the proper procedures for declaring war on, as it were, enemy land.[4] Later a column was consecrated on that land, in front of the temple of Bellona.

1. The commentator has been explaining why in the *Aeneid* the prelude of war was marked by the hurling of a spear.
2. King of Epirus (Greece), engaged in war with the Romans during the 270s B.C.
3. In the city of Rome.
4. The idea was that this land should be treated as hostile territory for the purpose of throwing the spear – so avoiding sending the priests on a lengthy sea voyage.

5.6 Ceremonies of Magna Mater and Isis

Some of the festivals of 'oriental' deities – with their strange, brightly coloured costumes, strident music and elaborate, gaudy processions – struck Roman observers as flamboyantly 'different' from the rituals of state religion. To us, the rituals of the Lupercalia and the Salian dances may seem just as 'odd' as the 'oddest' ritual of Isis; and it is clear (as **5.6b** shows) that there was no rigid dividing line between state festivals on the one hand and 'oriental' festivals on the other. But standards of 'oddity' are culturally determined, not objective; and the *difference* of 'oriental' rituals was a prominent theme in ancient writing on these religions.

Other aspects of the cults of Magna Mater and Isis are presented in **2.7**; **6.7**; **8.7** and **8**; **12.4**.

See further: Vol.1, 164–6, 196–8, 264–6, 287–8; Graillot (1912) 70–149; Witt (1971) 165–84*; Vermaseren (1977a) 96–125*; Turcan (1989) 42–61, 114–20; Beard (1994).

5.6a *Fresco depicting a celebration of Magna Mater, from Pompeii*

This painting of a procession in honour of Magna Mater was found on the outside wall of a small shop in Pompeii. A matching painting on the other side of the shop entrance depicted Venus; and above the entrance were paintings showing Apollo, Jupiter, Mercury and Diana. Width, 1.65 m.

See further: Spinnazola (1953) 213–37; Fröhlich (1991) 182–4.

1. Musicians, holding cymbals and pipes.
2. Small shrine containing a bust of the god Dionysus.
3. Central group of the procession. Note the distinction between the three (probably) male figures dressed in white – perhaps priestly officials – and the other participants, female and dressed in coloured robes. Each of the participants carries a musical instrument or cult object. The central figure of the priestly group holds a large container, perhaps (as in **8.7c**) for the most sacred cult objects.
4. Statue of Magna Mater on a litter (*ferculum*) with carrying poles, surrounded by four porters. We are to imagine the statue of the goddess having been carried in procession out of her temple, surrounded by her worshippers. Note the distinctive lions at Magna Mater's feet (see **2.7c** and **e**).
5. Altar and candelabra.

5.6b *The Spring festival of Magna Mater*

This passage illustrates a striking overlap between the festivals of 'oriental' deities and the 'official' authority of the Roman state, as well as suggesting widespread popular involvement in such 'foreign' rituals. Herodian is describing a procession that formed part of the cycle of ceremonies in honour of Magna Mater and Attis that took place annually in March – probably the procession associated with the Hilaria (Day of Rejoicing, 25 March), celebrating the rebirth of Attis. Although on this particular occasion the religious ritual was to be used to conceal an assassination attempt on the emperor Commodus (A.D. 176–92), the story presupposes that the emperor and the symbols of imperial power were regularly an integral part of the festival.

See further: Sfameni Gasparro (1985) 56–63.

Herodian, *History* I.10.5–7

On a particular day at the beginning of spring each year, the Romans hold a procession in honour of the Mother of the Gods. And all the tokens of private wealth and the treasures of the imperial house – wonders of material and craftsmanship – are conducted in procession before the goddess. And complete licence is given to everyone for all kinds of sport; and anyone can play the part of whatever character he likes. There is no position so high or exclusive that anyone who chooses cannot get dressed up and play at it, disguising his real identity – so that it is not easy to recognize who is himself and who play-acting. Maternus decided that this was an excellent opportunity for carrying out his plot undetected. For he hoped that if he himself put on the costume of a member of the praetorians[1] and armed his followers in the same way, he would be able to join in with the crowd of soldiers and be taken for a member of the procession; then, with everyone off their guard, he would suddenly fall upon Commodus and kill him. But he was betrayed by some of his followers who went ahead to the city and gave the plot away. (It was self-interest that provoked them to do this – the thought that they would have an emperor on the throne, instead of a robber chief.[2]) Before the day of the festival arrived, Maternus himself was arrested and beheaded; and his accomplices were punished as they deserved. Commodus sacrificed to the goddess and promised thank-offerings. He then celebrated the festival, and joyfully walked in the goddess' procession. During the festival the people held a public celebration for the well-being of the emperor.

1. That is the Praetorian Guard, who acted as the emperor's bodyguard.
2. The sense is not entirely clear. The point is probably that these men were so corrupt that they preferred having a fellow villain on the throne (i.e. Commodus) rather than a decent emperor.

5.6c *A procession of Isis*

In Apuleius' novel, *Metamorphoses*, the hero Lucius (who was turned into an ass at the beginning of the story, through his curiosity to learn about magic) is finally turned back into human form by the intervention of the goddess Isis. Here, just before regaining his human shape, he witnesses an Isiac procession set in Kenchreae (one of the ports of Corinth). His description of events no doubt evokes the atmosphere and particular details of festivals of the goddess. But at the same time it is part of the complex narrative structure of the story – and some elements of the description (see notes 1, 3 and 10) are constructed as an ironic commentary on the predicament of Lucius, or as a joke about (or perhaps against) the cult.

See further: Griffiths (1975) 181–215; Winkler (1985) 8–11, 204–47 (on the complex narrative structure of the novel). Other extracts from the work are given at **8.8** and **12.4b**.

Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* XI.9–10

While the people were enjoying these hilarious entertainments all over the place,[1] the actual procession of the saviour goddess started out. Women,[2] resplendent in their white robes, happily carrying different kinds of emblems and decked in spring flowers, strewed the ground with blooms, drawn from their breasts, along the path that the holy company trod; other women held shining mirrors behind their backs, facing towards the goddess as she advanced, to show their devotion to her; others, carrying ivory combs, waved their arms and twisted their fingers as if they were combing and styling the queen's hair. There were those too who sprinkled the streets with various kinds of unguents and pleasant balm, shaken out in drops.[3] A great number of people, besides, both men and women, carried lamps, torches, candles and other kinds of artificial lights to win the favour of the goddess who is the origin of the stars in the sky.[4] Then came the sweet strains of music, and the pipe and flute played in a lovely melody. They were followed by a delightful choir, made up of a select group of young men, radiant in their splendid white garments. They were singing over and over again a lovely song, which a clever poet had composed for music, with the blessing of the Camenae <Muses>; and the subject of this song partly represented a musical prelude to the major vows that were to follow. Then came the pipers too, dedicated to great Sarapis;[5] they played a traditional tune of the temple and its god on a slanting pipe, held across their face towards their right ear. And there were many whose job it was to proclaim that the route be kept clear for the sacred rites.

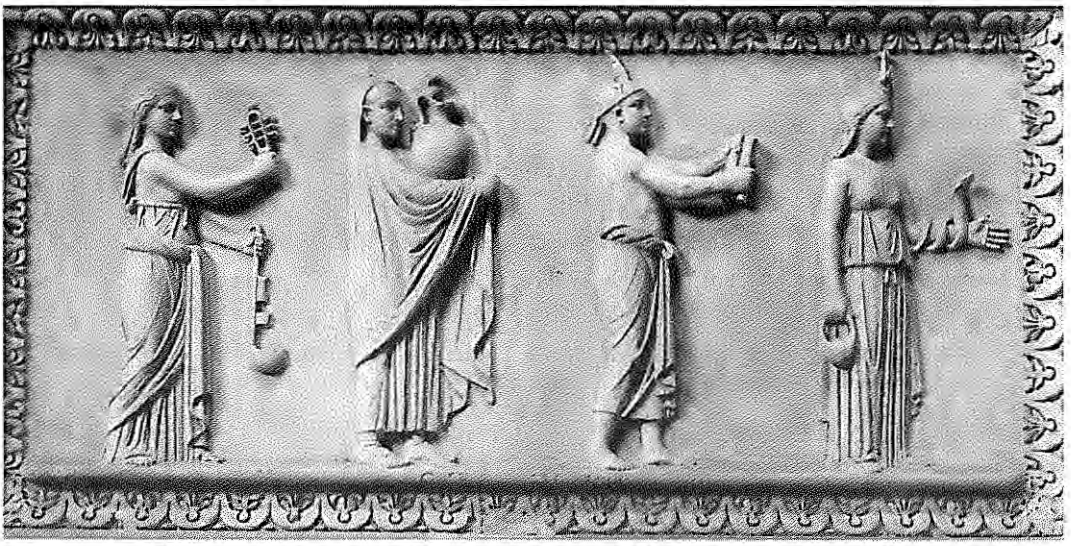
(10) Then the crowds of those already initiated into the sacred mysteries poured in, men and women of every rank and every age, shining in the pure whiteness of their linen robes. The women had swathed their hair, dripping with perfume, in transparent veils. The men had shaved their heads completely to leave a glistening pate.[6] All together they shook their sistrums,[7] that were bronze, silver, even gold, to make a piercing rattle. And the terrestrial stars of the great religion joined in too, those leading priests of the sacred rites, who wore white linen stretched tightly around their breasts, reaching to their feet, and carried the extraordinary emblems of the mightiest deities. The first of these held out a lantern that sparkled with a bright light, not like those lamps of ours which light up our night-time feasting, but a golden vessel that threw up quite a big flame from its central opening. The second priest was dressed in similar fashion, but in both hands he carried an altar, that is 'a source of help' – a distinctive name given in recognition of the providential aid of the supreme goddess.[8] The third went along carrying a palm branch, delicately leaved in gold, and a herald's staff like Mercury.[9] The fourth displayed a symbol of justice, a deformed left hand, its palm open. This seemed to be better suited to justice than the right hand, because of its natural slowness and lack of cunning and shrewdness.[10] The same man also carried a golden vessel rounded into the shape of a breast, from which poured libations of milk.[11] The fifth held a golden winnowing basket,[12] woven out of laurel twigs; and another, an amphora.

1. The preliminary part of the procession has included an array of fancy dress.
2. The procession is ordered so that the least (religiously) important people come first. Here at the very start are members of the general public – who presumably admire the cult, but are not formal initiates. Initiates and priests follow. For the role of women in the cult of Isis, see **12.4d**.
3. All these actions are connected with the dressing and adornment of the goddess – who later appears in the form of a cow.
4. That is, Isis.
5. Egyptian god often associated with Isis.
6. Shaving the head was a distinctive mark of Isiac priests. See **5.6d**; **12.4e**, n.2.
7. See **5.6d** n. 1.
8. For Isis' aid to mankind, see **12.4a** and **b**.
9. The distinctive attributes of a priest of Anubis, the jackal-headed Egyptian god.
10. The precise significance of this object is unclear – but it is presumably an ironic comment on the cult to suggest that its symbol of justice was a *deformed* hand.
11. Numerous such vessels have been found in Egyptian cult contexts.
12. Versions of the baskets or sieves used for winnowing – that is, separating the grain from the unwanted chaff – were commonly used in religious ritual.

5.6d *Sacred objects of the Isiac cult*

Visual images of Isiac celebrations can complement and clarify Apuleius' imaginative account of such proceedings. This relief sculpture from Rome shows four officials of the cult carrying various of its sacred objects in procession (height, 0.73 m.; width, 1.47 m.).

See further: Malaise (1972) 234–5.



① ② ③ ④

1. Woman carrying a rattle (*sistrum* – the distinctive musical instrument associated with the cult) and ladle (*kyathos*) for sacred water (see **12.4d** n.1).
2. Figure representing a senior official of the cult – the Prophet. Among his duties was the carrying of the sacred water vase (*hydria*) – in such a way that his hands did not directly touch the sacred object.

3. Sacred scribe (*hierogrammateus*), with a plumed headdress and carrying writing materials.
4. Woman, with a serpent entwined around her arm and carrying a water holder (*situla*).

5.7 The games

Games (*ludi*) – whether horse and chariot racing (*ludi circenses*) or theatrical displays (*ludi scaenici*) – were an important element in Roman religious ritual. Some of the regular festivals included them as one part of their programme of celebration: the festival of Dea Dia in the Arval Grove, for example, regularly finished with chariot racing (see 4.5). In other festivals the games were (or gradually became) the central focus of ritual activity: the Megalesian Games (*ludi Megalenses*), for example, in honour of Magna Mater were best known for their dramatic performances (at which some of the surviving Roman comedies by Plautus and Terence were originally performed); the *ludi Romani* (or *ludi magni* – the 'Great Games') in honour of Jupiter Optimus Maximus were famous for their chariot racing in the Circus Maximus. It is perhaps not surprising that the games were an increasingly popular form of celebration – so that by the first century A.D. there were over sixty days marked specifically in the calendar as regular *ludi*, in addition to such celebrations which might occasionally be declared for special occasions (to mark, for example, military victory).

See further: Vol. 1, 40–1, 65–7, 201–6; Piganiol (1923); Balsdon (1969) 245–8*; Clavel-Lévêque (1984); (1986); Dupont (1992) 207–9*.

5.7a *The procession at the Roman Games* (ludi Romani)

The *ludi Romani* had become an annual event by the middle of the fourth century B.C.; originally a single day's celebration regularly held on the anniversary of the foundation of the Capitoline temple of Jupiter Oprimus Maximus (13 September), by the reign of Augustus they extended over half the month of September – with theatrical shows, as well as various types of horse and chariot racing.

In this passage Dionysius of Halicarnassus describes the procession that preceded the games. But he also has his own partisan point to argue – namely that the details of this procession help to prove that Rome was originally a Greek city, founded by Greek colonists. It is to support this argument (and, in particular, to meet the objection that the Greek features of the games were late introductions, following Rome's conquest of Greece) that he claims the most ancient possible authority for his account of the ritual: just before the start of this extract, he says that he has based his description not on his own observations of procedure in his own time, but on the work of Fabius Pictor, the earliest Roman historian, writing around 200 B.C. about the first celebration of the games in the fifth century B.C.

This is by far the fullest surviving account of this ritual, but it also raises many problems: how much of the description is in fact based on Fabius Pictor? how much did Pictor himself know of the earliest celebration of the games? how much of this accounr (even omitting, as we have done, most of Dionysius' lengthy comparisons between elements of Roman ritual and similar Greek practice) is coloured by his desire to trace Greek roots for Roman institutions? One thing seems clear, however: although there was certainly Greek *influence* in this, as in no doubr almost every other Roman ritual, Dionysius wildly exaggerated its extent.

See further: Thuillier (1975); Gabba (1991) 134–7.*

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* VII.72.1–13 (excerpts)

Before beginning the games, the chief magistrates organized a procession in honour of the gods, starting from the Capitoline, leading through the Forum to the Circus Maximus. At the front of the procession came first the Romans' sons who were on the verge of manhood and were of the right age to take part in the ceremony – on horseback if their fathers had the financial qualification to be knights, on foot if they were destined to serve in the infantry. The former went in troops and squadrons, the latter in divisions and companies, as if they were going to training school.[1] The purpose of this was for strangers to see the flower of the city's youth that was approaching manhood, and to realize how numerous and fine they were. The charioteers followed after these, driving four horses or two, while others rode unyoked mounts. After them came the competitors in the light and the heavy events,[2] their bodies naked except for a covering over their genitals.

<Dionysius here argues that it was the earliest Greek practice to exercise not completely naked (as later), but with the genitals covered.>

(5) Following the competitors were numerous companies of dancers, divided into three groups: the first consisting of men, the second of youths, the third of boys. Directly behind these came tbe flute players, playing old-fashioned short flutes, as is done at the games even to this day; and the lyre players plucking their seven-stringed lyres of ivory and instruments known as 'barbita'.[3] Among the Greeks the use of these – though traditional – has died out in my time; amongst the Romans it is preserved in all their ancient ceremonies of sacrifice. The dancers were dressed in red tunics, fastened with bronze belts; swords hung at their sides, and they held spears shorter than normal length. The men also wore bronze helmets decorated with striking crests and plumes. There was one man to lead each group of dancers; and be gave the figures of the dance to the rest of tbem, and was the first to demonstrate the quick military steps, usually in a four beat rhythm.

<A discussion follows of Greek parallels for this armed dance.>

(10) After the armed dancing, groups of dancers dressed as satyrs came in procession, performing the Greek dance 'sikinnis'.[4] Those impersonating Sileni wore shaggy tunics,

known by some as 'chortaioi',[5] and swathes of all sorts of flowers; while those appearing as satyrs wore belts and goat-skins, and manes on their heads standing up on end, and other such things.[6] These mocked and mimicked the serious dancing that went before, turning it into a comic performance. The entry of triumphal processions also shows that a mocking kind of 'satyric' humour is an ancient, native Roman custom. For the soldiers escorting a victory procession are given the licence to mock and poke fun at the most distinguished men, generals included.[7]

<Dionysius then finds Greek parallels for this practice of jesting.>

(13) After these dancers, a crowd of lyre players and large numbers of flute players went past in procession. And after them, the men who carried along the whole route the censers in which perfumes and frankincense were burned; and the men bringing the gold and silver vessels on display, both those that were the sacred property of the gods, and those that belonged to the state. At the very end of the procession came the statues of all the gods, carried on men's shoulders – with much the same appearance as statues made by the Greeks, with the same costume, the same symbols, and the same gifts, which according to tradition each of them invented and bestowed on humankind.

1. The young men are ordered according to their census classification – that is, according to their wealth and so also according to their (notional) position in the Roman army. The cavalry (i.e. the wealthy) preceded the infantry (i.e. the poorer classes).
2. The 'heavy' events were boxing and wrestling; other athletic contests (races etc) were the 'light' events.
3. A stringed instrument similar to a lyre.
4. A dance traditionally associated with Greek satyrs (see n. 6).
5. A Greek term – derived from the Greek word for farmyard.
6. Dionysius makes a careful distinction here between two similar types of mythical creatures: satyrs, normally represented young, with mixed features of man and goat; Sileni, normally represented older, with horse-ears. Both are commonly found among the followers of Dionysus.
7. See 5.8a n.4.

5.7b *The Saecular Games*

There was a tradition at Rome, stretching back at least to the fourth century B.C., that the passing of a *saeculum* (the longest span of a human life – which came to be reckoned at 100 or 110 years) should be celebrated with *ludi*. The history of these games during the Republic is obscure – we do not know the exact intervals of their celebration, nor the details of the rituals performed. However, several of the saecular celebrations during the Principate are well documented.

By imaginative calculation, Augustus fixed the end of the *saeculum* in 17 B.C., and a stone inscription survives giving an elaborate account of the rituals carried out on that occasion. The following extract from the inscription omits the texts of the edicts establishing the celebration and some preliminary rituals, but includes the full surviving details of the main festival – including formal

sacrifices, theatrical performances, banqueting, choral singing and circus games.

See further: Vol. 1, 71–2, 111, 201–6; Pighi (1965); Wallace-Hadrill (1982); Zanker (1988) 167–72; for a translation of the inscription recording the games of A.D. 204, see Lewis and Reinhold (1951–5), II.558–60; new fragments from the starr of the text (not reprinted here) are published in L. Moretti (1982–4).

Note: the inscribed stone has suffered some damage and in several places the general sense of the text has had to be reconstructed on the basis of other evidence about the celebrations; the major reconstructions are marked in the text below by square brackets [ ]. The summaries given in diamond brackets < > at the start of each section are intended as guides to the complex ritual; they did not form part of the ancient text.

ILS 5050; *CIL* VI.32323 lines 90–168 (with amendments of Pighi (1965))

<Night of 31 May: Augustus sacrifices to the Fates; lines 90–9>

On the following night, on the Campus Martius, next to the Tiber, [the emperor Caesar Augustus sacrificed] according to the Greek rite[1] [nine female lambs to the divine Moirai[2]] as whole burnt offerings; and by the same [rite he sacrificed nine female goats as whole burnt offerings and spoke the following prayer:] 'Moirai. As it is [prescribed for] you in those books[3] [– and for this reason may every good fortune attend the Roman people, the *Quirites* – let sacrifice be made to you with nine] female lambs and nine female goats burnt whole for you. I beg you and pray that] you may increase [the power and majesty of the Roman people], the *Quirites*, in war and peace; [and that the Latins may always be obedient;[4] and that you may grant eternal safety], victory and health [to the Roman people, the *Quirites*; and that you may protect the Roman people, the *Quirites*, and the legions of the Roman people], the *Quirites*; [and that you may keep safe and make greater] the state of the Roman people, [the *Quirites*; and that you may be] favourable and propitious [to the Roman people], the *Quirites*, to the college of the *quindecimviri*,[5] [to me, to my house, to my household; and that] you may accept [this] sacrifice of nine female lambs and nine [female] goats, to be burnt whole for you in sacrifice. For these reasons be honoured with the sacrifice of this female lamb, become favourable and propitious to the Roman people, the *Quirites*, to the college of the *quindecimviri*, to myself, to my house, to my household.'

<Theatrical shows and sacred banquets; lines 100–2>

When the sacrifice was completed, games were celebrated by night on a stage, without the additional construction of a theatre and without the erection of seating. One hundred and ten matrons,[6] who had been designated by decree of the *quindecimviri*, held *sellisternia*,[7] with two seats set out for Juno and Diana.

<1 June: Augustus and Agrippa sacrifice to Jupiter Optimus Maximus; lines 103–7>

Kalends of June <1 June>, on the Capitoline, the emperor Caesar Augustus sacrificed a bull to Jupiter Optimus Maximus burnt whole for him, and in the same place Marcus Agrippa[8] sacrificed a second. They spoke a prayer, as follows:

'Jupiter Optimus Maximus. As it is prescribed for you in those books – and for this [reason] may every good fortune attend the Roman people, the *Quirites* – let sacrifice be made to you with this fine bull. I beg you and pray.' The rest as above.

At the sacred vessel[9] were Caesar, Agrippa, Scaevola, Sentius, Lollius, Asinius Gallus, Rebilus.[10]

<Theatrical shows and sacred banquets; lines 108–10>

Then the Latin games[11] were celebrated in a wooden theatre which had been erected on the Campus Martius next to the Tiber. And in the same manner women who were mistresses of households held *sellisternia*, and the games which had begun to take place at night were not interrupted.

<Edict suspending mourning; lines 110–14>

And an edict was issued: 'The *quindecimviri sacris faciundis* decree: Since, insofar as it accords with proper custom, and in like manner has been observed in numerous precedents, whenever there has been a rightful cause for public celebration, it has been decided that the mourning of women should be suspended; and since it seems that it is appropriate both to the honour of the gods and to the remembrance of their worship that that should apply to the time of solemn rites and games and that it should be scrupulously observed – therefore we have decided that it is incumbent on us to issue to women a decree by edict, that they should suspend mourning.'

<Augustus sacrifices to Ilythia; lines 115–18>

Then by night, next to the Tiber, the emperor Caesar Augustus made sacrifice to the divine Ilythiae[12] with nine cakes, nine *popana*, nine *phthoes*;[13] he spoke the following prayer:

'Ilythia. As it is prescribed for you in those books – and for this reason [may every good fortune attend] the Roman people the *Quirites* – let sacrifice be made to you with nine *popana*, nine cakes, nine *phthoes*. I beg you and pray.' The rest as above.

<2 June: Augustus and Agrippa sacrifice to Juno; lines 119–22>

Four days before the Nones of June <2 June>, on the Capitoline, [the emperor Caesar Augustus] sacrificed a cow to Juno Regina burnt whole for her, [and in the same place] Marcus Agrippa sacrificed [a second,] and spoke a prayer as follows:

'Juno Regina. As it is prescribed for you in those books – and for this [reason may every good fortune attend the Roman people, the *Quirites* –] let sacrifice be made to you with a fine cow. I beg you and pray.' [The rest as above.]

<Prayer of mothers to Juno; lines 123–32>

Then [?Marcus Agrippa] dictated to the one hundred and ten married women, mistresses of households, who had been commanded [to assemble on the Capitoline,] the formula of prayer as follows:

'Juno Regina. If there is any better fortune [that may attend the Roman people, the *Quirites*, we one hundred and ten mistresses of households of the Roman people, the *Quirites*,] married women on bended knee, [pray] that you [bring it about, we beg and beseech that you increase the power] and majesty of the Roman people, the *Quirites* [in war and peace; and that the Latins may always be obedient; and that you may grant] eternal [safety], victory [and health to the Roman people, the *Quirites*; and that you may protect the Roman people, the *Quirites*, and the legions of the Roman people], the *Quirites*; and [that you may keep safe and make greater] the state [of the Roman people, the *Quirites*; and that you may be favourable and propitious to the Roman people], the *Quirites*, to the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*, to us, [to our houses, to our households. These are the things that we one hundred and ten mistresses of households of the Roman people, the *Quirites*], married women on bended knee, [pray, beg and beseech.]'

At the sacred vessel were Marcus Agrippa [. . .]

<Games; line 133>

Games were held as on the previous day [. . .]

<Augustus sacrifices to Terra Mater; lines 134–7>

Then by night, next to the Tiber, [the emperor] Caesar Augustus [sacrificed a pregnant sow, as a whole burnt offering, to Terra Mater, and spoke the following] prayer:

'Terra Mater. As it is prescribed for you in those books – and for this reason may every good fortune attend the Roman people, the *Quirites* – let sacrifice be made] to you with a pregnant sow of your own, [as a whole burnt offering. I beg you and pray.'] The rest [as above.]

<Sacred banquet; line 138>

The matrons held *sellisternia* on this [day in the same manner as on the previous day.]

<3 June: Augustus and Agrippa sacrifice to Apollo and Diana; lines 139–46>

Three days before the Nones of June <3 June>, on the Palatine, the emperor Caesar Augustus and Marcus Agrippa made sacrifice [to Apollo and Diana with nine cakes,] nine *popana*, nine *phthoes* and they spoke a [prayer] as follows:

'Apollo. As it is prescribed for you in those books – and for this reason may every good fortune attend the Roman people, the *Quirites* – let sacrifice be made to you with nine *popana* and nine cakes and nine *phthoes*. I beg you and pray.' The rest as above. 'Apollo.

Just as I have offered *popana* and prayed to you with a proper prayer, for this same reason be honoured with these sacrificial cakes. Become favourable and propitious.' The same was said concerning the *phthoes*. To Diana in the same words.

<Hymn sung by boys and girls; lines 147–52>

When the sacrifice was completed, the twenty-seven boys, who had been commanded, their fathers and mothers still living, and the same number of girls, sang the hymn. And in the same manner on the Capitoline. The hymn was composed by Quintus Horatius Flaccus.[14] The *quindecimviri* were present: the emperor Caesar, Marcus Agrippa, Quintus Lepidus, Potitus Messalla, Caius Stolo, Caius Scaevola, Caius Sosius, Caius Norbanus, Marcus Cocceius, [Marcus] Lollius, Caius Sentius, Marcus Srrigo, Lucius Arruntius, Caius Asinius, Marcus Marcellus, Decimus Laelius, Quintus Tubero, Caius Rebilus, Messalla Messallinus.[15]

<Chariot races; lines 153–4>

When the theatrical games had ended at the [. . .] hour, close by that place where sacrifice had been made on previous nights and a theatre had been set up and a stage, turning posts were set up and chariot racing was presented; and Potitus Messalla presented trick riders.

<Edict announcing further theatrical shows; lines 155–8>

And an edict was issued in the following words:

'The *quindecimviri sacris faciundis* decree: We have added seven extra days of games to the holy rites of the games, and we shall commence them on the Nones of June <5 June> with: Latin plays in the wooden theatre which is next to the Tiber at the second hour; Greek shows in the theatre of Pompey at the third hour; Greek stage plays in the theatre which is in the Circus Flaminius at the fourth hour.'

<4 June: Break in the proceedings; line 159>

There was a gap in proceedings on the day before [the Nones of June <4 June>.]

<5 June: Theatrical shows; lines 160–1>

On the Nones of June <5 June>, [seven extra days] games were commenced: [Latin plays] in the wooden theatre; Greek shows [in the theatre of Pompey; Greek stage plays in the theatre which is in the Circus Flaminius.]

<11 June: Edict announcing animal hunt; lines 162–3>

Three days before the Ides of June <11 June>, an edict was issued in the following words:

'The *quindecimviri sacris faciundis* decree: On the day before the Ides of June <12 June> we shall present a hunting display [in . . . and we shall commence circus games.]

<12 June: Chariot racing and hunt; lines 164–5>

On the day before the Ides <12 June>, a procession was led past, and [squadrons] of boys [older and younger played the Trojan Game.] Marcus Agrippa [presented] the chariot racing [and a hunting display was performed in . . .]

<Conclusion; lines 166–8>

All these things were conducted by the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*: the emperor Caesar Augustus, Marcus Agrippa, Quintus Lepidus, Potitus Messalla, Lucius Censorinus, Cnaeus Pompeius, Caius Stolo, Caius [Scaevola, Caius Sosius, Caius Norbanus, Marcus Cocceius, Marcus Lollius, Caius Sentius, Marcus Strigo, Lucius Arruntius], Caius Asinius Gallus,[16] Marcus Marcellus, [Decimus Laelius, Quintus Tubero, Caius Rebilus, Messalla Messallinus].

1. The clearest distinguishing mark of the so-called 'Greek rite' was that the sacrificant officiated with his head bare (not covered by the toga as in the 'Roman rite'); see also 7.5a Here the 'Greek rite' accords with the numerous Greek aspects of the festival – including the fact that the whole ceremony was supposedly prescribed by the Sibylline Books (see 1.8; 7.5), and the Greek titles of the deities invoked. See Scheid (1996).
2. The Greek title of the Roman 'Parcae' (Fates).
3. Sibylline Books.
4. A traditional formula referring to Rome's control over her neighbours, the Latins; see 1.4.
5. The *quindecimviri sacris faciundis* (who had charge of the Sibylline Books) played a central role in the ceremony.
6. One for each year of the *saeculum* (here reckoned at 110 years).
7. The equivalent of a *lectisternium* (5.5b and c), but the gods sat on chairs (*sellae*) rather than reclining on couches.
8. Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, Augustus' son-in-law, here prominently associated with the emperor leading the rituals.
9. That is 'participating in the sacrifice'.
10. All members of the *quindecimviri*.
11. That is, plays in Latin.
12. Greek goddesses of childbirth.
13. *Popana* and *phthoes* were both particular varieties of Greek sacrificial cakes.
14. The text of this hymn is preserved (under the title *Carmen Saeculare*) among the works of the poet Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus). It evokes many of the deities honoured in these sacrifices.
15. In the Empire, the so-called '*quindecimviri*' ('Fifteen men') regularly included more than fifteen men.
16. The name of C. Asinius Gallus, who fell from favour in the reign of Tiberius (A.D. 14–37), was later erased from the stone.

5.8 The ceremony of triumph

Just as the rhythms of warfare were associated with ritual celebrations (5.4), so also Roman military victory was marked by rituals that gave honour to the gods as well as to the successful commander. A formal 'triumph' could be

granted by vote of the senate to a general who had achieved a victory in which at least 5,000 of the enemy were killed. The general, dressed in the costume of Jupiter Optimus Maximus ('god for a day' – see **1.9a**), processed on a chariot through the city, accompanied by the leading men of the state, by his victorious army and by his captives and spoils. The destination of the procession was the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline, where sacrifice was offered to the god.

See further: Vol. 1, 44–5; Versnel (1970); Weinstock (1971) 60–79; Künzl (1988).

5.8a *The triumph of Aemilius Paullus, 167 B.C.*

From relatively simple beginnings, as Roman victories brought more and more wealth into the city and the power of Roman generals grew, the triumph became an increasingly lavish celebration. Here Plutarch describes the triumph of Aemilius Paullus (following his victory over King Perseus of Macedon) – a magnificent display lasting three days. Similar, sometimes even more lavish, celebrations were to follow – notably the triumph of Pompey in 61 B.C. and Caesar's four-day extravaganza in 46 B.C.

See further: Errington (1971) 222–6; Dupont (1992) 50–3*.

Plutarch, *Life of Aemilius Paullus* 32–4

The triumph is said to have been conducted in this way. The people put up platforms in the horse-racing stadia (which the Romans call 'circuses') and around the Forum, and they took up position in other parts of the city that gave a good view of the procession; then, dressed up in clean white clothes, they watched the spectacle. Every temple was open and filled with garlands and incense; and numerous officials and *lictores* held the people back from streaming together into a disorderly crowd and rushing about in all directions – and so kept the streets free and clear. The procession was divided over three days. The first was scarcely long enough for the display of the captured statues, paintings and colossal figures, transported on two hundred and fifty chariots. On the next day, the finest and most valuable of the Macedonian weapons were carried along in numerous carts. These weapons glistened with their newly polished bronze and iron, and they were arranged in artful combinations to look just as if they had been heaped up indiscriminately, just as they fell: helmets against shields, breastplates against greaves, Cretan bucklers and Thracian shields and quivers mixed up with horses' bridles, and naked swords emerging through all these, with long pikes fixed among them. The weapons were packed so loosely that they crashed against each other as they were carried along and made a harsh and fearful sound, and the sight of them – even though they were spoils from a defeated enemy – was not free of terror. After the carts carrying the armour, 3,000 men came in procession bearing silver coin in vessels that each contained three talents[1] and were carried by four men. Others bore silver bowls, drinking horns, dishes, and cups, all of them arranged to be easily viewed, remarkable for their size and the depth of their engraved decoration.

(33) On the third day, immediately it was dawn, trumpeters came out – not playing a stately processional tune, but the kind of music the Romans use to urge themselves on to battle. Following these, 110 stall-fed oxen, with gilded horns, were driven past, decked with ribbons and wreaths. Leading the animals in their procession to sacrifice were young men wearing aprons with fine purple borders, and boys carrying silver and gold offering cups. Then, after these, came those bearing the golden coin, divided like the silver into vessels of three talents. And the number of vessels was eighty less three. Straight after these followed those who carried the sacred bowl which Aemilius had had made out of ten talents of gold and precious stones, and those who displayed the Antigonids, Seleucids and Thericleians[2] as well as the whole of Perseus' golden dinner service; and straight after these the chariot of Perseus with his weapons, and lying on his weapons his crown. Then, after a short gap, the children of the king were led as slaves, and with them a crowd of guardians, teachers and tutors, all weeping and stretching out their hands to the onlookers, and teaching the children to beg and plead. Two of the children were boys, one a girl; and because of their age they were not fully aware of the extent of their misfortunes. And for this reason the pity they evoked was in fact intensified by pity for the change in their awareness that would follow. So that Perseus walked a little behind hardly attracting attention, while the Romans from compassion fixed their eyes on the children. Many ended up shedding tears, and all found the sight a mixture of pain and pleasure until the children had passed.

(34) Perseus himself walked behind the children and their group of attendants, dressed in a grey cloak, with the traditional boots of his native country. The extent of his misfortunes made him seem completely dumbfounded and out of his mind with bewilderment. He too was accompanied by a group of comrades and friends, their faces weighed down with grief. And their weeping and continual gazing at Perseus gave the onlookers the sense that it was his fate that caused their lamentations, and that they were hardly concerned about their own situation at all. In fact Perseus had sent a message to Aemilius, begging not to be sent in the procession and asking to be left out of the triumph. But Aemilius, scorning what seemed to be cowardice and faintheartedness on the king's part, said that this had rested with Perseus before – and still did, if he wanted. He indicated, that is, suicide as an alternative to shame; but the coward could not face this and, instead, weakened by some faint hopes, became a part of his own spoils.

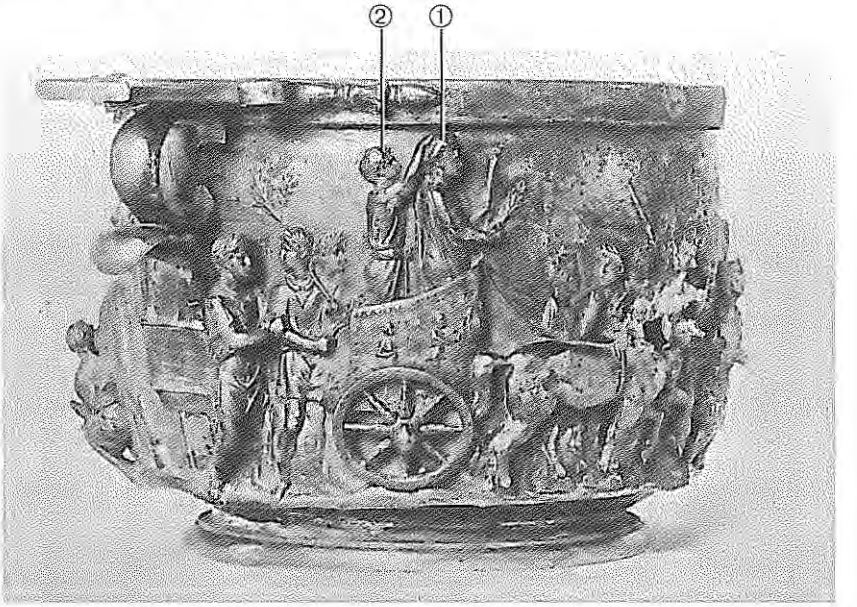
Following on these, were carried golden wreaths, 400 in total, which the cities had sent to Aemilius by embassy as prizes of victory. Straight after came the general himself, riding on a chariot magnificently adorned, a man worthy of admiration, quite apart from such pomp. He was dressed in purple robe shot with gold, and he held a spray of laurel in his right hand.[3] His whole army also carried laurel, following the general's chariot in their ranks and divisions; and they sang, for part of the time, traditional songs interspersed with ribaldry,[4] and, for the rest, hymns of victory and praise of the achievements of Aemilius – who was the object of wonder and admiration of all, while being envied by no one who was good.[5]

1. Greek unit of coinage, and of weight.
2. Different forms of drinking vessels.
3. This dress imitated that of the cult statue of Jupiter Optimus Maximus; see 1.9a.
4. It was the custom for the soldiers to sing ribald songs, apparently mocking their general, at his triumph.
5. Plutarch proceeds to offer the triumph of Aemilius Paullus as a moral example that human life does not allow total happiness – for (as he goes on to explain) Aemilius Paullus lost two of his sons around the time of his great triumph.

5.8b *The triumph of Tiberius (A.D. 12)*

By the middle of the reign of Augustus, the privilege of a full triumph was restricted to emperors or members of the imperial family. On a silver cup found at Boscoreale, near Pompeii, the triumphal procession of the future emperor Tiberius (then Augustus' chosen heir) is represented. The other side of the cup shows a sacrifice – probably that performed at the beginning of Tiberius' campaign. Height, 0.10 m.; diameter, 0.20 m.

See further: for a detailed description, Ryberg (1955) 141–4, though she is probably incorrect to treat the sacrificial scene as part of the triumphal procession – see F. S. Kleiner (1983).



1. Tiberius holding sceptre and laurel branch.
2. A slave, standing in the chariot, holds a crown over the triumphing general. During the procession this slave was said to have repeated over and over again 'Remember you are a man' to the general – dressed as he was in the costume of Jupiter; see Epictetus, *Discourses* III.24.85; Tertullian, *Apology* 33.

6 *Sacrifices*

Animal sacrifice, the ritual killing of an animal and the offering to the gods of parts of its body, burnt on the altar, was a (perhaps *the*) central element of Roman ritual. But its forms were more complex and varied than that simple description suggests; and it carried a range of symbolic meanings that extended far beyond merely 'honouring the gods'. This chapter starts from a reconstruction of the 'ideal' form of Roman public sacrifice (**6.1**), and the record of sacrifices undertaken on one particular occasion by a group of official Roman priests (**6.2**); and it then considers various aspects of private sacrifice (**6.3**) and 'bloodless' offerings to the gods, not involving animal slaughter (**6.4**). The second half of the chapter turns to irregular, extraordinary or transgressive forms of the ritual: the so-called 'Sacred Spring' (**6.5**), human sacrifice (**6.6**) and the *taurobolium* in the cult of Magna Mater (**6.7**). The final section (**6.8**) focuses on the debates over sacrifice in the conflict between paganism and Christianity.

See further: for general theories of sacrifice (focused largely on Greek material), Burkert (1983); Price (1984) 227–31*; Hamerton-Kelly (1987)*; Detienne and Vernant (1989).

6.1 The stages of sacrifice

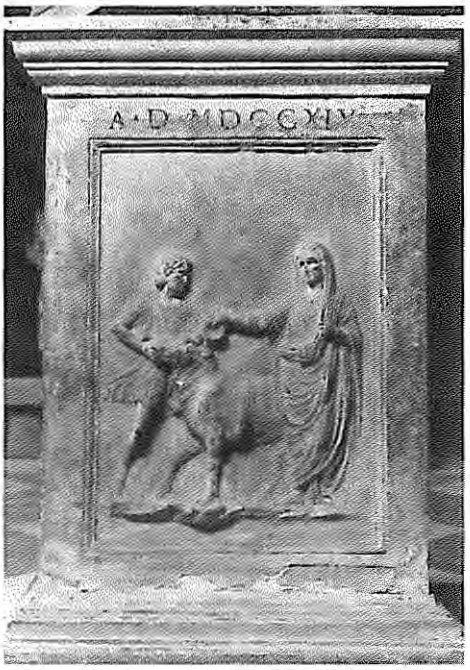
Traditional Roman animal sacrifice was a lengthy process, involving much more than the killing of the sacrificial victim. There were six main stages in the ritual: (a) the procession (*pompa*) of victims to the altar; (b) the prayer of the main officiant at the sacrifice, and the offering of wine, incense etc. (as a 'libation') at the altar; (c) the pouring of wine and meal (*mola salsa*) over the animal's head by the main sacrificant; (d) the killing of the animal by slaves; (e) the examination of the entrails for omens; (f) the burning of parts of the animal on the altar, followed normally (except in some cases where the whole animal was burnt) by a banquet taken by the participants from the rest of the meat. The following illustrations, drawn from various Roman monuments, offer a composite view of these different stages.

See further: on the stages of sacrifice, Warde Fowler (1911) 179–91; Ogilvie (1969) 41–52*; Scullard (1981) 22–5*; Scheid (1988); on the visual images and their interpretation, Ryberg (1955); R. L. Gordon (1990b) 202–19*.

(a)

(b)

(c)

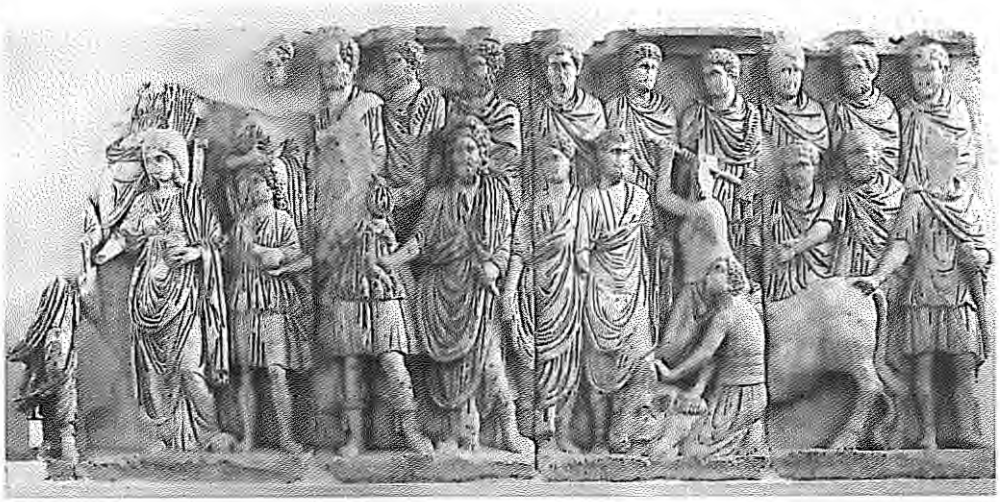


(a) Small frieze from inner altar of the Augustan Ara Pacis (see **4.3**) (height, 0.30 m.; width, 2.15 m.). Note the distinction in dress here, and throughout these images, between the major officiants of the sacrifice, fully clad in togas, and the bare-chested slave attendants (*victimarii* and *popae*) whose job it was to introduce and eventually kill the animals. See Vol. 1, fig. 7.1 'Outside a military camp', for an illustration (from Trajan's column) of a sacrificial procession in a military camp.

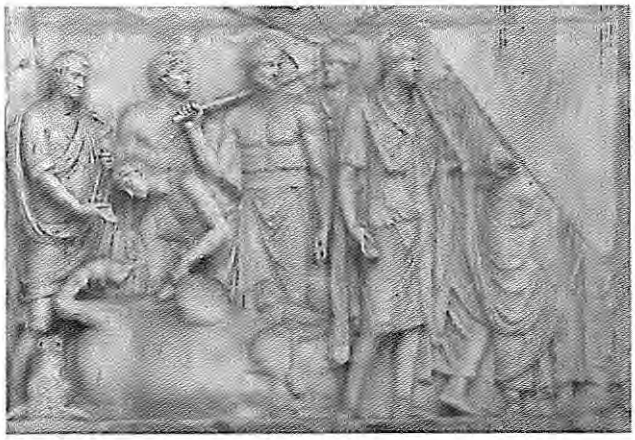
(b) Panel from triumphal arch of Marcus Aurelius, Rome, A.D. 176 (height, 3.14 m.; width, 2.10 m.). Beside the emperor offering a libation at the altar stand an attendant (*camillus*) with incense box and a musician (see **4.3b**, n.1).

(c) Panel from the 'Altar of Scipio Orfitus', Rome, A.D. 295 (height, 0.77 m.; width, 0.59 m.). The technical term for this part of the ritual (*immolare*) was also used for the act of animal sacrifice as a whole. But despite its importance as a stage in the process, this sculpture is almost unique in offering a visual representation of the scene.

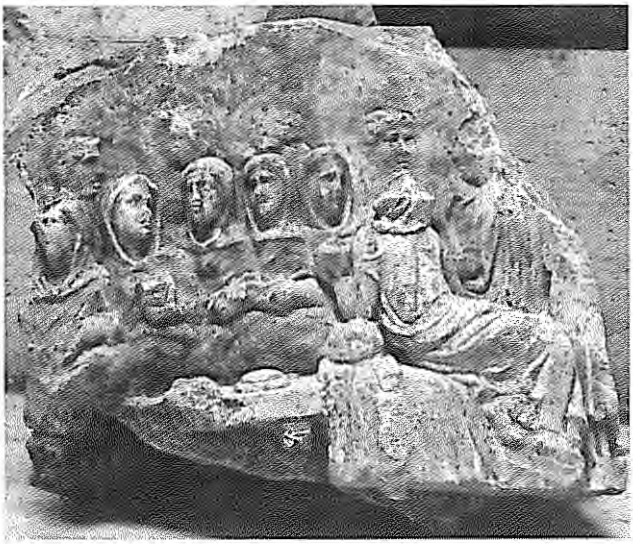
(d)



(e)



(f)



(d) Frieze from the arch of Septimius Severus, Lepcis Magna (North Africa), A.D. 203 (height, 1.72 m.; width of whole panel, 7.50 m.). Note the distance between this act of killing and the main officiants – Julia Domna (wife of the emperor Septimius Severus, at the far left, stretching out her hand), and the emperor himself (now lost, standing opposite his wife to the left of this scene). See Vol. 1, 350–1.

(e) Part of a marble relief from Trajan's Forum, Rome, middle of the second century A.D. (reproduced on a larger scale at 7.4d). (Height of whole, originally *c.* 3 m.; of this section, 2.03 m.; width, 4.05 m.)

(f) Fragment of a first-century A.D. marble relief from Rome (height, 0.49 m.; width, 0.50 m.) – probably showing the Vestal Virgins at the post-sacrificial meal (our only surviving visual image of a part of the ritual commonly referred to in written documents – see, e.g., 4.5).

6.2 A record of sacrifice

The inscribed record of the rituals of the Arval Brothers includes numerous accounts of sacrifices, performed on a variety of occasions – not only those carried out at the annual festival of the Arvals' goddess, Dea Dia (see 4.5), but also regular sacrifices 'for the well-being' (*pro salute*) of the emperor and his family, as well as those commemorating particular events affecting the priesthood or the emperor (military victory, for example, or the birth of imperial children). Here they record a series of 'expiatory' sacrifices offered in A.D. 224, when repair work after lightning damage in the grove demanded that several trees of the sacred grove be uprooted and destroyed.

See further: Vol. 1, 194–6; Scheid (1990) 285–676. Compare also the record of sacrifices in the inscription of the Saecular Games (5.7b).

CIL VI.2107, lines 2–13; *ILS* 5048

Seven days before the Ides of November <7 November>, the Arval Brothers assembled in the grove of Dea Dia on the Campanian Road <*via Campana*>, at the fifth milestone, on the instructions of Caius Porcius Priscus, the master.[1] And there they made sacrifice because in a violent storm some trees in the sacred grove of Dea Dia were struck by lightning and burnt; and in expiation for uprooting those trees, striking them with iron[2] and consuming them in fire, for grinding down their remains and then for replacing them with others, and for initiating the work and rebuilding altars for the occasion, sacred to Dea Dia – in expiation for these things a purificatory sacrifice was carried out with the offering of a full-grown pig, ram and bull <*suovetaurilia*>.[3] Then in front of the temple cows,[4] their horns bound with gold, were sacrificed to Dea Dia – total 2; then at the altars built for the occasion sacrifices were made to the gods as listed below: to Janus Pater, rams – 2; to Jupiter, wethers[5] – 2; to Mars Pater Ultor, rams – total 2; to deity, male or female,[6] wethers – 2; to the spirit of Dea Dia, sheep – total 2; to the virgin deities, sheep – total 2; to the attendant deities, wethers – total 2; to the Lares, wethers – total 2; to the mother of the Lares, sheep – total 2; to Fons <the god of springs>, wethers – total 2; to Flora, sheep – total 2; to Summanus Parer, black wethers – 2; to Vesta Mater, sheep – 2; to Vesta[7] of the gods and goddesses, sheep – 2; likewise to Adolenda and Coinquenda,[8] sheep – 2; and, before the shrine of the Caesars,[9] to the spirit of our lord, the emperor Severus Alexander, a bull with gilded horns; likewise to the *divi*, totalling 20[10], wethers – 20.

1. The master was the head of the college; see 4.5 n.1.
2. Iron was a material normally strictly forbidden in the sacred area.
3. See 6.3a.
4. Female deities regularly received female victims; male deities received male victims.
5. That is, castrated rams.
6. This formula ensured that any deity who might have been forgotten, or whose identity was uncertain, was included in the sacrifice.
7. The surviving text of the inscription appears meaningless here. 'Vesta' is an attempt to make some sense of what is on the stone.

8. Adolenda was the deity who presided over the burning of trees; Coinquenda over the felling of trees. For deities of this type, see further 2.2c.
9. The Caesareum (see 4.5).
10. This includes most of the deified emperors (and members of their family), stretching back to the deified Julius Caesar. It probably excludes such minor figures as the infant daughter of Nero (deified A.D. 63). See 2.8; 9.2; 9.3b.

6.3 Private sacrifice

Sacrifice was also a ritual performed privately, with or without the aid of a priest. These extracts illustrate the wide range of contexts in which the private ritual played a part, and the wide range of attitudes which it could evoke – from humble piety to despair at its expense.

See further: on the contexts for, and ritual of, private sacrifice, Orr (1978)*.

6.3a *'Suovetaurilia' on the farm*

In this passage of his handbook *On Agriculture* Cato describes the formula of prayer to be used when purifying farmland with a *suovetaurilia* – the sacrifice together of a pig (*sus*), ram (*ovis*) and bull (*taurus*). The *suovetaurilia* was commonly associated with both private and public rituals of purification – including the purification of an army before battle, or of the city itself after a prodigy.

See further: Vol. 1, 49; Dumézil (1970) 237–40 (on Indian parallels for the *suovetaurilia*); Scullard (1981) 84, 124–5*.

Cato, *On Agriculture* 141

This is the procedure prescribed for purifying the land. Order the *suovetaurilia* to be driven round the land, using these words: 'With the good will of the gods, and so that the result may be favourable, I bid you, Manius,[1] to take care to purify my farm, my land, my ground with this *suovetaurilia*, over whatever area you judge that they should be driven or carried around.' Pray first to Janus and Jupiter with an offering of wine, then speak as follows: 'Mars Pater,[2] I pray and beseech you to be favorable and kind to me, my house and our household; for this reason I have bidden a *suovetaurilia* to be driven around my land, ground and farm, that you may prevent, ward off and avert diseases, visible and invisible, dearth and destruction, ruin and storm, and that you permit the crops, corn, vineyards and plantations to grow and flourish, and that you keep safe the shepherds and their sheep, and grant good health and strength to me, my house and our household. In respect of these things, in respect of purifying my farm, ground and land, and performing the purification, as I have said, be honoured[3] by the sacrifice of the suckling victims of this *suovetaurilia*;[4] Mars Pater, in respect of the same things, be honoured by the suckling victims of this *suovetaurilia*. So also pile up the offerings with the knife and see that the cake is close at hand;[5] then bring up the victims. When you sacrifice the pig, the lamb and the calf, the words prescribed are as follows: 'In respect of

these things, be honoured by the sacrifice of a *suovetaurilia*.' It is forbidden to call Mars, or the lamb, or the calf by name.[6] If no favourable omens come out at all, make this prayer: 'Mars Pater, if nothing in the sacrifice of the suckling victims of this *suovetaurilia* has pleased you, I offer you this *suovetaurilia* in expiation.' If there is doubt about one or two of the animals, make this prayer: 'Mars Pater, insofar as you were not pleased with that pig, I offer you this pig in expiation.'[7]

1. Manius may refer to a specific slave or servant – or may simply be a common name ('John Smith') intended to stand for anyone. In any case, Cato envisages here (as in the public ritual) that the officiant at the sacrifice recites the prayer, while a man of lower status actually conducts (and kills) the animals.
2. The *suovetaurilia* was regularly offered to Mars.
3. The Latin word translated 'be honoured' is '*macte*', a word commonly used in prayers. It is related to the word *magnus* ('great'), but its exact meaning is uncertain.
4. Cato here prescribes that it is the young of each species that is to be sacrificed – in contrast to the full-grown (and no doubt more expensive) animals specified in 6.2.
5. The precise instructions here are: (a) to make a *strues*, a pile of small offering cakes; and (b) to have at hand a *fertum*, a different type of offering cake.
6. The Latin text here is uncertain. An alternative version reads: 'It is forbidden to call *the pig*, or the lamb, or the calf by name.'
7. Cato allows for the possibility that *all* the victims will give unfavourable omens, or only one or two.

6.3b *The pimp's sacrifice*

Here Plautus presents the comic picture of a pimp who has sacrificed six times to Venus, but failed to get good omens. The pimp plays on the idea that the sacrificial meat is the food of the gods – and he abuses the diviner who discovered the bad omens.

See further: on the comic role of the failed sacrifice, Henderson (1994); for other aspects of private divination, see 11.7.

Plautus, *Little Carthaginian* 449–66

May the gods, one and all, damn the pimp who from this day forth ever sacrifices a single victim to Venus, or offers her a single grain of incense. For damn me – here I am, my gods in a dreadful rage, six times today I've sacrificed a lamb, but I haven't been able to do one sacrifice that suits Venus. So, seeing I can't get good omens, I've gone straight off in a rage myself – telling them not to cut off the gods' share of the meat.[1] That's the neat way I've caught her out, that greedy Venus. She wouldn't let enough be enough – so I called it a day myself. That's my way of doing things. That's the kind of guy I am. And it's bound to make the rest of those gods and goddesses a lot more easy to please, a lot less greedy – when they learn how the pimp caught Venus out. And that entrail man (*haruspex*) – not worth a penny – he really was worthy of the goddess, when he said that all the innards foretold disaster for me, bankruptcy and . . . the gods out to get me. How could you believe what *he* told you, about gods or men?

1. That is, once ill omens were declared, he did not proceed to burn the meat for the gods.

6.3c *The expense of sacrifice*

Sacrificial animals cost money. Here in a third-century A.D. inscription from the Roman province of Asia (in the region of Lydia, in modern Turkey), a woman records on an inscribed stone (a 'stele') that she could not afford the bull she had promised to sacrifice to the god.

See further: Lane (1970) 51–2.

E. N. Lane, *Corpus monumentorum religionis Dei Menis* I (EPRO 19, Leiden, 1971) no. 50

To Men Axiotennos.[1] Tatiane, daughter of Herpos, vowing a bull on behalf of her brothers <and/or sisters> and being heard,[2] but not being able to pay for the bull, asked the god, and he consented[3] to accept the stele. In the year 320 <A.D. 235/6>, the tenth of the month Panemos.[4]

1. Men was, in origin, a Phrygian lunar god – here given the epithet Axiotennos (probably referring to his connection with a place called Axiotte).
2. That is, whatever she had requested in her prayer had been granted.
3. It is not clear how the god gave his consent – perhaps in a dream. The stele is decorated with an image of the god, a pair of lions and a large bull (illustrated in *Corpus monumentorum religionis Dei Menis* and Lane (1970) pl. VIb).
4. Dates are given according to the local calendar; the year is dated from Sulla's settlement of the region in the first century B.C.

6.4 Sacrifice without animals

Sacrifice did not always involve the shedding of blood. Sometimes wine, incense, cakes or fruits alone were offered to the gods.

See further: Williams (1969) 119–22*.

6.4a *Before animal sacrifice*

The simple libation of grain and salt was commonly regarded by the Romans as the earliest form of offering to the gods, before the 'invention' of animal sacrifice. Here Ovid evokes the primitive rustic world of earliest Rome, when the gods were satisfied with just vegetable offerings; and he gives a mythical account of the origin of animal sacrifice.

Ovid, *Fasti* I.337–53.

Long ago it was grain and the sparkling pinch of pure salt that served to win for humans the favour of the gods. Not yet had any foreign ship, speeding over the ocean waves, brought us myrrh distilled from the bark; nor yet had the Euphrates sent us its incense, nor India its spice; nor then were the threads of red saffron known to man.[1] The altar would smoke, content with just the scent of juniper; and the laurel would burn up, crackling loud. If there was anyone who could add violets to the garlands woven of

meadow flowers – that man was surely rich. And the knife that now lays bare the innards of the bull, slain in sacrifice, had then no work to do in sacred rites. The first to take pleasure in the blood of the greedy sow was Ceres, avenging with rightful slaughter of the guilty animal the harm that had been done to her crops; for she discovered that in early spring a bristly sow with its snout had uprooted the milky seedlings from their soft furrows. The sow paid the penalty.[2]

1. All features of later Roman 'luxury'.
2. That is, was killed in sacrifice.

6.4b *Sacrificial cakes*

Cato's handbook on agriculture includes a recipe for making sacrificial cake (*libum*).

Cato, *On Agriculture* 75

How to make sacrificial cake. Crush two pounds of cheese in a mixing bowl; when that is thoroughly done, add a pound of wheat flour or, if you want the cake to be lighter, just half a pound of fine flour and mix well with the cheese. Add an egg and mix together well. Make it into a loaf, put it on leaves and bake slowly on a warm hearth under a crock.

6.5 The season of the 'Sacred Spring' (*Ver Sacrum*)

The practice of Roman sacrifice sometimes took other, much more elaborate, forms. The 'Sacred Spring' was believed by the Romans to have been an ancient Italian ritual undertaken in times of crisis: it vowed as a sacrifice to the gods all that was born during the following spring (including human offspring, who were not put to death, but forced to leave their native land when they reached adulthood). The idea of the 'Sacred Spring' may well have been largely a romantic, antiquarian construction by the later inhabitants of Italy, speculating on their earliest traditions and rituals. But whatever its primitive form, the Romans self-consciously 'revived' the ritual in the middle of the crisis of their war against Hannibal.

In this passage, Livy describes the procedure by which the 'Sacred Spring' was vowed in 217 B.C. The sacrifice of the animals took place in 195 B.C., twenty-one years after the vow (Livy, *History* XXXIII.44).

See further: Vol. 1, 80; Heurgon (1957); E. T. Salmon (1967) 35–6; Dumézil (1970) 208, 475–6*.

Livy, *History* XXII.10

After these resolutions by the senate, the *praetor* consulted the college <of *pontifices*>. Lucius Cornelius Lentulus, the *pontifex maximus*, gave his opinion that first of all the people's assembly should be consulted on the question of a 'Sacred Spring'; for it could

not be vowed against the wish of the people. The question was put to the assembly according to this formula: 'Do you wish and ordain it that this action be carried out as follows?' If the Roman state, its people, the *Quirites*, is preserved for the next five years[1] (as I would wish it kept safe) in these wars – that is, the war of the Roman people with the Carthaginian people and the wars with the Gauls on this side of the Alps[2] – let the Roman people, the *Quirites*, offer up to Jupiter, as an unalterable sacrifice, what the spring produces from the flocks of swine, sheep, goats, cattle, whatever is not already consecrated, starting from the day determined by the senate and people.[3] Let him who will perform the sacrifice perform it at whatever time, by whatever form of ritual he wishes; however it is done, let it be deemed to have been done correctly. If an animal that ought to be sacrificed dies, let it count as outside the vow and let no guilt attach to the sacrificer; if anyone harms or kills an animal unawares, let it not be a crime; if anyone steals an animal, let no guilt attach to the people nor to him from whom it was stolen; if he sacrifices on a 'black day'[4] unawares, let it be deemed to have been done correctly; whether by night or day, whether a slave or a free man performs the sacrifice, let it be deemed to have been done correctly; if it is performed before the senate and people have ordered it to be performed, by that action let the people be absolved and free of obligation.[5]

1. The original intention seems to have been to carry out the Sacred Spring five years hence.
2. Not only the war against the Carthaginian, Hannibal, but also against the Gauls of north Italy who had joined Hannibal.
3. Although the most primitive form of this vow is assumed to apply also to the human offspring, this vow includes only the animal offspring of the season.
4. 'Black days' were days of ill omen, on which it was normally forbidden to conduct public business. They partly overlapped with the category of *dies nefasti* (see 3.2); but 'black days' were also particularly associated with the anniversaries of major disasters suffered by the Roman state.
5. Note the legalistic precision of the formula, and its attempts to foresee and circumvent those circumstances in which fulfilment of the vow might be impossible. Despite these, the sacrifice of 195 B.C. was repeated in 194 B.C., because of some flaw in the performance of the ritual (Livy, *History* XXXIV.44).

6.6 Human sacrifice

Human sacrifice was one of the most powerful symbols of the Roman sacrificial system. On the one hand, it was a practice regarded by the Romans as utterly foreign – a distinctive marker of barbarian ritual and of all that was *not-Roman* (see 11.3). On the other hand, despite that, there were particular occasions on which various forms of ritual killing had a recognized place *within* Roman religion and tradition.

See further: Schwenn (1915); (for comparative Greek material) Henrichs (1981).

6.6a *'Devotio' – a general vows himself to the gods*

The legendary tradition of early Roman history provided several examples of a general vowing his own life to the gods in return for Roman victory. Whether or not any of these incidents ever actually took place, this practice of self-sacrifice (*devotio*) came to be regarded as the ultimate example of a general's heroism and piety (both to his city and to the gods).

Livy here describes the *devotio* in 340 B.C. of Decius Mus, whose family was particularly associated with the ritual – both his son and grandson being said to have made the same vow. Livy's account shows how such *self*-sacrifice could be seen as a version of the 'standard' sacrificial ritual.

See further: Vol. 1, 35; Warde Fowler (1911) 206–9*; Dumézil (1970) 93–6; Versnel (1976); (1981b); Janssen (1981).

Livy, *History* VIII.9.1–10

Before leading their men into battle,[1] the Roman consuls offered sacrifice. It is said that the *haruspex* pointed out to Decius that the lobe of the liver was damaged where it referred to his own fortunes, but that in other respects the victim was acceptable to the gods; Manlius'[2] sacrifice, though, had been perfectly successful.[3] 'All is well,' replied Decius, 'if my colleague has obtained favourable omens.' The troops were drawn up in the formation already described and they advanced into battle, Manlius commanding the right wing, Decius the left. At first, the battle was fought with equal strength and equal spirit on each side. But after a while the first line of Roman soldiers on the left failed to withstand the Latin onslaught and fell back on the second line. In this confusion Decius, the consul, shouted out to Marcus Valerius[4] 'The help of the gods, Marcus Valerius, is needed here. Come then, state *pontifex* of the Roman people, dictate the formula that I may devote myself to save the legions.' The *pontifex* instructed him to don the *toga praetexta*, to veil his head[5] and, with one hand held out from under his toga touching his chin, to stand on a spear laid under his feet and speak as follows: 'Janus, Jupiter, Mars Pater, Quirinus,[6] Bellona, Lares, divine Novensiles, divine Indigetes,[7] gods whose power extends over us and our enemies, divine Manes,[8] I pray to you, I revere you, I beg your favour and beseech you that you advance the strength and success of the Roman people, the *Quirites*, and afflict the enemies of the Roman people with terror, fear and death. As I have pronounced in these words, so on behalf of the state, the Roman people, the *Quirites*, on behalf of the army, the legions, and auxiliaries of the Roman people, the *Quirites*, I devote the legions and auxiliaries of the enemy along with myself, to the divine Manes and to Earth.'

(9.9) He recited this prayer, then instructed *lictores* to go to Titus Manlius and to tell his colleague straightaway that he had devoted himself on behalf of the army. He himself, tying his toga in the Gabine knot,[9] leapt fully armed onto his horse and plunged into the midst of the enemy. He was clear to see from both sides of the battle, a sight more divine

than human, as if he had been sent from heaven to expiate all the anger of the gods and turn disaster away from his own people towards the enemy.

1. Against the Latins.
2. Titus Manlius Torquatus, Decius' colleague in the consulship.
3. For this procedure of the *haruspex*, see 7.4.
4. A *pontifex* – who probably accompanied the Roman army to offer religious advice or conduct rites.
5. Decius dresses as if conducting a sacrifice.
6. Note the grouping of Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus; see 1.3.
7. The functions of the Novensiles (elsewhere Novensides) and Indigetes are not known; Wissowa (1912) thought the Novensides were new, the Indigetes native gods, but this distinction is now abandoned.
8. Gods of the underworld.
9. A particular way of wearing the toga, common in religious ritual – a practice reputed to have derived from the Italian town of Gabii.

6.6b *Sacrifice of Gauls and Greeks*

On three occasions in the later Republic (in 228, 216 and 113 B.C.) two Gauls and two Greeks were buried alive in the Forum Boarium (Cattle Market) of the city of Rome – on the instructions of the Sibylline Books (see 1.8; 2.6c; 7.5). Later Romans were puzzled by this kind of 'sacrifice', which seemed to them so flagrantly at odds with 'normal' Roman practice; and modern scholars have also debated the significance of the ritual without reaching agreement. Interpretation is difficult because whereas invasions by Gauls occurred near the times of all three burial-rituals, there is no reason to connect Greeks with any of these incidents. On two occasions, however, in 216 and 113, the ritual burial followed shortly after (and seems to be related to) the discovery of unchastity among the Vestal Virgins (see 8.4a). In this passage the Greek writer Plutarch discusses the apparent inconsistencies of Roman attitudes to human sacrifice, as well as the events of 113 and their connection with the Vestal scandal.

See further: Vol. 1, 80–2; Dumézil (1970) 449–50*; Briquel (1981); Cornell (1981)*; Fraschetti (1981); Eckstein (1982); Porte (1984); Briquel (1986); on the religious-historical background to the incident of 113, Rawson (1974).

Plutarch, *Roman Questions* 83

Why was it that, when the Romans discovered that a barbarian tribe called the Bletonesii[1] had sacrificed a human being to the gods, they sent for the leaders of the tribe, intending to punish them, but when it became clear that the tribe had acted in accordance with some native custom, they set the leaders free, though forbade the practice for the future? Yet the Romans themselves, not many years before, had buried alive two men and two women in the place known as the 'Forum Boarium', two Greeks and two Gauls. It certainly seems odd that they should do this, while censuring the barbarians on the grounds that they were acting against divine law.

Did they think it impious to sacrifice human beings to the gods, but necessary to sacrifice them to the spirits?[2] Or did they think that men who did this by tradition and custom did wrong, while they themselves acted according to the instructions of the Sibylline Books? For it is said that a young woman, a virgin called Helvia, was struck by lightning as she rode a horse, and that the horse was found lying stripped of all its trappings, and the woman herself was found stripped too – her tunic pulled up above her private parts as if on purpose, her shoes, rings and headdress scattered in different directions, her tongue sticking right out from her mouth. The soothsayers[3] declared that this was a dreadful disgrace for the virgin priestesses which would become notorious; and that some outrage would extend to the knights also. Then a barbarian slave of one of the knights laid information against three of the Vestal Virgins, Aemilia and Licinia and Marcia, saying that they had all been corrupted around the same time and for a long period had been sleeping with men; one of these men was Vetutius Barrus, the master of the informer. The women were convicted and punished;[4] but as it was such an appalling business, it was decided that the priests should consult the Sibylline Books. They say that oracles were discovered, prophesying disaster and (in order to avert what impended) prescribing that two Greeks and two Gauls[5] should be offered to strange foreign spirits, buried alive on the spot.

1. A Spanish tribe. The incident may be associated with Publius Licinius Crassus, governor of Further Spain 96–93 B.C. In his consulship (97 B.C.), a senatorial decree was issued forbidding human sacrifice.
2. He suggests a distinction between the gods, in the strictest sense, and other, lesser divinities or 'semi-divinities'.
3. The incident is treated as a prodigy. See 7.3.
4. For the punishment of Vestals, see 8.4a.
5. The reasons for this particular combination of nationalities have been much disputed. In the most general terms it is clear that Rome's good relations with the gods are being restored by the sacrifice of two pairs of (potential) enemies – but it is far less clear why precisely it should be Gauls and Greeks.

6.6c *Accusations of human sacrifice*

Whatever the Roman traditions of human sacrifice, to accuse someone at Rome of having sacrificed a person rather than an animal was to accuse them of having broken all norms of proper civilized *Roman* behaviour. So, for example, Romans accused the Christians of the sacrifice of babies (see 11.11d); Druids and magicians were assumed to have practised human sacrifice (11.3; 11.4) and here the third-century emperor Elagabalus (see 8.5c) is characterized as a human sacrificer – a symbol of his (supposed) life of depravity.

See further: Optendrenk (1969) 65–70; Frey (1989) 34–42 (both assuming that there is a basis of fact in the accusations – for the fictional character of this biography, see Browning (1982), 724–7). Further bibliography is given at 8.5c.

Augustan History, *Life of Elagabalus* 8

He also slaughtered human victims, choosing for this purpose boys of noble birth and fine appearance from the whole of Italy – only those who had both their parents still alive, so that (I suppose) the sorrow (as it was suffered by both father and mother) should be the greater.[1] In fact, all kinds of magicians attended him and performed sacrifice every day. He would urge them on and give thanks to the gods for the goodwill they showed – so he thought – to these men; while at the same time he would inspect the children's entrails and torture his victims according to his own native rites.[2]

1. Perhaps rather to be understood as a parody of the demands made in some Roman religious rituals that the child attendants should have both mother and father still alive. See, e.g., **5.7b** lines 147ff.
2. Elagabalus originated in Syria – and was a devotee of the Syrian god Elagabal.

6.7 The *taurobolium* in the rituals of Magna Mater

The rules of traditional Roman sacrifice can in some respects be seen as a 'code' – which might be altered or subverted to give different 'messages'. So, in contrast to the complete transgression represented by human sacrifice, some cults marked out their difference from the Roman norm by parading a slightly different form of animal sacrifice. This was the case with the bloody rite of the *taurobolium* (bull-slaying) in the cult of Magna Mater.

See further: Vol. 1, 384; Rutter (1968); Duthoy (1969); Vermaseren (1977a) 101–7*; Tbomas (1984) 1522–5*; Sfameni Gasparro (1985) 107–18; Turcan (1989) 55–8, 65–8.

6.7a *The blood-drenched sacrificant*

The main contrast between traditional civic sacrifice and the ritual of *taurobolium* lay in the role of the principal sacrificant himself: in the traditional sacrifice he remained 'clean', separated from the act of killing which was in the hands of slave attendants (see **6.1**); in the *taurobolium* the sacrificant was drenched with the blood of the bull as it was slain. This passage is the only detailed surviving account of a *taurobolium* – though it is written from an explicitly Christian propagandist perspective, using details of the pagan ritual as a pointed contrast with Christian ritual and doctrine: the words are supposedly spoken by a Christian martyr, Romanus, whose account of the *taurobolium* contrasts his own martyr's blood, the holy blood of Christ and the pure ritual of Christian baptism with the polluted blood of pagan sacrifice.

See further: on Christianity and paganism in Prudentius, Malamud (1989) 79–180; A.-M. Palmer (1989) 1–97; another passage from this work is given at **13.8**.

Prudentius, *Crowns of Martyrdom* 10.1001–50

With these words Aristo tried to clear himself,[1] but they had no effect at all on the impious scourge of the Christians. Instead he was carried further and further down the path of insanity, and asked whether it was the blood of someone else that was spattered over the martyr, or whether it poured from his own wound.

(1006) Romanus replied in these words: 'Look – I stand before you. This is truly *my* blood, not that of an ox. Do you recognize, you poor pagan, the blood I speak of, the sacred blood of your ox, which drenches you in the slaughter of sacrifice?[2] The high priest goes down into the depths to be consecrated,[3] in a trench dug in the ground, with strange bands round his head, his temples solemnly entwined with ribbons of office, his hair held by a golden crown, his silken toga tied in the Gabine knot.[4] Above him they construct a platform, by laying planks, in a loose arrangement, with gaps in between the timber. Then they cut or drill through the surface, making many holes in the wood with a sharp instrument, so that it has a large number of tiny openings. Here they bring up a huge bull, with shaggy, savage brow, bound with garlands of flowers around his shoulders or entwining his horns. The victim's brow shimmers with gold, and the radiant sheen tinges its rough hair. When the beast for sacrifice has been brought into position here, they pierce his breast with a hunting spear consecrated to the gods; the vast wound pours forth a stream of steaming blood, and over the bridge of planks below a reeking river gushes out and seethes all around. Then through the many ways made open by the thousand chinks, like falling rain, it showers down its revolting spray. The priest, hidden in the trench below, catches the shower, holding his filthy head under all the drops, fouling his clothes and his whole body. He even throws back his head, and offers his cheeks to the downpour, puts his ears under it, exposes his lips, his nostrils and washes his eyes themselves in the streams. And he does not now even spare his mouth, but wets his tongue until his whole body imbibes the dark blood. After the corpse has become stiff, its blood all lost, and the *flamines*[5] have dragged it off that platform, the *pontifex*[5] comes out of the trench, a ghastly sight, and he shows off his soaking head, his foul beard, his dripping ribbons and sodden clothes. Stained with this pollution, filthy from the putrid blood of the victim, just slaughtered, everyone hails him and from a distance offers him reverence – because the worthless blood of a dead ox bathed him, while he hid away in that foul hole.

1. Aristo, the doctor attending the execution, had been forced to speak in his own defence to the Roman authorities – for although, under instructions from the Roman magistrate, he had cut out the tongue of the martyr, the martyr had (miraculously) continued to speak.
2. That is the blood of the *taurobolium* – which Romanus treats as 'standard' pagan sacrifice.
3. Romanus treats the *taurobolium* as a ritual of consecration, so suggesting the idea (ridiculous from a Christian point of view) that the sacrificant is made holy by the foul blood of the dying animal.
4. See 6.6a n.9.
5. The titles of the priests are those of traditional state cult. Although there was some over-

lap in personnel between traditional cult and the cult of Magna Mater (see 6.7b and 8.9), and more so in the fourth century A.D., the *taurobolium* was not part of the regular official duties of the *pontifex* and *flamen*, even at this period. The author here is probably conflating all types of pagan ritual.

6.7b *Inscribed record of a taurobolium*

The performance of a *taurobolium* was commonly commemorated by an inscription. Some of these inscriptions suggest that *taurobolia* were connected with ideas of salvation and rebirth within the cult of Magna Mater. But others, like this inscribed altar from Lugdunum (Lyons) show how the performance of a *taurobolium* (like traditional civic sacrifice) could also be focused on the prosperity of the Roman state, the emperor and the local community.

See further: Vol. 1, 384; Turcan (1972) 83–8, 124–7.

CIL XIII.1751; *ILS* 4131

In the *taurobolium* of The Great Idaean Mother of the Gods, which was performed on the instruction of the Mother of the Gods, for the well-being of the emperor Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius <i.e. Antoninus Pius>, father of his country, and of his children, and <for the well being> of the condition of the *colonia* of Lugdunum, Lucius Aemilius Carpus, *sevir Augustalis* and at the same time *dendrophorus*[1] received the 'powers'[2] and transferred them from the Vaticanum,[3] and consecrated an altar adorned with an ox-head at his own expense. The priest, Quintus Sammius Secundus, was honoured with an armlet and garland by the *quindecimviri*, and the most holy town-council of Lugdunum decreed him a lifelong priesthood.[4] In the consulship of Appius Annius Atilius Bradua and Titus Clodius Vibius Varus <A.D. 160>. Ground was given for this monument by decree of the town-council.

<On the right side of monument> The midnight ceremony[5] was performed on the fifth day before the Ides of December <9 December>.

1. Lucius Aemilius Carpus was both an officer of the imperial cult (*sevir Augustalis* – see 8.6) and of the cult of Magna Mater (*dendrophorus*).
2. The term 'powers' (Latin *vires*) probably refers to the genitals of the sacrificed bull.
3. It is not certain whether this refers to the major sanctuary of Magna Mater on the Vatican hill in Rome, or to a local sanctuary of Magna Mater, named after that sanctuary. If the former is correct, then the *taurobolium* recorded here was performed in Rome, not Lyons.
4. The sacrifice seems also to have commemorated the appointment of a new priest of the cult. Cf. 10.4b, where the *quindecimviri* likewise grant the honours, but do not control the appointment.
5. This midnight ritual, apparently performed in association with the *taurobolium*, is not otherwise known.

6.8 Conflict and opposition

The central position of animal sacrifice throughout Roman paganism made it a highly charged marker of the conflict between paganism and Christianity. The Christians' complete rejection of sacrifice set them apart from other religions of the Roman empire, all of whom accepted sacrifice in some form or other.

See further: Vol 1, 226, 239–41, 374–5; Young (1979) 79–96; R. P. C. Hanson (1980) 913–18*; R. L. Gordon (1990c).

6.8a *The folly of animal sacrifice*

In this passage Arnobius pillories the cruelty, illogicality and unfairness (what after all had the animal done to deserve it?) of killing animals to honour the gods or expiate human crimes. Although writing from an explicitly Christian standpoint, Arnobius draws on long-standing debates within Greek and Roman philosophy: how far, for example, did the lack of 'rationality' in the animal justify its killing?

See further: on the character of Arnobius' attack on paganism, Liebeschuetz (1979) 254–60*; on pagan philosophical discussion of sacrifice, Attridge (1978).

Arnobius, *Against the Gentiles* VII.9

Imagine that some ox, or any other animal you like, that is being slaughtered to placate and assuage the fury of the gods, were to take on a human voice and speak in these words: 'How is it Jupiter (or whatever other god you are) that it is right and proper, or to be reckoned at all fair, that when someone else has committed a sin, it is *me* that is put to death, and that it is from *my* blood that you accept reparation – when I never hurt you, when I never knowingly or unknowingly violated your divinity and majesty, a dumb animal as you know, just following my guileless nature, not a fickle trickster, full of deceit? Did *I* ever celebrate your games without proper care and scruple? Did *I* ever drive a dancer through the circus before they started, to dishonour your majesty?[1] Did *I* ever swear falsely by you? Did *I* ever commit unholy theft, seizing your property or despoiling your treasure houses? Did *I* ever uproot your most sacred groves, or pollute and desecrate any holy sites with my own private buildings? So whatever is the reason that a crime that is not mine is to be paid for with my blood, that for someone else's sin my innocent life is to be led to the altar? Or is it the fact that I am a worthless animal, with no rationality or reason, as those who call themselves 'humans' claim, those who surpass the beasts in their savagery? Surely the same nature, with the self same elements, brought me too into being, gave me my form? Surely there is a single life breath that rules both me and them? Is it not according to the same principles that I breathe and see and am endowed with the other senses? They have livers, lungs, hearts, intestines, bellies. And is not exactly the

same number of limbs assigned to me as to them? They love their offspring and they join in union to bring forth children. But do not I too have the desire to bear offspring to succeed me, and do not I too take pleasure in them when they have been born? But they are rational beings and utter articulate speech. Yet how do they know whether I too do what I do according to my own rationality, and whether that sound I make is the language of my species and is understood by us alone?'

1. A reference to a story told later in the book: how Jupiter was said to have been angered when a slave (ironically called a 'dancer') was dragged through the circus before the start of the games.

6.8b *Refusal to sacrifice*

Their willingness to perform sacrifice came to be used as a key test of Christians during the persecutions. In this passage Perpetua, a recently converted Christian woman from North Africa, describes her trial (A.D. 203) – and how she was urged by both her father and a Roman magistrate to sacrifice and so avoid the death penalty.

See further: Vol. 1, 237–8; on the martyrdom of Perpetua in particular, Barnes (1971) 71–80*; Lefkowitz (1981) 53–8; Kraemer (1992) 159–61*; Shaw (1993); for the dreams of Perpetua, see 7.9b; for the anniversary of the martyrdom, 3.6.

The Martyrdom of Sts Perpetua and Felicitas 6

One day when we were having breakfast[1] we were suddenly rushed off for a hearing. We came to the forum and straightaway the news travelled all round the parts of the town near the forum and a huge crowd assembled. We stepped up onto the platform. The others were questioned and confessed their faith. Then it came to my turn. And my father appeared straightaway with my son and dragged me from the steps, saying: 'Perform the sacrifice. Have pity on your baby.' And Hilarianus, the *procurator*, who had then taken over the right to try capital crimes in place of the late governor Minucius Timinianus,[2] said to me: 'Have compassion for the white hairs of your father; have compassion for your baby boy. Perform the sacrifice for the well-being of the emperors.'[3] And I replied: 'I'm not doing it.' 'Are you a Christian?' Hilarianus said. And I replied: 'I am a Christian.' And when my father went on trying to sway me from my resolve, Hilarianus gave orders for him to be thrown to the ground and beaten with a rod. And I grieved for my father as if it was me that had been beaten; I grieved for his miserable old age. Then Hilarianus proclaimed sentence on all of us and he condemned us to the beasts; and joyfully we went back down to our prison.[4]

1. That is, in the prison where they had been taken prior to trial.
2. Hilarianus, a junior official (*procurator*) in the province of Africa, had taken over the responsibilities of the governor who had died in office.
3. There is no question here of her being asked to perform sacrifice *to* the emperor (treat-

ing the emperor as a god); she is to perform the sacrifice to the gods *on behalf of* the emperor. See **10.6b** n.4.

4. One of the standard themes of these Christian accounts is that martyrs were *happy* to die for their faith.

6.8c *Certificate of sacrifice*

A series of papyrus documents issued during the Christian persecution initiated by the emperor Decius (A.D. 249–51) were used to provide proof that the individual concerned had, in fact, performed sacrifice. A 'Christian suspect' who sacrificed in front of the government authorities received a witnessed certificate of the act – which could presumably be produced in the event of any future suspicion or arrest.

See further: Vol. 1, 238–41; Knipfing (1923); Frend (1965) 405–13; Lane Fox (1986) 450–62*.

L. Mitteis and U. Wilcken, *Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde* I, 2 (Leipzig, 1912) no. 124

<First hand[1]> To those chosen to superintend the sacrifices in the village of Alexander's Island;[2] from Aurelius Diogenes, son of Sabatus, of the village of Alexander's Island, aged seventy-two, with a scar on his right eyebrow. I have always sacrificed to the gods; and now in your presence in accordance with the terms of the edict[3] I have sacrificed and [poured a libation?] and have [tasted] the sacrificial victims. I request you to certify this. Farewell. I, Aurelius Diogenes, have presented this petition.

<Second hand[1]> I, Aurelius Syrus, saw you and your son sacrificing.

<Third hand[1]> [I . . . son of . . . certify it.]

<First hand[1]> In the first year of emperor Caesar Gaius Messius Quintus Trajanus Decius Pius Felix Augustus, on Epeiph 2 <26 June, A.D. 250>.

1. The document is written in different hands – representing the affidavit of Aurelius Diogenes, and the official certification of his sacrifice.
2. Local commissioners had been appointed to oversee the sacrifices demanded by the emperor's edict. The village of Alexander's Island is in the Fayum district of Egypt.
3. The edict of persecution probably demanded that all inhabitants of the empire should sacrifice – but it is unlikely (given the administrative burden) that certificates would have been issued to those not under suspicion of being Christian.

7 *Divination and diviners*

This chapter is concerned with divination and prophecy: that is, with the ways in which humans ascertained the will of gods and with the ways in which the gods were believed to make known the future. Divination was central in Roman politics and in the traditional religion of the Roman state. So, for example, before engagement in battle or before any meeting of an assembly, the 'auspices' were taken – in other words, the heavens were observed for any signs (such as the particular pattern of a flight of birds) that the gods gave their assent, or otherwise, to the project in hand. But there were many other aspects of divination: some of these (such as astrology) involved specific foretelling of the future; some (such as dream interpretation) were a private, rather than public, affair; some could even be practised as a weapon against the current political order of the state – as when casting an emperor's horoscope foretold his imminent death. The practitioners of divination were as varied as its functions. These ranged from the senior magistrates (who observed the heavens before an assembly) and the state priests (such as the *augures* who advised the magistrates on heavenly signs) to the potentially dangerous astrologers and soothsayers, periodically expelled from the city of Rome (11.7).

The chapter starts with the official divination of the city of Rome: Roman myths about the activity of early diviners (7.1), procedures for the taking of auspices before an election (7.2), the interpretation of 'prodigies' (7.3) and of the entrails of sacrificial animals (7.4), and the role of the so-called 'Sibylline Books', a collection of written oracles kept in Rome (7.5). The second part of the chapter deals with some of the wider aspects of divination and prophecy in Rome and its empire: from private consultation of oracles (7.6) to magic (7.7), astrology (7.8) and dream interpretation (7.9).

See further: R. Bloch (1963) 43–157; Dumézil (1970) 594–610; Vernant (1974); Liebeschuetz (1979) 7–29*; North (1990a)*; Dupont (1992) 181–7.

7.1 Some early prophets

The myths of early Rome include several stories of great seers or prophets, endowed with sometimes miraculous power and enormous religious authority in their own right. These stories contrast markedly with the activity of official Roman priests in the historical period, who – as our sources present them –

enjoyed no such charismatic religious power, did not engage in prophecy of future events and normally did not even conduct divination themselves (but advised the magistrates who did). There was perhaps a chronological development underlying this contrast, with the inspired prophets of early Roman religion gradually becoming 'routinized' within the political structures of the state. But the mere existence of these myths, their continued telling and retelling, suggests that the image of the Roman diviner was always more complicated than that of a simple 'political' official.

7.1a *The story of Attus Navius*

In this passage Livy tells the story of conflict between King Tarquin (the Elder, who reigned, according to tradition, from 616 to 579 B.C.) and Attus Navius, one of the legendary founders of the college of *augures*. It is a striking example of the power of priestly divination being used *in competition with*, rather than *in the service of* the current political authorities of the state – although ultimately (as the passage makes clear) Navius was upholding the more fundamental political order, as established by Romulus.

See further: Vol. 1, 23–4; Piccaluga (1969) 151–208; Ogilvie (1970) 150–1; Beard (1989) 50–3*.

Livy, *History* I.36.2–6

King Tarquin, judging that his cavalry was a particular weakness, decided to add new centuries <units> of cavalry to the exisring ones – Ramnes, Titienses, Luceres – created by Romulus, to which he would leave the disrinction of his own name. Because Romulus had created his three tribes by means of the auguries,[1] a distinguished *augur* at that time, called Attus Navius, declared that no change or innovation could be made to them without the consent of the birds. That moved King Tarquin to anger. To make fun of the *augur's* art, the story goes, he said to Navius: 'Come then, prophet, divine by your augural art whether it is possible to do what I am thinking of at this moment.' Navius took the auspices and announced that what the King was thinking of would in fact come to pass. 'Well', said Tarquin, 'I was thinking of your cutting a whetstone in half with a razor. Fetch them and perform what your birds declare can be done.' Without delay Navius cut the whetstone in half. A statue of Navius with his head veiled used to stand in the place where this happened – in the *comitium*, on the steps to the left of the senate house.[2] The whetstone was also supposed to have been preserved at the same spot, to provide a memorial for posterity of the miracle. Such great honour was brought to the auguries that no action was taken, in war or in the city, without the auspices: assemblies of the people, levies of the troops, all the greatest affairs would be broken up if the birds did not approve.[3]

1. Romulus had set up a hundred (*centuria*) cavalry for each of his three tribes. Tarquin wanted to add three more centuries, not corresponding to the tribes (and named after himself).

2. See 4.7.
3. The solution adopted after this incident was to double the number of cavalry within the existing centuries, calling them the 'old' and 'new' (*primores, posteriores*) Ramnes, Titienses and Luceres. This is what they were still called in Livy's day; his story is, in part, explaining the eccentricities of the arrangement.

7.1b *The old man of Veii*

Livy's narrative of the Roman capture of the Etruscan town of Veii in 369 B.C. (see 2.6a) includes this story of an inspired soothsayer. Although there is nothing miraculous here, the story reflects an attitude towards prophecy in which the wisdom of the individual prophet is what counts. Therefore to capture the person is to control the message; see also 7.1c.

See further: Vol. 1, Map 5; Hubaux (1958) 121–49; Ruch (1966); Scullard (1967) 69 and 269*; Ogilvie (1970) 658–63; Dumézil (1975) 25–31.

Livy, *History* V.15.4–11

An interpreter nearer to hand[1] emerged in the person of an old man of Veii, who, while the Roman and Etruscan soldiers were at their stations and posts jeering at one another, burst into a kind of prophetic song and declared that Rome would never take Veii until waters had been drained from the Alban Lake.[2] At first this was treated as a casual joke, but then it became a subject of discussion until one of the Roman soldiers asked one of the townsmen (they were on chatty terms because of the length of the war) who the man was who was making mysterious utterances about the lake. When he heard that he was a *haruspex*,[3] the soldier, a man of some piety, tempted the soothsayer out to speak to him, by pretending that he wanted his advice about how to deal with a private prodigy. The two of them walked off together away from the lines, unarmed and apparently fearlessly; but then the strong young soldier grabbed the weak old man in full view of everybody, and despite the clamour of the Etruscans carried him over to his own side.

(8) The soothsayer was sent on to the general and then to the senate in Rome, where he was asked to explain what he had said about the Alban Lake. He said that the gods must have been angry with Veii when they had put it into his head to give away the fate destined for his country. Therefore, what he had sung then by some divine inspiration he could neither now call back, as if it had never been spoken, nor now suppress, since the gods wanted it published; it would be as wrong to hide what they wanted revealed as to reveal what they wanted hidden. It was handed down in the books of fate and in the lore of the Etruscans[5] that if, when the Alban waters were high, the Romans should draw them off, they would achieve victory over Veii. Until that had occurred, the gods would never abandon the walls of Veii.[4]

1. The Romans had just sent a mission to consult the oracle at Delphi about the miraculous flooding of the Alban Lake – which had overflowed even though there had been no rain, and without any obvious cause.
2. The Alban Lake is about 25 km. south east of Rome, filling a crater in the Alban Mount,

which was one of the great religious centres of the Latins (see **1.5a**). The text speaks of 'draining waters from the lake', presumably meaning surplus flood-waters, not all the water of the lake. There are still surviving traces of an overflow tunnel (*emissarium*) from the lake, which might be of this date; but it is quite uncertain whether this should be tied in with the prophecy.

3. See **7.4**.
4. Only when the seer's words were confirmed by the response from Delphi (Livy, *History* V.16.8–11, 17.1–5) did the senate follow his advice. He explained to them that the reason for the gods' displeasure (shown by the flood) was a flaw in the election of the magistrates who had proclaimed the Latin Festival; **1.5**. After proper expiation, Veii was captured.

7.1c *Cacu and the Vibennae*

This bronze mirror (diameter 0.15m.) of the late fourth, or early third, century B.C. comes from Bolsena (ancient Volsinii) in Etruria. Four characters are named in Etruscan lettering on the rim above their heads; a fifth face, perhaps that of a satyr, peeps out from behind a rock and watches the action. The named figures are Cacu, shown as a prophet, complete with lyre; a youth Artile who has a tablet, with writing visible on it, open on his lap, and two warriors who are lurking behind the bushes, evidently ready to ambush the prophet and his companion.

The two warriors are named Caile Vipinas and Aule Vipinas, or in Latin, Caelius and Aulus (or Olus) Vibenna. These two are known in connection with stories of early Rome, which mention them together with the Tarquins, the sixth-century Kings with the strongest Etruscan links; still more tellingly, they are both connected to the naming of specific Roman hills – Caelius to the Caelian Hill, Aulus or Olus to the Capitolium, so called it was said, from caput Oli (i.e. the head of Aulus), which was supposed to have been dug up there. It seems clear that the pair were wandering warrior heroes about whom both Roman and Etruscan stories were told.

A character called Cacus appears in Virgil's *Aeneid*, VIII.184–279, where he is a monster who lived on the Palatine Hill before the foundation of Rome as a city; he terrorized the local inhabitants, until Hercules passed by in the course of performing his labours; Cacus tried to steal Hercules' cattle and was duly killed. It is not clear whether Roman Cacus and Etruscan Cacu should be identified; but the graceful figure on the mirror can hardly be Virgil's vast, revolting, formless monster and we have no mention in Roman sources of the episode depicted. The theme of the mirror is close to the Roman story of the old man of Veii (**7.1b**), who is also a prophet captured by force or trickery. It also seems very likely that the book held by Artile is a prophetic text like the Sibylline Books, though perhaps in the Volsinian version. So, perhaps we have the myth of the origin of a written prophetic collection, though no way of knowing the city for which the Vibennae were working at the time.

See further: Small (1982) 3–67, 113 (identifying Cacu with the Roman Cacus); Hardie (1986) 110–18 (on Virgil's Cacus) and on the connection of the Vibennae with the Tarquins, Scullard (1967) 256–8; Cornell (1996) 130–41*.

1. Cacus playing the lyre
2. Artile with an open book on his lap
3. and 4. The brothers Vihenna about to jump out and capture the prophet and his book

7.2 Public auspices

Priestly activity at Rome, after the legendary period of the early city, was technical and specialist rather than inspirational. So, for example, priests acted as arbiters if anything went amiss in the routine consultations of the gods practised by magistrates. In this case, related by Cicero, the problem concerned the conduct of elections, which like other public events at Rome took place at a time and place ritually approved by consultation with the gods. The priests were asked by the senate to judge whether anything had gone wrong or not in the elections of 163 B.C. There has been much discussion on this incident, and on whether the main character, Tiberius Gracchus, was acting from religious or purely political motives. But, either way, the close interplay of priests and politicians and the complexity of the rules governing the procedures are evident.

See further: Vol. 1, 21–3; Valeton (1889–90); Botsford (1909) 100–18; Liebeschuetz (1979) 10–16*; Linderski (1986); on this particular incident, Scullard (1973) 226–7; Linderski (1986) 2168–73.

Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* II.10–12

The disciplines both of our own *augures* and of the Etruscan *haruspices*[1] were historically confirmed in the consulship of Publius Scipio and Gaius Figulus <162 B.C.>. Tiberius Gracchus was creating these two new consuls[2] when the first returning officer (*rogator*), on the very point of announcing the names, suddenly died on the spot. Gracchus completed the elections all the same; but since he realized that the incident raised religious issues for the people, referred it to the senate. The senate referred it on <to the priests> as was their usual practice; so the *haruspices* were brought into the senate and responded that it had been the officer of the assembly (*rogator comitiorum*) who had acted improperly.[3] At this point, Gracchus (it was my father who told me this) completely lost his temper: 'What do you say? that I was the one who acted improperly, while holding the assembly as consul? I, an *augur*, having taken the auspices myself?[4] Do you barbarian Etruscans claim the right to judge the auspices of the Roman people? Are you able to interpret the conduct of our assembly?' So he had them thrown out. Later on, however, he wrote a letter to the college of *augures* from his province, to say that while reading some books, he had realized that his observation-post (*tabernaculum*)[5] at the gardens of Scipio had been vitiated, because after setting it up he had gone back across the city boundary (*pomerium*) to hold the senate, but forgotten to take the auspices again when recrossing the same boundary on his way out.[6] So the consuls had been created improperly. The *augures* referred the matter to the senate; the senate asked the consuls to resign; they did so. What better example could we seek? A most wise Roman, perhaps the greatest of all, preferred to reveal a mistake he could have concealed, rather than let a religious error stand in public life; the consuls laid down the supreme power rather than hold on to it for a moment against religious rule.[7] Great is the authority of the *augures*; is not the art of the *haruspices* a thing divine?

1. In contrast to the Roman college of *augures*, the *haruspices* (though regularly summoned to give advice at Rome) were a group of Etruscan diviners. See 7.4.
2. That is, Tiberius Gracchus, as consul for 162 B.C., was conducting the election for the consuls of the following year.
3. The same word (*rogator*) can be used for the magistrate holding the elections (Gracchus himself) and for the official who reported the voting in the different divisions of the assembly.
4. Gracchus would have taken the auspices as a magistrate; he emphasizes the fact that he was also an *augur* to add extra authority to his claims.
5. That is the post from which he observed the heavens.
6. The elections were held outside the *pomerium* in the Campus Martius. See 4.8.
7. Cicero thus confirms that the religious error did not in itself make the election null and void. The consuls still had to abdicate.

7.3 Prodigies

Prodigies were signs from the gods which indicated that relations between gods and men were disrupted. Lists of prodigies, and of the action taken by senate and priests to avert their implied menace, are preserved by Livy, year after year in the republican period. The lists become longer and more appalling than usual in years of disaster, whether because more were reported or because Livy used them in his narrative to help create an atmosphere of nervous expectation and fear.

See further: Vol. 1, 19–20, 37–9; R. Bloch (1963) 77–86, 112–57; Liebeschuerz (1979) 9–10*; MacBain (1982); Levene (1993) 17–37.

7.3a *The prodigies before the disaster at Trasimene, 217 B.C.*

This is one of the most elaborate prodigy lists, placed by Livy before the disastrous battle at Lake Trasimene, at which the Romans suffered a terrible massacre at the hands of the Carthaginian invaders. These extraordinary happenings did not provide the basis for any *prophecy* of future events; instead the priests' advice results in elaborate rituals to restore relations between gods and men.

See further: Walsh (1961) 61–4*; Rawson (1971).

Livy, *History* XXII.1.8–20

Prodigies, reported from several places simultaneously, increased the terror <in Rome>: in Sicily, some arrows caught fire among the soldiers; in Sardinia, as a cavalryman was checking round the guards on the wall, the baton he was holding in his hand also caught fire; the coasts shone out with many fires and two shields sweated blood; some soldiers were struck by lightning and the orb of the sun was seen to diminish; at Praeneste, burning stones fell from the sky; at Arpi, shields were seen in the sky and the sun fighting with the moon; at Capena, two moons were seen to rise; the waters at Caere flowed

mixed with blood and the spring of Hercules itself ran spattered with spots of blood; when they were taking in the harvest at Antium, bloody ears fell into the basket; the sky at Falerii was seen to gape as if with a great hole and, at the point where it lay open, an enormous light shone forth; the lots shrank spontaneously and one fell out giving the message: 'Mars shakes his spear.'[1] At the same time in Rome, the statue of Mars by the Appian Way and the images of the wolves sweated; and at Capua there was the appearance of the sky burning and of the moon falling to earth during a storm.[2] Trust was then placed in lesser prodigies as well: some goats grew wool; a hen turned into a male and a cock into a female. These events were expounded to the senate, just as they had been reported, and those who vouched for them were brought in; then the consul consulted the senators about the ritual implications. Their decree was that the prodigies should be dealt with by sacrifice partly of greater victims, partly of suckling victims;[3] and a three-day supplication should take place at all the couches of the gods.[4] Next, when the *decemviri* had consulted the Books,[5] the gods should be addressed in sacred hymns according to the preferences of each one. By the advice of the *decemviri* the first gift was decreed to Jupiter, a golden thunderbolt fifty pounds in weight, Juno and Minerva were given silver gifts and Juno Regina on the Aventine and Juno Sospita of Lanuvium received sacrifices of greater victims; and the matrons, after the collecting of as much money as each one could bring together appropriately, should carry a gift to Juno on the Aventine and a *lectisternium* should be held <for her>;[6] and that the women ex-slaves should also collect money, according to their ability, to offer a gift to Feronia.[7] When this had all been done, the *decemviri* should sacrifice in the forum at Ardea with greater victims. Finally, it being now December, a sacrifice and a *lectisternium* (the couch being set out by the senators) should be held in the temple of Saturn in Rome, and also a public feast; and that the cry 'Saturnalia' should be kept up through the city for a day and a night and the people bidden to hold it a sacred day and so to keep it in perpetuity.[8]

1. Various towns in Italy had a 'lot' oracle: tablets of wood (or other material) each inscribed with an oracle were drawn at random to give an oracular response. It was a bad omen when the lots shrank.
2. The meaning (and the Latin text) is uncertain here.
3. Greater victims were full-grown; suckling victims, still young.
4. For the gods' statues on couches, see 5.5c.
5. That is, the Sibylline Books; see 7.5 and 1.8.
6. For the *lectisternium*, see 5.5b and c.
7. Feronia was the divine patroness of the women ex-slaves, as Juno was of the matrons.
8. The Saturnalia was an ancient festival (see, e.g., 3.2, where it is marked in large capital letters); so Livy is either here mistakenly thinking it was a new invention in 213 B.C. or he meant to imply that only the day of public feasting was the innovation. See 5.3.

7.3b *Pliny on portents*

It is not always easy to understand why some particular events were seen as prodigies, and others not. Historians, such as Livy, only give us the bald record of a prodigy, not the reasons for that classification. Occasionally, however,

Pliny's *Natural History* – which includes all kinds of information about birds and animals in religion, science and popular thought – gives us some hint as to why the behaviour of a particular beast might be seen as prodigious.

See further: Köves-Zulauf (1972) 166–314; Beagon (1992) 144–7.

7.3b(i) Ravens

See further: on the habits of ancient ravens, R. L. Gordon (1980a) 25–32.

Pliny, *Natural History* X.32–3

Ravens have at the most five young. It is popularly believed that they give birth or have intercourse through their beaks; and that that is why pregnant women, if they eat a raven's egg, return the foetus by the mouth and, if the eggs are carried into the house, have a difficult delivery in general. Aristotle will have none of this; no more than with the Egyptian ibis, for he says that the kissing which is often seen, means no more than in the case of doves. Ravens are the only birds who in the auspices understand the messages that they convey. For when the guests of Meidias were killed, all of them fled from the Peloponnese and Attica.[1] The worst message is when they whine, as though they were being strangled.

1. Meidias (or Medius) was a Thessalian war-lord, who massacred some Spartan mercenaries (here called 'guests') at the start of the Corinthian War (395 B.C.). The ravens apparently saw what was coming.

7.3b(ii) Owls

Pliny, *Natural History* X.34

The owl (*bubo*) is a funereal bird and a disastrous omen, particularly in the context of the public auspices. It lives in the deserts not just in the regions to which men do not go, but ones both inaccessible and awesome. It is a monster of the night-time, with a scream instead of musical notes for its cry. As a result of this, it is a direful omen whenever seen inside a city or at all in the daytime. I know of cases where it has rested on a private house, but not presaged a death. It never travels directly the way it means to go, but off-course and obliquely.

7.3c *Eclipse before a battle*

Many events that were regarded as prodigies – and so signs from the gods – could be explained in other ways. On the eve of the Battle of Pydna in 168 B.C., the final battle between the Romans and King Perseus of Macedon (see 5.8a), there was an eclipse of the moon. Eclipses had traditionally been seen as prodigies and dealt with as religious events. However, those who understood the latest scientific views knew why they happened and how to predict them. The point of Livy's story is a paradox: you would have expected the Romans (regarded by the Greeks as barbarians) to have been ignorant of the latest

scientific ideas, while in fact it is the Greeks who turned out to be prey to superstitious fears.

See further: Cramer (1954) 48–50*; Walbank (1957–79) III.386–7; on the details of the chronology, Oost (1953); Meloni (1954).

Livy, *History* XLIV.37.5–9

When the camp was fully fortified, Gaius Sulpicius Gallus, who had been *praetor* the previous year <169 B.C.> and was now military tribune in the second legion,[1] called a meeting of the troops with the consul's consent; he told them not to take it as a bad omen that there was going to be an eclipse of the moon between the second and fourth hours of the coming night. He said this was a regular natural phenomenon and could therefore be predicted. It surprised nobody, he said, that the moon should sometimes be full and sometimes a slim crescent, since the rising and setting of the moon and the sun are regular occurrences; in the same way they should not regard it as a prodigy that the moon should be obscured when it was hidden by the earth's shadow. On the night of 3 September <literally: on the night that preceded the day before the Nones of September>, the moon went into eclipse at the time predicted: the Roman troops looked on the wisdom of Gaius as next to divine. Meanwhile the Macedonians received the eclipse as a bad portent, signifying the fall of their monarchy and their nation, and their soothsayers were not able to dissuade them from this idea.[2]

1. He is presented here and elsewhere as a learned man who wrote a book on astronomy (e.g. Cicero, *On the State* I.23; *On Old Age* 49; Pliny, *Natural History* II.53).
2. The Greek accounts of the incident (Polybius, *The Histories* XXIX.16; Plutarch, *Life of Aemilius Paullus* 17.3–6) do not mention Gallus at all, and present both the Romans and the Greeks as superstitious, only Aemilius Paullus knowing better (according to Plutarch).

7.4 The *haruspices*

The *haruspices* were a group of specialist diviners from Etruria. They were never recognized as *Roman* priests in the full sense; bur they played an important role in the religious life of Rome.

See further: Vol. 1, 19–20, 101–2, 113, 137–8; Thulin (1906–9); Lenaghan (1969) 32–7*; Rawson (1978).

7.4a *Response from the 'haruspices'*

In 56 B.C. the *haruspices* offered an interpretation of a particular prodigy: a strange rumbling noise rhat had been heard outside Rome. Cicero in turn devoted a whole speech to interpreting their interpretation, trying ro argue that they were referring to rhe crimes of Cicero's enemy, Clodius. The words of the priests can be reconstructed from quotations given by Cicero at various

places in his speech. The first two clauses specify the religious action required; the next five give the religious offences that have caused the gods to be angry and require appeasement; rhe last four list the public dangers that need to be averted by religious action.

See further: Vol. 1, 19–20, 101–2, 137–8; R. Bloch (1963) 50–5; Lenaghan (1969); Dumézil (1970) 671–2*; Wiseman (1974) 159–69.

Composite text from Cicero's speech, *On the Response of the Haruspices* (figures in brackets represent chapter numbers of the speech)

Because in the territory of Latiniensis[1] a groaning noise was heard: (20)
Compensation is due to Jupiter, Saturn, Neptune, Tellus, the Gods of the Heavens (20)
the games have been celebrated without enough care and polluted (21)[2]
sacred and holy places have been profaned (9)[3]
envoys have been slain against all faith and right (34)[4]
trust and sworn oaths have been neglected (36)[5]
old and secret sacrifices have been celebrated without enough care and polluted (37)[6]
in order that murders and perils should not be caused by discord and dissension amongst the senators and the leading men; and that there should be no lack of divine help in preventing the power falling to a single man and the army from weakening and losing its strength (40)[7]
in order that the Republic be not harmed by secret plans (55)
in order that honour should not be increased for men of low worth and political failure (56)
in order that the basis of the Republic remain unchanged (60)

1. The exact location of the territory is unknown, but it was somewhere near Rome.
2. Cicero referred this to Clodius' disruption of the Megalesian Games (see **3.3a** n.2).
3. Clodius had claimed that this was a reference to Cicero's rebuilding and reoccupation of his house, which Clodius had demolished, consecrating part of the site as a Shrine of Liberty; cf. **8.2a**.
4. This was generally referred to the killing of envoys from Egypt, on the instructions of Ptolemy Auletes, the Egyptian king.
5. Cicero related this to Clodius' alleged bribery of the jurors in his trial for invading the festival of Bona Dea, **8.2b**.
6. Cicero referred this to Clodius' alleged invasion of the festival of Bona Dea, **8.2b**.
7. The Latin text is uncertain at the end of this section.

7.4b *The Liver from Piacenza*

The *haruspices* were specialists in the examination of the entrails of sacrificial victims ('extispicy'). This bronze liver (probably third–second century B.C.) found near Piacenza in Etruria in 1877, seems to have provided a guide to the interpretation of the victim's organ. The bronze (0.13 m. × 0.08 m.) is marked out as a map of the heavens with the gods of each section identified on its surface; so the animal's liver was seen as analogous to the divine sphere, and

different gods were placated according to its particular marks and characteristics.

See further: Dumézil (1970) 650–9*; Pallottino (1975) 138–47*; van der Meer (1987).

7.4c *Reading the entrails*

Oddities in the entrails of sacrificial victims could signify disaster for the sacrificer – or, if he was a major magistrate, for the city as a whole. Here the senate orders the consuls to continue sacrificing until they find a victim with satisfactory organs and achieve favourable omens. (Compare also the events in 6.6a.)

See further: Schilling (1962); Linderski (1986) 2174–5; Rosenstein (1990) 89–90.

Livy, *History* XLI.14.7 and 15.1–4

In the consulship of Gnaeus Cornelius and Quintus Petilius, on the very day they entered office <probably 15 March 176 B.C.>, they were both sacrificing the customary ox to Jupiter, when no lobe was found in the liver of Petilius' victim. When this was reported to the senate, they ordered him to continue sacrificing till he achieved favourable omens.

<While he was doing this, the senate carried on with other business, concerning the provincial commands of the year.>

(15.1) While the senate was engaged on this business, Gnaeus Cornelius was called out by his attendant; he left the temple, but shortly returned with dismay in his face to tell the senators that the liver of the ox he was sacrificing had dissolved. The *victimarius*[1] had told him about this, but he could not believe what he had heard and therefore had the water in which the entrails were being cooked poured out of the cauldron, and saw for himself that the other entrails were still complete, but that the whole liver had been consumed by some unspeakable corruption. The senators were appalled by this prodigy and Petilius (whose victim's liver had lacked its lobe) added to the gloom by reporting that he had sacrificed three more oxen and still not achieved favourable omens. The senate bid him complete the sacrifice using the greater victims.[2] They tell that all the other sacrifices achieved favourable omens, but that Petilius' sacrifice to Salus <Public Safety>[3] never did. Then the consuls and praetors drew lots for the provinces.

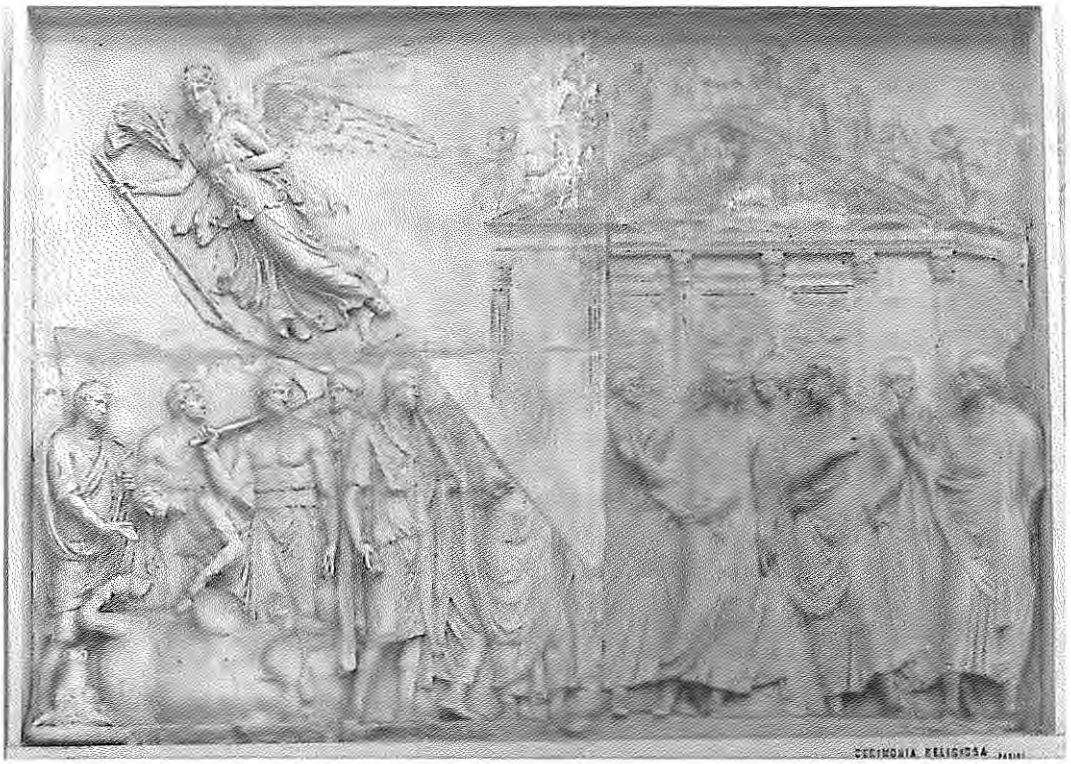
1. For the *victimarius*, see **6.1a**.
2. See **7.3a** n.3. For the disappearance of vital organs at the moment of sacrifice, see **13.2**.
3. Salus has not been mentioned before in Livy's account – only Jupiter; but the absence of a satisfactory sacrifice to Salus would be particularly damaging and the senate may have ordered it when things started to go wrong. Petilius was later defeated and killed on campaign, amidst allegations of ritual mistakes: see Livy, *History* XLI.18.7–14.

7.4d *The extispicy relief from Trajan's Forum (early second century A.D.)*

This sculptured panel, now in Paris, came originally from Trajan's Forum at Rome. In general, depictions of the examination of entrails are rare in Roman art (despite taking place in some form after almost every sacrifice); so the subject may well have had a particular point in the context of the Forum. It is a likely guess that the scene shows the sacrifice before the emperor Trajan set out on campaign, and that the entrails here being examined predicted the victory that the Forum was built to celebrate.

Our photograph shows a plaster-cast of the relief, which assembles fragments of the original currently held in different museums in Paris. Original height, *c.* 3 m.; width 4.05 m.

See further: Wace (1907) 229–49; Ryberg (1955) 128–30; Koeppel (1985) 154–7, 204–12; D. E. E. Kleiner (1992) 223–4*.



7.5 Sibylline Oracles

The oracular books bought, according to legend, by King Tarquin (**1.8**) were an important part of Roman state divination. Kept on the Capitoline hill, in the charge of the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*, they were consulted on the instructions of the senate after prodigies (**2.6c**; **6.6b**; **7.3**) or in other moments of crisis. The Books seem regularly to have recommended particular rituals to be carried out in reponse to the prodigy; but in the middle Republic (particularly in the third century B.C.) a series of consultations of the Books led to the introduction of new deities from the Greek world to Rome.

See further: Vol. 1, 27, 62–3; Diels (1890); North (1976) 9*; Parke (1988) 136–51, 190–215.

7.5a *A Sibylline Oracle of the Roman Republic*

Eighty lines of Greek verse, seeming to be a Sibylline Oracle from the official collection, are preserved in a book of *Wonders*, by the second-century A.D. writer Phlegon, an ex-slave of the emperor Hadrian. There has been some argument about whether this is a genuine oracle or not, because the Sibylline Books were usually kept secret. But Phlegon's story is that it was produced by

the priests themselves in 125 B.C. and the content seems broadly compatible with that date. It may be, however, that some of the text is a great deal older, perhaps being built up gradually into its present form over many years.

The text is thoroughly obscure and baffling (and must have been so for the Romans too); it would have called for skill, effort and a good deal of faith from its interpreters. The first line (as we know from Cicero, *On Divination* II.111–12 was the custom in these oracles) is an acrostich: that is, it is composed of the first letter of each of the remaining lines of the oracle, reading downwards. The great bulk of the text is a description of an elaborate ceremonial to be carried out, but the end of this extract provides a riddling reference to a war, seemingly with the Greeks.

Only the first half of the text is translated here. The translation is speculative at times, since the text has gaps and many uncertainties. The speaker is the Sibyl herself.

See further: MacBain (1982) 129–31; Breglia Pulci Doria (1983); Parke (1988) 137–9.

Phlegon of Tralles, *On Wonders* 10, in Diels (1890) 111–13 and F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (1923–58), II B no.257, fr. 36.10.A.1–28

Since I know the Fates, and know where each man's destiny shall take him,[1] and know the wonders and griefs Fate has in store, all these things I can reveal through the power of my <prophetic> loom,[2] if you will meditate on these things in your heart, putting your trust in the loom's power. I tell you that a woman shall give birth to a hermaphrodite, having all the parts of males, but also those of females.[3] I shall no longer conceal, but explain in detail, the sacrifices for Demeter and chaste Persephone. The Goddess herself is mistress of the loom, if you place your trust in these things, for the most holy Demeter and the chaste Persephone. First of all, gather together a treasure of coined money, from the cities and from yourselves as you wish, then order the making of a sacrifice for Demeter, Mother of the Maiden. Then I bid you at public expense thrice nine bulls . . .[4]

<7 lines of text missing>

. . . sacrifice splendid <heifers>, with fine horns and white hides, the ones you judge most beautiful of all. Bid the maidens, the number I have already said,[5] perform these by the Greek rite,[6] calling upon the Queen Immortal[7] with sacrifices, chastely and purely. Then after that let there be sacred gifts from your wives and let these – trusting in my loom – carry torches for the most holy Demeter. Then next, let the older women (knowing well the sacrifices) take thrice the same number of libations – wineless ones – and place them on a slender flame. And let the others (the young ones with a carefree spirit) taking as many to Persephone, Pluto's wife, let them pray to her, the most holy, the all-learned one, to remain in the fatherland while the war goes on, and pray for forgetfulness to fall upon the Greeks both of the city <Rome?> and of her <the Goddess>.[8]

1. The acrostich ends at this point.
2. The loom is treated throughout as the symbol of prophecy.
3. The birth of a hermaphrodite was regularly regarded as a prodigy (7.3).
4. There must be a lengthy gap here and confusion in the text as we have it. A likely solution is that the number twenty-seven referred not to bulls at all, but to the twenty-seven maidens who appear later (n. 5).
5. The number appeared either in the gap or as suggested in n. 4.
6. For the Greek rite, see 5.7b n.1.
7. Persephone.
8. The situation appears to be a war, in which the Romans must retain Persephone's favour while the Greeks lose it. This is hard to relate to any known circumstances of 125 B.C.

7.5b *Later Prophecy in the Sibylline tradition*

The Roman collection of Sibylline Oracles may have been the most famous and authoritative, but there were many other famous Sibyls in antiquity and it is clear that not just Roman pagans, but Greeks, Jews and Christians all used them to provide legitimacy for their prophetic texts. We have two collections of these, preserved in Renaissance manuscripts. The section of the oracle printed here contains three separate sections of prophecy, which may originally have been separate oracles. It is a very mixed text, with pagan, Jewish and Christian elements. Several of the details suggest an origin in the first century B.C. in a Jewish context; but it could also be interpreted by the Christians as containing useful confirmation of the truth of Christianity.

See further: Nikiprowetzky (1970); Schürer (1973–87) III.618–54; Collins (1987)*; D. Potter (1991) 95–140*.

Sibylline Oracle III.46–76

When Rome shall extend its power over Egypt, bringing it under a single rule,[1] at that time shall the mighty kingdom of the immortal king appear among men. There shall come a pure ruler who will control all the sceptres of the whole world for all the ages of future time.[2] And then shall the anger against the men of Latium become inexorable; the three[3] shall impose a terrible fate upon Rome and all the people shall perish in their own houses as a cataract of fire launches itself from the sky. Alas, timid one, when shall the day come, that shall bring the judgement of immortal god the mighty king? And you, the cities, are you still building? still adorning yourselves with temples, stadiums, marketplaces? with statues of gold, of silver and of stone? and all this just to meet that bitter day? For the day shall come when the smell of sulphur shall spread itself amongst all men. So I shall tell you the details about each city where men shall meet with disaster.

(63) Then shall Beliar come from Sebaste.[4] He will raise up high mountains, he will immobilize the sea, the great fiery sun and the shining moon; he will rouse the dead and send many signs ro the people, but these will come to nothing. They will be works of deception and they will deceive many mortals, faithful and chosen Hebrews or else those withour law or who have not yet heard speak of God. But when the moment shall come

for the fulfilment of the threats of the Great God, then shall a flaming power rise up from the sea upon the earth and it shall consume Beliar and all the arrogant ones who have placed their faith in him.

(75) Then shall the earth be ruled by the hands of a woman[5] and they shall obey her in all things.

1. Egypt was brought under Roman control at the battle of Actium, 31 B.C.
2. A reference to the coming of a Messiah.
3. This may refer to the Second Triumvirate (42–32 B.C.).
4. Beliar represents the Antichrist. Sebaste probably refers to the town, otherwise known as Samaria, in the Roman province of Judaea. It has also been suggested that Sebaste is to be read as Sebastoi (i.e. the title in Greek of the Roman emperors); if that is correct, Beliar could refer to the emperor Nero.
5. Perhaps a reference to Cleopatra.

7.5c *The Marcian Songs (212 B.C.)*

There are occasional surviving traces of a prophetic tradition in Roman Italy wider than just the Sibylline Oracles and the legends of the prophetic gifts of early priests (7.1). This story of the prophecies of Marcius is one such trace. These prophecies played a very important role in Rome at a critical moment in the war against the Carthaginians; they led to the creation of a new set of games (the *ludi Apollinares*), and were eventually included, alongside the Sibylline Oracles, among the official collection of the *decemviri sacris faciundis*, although that consisted normally of Greek texts. The earlier history of the Marcian songs is much less clear. They had apparently been current in Italy before 212 B.C.; but we do not know whether they were ancient or newly invented texts.

See further: Vol. 1, 79–84 (for the general context); Gagé (1955) 270–9; Herrmann (1960); Dumézil (1970) 512–15.

Livy, *History* XXV.12.2–13

A new religious crisis occurred as a result of the songs of Marcius. This Marcius was a famous seer,[1] whose works had come into the hands of the *praetor*, M. Aemilius, in the course of the previous year's enquiry into such propheric books, set up by senatorial decree.[2] He had handed them over to Sulla, his successor. There were two of these prophecies by Marcius, the first of which gained authority because the events predicted had already happened; this brought credence to the second one, whose time of fulfilment had not yet arrived. The first one foretold the disaster at Cannae,[3] more or less in these words: 'Flee the River of Canna, Trojan-born, lest the foreigner force you to join battle in the plain of Diomedes. But you will not believe me: not until you have filled the plain with your blood, and the river has borne many thousands of your dead, from the fruitful earth down to the great sea. Your flesh will be food for the fishes, birds and wild beasts that live in those lands. For it is thus that Jupiter has spoken to me.' And the plain of Diomedes the Argive and the river Canna were recognized by those who had fought there as being close to the scene of the disaster.[4]

(8) Then the other prophecy was read out, harder to understand not just because the future is less certain than the past, but also because it was written in a more complex style: 'Romans, if you wish to drive out the enemy from your land, the plague that came from faraway lands, I bid you vow to Apollo annual games which will be celebrated for him joyfully; the people shall bear part of the cost from public funds, but private men shall contribute for themselves and their families. In charge of the conduct of the games shall be the *praetor* who is the chief judge for the people and commons <i.e. the urban *praetor*>; the *decemviri* shall perform the sacrifices, by the Greek rite.[5] If you perform all this rightly, you shall ever rejoice and your power shall be dominant. For the god who shall extinguish your wars shall be the one who in peace cultivates your fields.'[6]

(11) They took one day for rituals of expiation after this prophecy. Then, next day, the senate decreed that the *decemviri* should inspect the Sibylline Books on the subject of games for Apollo and the rituals that should be followed. When the Books had been inspected and a report made to the senate, they decreed that the games for Apollo should be vowed and performed and that at the time of the performance the *praetor* should receive 12, 000 *asses* for the rituals and two greater victims.[7] A second decree was passed that the *decemviri* should sacrifice by the Greek rite[5] with the following victims: for Apollo a gilded ox and two white gilded goats; for Latona a gilded heifer.

1. Also mentioned by other authors, though there are sometimes (e.g. Cicero, *On Divination* i.89) said to be two brothers.
2. A *praetor* of 213 B.C., M. Aemilius Lepidus, had investigated the presence of foreign cults, in Rome. See Vol. 1, 91–2.
3. A disastrous Roman defeat inflicted by Hannibal in 216 B.C.
4. The references are not entirely clear. Canna appears to refer to the river Aufidus in Apulia (south Italy) where the battle was fought, though it obviously evokes the name of Cannae; Diomedes was a Greek hero in the Trojan war, who was supposed to have travelled in later life to Apulia and set up a kingdom there.
5. See **5.7b** n.1. The Greek rite was the usual recommendation of the Sibylline Books.
6. For the *ludi Apollinares*, see Scullard (1981) 159–60.
7. See **7.3a** n.3.

7.6 Prophecy in the Roman empire

In the Roman empire, there was an enormous variety of prophecies and prophetic activity, both pagan and Christian. This section tries to capture some of that variety.

See further: Lane Fox (1986) 168–261, 375–418.

7.6a *How to invent an oracle*

Lucian's satire on Alexander of Abonouteichos (a city in the region of Paphlagonia on the south shore of the Black Sea) sets out to expose a false oracle, fraudulently stage-managed by Alexander. In this passage he describes the

way Alexander first contrived his oracular god; in a later passage (56), Lucian claims that he himself visited the oracle and played a part in exposing Alexander as a charlatan.

See further: Robert (1980) 393–421; Jones (1986) 133–48*; Branham (1989) 181–210.

Lucian, *Alexander of Abonouteichos* 13–15

When the time came to start, he thought up an ingenious trick. They were just digging out the foundations of the new temple <of Asklepios>, and water had collected there, either from nearby springs or from rain; so he went down there at night and hid a goose's egg previously blown, with a new-born snake placed inside it; he buried the egg deep in the mud and then he went back up again. In the morning he ran out into the market-place, naked apart from the golden cloth tied round his loins, carrying his sickle and shaking his wild locks like a frenzied devotee of Magna Mater.[1] He climbed up on to a high altar and addressed the people, congratulating them because they were just on the point of receiving the god visible into their presence. Those who were there – and in fact almost the whole city had turned up, even women, old men and children – marvelled, prayed and did obeisance. He uttered some meaningless noises, rather like Hebrew or Phoenician, which abashed all the people who had no idea what he was talking about except that he mixed in the words 'Apollo and Asklepios'.

(14) Then he ran off at top speed down to the site of the new temple. He went down to the excavation and into the improvised fountain-head of the oracle. He entered the water, sang hymns in a loud voice to Asklepios and Apollo inviting them to appear in the city for its good fortune. He asked for and was given a saucer and slipped it neatly under the ground and then together with some mud and water brought up the egg in which he had hidden the god. (He had sealed the joint with wax and white lead). He took the egg in his hands and said he was holding Asklepios. The people gazed to see what would happen next, having already been staggered by the discovery of the egg in the water. But when he broke the egg and took the little snake into the hollow of his hand, where the crowd could see it moving and wriggling round his fingers, they all shouted out, greeted the god, blessed the city and each one started to sate himself with prayers for treasures, for wealth, for health and all other blessings. Then he shot off again at high speed, back to his house carrying the new-born Asklepios, in fact 'the twice-born, when other people are only born once' <Homer, *Odyssey* XII.22>, and with a mother who was not Coronis,[2] by Zeus, nor even a crow, but a goose. And the whole city followed him home full of religious enthusiasm and crazed with hopes.

(15) Then he stayed at home for a few days hoping for what did actually happen, that is that, as the news spread, the Paphlagonians would come rushing in. When the city was simply packed with people all lacking any of the brains and sense of normal grain-eating human beings, differing from the beasts only in their appearance, he took his place on a couch in a certain room dressed like a god and with the Asklepios he had brought from

Pella,[3] who was, as I said before, enormous and very lovely. He coiled this snake round his neck, letting the tail, which was long, hang over his lap and part of it trail onto the floor. The only part he kept hidden was the head, under his arm, while he displayed the linen head[4] on one side of its beard as if it belonged entirely to the creature that was visible.

1. See 8.7a–c.
2. According to one mythological tradition, Coronis was the mother of Asklepios. *Corone* is the Greek word for 'crow'; hence the pun which follows.
3. Earlier in the story (6–7), Alexander had bought a tame snake from Pella (in Macedonia).
4. Chapter 12 describes this linen head – of part-snake, part-human appearance, which could be made to move its mouth and so appear to speak.

7.6b *The prophecies of Montanus*

Montanus (late second century A.D.) was the founder of a Christian movement in Phrygia (Asia Minor). The Montanists, who came to be seen as 'heretical' by the 'orthodox' Church, claimed that God spoke to the Church through prophets and prophetesses, whose authority should be greater than that of bishops. The movement was resisted by the bishops of Asia Minor, but spread to North Africa and Rome. Eusebius, the fourth-century Christian historian, is the main source for the development of the movement; in this passage, he is drawing on an earlier writer whom he does not name.

See further: Vol. 1, 305–6; G. Salmon (1882); Labriolle (1913); Frend (1984) 253–7*.

Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* V.16.7–8

There is, it seems, a village called Ardabau, near the Phrygian border with Mysia. It is said that, in the proconsulate of Gratus in Asia,[1] a recent convert called Montanus laid himself open to the devil through his limitless ambition to succeed; he became filled with spiritual exaltation and fell into a sort of trance or ecstatic state. He started chattering and speaking strange words, prophesying in a manner quite inconsistent with the Church's practice as handed down from generation to generation from the beginning. Some of those who heard his bogus performances were angry and regarded him as possessed, a demoniac in the power of a spirit of error, a disturber of the people. They assailed him and tried to prevent his speaking, mindful of the division made by the Lord when he warned against the coming of false prophets. But others were aroused as if by the Spirit or by a gift of prophecy, and became gripped with pride, forgetful of the Lord's warning. They accepted a harmful, delusive, misleading spirit; they were so bewitched and deluded, that they could no longer be kept quiet.

1. The exact date of Gratus' office is unknown; it was probably in the 150s or 160s A.D. See Barnes (1970).

7.6c *The oracle at Didyma speaks . . .*

Plutarch, writing in the late first/early second century A.D., seems to imply that in his day many oracles in mainland Greece had fallen silent. But, if so, it was certainly not the case that oracular activity had ended forever throughout the Greek world; for there is ample evidence from the oracles of Asia Minor that both cities and individuals in the second and third centuries A.D. regularly brought their problems, practical or theological, to the oracles and recorded the replies they received (see **2.10a**). The oracle of Apollo at Didyma, ten miles south of Miletus on the west coast of modern Turkey, was already one of the most extensive and famous in the sixth century B.C. and was patronized and favoured by the Romans from the time they took control of the area.

The following texts are the records of three different questions posed to the oracle at Didyma, and the responses received.

See further: Parke (1985) 1–111*; Fontenrose (1988).

7.6c(i) Alexandra the Priestess (second century A.D.)

See further: Robert (1960b) 543–6; Lane Fox (1986) 102–4; Fontenrose (1988) no. 22, pp. 196–7.

Didyma: Inschriften 496A.8–10 = Fontenrose (1988) no. 22

To Good Fortune

Alexandra, priestess of Demeter Thesmophoros <'Bringer of Law'>,[1] asks: 'Since the time she took over the priesthood, the gods have never been so manifest in their appearances, in part through maidens and women, in part through men and boys.[2] Why is this? Is it auspicious?' The god replied: 'Immortals consort with mortals and make known their will and the honour which[. . .]'[3]

1. Alexandra is the priestess of a cult of Demeter in Miletus, also known from Fontenrose (1988) no. 23 (another response dealing with the cult of Demeter).
2. The meaning is not clear. It could be 'appearances to' or 'appearances in the form of' maidens and women etc.
3. The rest of the god's reply is lost.

7.6c(ii) Damianos the prophet (late third century A.D.)

Advice on matters of ritual and changes in religious procedure were a standard part of the business of oracles.

See further: Lane Fox (1986) 216–17; Fontenrose (1988) 147–9.

Didyma: Inschriften 504.15–16 = Fontenrose (1988) no. 30

Good Fortune

Your prophet Damianos asks: 'Since in your sanctuary and altar-circle of all the gods he has never seen an altar of your most holy sister, his own ancestral goddess, Soteira Kore,[1] and since it grieves him as a lover of the gods that this should be so, he asks you to declare, Lord of Didyma Helios Apollo, whether you would permit him to establish beside the altar of Demeter Karpophoros <'Bringer of Crops'> an altar of her daughter.' The god replied: 'Give the honour of an altar in the circle to Soteira Kore.'

1. The goddess referred to as Kore (the Maiden) is Persephone, daughter of Demeter; calling her the sister of Apollo (who in Greek mythology is normally thought of as the son of Zeus and Hera) perhaps reflects a local myth, otherwise unknown. She appears here as Soteira Kore, that is 'the Saviour'.

7.6c(iii) A labour dispute? (c.120 A.D.)

Practical problems also were brought to the oracle for advice. This inscription, found in the nearby town of Miletus, records the god's advice in building operations.

See further: Buckler (1923) 34–6.

T. Wiegand, *Sitzungsberichte der Ak. der Wissenschaften* (Berlin, 1904) no. 83 = Fontenrose (1988) no. 19

The builders who work with E[. . . and with] Epigonos, who are the contractors for the part of the theatre of which the supervisor was the late Ulpianus, the prophet of the god,[1] and of which the employer was the architect Menophilos: they ask whether they should undertake and complete the placing of the arches and vaulting, or whether they should consider some other task.[2]

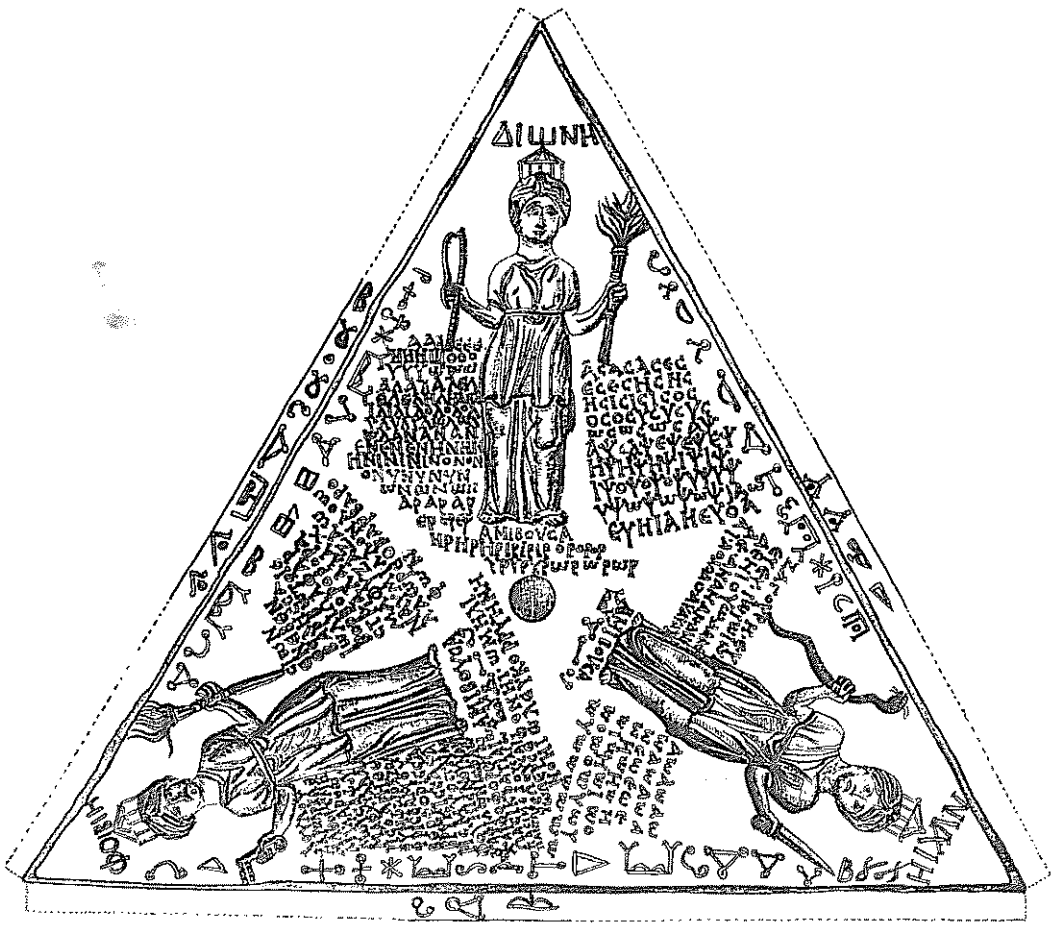
The god replied: 'It is beneficial for you to make use of the building skills and advice of a good and capable man, while also praying, with sacrifices, to Pallas Tritogeneia <born of Triton, 1.5b(iii)> and to Herakles the valiant.'

1. That is, the supervisor was also the prophet of Apollo.
2. Perhaps some kind of labour dispute lies behind the enquiry (and the workmen were considering not finishing the job at all, but starting 'some other task' entirely); or perhaps they were simply concerned with what part of the operation to do first.

7.7 Magical divination

Divination and prophecy played a part in illicit (as well as regular, official) religious life. The techniques of magic (see **11.2–6**) offered alternative ways of divining the future. The bronze table (sides 0.26 m.) from Pergamum, the base of which is shown here, was found as part of a cache of equipment which must have been for use by a magician: also in the cache were a mirror, a nail, two rings, two small plaques and three polished black stones. The use of material such as this is illustrated by a description of magical divinarion in rhe fourth-century historian Ammianus Marcellinus (XXIX.1.28–32): the participants gather round a small table, with the twenty-four letters of the alphabet inscribed at its edge; after various incantations a ring is swung on a thread over the table, and marked with its swinging a succession of letters, to give the answer to a question (in that case – who will succeed rhe emperor?).

See further: Wünsch (1905); Barh (1963) 111–17*; Donnay (1984); Marthews (1989) 217–25.



7.8 Astrology

The casting of horoscopes for individuals was common in the imperial period, and no doubt practised at all levels of society. Attitudes to astrology varied – from outright rejection of its claims as mere humhug, ro enthusiastic devotion. Emperors themselves, on the one hand, sought to control certain types of astrology and astrologers, whose predictions (see 11.7) could be a threat to imperial power; on the other, they were very happy if the stars were on their side.

See further: Vol. 1, 231–3; MacMullen (1966) 128–62*; T. Barton (1994a); (1994b)*.

7.8a *Augustus and his astrologer*

Among a series of signs of the emperor Augustus' future greatness, Suetonius recounts a story ser at Apollonia (in modern Alhania), just hefore rhe dearh of Julius Caesar, when Augustus was only eighteen. Capricorn, allegedly Augustus' birth sign, was connected with the rebirth of the Sun and the idea of a Golden Age.

See furtber: Kraft (1967); T. Barton (1995).

Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 94.12

While he had withdrawn to Apollonia, Augustus with Agrippa for his companion went up to the observatory of the astrologer Theogenes. Agrippa had the first consultation and received predictions of almost incredible greatness. Augustus, in his anxiety and shame in case he should turn out to have the lesser destiny, for a time kept silent and refused to reveal his time of birth. After much persuasion and with great hesitation he finally gave it; Theogenes jumped up and hurled himself at Augustus' feet. From that time onwards, Augustus had such faith in his destiny that he published his horoscope and issued silver coinage with the sign of Capricorn on it, under which he was born.[1]

1. He published his horoscope in A.D. 11 (Dio LVI.25.5); coins with the sign of Capricorn were issued from the 20s B.C. onwards.

7.8b *Augustine as an addict of astrology*

The Christian Augustine here describes the (unsuccessful) attempt of a friend to cure him of his addiction to astrology. It is likely that this friend, Vindicianus, was not a Christian. Augustine is ascribing to god the use of Vindicianus as a way of giving him the ideas that would later lead him to abandon astrology.

See further: P. Brown (1967) 57–8, 67*.

Augustine, *Confessions* IV.3(5–6)

There was at the time a man of wisdom, very skilful in medicine for which he was very famous; it was he who laid the wreath of the conqueror on my poor sick brow as proconsul, but not as doctor.[1] It is only you 'who thwart the proud and offer grace to the humble' <1 Peter 5.5> who can cure that sickness. But all the same, even through that old man, did you ever fail to assist me or abandon taking care of my soul? As we became friends, I attended with care and constancy to his conversation, which, though without verbal sophistication, was made pleasant and serious by the vivacity of his thought.

As we talked, he found out that I was a fanatic for books of astrology and told me in a kind and fatherly way I should throw them out and not waste my efforts on such rubbish when there were better things to do. He told me that he too had studied astrology when young, meaning to make it his career, saying that if he could understand the writings of Hippocrates,[2] he could manage astrological books as well. But after a while he had abandoned astrology and pursued medicine, precisely because it was all quite bogus; as an honest man, he had no wish to live by deception. 'But you,' he went on, 'can make your living as a rhetorician; it is only curiosity that is leading you into this charlatanry, not any necessity to raise additional income. So you ought to trust what I say, because for me it was going to be my only means of livelihood, so I tried to learn everything I could about it.'

I asked him to tell me why, if he were right, the future was often correctly divined by the methods of astrology. He gave me the one answer possible: that it resulted from the power of chance, a factor always to be reckoned with in the order of nature. He said that when somebody opened a book of poetry at random, despite the fact that the poet had had something quite different on his mind, the reader often put his finger on some verse with remarkable relevance to his problem. It was therefore no surprise that a man's mind, without deliberation but by some intuition not under his own control, should happen upon something that fitted the case and the facts of a particular problem. This would then result not from skill, but from chance.

(6) Such was the warning you provided for me, whether from him or through him; and so you sketched an outline into my memory, which I would later on explore thoroughly on my own.[3]

1. Helvius Vindicianus was proconsul (governor) of Africa, A.D. 379–82.
2. Hippocrates (fifth century B.C.), leading ancient doctor; Vindicianus translated some of his works into Latin.
3. For Augustine's persuasion by Vindicianus' arguments, see *Confessions* VII.6 (8–10).

7.9 Dreams

Dreams provided another means of access to future events, sent by the gods to inform the dreamer of what was to come. (See **9.5c** for the vision of a deity in a dream.) Not all dreams were seen as predictive, of course: some dreams were delusive, trivial or merely puzzling; some dreamers were unconcerned with their dreams or simply baffled.

See further: Dodds (1965) 38–53*; Price (1986); Miller (1994).

7.9a *A dream of imperial power*

Prophetic dreams might signal divine favour for emperor and orhers. Shortly before rhe story of Augustus and Theogenes (**7.8a**), Suetonius recounts a pair of dreams about Augustus. As the principal character (Quintus Catulus) was dead by rhe time Augustus was two and a half, the story is, presumably, a convenient fiction.

Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 94.8

Quintus Catulus, after his dedication of the Capitoline temple <69 B.C.>, had dreams on two nights in succession: the first night, that Jupiter Optimus Maximus called aside one of a number of boys of good family <*praetextati*>, who were playing round his altar; into the lap of this boy's toga he put the statue of the State which he was holding in his hand; the following night, he saw this same boy in the lap of <the statue of> Jupiter on the Capitol; he gave an order to have him brought down, but was prevented by the god's declaration that this boy was being reared for the guardianship of the State. The very next day, he met Augustus, whom he had never seen before; he gazed at him in great surprise and said he was exactly like the boy in the dream.

7.9b *The dream of a Christian martyr (A.D. 203)*

While she was in prison in Carthage, awaiting the day of her martyrdom, Perpetua wrote an accounr of her arrest, imprisonment and her dreams – here an account of a dream of personal combat in rhe amphitheatre. For another extract from this text, see **6.8b**; for the anniversary of her martyrdom, **3.6**.

See further: Dodds (1965) 47–53*; Robert (1982); Miller (1994) 148–83; for more general bibliography on Perpetua, **6.8b**.

The Martyrdom of Sts Perpetua and Felicitas 10

The day before we were to fight,[1] I saw this in a vision: The deacon Pomponius came to the prison gates and began to beat loudly on them. I went out and opened the gate for him. He was wearing a white tunic without a belt and elaborate sandals. He said to me: 'Perpetua, we are waiting for you; come on.' He held his hand out for me and we began

to pass through rugged, broken country. With difficulty and out of breath, we finally made our way to the amphitheatre and he led me into the middle of the arena. 'Do not fear,' he said, 'I am with you and share in the struggle.' Then he went away. I looked at the great crowd of people, who were astonished. I knew that I had been condemned to death by the beasts, so I was surprised that they did not loose the beasts on me. Then there came out against me an Egyptian of foul appearance along with his seconds, so as to fight against me. There also came out some good-looking young men, to be my seconds and supporters.

(7) My clothes were stripped off and I became a male. My seconds began to rub me down with oil, as they do before a contest. Then I saw the Egyptian on the other side, rolling in the dust. At this point there came forth a man of gigantic height, so big that he rose above the top of the amphitheatre. He was wearing a beltless tunic with purple running down the middle of his chest, between two stripes. He wore elaborate sandals made of gold and silver. He carried a rod like a trainer and a green branch with golden apples on it. He asked for silence and said: 'If the Egyptian wins, he will slay her by the sword; if she wins, she will receive this branch.' Then he departed.

1. That is, to be martyred in the amphitheatre.

7.9c *Professional dream-interpretation*

Artemidorus' *Dream Book* – an encyclopaedic handbook on different kinds of dream – was written in the middle to late second century A.D. in the Roman province of Asia. Artemidorus claims that he learned the craft of dream interpretation by experience: 'I rubbed shoulders for many years with the despised marker-place diviners' and often notes that he has reached his own conclusions on the basis of observation. Many, but not all, of the dreams discussed by Artemidorus have a predictive element. But whether predictive or not, the significance of the dream (as in this passage concerning dreams of incest) changes according to the status and circumstances of the dreamer.

See further: R. J. White (1975); Price (1986)*; Foucault (1988) 3–36; Bowersock (1994) 80–98.

Artemidorus, *Dream Book* 1.79

The discourse about the mother has many different aspects, sections and subsections not noticed by many interpreters so far. It goes like this. Sexual intercourse as such is not enough to indicate the meaning, but the different forms of embrace and positions of the bodies refer to different outcomes. First of all we ought to speak of intercourse in the 'body to body' position if the mother is still alive, for if she has died then the dream means something different. If someone dreams of having intercourse with his mother 'body to body', in the position called by some natural, when she is still alive and the father healthy, that means he will have hatred against his father, as a result of the normal

jealousy amongst men. If the father is in bad health, he will die; for the son dreaming will be taking over his mother both as her son and as her husband. For a craftsman or artisan it is a fortunate dream, because it is usual to call one's trade one's 'mother', so having intercourse with one's mother could only mean working constantly and making a living. For political leaders and politicians it is a favourable dream also, for the mother then signifies the fatherland. Just as the man who has intercourse by Aphrodite's rule has power over the woman's whole body, if she consents willingly, so the dreamer will have power over the political life of his city.

8 *Priests and priestesses*

There was no such thing as 'the Roman priesthood', no single definition of 'the Roman priest'; there were instead many different types of priesthood at Rome, involving large numbers of different religious officials, attached to different deities and cults, with different duties, obligations and privileges. This chapter starts from the priests of the official state cult – their varied and (even to the Romans) puzzling origins (8.1), their political role (8.2) and day-to-day duties (8.3); and it examines, in particular, the only major group of female cult officials of Roman state religion, the Vestal Virgins (8.4). It then considers the position of the Roman emperor in relation to the traditional priesthoods – focusing both on the role of the emperor himself as a priest (8.5) and on new priesthoods associated with the worship of emperors (8.6). The second half of the chapter turns to alternative models of priesthood: not only those of the so-called 'oriental' cults at Rome – the priests of Magna Mater (8.7) and of Isis (8.8) – but also the changing pattern of aristocratic priestly office-holding in the later imperial period (8.9). The chapter ends with the conflict between paganism and Christianity and Christian attacks on pagan priests (8.10).

For the role of priests in rituals, festivals and sacrifice, see 4.5; 5.4; 5.5d; 5.7b; 6.4; 6.5; 6.6a and b; for priests and officials of 'oriental' cults, 5.6; 6.7; 12.3; 12.4c and e; 12.5; see further (for general discussions of Roman and other ancient priestly office holding, as well as of specific priesthoods) Beard and North (1990)*; Scheid (1993b)*.

8.1 The earliest Roman priesthoods

The origins of most of the priesthoods of the traditional Roman state cult are lost in the very earliest history of the city. The Romans themselves generally attributed their priestly organization to their legendary second king – Numa (1.2); but even for them (at least by the late Republic) there was much disagreement, conjecture and obscurity about the origins of particular priests and their titles.

8.1a *The origins of the priesthoods*

In this passage, Varro, writing in the first century B.C., lists a number of major Roman priesthoods and speculates on their original function and on the derivation of their titles.

See further: (on such etymologies) Hallett (1970).

Varro, *On the Latin Language* V.83–5

The priests <*sacerdotes*> as a group derive their title from the sacred rites <*sacra*>. The name *pontifices* according to Quintus Scaevola[1] the *pontifex maximus* comes from the verbs 'to be able' <*posse*> and 'to do' <*facere*>, as if they were called *potifices*.[2] I think, however, that the name derives from the word 'bridge' <*pons*>. For it was by these officials that the Sublician Bridge[3] was first constructed; and it has often likewise been repaired by them. In fact, in that connection, sacred rites are carried out on both sides of the Tiber with considerable ceremony. The *curiones* are called after the *curiae*; they were appointed in order to perform sacred rites in the *curiae*.[4]

(84) The *flamines* were originally called *filamines*, because in Latium[5] they had kept their heads covered and bound their head with a fillet <*filum*>. Individually the *flamines* have an additional title, derived from the deity whose rites they perform. Some of these epithets are self-explanatory, some obscure: *Martialis* <of Mars> and *Volcanalis* <of Volcan>, for example, are self-explanatory; *Dialis* and *Furinalis* obscure – since *Dialis* comes from Jupiter (for he is also called Diovis), and *Furinalis* from Furrina,[6] whose festival – the *Furinales* – even figures in the ritual calendar. Likewise the *flamen Falacer* comes from the divine father Falacer.[6]

(85) The *Salii* derive their title from the verb 'to dance' <*salitare*>, because that is what they are obliged to do in their regular yearly rites in the *comitium*.[7] The *Luperci* are so-called because at the festival of the *Lupercalia* they perform rites at the Lupercal.[8] *Fratres Arvales* is the title given to those who carry out public rituals so that the fields may bear crops: they are called *fratres Arvales* from the words 'to bear' <*ferre*> and 'fields' <*arva*>.[9] But some people have claimed that their name came from *fratria*; *fratria* is the Greek word for a subdivision of citizens, as it is used at Naples even now. The *Sodales Titii* are named after the twittering <*titiare*> birds which by custom they watch in particular augural observations.[10]

1. Q. Mucius Scaevola, *pontifex maximus c.* 89–82 B.C., consul 95 B.C.
2. Varro's rules of etymology suggest that the title would correctly be *potifices* (not *pontifices*), if it was derived from *posse* and *facere*. Here the specific sense of *facere* is 'to do/carry out a sacrifice'.
3. The Sublician Bridge was the oldest bridge across the Tiber in Rome, built entirely of wood (Latin *sublica* = wooden pile). Its upkeep was in the hands of the *pontifices*.
4. The thirty *curiae* were the earliest subdivisions into which the Roman population was divided – with their own assembly place, religious and political functions.
5. The area of Italy around Rome.
6. In these cases the derivation of the name itself is unproblematic to Varro – but the nature of the divinities themselves are as obscure for him as for us. On Furrina, see Vol. 1, 283.

7. See 5.4. The *comitium* was the assembly area outside the senate house in the Forum; see 4.7.
8. For this festival, see 5.2. The Lupercal was a cave on the west of the Palatine hill at Rome, supposed to have been the spot where Romulus and Remus were suckled by the wolf.
9. For Arval rituals in the imperial period, see 4.5 and 6.2.
10. Almost nothing is known of this priesthood or of its duties.

8.1b *The priest of Jupiter: 'flamen Dialis'*

One of the earliest priesthoods at Rome was the priesthood of Jupiter – and many of the taboos surrounding that office must go back to the earliest period of the city's history. No other priests (except the Vestal Virgins – 8.4) seem to have been subject to restrictions of this kind, which (as this passage illustrates) were the subject of antiquarian curiosity at least by the late Republic. For the selection of a *flamen Dialis*, see **8.2d**; for a provincial priesthood partly modelled on the *flamen Dialis*, see **10.4e**.

See further: Vol. 1, 19, 28–29, 106–8, 130–2; Scheid (1986b); Vanggaard (1988); Simón (1996).

Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* X.15.1–25

Many ritual duties are imposed on the *flamen Dialis*, and likewise a variety of taboos – about which we read in the books written *On Public Priests* and also in the first book of Fabius Pictor.[1] From these sources, this is more or less what I remember: there is a rule against the *flamen Dialis* riding a horse; likewise there is a rule against him seeing 'the levy arrayed' outside the *pomerium*,[2] that is the army equipped for battle. (It is for this reason that the *flamen Dialis* was rarely made consul, since the consuls took charge of wars.) Likewise it is never lawful for the *Dialis* to take an oath; nor is it lawful for him to wear a ring, unless it is perforated and quite plain. It is not allowed to remove any flame from the *flaminia* (that is from the house of the *flamen Dialis*) except for a ritual purpose; if a man in chains enters his house, he must be freed and the chains taken up through the *impluvium*[3] onto the roof and let down into the street outside. He has no knot in his headdress, nor in his belt, nor any part of his clothing; if anyone who is being taken off for flogging falls as a suppliant at his feet, it is deemed a sin for him to be beaten on that day. Only a free man may cut the hair of the *Dialis*. It is the custom that the *Dialis* does not touch or even name a she goat, raw flesh, ivy or beans. He does not pass under an arbour of vines. The feet of the bed in which he sleeps must be smeared with a thin layer of clay; and he does not sleep away from that bed three nights in a row; nor is it lawful for anyone else to sleep in that bed. At the head of his bed there must be a box with a set of sacrificial cakes. The nail parings of the *Dialis* and his hair trimmings are buried in earth under a fruitful tree. For the *Dialis* every day is a day of religious ceremony. He is not allowed to be in the open air without his *apex*.[4] That he should be allowed to do without it indoors was, according to Masurius Sabinus,[5] a recent decision of the

pontifices; and it is said that some other obligations have been relaxed and some have been entirely dispensed with. It is not lawful for him to touch flour mixed with yeast. He does not take off his under-tunic except indoors, so that he should not be naked in the open air, as if that was under the eyes of Jupiter. No one else, except the *rex sacrificulus*[6] has a place at the dining table above the *flamen Dialis*. If he has lost his wife, he resigns from the flaminate. The marriage of the *flamen* cannot lawfully be dissolved, except by death. He never enters a place where there is a tomb, he never touches a dead body; he is not, however, prohibited from attending a funeral.[7]

1. Writer of a treatise *On the Pontifical Law* (mid second century B.C.); almost certainly not the historian of the same name, who wrote (around 200 B.C.) a history of Rome in Greek.
2. See 4.8.
3. The opening in the roof of the central hall (*atrium*) of a Roman house.
4. The distinctive pointed headdress of the *flamen*; see Vol. 1, fig. 1.4.
5. A jurist of the first half of the first century A.D.
6. An alternative title of the priest more commonly known as the *rex sacrorum* ('the king of rites'). He was believed to have taken over the religious functions of the early kings of Rome, when the monarchy was overthrown; see Vol. 1, 54–61.
7. The passage continues with a short section on taboos applying to the *flamen*'s wife, the *flaminica*.

8.2 Priests and politics in the Roman Republic

Most of the major state priesthoods were 'part-time' posts. They were held by men of the Roman elite, alongside more strictly political offices – although, unlike Roman magistracies, priesthoods were normally held not just for one year but for life (after entry into the priesthood in early adulthood or later). Priesthoods were an integral part of the public, political career of many Roman senators, not (as in some societies – like our own) the monopoly of religious specialists.

See further: Vol. 1, 99–108, 134–7; Szemler (1972); Scheid (1984); Beard (1990)*; North (1990a)*.

8.2a *Cicero addresses the college of 'pontifices'*

In 57 B.C. Cicero appeared before the college of *pontifices*, who were adjudicating in the matter of his house. This had been destroyed during Cicero's exile and its site consecrated by his enemy Clodius; and it was up to the priests to decide whether the consecration was valid, or whether the house could be rebuilt (see also 7.4a n 3). Cicero opens his speech with a clear statement of the close links between political and religious office-holding and decision-making.

See further: Vol. 1, 114–5; (for the context of the speech) Rawson (1975) 122–5*; Mitchell (1991) 158–61.

Cicero, *On his House* 1.1

Among the many things, gentlemen of the pontifical college,[1] that our ancestors created and established under divine inspiration, nothing is more renowned than their decision to entrust the worship of the gods and the highest interests of the state to the same men – so that the most eminent and illustrious citizens might ensure the maintenance of religion by the proper administration of the state, and the maintenance of the state by the prudent interpretation of religion. And if ever a case of great importance has depended on the judgement and authority of the priests of the Roman people, then surely this case before you now is of such magnitude that the whole prestige of the state, the well-being of all citizens, their lives, their liberty, their altars, their hearths, their household gods <*di penates*>, their property, their prosperity, their homes – all of these things seem to have been entrusted and made over to your good sense, your impartiality, your authority.

1. Cicero is addressing the fifteen *pontifices* and some other priests (the *rex sacrorum* and major *flamines*) who were counted as part of the college.

8.2b *The scandal of Bona Dea <'The Good Goddess'>, 61 B.C.*

The major colleges of priests regularly acted in association with (or even in a subordinate role to) the senate. Here Cicero is informing his friend Atticus of a notorious disruption of the festival of Bona Dea (see also 13.4): although strictly a festival of women only, it had been infiltrated by a man – who had run off before he could be caught. Cicero's account shows how the senate, magistrates and priests were all involved in resolving the crisis. For a similar procedure, see 7.2.

See further: Vol. 1, 129–30; Balsdon (1966); Wiseman (1974) 130–7*; Moreau (1982); Brouwer (1989) 363–70; Tatum (1990).

Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 1.13.3.

I expect you have heard that, when the state sacrifice[1] was being carried out in Caesar's house,[2] a man in woman's clothes got in; and that after the Virgins[3] had repeated the sacrifice, the incident was raised in the senate by Q. Cornificius (he was the prime mover, by the way – in case you imagine it was one of us[4]). Then what happened is that the senate voted to refer the matter back to the Virgins and the *pontifices* – who pronounced that it was a sacrilege. After that, by senatorial decree, the consuls brought forward a bill.[5]

1. The festival of Bona Dea.
2. The festival took place in the house of a magistrate; Caesar was then *praetor*.
3. The Vestal Virgins (see 8.4) were in charge of the ritual.
4. By 'us' Cicero probably means the most senior senators – the ex-consuls (like Cicero himself).
5. A bill to constitute a tribunal to try the case of sacrilege.

8.2c *The election of priests in the late Republic*

From 104 B.C. priests of the four major colleges (*pontifices, augures, decemviri sacris faciundis, tresviri epulonum* – later *quindecimviri* and *septemviri*) were chosen by popular election. The earlier practice (temporarily revived between 80 and 63 B.C.) had been that the priests themselves simply co-opted men to fill any vacancies in their college. Priestly elections in the late Republic were often eagerly contested among the Roman elite – in much the same way as strictly 'political' elections. In this letter (written in 43 B.C.) Marcus Brutus urges Cicero (who was an *augur*) to nominate his step-son, Lucius Bibulus, in the first stage of election to the college of *augures*. The arguments used are practically indistinguishable from those in letrers of 'political' recommendation.

See further: Vol. 1, 134–7; Linderski (1972) 191–2; North (1990h)*.

Brutus in Cicero, *Letters to Brutus* I.7

M. Brutus to M. Cicero, greetings:

No one can judge better than you the great esteem in which I should hold L. Bibulus; for you have experienced such struggles and anxieties for our country's sake. In fact either his own merits or his connections with me ought to incline you towards him. All the more reason, I think, for my not writing at lengrh – as my favour ought to carry weight with you, so long as it is reasonable or undertaken as a duty of friendship. He has decided to become a candidate for Pansa's place.[1] I am begging you to nominate him. You cannot do a favour to any friend closer than I am to you, nor can you nominate a candidate worthier than Bibulus.

(7.2) As for Domitius and Apuleius, what concern is it of mine to wrire, since they are highly recommended to you through their own actions?[2] You are certainly under an obligation to use your influence to support Apuleius. But Apuleius will have a letter of recommendation all to himself. As for Bibulus, do not dismiss him from your affections – a fine man already, and he may turn out (believe me) to be one who can live up to the praises of the select few like yourself.

1. The vacancy in the college of *augures* was created by the death of the consul Vibius Pansa.
2. There were other vacancies in the college for which these two men were wanting to stand.

8.2d *The choice of the 'flamen Dialis' 209 B.C.*

Some Roman priesthoods were never subject to any process of popular election. The priest of Jupirer (*flamen Dialis*) was always chosen by the *pontifex maximus* – even sometimes against the will of the nominee himself. The office was often unpopular because rhe rules and restrictions associated with the priesthood (see **8.1b**) made a simultaneous, active political career almost impossible. In rhis passage Livy describes the selection of Gaius Valerius

Flaccus – an, at first, unwilling and apparently unsuitable candidate for the office. As he 'makes good', Flaccus asserts his right to take a seat in the senate. The underlying principle of his argument is that, even for a *flamen Dialis* (with all his restrictions), religious office-holding implied a political role in the state. He later held political office as *aedilis* and *praetor*.

See further: Vol. 1, 56, 106–8; Warde Fowler (1911) 342–3*; Vanggaard (1988) 59–69.

Livy, *History* XXVII.8.4–10

And Publius Licinius, the *pontifex maximus*, forced Gaius Valerius Flaccus to be installed as *flamen Dialis*, although he was unwilling to take the office; while Gaius Laetorius was made *decemvir <sacris faciundis>* in the place of Quintus Mucius Scaevola, who had died. The reason for installing a *flamen* under compulsion I would gladly have passed over in silence, were it not for the fact that in the process his reputation changed from bad to good. It was on account of the irresponsibility and extravagance of his youth – vices which brought him the odium of his twin brother Lucius Flaccus and other relatives – that Gaius Flaccus was chosen as *flamen* by Publius Licinius, the *pontifex maximus*.[1] As soon as his attention turned to the responsibility for religious rituals and ceremonies, he put aside his former ways so suddenly that no young man in the city was deemed more outstanding or meritorious by leading senators, both those within his own family and strangers alike. The unanimity of this approbation enhanced his rightful sense of self-confidence; and he claimed an entitlement that had long been in abeyance because of the unworthiness of former *flamines*, namely that he should be admitted to the senate. When he entered the senate house, Publius Licinius, the *praetor*, marched him straight out again; so he appealed to the tribunes of the people. The *flamen* was claiming the ancient right of his priesthood, which he said had been given to the office of *flamen* along with the *toga praetexta*[2] and the official chair of state *<sella curulis>*.[3] The *praetor* would have it that the decision depended not on long outmoded precedents from historical records, but on the most recent standard practice: no *flamen Dialis*, he said, within the memory of their fathers or grandfathers had ever made use of that right. The tribunes gave judgement as follows: that, as the entitlement had fallen into disuse through the indolence of the *flamines*, the loss should be deemed to have fallen on the individual priests themselves, not on the office. Then, with no opposition even from the *praetor* himself and to the general approval of senators and people, they conducted the *flamen* into the senate; while everyone considered that the *flamen* had achieved his object more because of the purity of his life than because of any particular right attached to his priestly office.

1. Presumably the intention was to force him to change his ways.
2. This toga (with a purple stripe) was worn by priests as well as senior magistrates, and children before assuming the adult toga.
3. Chair used by senior magistrates.

8.3 The administrative business of the priestly colleges

It is generally very hard to reconstruct any detailed picture of how exactly the priests carried out their ritual duties or conducted their administrative business; but records inscribed on stone occasionally give us a glimpse of day-to-day priestly activity. This text is concerned with the responsibilities of the pontifical college for the rules and regulations of burial at Rome (see also **10.4d(iii)** and **(iv)**). It records a decision taken by two *pontifices* (by correspondence, without actually meeting) allowing one Arrius Alphius to transfer the bodies of his wife and son to a new tomb. The inscription was presumably put up by Arrius Alphius to show that he had formal permission to make the move.

For detailed records of the ritual performed by a group of priests, see **4.5**; **5.7b**; **6.2.**

See further: Vol. 1, 25–6, 320–1; Crook (1967) 133–8 (on burial law); Potter (1989) 131–44.

ILS 8380; *CIL* VI.2120

From Velius Fidus to his colleague Iubentius Celsus, greetings:

My dear brother[1] Desiderius,[2] I have sent you a letter of Arrius Alphius, an ex-slave of Arria Fadilla, the mother of our lord, the emperor Antoninus <Pius>, and a man whom I have known for a long time, since my youth. In fact I was amazed that, when I was away from home, this man tracked me down to where I was and told me that he had urgently petitioned our lord the emperor for what he wanted – both for the sake of his peace of mind and because of the religious issues involved.[3] So then, to make sure that *we* do not appear to have been responsible for any delay, please send the letter straight back to me, properly endorsed, with the same slave who has brought it to you.[4] I hope you are well and on good form.

Copy of the letter given:

The circumstances are that I lost my wife and son some time ago and, because I had very little money, I buried them in a clay coffin – until such time as the tomb was built in the place I had bought on the Flaminian Road, between the second and third milestones as you go out of the city, on the left hand side of the road, in the tomb under the custodianship of Flavia Thumele, in the burial ground belonging to Marcus Silius Orcilius.[5] Therefore I beg you, my lord, to allow me to put their bodies in that same place in a marble sarcophagus that I have just bought, so that when I die I can be laid there next to them.

Agreed; decision taken. I, Iubentius Celsus, deputy master,[6] have endorsed this, 3 days before the Nones of November <3 November>, in the consulship of Antius Polio and Opimianus, following the regular consulship of Severus and Sabinianus <A.D. 155>.[7]

1. Used as a title of address between priests in the same college.
2. Another name of Iubentius Celsus.
3. It seems that Arrius Alphius first approached the emperor (who was head of the pontifical college – see **8.5b**), and then tracked down Velius Fidus.

4. Velius Fidus would not wish the emperor (who has been involved in the case) to think that he and Celsus were responsible for any delay.
5. The exact details of the tomb within the larger burial ground are unclear.
6. Of the pontifical college.
7. With unusual precision, the text is dated both by the names of the 'regular' consuls who took office at the beginning of the year and by those of the 'suffect' consuls who replaced them later in the year.

8.4 The Vestal Virgins (*Virgines Vestales*)

The only major group of *priestesses* at Rome were the six Vestal Virgins, whose main duty was tending the sacred flame kept permanently alight in the temple of Vesta. In some respects the character of and organization of the Vestals was similar to that of the major (male) priestly colleges: they were drawn from the daughters of elite families at Rome; and they were chosen (like the *flamen Dialis*) by the *pontifex maximus*. But in other respects they were quite different: they entered their priesthood as children (between the ages of six and ten); they served 'full-time' in their priesthood, living together in a special residence near the temple of Vesta in the Forum.

See further: Vol. 1, 51–4, 189–91, 194; Guizzi (1968); Pomeroy (1976) 210–14*; Beard (1980); Kraemer (1992) 81–4; Scheid (1992) 381–4*; Beard (1995).

8.4a *Numa establishes the priesthood of the Vestals*

The Vestal priesthood was believed to have been established by King Numa (1.2). In this passage Plutarch describes what were, in fact, some of the major obligations and privileges of the Vestals in his own day – although he attributes them to the original regulations of Numa. He goes on to discuss the punishment of Vestals who broke their vow of chastity. (For unchastity among the Vestals, see also 6.6b; and, for an ancient eye-witness account of the punishment, Pliny, *Letters* IV.11.)

See further: Vol. 1, 1, 52; (on the punishment of Vestals) Cornell (1981)*; Fraschetti (1984).

Plutarch, *Life of Numa* 10

At first, they say, Numa consecrated Gegania and Verania, followed by Canuleia and Tarpeia. Later Servius[1] added two more, making the number <six> that has been maintained up to our time. A period of thirty years' chastity was laid down for the sacred virgins by the king: in the first ten years they learn their duties; in the second they carry out what they have learnt; in the third they, in their turn, teach the duties to others. Then, after this period, any one of them who wishes is free to leave the priesthood and to marry and to follow a different style of life. But it is said that not many have taken advantage of

this dispensation, and that those who have did not prosper from it: they passed the rest of their life in repentance and misery, and so inspired such pious foreboding in the others that they continued steadfastly in their virginity until old age and death.[2]

(10.3) Numa gave them great honours, among which was their right to make a will during the lifetime of their father and to deal with their other affairs without the need for a guardian, like mothers of three children.[3] When they appear in public, the *fasces* are carried in front of them. And if they, by chance, meet someone being carried off to execution, then he is spared; but the virgin must swear that the meeting was unintentional and fortuitous, and that it had not been contrived. If anyone, on the other hand, passes under a litter on which the Vestals are being carried, he is put to death. As punishment for their minor offences, the virgins are beaten, the *pontifex maximus* sometimes flogging the offender naked, in a dark place, with a cloth spread out to conceal her. But the priestess who dishonours her virginity is buried alive near the Colline Gate.[4] In this spot, just within the city, there is an embankment of earth stretching for some distance; it is called the 'agger' in Latin. Here a small chamber is constructed underground, with a way in from above. And in it is placed a couch, complete with covers, and a lighted lamp; there are as well small portions of life's necessities – such as bread, a jug of water, milk, oil – as if they were trying to escape the charge of starving to death a person consecrated to the greatest services of the gods.

(10.6) They put the offender herself on a litter, completely covering her over and fastening the covers down with straps, so that not even a cry can be heard from inside; then they carry her through the Forum. Everyone stands aside silently to let her pass, and without a sound they escort the litter in dreadful sorrow. There is no other sight more awful than this; nor does the city ever experience a day more gloomy. When the litter has arrived at the spot, the attendants loosen the fastenings and the *pontifex maximus* utters mysterious prayers, stretching out his hands to the gods before the fatal moment; then he takes the priestess, closely veiled, and sets her on the ladder that leads down to the chamber below. Then he himself turns away, along with the other priests. But when she has gone down, the ladder is taken up and the chamber is buried with a great quantity of earth thrown from above, making the place level with the rest of the embankment. This is the manner of punishment for those who abandon their sacred virginity.

1. Servius Tullius, the legendary sixth king of Rome.
2. Tacitus, *Annals* II.86 records the death of a Vestal who had served fifty-seven years.
3. Mothers of three children were given special legal privileges at Rome.
4. Towards the north of the built-up area of the city.

8.4b *Inscriptions honouring Vestals*

Several statues of individual Vestals (mostly of the third century A.D.) have been found in and around their house and temple in the Forum – as well as large bases, originally supporting the statues, inscribed with the name of the priestess concerned, and the reason for this honour. Some of these texts show

the Vestals using their prominent public position and (no doubt) high level connections to obtain favours, employment and promotion for friends and clients – using, it seems, traditional structures of patronage just like the male ones. Others celebrate the religiosity of the priestesses, their piety and their close personal links with their goddess.

See further: Nock (1930).

8.4b(i)

ILS 4929; *CIL* VI.2131

To Campia Severina, senior Vestal Virgin, most holy and most kind. In gratitude for the benefits of equestrian rank and a military post of the second rank that she obtained for him,[1] Aemilius Pardalas, honoured at her request with the command of the first cohort 'Aquitanica', erected this.

<On the side> Dedicated 4 days before the Ides of May <12 May> in the consulship of Sabinus (for the second time) and Venustus <A.D. 240>.

1. Campia Severina obtained for Pardalas the rank of an equestrian and at the same time appointment to command of an auxiliary cohort (the first 'Aquitanica') of troops – the military post 'of the second rank' referred to. She appears to have enabled him to 'jump' to the second level, without having held a first-level post.

8.4b(ii)

ILS 4930; *CIL* VI.32414

To Flavia Publicia, daughter of Lucius, senior Vestal Virgin, most holy and most pious. Her most holy and scrupulous charge of her religious duties, which she showed through all the grades of her priesthood with praiseworthy devotion, the divine power of Vesta Mater <mother> has acknowledged. Aemilia Rogarilla, of senatorial family, her niece, along with Minucius Honoratus Marcellus Aemilianus, of senatorial family, her <Rogatilla's> son, erected this on account of her outstanding loyalty towards them.

<On the side> Erected 5 days before the Ides of July <11 July> in the consulship of our lords the emperor Philippus Augustus (for the second time) and Philippus Caesar. <A.D. 247>

8.5 The emperor as priest

The Roman emperor concentrated religious (as well as political and military) power in his own hands. Although it had been normal practice in the Republic that no man should be a member of more than one major priestly college, Roman emperors (and their designated successors) were regularly members of all priestly colleges; and each new emperor took the office of *pontifex maximus* – which was effectively changed from the headship of just the pontifical college

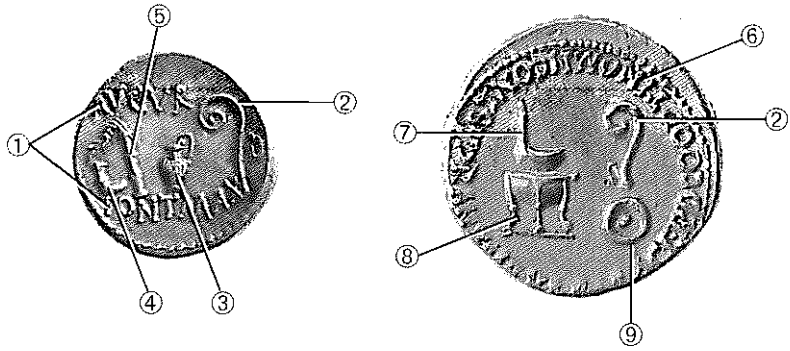
to the headship of the whole of state religion. Priesthood in various forms became part of the imperial image.

See further: Vol. 1, 186–92; R. L. Gordon (1990a)*.

8.5a *Priestly symbols on the coinage of Caesar and Nero*

Julius Caesar was the most important precedent for the imperial cumulation of priesthoods. His membership of both the augural and pontifical colleges is here commemorated on a coin of 46 B.C. (left, a *denarius*). Nero's coin (right, an *aureus*), issued under his predecessor Claudius before he became emperor, commemorates his membership of all the major colleges.

See further: (on Caesar's priesthoods) Vol. 1, 188; Weinstock (1971) 28–34*.



1. Legend = *augur pont(ifex) max(imus).*
2. Curved staff (*lituus*), carried by *augures*, used for marking out the regions of the heavens (see 4.4).
3. Jug, commonly used as a symbol of the *augures* – presumably a utensil in rituals of libation.
4. Pottery vessel (*culullus*) – used in the rituals of *pontifices* and Vestals.
5. Sprinkler – part of the priestly equipment of the *pontifices.*
6. Legend = *Sacerd(otum) coopt(atus) in omn(ia) conl(egia) supra num(erum) ex s(enatus) c(onsulto)*; 'Coopted into all the colleges of priests as a supernumerary member, by decree of the senate'.
7. Earthenware ladle (*simpuvium*, or *simpulum*) used for pouring liquid at religious festivals – symbol of the *pontifices.*
8. Tripod, used for libation and sacrifice – symbol of the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis.*
9. Libation bowl (*patera*) – symbol of *septemviri epulonum.*

8.5b *Augustus becomes 'pontifex maximus'*

In this passage from his own account of his reign, Augustus stresses the legitimacy of his election to the office of *pontifex maximus* and its immense popular support. Yet underlying his words is a sense of the new status of the priesthood – passed on, as an almost hereditary office, from one emperor to his successor – quite at variance with republican traditions.

See further: Vol. 1, 188–9; Bowersock (1990) 380–3*; Frascherti (1990) 330–8.

Augustus, *Achievements* 10.2

I declined to be made *pontifex maximus* in place of a colleague still living,[1] when the people offered me that priesthood which my father[2] had held. But some years later I accepted the priesthood, on the death of that man who had used the opportunity offered by civil war to seize it for himself; this was in the consulship of Publius Sulpicius and Gaius Valgius <12 B.C.> and such crowds poured in from the whole of Italy for my election as are never recorded at Rome before.

1. Marcus Lepidus. He had become *pontifex maximus* on the death of Caesar in 44 B.C. Although at first an ally of Octavian (Augustus) in the civil wars that followed Caesar's assassination, he was deposed from all political offices in 36 B.C. and was forced to withdraw from public life. He was not, however, deprived of his priesthood – which he kept until his death in 13 B.C. Augustus here proclaims his own 'correctness' in not simply removing the office from Lepidus.
2. Julius Caesar, his adoptive father.

8.5c *The portrait of the emperor Elagabalus (A.D. 218–222)*

Priesthood was a wider category than just the traditional priests of the Roman state cult. During the Roman Empire, priests of the so-called 'oriental' cults became well known at Rome (see **8.7**; **8.8**). Here Herodian discusses the public image of an emperor, presented not as *pontifex* or *augur*, but in the role of a priest of the Syrian god Elagabalus. The emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus was a Syrian by birth and was often seen by ancient writers as a model of the wildest forms of 'oriental' transgression; he was later known (as he is today) as Elagabalus, afrer his patron deity. See also **6.6c**.

See furrher Vol. 1, 256–8; Optendrenk (1969); Bowersock (1975)*; Pietrzykowski (1986); Frey (1989); Millar (1993) 300–9*.

Herodian, *Histories* V.5.5–7

Maesa[1] was exceedingly alarmed when she saw this,[2] and she kept trying to persuade him to change into Roman dress now that he was soon to reach Rome and enter the senate house. She was afraid that sight of his foreign, entirely barbarian, garb would instantly give offence to the onlookers, who were not used to it and thought such adornments suitable for women, not men. But he spurned the old woman's advice and was open to persuasion by no one – in fact, he admitted to his company only those of similar character and those who flattered his faults. He was, nevertheless, keen for the senate and Roman people to get used to seeing his costume and wanted to test their reaction to the sight, while he was still away from Rome. So he had a huge, full-length portrait of himself painted, showing him as he appeared in public performing his priestly duties; and he had put next to himself in the picture the image of his native god, to whom he was depicted making favourable sacrifice. He sent the painting to Rome and ordered it to be hung high up in the senate house, above the head of the

statue of Victory – to which each senator makes an offering of incense and pours a libation of wine on entering the senate house. And he commanded that all Roman magistrates and anyone else conducting public sacrifice should invoke the new god Elagabalus before the other gods whom they called upon in their rites. And, when he arrived at Rome in the garb already described, the Romans – who had become used to it in the picture – looked on it as nothing unusual.

1. Grandmother of Elagabalus.
2. That is, when she noticed Elagabalus' continued habit of wearing extravagant eastern clothes, not traditional Roman dress. Elagabalus had been hailed emperor at Emesa in Syria; at this point he is on his way from the East to Rome.

8.6 Priests of the imperial cult

The new cults associated with the worship of the Roman emperors brought with them a new range of priestly offices. Some of these priesthoods were filled in the traditional way hy members of the Roman elite; but others involved men of much lower social status.

See further: Vol. 1, 357–9; Nock (1933–4); Duthoy (1978); Fishwick (1987-) II.1.609–16*; Ostrow (1985)*; for regulations concerning the priesthood of a provincial cult of the emperor, see **10.4e**.

8.6a *Priests of the wards of Rome*

In the city of Rome Augustus transformed the old neighbourhood culrs of the crossroads (Lares Compitales) into a focus of loyalty to bis own rule – by introducing in 7 B.C. the worship of his own household gods (Lares Augusti) and his *genius* (*genius Augusti*). The officials of these local cults were almost exclusively slaves and ex-slaves, as in this altar dedicated in 2 B.C.

See further: for full publication and phorographs, Gatri (1906); and, on such altars more generally, Hano (1986); for the transformation of the neighbourhood cults, Vol. 1, 184–6; Ryberg (1955) 53–6; Niebling (1956); Liebeschuetz (1979) 70–1*; for the idea of the *genius* and its cult, Warde Fowler (1914) 17–22; Fishwick (1969).

ILS 9250

To the Augustan Lares
the officials <*ministri*> of year six[1]

Felix slave of Lucius Crautanius
Florus slave of Sextus Avienus
Eudoxsus slave of Gaius Caesius
Polyclitus slave of Sextus Ancharius[2]

In the consulship of Lucius Caninius Gallus and Gaius Fufius Geminus <2 B.C.>, 14 days before the Kalends of October <18 September>.

(a similar inscription appears on the back face of the altar)

1. That is, the sixth year after the foundation of this cult. The inscription on the rear includes the name of the ward (*vicus*) to which these officials belong – 'the ward of Stata Mater' (probably named after a statue of the goddess Stata Mater nearby).
2. These names appear inside a carved oak wreath – an allusion to the oak wreath that, by senatorial decree, decorated Augustus' house.

8.6b *The drunken 'Augustalis'*

In the towns of Italy and the western provinces, there emerged in the early Empire groups known as the *Augustales*, often consisting largely of ex-slaves, men normally excluded from other forms of public office-holding in their towns. Sometimes (as in this passage) they formed small associations of *seviri* ('six men'); sometimes they were much larger organisations, of up to several hundred members. Although some of these groups certainly had responsibility for various aspects of cult of the emperors, it is a matter of debate how far they should be seen as priests in any strict sense; they are probably best regarded as 'status groups', who may have had (but did not necessarily have) a religious role.

Here Petronius presents a fictional, satiric picture of a local *sevir*, arriving late at a dinner party, already completely drunk. Such officials were not always treated with solemn respect; they could be made figures of fun.

See further: Vol. 1, 357–8; Veyne (1961); for the literary 'construction' of the priest's entry, Averil Cameron (1969); for the social status of local Italian *seviri*, D'Arms (1981) 126–48. See also **11.5c**.

Petronius, *Satyricon* 65

In the middle of all this, a *lictor*[1] knocked at the dining-room door; and some reveller came in dressed in white with a great crowd of followers. I[2] was really scared by this lordly entrance and assumed the chief magistrate had come to call. So I tried to get up and put my bare feet on the ground. Agamemnon[3] laughed at my fright and said, 'Pull yourself together, you idiot. Habinnas here is a *sevir*, a stone-mason too.'

Feeling better at this news, I went back to reclining and watched Habinnas' entrance with absolute astonishment. Drunk long since, he'd got his hands on his wife's shoulders; he was wearing a whole load of garlands and the perfume was streaming over his forehead into his eyes.[4] He put himself down in the place of honour and straightaway demanded wine and warm water. Trimalchio,[5] delighted at all this fun and games, demanded a bigger cup for himself and asked what kind of entertainment he'd had. 'Everything was there, except you,' he said. 'The apple of my eye was here. All the same it was bloody good. Scissa was holding the nine-day feast[6] for her poor little slave that she'd freed on his deathbed. I guess she's got a right fuss on her hands with the taxman; because they reckon

the dead man was worth 50, 000 <*sestertii*>. But anyway, it was a charming do – even if we did have to pour half our drinks over his poor old bones.'

1. *Seviri*, like Roman magistrates, were accompanied by official attendants.
2. The narrator, Encolpius, a guest at the party.
3. A fellow guest.
4. Garlands and unguents were commonly used on ceremonial occasions.
5. The host, who was also a *sevir Augustalis*.
6. Habinnas has been at a funerary celebration (*novendialis*) given at the tomb after nine days of mourning for the dead; see 4.13.

8.7 'Oriental' priests at Rome: priests of Magna Mater

Alongside the priests of traditional state cults at Rome, was a range of very different, priestly officials associated with the cults of Magna Mater, Isis and other of the so-called 'oriental' cults in the city. It is even harder to reconstruct any clear picture of the character of these priesthoods than of the traditional priesthoods of the city. They were in any case very varied, with individual cults having many different types of officials – full-time, part-time, male, female, and so on. But even more problematic is how to assess the wild, dangerous, 'odd' image of these priests often presented in Roman literature, and to judge how far that image reflects the 'real life' character of the priests. In this section we discuss the priests of Magna Mater, in the next those of Isis.

See further: R. L. Gordon (1990c) 245–8*; and (with specific reference to the cult of Magna Mater) Beard (1994)*; see also 2.7; 5.6; 6.7.

8.7a *Restrictions on Roman involvement in the cult of Magna Mater*

The cult officials of Magna Mater provided a notorious example of the strangeness and 'difference' of oriental cults and their priests. In this passage Dionysius claims that no native Roman was allowed to take part (as a worshipper or official) in the more 'foreign' elements of the goddess' rituals. We do not know how accurate this claim is, or (if accurate) how long the ban lasted. But, whether true or not, it represents a clear attempr to mark a separation between 'oriental' rites (and priests) and 'proper' Roman traditions.

See further: Vol. 1, 97–8, 164–6, 280–1, 337–9; Wiseman (1984); Wiseman (1985) 201–5*.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* II.19.3–5

The most striking thing of all, in my view, is this: despite the influx into Rome of countless foreigners, who are under a firm obligation to worship their ancestral gods according to the customs of their homeland, the city has never officially emulated any of these foreign practices – as has been the case with many cities in the past; but even though the Romans introduced various rituals from abroad on the instructions of oracles, they have got rid of all the fabulous mumbo-jumbo and celebrate them according to their

own customs. The rites of the Idaean Mother[1] are an example of this. For the *praetores* conduct sacrifices and games[2] in her honour every year along Roman lines, but her priest and priestess are Phrygian;[3] and it is they who carry the image in procession around the city, begging for alms (as is their custom), wearing medallions on their breasts and beating their tympana, while their followers play tunes on the flute in honour of the Mother of the Gods. But by a law and decree of the senate no native-born Roman walks through the city dressed in bright clothes,[4] begging for alms or accompanied by flute players, nor worships the goddess with wild Phrygian ceremonies. So careful are the Romans to guard against religious practices that are not part of their own traditions; and they abominate all empty pomp that falls below proper standards of decency.

1. Magna Mater (or Cybele). For her rites, see **5.6a** and b; **6.7**.
2. The Megalesian games, 4–10 April; see **3.3a** (with n. 2); **3.3b**.
3. That is, from the home of the goddess in Asia Minor. It is not clear which of the many cult officials of Magna Mater Dionysius is referring to here. The description that follows seems very like what we know of the *galli* (see **8.7b** and c) – the castrated male priests of the goddess; but Dionysius seems to have in mind both male and female officials – and the *galli* were always (castrated) males.
4. The *galli* wore brightly coloured clothes (see below **8.7b**).

8.7b *The eunuch 'gallus'*

Juvenal here satirizes a *gallus*, a eunuch priest of Magna Mater. But his main target is the Roman women who follow the *gallus* and accede to his ridiculous demands. Further extracts from this poem are given at **12.4d** and **13.4**.

See further: Graillot (1912) 287–319; Nock (1925); Sanders (1972) cols. 984–1034; Vermaseren (1977a) 96–100*; for Juvenal's misogyny, Henderson (1989).

Juvenal, *Satires* 6.511–21

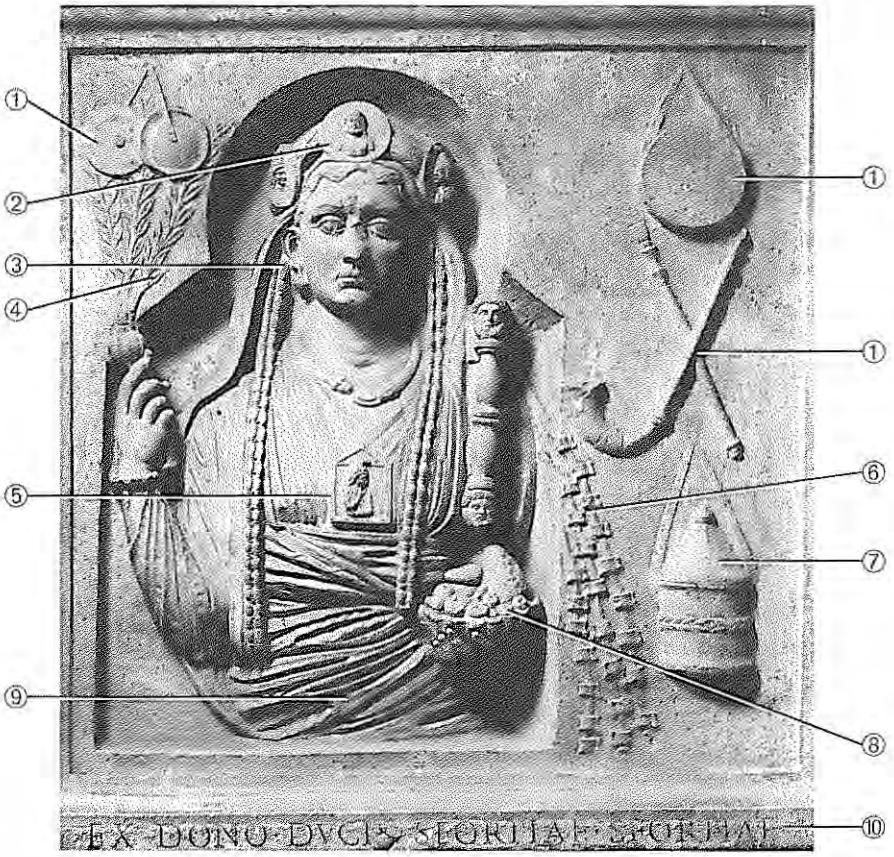
Look, in come the devotees of frenzied Bellona[1] and of the Mother of the Gods. And in comes the huge eunuch – the one that the rest of the obscene gang must honour. Long ago he grabbed a bit of broken pot and sliced through his soft genitals,[2] and now before him the howling crowd, with their tambourines, give way. His vulgar cheeks are covered by a Phrygian bonnet. Loudly he proclaims that the lady should beware the coming of September and its winds – if she does not purify herself with a hundred eggs and present him with her rich red, cast-off gowns[3] so that any sudden calamity that threatens may pass into the clothes and she may make expiation for the whole year to come.[4]

1. The goddess Bellona was commonly associated with Magna Mater. At Ostia, for example, there was a temple of Bellona within the precinct of Magna Mater.
2. The *galli* were *self*-castrated, using (it was said) a broken piece of pottery or a stone.
3. This is a parody of the priests' practice of begging; predictably the *gallus* is after cast-off women's clothes in bright colours.
4. The joke is that the clothes are to act as a 'scapegoat' for the woman's sins – but are not (as you would expect with a scapegoat) to be destroyed; instead they are to be handed over to the *gallus*.

8.7c *Tomb portrait of a 'gallus'*

This tomb portrait of a *gallus* (dating to the second century A.D.) was found just outside Rome (height 1.20 m., width 1.20 m.). Note the effeminacy of the portrayal and how the priest proudly displays the objects usually treated derisively by Roman writers.

See further: Vermaseren: (1977b) 152–3*; and (for a study of a similar tomb-portrait of a priest of Bellona) E. Strong (1920).



1. The characteristic musical instruments of the cult of Cybele – cymbals, tympanum and double Phrygian flute.
2. Headdress with plaques showing Attis and Jupiter/Zeus.
3. Long fillets or ribbons bound into the priest's curling hair.
4. Sprinkler.
5. Breast plaque (pectoral) showing Attis.
6. Whip of knuckle bones, for self-flagellation.
7. Box holding cult objects – its closure probably stands for the secrecy of part of the cult. See also 5.6a n. 3.
8. Bowl of fruit – containing almonds (which, according to the myth, sprang from Attis' blood at his self-castration).
9. Swathed dress – reminiscent of female, rather than male, clothing.
10. Modern inscription.

8.8 The caring priest of Isis

The traditional priests of Rome did not play the caring, pastoral role that we associate with modern priests. By contrast it appears that the officials associated with some of the oriental cults *did* have that role in relation to the followers of their cult. In this passage Apuleius pictures a priest of Isis comforting and advising Lucius – who is too eager to be initiated into the mysteries of the goddess.

See further: Vol. 1, 287–8; Witt (1971) 89–99*; Winkler (1985) 209–23. For further texts concerning Isis, see **12.4**.

Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* XI.21

In fact my desire to be admitted into the mysteries grew stronger by the day; and I had accosted the high priest time and time again with the most pressing entreaties, begging him to initiate me into the secrets of the holy night. But he, who was otherwise a somewhat severe character, renowned for his strict observance of the rules of the faith, put off my insistence gently and kindly – like parents do, when they restrain the impetuous enthusiasm of their children; and he calmed my general anxiety with the comforting hope of something better. For he explained that not only was the date of each person's initiation determined by the will of the goddess, but also the priest who was to celebrate the ritual was chosen by her foresight; even the sum required for the ceremony was specified by a similar instruction.[1] And his advice was that we should accept all these rules with proper endurance, as it was my duty to take particular precaution against over-eagerness and obstinacy, and to avoid both those faults – neither hesitating once I had been called, nor hastening on before I was bidden; there was indeed, he said, no member of his priesthood so mad or, to put it more strongly, so bent on destruction, that he would dare to carry out a dangerous and sacrilegious office and to commit an offence that would lead to death, unless his sovereign lady ordered him; for both the gates of hell and the guarantee of life were in the hands of the goddess, and the initiation itself was celebrated in the manner of a voluntary death and of salvation won by prayer; indeed her divine majesty was accustomed to choose those who already stood on the very threshold where the light of this world is extinguished, their span of life passed, those to whom the great secrets of the faith could nevertheless be safely entrusted; and by her providence they were in some way born again, as she set them once more on the course of a new life; so, he said, it was my duty also to accept the heavenly command, even though clear and particular marks of favour of the great goddess had long ago appointed me and marked me out for the blessed service; and now, like other worshippers, I should abstain from unholy and forbidden food, so that I might arrive more directly at the hidden secrets of the purest faith.

1. A payment was due on initiation.

8.9 Priesthoods of the later Roman aristocracy

By the fourth century A.D., there was a striking change in the pattern of priestly office-holding among those leading members of the senatorial aristocracy of Rome who were still pagan. This inscription in honour of Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, listing his offices, offers an extreme example of this trend towards the accumulation of priesthood after priesthood by men (and women) outside the imperial family. Although it has been suggested that this change was caused by a shortage of men willing to fill these offices, it is more likely that priestly office, and the display of priestly office, was becoming an important weapon in the conflict between paganism and Christianity.

See further: Vol. 1, 374, 383–4; Bloch (1945); (1963); Jones, Martindale and Morris (1971) 722–4 (largely on Praetextatus' political career); Matthews (1973); Croke and Harries (1982) 98–121*.

CIL VI.1778

<In honour of> Agorius
To Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, of senatorial rank

Pontifex of Vesta[1]
Pontifex of the sun[3]
Quindecemvir <sacris faciundis>
Augur
Celebrant of the *taurobolium*[4]
Curialis[5]
Neocorus[6]
Hierophant[7]
Father of the rires[8]
Quaestor 'candidatus'[2]
Urban *praetor*
Governor of Tuscia and Umbria
Governor of Lusitania
Proconsul of Achaia
Prefect of the city
Twice Praetorian Prefect of Italy and Illyricum
Consul designate[9]

<On the side> Dedicated on the Kalends of February <1 February> in the third consulship of our Lord Flavius Valentinianus Augustus and of Eutropius <A.D. 387>.

1. After the establishment of *pontifices* of the Sun (see n. 3), the traditional *pontifices* were commonly known as *pontifices* of Vesta.
2. In the early Roman Empire this title had marked out those junior magistrates specially nominated by the emperor; although the title survived, by the later fourth century the office had lost its active political function and had no particular connection with the emperor.
3. A priesthood established by the emperor Aurelian (A.D. 270–5).
4. For the *taurobolium* in the cult of Magna Mater, see 6.7.
5. A priesthood of Hercules.
6. 'Temple overseer' – here referring to a priesthood of the Egyptian god Sarapis. For the 'official' status of this cult from the third century A.D., see Vol. 1, 383.
7. A priesthood of the goddess Hecate.
8. A position in the grades of the cult of Mithras; see also 12.5c(vi).
9. Praetextatus died in A.D. 384 before he could take up the consulship.

8.10 Pagan priesthood under attack

Priesthood and the activities of priests provided a major focus of debate in the conflict between pagans and Christians. This was not just a matter of the supposed immorality of pagan priests (both traditional and oriental). It was also a matter of the definition of imperial power. For the image of the emperor had in part been constructed around the image of the pagan priest. To present oneself as a *Christian* emperor meant renegotiating that image of priesthood.

See further: Bowersock (1986).

8.10a *Priests and immorality*

Here Minucius Felix ridicules the supposed purity of the Vestal Virgins (see 8.4) and suggests that pagan priesthoods in general were little more than a 'cover' for immorality.

See further: Clarke (1974) 307.

Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 25.10–11

You might choose to argue that among the pagans virgins were more chaste or that priests were more religious. But in fact more of their virgins than not were proven guilty of unchastity[1] – no doubt without Vesta's knowledge; and as for the rest it was not stricter chastity but better luck in their immorality that saved them from punishment. And where are more debaucheries arranged, where is more pimping practised, more adultery planned than by priests at their altars and temples? Indeed the flames of lust more often have their way in sacristans' storerooms than in actual brothels.

1. There are some recorded instances of Vestal Virgins convicted of breaking their vow of chastity (see **6.6b**; **8.4a**); but it was not the regular occurrence that Minucius Felix states.

8.10b *The emperor Gratian (A.D. 375–383) refuses the pontifical robe*

The Christian emperor Gratian was the first to sever the link between the position of Roman emperor and the office of *pontifex maximus*. Here the later pagan writer Zosimus offers a disapproving account of the emperor's rejection of the priesthood – implying that Gratian's neglect of the office brought about his downfall. Although later emperors followed Gratian's example, the title of *pontifex maximus* was eventually taken over (and is still used) by the Christian pope.

See further: Vol. 1, 372, 374; Alan Cameron (1968); Matthews (1975) 203–5*; Geffcken (1978) 159–77; and, for the papal title, Kajanto (1981).

Zosimus, *New History* IV.36

It was the custom for each emperor, at the same time as he took overall command, to be offered the priestly robe by the *pontifices* and to be given the title *pontifex maximus* – in

other words 'chief priest'. In fact, all other emperors appear to have accepted the honour and to have used this title most gladly – even Constantine, when he came to the imperial throne (despite the fact that in religion he turned away from the correct path and embraced the Christian faith), and the others that came after him in turn, including Valentinianus and Valens.[1] But when the *pontifices* followed the tradition in presenting the robe to Gratian, he rejected their offer – regarding such garb as unlawful for a Christian. And when the robe had been returned to the priests, the story goes that the leading man amongst them retorted: 'If the emperor doesn't want to be *pontifex maximus*, Maximus soon will be *pontifex*.'[2]

1. The point is that even Christian emperors had accepted the office.
2. The priest puts on the title of the office and the name of the usurper Maximus – who (successfully) revolted against Gratian in A.D. 382–3.

9 *Individuals and gods: life and death*

This chapter deals with various aspects of the relationship between individuals and the gods. The first three sections are concerned with the most powerful members of Roman society, and with the gradual evolution of the idea that rulers did, or should, enjoy particularly close relations with divinities (9.1) – some even being worshipped as gods themselves (9.2–3). Such an idea was in many ways incompatible with the tradition of Roman republicanism which placed much emphasis on the rotation of power between the great families and on the avoidance of pre-eminent power for any one man. The later sections deal more with the ordinary man or woman in the imperial period: with their conceptions of the place of supernatural beings in human experience (9.4–5), and their ideas of death and the consequences of death (9.6).

See further: Vol. 1, 140–9, 206–10.

9.1 Late republican dynasts

In the last period of the Republic, religion provided one of the fields in which Marius and Sulla, Caesar and Pompey, Antony and Octavian/Augustus fought out their conflicts, each claiming to have more reliable access to divine support than did their rivals. Some believed that there had been precedent for such divine associations in the career of Scipio Africanus (236–184/3 B.C. – the conquetor of Hannibal), who was said to have paraded his special relationship with Jupiter.

See further: Vol. 1, 84–7, 140–9; Bayet (1955); Gallini (1970); Weinstock (1971); Champeaux (1982–7) II.215–91.

9.1a *Scipio Africanus*

It is impossible to be sure whether the associations of Scipio with Jupiter (and with Alexander the Great) claimed in the following passage were contemporary with Scipio or later inventions. Their resemblance to the divine associations of such men as Pompey and Caesar has led to the suspicion that they were invented in the first century B.C., to serve as precedents for what was happening then. On the other hand, it is possible that in this, as in other respects, the events of the late third century B.C. anticipated some of the features of the fall

of the Republic (see Vol. 1, 86). Scipio may himself have created the impression of having a special relationship with gods, and/or such stories may have originated in contemporary abuse of him – implying that he was seeking unacceptable power through his special connections with the divine. Whichever is the case, the image of Scipio marks a stage in the evolution of religio-political power in Rome.

See further: Vol. 1, 84–5; Walbank (1967); Scullard (1970) 20–3*; Seguin (1974).

Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* VI.1.1–6

It is recorded that the mother of Scipio Africanus, the elder, had the same experience as Olympias, Philip the Great's wife and Alexander the Great's mother, according to the records of the Greek historians.[1] For Gaius Oppius[2] and Julius Hyginus,[3] and other writers on Africanus' life and achievements, tell us that his mother had long been believed sterile and that Publius Scipio,[4] her husband, had despaired of having children. Then, while her husband was away and she was sleeping on her own, a huge snake was seen beside her, in her room and in her bed; when those who saw this snake shouted out in terror, it vanished and could not be found. Scipio consulted the *haruspices* about this and they held a sacrifice and gave a response that children would be born. Not long after the sighting of the snake, the woman began to show all signs of being pregnant; in the tenth month, she gave birth to this Publius Africanus, the man who defeated Hannibal and the Carthaginians in the Second Punic War. But it is much more because of his achievements than because of that prodigy that he also <i.e., as well as Alexander> is thought to be a man of godlike quality. It is worth adding that the same authorities also record that this same Africanus used to go up on to the Capitol in the dead of night, before dawn had appeared, and have the shrine <*cella*> of Jupiter opened for him; he would remain there for a long time, as though he was consulting with Jupiter about the state of the Republic. The caretakers of the temple were often astonished that the temple dogs never barked or rushed at Scipio despite the time of night, though they always savaged anybody else.

1. For Alexander's birth, see Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* 2.
2. Friend and supporter of Julius Caesar, who wrote biographies, including one of Africanus.
3. Ex-slave of Augustus, a writer of *Exempla* – improving tales of the great deeds of the Roman past.
4. Consul of 218 B.C.

9.1b *Sulla*

Sulla was a deeply controversial figure in the history of the late Republic. After reaching the consulship in 88 B.C., he fought a successful war in the East, recovering lands lost to Mithridates, King of Pontus. On his return, he seized power in Rome – taking the office of 'dictaror' – and carried through extensive reforms in the interest of the conservative group in the senate. The following

entries illustrare various ways the divine associations of Sulla were paraded.

See further: Vol. 1, 131, 144; Fears (1981) 877–82*; Keaveney (1983).

9.1b(i) Sulla the 'Felix'

Plutarch's *Life of Sulla* (which drew on Sulla's own autobiography) is a major source of information about Sulla's religious ideas. In this passage Plutarch discusses his display of (divinely inspired) good fortune. (See also Plutarch, *Life of Sulla* 6; Appian, *Civil Wars* I.97.)

See further: Vol. 1, 131, 144 and n. 84; Balsdon (1951); Champeaux (1982–7) II.216–36; Keaveney (1982) 40–2*.

Plutarch, *Life of Sulla* 34

His triumph however was certainly lavish because of the extravagance and originality of the king's booty; but its greatest glory and its most beautiful sight was the returned exiles.[1] For the most noble and powerful of the citizens followed in the procession, wearing garlands and hailing Sulla as 'Saviour and Father', since it had been through him that they had returned to the fatherland and brought back their wives and children. Also, when the celebration had been completed, he gave an account of his actions at an assembly <i.e. *contio*> in which he listed examples of his good fortune with no less enthusiasm than he did those of his own merits. Moreover, he told them to call him the 'fortunate' one, for that is what the name 'Felix' really means. Meanwhile, when writing to or doing business with the Greeks, he called himself 'Epaphroditos' and on the trophies he set up amongst us <Greeks>, he is inscribed as: 'Lucius Cornelius Sulla Epaphroditos'.[2] What is more, when his wife Metella bore him twins, he called the boy Faustus and the girl Fausta. For the Romans call 'faustus' what we call lucky or happy. Altogether he put his trust not in his actions but in his good fortune: for instance, although he had had many people eliminated and there had been so many revolutionary changes, he made no use of the power he held to control the consular elections without attending them himself, but rather went down into the Forum just like an ordinary citizen, offering himself to be challenged by anyone who wished to.

1. That is, the Romans who had been banished in the civil conflicts that surrounded Sulla's rise to power.
2. The name 'Epaphroditos' parades a special relationship with the goddess Aphrodite (Roman Venus), but also apparently serves as the Greek equivalent of the Latin Felix (see 9.1c).

9.1b(ii) Sulla's honours

The coinage associated with Sulla marks an important stage in the evolution of more extreme religious bonours for the individual. It was not until Julius Caesar that Roman leaders started to place their own features on coins, where only those of gods and goddesses had appeared before. Bur Sulla came close to representing himself by representing his statue on this *aureus* (minted 80 B.C., during the period of his dictatorship). The statue itself, apparently inscribed

with the title 'Cornelius Sulla Felix', is discussed by the historian Appian (*Civil Wars* I.97).

See further: Balsdon (1951) 4; Crawford (1974) 397*.

9.1b(iii) Sulla and portents

Sulla was also innovatory in parading his reliance on signs from the gods and dreams in determining his actions. This *denarius* appears to depict his dream in which a goddess (here shown as Luna, the Moon) offers him victory over his rival Marius and may reflect his own emphasis on such portents. But it was minted in 44 B.C. long after Sulla's death, and it no doubt also reflects ideas current at the very end of the Republic; by then, the idea that divine signs marked the lives of great men seems to have become far more widespread.

See further: Vollenweider (1958–9); Crawford (1974) 493*; for another coin in this series, see 9.2b(ii).

1. Sulla reclining.
2. Victory with outstretched wings.
3. Luna (Moon), holding staff in raised right hand.

9.1c *Pompey and 'felicitas'*

It was not only Sulla who claimed the special quality of *felicitas*. The passage below concerns Pompey, also a great conqueror in the East. Sulla's settlement in the East (see 9.1b) did not hold for very long and a new war broke out in the 70s. In 66 B.C. a controversial law was brought forward to confer the eastern command and special powers on Pompey, who already had a great military reputation. Cicero spoke in support of Pompey's claim to the command. Here, in an extract from that speech, he praises Pompey's *felicitas*, amongst other qualities also including his courage and skill as a general. The passage provides us

with our best definition of *felicitas*, as understood in Cicero's time. The word is sometimes translated 'luck', but the context makes it clear how inadequate a translation that is.

See further: Vol. 1, 84–6, 144–5; Erkell (1952); Weinstock (1971) 112–16*; Fears (1981) 882–3; Champeaux (1982–7) II.236–43.

Cicero, *On the Command of Pompey* 47

It remains for me to speak of his <Pompey's> *felicitas* – a quality that no one can claim on his own behalf, only recall and record on behalf of another; though even then it must be cautiously and concisely expressed, as is proper when humans speak of the power of the gods. For it is my belief that Fabius Maximus, Claudius Marcellus, Scipio, Marius[1] and the other great military leaders were granted their powers and entrusted with armies not only because of their virtues, but also their good fortune. For in the case of certain supreme men, there is a kind of fortune divinely embedded in them that brings to them greatness, glory and famous deeds. So far as Pompey's *felicitas* is concerned, the subject of these words, I must take care not to give the impression that this fortune is in his own power; all we can do is take note of the past and hope for the future, for we must on no account let this speech become either arrogant or ungrateful in the gods' eyes.[2]

1. The list of great generals emphasizes the men who saved Rome from Hannibal 218–201 B.C. (Fabius, Marcellus and Scipio) and from the Gaulish invasion of 104–100 B.C. (Marius) – but note the omission of Sulla, apparently less popular with the Roman voters to whom Cicero is appealing on Pompey's behalf.
2. The implication is therefore that the divine quality is given only to very special individuals; it may be revoked by the gods who gave it, but military success depends on retaining it.

9.1d *An afterlife for heroes*

Cicero concluded his dialogue *On the State* with an epilogue in the form of a dream, in which he re-expressed some of the doctrines of the main work in a mythical form. The narrator of the dream is Scipio Aemilianus (185–129 B.C.); and in the dream, he meets his father and famous grandfather (Scipio Africanus – see **9.1a**), who is the speaker at the beginning of this extract. They tell him of the eternal life in store for the great statesmen of Rome, whose importance was one of the central themes of the dialogue. This provides the setting for an exposition of Pythagorean and Platonic ideas about immortality.

See further: Boyancé (1936); Coleman (1964); Büchner (1976) 59–120; Powell (1990) 119–33*.

Cicero, *On the State* VI.13–16

'Listen to this, Africanus,[1] and it will make you even keener than you are to defend the Republic: all those who have protected or assisted the fatherland, or increased its greatness, have a special place reserved for them in heaven, where they may enjoy

perpetual happiness. There is nothing on earth more acceptable to the supreme god who rules the whole world than are the gatherings and assemblies of people joined together by law, known as cities; it is from heaven that the rulers and preservers of the cities come, and it is to heaven that they eventually return.'

By now I was thoroughly frightened not so much by the fear of death as by the thought of treachery in my own family;[2] all the same I asked Africanus whether he himself and my father Paullus[3] and the others we regard as dead were really still alive. 'Yes they are,' he replied, 'and freed from their chains, from that prison-house – the body; for what you call life is in fact death. But don't you see? here comes your father Paullus.'

On seeing my father, I burst into a flood of tears; but he embraced and kissed me and told me to stop weeping.(15) As soon as I could manage to do so and speak again, I said: 'Most revered and excellent father. Since this life of yours is the true life, as Africanus has just been telling me, why am I lingering here on earth? why don't I come and join you there, with all haste?' 'No, no,' he said, 'unless the god, whose *templum* is everything you can see,[4] has freed you from the bonds of your body, there can be no admission for you here. The human race was generated on purpose to inhabit the globe called earth, that you can see in the middle of this *templum*, and they were provided with souls from those eternal fires called stars and constellations. These consist of globes or spheres, animated by the divine intelligence, and moving at wonderful speed round their circuits or orbits. So, you, Publius, and all the righteous must allow your soul to stay in the body's custody; nor must you abandon the life of humans without the orders of the god who conferred it on you, or else you will be evading the duty laid on humans by god.(16) Act like Scipio, your grandfather, or like me, your father: cultivate justice and piety, qualities we owe to parents and kinsmen, but even more to the fatherland. That is the life that leads to heaven and to the company of those who have lived out their lives, been released from their bodies and now dwell in the area you can see there, which you Romans (following the Greeks) call the Milky Way; for there was a splendid circle of light shining out amongst all the other fires.'

1. In this section both the speaker and the addressee (the narrator of the dream) are – confusingly for us – referred to as Scipio Africanus; though in modern writing the addressee is always known as Scipio Aemilianus. Aemilianus was Africanus' grandson, through his adopted father (see n.3). Both men (having won victories in Africa) took the honorific name 'Africanus' and both use the name for one another.
2. The possibility of treachery within the family had been raised by the speaker, just before this passage; it refers to the notorious mystery about the assassination of Aemilianus, that took place shortly after the dramatic date of the dialogue.
3. Paullus is Aemilianus' natural father – L. Aemilius Paullus conqueror of Perseus of Macedon (see 5.8a), who had died in about 160 B.C.
4. For the religious/legal meaning of *templum*, see above 4.4. Here the whole universe is treated as the *templum*, the sacred space, of the universal god Cicero is describing.

9.2 Emperor worship

The increasing claims of the late republican leaders might predictably have led on directly (once the republican system had fallen) to the recognition of emperors as gods on earth. It is indeed possible that Julius Caesar did have plans to be recognized as a god in his own lifetime (**9.2a**). But if this is the case, and if Caesar's successors were aware of these plans, they chose largely to avoid any such precedent. In practice, 'deification' of Roman emperors was a complex, shifting and varied phenomenon. In Rome itself emperors were often closely associated with the gods (see **2.8c**), but only the stereotypically 'bad' emperors were said to have become gods during their lifetime; in general, emperors received divine status only after their death – and only if the senate deemed to them to have deserved it (**2.8b**). In the provinces, divine honours were sometimes given to living emperors – but local practice varied widely and was a matter of local initiative as much as demands made by the emperor himself (**10.4e, 10.5, 10.6**).

See further: Vol. 1, 140–9; Koch (1960); Hopkins (1978) 197–242*; Price (1984); Fisbwick (1987-) I.3–93; for further passages and bibliography, **2.8**.

9.2a *Caesar as god*

This passage is one of the main pieces of evidence to suggest that Caesar was aiming at deification during his lifetime. It is part of a speech delivered by Cicero in the autumn of 44 B.C. against his great political enemy, Mark Antony. Cicero is teasing Antony by asking him why, if he was as devoted to Caesar's memory as he said he was, he had not yet gone through the formal ceremony of inauguration as *flamen*, that is special priest of Caesar's new cult. In doing this, Cicero claims detailed knowledge of the cult – the god's title, the priest's title, even the new priest's identity. In fact, the formal recognition of Caesar as a god (*divus* Julius) did not occur till after Cicero's death and Antony only became *flamen divi Iulii* in 40 B.C. (Plutarch, *Life of Antony* 33.1). The only explanation for Cicero's apparent knowledge is that he knew of detailed plans for deification drafted in Caesar's lifetime, but only implemented in the years after his death.

See further: Vol. 1, 140–2, 145, 148–9; Weinstock (1971) 305–8; North (1975); Fishwick (1987-) I.56–72*.

Cicero, *Philippic* II.110–11

And you <Antony> so sedulous about Caesar's memory, are you really devoted to the man now he is dead? What greater honour did he ever get than that he should have the sacred couch, the statue, the gable on his house, the special *flamen*?[1] So you see, just as there is a *flamen* for Jupiter, for Mars and for Quirinus, so there is now a *flamen* for the *divus* Julius – Mark Antony himself. So why hesitate? Why do you not hold the

inauguration? Pick your day; choose the priest to act; we <*augures*> are all your colleagues; none of us will refuse.[2] How hateful a man you are – whether as priest of a tyrant or priest of a dead man. So I ask another question: do you not know the date today? Do you not know that this is the fourth day of the Roman Games in the circus? Was it not you yourself who proposed the law that the fifth day of the games should be in Caesar's honour? Why are we not wearing the *toga praetexta*? Why are we letting an honour lapse that was carried by your own law? Or are you happy to see the supplication desecrated by adding days, but not so happy about desecrating the sacred couch?[3] Either you should abolish religious scruple everywhere or respect it everywhere. You ask me, do I approve of the sacred couch, the statue, the gable on his house, the special *flamen*? No, I disapprove of it all; but you are the one who are defending all the Acts of Caesar[4] – how can you explain defending some and not bothering about some others? Unless you are going to admit that your actions are to be measured not by his dignity, but by your own profit.

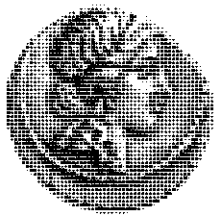
1. All these are symbols borrowed from the cult of the gods, unprecedented for a man.
2. Both Antony and Cicero himself were members of the college of *augures*, any of whom could act in the ceremony.
3. Cicero tries to imply that Antony was proposing some improper honours for Caesar, but inconsistently not implementing those voted. For the idea of adding in Caesar's honour an extra day to all *supplicationes*, see *Philippic* I.12–13.
4. Antony was at this time enacting controversial legislation claiming that it had formed part of Caesar's 'Acts', uncompleted at the time of his death.

9.2b *Representations of power*

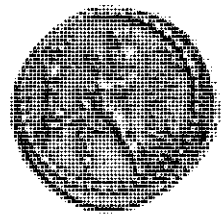
The sequence of coinage of the late Republic, securely dated year by year, provides a good index of the gradual assimilation of rulers to divine roles. Caesar was following his ancestors in advertising the Julian family's descent from Venus, through her son Aeneas, and his son Iulus (**i**). But he broke with tradition when his own head appeared on the coinage at the end of his life (see above **9.2a**), and the star may well be a symbol of his new status as a god (**ii**). Octavian, like his competitors, used his own heroic portrait as a coin-type and added his now deified father *divus* Julius to the traditional claim of divine ancestry through Venus (**iii**). Finally (**iv**) in asserting his claim to supreme power in the world, Octavian had himself represented in the guise of one of the 'traditional' gods.

See further: Vol. 1, 143–5; Kraft (1969); Weinstock (1971) 253–6, 274–5, 370–84; Crawford (1974) 734–44; Wallace-Hadrill (1986); Zanker (1988) 53–7*.

(i) Denarius of Caesar, 47/6 B.C.

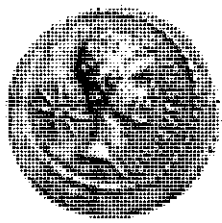


(obv.) Head of Venus

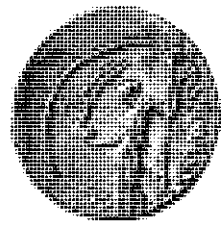


(rev.) Aeneas, bearing Anchises on his shoulders and the *palladium* (the statue of Athena rescued from Troy) in his right hand. CAESAR

(ii) Denarius issued by Publius Sepullius Macer, 44 B.C.

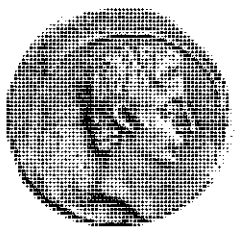


(obv.) Head of Caesar, wreathed; behind, star. CAESAR IMP(ERATOR)

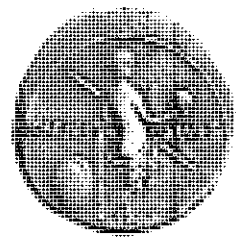


(rev.) Venus holding Victory in right hand, sceptre in left. P. SEPULLIUS MACER

(iii) Denarius of Octavian, before 31 B.C.

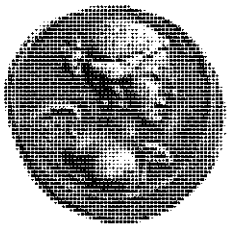


(obv.) Head of Octavian

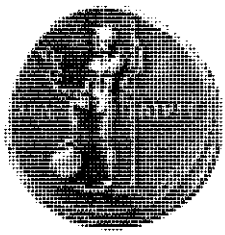


(rev.) Venus, holding the arms of Mars. CAESAR DIVI F(ILIUS)

(iv) Denarius of Octavian, before 31 B.C.



(obv.) Victoria



(rev.) Octavian in the guise of Neptune, symbols of power in his hands, foot on the globe. CAESAR DIVI F(ILIUS)

9.2c *Claudius as god*

Jokes often feature in the comments made by the Romans – even by emperors themselves – about the deification of rulers. (Vespasian's last words were supposed to have been: 'Oh my goodness, I think I am becoming a god.') The most famous and extended of these jokes to survive is a satire on the deification of Claudius, the next ruler to be deified after Caesar and Augustus and a man whose personal eccentricities made him a particularly unlikely god. It is probable, though not certain, that it was written by Seneca, the famous essayist, philosopher, dramatist and adviser to Nero, Claudius' successor. If so, the satire comes from a man close to the heart of the regime that had honoured the dead Claudius with divine status.

The scene is set on Mount Olympus, where the old gods debate the new arrival. The procedure parodies that of the senate in Rome, where the decision to deify was made. The gods turn out to be divided on the issue, but Claudius' claim is in the end rejected on the advice of *divus* Augustus, who lists Claudius' crimes.

See further: Griffin (1976) 129–33*; Eden (1984); Braund (1993); Relihan (1993) 75–90.

Seneca (?), *Pumpkinification of Claudius* 9

It finally dawned on Jupiter that so long as strangers were loitering in the senate house[1] the senators were not allowed to express opinions or take part in debate. 'Conscript Fathers,' he said, 'I gave you permission to ask questions, but all you have done is to create mayhem. I require you to obey the rules of the senate house. What impression will this man (whatever he is) have formed of us?' So, Claudius was sent out and the first called to give his opinion was Father Janus. He was the consul designate, down to hold the office for the afternoon of the following first of July,[2] and a fellow who, so long as it's up his own street, always looks 'backwards and forwards at the same time'.[3] He lived in the Forum and had much to say with an eloquence that the shorthand-writer could not

keep up with.[4] I'm therefore missing this out, so as not to put his speech into other words. He had a lot to say about the greatness of the gods and about how the honour should not be handed out to every Tom, Dick and Harry. 'There was a time,' he said, 'when it was a great thing to be made a god; but you have turned it into a Bean Farce.[5] To avoid seeming to give my views *ad hominem*, rather than on the issue, my proposal is that from this day onwards nobody should be made a god from those who 'consume the fruits of the earth' or whom the 'fruitful earth' sustains.[6] Anyone who, contrary to this decree of the senate, is made, spoken about or represented as a god shall be delivered up to the spooks and lashed with whips among the new gladiators at the next public spectacle.'

1. I.e. the senate house on Mount Olympus. Jupiter and Janus are represented just as satirically as Claudius himself.
2. The consul-elect had the privilege of speaking first in the senate; the satirical reference is to short-term appointments to high office, which were much criticized.
3. Janus was always represented with a double head. Looking 'backwards and forwards at the same time' is quoted by Seneca in Greek; it is a phrase used commonly in Homer for heroes with knowledge of both past and future.
4. Janus' statue stood in the Forum, also the centre of speech-making – hence his 'eloquence'.
5. The reference to 'Bean Farce' is obscure; it was presumably some ridiculous comic performance.
6. Janus quotes Homer (in Greek) to refer to mortal men, as defined by their diet; the force of the mock decree is therefore to ban deification in future.

9.3 Funeral ceremonies

The funeral of a Roman emperor came to mark his change of status from mortal to divine – and the funeral ceremonial developed to take account of imperial deification. Nevertheless, even in this most monarchical of rituals, there were strong elements of continuity with traditional republican funerary practice. The ambiguities of the emperor's position were such that his funeral was both an 'ordinary' aristocratic funeral and a ceremony of deification.

See further: Toynbee (1971) 43–61*; Price (1987).

9.3a *Aristocratic funerals*

In this passage Polybius emphasizes the social effects of aristocratic Roman republican funerals as a source of Roman strength and continuity; it forms part of his wider attempt to explain Rome's success in war against the Hellenistic kingdoms of Greece and the Near East.

See further: Walbank (1957–79) I. 737–40; Nicolet (1980) 346–52*.

Polybius, *The Histories* VI.53–54.3

Whenever one of their famous men dies, he is carried, in the course of the funeral, to the *rostra*, as they call it, in the Forum, with every kind of honour; often, the body is

prominently upright, less often it reclines. In the presence of the whole people standing, a grown-up son, if there is one and if he is present, or otherwise some other member of the family, goes up to the *rostra* and makes a speech about the virtues of the dead man and the achievements of his life. As a result of this, the people, not just those with a share in the achievements but even those without, are so moved to sympathy by having the facts called to mind and to sight, that it seems as though the loss belongs to the whole people not just to the mourners. After this, when the burial and the usual rituals have been carried out, they place the image of the dead man in the most conspicuous position of the house, enclosed in a wooden shrine. This image consists of a mask that reproduces his features and complexion with remarkable faithfulness.[1] At the public sacrifices, they display these images and decorate them carefully. On the deaths of distinguished family members, they take the masks to the funeral, worn by those who seem to have the closest resemblance <to the dead man> in point of size and gait. These men also dress up in the appropriate kind of toga: purple-bordered <*toga praetexta*> for a consul or *praetor*; all purple for a censor; gold-embroidered for one who had celebrated a triumph or achieved something similar. They also ride in chariots, preceded by the *fasces*, the axes and the magisterial symbols, according to the various levels of dignity they reached in their lifetimes through their public careers. When they reach the *rostra*, they all sit in order on ivory chairs. There could be no finer or nobler sight for a man intent on glory and virtue. For who could fail to be inspired by seeing the images of men so famous for their virtue, all together as though living and breathing? What more glorious vision could there be?(54) What is more, the orator at the funeral, after speaking about the dead man himself, goes back to describe the achievements and exploits of each of the others present, starting from the most ancient of them. In this way, because of this constantly renewed reciting of the virtues of the brave, the fame of those who performed noble deeds is immortalized and the glory of those who benefited the fatherland is made known to the people and thus becomes a legacy for future generations. Most important of all, the young men are inspired to suffer everything for the common good, in pursuit of the glory that comes to the brave.

1. The possible influence of these masks on the development of Roman portraiture is discussed by Smith (1981) 31–2.

9.3b *Imperial apotheosis*

Cassius Dio was well placed to describe the funeral rites of the emperor Pertinax in A.D. 193; he was a leading senator of the period, holding the highest offices (consul A.D. 205 and 229); he was also, as this passage makes clear, an eyewitness of the ceremonial. The circumstances were in fact unusual, because Pertinax had been assassinated some months earlier, and the new emperor, Septimius Severus, had come to the throne after a second coup. It was, therefore, in his interest to establish his links with the legitimate succession

through Pertinax; to do so, he conducted the funeral (and arranged the apotheosis) of Pertinax, using a wax effigy.

See further: Bickermann (1929); (1963); Price (1987)*; Arce (1988); Dupont (1989); for an image of apotheosis, **2.8b**.

Cassius Dio LXXV.4.2–5.5

Despite the lapse of time since his death, his funeral was celebrated as follows. A platform was constructed of wood near the *rostra* in the Roman Forum and on it a shrine of gold and ivory was set up, with no walls only columns. Inside this, there was a bier of the same materials, decorated with the heads of animals, of land and sea, and having covers of purple and gold. On the bier was Pertinax, in waxen effigy, laid out in the dress of a triumphing general; a handsome boy was keeping the flies off him with peacock feathers, as though it were a real person asleep. As the body lay in state, Severus together with us senators and our wives approached it wearing mourning; the women sat down in the porticoes, we in the open air. Then a procession passed by: first, the famous Romans of ancient times; then men and boys singing hymns of mourning for Pertinax; after that all the nations of the empire, represented by figures of bronze dressed in the local costumes; next, members of the Roman guilds – those of the *lictores*, the scribes, the heralds and so on. Then came images of men famous for some deed, or invention or activity. Then came the cavalry and infantry in arms; the racehorses; and then all the offerings sent by us senators and our wives, by the more distinguished of the knights, by the people and by the guilds of Rome. After the offerings, came an altar, entirely gilded and set with ivory and gems from India. (5) When the whole procession had passed by, Severus went up on the *rostra* himself and read out a speech in praise of Pertinax. We often shouted out in enthusiasm in the course of this speech, sometimes praising Pertinax and sometimes bewailing him; but the loudest shouts of all came at the end. Finally at the point when the bier was going to be moved, we all lamented and wept together. It was taken down from the platform by the priests and by the magistrates in office and the magistrates elect; they then handed it over to be carried by some of the knights. The rest of us marched in front of the bier, some beating our breasts, some playing a dirge on the flute; the emperor followed last of all; and in this order we reached the Campus Martius. There, in the form of a three-storey tower, a pyre had been built decorated with ivory, gold and many statues; at its peak there was a golden chariot that Pertinax used to drive. The funerary offerings were thrown inside this pyre and the bier put into it. The effigy of Pertinax was then kissed by Severus and by members of the family. The emperor climbed up on to a platform; we senators (except the magistrates) on to stands of wood from which we could view the rituals easily and safely. The magistrates and the equestrian order in their appropriate dress, and likewise the cavalry and the infantry, passed in and out around the pyre performing intricate manoeuvres, both those of peace and those of war. Then finally the consuls set fire to the structure and, when this was done, an eagle flew up from the pyre. In this way Pertinax was made immortal.

9.4 Gods and mortals

The emperors were not the only 'divine humans' in the Roman empire. Perhaps the deification of emperors was itself an impetus to the wider spread of divine status in other areas of Roman society. Or perhaps all these developments are symptomatic of an increasingly flexible perception of the boundary between humans and the gods in the Roman empire (see **2.8**). That humans should turn out to be gods on earth was clearly a possibility; and the performance of miracles was prima-facie evidence of divinity. Christians, however, were committed to the view that the miracles proved divinity only in the case of Jesus; pagans were not so limited.

9.4a *Paul as Hermes*

This passage from the Acts of the Apostles shows how closely pagans could associate miracle workers (here Paul and Barnabas) with divinity in the first century A.D. The author is, of course, hostile to pagan conduct; and the dramatic tale may have served as an opportunity for a sermon to the gentiles – telling them to abandon their confused notions of deity and accept the true one. The story is set in south-west Asia Minor (modern Turkey), around A.D. 47.

See further: Haenchen (1971) 424–34; Lane Fox (1986) 99–100*.

Acts of the Apostles 14.8–18

<In Lystra> there sat a certain crippled man, lame from birth, who had never been able to walk. He listened to Paul speaking; and when Paul looked back at him, he saw that he had the faith to be healed; so he said in a loud voice: 'Stand up straight on your feet.' The man jumped up and walked. There was a crowd watching what Paul did, and these people called out in the local language of Lycaonia: 'These are gods who have come down to us in the likeness of humans.' So they called Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes since he was the master of speech. And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was before the city, brought bulls and garlands to the gates and wanted to hold a sacrifice with the crowd. But when Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes, rushed out into the crowd and said: 'What are you doing? We are humans too, of a nature just like your own, preaching to you that you should turn away from these empty ways and towards the living god who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. In past generations he allowed all the nations to follow their own paths. And yet he did not let himself pass quite unwitnessed, giving benefits in the form of rain from heaven and times of harvest, filling us with food and our hearts with happiness.' But even speaking like this, they had a hard time to stop the crowds from performing the sacrifice to them.

9.4b *Gods as familiars*

In this extract from his biography of the philosopher Plotinus (*c.* A.D. 205–70), Porphyry discusses Plotinus' 'familiar spirit'. It is assumed as common knowledge in this story that everyone has a familiar spirit; the surprise is that Plotinus' spirit turns out to be a god, not a spirit of some lower category. The belief that certain individuals were marked by special divine qualities was one that affected Christian and pagan experience alike.

See further: Dodds (1965) 83–91; P. Brown (1978) 54–80*; Brisson (1992) 468–72.

Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus* 10

Plotinus had special gifts from his birth onwards. There was an Egyptian priest who came to Rome and met him through a friend. This priest offered to give a demonstration of his science and asked him to come to attend an evocation of his familiar spirit.[1] Plotinus was happy to agree. It was in the Isis temple that the evocation took place, because that, according to the Egyptian priest, was the only place he could find in Rome that was 'pure'. The spirit was conjured and asked to reveal himself, but it was not a spirit that appeared, but a god. The Egyptian cried out: 'You are blessed who have as your familiar a god and not a spirit of the lower orders.' There was no chance to ask any questions of the apparition, nor even to look at it for long, because another friend who was there, and who was holding some birds as an insurance, strangled them, whether because he was jealous or terrified.[2] Since Plotinus had a divine being as his familiar, he concentrated on it for a time with his divine eye. This experience caused him to write a book trying to explain the differences between familiars; it was called *On the Spirit that Allotted Us to Himself.*

1. The Greek word is *daimon*, which sometimes corresponds to our 'demon', but is not necessarily a hostile spirit; the idea of a *daimon* attached to the individual goes back to Plato.
2. The idea seems to be that the birds would in some way offer protection to the participants, should the conjured spirit turn out to be dangerous. When they are strangled, for whatever reason, it would no longer be safe to proceed.

9.4c *Souls as divine?*

Arnobius, a newly converted Christian, was well informed about the religious controversies of his day. He attacks pagan ideas and especially those of the neo-Platonists. But the views he advocates himself would not have been accepted by most Christians either, since he is vigorously denouncing the idea that human souls could have been made by the Creator God.

See further: Festugière (1940) 97–132; Courcelle (1963) 151–7*; for a more general survey, Le Bonniec (1982) 7–85; Frend (1987).

Arnobius, *Against the Gentiles* II.37

If souls were, as the story runs, the offspring of the Lord, generated by the supreme power, they would in no way fall short of perfection themselves, being born of the most perfect virtue. They would all have shared a single mind, and a single accord. They would always have lived in the royal palace and never have given up the seats of bliss, in which they had learned and retained the most divine teachings;[1] never rashly have sought out instead these earthly regions, where they are twisted up in gloomy bodies all amongst the phlegm and the blood, the bags of shit and filthy urine-pots. But you might say that it was necessary for these areas to be inhabited and so that was why the omnipotent god sent out the souls, as though on a colonial venture. So, what good are human beings to the world? and what is this cause for which they are so necessary that it provides the reason why they have to live here and be tenants of an earthly body? Well, they bring some contribution to the completion of the whole mass; if they had not been added in, then the whole sum of the universe would have been incomplete and imperfect. So what? If there were no human beings, would the world cease to fulfil its functions? would the stars not go through their courses? would summer and winter not happen? would the winds' blasts die down and the rain not fall from the clouds, gathered and hanging above, so as to temper the droughts? In fact, all these things would run in their own courses and not depart from their normal order, even if the name of humankind had never been heard in the world and the whole orb of the earth still dwelt in the silence of an empty desert.

1. He is referring to the idea of Plato, much debated in this period, that the soul comes to earth already having memories of earlier experience.

9.5 Sickness and trouble

The Roman gods offered help to the individual in times of sickness or trouble. Although the main focus of Roman religion (at least as it is represented to us in surviving literary texts) was not on the personal or emotional life of the worshipper, it could nonetheless be a resource for the private man or woman at times of crisis. One of the most enduring religious customs of the Graeco-Roman world (attested in literally thousands of surviving inscriptions) was the making of a vow, or promise to a god, to be fulfilled in return for divine aid, when the crisis had passed away.

See further: Vol. I, 34–5; Versnel (1981a).

9.5a *A tenth for Hercules*

The vow here fulfilled is a particularly striking one, because it involved spending a tenth of the family fortune on a single vow to Hercules; the dedicants, the sons of the vower, are unspecific as to the troubles that led to the vow being

made. The inscribed text (*c.* 150 B.C.) comes from Sora, about 85 km. east of Rome. (See also Plutarch, *Life of Sulla* 35, for a tenth dedicated to Hercules by Roman generals.)

See further: Wissowa (1912) 277–9; Bayet (1926) 459–61.

ILS 3411; *ILLRP* 136

Marcus and Publius Vertuleius, sons of Gaius:

The vow their father once vowed when in despair about his afflictions, desperate and in fear, has now been discharged through the offering of a tenth at the holy feast; his sons gladly dedicate the gift to Hercules, greatly deserving. Together they pray that they may be doomed many times to the fulfilling of such a vow.

9.5b *Eyesight restored*

This inscription, probably of early imperial date, was found on the road to Ostia outside Rome.

See further: Brouwer (1989) 53–4*.

ILS 3513; *CIL* VI.68

Felix Asinianus, public slave of the *pontifices*, discharged his vow of a white heifer, gladly and sincerely to rustic Bona Dea Felicula[1] for the restoration of his eyesight. The doctors had abandoned him after ten months, but he was cured by favour of the Mistress and her remedies. All restored under the care of Cannia Fortunata.[2]

1. For Bona Dea, see 8.2b; 13.4. The name Felicula is unknown and might be either a local cult, or an invention derived from the name of Felix himself.
2. That is, the monument commemorating the miracle had been restored.

9.5c *Help in illness*

Aelius Aristides was a prominent orator and public figure from Asia Minor (modern Turkey). On a visit to Rome, he suffered the first of his many illnesses which are recounted in his autobiographical *Sacred Tales*. These provide, in effect, a diary of his health and of the measures he took to deal with his complaints and diseases. For us, it is an invaluable indication of the intermixture in his experience of what we should classify as rational or irrational treatments for his diseases, 'religious' cures alternating with 'scientific' ones. The incident recounted here took place at Smyrna (modern Izmir) during the great plague of A.D. 165.

See further: Festugière (1954) 85–104; Behr (1968); Lane Fox (1986) 160–3*.

Aelius Aristides, *Sacred Tales* II.39–45

The disease got worse and I was suffering from a terrible burning of the bilious mixture; this caused continuous trouble, by day and by night. I was prevented from taking any food and my strength was failing. The doctors gave me up for lost and despaired completely, so my imminent death was announced. But as Homer has it <*Iliad* XI.813>, 'The mind was still steady'. I was aware of myself as though I was somebody else and was watching my own body as I was sliding towards my death. In this condition I chanced to turn towards the inside of the bed. Now was the end – but, as if it were all a dream, I seemed to be at the conclusion of some drama and to be putting aside my stage shoes, and to be putting on the shoes of my father.[1] And while I was busy doing this Asklepios the Saviour turned me round in the bed, towards the outside. Soon afterwards, Athena appeared, complete with the aegis, the beauty, the height and in fact the whole form of the Athenian Athena of Pheidias.[2] There came a perfume from the aegis, as sweet as possible, and it was like wax, and she herself was wonderful in beauty and size. She appeared to me alone, standing in front of me, right where I would be able to see her as well as possible. I pointed at her for those – two friends and my foster sister – who were present and named her as Athena, saying that she was there and speaking to me and I pointed at the aegis. They didn't know what to do, were quite at a loss and thought I was delirious, until they saw my strength returning and heard the words I had heard from her. I remember her saying that I should remember *The Odyssey*, for these were not idle tales, but could be assessed even in the present situation; I must persevere; I was Odysseus and also Telemachus,[3] and she must help me. And other things of this kind. Thus the goddess appeared, comforted me, saved me when I was lying there on my deathbed. It immediately came to me that I should have an enema of Attic honey, and there was a purge of my bile. After this came drugs and then food. The first was goose-liver, I think, after long fasting. Then some sausage. Then I was brought to the city in a long, covered carriage. And thus step by step, with difficulty and trouble, I recovered.

1. The changed shoes were apparently a sign that the disease would end with Aelius Aristides' death – though that was contradicted by his turning around in his bed,
2. That is, he had a vision of Athena in the guise of her cult statue, the work of the sculptor Pheidias, in the Parthenon at Athens. The aegis was the symbol of Athena, represented in art either as a goatskin or a shield. The mention of wax is obscure.
3. Odysseus and his son Telemachus are the two heroes of the *Odyssey*, to whom Athena brings salvation from their troubles by the end of the epic.

9.5d *'Superstition' and worship*

This passage – quotation and paraphrase by St Augustine from a (now lost) work of Seneca – offers a glimpse of the richness and variety of the private worship that might be devoted to the traditional pagan deities. It suggests that the elite literary sources may well offer an impoverished picture of the religious experience (within the traditional cults) of 'ordinary' Romans – and that the

association of traditional deities with personal concerns may well have extended much more widely than the areas of trouble and illness attested in the inscribed vows.

In the quorations selected by Augustine here, Seneca seems to be attacking pagan religious practice as a whole. But it is more likely that he is, in common with other pagan writers, really attacking excessive attachment to religious practices, the mark of the superstitious person, repugnant to the Stoic sage that Seneca himself aspired to be.

See further: Vol. 1, 217–19; Lausberg (1970) 197–227.

Augustine, *The City of God* VI.10 (= Seneca, *On Superstition* frr. 35–7, Haase)

He goes on to describe the rituals customarily held on the Capitol itself, revealing the truth about them without any reservation. It would be impossible to believe (as he implies) that these could be carried out by anybody but a madman, unless it were with the purpose of mockery. He writes derisively about the Egyptian mysteries, in which Osiris first receives mourning and then joy ar his rediscovery; for, while both the loss and the recovery are total fictions, the grief and the rejoicing are expressed with the most convincingly real emotion by people who have not really lost or found anything at all. Seneca goes on: 'But at least there is a fixed term for this lunacy – it is not unacceptable to go mad once a year. But if ever you go up on the Capitol, it will make you feel ashamed just to see the crazy performances put on for the public's benefit, all represented as duties by light-hearted lunacy. So Jupiter has a special attendant to announce callers and another one to tell him the time; one to wash him and another to oil him, who in fact only mimes the movements with his hands. Juno and Minerva have special women hairdressers who operate some distance away, not just from the statue, but from the temple; they move their fingers in the style of hairdressers, while others again hold up mirrors. You find some people who are praying to the gods to put up bail for them, and others again who are handing over their writs and expounding the lawsuits they are involved in. There used to be an old, decrepit but very experienced pantomime artist who put on his act every day on the Capitol as if the gods were enjoying the show – now that they had been abandoned by human beings. Meanwhile craftsmen of every trade stand around waiting for work on behalf of the immortal gods.' Soon afterwards, Seneca adds: 'At least the services they offer are not indecent or dishonourable, however unnecessary. But there are some women who hang around on the Capitol because they believe that Jupiter is in love with them, totally undeterred by fear of Juno's anger and jealousy – formidable enough, if you believe the poets.'

Here is a freedom of speech not known to Varro. The only type of theology Varro could bring himself to criticize was the 'poetic' type; the 'civil' type he did not dare; it was Seneca who tore that to pieces.[1] But if we are looking for the real truth, the temples where the civil rituals go on are even worse than the theatres where the poetic fictions are acted out. In the rituals of 'civil' theology, the role for the wise man[2] advocated by Seneca is to

pretend to conformity in the action, while having no religious commitment. These are his words: 'The wise man will observe all these customs as being fixed by law, not as being acceptable to the gods.'

1. For Varro's formulation of the three different types of religion, see 13.9.
2. That is, the Stoic philosopher.

9.6 Death

It is impossible to generalize about pagan attitudes to death; let alone be sure whether we can securely detect changes in these attitudes. In literature and philosophy there is a commonly expressed belief that souls (though not bodies) survived death, and even that rewards or punishments could be anticipated in the after-life. It is much less clear how far such theoretical views were widespread amongst pagans and how they connected with religious practices. It has often been suggested by scholars that it was only the 'oriental' mystery cults (see, especially, **12.3**; **12.4**; **12.5**), together with Christianity, that made access to the after-life a central part of their message: initiates, unlike non-initiates, would be guaranteed a place in heaven. But the evidence even for this is extremely flimsy.

See further: Vol. 1, 50, 289–91; Toynbee (1971); Hopkins (1983) 201–55*; Walker (1985).

9.6a *Hell on earth*

The avowed purpose of Lucretius' philosophical poem (written in the middle of the first century B.C.; see further **2.4c**; **2.7e**) was to free the human race from fear of death, by showing that the universe (including everything that we sense, know or think in it, and also including the gods) was material and therefore perishable. So, for him, hell could exist only in this life. One implication of the poem and of its passionate attack on the power of religion over the lives of men and women is that the idea of punishment after death was more widespread in the first century B.C. than any other evidence would have suggested.

See further: Wormel (1965) 54–6*; Wallach (1976); C. Segal (1990).

Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* III.978–97

Everything traditionally told about the depths of Acheron[1] belongs in fact to our own real life. There is no wretched Tantalus,[2] as in the story, terrified of the mighty rock hanging above his head; rather in real life it is an empty fear of the gods that oppresses mortals, living in terror of the stroke that fate might bring for each of them. Nor are there birds that attack Tityos[2] as he lies in Acheron; they do not burrow into his mighty breast, still finding matter to last all eternity; however vast the extent of his body, even if he stretched over the whole earth and not a mere nine acres, he could not

stand a whole eternity of pain, or provide a supply of food from his own flesh for ever.

(992) Rather is Tityos here amongst us – the man who lies in love for the birds to lacerate, whom his torturing anxiety consumes, or whom his cares tear apart with any other desire. Sisyphus[2] is also in real life before our eyes – the man who seeks to win the rods and axes of power from the people, for he always retires defeated and saddened.

1. Acheron was the mythical underworld.
2. Mythical sinners, punished in Acheron: Tantalus by having a rock suspended over the banquet set before him; Tityos by having vultures tearing at his liver; Sisyphus by having to roll a rock uphill, which always rolls back before he reaches the top.

9.6b *Epitaphs*

Epitaphs quite commonly express the expectation that death is the end for the individual human existence. The thought is even familiar enough to have a shorthand form of its own inscribed on numerous tombstones: nf f ns nc (non fui, fui, non sum, non curo) which means: 'I wasn't; I was; I'm not; I don't care'. The particular expression of this thought at the end of the following inscription is apparently not affected by the fact that the dead man's wife (though apparently not he himself) was a worshipper of the goddess Isis, who was said to offer immortality to her initiates. The text, probably of the middle of the third century A.D., comes from the cemetery below St Peter's in Rome (Vol. 1, Map 4, no. 61).

See further: Lattimore (1962); Hopkins (1983) 227–32*.

CIL VI.17985a; Vidman, *Sylloge* 451

My home was Tibur;[1] Flavius Agricola I was called. I am the one you can see lying there, just as I used to lie at dinner,[2] carefully looking after myself for all the years Fate allowed me. And I never spared the wine. My darling wife, Flavia Primitiva, died before me, chaste and attentive worshipper of Isis,[3] with whom I spent thirty years of happiness. For consolation, she left me her body's fruit – Aurelius Primitivus, who will tend my grave with piety and will preserve for ever my resting-place. Friends, who read this, heed what I say: mix the wine, bind the garland round your brow, drink far from here.[4] And do not withhold the pleasures of love with beautiful women. When death comes, everything will be consumed by earth and fire.

1. Tivoli, 28 km. east of Rome (see Vol. 1, Map 5).
2. The monument to which this inscription was attached showed Flavius reclining, as if at a feast, with a *patera* in one hand – a common type of representation on tombstones.
3. Modern scholars have often (but probably incorrectly) claimed that the cult of Isis was particularly associated with women; see Vol. 1, 298–9, 308–9; **12.4d and f.** If his wife's devotion involved belief in the after-life (see **9.6c**), he apparently did not share her views.
4. That is, far from the tomb.

9.6c *Salvation through Osiris?*

Initiation into the rites of Isis and her consort Osiris were felt to transform the lives of initiates, and to have consequences for the soul of the deceased. This epitaph, written in Greek, from the city of Rome (probably third century A.D.), concerns a couple who probably originated in the eastern part of the Roman empire.

See further: Vol. 1, 308–9; Malaise (1981); Burkert (1987) 25–7*; for female involvement in the cult, see **9.6b** n. 3.

IGUR 432; Vidman, *Sylloge* 459

To the gods of the Underworld
for Aurelia Prosodos
from Dioskourides her husband
for his companion,
the best and the sweetest,
in memorial.
Greetings, my lady,
and may Osiris give you
the cold water.[1]
Dioskourides built the tomb for himself
and his ex-slaves' ex-slaves.[2]

1. Water from a spring in the underworld was to refresh the deceased.
2. It is not unusual to provide that a tomb should be used by your ex-slaves and their descendants (**4.13a** n. 3). Mention of *their* ex-slaves may seem odd, but is not unparalleled; Crook (1967) 136–8.

9.6d *The debate between pagan and Christian views*

In this passage the Christian writer Origen quotes the attack on Christian views of the after-life by the pagan Celsus. A favourite theme of Celsus was the absurdity of the Christian idea of bodily resurrection, compared with the pagan notion of the survival of the soul (*psyche*). He thought that they had simply failed to understand Plato and were excessively attached to the body.

See further: Vol. 1, 289–90; Chadwick (1966) 22–30 (Celsus), 66–123 (Origen)*; on Celsus' views in general, Andresen (1955); Wilken (1984) 94–125*.

Origen, *Against Celsus* VIII.49

Let us examine Celsus' next remarks to us <Christians>, as follows:

'Are your ideas not absurd? On the one hand, you admire the body and look forward to its rising in just the same form as it has, as though it were our best and most precious possession; on the other, you would cast it into punishment, as if it were worthless.

However, there is no point in arguing with people who believe all this, since they are entirely bound to the body; nor is this the only respect in which they are crude and impure, lacking in reason and afflicted with seditiousness. I will debate only with those who aspire to have their soul or mind eternally with god – whether they call this mind "spiritual", or a "holy and blessed mental spirit", or a "living soul", or the "super-heavenly and indestructible child of a nature godly and immaterial", or whatever they want to call it. To this extent at least, rhey are in the right: those who have lived lives of virtue will be happy, while the wicked will suffer perpetual griefs. This idea is not to be lost by them or anybody else.'

Celsus often complains about our view of resurrection. I have already given what we think to be the reasonable view on this matter and do not intend to repeat the answer to an objection put forward so often.[1] But Celsus is quite wrong in his assertion that we hold nothing better or more precious than the body. We hold that the soul and especially the rational soul is more precious than the body, because it contains that which is 'after the image of the Creator' <Colossians 3.10>, whereas this is not at all true of the body. In our view, God is not a material substance. We would not fall into the silly views of those who follow Zeno and Chrysippus.[2]

1. See e.g. *Against Celsus* VII.32.
2. That is, the view of Stoic philosophers.

10 Rome outside Rome

This chapter is concerned with Roman religion outside Rome – with how far the deities, practices and rules of the religion of the city of Rome came to be extended to the communities of the empire as a whole. The Romans never seem to have had a methodical policy either of imposing their own religion on the peoples they conquered or of accumulating defeated gods in their own capital city. All the same, a complicated relationship grew up between the religion of Rome and the religions of Italy and the provinces. This chapter explores the development and character of that relationship. First (**10.1**), the particular influence of an archaic religious law, that of the sanctuary of Diana on the Aventine (**1.5**), is traced from the early Latin League to later *coloniae* in the provinces; **10.2** is concerned again with Roman colonies, both in Italy and overseas, and with the extent of their borrowing from Rome; **10.3** illustrates two religious aspects of Roman conquest abroad – the development of a cult of the goddess 'Roma' in the provinces, and Roman assimilation of the gods of their conquered enemies; **10.4** explores how far priests of the city of Rome claimed authority (or were influential as models of priestly behaviour) outside Rome itself; **10.5** and **10.6** collect some of the best evidence of provincial reactions to the presence of Rome and Roman rulers in the provinces, East and West.

See further: Vol. 1, ch. 7.

10.1 The rules of Diana on the Aventine

According to Roman tradition, the temple of Diana on the Aventine was founded by King Servius Tullius (see **1.5d** and **1.7a**) as a religious centre for the Latin League. The rules established for this sanctuary, regulating for example sacrificial practice and establishing the right of asylum (the right of fugitives to escape arrest), were explicitly extended to other sanctuaries in the Roman empire. It is very likely that other Roman institutions were similarly taken as models in founding Roman colonies in Italy and further afield (see **10.2**).

Diana on the Aventine was identified – possibly from the time of the foundation of the temple – with Artemis of Ephesus. It is far from clear what exactly this claim amounted to; but the two cults certainly had features in common – both, for example, had the right of asylum.

See further: R. E. A. Palmer (1974) 57–78; on the overseas connections of Diana: Ampolo (1970); Gras (1987) 47–61.

10.1a *Diana on the Aventine Hill*

Dionysius of Halicarnassus is the only surviving writer to refer in any detail to the special rules of Aventine Diana, recorded (as Dionysius states) on an ancient inscription; though even he does not mention the extension of these rules outside Rome. For Livy's account of the establishment of the sanctuary, emphasizing particularly the connection with Ephesus, see **1.5d**.

See further: Vol. 1, Map 1 no. 19; Scullard (1981) 173–4*; on the significance of Dionysius' use of the inscribed text: Gabba (1991) 138–9.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* IV.26.3–5

After saying this, he advised them to set up a sacred asylum from their common funds, at which the cities would come together and offer sacrifices each year, individually and jointly, and celebrate festivals. And if any quarrels should arise between them, they would resolve them during the sacrifices, by putting their complaints to the other cities for settlement. He emphasized these and many other benefits that would flow from the creation of a common council and thus persuaded all who were present at the meeting. Then, using the contributions brought in by all the cities, he built the temple of Diana on the Aventine, the largest of all the Roman hills. And he wrote laws on the mutual relations of the cities and regulated everything else to do with the festival and the meeting. And in order that the passage of time should not blot out these laws, he put up a brazen pillar on which he had inscribed the decrees of the meeting and the list of cities taking part in it. The pillar was still in existence in my time in the temple of Diana; the inscription was in the script used in archaic Greece. This in itself would provide no mean proof that Rome's founders were no barbarians; for if they had been, they would not have used the Greek script.[1]

1. The text that Dionysius was reading was, of course, in Latin – but the script in which early Roman documents were written was very similar to Greek scripts. Interpreting the script as Greek, Dionysius finds this inscription useful evidence for the central contention of his history – that Rome was originally a Greek city, see **5.7a**.

10.1b *Altar dedication from Narbo Martius (Narbonne) in Gaul*

The regulations inscribed on the altar dedicated to the divine power (*numen*) of the Emperor Augustus by the people of Narbo refer explicitly to the regulations of Aventine Diana. Narbo was founded as a Roman *colonia* in 118 B.C. The altar was established in A.D. 11 or 12, but the inscription itself is a later publication or re-publication of the original rules. The text that follows is on one face of the altar; on another inscribed face the composition of the board of knights and ex-slaves overseeing the cult of the *numen*, as well as the offerings prescribed, is laid out.

See further: Vol. 1, 329–30; Gayraud (1981) 358–66 (on Diana, 364–6); Fishwick (1987-) II.1.379–80, 502, 508; on the notion of law (*lex*) in this and the next document, Wissowa (1912) 473; Magdelain (1978) esp. 29–31. For a translation of the orher inscribed face, Sherk (1988) 12–13.

ILS 112; *CIL* XII.4333

[The people] of Narbo dedicated [this altar] for the divine power of Augustus [2 lines erased] by the laws[1] written below.

Divine power of Caesar Augustus, father of the country, when to you on this day I shall give and dedicate this altar, by those laws and within those limits shall I give and dedicate it which I shall have declared here publicly to be the foundation of this altar and of its inscriptions: if anyone wishes to clean, refurbish or repair it – as a public service – that shall be a right and lawful act; or if anyone wishes to sacrifice an animal but does not expose the entrails,[2] the sacrifice shall count as still properly performed; if anyone wishes to make a gift to this altar and to enrich it, that shall be permitted and the same law shall apply to the gift as to the altar; other laws for this altar and its inscriptions shall be the same as for the altar of Diana on the Aventine. By these laws and within these boundaries, as I have said, with respect to this altar for Imperator Caesar Augustus, father of the country, *pontifex maximus*, holder of the tribunician power for the 35th year <A.D. 11 or 12>, and for his wife, children and clan (*gens*), and for the people and senate of Rome, and for the citizens and inhabitanrs of the *colonia* Julia Paterna Narbo Martius,[3] who have bound themselves for ever to the cult of his divine power, I give and dedicate, that you may be favourable and propitious.

1. The word law (*lex*) here means not a law passed by an assembly, but one uttered formally by a magistrate, in this case a local magistrate of the *colonia*.
2. In some rituals the entrails (*exta*) were exposed in a pit (*magmentarium*) rather than returned to the altar; this clause makes that procedure optional.
3. This is the full Roman name for Narbo.

10.1c *Altar dedication at Salona in Dalmatia (A.D. 137)*

Salona was a *colonia* on the eastern coast of the Adriatic and, at the rime of this dedication, the major city of the Roman province of Dalmatia. Here too, the regulations of Aventine Diana provided the model for the ritual of an altar.

See further: Vol. 1, 329–30; Laffi (1980); on Salona, Wilkes (1969) 220–38.

ILS 4907; *CIL* III.1933

In the consulship of Lucius Aelius Caesar (for the second time) and of Publius Coelius Balbinus Vibullius Pius <A.D. 137> seven days before the Ides of October <9 October>, Gaius Domitius Valens the *duovir iure dicundo*[1] pronounced the law written below, with Gaius Julius Severus the *pontifex* dictating the words to him:[2]

'Jupiter Optimus Maximus, when to you this day I shall give and dedicate this altar, in

accordance with those laws and those limits that I shall here this day openly declare, in accordance with the lowest visible part of this altar; if anybody sacrifices here with a victim, albeit he has not exposed the entrails, the sacrifice shall still count as properly performed.[3] Other laws for this altar shall be the same as the law pronounced for the altar of Diana on the Aventine Hill.

By these laws, within these limits, as I have declared them, I give, grant and dedicate this altar to you Jupiter Optimus Maximus, so that you may be favourable and propitious to me, my colleagues, to the town councillors, the citizens and other inhabitants of the *colonia* Martia Julia Salona, and also to our wives and children'.

1. That is, a magistrate of Salona – literally 'one of the two men for administering justice'.
2. For law, see 10.1b n. 1.
3. See 10.1b n. 2; For the definition of acceptable procedure, compare 6.5.

10.2 Colonies of Rome

From the middle of the Republic on, settlements of Roman citizens (most commonly ex-soldiers, but also landless citizens from the capital itself) were established outside Rome. The legal and constitutional arrangements of these *coloniae* were modelled on those of Rome, and they were expected to replicate some (though not all) of the institutions of Roman state religion.

See further: Vol. 1, 328–34; on the administration of *coloniae* in general, Millar (1981) 84–5*.

10.2a *The constitution of a Roman colonia*

Urso was a Spanish town in the valley of the river Baetis (Guadalquivir) which formed a centre of resistance against the Caesarians in the Civil War. A *colonia* was sent there in 44 B.C., to be set up on confiscated land and much of the law constituting it survives on a bronze tablet discovered at the site. These chapters arrange for the religious institutions of the new town, including the creation of priestly colleges modelled on the Roman ones. The reference to the priests having the same rights as those of priests in every *colonia* suggests that these are, at this date, standard arrangements for every *colonia*. This text of the foundation charter was inscribed in the first century A.D.

See further: Vol. 1, 328; Mackie (1983) 62–3 and n. 31; 85–6; Lintott (1993) 137–40*; for a translation of the complete document (with extensive commentary) Crawford (1996) 1.393–454.

ILS 6087 paras. 64–7; *CIL* II.5, 439, 64–7

(64) The *duoviri*[1] who hold office after the establishment of the *colonia* shall, within the first ten days of their office, bring for decision to the town councillors, in the presence of not fewer than two thirds of them, the question of which days and how many days shall

be festal, which sacrifices shall be publicly performed and who shall perform them. Whatever shall have been decreed by the majority of those present at the meeting, that shall be lawful and valid, and those sacrifices and those festal days shall be observed in the said *colonia*.[2]

(65) Whatever sums are levied as fines related to the taxes of the *colonia*, no one shall have the power to use, give or assign them to anyone, except for the sacrifices offered in the name of *coloni*, whether within the *colonia* or anywhere else. Let no one take those sums in any other way without incurring liability, and let no one have the right or power to make a proposal about those sums to the decurions or to speak his opinion about them. And the *duoviri* shall without incurring liability give and assign those sums for those sacrifices that are offered in the name of the *coloni*, whether within the *colonia* or anywhere else, and they shall have the right and power to do so. And those to whom the sums are given are permitted to take them without incurring liability.

(66) Whosoever shall be appointed *pontifices* and *augures* from the *colonia* Genetiva[3] by Caius Caesar (or by whoever establishes the *colonia* on Caesar's instruction) let them be *pontifices* and *augures* of the *colonia* Genetiva Julia; let them be *pontifices* and *augures* in the colleges of *pontifices* and *augures* of the said *colonia*, possessing all the best rights that pertain or shall pertain to the *pontifices* and *augures* in every *colonia*. Let those *pontifices* and *augures*, who shall be members of each college, and their children be sacredly guaranteed freedom from military service and public obligations, in the same way as a *pontifex* is and shall be in Rome, and all their military service shall be deemed to have been completed.[4] Concerning the auspices and matters connected therewith, let the jurisdiction and the power of adjudication belong to the *augures*. The said *pontifices* and *augures* shall have the right and power to wear the *toga praetexta* both at Games celebrated publicly by the magistrates and at public sacrifices of the *colonia* Genetiva Julia celebrated by themselves; and the said *pontifices* and *augures* shall have the right and power to sit amongst the town councillors at the Games and the gladiatorial combats.

(67) Whosoever shall be chosen or co-opted as a *pontifex* or as an *augur* of the *colonia* Genetiva Julia in place of a deceased or condemned member, after the issuing of this law, let him be a *pontifex* or an *augur* of the *colonia* Julia, a *pontifex* or an *augur* in the college, possessing all the rights that pertain or shall pertain to the *pontifices* and *augures* in every *colonia*. Let nobody accept, choose or co-opt anybody into the college of the *pontifices* except when there shall be fewer than three *pontifices* from among those of the *colonia* Genetiva. Let nobody accept, choose or co-opt anybody into the college of the *augures* except where there shall be fewer than three *augures* from among those of the *colonia* Genetiva Julia.[5]

1. The standard title of the senior magistrates in a *colonia*, as in **10.1c**.
2. Decisions about religious matters are thus entrusted to the town council, without apparent reference to priests or oracles.
3. *Colonia* Genetiva Julia was the Roman name of the town Urso (now Osuna) – Julia from Julius Caesar, the founder; Genetiva the specific name of the colony (whose precise significance is unclear).

4. Military service led to privileges; the priests are to have the privileges without having to perform the service.
5. Three is the maximum number allowed; the next clause (68) specifies an electoral assembly for new priests.

10.2b *Foundation ritual of a* colonia

The ceremonial decoration of the cattle and the solemn procession of men in togas suggest that this relief from the Roman *colonia* of Aquileia (N. Italy) (height 0.44m., width 0.95m.) was meant to depict the foundation ritual – presumably that of Aquileia itself. The ritual consisted of the ploughing of a furrow round the perimeter of the *colonia*, to mark its boundary, just as Romulus had marked out the perimeter of the city of Rome (see **4.8a**).

See further: Valeton (1895) 64–72; Thulin (1906–9) III.5–8; E. T. Salmon (1969) 24*.

10.2c *The Capitolium of a* colonia

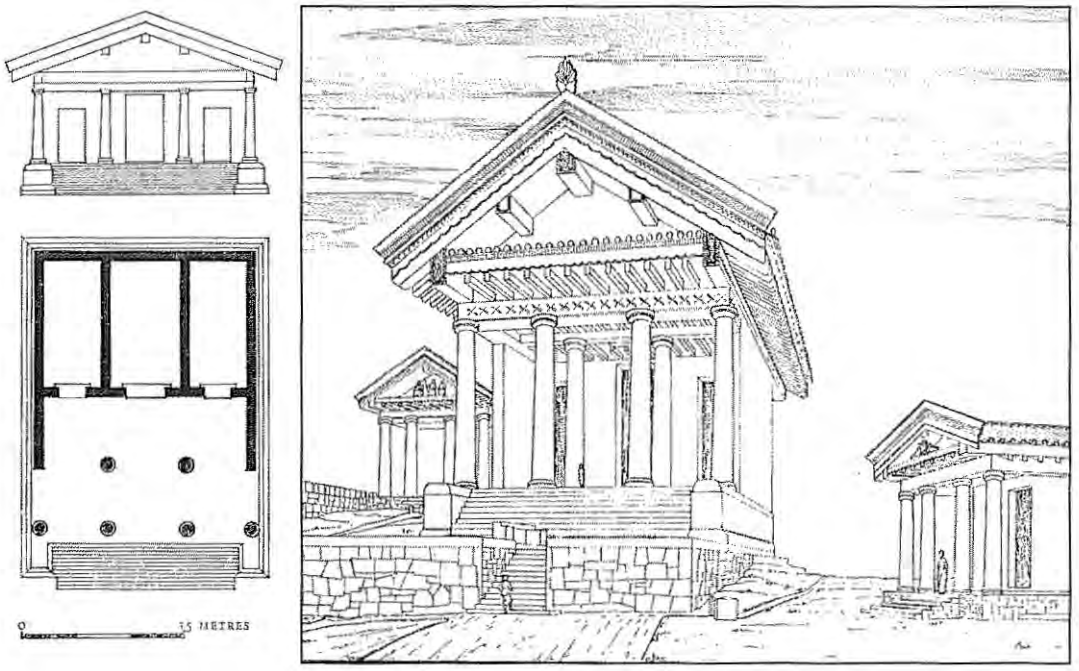
The custom of building a triple temple (Capitolium) to the three gods of the state triad – Jupiter, Juno and Minerva – spread outwards from Rome to the Italian *coloniae* and then into the empire as well. (For the Capitolium at Rome, see **1.9b**.)

See further: Vol. 1, 334–7.

10.2c(i) The Capitolium at Cosa

Cosa was a *colonia* founded in Etruria, north of Rome, in 273 B.C. Its central sanctuary reproduced the Roman model carefully, though on a smaller scale.

See further: F. E. Brown (1960) 48–139; (1980) 51–6*; T. Potter (1987) 69–71*.



10.2c(ii) The Capitolium at Sufetula (Africa)

A Capitolium consisting of three similar, but separate temples, placed side by side, and built in the second century A.D. illustrates the range of possible variations that could be seen as still reflecting the Roman example. The total width of these three facades is *c.* 35 m.

See further: Vol. 1, 334–6; Ward Perkins (1981) 183; N. Duval (1982) 606–8; I. M. Barton (1982); (1989) 91–3*.

10.3 Republican relations with foreign powers

The Romans did not systematically destroy the native religious traditions of their empire nor impose their own religion on those they had conquered. Nevertheless, Roman conquest did regularly bring religious changes in its wake: the establishment of particular cults of loyalty to Rome in the conquered territories and the 'Romanization' of various local traditions. Religion was one of the means through which Rome regulated its relations with its foreign subjects and displayed its power.

See further: Vol. 1, 145–7, 158–60, ch. 7 *passim*.

10.3a *Roma the Goddess (Miletus, c. 130 B.C.)*

From the very early days of Roman rule in the East, Rome herself became a goddess (Dea Roma – in Greek, Thea Rome) widely worshipped in Greek cities. This Greek document from Miletus, on the west coast of Asia Minor, mentions many institutions of the goddess' cult; it is our fullest source of information about sacrifices to Dea Roma, describing month by month the duties of her priest. It is possible that the document records the decree that first established the cult – or a subsequent reform to the calendar of sacrifices.

The inscription now consists of two fragments (A and B), with some text missing in the gap; no doubt the calendar continued after the end of the surviving text.

See further: Vol. 1, 158–60, 257–8; on the cult in general, Mellor (1975); (1981); Fayer (1976); Price (1984) 40–7*; on this particular document, Mellor (1975) 53–4, 135; Fayer (1976) 47–9; on the calendar of Miletus, Samuel (1972) 114–15.

Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées d'Asie Mineure* no. 49

(A) With good fortune. The man who buys the priesthood of the Roman People and of Roma[1] shall immediately give to the treasurers and kings[2] his nomination to the priesthood of a man at least twenty years old. The man nominated, or another he may offer as his substitute, shall serve for three years and eight months, beginning from the month Metageitnion <the fifth month of the year>, during the term of office as *stephanephoros* of Cratinos,[3] after being consecrated to Zeus Telesiourgos <'the one who completes the work'>. He shall receive from the treasurer sixty *drachmae* each year, on the first day of the month of Taureon <the first month>, and shall sacrifice a fully grown victim on the first day of the month of Taureon to the Roman people and to Roma. On the eleventh day of the same month, there shall be another sacrifice of a fully grown victim by the gymnasiarchs taking up office and by the ephebes; and yet another by the gymnasiarchs laying down office, together with the ephebes who have completed their training;[4] each group <of gymnasiarchs and ephebes> shall provide the priest with the perquisites[5] as laid down.

(B) . . . and for the other athletic contests, assigning the right prizes to each; setting up as prizes for dedication no fewer than three weapons, having inscribed on them <the name of> the contest; in all these matters showing the greatest zeal, worthy of our People's piety to the divine and of our gratitude towards the Romans. In the organization and administration of these contests, the gymnasiarchs of the young men shall participate as well as the priest, so the contests can be as splendid as possible. On the 28th <?> day of the same month he shall put on in the children's *palaestra* <exercise area or hall> the contest of the torch-race and the other athletic games, for which he shall provide suitable organization. The supervisors of the children's education shall co-operate in the organization and administration of this contest. The dedication of the arms set up as prizes in the Roman Games shall take place for the present in the gymnasium of the young men, but eventually, when the temple of Roma has been completed, in the Romaion <the sacred enclosure of the temple>.[6] There shall take place on the first day of each month the sacrifice by the priest of a fully grown victim to the Roman People and to Roma; the priest shall receive from the treasurer of the prytany ten *drachmae* for this sacrifice.[7] On 7th Thargelion <the second month>, there shall be a sacrifice of a fully grown ox by the *aisymnetes*[8] to the Roman People and to Roma and he shall give the priest the perquisites as laid down; on 12th Metageitnion, he shall sacrifice in the same way and give the perquisites. But should the office of *aisymnetes* be purchased by the god, let the god's *prosetairoi* sacrifice the fully grown victims on both these days and give the perquisites to the priests.[9] On 18th Boedromion <the sixth month>, the fifty *archontes*[10] shall sacrifice a fully grown pig and give the perquisites [to the priest . . .]

1. It was common practice for a rich, patriotic citizen to purchase the right to nominate the priest or priestess, acquiring honour and funding the cult.
2. Local officials.
3. The *stephanephoros* (wreath-wearer) was the title of the annual official who gave his name to the year. The date is not certain, but was probably around 130 B.C.
4. The ephebes were the young men undergoing training; the gymnasiarch was responsible for organizing and financing that training. See **12.6f** n. 1.
5. The priests had the right to take certain choice cuts from the sacrificial meat.
6. The uncompleted temple supports, but does not prove, the idea that the cult is new to Miletus at this date.
7. A prytany is a division of the civil year, so this may be a different treasurer from the one who made the annual payment of 60 *drachmae* above.
8. It is possible that the *aisymnetes* is another title for the *stephanephoros*.
9. If no patriotic purchaser came forward to pay for a religious office, temple-funds were used instead and the god was said to have purchased the office himself. In this event, other officials, *prosetairoi* – more junior officials attached to tribes (sub-divisions of the citizens) – carry out the sacrifice on the god's behalf.
10. The fifty *archontes* are a Roman innovation at Miletus, intended to provide oligarchic control of the city.

10.3b *Evocatio at Isaura Vetus (c. 75 B.C.)*

The traditional Roman ritual of *evocatio* was a procedure whereby the Romans 'summoned away' the gods or goddesses of any enemy city by offering them a new home in Rome itself (for the case of Juno of Veii, see **2.6a**). This inscription was found on the site of Isaura Vetus, a town in Asia Minor, captured by the Romans (under the command of Gaius Servilius) in 75 B.C. It seems to record a vow of *evocatio* leading to the foundation of a cult not in Rome, but in its original (though now Romanized) location in the province. The text, in Latin, is inscribed on a building-block and may therefore have been set into whatever shrine was built.

See further: Vol. 1, 132–4; Hall (1973); Le Gall (1976).

AE (1977) 816

Servilius, son of Gaius <Servilius>, the *imperator*, defeated the enemy, took Isaura Vetus and sold those he captured there. Whether it was god or goddess[1] who provided protection for Isaura Vetus, he fulfilled his vow.

1. The name, and even the gender, of the protecting deity of the enemy city might be uncertain. The text of the vow of *evocatio* supposedly used by the Romans at Carthage in 146 B.C. (Macrobius, *Saturnalia* III.9) also uses this formula 'whether it be god or goddess . . .'.

10.4 Roman religious authority outside Rome

Did Roman religious rules generally apply outside Rome? There was, according to the legal writer Gaius (**10.4c**), a sharp distinction between the applicability of the religious law at home and in the provinces. Lawyers' theoretical formulations do not always reflect practice; but the other evidence seems to confirm that in Rome and Italy the ruling of Roman priests was authoritative; and that it was only for convenience or courtesy that these principles were applied in the provinces.

See further: Vol. 1, 320–1, 337–9.

10.4a *Altar restored by decree of the 'quindecimviri sacris faciundis' (A.D. 213)*

The inscription was found at Terracina (about half-way between Rome and Naples), but may well have come originally from nearby Circeii, a Roman *colonia* where we know there was an important cult of Circe. Circe was the daughter of the Sun-god, Helios; under the name of Apollo, he was the inspirer of prophecy and the god of the *quindecimviri* themselves. This connection may explain the direct intervention of the Roman priests here.

See further: R. E. A. Palmer (1974) 239.

ILS 4037; *CIL* x.6, 422

By the authority of the emperor, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Pius Felix Augustus, Parthicus Maximus, Britannicus Maximus, *pontifex maximus* <i.e. Caracalla>, and by the decree of the college of the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*, Servius Calpurnius Domitius Dexter the pro-master[1] has restored the altar of the most holy Circe. The dedication was carried out on the 17th day before the Kalends of July <15 June>, in the fourth consulship of the Emperor Antoninus Augustus and the second of Balbinus <A.D. 213>.

1. Dexter was a leading figure in Rome, later to be the consul of A.D. 225. Here he is acting officially as the deputy of the master of the college.

10.4b *Ruling of the 'quindecimviri sacris faciundis' (from near Baiae, A.D. 289)*

This inscription consists of two documents. The first is a decree of the authorities of Cumae, a town on the bay of Naples (incorporating a *colonia* of veterans from the reign of Claudius); it deals with a cult of Magna Mater at Baiae, a small fashionable resort 4 km. from Cumae and within its territory. The second is a letter from the Roman college of the *quindecimviri*; it does not reply to the decree, but to a letter which evidently reported the decree, and which must also have added a request (not included in the decree) about an honour for the new priest. The Roman college does not control the appointment of the priest, which they simply note; but they do award and limit the honour granted to him, as in **6.7b**.

For other documents concerning the cult of Magna Mater, see **2.7**; **5.6a** and **b**; **6.7**; **8.7**.

See further: Vol. 1, 337–8; Graillot (1912) 240–1.

ILS 4175; *CIL* x.3698

In the consulship of Marcus Magrius Bassus and Lucius Ragonius Quintianus, on the Ides of June <13 June A.D. 289>, at Cumae in the temple of *divus* Vespasian, there was a meeting of the order of the town councillors; the *praetores* Marcus Mallonius Undanus and Quintus Claudius Acilianus[1] summoned the meeting; the drafting committee chosen by lot were Caelius Pannychus, Curtius Votivos and Cosidius Felicianus; the motion was put by the *praetores* about appointing a priest of the Mother Goddess of Baiae[2] in the place of Restitutus the priest, who had died. It was unanimously decreed that Licinius Secundus should be the priest.

The *quindecimviri sacris faciundis* greet the *praetores* and other magistrates of Cumae. We learn from your letter that you have created as priest of the Mother of the Gods[2] Licinius Secundus in place of the late priest Claudius Restitutus. By your wish, we have conceded to him the right to wear the armlet and crown, but only within the boundaries of your *colonia*.[3] We send good wishes to you. Pontius Gavius Maximus signed on behalf of the

master of the College, on the 16th day before the Kalends of September <15 August> in the consulship of Marcus Umbrius Primus and Titus Flavius Coelianus <A.D. 289>.[4]

1. Magistrates of Cumae.
2. She is called 'Mother Goddess of Baiae' in the Cumaean document; Mother of the Gods, that is Magna Mater, in the reply of the *quindecimviri*, who presumably recognized, but did not themselves use, the local name.
3. For these decorations, see also **6.7b**.
4. These two were consuls elected for the second part of the same calendar year as the first pair mentioned.

10.4c *Religious law in the provinces (second century A.D.)*

The Roman jurist Gaius, in discussing the definition of the 'sacred' and the 'religious' draws a clear distinction between Roman and provincial territory.

See further: Vol. 1, 320–1; Fugier (1963) 131; Watson (1992) 55–7*.

Gaius, *Institutes* II.1–11

The first division of things is into two classes; for some are subject to divine law <*ius*>, some to human law. Within divine law some things are sacred, some religious. Things sacred are those consecrated to the gods above; things religious are those devoted to the gods below. Nothing can become sacred except by the authority of the Roman People, which can result either through the passing of a law or through a decree of the senate. On the other hand, things can become religious by our own act of will when we bury the dead in our own ground, provided that the particular burial is our own business. On the soil of the provinces, however, since individuals can only have possession or usufruct but not full dominion,[1] which belongs only to the people of Rome or to the emperor, the ground can never become properly religious but only quasi-religious. In the same way in the provinces, ground that has not been consecrated by authority of the Roman People is not properly sacred but quasi-sacred.

1. Individuals in the provinces can never have full dominion, only qualified forms of ownership; it follows that by burying their dead they cannot make the ground 'religious'.

10.4d *Pliny and Trajan on points of religious law*

Pliny the Younger was sent to Pontus-Bithynia (modern north-west Turkey) as Governor probably in A.D. 110; his correspondence with the Emperor Trajan from the years of his governorship is preserved among his published *Letters*. These two exchanges of letters concern points of religious law as they affected the lives of provincials. In broad terms, they support Gaius' views in **10.4c**; though Trajan's assumption in **10.4d(iv)** seems to be that, on the one hand, the pontifical law could in theory be applicable, while, on the other, it would be 'hard' on the provincials ro apply it in actual cases.

10.4d(i) Moving a temple

See further: Vol. I, 320–21; Sherwin-White (1966) 631–2; Veyne (1967) 745–6.

Pliny, *Letters* X.49

Before I arrived, lord, the people of Nicomedia had srarted to add a new forum to their old one; in one corner is a very old temple of Magna Mater, which must either be rebuilt or moved to another position, chiefly because it is far below the level of the new constructions, which rise to a great height. I asked whether there was any special law of the temple[1] and discovered that their traditional procedure for dedication is quite different from ours. So give a ruling, lord, as to whether it is possible in your view to transfer a temple for which there is no special law, without committing a religious offence; unless there is some religious obstacle, it would in other respects be more convenient to do so.

1. For the 'law' of a temple in Rome, see **10.1**.

10.4d(ii) Trajan's reply

Trajan in Pliny, *Letters* X.50

You can, my dear Pliny, transfer the temple of Magna Mater to a more appropriate location, if the situation seems to require it, without any anxiety about the religious issue. It need cause you no concern if a special dedication law is not forthcoming, since the soil of a foreign state is incapable of receiving dedication, which takes place by our law.

10.4d(iii) Burial rules

See further: **8.3**; Sherwin-White (1966) 655–6.

Pliny, *Letters* X.68

Certain people have requested that I should give permission, following the precedent of earlier proconsuls, for them to move the mortal remains of their family members, either because of damage <to the tombs> caused by the passage of time or because of river floods or other similar accidents. I thought it best to ask your advice as *pontifex maximus*[1] on the best practice, for I am aware that in our city it is the custom to consult the college of *pontifices* in cases such as these.

1. Burial law was one of the special responsibilities of the *pontifices* in Rome and from Augustus onwards the emperor himself was always *pontifex maximus* (**8.5b**).

10.4d(iv) Rules remitted

Trajan in Pliny, *Letters* X.69

It is hard to impose on provincials the obligation of consulting the *pontifices* if they wish to transfer the remains of their relations from one place to another for any good reasons.[1]

1. Pliny's letter had not, in fact, suggested that the college should be consulted; he had only asked Trajan's advice on procedure.

10.4e *Lex Narbonensis, on the flaminate (reign of Vespasian)*

This text was inscribed on a bronze tablet, found near the amphitheatre at Narbonne, in an area probably devoted to the provincial cult of the emperor in Narbonese Gaul. Only fragments of thirty lines of the text survive, dealing with regulations for the priest of the provincial cult, the *flamen* (honours for the current and past *flamen*; the accountability of the retiring *flamen* etc.). It is clear that the priest's position, and that of his wife, were partly modelled on the privileges and duties of the Roman *flamen Dialis* (the priest of Jupiter; see **8.1b**; **8.2d**) and of his wife the *flaminica*. The inscription probably dates to A.D. 69–79, when (as other evidence suggests) the provincial cult of Narbonese Gaul began. It is not certain whether the full text of this law dealt with that cult generally, or only with the regulations for the priesthood.

See further: Vol. I, 357; Weinstock (1971) 408–9; C. H. Williamson (1987), with translation and full bibliography; Fishwick (1987–) II.1.478–9, 579–80; on the role of the emperor Vespasian, Fishwick (1978) 1219–30.

ILS 6964; *CIL* XII.6038

[Concerning the honours of the man who will be the *flamen*]

[. . . at Na]rho[. . .] [. . .]the *lictores*[. . .] [. . .] and law of that province[. . .] [. . .] among the town-councillors or senate[. . .] [. . . among the town-councillors or s]enators, in the first row, to watch [the games let him have the right][1] [. . . the wife of the *fl]amen* clad in white or purple garments[. . .] [. . .] nor let her take an oath against her will nor touch a dead body[. . .] [. . .]of a cremated man; and let her at public games[. . .][2]

Concerning the honours of the ex-*flamen*[3]

[. . . if the ex-*flamen*] has done nothing contrary to this law, let the *flamen* [see to it that . . .] [. . . by ballot] they should decide on oath whether the ex-*flamen* should be allowed [to place a statue . . .] [. . . should have the right of] placing a statue and the name of his father, his origin and the year of his flaminate[. . .] [. . . at Nar]bo let there be the right of p[lacing the statue within the temple area, unless the emperor [. . .][4] [. . . And let him] have the right in the local council and in the provincial council of Narbonensis amongst the men of his rank according to the law [. . .] let there be the right of giving an opinion and voting; likewise at the public show in the province [. . .] in the *toga praetexta* and on those days on which he sacrificed as *flamen* in that dress [. . .]

If the *flamen* ceases to be a Roman citizen

If the *flamen* ceases to be a citizen and no substitute has been appointed, then whoever [. . .] within three days from the time of being informed and being able <to act>, let him perform the sacred rites at Narbo [. . . for the rest] of the year let him hold [the ?] in

the order in which [the ?] of the annual *flamines* [are held][5] [. . . if he shall have performed for not fewer than] thirty [days], the same law, right and claims [shall apply to him] as to the *flamen Augusti* [under this law].

In which place the assembly [of the province shall meet]

Those who assemble for rhe provincial assembly at Narbo [. . .] what is enacted when an assembly has been held, let that be lawful and valid[. . .][6]

Concerning money [. . ?]

Whoever retires from the office of *flamen*, from the money [remaining (?) . . . let him dedicate (?) statu]es or likenesses of *Imperator* Cae[sar[7] . . . at the discretion of the pro]vincial govetnor within the same [period (?) . . . and offer proof that he has properly (?)] acted about these matters to the one who reckons tbe acc[ounts . . .] [. . . in th]at temple as [. . .]

1. The details are lost, but the *flamen* is receiving high privileges in the city of Narbo, even though he might come from some other city in the province.
2. These privileges for the *flamen*'s wife correspond closely to those of the Roman *flamen*'s wife. (Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* X.15.26–7; see 8.1b)
3. One difference between the original Roman *flamines* and these in the provinces is that the Roman ones held office for life.
4. The right seems to be subject to the emperor's approval; it may be that 'Caesar Vespasian Augustus' was named in the text.
5. Some regular duties of the *flamen* were to be performed in sequence – perhaps, the holding of meetings.
6. The meaning is lost here, but the clause illustrates the close connection between the *flamen* and the assembly of a province.
7. The word used (*imago*) implies a likeness of the living, so perhaps 'Vespasian Augustus' again appeared in the missing text.

10.5 Emperor-worship in the provinces

The most obvious presence of 'Roman' religion in the provinces of the empire was the cult of the Roman emperor, in its various forms. Much of the surviving information about this cult comes from the East and takes the form of inscriptions detailing honorific decrees, regulations, donations and payments. The ritual performances are rarely described, but it seems clear from the evidence that does survive that a rich variety of processions, festivals and celebrations in all parts of the empire brought Rome and the emperor into religious and civic life. Other texts concerning the cult of the emperor are given at **2.8b** and c, **9.2, 9.3b, 10.4e.**

See further: Vol. 1, 348–63; Price (1984); Fishwick (1987–).

10.5a *Festival regulations from Greece (c. A.D. 15)*

This Greek inscription from Gytheum (near Sparta) records the regulations for celebrating various festivals of the imperial cult – to be conducted by a local magistrate, the *agoranomos*. It is striking how far the celebration of these imperial festivals is linked to the celebration of local benefactors of the traditional religious institutions of the city.

See further: Rostovtzeff (1930); Price (1984) 210–11*; for images in the worship of the emperor, Price (1984) 170–206.

SEG XI.923.7–40

[The *agoranomos*] shall celebrate the first day for the god Caesar Augustus, son of the god <Caesar>, our Saviour and Deliverer; the second day for the emperor [Ti]berius Caesar Augustus, father of the fatherland; the third day for Julia Augusta, the Fortune of our nation and city; the fourth day (of Victory) for Germanicus Caesar; the fifth day (of Aphrodite) for Drusus Caesar; and the sixth day for Titus Quinctius Flamininus;[1] [the *agoranomos*] shall be responsible for the good order of the contestants. He shall render accounts to the city for all payments to the performers and for the administration of the sacred monies at the first assembly meeting after the contest. If he is found to have misappropriated funds or to have rendered false accounts, after conviction he shall be ineligible for public office and his possessions shall be confiscated. What is confiscated shall be sacred property and used by the annual *archontes* to provide for the decoration [of the city . . .]

Following on the days for the gods and rulers, the *agoranomos* shall introduce thymelic games[2] for two more days, one to the memory of Gaius Julius Eurycles, many times benefactor of our nation and city, and a second day in honour of Gaius Julius Laco,[3] protector of the security of our nation and city. The games of the goddess he <the *agoranomos*> shall celebrate on wharever days he can; and when he leaves the office, the city shall hand over, with written record, to his successor all the sacrificial victims for the games and obtain a handwritten receipt for them. When the *agoranomos* is holding the thymelic games,[2] he shall conduct a procession from the temple of Asklepios and Health, including the ephebes,[4] the young men and the other citizens, wearing bay-leaf garlands and white clothes. Also in the procession will be the sacred maidens and the women in sacred clothes. When the procession reaches the *Caesareion*,[5] the ephors[6] shall sacrifice a bull on behalf of the safety of our rulers and gods and the eternal continuance of their rule. After their own sacrifice, they will bid the common messes[7] and the magistrates to sacrifice in the *agora* <market place>. If they fail to hold the procession, or fail to sacrifice, or after sacrificing fail to make the messes and magistrates sacrifice in the *agora*, they shall pay two thousand sacred *drachmae* to the gods. Any willing citizen of Gytheum may accuse them.

During the office of Chairon as *strategos* <general> and as priest of the god Augustus Caesar, the ephors,[6] the colleagues of Terentius Biades, shall deliver three painted images

of the god Augustus and of Julia Augusta and of Tiberius Caesar Augustus, also – for the theatre – the platform for the chorus, four doors for stage performances, footstalls for the orchestra. And they shall put up a stone column with this sacred law inscribed on it and they shall deposit a copy of this sacred law in the public archives, so that this law may, displayed for all to see in a public place and in the open air, prove the gratitude of the People of Gytheum towards the rulers for all men [to see . . .]

1. The first five recipients are the recently dead and deified Augustus, the current emperor Tiberius, and other members of the imperial family. The sixth was the commander who had 'freed' the Greeks from the Macedonian King Philip two centuries earlier and who had evidently been receiving honours ever since. Greek had no specific term to translate the Latin *divus*; hence the use of the word 'god' for these deified mortals.
2. Thymelic games were musical festivals, with dancing but not drama.
3. Gaius Julius Eurycles and his son Gaius Julius Laco were both rich Spartans of distinguished family, influential with the Romans.
4. See **10.3a** n. 4.
5. A building in honour of the Caesars, the imperial family, often decorated with portraits and patriotic reliefs.
6. Spartan magistrates.
7. Groups of citizens eating together at public messes were part of the Spartan tradition.

10.5b *Singers of Roma and Augustus at Pergamum (A.D. 117–138)*

This association, sponsored by the province of Asia, was established to sing hymns at the temple of Roma and Augustus at Pergamum (in modern Turkey, about 110 km. north of Izmir). The following text, inscribed on four sides of an altar, lists: (A) the names of 36 members (omitted here), characteristic of elite names of the period; (B-D) the responsibilities of the three officers, the regulations for new members, and the regulations for members' funerals (omitted here). The principal festivals of the association were on 21–3 September (23 September, Augustus' birthday, was the start of the year in the province of Asia); 1 January; 24–6 May (the Rose Festival); 23–5 June (the Mysteries). There were also meetings on the monthly birthday of Augustus and on the annual birthdays of other emperors.

See further: Robert (1960a) 318, 321, 340–2; Price (1984) 90, 105, 118, 129, 190–1, 209; **3.4** and **12.2** for calendar and rules for other imperial associations.

Inschriften von Pergamon II 374; *IGR* IV.353

(B) With good fortune. The president shall provide the following during his year of office:
Month of Caesar, Augustan day <23 Sept>: for Augustus' birthday, 1 *mna*.[1]
Month of Pereitios: for Kalends of January <1 Jan>,[2] 1 *mna*; 1 loaf.
Month of Panemos, Augustan day <24 May>: for Rose Festival,[3] 1 *mna*; 1 loaf.
Month of Loos, 3rd <25 June>: for Mysteries,[4] wine; 1 *mna*; 1 loaf.
Month of Hyperberetaios, 29th <21 Sept>: 1 *mna*, 1 loaf.
The president shall also provide garlands for the singers on the monthly celebration for

the birthday of Augustus and for those of the other emperors; also, on each day of the Mysteries, garlands for the singers' hall and the singers and their sons, as well as pastry and incense <for offerings>, and lamps for the image of Augustus < . . . regulations for members' funerals follow . . . >

(C) With good fortune. The priest shall provide the following during his year of office:

Month of Pereitios: for Kalends of January <1 Jan>, wine; setting; 1 *mna*; 3 loaves.

Month of Panemos, 2nd <25 May>: for Rose Festival, wine; setting; 1 *mna*; 3 loaves.

Month of Loos, 2nd <24 June>: wine; 1 *mna*; 3 loaves.

Month of Hyperberetaios, 29th <21 Sept>: 1 *mna*; 3 loaves.

Month of Hyperberetaios, 30th <22 Sept>: wine for the altar-song; setting costing 1 *denarius*.

The outsiders elected as singers shall provide 50 *denarii* towards busts of the Sebastoi <Augustus and Livia>.[5]

(D) With good fortune. The secretary shall provide the following during his year office:

Month of Hyperberetaios, 29th <21 Sept>: for the birthday of Livia,[6] wine; setting costing 2 *denarii*; 1 *mna*.

Month of Pereitios: for Kalends of January, 1 *mna*; 1 *drachma* and 9 *assaria* in local coin.[7]

Month of Panemos, 3rd <26 May>: for Rose Festival, setting costing 1 *denarius*; 1 *mna*; 1 loaf.

Month of Loos, Augustan Day <23 June>: for Mysteries, wine; setting; 1 *mna*; 1 loaf. . .

A newly elected singer shall pay as an entrance fee: for sacrifices to Rome and the Emperor, 100 *denarii*; to each singer, 15 *denarii*; to the gods <Roma and Augustus>, double, 30 *denarii*, wine, 3 loaves; to the sons of the singers, half a loaf; half a *mna*; but if a new member is taking over his father's hymn, he will only pay 15 *denarii* to the gods; 7 *denarii* to each singer, wine and a setting; to sons who have paid attendance fees, the officers will refund half the amounts.

1. 1 *mna* (= 100 local *drachmae*) was probably the equivalent of 75 Roman silver *denarii*. One *mna* was a substantial sum, well over the average monthly subsistence of a peasant family.
2. The first day of the Roman year, increasingly celebrated as a festival in the Greek East.
3. This was a Roman festival: see 3.5 n. 4, 3.7 n. 3.
4. Imperial mysteries, perhaps focusing on the revelation of imperial images, were celebrated in various Greek cities.
5. 'Sebastos' is the Greek equivalent of Augustus, here used in the plural to refer to Augustus and Augusta (i.e. Augustus and Livia). See also 10.5c.
6. Livia's 'official' birthday was celebrated on this date, so as to lead up to that of Augustus. A *theologos* (mentioned on side A), who praised the gods, will have performed at this and other festivals.
7. This small sum, in local coinage, was perhaps given to each member.

10.5c *Honours for Julia Domna at Athens (late 190s A.D.)*

Julia Domna was the second wife of the Emperor Septimius Severus and was empress from his accession in A.D. 193 until his death in A.D. 211. This inscription records a decree of honours granted to her by the Athenians. She is given the title 'Saviour' – implying that the decree was in gratitude for some protection accorded to Athens. The surviving sections of the text are concerned particularly with honours that identify Julia Domna with the ancient protective goddess of Athens – Athena Polias; so her full title becomes 'The Saviour of Athens, Julia Sebaste <the Greek translation of 'Augusta'> Athena Polias'.

The damage to the text is more serious at the beginning than in later sections. The square brackets indicate where there is considerable doubt about the wording.

See further: Vol. I, 355; Oliver (1940); Stroud (1971) 200–4.

IG II 2.1076; revised *HSCP* Supp.1 (1940) 528–9

[. . .] of her inherent[. . .] philanthropy [. . .] co-operating[. . .] for all [. . . of the] saviour of [Athens] [Ju]lia Seb[aste, I propose] that in all other respects it should be done [as my colleague] in the office, Elpideph[oros son of . . .]ades from Palen[e, has during] my absence proposed:[1] [all the] annual [*ar]chontes*[2] are to sacrifice to Good [Fortune] [on the most holy birthday of Julia] Sebaste [. . .] [and to make the *ei]seteria*[3] to the [saviour of Athens Julia Sebaste] Athena Polia[s . . .] [. . . the general over the ho]plites [. . .] the *archon* [. . .] the [. . .] day [of the month] Thargelion [is to be holy], the day on which Athens dedicated the a[ncient t]emple to her [as Polias].[4] The war-*archon*[2] is [to sacrifice to the Mothe]r of the Forces[5] on the first [day of] the Roman year, and these sacrifices are to be started by the priestess of Athena [Polias] and she will receive the perquisites[6] and a golden statue <of Julia Domna> is to be set up in the Parthenon; [and the general] is to perform the preliminary sacrifice to Good Fortune and [the *archontes*] and all the priests and [the herald] are to pour libations, and the priestess and the queen of the [king-*archon*[2]] are to [sacrifice] and to offer the *eiseteria* of the priesthood to Athena Polias; and the retiring *arrephoroi* are also to sacrifice and raise the torch and dance at the festival,[7] in order that through these events also our reverence towards the saviour of Athens Julia Sebaste may be [made evident]. The account of these matters shall be inscribed on a tablet and set up by the altar of the Sebastoi[8] [on the Acropolis.]

1. This formula shows that the text we have was an amendment to a decree, presumably on a related subject.
2. The *archontes* (archons) were ancient magistrates of Athens, by this time ceremonial in their functions. There were three: the *archon* of the year; the war-*archon* (*polemarchos*); and the king-*archon* (*basileus*).
3. The *eiseteria*, the opening sacrifices, were of special importance and honour.
4. The ancient temple on the Acropolis is rededicated to the newly recognized form of the goddess Athena.
5. This title was conferred on the Empress in A.D. 195; she is therefore receiving sacrifices under two divine titles.

6. For these, see **10.3a**, n. 5.
7. The *arrephoroi* were two sacred maidens who lived for a time near the ancient temple of Athena Polias, performed secret rites and were then replaced by a new pair (see Pausanias, I.27.3). They represent the most ancient elements of the cult of the goddess. See Parke (1977) 141–3; Simon (1983) 39–45.
8. The altar of the 'Sebastoi' (Latin: Augusti) was in honour of Roman emperors (and their immediate family) from Augustus onwards.

10.6 Outside reactions to the worship of the emperor

Our knowledge of the worship comes almost exclusively from Rome and the cities participating in the cult; but occasionally we may have a glimpse of a different – even hostile – perspective.

10.6a *A barbarian observer*

This passage offers an image of a barbarian reaction to the presence of an imperial prince and to the cult of the imperial family: it is, of course, a Roman image of that reaction. Velleius was no doubt concerned to suggest that even the German barbarians appreciated the nobility of his hero, Tiberius. The incident described took place during the campaigns that the future emperor Tiberius undertook on Augustus' behalf; Velleius accompanied him on these campaigns.

See further: Vol. 1, 352–3; Woodman (1977) 146–8.

Velleius Paterculus, *History of Rome* II.107

I cannot resist inserting a minor incident even into this narrative of great events. Our camp was on the nearer bank of the river I have just mentioned;[1] on the far bank there was a glittering array of the enemy's troops, but hastily retreating [at every movement of our ships].[2] But one of the barbarians, a senior man in years, very tall, high-ranking as shown by his dress, embarked in a canoe – a hollowed out log, as is their custom – and steered his own course to the middle of the river. Then he asked if he could have permission to land in security on our bank, and to look at Caesar.[3] Permission was granted, so he beached his canoe and gazed at Caesar for a long time without speaking. Then he spoke: 'Our young men are crazy: they worship your divine power when you are absent;[4] but when you arrive they would rather go in terror of your arms than put themselves under your protection. But I, Caesar, by your kind permission, have seen the gods of whom I used once only to hear; nor have I ever hoped for or experienced a happier day in my life.' He was given permission to touch Caesar's hand; and then he went back to his boat, and carried on ceaselessly gazing back at Caesar until he reached his own side's bank of the river.

1. The Elbe.
2. The text is corrupt and the sense uncertain.

3. That is, Tiberius.
4. That is, in provincial cults of the emperor.

10.6b *The Jewish view*

As a result of conflicts between Jews and Greeks in the Egyptian city of Alexandria (see **12.6f** and, for another extract from this text, **12.6c(ii)**), which had come to a head with rioting and anarchy in the summer of A.D. 38, two delegations were sent to the Emperor Gaius – a Jewish one, led by Philo, and a Greek one. The Jewish objective was to secure, or if possible improve, their rights in the city, and especially their religious liberty; they particularly wished to be exempted from any orders to sacrifice to the emperor as a god. Philo here offers a vivid, polemical and, no doubt, highly embellished account of the exchanges between the emperor and the Jews, published after Gaius' death.

See further: Vol. 1, 361–2; Smallwood (1961); (1976) 220–55*; Barrett (1989) 182–91*; R. Williamson (1989) 5–18*.

Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 355–7

Isidorus, that bitter sycophant,[1] realizing that Gaius enjoyed being offered titles beyond human nature, said: 'You are going to hate these Jews here, my lord, and their fellow-countrymen more than ever when you hear about their ill-will and impiety towards you. For when all humanity was offering sacrifices of gratitude for your recovery, these were the only ones who could not bear to perform sacrifice. By "these" I mean to include all the other Jews as well.' At that we all shouted out together, 'Lord Gaius, we are being slandered; we did sacrifice – we sacrificed whole hecatombs. And we did not just sprinkle blood on the altars (as some people do) and then take the meat home for feasting and celebrations, but put the whole offering into the sacred flame to be burned up.[2] We have already done this not just once but three times: the first time was on your accession as emperor; the second was on your recovery from that dreadful illness that the whole world suffered with you; the third was in expectation of your triumph in Germany.'[3] 'It may be true,' Gaius replied, 'that you did sacrifice but you sacrificed to somebody else, even if it was on my behalf. So where's the merit in that? You did not sacrifice to me.'[4] Immediately we heard that, following on his previous remark, we were seized by a violent trembling, such that it was beyond all concealment.

1. Isodorus was the leader of the Greek, anti-Jewish delegation.
2. Philo is referring to one of the standard Jewish forms of sacrifice – the daily burnt offerings in the temple; and (with apparent gross tactlessness) he suggests that it is far preferable to the standard form of pagan sacrifice, in which the meat is consumed at the end of the ritual; see Yerkes (1953) 126–46.
3. The accession of Gaius, March, A.D. 37; the illness, September/October A.D. 37; the proposed German expedition, summer A.D. 39.
4. For the distinction between sacrifice 'to' and 'on behalf of' the emperor, see Price (1980). As he shows, sacrifice on behalf of (rather than 'to') the emperor was common.

11 *Threats to the Roman order*

Roman thinking about illicit versions of religious practices, which might threaten the religious and hence socio-political order, is the theme of this chapter. Laws defined illicit use of 'drugs' for poisoning and magic (11.2) and illicit forms of divination (11.7); a law regulated clubs and associations (11.9), and trials were held for foreign *superstitio* (11.10). In the republican period there were fears about foreign Pythagorean philosophy (11.1), and in the empire about the *magi* (11.3), the Jews (11.8), the Christians (11.11) and the Manichees (11.12). We also present here texts that reveal something of the actual practices that were so condemned: love magic (11.4), curse tablets (11.5) and magical revelation (11.6). Other chapters explore these practices further: divination (7.7), Judaism (12.6) and Christianity (12.7). But the conversion of Constantine in A.D. 312 changed the old rules: the Christian church now received imperial benefactions (11.13), and towards the end of the fourth century it was now traditional sacrifice that was banned as a *superstitio* (11.14).

See further: Vol. 1, ch.5.

11.1 Burning of the Books of Numa (181 B.C.)

Apart from the action against the followers of Bacchus (12.1), there was little attempt under the Republic to destroy or repress un-Roman practices. But five years after the Bacchanalia affair there seems to have been further reaction against a foreign 'threat', the philosophy of the Greek Pythagoras: Pythagorean treatises supposedly discovered in the tomb of King Numa (1.2) were burned on the order of a magistrate. There are problems with the story: Numa predated Pythagoras by 150 years, and the sources disagree about the number and content of the books; there is however no disagreement that some books were destroyed. It may be that the 'discovery' of the books was a deliberate attempt on the part of some members of the Roman elite to foist some new religious or philosophical doctrine on the Romans under the guise of attributing them to Numa.

See further: Delatte (1936); Gagé (1955) 328–38; Pailler (1988) 623–703; Gruen (1990) 158–70*; other sources: Varro in Augustine, *The City of God* VII.34; Livy XL.29; Plutarch, *Life of Numa* 22.2–5.

Pliny, *Natural History* XIII.84–6

There are some important facts which tell against Marcus Varro's opinion on the origin of papyrus.[1] Cassius Hemina, a historian of great antiquity,[2] in the fourth book of his *Annals*, reported that the scribe Gnaeus Terentius when turning over his field on the Janiculum dug up a coffin in which Numa, king of Rome, had been buried. In the same coffin he apparently discovered books of Numa, when the consuls were Publius Cornelius Cethegus, son of Lucius, and Marcus Baebius Tamphilus, son of Quintus <181 B.C.>, 535 years subsequent to the reign of Numa. These books were of papyrus, which is even more amazing given that they had survived underground. Because the matter is so important I shall give the actual words of Hemina: 'People were amazed that these books could survive, but he <Terentius> gave the following explanation: in the middle of the coffin was a squared stone completely bound in waxed string. The three books had been placed on the top of this stone; which was why he thought they had not decayed. And the books had been wrapped in citron leaves which was why he thought the worms had not touched them. These books contained texts of Pythagorean philosophy.' They were burned by the praetor Quintus Petilius because they were philosophical texts.

1. The immediate context of the passage is a discussion of papyrus; earlier (XIII.70) Pliny had referred to Varro's opinion that its spread was due to the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great.
2. Hemina lived in the middle of the second century B.C.

11.2 The law on poisoning and magic

'The Cornelian law on murderers and poisoners', passed in the dictatorship of Lucius Cornelius Sulla 81–80 B.C., was probably concerned only with what we call poison, but the law came to be interpreted by the end of the first century B.C. to include substances 'acting at a distance', or what we call magic. Though the actual text of the law does not survive, we have commentary on it by jurists of the imperial period.

See further: Vol. 1, 233–5; Mommsen (1899) 639–43; Massonneau (1934) 159–96; Graf (1994) 57–61.

11.2a *Extracts from commentaries by two lawyers of the third century A.D. (Marcianus and Modestinus)*

The systematic compilation of Roman law undertaken in the sixth century A.D. (known to us as Justinian's *Digest*) included quotations from earlier jurists' commentary on the law.

Justinian, *Digest* XLVIII.8.3, 11, 13

Marcianus, *Institutes*, Book XIV: under chapter 5 of the same Cornelian law on murderers and poisoners a person who makes, sells or possesses a drug for the purpose of killing

someone is punished. The penalty of this same law is applied to a person who sells harmful medicaments to the public or possesses it for the purpose of homicide. But the inclusion of the word 'harmful' shows that certain drugs are not harmful. Therefore, the word 'drug' is neutral and includes both that designed to heal and that designed to kill, and also that which is called an aphrodisiac. But the only drug covered in this law is that possessed for the purpose of homicide. But by decree of the senate a sentence of banishment is to be passed on a woman who, though with no ill intent but by setting a bad example, has given a fertility drug which kills the recipient . . .

Modestinus, *Rules*, Book VI: by a rescript of *divus* Pius <sc. Antoninus Pius> only Jews are allowed to circumcise their sons; a person not of that *religio* who does so, suffers the penalty <under the Cornelian law> of one carrying out a castration . . .

Modestinus, *Encyclopedia*, Book XII: in accordance with a decree of the senate,[1] whoever performs or organizes evil sacrifices is to be condemned to the penalty of this law.

1. This is a later extension of the law.

11.2b *Penalties for drugs and magic*

In another commentary on the Cornelian law, the possession of magical books, as well as the actual practice of magic, is stressed. The existence of such books was also an issue in the division of an inheritance between heirs. According ro rhe lawyer Ulpian, 'Harmful drugs and poisons are covered by this action, but the judge should not get involved in them at all; for he should fulfil the role of a good, honesr man. The same applies to his treatment of books on unacceptable subjecrs, magic for example and such like things. These sbould all be destroyed immediately' (Justinian, *Digest* X.2.4.1).

Paul, *Opinions* V.23.14–19 in *FIRA* II, pp.409–10

Those who administer a potion to cause an abortion or as an aphrodisiac, even if they do not act maliciously, nevertheless because their action is a bad example, those of inferior rank are sentenced to the mines, and those of superior rank are banished to an island, after part of their property has been confiscated.[1] But if a woman or a man dies from the potion, they receive the supreme penalty. Those who perform or have performed for them impious or nocturnal rites for rhe purpose of enchanting, bewitching or binding someone, are either crucified or thrown to the beasts. Those who sacrifice human beings or take auspices with human blood or pollute a shrine or temple, are thrown to the beasts or, if they are of superior rank, executed. Those who are knowledgeable in the art of magic are to receive the supreme penalty, that is, to be thrown to the beasts or crucified. The magicians themselves are burnt alive. No one may possess books on the art of magic; and those found in possession have their property confiscated and their books burnt in public; they are deported to an island or, if of inferior rank, executed. Not only the practice of this art, but also the knowledge of it, is prohibited. If someone dies from a

drug which was administered for their health or as a cure, the person who administered it is, if of superior rank, banished to an island or, if of inferior rank, executed.

1. The extension of the law recorded in **11.2a** is here presented as part of the law itself. The system of having different penalties for different classes of offenders became standard in Roman law from at least the early second century A.D. onwards.

11.2c *Ruling of Constantine against magic (A.D. 317–319)*

This ruling by Constantine illustrates the continuing validity of the law. Although it has sometimes been seen as Christian action against 'paganism', it was in fact a development of earlier Roman law.

Theodosian Code IX.16.3

Constantine Augustus and Caesar to <Septimius> Bassus, prefect of the city: The knowledge of those who with the aid of magic arts are discovered to have plotted against people's well-being or to have diverted chaste minds to lustful thoughts must be punished and a penalty duly exacted under the harshest of laws. However, criminal charges are not to be brought against remedies devised for the human body, nor against assistance innocently applied in rural areas to prevent fears of rain falling on the ripe grapes or their pummelling by a fierce hailstorm; nobody's health or reputation is harmed by them; in fact such actions ensure that neither the gift of the gods nor the labour of humans is spoiled.

11.3 The fraudulent claims of the *magi*

Magic was often represented as a specifically foreign aberration; the following passage is excerpted from Pliny's lengthy discussion of the origin of magic in Persia. It shows how magic could be perceived by the early imperial period as an autonomous practice in opposition to *religio*. Note how human sacrifices have become diagnostic of magic (even though various forms of ritual killing of humans had once been officially practised at Rome; see **6.6**); and how in consequence Druidism is seen as magical. The passage argues that magic was bogus if obnoxious; many people assumed that it was dangerously effective.

See further: Vol. 1, 233–5; Garosi (1976) 17–31; North (1980)*; Graf (1994) 61–9.

Pliny, *Natural History* XXX.1–2, 12–15

(1) In the previous pages of this work we have frequently refuted the pretensions of magic, whenever the subject and the place demanded; we shall continue to unmask them here. Magic, however, is one of the rare subjects on which there is more to be said, if only because as the most fraudulent of arts it has had the greatest influence in the whole world for many centuries. No one should be surprised at the immense authority it has had since

it alone integrated and incorporated the three other arts that had the greatest sway over the human mind. (2) No one will doubt that it first arose from medicine and under the guise of promoting health it stealthily inserted itself as a superior and holier form; so, to its most tempting and welcome promises, it added the powers of *religio*, on which the human race remains even today completely blind; then, to add an extra force, it blended in astrology, everybody being keen to know their future and believing that it may be known most accurately from the heavens. So having trapped the human spirit in a triple bond it has reached such heights that today it has sway over a great proportion of nations and, in the East, rules the king of kings . . .

(12) It is certain that magic has left traces among the Italic peoples too, for example in our Twelve Tables and in orher sources, as I have explained earlier <XXVIII.17>. Only in the 657th year of the city when Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus and Publius Licinius Crassus were consuls <97 B.C.> was a senatorial decree passed banning human sacrifice, which shows that down to that time these monstrous rites were still performed.[1]

(13) The Gallic provinces were certainly controlled by magic, and that down to our own time. For it was only the Principate of Tiberius Caesar that suppressed their Druids and this species of prophets and doctors.[2] But need I recall these actions against an art which has actually crossed the Ocean and reached the wilds of nature? Even today Britain in its madness practises magic with such grand rituals that one could imagine that she gave it to the Persians. So, all the peoples in the world, though they are at odds or unknown to each other, are in agreement on this doctrine, and one cannot calculate how great a debt is owed to the Romans for having swept away these monstrosities in which to kill a person was an extremely religious act, and to eat him guaranteed one's well-being.

(14) As Osthanes said,[3] there are several types of magic. He promises divination from water, globes, air, stars, lamps, basins, axes and by many other methods, as well as interviews with ghosts and those in the underworld. In our time the Emperor Nero discovered that all this was a deceptive fraud; for his passion for magic was no less than that for the lyre and tragic recitations, his attainment of the highest human fortune arousing in him the most profound vices of his soul; his principal ambition was to give orders to the gods, and he could rise to no nobler objective. No one ever patronized an art more vigorously. (15) For this purpose he had no lack of wealth, strength, aptitude for learning, or anything else the world offered. What an immense and irrefutable proof of the falseness of magic is the fact that Nero abandoned it!

1. See Vol. 1, 80–3 and 154–6; 6.6. The Twelve Tables are the first Roman law code, compiled 451–450 B.C.
2. Suetonius (*Life of Claudius* 25) claims that Claudius stamped out the Druids; see Vol. 1, 341–2.
3. A Persian of the fifth century B.C. A book allegedly by him was, according to Pliny, the earliest work on magic.

11.4 Love magic

Greek and Roman literary texts present stereotypical images of love magic. In this poem, Horace deploys several of the stereotypes in an attack on one Canidia: the performance of love magic by a woman, in this case Canidia herself; the killing of a boy (whose words open the poem); the use of infernal ingredients. In fact the practices of love magic, as recorded in surviving curses and spells (**11.5a–b**), were rather different.

See further: Vol. 1, 235–6; Tupet (1976) 284–329; R.L. Gordon (1987); Winkler (1990) 71–98*.

Horace, *Epode* 5, 1–40

'Oh, whatever god in heaven rules the earth and the human race, what means this din? Why is everyone's gaze fixed savagely on little me? By your own children, if at your summons Lucina[1] has aided your real birthpangs, by this pointless purple decoration,[2] I beg you, by Jupiter who will condemn these things, why do you gaze on me like a stepmother or like a wounded animal?'

(11) When despite these piteous cries from his trembling lips, the boy stands there stripped of his emblems of youth, a childish form, such as might soften the impious hearts of the Thracians, Canidia, with short snakes entwined in her dishevelled hair, orders figtrees wrenched from tombs, orders funereal cypresses and eggs and feathers of the nocturnal screech owl smeared with the blood of a hideous toad, and herbs grown in Iolcus and Hiberia, the home of drugs, and bones snatched from the mouth of a ravening dog, she orders all these to be burned in the Colchian flames.[3] Meanwhile, Sagana, duly dressed, sprinkles waters of Avernus all over the house, her hair on end like a sea-urchin or a charging boar. Veia, undeterred by any sense of conscience, was digging out earth with firm spadeblows, groaning as she worked, so that the boy could be buried and die within full sight of food changed two or three times in the course of the long day, with his head projecting out as much as swimmers' bodies are above the water when they float by the chin; so that they could remove the marrow and dried up liver to be a love potion as soon as his eyes, fixed on the forbidden food, had withered away.[4]

1. The epithet Lucina was associated with Juno in her role as protectress of women in childbirth.
2. Boys wore a toga with a purple band (*toga praetexta*).
3. Iolcus in Thessaly and Hiberia east of Colchis on the Black Sea were in regions strongly associated with magic.
4. In the second half of the poem Canidia complains that the spells are not working and threatens yet stronger magic. It ends with the boy's curse on the witches.

11.5 Curse tablets

Curses tried to mobilize supernatural power, of the gods, the dead or other infernal beings, against the living. They were composed for three main reasons: to ensure one's way in love (11.5a–b; cf. 11.4); to gain vengeance or justice (cf. 11.5c–d), sometimes against thieves or other malefactors; and to win competitions in theatre and circus. The lead tablets on which the texts were inscribed were placed in various appropriate locations: originally in graves (often of the untimely dead); later in water (wells, springs, rivers), in the house of the target, in sanctuaries, and in stadia.

See further: Vol. 1, 220, 234–5; Gager (1992) 3–41*; Graf (1994) 139–98.

11.5a *A lover's binding spell (third/fourth century A.D. ?)*

The tone of this love spell from Egypt is very different from the heady imagery of 11.4. The text was written (in Greek) on a lead sheet and placed in a vase with a female figurine pierced with needles (see p. 267). There is a striking similarity between this text (and four other extant Egyptian cast spells) and the prescriptions for casting a love spell given in a handbook to magic written on papyrus (*Papyri Graecae Magicae* IV.335–406, translated in Betz (1986). Extract of a different section in 11.6). The names of the gods invoked range from familiar Greek and Egyptian ones to the bizarre.

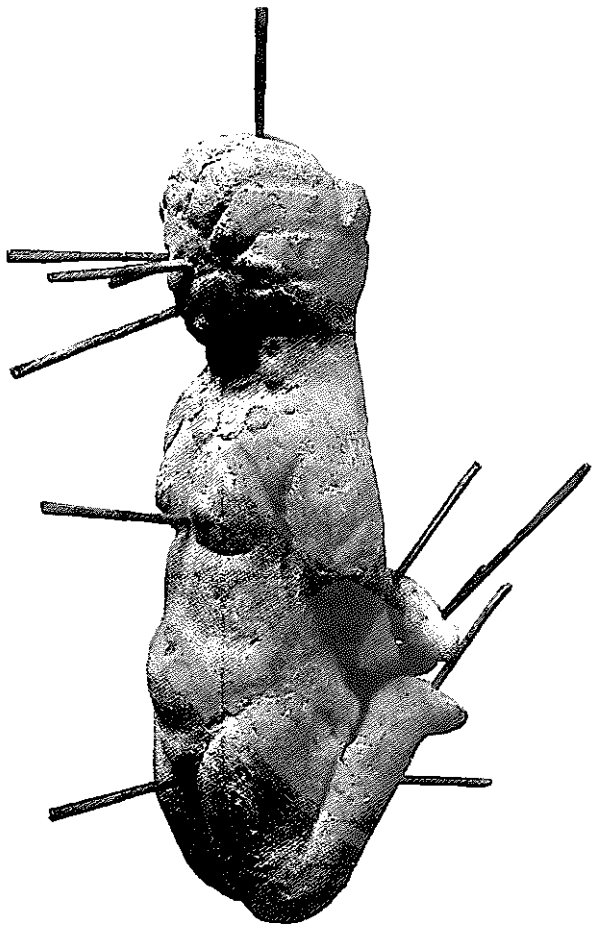
See further: Nock (1929); Moke (1975) 205–33; Gager (1992) 78–115*.

SEG XXVI.1717; R. W. Daniel and F. Maltomini (eds.), *Supplementum magicum* I (Papyrologica Coloniensia 16.1, 1990) no.47

I entrust this binding spell to you chthonic gods, Pluto and Kore Persephone Ereschigal and Adonis also called Barbaritha and Hermes chthonian Thoth Phokensepseu Erektathou Misonktaik and Anoubis the powerful Pseriphtha, who holds the keys of Hades, and to you chthonic divine demons, the boys and girls prematurely dead, the young men and women, year after year, month after month, day after day, hour after hour, night after night; I conjure all the demons in this place to assist this demon Antinous.[1] Rouse yourself for me and go to each place, to each neighbourhood, to each house and bind Ptolemais whom Aias bore, the daughter of Horigenes, so that she should not be fucked, buggered or should not give any pleasure to another man, except to me alone Sarapammon, whom Area bore; and do not let her eat nor drink nor resist nor go out nor find sleep except with me Sarapammon, whom Area bore. I conjure you, Antinous spirit of the dead, in the name of the Terrible and Fearsome, the name at whose sound the earth opens up, the name at whose sound the demons tremble in fear, the name at whose sound rivers and rocks burst asunder. I conjure you, Antinous spirit of the dead, by Barbaratham Cheloumbra Barouch Adonai and by Abrasax and by Iao Pakeptoth Pakebraoth Sabarbaphaei and by Marmaraouoth and by Marmarachtha Mamazagar. Do

not disregard me, Antinous spirit of the dead, but rouse yourself for me and go to each place, to each neighbourhood, to each house and bring me Ptolemais, whom Aias bore, the daughter of Horigenes; prevent her from eating, from drinking, until she comes to me, Sarapammon, whom Area bore, and do not allow her to accept the advances of any man other than me alone Sarapammon. Drag her by the hair, the guts, until she does not reject me, Sarapammon, whom Area bore, and I have her, Ptolemais, whom Aias bore, the daughter of Horigenes, subject to me for the entire extent of my life, loving me, desiring me, telling me what she thinks. If you do this, I will release you.

1. The text probably comes from the region of Antinoopolis and the Antinous is probably the eponymous favourite of Hadrian who died there and who is known as the subject of magical invocations (Origen, *Against Celsus* III.36).



The victim of this curse. A clay figure of a woman (height 0.09 m.), pierced with needles, as in the instructions of *Papyri Graecae Magicae* IV.296–334.

11.5b *A jealous lover (late republican/Augustan date)*

In this text on a lead tablet from a cemetery just outside Rome a jealous lover of Rhodine commended her to Dis Pater, so that she should not favour Marcus Licinius Faustus. At the end four other men and women are also cursed.

ILS 8749; A. Audollent, *Defixionum tabellae* (Paris, 1904) no.139; *CIL* I². 1012

Just as the dead man who is buried here can neither speak nor talk, so may Rhodine die to Marcus Licinius Faustus and not be able to speak nor talk. As the dead man is received neither by gods nor humans, so may Rhodine be received by Marcus Licinius and have as much strength as the dead man who is buried here. Dis Pater, I entrust Rhodine to you, that she be always hateful to Marcus Licinius Faustus. Also Marcus Hedius Amphio. Also Gaius Popillius Apollonius. Also Vennonia Hermiona. Also Sergia Glycinna.

11.5c *A slave's revenge on his employers (late first century A.D.)*

A public slave of the *colonia* of Tuder in central Italy affixed curses against local councillors to some tombs. This text, inscribed on the base of a statue, was set up to record how Jupiter, rather mysteriously, prevented disaster.

ILS 3001

For the well-being of the *colonia* and the order of councillors and the people of Tuder, to Jupiter Optimus Maximus guardian and preserver, because he <sc. Jupiter> removed by his divine power the names of members of the order of councillors that had been affixed to tombs (?) by the despicable criminal action of the most accursed public slave, and because he <Jupiter> vindicated and freed from fear of danger the *colonia* and citizens, Lucius Cancrius Primigenius, ex-slave of Clemens, *sevir*, *Augustalis* and *Flavialis*, who was the first to receive these honours from the council,[1] fulfilled his vow.

1. Cancrius was the first *Flavialis*, that is priest of the deified Flavian emperors. For *seviri* and *Augustales* see **8.6** and Vol. 1, 357–9.

11.5d *A plea for retribution (third century A.D.?)*

In this text, in Greek, on a lead tablet from a cemetery just outside Rome, a man whose brother (Demetrios) has died, perhaps at the hands of a military doctor, curses the doctor with the aid of eight demonic powers listed at the end.

SEG XIV.615; M. Guarducci, *Epigrafia Greca* (Rome, 1978) IV.251–4

Bind Artemidoros the doctor, the son of Artemidoros, belonging to the third Praetorian cohort. Assisting <him?> is the brother of the late Demetrios, who wants now to go to his own native land. So do not release him <sc. the doctor>, but bind the land of Italy for ever and dash <?> the gates of the Romans. But bind Artemidoros the son of

Artemidoros, the doctor. Eulamon, Laimeila[.]sion, Kreiochersoprix, Omelieus, Axeieus, Areieus and Lathos and Tham[. . .] bind <sc. him>.

11.6 Magic and revelation

A magical handbook of the fourth century A.D., preserved on papyrus, includes fifty-three different spells. The longest (of which this passage is an extract) gives instructions on how to obtain divine revelation and gain immortality. From the parallels with the cult of Mithras, this text has in the past been described as a Mithraic liturgy, but it seems rather to be a magical text which has borrowed some genuine Mithraic features.

See further: Vol. 1, 303 and n. 175 and 12.5; Dieterich (1923); Nock (1929) 231–2*; Beck (1977–8b) 120–7; Hinnells and Gordon (1977–8) 213–19; Beck (1984) 2051*. Betz (1986) includes a complete translation.

Papyri Graecae Magicae IV.475–86, 618–65, 674–7, 692–732

(475) Be favourable to me, Providence and Psyche, as I write these mysteries, handed down <not> for sale but for instruction; for my only child I request immortality, O initiates of this our power (so you should, daughter, take the juices of plants and spices which will <be revealed> to you at the conclusion of my holy treatise), the power which the great god Helios Mithras instructed to be handed over to me by his archangel, so that I alone should ascend to heaven as an enquirer and should behold all things . . .

(618) Say all these things with fire and spirit in completion of the first utterance; then similarly begin the second, until you complete the seven immortal gods of the universe. When you have said them, you will hear thunder and turmoil in the environs. You will notice yourself being similarly in turmoil. You should again say: 'Silence' (a prayer), then open your eyes and see the opened doors and the universe of the gods which is within the doors, so that the pleasure and joy of the vision makes your spirit run on and ascend. So, stand still and straightaway draw spirit from the divine into yourself while you gaze. So when your soul is resrored, say: 'Come, lord, archandara photaza puriphota zabuthix etimenmero phorathen erie prothri phorarhi.' When you have said this, the rays will turn on you: look in the centre of them. When you do this, you will see a young god, fair in shape, with fiery hair, in a white robe and a scarlet cloak wearing a fiery crown. Immediately greet him with the fiery embrace:

'Lord, hail, Mighty Power, Mighty Ruler, King, Mightiest of gods, Helios, lord of heaven and earth, god of gods, strong is your breath, strong is your power, lord. If you will, announce me to the migbtiest god, who created and made you, that a human, I, X son of Y mother, who was born from the mortal womb of Y and from the fluid of semen, and, since he has today been born again from you, has become immorral from so many millions at this hour by the will of god, rhe extremely good, he resolves to do you homage

and requests to the best of his human power (that you may take along with you the horoscope of today's day and hour whose name is Thrapsiari morirok, so that you may appear and give prophecy at the good hours: eoro rore orri orior ror roi or reorori eor eor eor eore).' When you have said these things, he will come to the celestial pole, and you will see him walking around as if on a road. You should while gazing on sound a long bellow like a horn, releasing all your breath and straining your sides, and should kiss the phylacteries and say, first to the right: 'Protect me prosumeri.' When you have said these things, you will see doors opening and, coming from far within, seven virgins dressed in fine linen, with the faces of asps. They are called the Fortunes of heaven and wield golden sceptres . . . (674) There come forth anorher seven gods, with the faces of black bulls, in linen loincloths, wearing seven gold diadems. They are the so-called Pole Lords of Heaven. . . . (692) When they take their appointed places, gaze in the air and you will see bolrs of lightning descending and light flashing and the earth shaking and the most mighty god coming down, having an appearance of light, young, golden haired, in a white tunic with a gold crown and trousers, holding in his right hand the gold shoulder of a calf: he is the Bear who moves and rotates the heavens, ascending and descending in season.[1] Then you will see lighrning flashes leaping from his eyes and stars from his body. You should immediately sound a long bellow, straining your stomach, so that you may stimulate your five senses, a long bellow until out of breath, kissing the phylacteries again and saying: 'mokrimo pherimophereri life of me, X, stay, dwell in my soul, do not abandon me, for entho phenen thropioth commands you.' And gaze upon the god sounding a long bellow and greet him as follows: 'Lord, Hail, master of water, Hail, founder of the earth, Hail, ruler of wind, light of brightness, proprophenge, emethiri artentepi: theth: mimeo uenaro phurchecho pseri dario: Phre Phrelba: give prophecy, lord, about such and such a thing. Lord, while I am reborn I am passing away, while I am growing and having grown I am dying, being born from life-giving birth I am freed and proceed to rebirth (*apogenesis*)[2], as you have founded, as you have legislated and created the mystery. I am pheroura miouri.' When you have said these things, he will immediately give an oracle. You will be weak in your soul and will not be in yourself when he replies to you. He utters the oracle to you in verse and when he has spoken he will go away. But you stand in silence; you will comprehend all these things on your own, and then you will remember without error what has been uttered by the mighty god, even if the oracle has a million lines.

1. The two pairs of seven deities represent the stars of Ursa Minor and Major, who guard the world's axis; the Great God with the shoulder of a calf (which was the Egyptian constellation corresponding to Ursa Major) is at the celestial pole between the two constellations. On numerous Mithraic reliefs in the scene of Sol kneeling before Mithras, Mithras carries the shoulder of a bull (e.g. Nersae **12.5b** n.11); this may symbolize that Mithras controlled the universe. The confirmation of the parallel between the papyrus and the Mithraic reliefs has shown that there may have been two-way borrowings between the cult of Mithras and Graeco-Roman magical and astronomical beliefs.
2. On *apogenesis* see **12.5g** n.7.

11.7 Regulations about divination

Although divination by Roman state officials was part of the established traditions of Roman religion (7.1–4), there were fears about private divination, whose predictions might be used to subvert or challenge imperial (or domestic) authority (cf. 7.7). In the imperial period there were attempts to control private divination (by astrology or sacrifice), and these were continued in the fourth century by Christian emperors (compare their hostility to magic, 11.2). At the end of the century, however, the controls were extended: public divination and all forms of sacrifice were banned (11.13).

See further: Vol. 1, 21–4, 155–6, 231–3, 235–6, 374–5; Mommsen (1899) 861–5; Cramer (1954) 248–81; T. Barton (1994a) 38–52*.

11.7a *Control of astrologers and soothsayers (early third century A.D.)*

The jurist Ulpian included the control of astrologers, soothsayers and other types of private diviners in his discussion of the duties of Roman provincial governors. By his time governors were expected to follow precedents established in Rome.

Comparison of Mosaic and Roman Law XV.2, in *FIRA* II, pp.579–80

Ulpian, *On the Duty of the Proconsul*, Book VII, 'On astrologers and soothsayers'[1]:
Furthermore, a ban is put on the cunning deceit and persistent convictions of astrologers. This ban is not an innovation, but an ancient prohibition. For there is extant a decree of the senate passed in the consulship of Pomponius and Rufus <A.D. 17> by which astrologers, Chaldaeans,[2] prophets and others who undertake similar things are banned from water and fire and have all their goods confiscated; and if it is a foreigner who does this, he shall be executed. But there used to be a debate about whether people of this type should be punished for merely knowing the subject, or only for the practice and profession of their art. The older authorities claimed that it was the profession, not the knowledge, that was prohibited; thereafter, opinions varied. One cannot deny that at times it became customary for them actually to practise their profession and publicly offer their services. This arose more from the defiance and temerity of the clients and the practitioners than from the fact that it was legally sanctioned. Indeed, almost all emperors have very frequently prohibited people from engaging in stupidities of this sort, and those who have practised it have been punished in various ways, depending of course on the type of consultation. Those who made a consultation about the well-being of the emperor have been executed or have received some other severe penalty; the penalty is lower for those who have consulted about themselves or their family.[3]

These prohibitions include soothsayers, and they too are also to be punished, since they sometimes practise their scandalous arts so as to jeopardize public order and the imperial rule of the Roman people. For there is extant a decree of *divus* Pius <Antoninus

Pius> to Pacatus, governor of the province of Gallia Lugdunensis; the full text of the ruling being lengthy, I append a short extract from its ending.[4] Then *divus* Marcus <Marcus Aurelius> banished to the island of Syrus the man who had prophesied during the revolt of Cassius and had made many utterances allegedly by divine inspiration.[5] Indeed, people of this type should not escape punishment; pretending divine guidance, they make, circulate or knowingly fabricate pronouncements.

1. Ulpian is here quoted in a later legal treatise.
2. Chaldaeans was another term for astrologers, because of the alleged origins of the art in Chaldaea (southern Babylonia).
3. Consultations about the well-being of the emperor were felt to offer dangerous knowledge of the portending death of the ruler; similar knowledge about one's own family was equally threatening to the authority of the head of the family. Cf. 11.7b.
4. The extract has either dropped out, or appears as the last sentence of our text.
5. The revolt took place in A.D. 175.

11.7b *A ban on divination (A.D. 198–199)*

The governor of Egypt issued this circular to the local administrators forbidding divination. Some scholars connect the ban with the visit of Septimius Severus to Egypt in A.D. 199 (though we do not know that the ban in fact preceded the visit). Septimius is known to have been hostile to consultations of astrologers about his death, and such consultations were covered by the circular. But the ban is cast in quite general terms with no direct reference to consultations about the well-being of the emperor, and fits into the general context of 11.7a.

P.Coll.Youtie 1 no.30; *ZPE* 27 (1977) 151–6; G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* (North Ryde, 1981) no. 12

[Since I have met many people] who believe they have been deceived by means of divination, [I thought it necessary], so that no danger should follow from their foolishness, immediately to proclaim here clearly to everyone that they should refrain from indulging a curiosity that brings danger. Therefore, let no one pretend to know about the supernatural or proclaim his expertise about the obscurities of the future, whether it be through oracles (that is, written documents allegedly originating in the presence of the divine) or through the procession of images or such-like trickery,[1] nor let anyone give his services to those who want to know about it, or give any reply at all. But if anyone is discovered persisting in this profession, let him be sure that he will be sentenced to the ultimate penalty.

Each of you must have a copy of this letter, written in clear and legible script, set up on white boards in public in the regional centres (*metropoleis*) and in each village, and each of you must continually make enquiries; if you find someone breaking the prohibitions, you must send him under guard for my cognizance. For you too will be at risk if I learn again that such behaviour is being disregarded in the areas under your

control. Indeed you will suffer the same punishment as those who are detected. For each of those people, if he actually dares to do what has been banned, is only one individual; but an official who fails to repress this activity is himself responsible for danger to many.[2]

<Second hand> During the seventh year of Emperors Caesars Lucius Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax Arabicus Adiabenicus Parthicus Maximus and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus August[. . .]

1. In Egypt questions and petitions were put to the gods when their images were carried in procession; the response of the god was indicated either by the image becoming heavy or by it moving toward or away from the petitioner.
2. By this period governors were expected to search out malefactors (Ulpian, *On the Duty of the Governor* Book VII, in Justinian, *Digest* 1. 18.13 pr; cf. **11.7a**). This is a change from the early Empire when governors were expected only to respond to cases brought to them: see the ruling that Christians should *not* be sought out (**11.11b**).

11.8 The Jews

Roman attitudes to Judaism varied widely. Some Roman writers expressed an interested and sympathetic attitude to the Jewish faith (see **12.6a–b**). Others made passing jibes against Jewish 'credulity' (e.g. Horace, *Satires* 1.5.96–105) or (particularly after the Jewish revolt of A.D. 66–70) produced systematic diatribes against Judaism.

See further: Vol. 1, 222–3, 275–6, 284, 304; **12.6**; M. Stern (1974–84), (a full collection of evidence, with translations and commentaries); M. Whittaker (1984) 3–130 (selection of translated sources); Gager (1985) 35–112*.

11.8a *An ethnography of the Jews*

The most extensive (extant) Roman account of the Jews was given by Tacitus in his description of Titus' capture of Jerusalem and the suppression of the revolt of A.D. 66–70. A paragraph on the Jews' origins (from Mount Ida on Crete, or from Egypt, the majority view) is followed by an exposition of Moses' creation of new and peculiar rules. The whole is to our eyes a mixture of good information and garbled assertions.

See further: M. Stern (1974–84) II.37–43.

Tacitus, *Histories* V.4–5

To establish his position over the race for the future, Moses introduced novel rites, quite different from those of the rest of the human race. In them everything we hold sacred is profane, and conversely they permit what for us is taboo. In the heart of the temple they dedicated a statue of the animal <an ass> which helped them to find their way and end their thirst <sc. in the wilderness>, sacrificing a ram apparently in mockery of Ammon; a bull too is sacrificed, since the Egyptians worship the Apis bull. They abstain from pork

in memory of an epidemic when they were infected by the scabs to which this animal is prone. To this day they bear witness to their historic hunger by frequent fastings, and Jewish bread is still made without leaven to recall their hurried meal. They say that they decided to rest on the seventh day because that marked the end of their toils; then the lures of sloth led them to give over the seventh year too to inactivity. Others say that this rest is in honour of Saturn, either because the Idaeans (who had been expelled with Saturn and whom we believe are the founders of their race) transmitted the fundamentals of their religion; or because, of the seven planets that govern the human race, Saturn moves in the highest orbit and has the greatest power; in addition, many of the heavenly bodies run on courses in multiples of seven.

(5) These rites, whatever their origins, are sanctioned by their antiquity. But their other practices are perverse and disgusting, and have lasted only because of their depravity. Wretches of the worst kind who scorned their ancestral religions <i.e. proselytes> used to send dues and contributions there <sc. to Jerusalem>, which increased the wealth of the Jews. And the Jews, though extremely loyal and ready to show compassion to each other, are implacably hostile to the rest of the world. They eat apart, they sleep separately, and though they are a most lascivious people they abstain from intercourse with foreign women; but among themselves nothing is illicit. They established the practice of circumcision to show that they are different from others. Those who go over to their ways adopt the same practices, and the first lesson they learn is to despise the gods, disown their country and to have little regard for their parents, children and brothers. However, they take pains over increasing their numbers. They think it a crime to expose any offspring born as heirs, and they consider the souls of those killed in battle or by the executioner to be immortal. Hence their passion for procreation and their scorn of dying. They inhume rather than cremate the dead, in accordance with Egyptian custom; they give the same care to the dead and hold the same beliefs about the underworld, but they hold a contrary belief about the gods. While the Egyptians worship many animals and half-human, half-bestial images, the Jews concede only one divine power, which can be perceived by the mind alone. They regard as impious those who create images of the gods from perishable materials in the likenesses of humans, for the supreme and eternal power is inimitable and immortal.[1] Therefore they do not place any images in their cities, let alone in their temples <i.e. synagogues>; their kings are not accorded this flattery, nor are the Caesars thus honoured. But because their priests used to chant to the pipe and cymbals, wearing garlands of ivy, and because a golden vine was discovered in their temple, some people have considered that they worship Father Liber, the conqueror of the East, but this view is incompatible with their customs. For Liber established happy and joyful rites, while the practices of the Jews are bizarre and sordid.

1. For this idea see Varro in 1.1a and 12.6a.

11.8b *Not in front of the children*

Juvenal's fourteenth satire, a warning against setting bad examples to one's children, includes an attack on those who point their children towards Judaism.

Juvenal, *Satires* 14.96–106

Some who have a father who observed the sabbath worship nothing but clouds and the divinity of heaven, and think there is no difference between human and pig's flesh, from which their father abstained; before long, they go on to remove their foreskins.[1] Accustomed to despise Roman laws, they learn, follow and observe Jewish law, whatever Moses handed down in his arcane volume: for example, that one should show the way only to a fellow believer, and with people in search of drinking water that one should assist only the circumcised.[2] But it is the father who was at fault; for him every seventh day was given up to laziness, and kept apart from all the concerns of life.

1. Juvenal is apparently referring to a penumbra of Jewish sympathizers, 'god-fearers', who observed only part of the Jewish law, but he depicts their sons as full proselytes. Cf. **12.6e**.
2. The alleged refusal of Jews to help non-Jews was seen as extremely anti-social. Jewish authors (e.g. Josephus, *Against Apion* II.211) sought to counter the charge.

11.9 Regulation of clubs and associations

Regulation of private gatherings first occurred in Rome in the middle of the first century B.C. amid fears of social and political disorder. Under Augustus a more extensive Law on Associations was passed which required all associations to be authorized by the senate or emperor, with the exception of burial societies (for the poor) and meetings for the sake of *religio*. In the second century governors could ban social clubs, with consequences for Christian gatherings (**11.11b**), and by the third century A.D. (as the following passage, from a jurist of the first half of the third century A.D., explains) the principles were extended systematically to the provinces in imperial instructions to provincial governors.

See further: Vol. 1, 230; **12.2**; Mommsen (1899) 875–7; Schulz (1951) 95–102.*

Justinian, *Digest* XXXVII.22.1

Marcianus, *Institutes*, Book III: By the imperial mandates to provincial governors it is laid down that neither fellowship societies be tolerated nor soldiers' clubs in the camps be permitted; but it is permissible for the people of poorer means to pay a monthly subscription provided that they gather only once a month; this limitation is to prevent any pretext for an illegal club. *Divus* Severus <Septimius Severus> issued a ruling that this regulation applies not only in Rome, but also in Italy and the provinces. 'But meetings

for the sake of *religio* are not banned, as long as the meeting is not contrary to the decree of the senate that prohibits illegal clubs.'[1]

No one may be a member of more than one legal club, as is laid down by the *divi* brothers <Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus>; and if someone is a member of two, there is an imperial ruling that he should choose one that he prefers to remain in, and that he should receive from the club he is resigning the share of the common fund due to him.[2]

1. This decree (of which the only surviving extract is quoted in 12.2) was a supplement to the Augustan Law on Associations. For Caesarian exemption of the Jews see 12.6c(i)).
2. The (later) imperial ruling dealt with a problem not addressed in the first ruling. These rulings eliminated the possibility of multiple membership generating an underground conspiracy, a fear evident elsewhere (12.1a–b).

11.10 A trial for foreign *superstitio* (A.D. 57)

Tacitus records the following item among the senatorial business for the year. At this early date, it is not likely that the *superstitio* was Christianity; Judaism is more likely.

See further: Vol. 1, 229–30; 12.1; Mommsen (1899) 19, 578–9.

Tacitus, *Annals* XIII.32

And Pomponia Graecina, a woman of noble family, married to Aulus Plautius, whose victory procession over the Britons I mentioned above <in the now lost part of Book XI>, was accused on a charge of foreign *superstitio* and handed over to her husband's jurisdiction. Following ancestral practice, with his wife's life and reputation at stake, he conducted the hearing in the presence of relatives and found her innocent.

11.11 Responses to the Christians

From A.D. 64 until Constantine, Christians were tried and executed by the Roman authorities. This occurred spasmodically, and without the existence of a general legal enactment, until the first securely attested imperial edicts against the Christians in the middle of the third century A.D.

See further: Vol. 1, 236–44; de Ste. Croix (1963)*; Barnes (1968a); Benko (1984).

11.11a *Christians as scapegoats (A.D. 64)*

This is the record of the first known imperial action against Christians – treating them as scapegoats for the catastrophic fire of Rome.

See further: Vol. 1, 237; Benko (1984) 14–21*.

Tacitus, *Annals* XV.44

Therefore, to end the rumour <that he had started the fire>, Nero substituted as the guilty and punished with the choicest penalties those hated for their vices and popularly called Christians. The originator of their name, one Christus, was executed in the Principate of Tiberius by the governor Pontius Pilate; the deadly *superstitio* was checked for a time, but broke out again, not only in Judaea, the origin of the evil, but even in the capital, where all hideous and shameful practices collect from every quarter and are extremely popular. So first the confessed members were arrested; then, on their evidence a huge number were found guilty, not so much on the charge of arson, as for their hatred of the human race.[1] And those dying were made an object of mockery: covered with animal skins, they were torn to pieces by dogs; or nailed to crosses, when daylight failed, they were set alight as torches to lighten the darkness.[2]

1. In fact the punishment (execution by fire) is what the law laid down as the penalty for arson.
2. The text of the last clause (from 'Or nailed...') is uncertain

11.11b *Correspondence between Pliny and Trajan (c. A.D. 110)*

Pliny, the governor of Pontus-Bithynia, wrote to the emperor from Pontus about the Christians. Despite his professed inexperience, he knew to release those who denied that they were or ever had been Christians, to punish those who admitted that they were Christians (executing those not Roman citizens, and sending Roman citizens to Rome for trial); but he needed guidance on a third category, lapsed Christians, whom he hoped to release. The letters are among our best evidence for Roman expectations of Christian criminal actions, for official procedures, and (along with **12.7d(i)**) for second-century Christian practices. Compare the response to the cult of Bacchus (**12.1a–b**).

See further: Vol. 1, 237–8; **10.4** for further correspondence between Pliny and Trajan; Sherwin-White (1966) 691–712; Barnes (1968a) 36–7*; Benko (1984) 4–14*.

Pliny, *Letters* X.96–7

Pliny to the Emperor Trajan

It is my practice, lord, to refer to you on all points where I am doubtful, for who can better resolve my uncertainty or enlighten my ignorance? As I have never taken part in a trial of Christians, I do not know what it is customary to investigate nor how far the penalty should be applied. I hesitated not a little as to whether there should be any distinction drawn between them on grounds of age, or whether rather the young and their elders should be treated alike; whether repentance should lead to a pardon, or whether rather it should not avail those who had once been Christians to have renounced it; and whether the name itself should be punished even if there were no criminal acts, or whether rather the criminal acts associated with the name should be punished.

In the mean time, I have employed the following procedure in relation to those who were denounced to me as Christians. I asked them in person whether they were Christians. If they confessed it, I repeated the question a second and third time, threatening them with capital punishment; those who persisted, I ordered to be executed. For I had no hesitation, whatever the nature of their confession, that that stubbornness and rigid obstinacy should certainly be punished. There were others similarly fanatical whom, because they were Roman citizens, I have put on the list of persons to be sent to the city <of Rome>.

As a result of the actual investigation, as often happens, these accusations have spread rapidly and further types of the trouble have come to light. An anonymous pamphlet was laid before me containing many people's names. Those mentioned there who denied that they were or had been Christians, I thought should be released, when they repeated after me an invocation to the gods and made a *supplicatio* of wine and incense to your image, which I had ordered for this purpose to be placed with the statues of the gods, and in addition cursed Christ, all things which those who are true Christians, it is said, cannot be brought to do.

Others who had been named by an informer said that they were Christians and then denied it; they had been, but had stopped – some two years before, some longer ago, a few actually twenty years ago. All [these] too paid homage to your image and the statues of the gods, and cursed Christ. They claimed that the sum total of their guilt or wrong doing was the following: they had been accustomed to gather on a fixed day before dawn, to sing a song in alternate verses to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by an oath, not for any criminal purpose, but that they should not commit theft, robbery or adultery, that they should not break contracts, and that they should return money entrusted to them when called upon. After this ceremony, they said, it had been their practice to depart and reconvene later to take food, which was however ordinary and harmless; but they had ceased to do this after my edict, by which in accordance with your official instructions I had banned political clubs.[1] This made me believe that it was all the more essential to find out from two slave serving-women, who were called 'attendants', what the truth was, using torture. I discovered nothing worse than a depraved and excessive *superstitio*.

Therefore, adjourning the proceedings, I have hastened to consult you. The affair seems to me worth consulting you about, especially because of the numbers of those at risk. Many people of all ages, every status, and both sexes are actually being summoned to trial and this will continue. The taint of this *superstitio* has permeated not only towns, but also villages and the countryside; but it can probably be stopped and cured. It is perfectly clear that temples that had been almost abandoned for a long time have begun to be frequented, and sacred rites that had long lapsed have been taken up again, and [the meat] of sacrificial animals is on sale everywhere, though until recently almost no buyers could be found for it. From this it is easy to infer the number of people that can be reformed, if there is any opportunity for repentance.

Trajan to Pliny

You have followed, my dear Secundus <i.e. Pliny>, the proper procedures in investigating the cases of those denounced to you as Christians. For no general rule can be laid down to a fixed formula. They are not to be sought out; if they are denounced and found guilty, they are to be punished; but those who deny that they are Christians and make that absolutely clear in practice, that is by making a *supplicatio* to our gods, even if they had incurred suspicion in the past, they should obtain an acquittal as a result of their repentance. Anonymous pamphlets laid before you should have no role in any accusation. They are an extremely bad precedent and out of keeping with our age.

1. For the regulation of social clubs see 11.9.

11.11c *Christian 'corruption' of the vulnerable*

The first known treatise against Christianity (by Celsus), daring perhaps to c. A.D. 180, was written in Greek, either in Rome or in Alexandria. It is preserved only through an attempted refutation of it some seventy years later by Origen, a Christian theologian. Celsus criticized (among other points) the irrationality of Christianity and the appeal of Christianity to the intellectually vulnerable (the ill-educated lower class; women and children); he also shows how Christian missionary activity in the second century A.D. could be seen by a non-Christian.

See further: Vol. 1, 277, 296; Walzer (1949) 48–56 (on faith and reason); Chadwick (1966) 22–30 (on Celsus), 66–94 (on Origen); Wilken (1984) 94–125*.

Origen, *Against Celsus* I.9, III.55

(I.9) He <Celsus> next exhorts one to accept doctrines only in the light of reason and with a rational guide; error is inevitable if one adheres to certain doctrines without this precaution. And he compares them to people who have irrational belief in mendicant priests and diviners, in Mithras and Sabazios, and in whatever else one might meet, apparitions of Hecate or of some other spirit or spirits.[1] Just as in these cults scoundrels often play on the ignorance of gullible people and lead them where they like; so also the same things, he says, happen with the Christians too. He adds that some of them do not even wish to give or receive a reason for what they believe, employing the expressions 'Enquire not, but believe', and 'Your faith will save you'. He claims that they say. 'The wisdom in the world is an evil, and foolishness a good thing' . . .

(III.55) . . . Even in private houses one can see woolworkers, leatherworkers, laundryworkers, the most ill-educated and backward of men, who would not dare to utter a word in the presence of their elders and betters – that is of their masters – but who, when they can get some children or dim-witted women on one side, come up with the most bizarre advice: they should pay no attention to their fathers or teachers, but only

to themselves <i.e. the Christians>; fathers and teachers, they tell them, talk nonsense, have no understanding, are incapable of saying or doing anything good and are wholly preoccupied with trivialities; they themselves, by contrast, are the only ones to know how to live, so that the children, if they will only believe them, would be happy and make their homes happy too. Should they while imparting this lesson, happen to see a schoolteacher coming, or an intelligent person, or even the father himself, then the faint-hearted ones vanish, though the bolder ones incite the children to rebel. These whisper to them that they cannot explain anything in the presence of fathers and teachers, because they will have nothing to do with the elders' stupidity and grossness, since they are quite corrupt, set on the path of vice and even liable to punish them. But if the children wish to obtain instruction, they should leave their fathers and their teachers, and come with the women and with their playmates to the wooldresser's shop <or to the women's quarters> or the leather shop or the fullery to attain perfection. With these words, they persuade them.

1. On the mendicant priests see Nock (1933) 82–3.

11.11d *Allegations of Christian immorality*

According to Christian writers of the middle of the second to early third centuries A.D., Christians were believed by outsiders to be a secretive rabble that committed ritual incest and cannibalism. Here the Christian Minucius Felix puts such allegations in the mouth of a non-Christian. Christians sometimes also made these allegations against other Christians (12.7a (i)).

See further: Vol. 1, 225–7, 236–8; Clarke (1974) 206–25; Benko (1984) 54–78*.

Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 8–9 (extracts)

(8.4) 'They have collected from the absolute dregs of society the ill-educated and the women, who tend because of their sex to be more credulous and unstable, and have created a rabble of blasphemous conspirators, which is bound together by nocturnal gatherings, ritual fasts and unnatural feasts, not for any rite but for profanation. They form a secretive people that shuns the light, silent in public, talkative in corners, they despise temples as being only tombs, they spit on the gods, they mock our rites, these pitiful people pity (incredible though it is) our priests, they despise public offices and their purple robes, while they themselves go half-naked . . .

(9.2) 'They recognize each other by secret marks and signs, and fall in love almost before they are introduced: everywhere they actually join together in a sort of *religio* of lusts, and call each other indiscriminately brother and sister, so that under the cover of a sacred name, ordinary sex is converted to incest. And thus their pointless and stupid *superstitio* boasts of crimes. For, unless there were some basis of truth, shrewd rumour would not allege gross, varied and unmentionable forms of vice. I am told that they

worship the head of an ass,[1] the lowest of beasts, which has been consecrated under some absurd impulse – a *religio* that is suited to and derived from this sort of morals!

(9.5) 'Reports of the initiation of new recruits are as revolting as they are notorious. An infant, covered in flour to deceive the unsuspecting, is put in front of the person to be admitted to the rites. The recruit is called upon to make seemingly harmless blows to the flour, and kills the infant with wounds that remain secret and hidden. I can hardly mention this, but they thirstily lap up the infant's blood, eagerly tear his body apart, make a covenant over this sacrificial victim, and by complicity in the crime they bind themselves to mutual silence. These rites are more foul than any form of sacrilege.

(9.6) 'And their feasting is well known. People talk about it everywhere, as is shown by a speech of our compatriot from Cirta.[2] On the appointed day they gather for a banquet, with all their children, sisters and mothers, people of every sex and every age. There, after many courses, when the dinner has warmed them and drink has lighted the flames of incestuous lust, a dog which has been tied to the candlestick is tempted to jump and leap forward by a scrap thrown out of reach of the leash tying him up.[3] In so doing the tell-tale light is turned over and extinguished, and in the darkness that ends shame they copulate indiscriminately with unutterable desires; and all alike, though not in practice at least in complicity, commit incest, since whatever happens through the actions of individuals results from their common intention.'

1. For this allegation, first made against the Jews (**11.8a**), see also **2.10b**. The alleged sexual powers of the ass may explain the train of thought.
2. I.e. Fronto, who like the speaker came from Cirta in North Africa. Though many scholars have inferred from this passage and 31.2 that Fronto wrote a major speech 'Against the Christians', the reference may simply be to a speech which made a passing allusion to Christian incest (Champlin (1980) 64–6).
3. Cf, **12.7a (i)**.

11.12 Ruling against the Manichees (A.D. 297 or 302)

Mani (A.D. 216–76), the 'Apostle of Jesus Christ', founded in the Sassanian (Persian) kingdom a new religion proclaiming a cosmic conflict between Light and Darkness. This faith was propagated by active missionary activity, both east from Persia and (from the middle of the third century A.D.) west into the Roman empire. There were adherents in Egypt by the end of the third century, and those in North Africa were felt to be a sufficient problem for the governor to write a detailed report on them to the Emperor Diocletian. Diocletian's letter in reply (preserved in a later legal treatise) argued in traditional terms that the newfangled faith should be repressed, partly as it was (allegedly) Persian (Persia being Rome's ancient eastern enemy, with whom there had been recent conflict).

See further: Vol. 1, 242, 303; Volterra (1966); P. Brown (1969); Lane Fox (1986) 561–71*; Lieu (1992) 86–96, 121–5; Lieu (1994) 22–131.

Comparison of Mosaic and Roman Law XV.3 quoting Gregorianus, Book VII 'On sorcerers and Manichees', in *FIRA* II, pp.580–1

The emperors Diocletian and Maximian, Augusti, [and Constantius] and Maximian, most noble [Caesars], to Julianus governor of Africa. Excessive leisure sometimes induces people to join together to overstep the bounds of human nature and persuades them to introduce certain stupid and disgraceful types of superstitious doctrine. In so doing they seem to lure on many others too to accept the authority of their own false doctrine, my dear Julianus. But the immortal gods by their providence have deigned to order and dispose matters so that good and true principles should be established and preserved intact by the judgement and constant deliberation of many good, excellent and wisest of men. Thus it is improper to oppose or resist these principles nor should ancient *religio* be criticized by a new one. For it is the greatest crime to re-examine what has been fixed and defined by the ancients and what holds and possesses its own position and course.

Therefore it is our great desire to punish the obstinate and corrupt minds of the most depraved of people. These people, who institute new and unheard-of sects in opposition to more ancient religions so that, to the benefit of their own corrupt authority, they can drive out what was once divinely granted to us – on these Manichaeans, about whom your Wisdom has reported to our Serenity,[1] we have heard that they quite recently, like strange [and] unexpected monstrosities, have advanced or have arisen in this world from the Persian race, a race hostile to us, and are committing many crimes there, unsettling tranquil peoples and also introducing the greatest harm into cities too. And it is to be feared that by chance, as usually happens, in the passage of time they should attempt [through] the accursed customs and perverse laws of the Persians to inject people of a more innocent nature, namely the temperate and peaceful Roman race and our whole world, with (as it were) their malignant drugs. And because all the types of crime which your Wisdom has revealed in your report on their *religio* have obviously been devised and lyingly contrived contrary to the statutes, we have determined on fitting and appropriate afflictions and punishments for them.

We order that the founders and leaders together with their abominable writings be subject to a severe punishment, to be burnt in flames of fire; their followers, especially those who continue recalcitrant, we instruct shall be merely executed, and we rule that their property be confiscated to our Treasury. With those office holders or persons of any rank or distinction who have gone over [to] this previously unknown, disgraceful and entirely infamous sect, particularly to the doctrine of the Persians, you shall cause their estates to be added to our Treasury and the persons to be despatched to the mines at Phaena or Proconessus.[2] In order then that this abominable plague be completely eradicated from our most happy age, your Devotedness will hasten to obey the orders and decisions of our Tranquillity. Issued the day before the Kalends of April <31 March> at Alexandria.

1. A complimentary form of address, common in late antiquity. Cf. in this and following passages 'Constancy', 'Devotedness', 'Solicitude', 'Tranquillity', and 'Wisdom'.

2. Phaena is near Damascus, Proconessus an island in the Sea of Marmara. Cf. **11.2b** n.1 for the dual penalty system.

11.13 Constantine and the Church

The conversion of Constantine to Christianity in A.D. 312 is endlessly debated: how far was he 'really' a Christian, and from what date? But it is nevertheless clear that he began acting in favour of the Christian church from almost the beginning of his reign.

See further: Vol. 1, 365–9; Gaudemet (1947); Baynes (1972)*.

11.13a *Letter of Constantine and Licinius on restoration of the church (A.D. 313)*

After Constantine's victory in A.D. 312, he immediately ended the persecution of the Christians and began to order the restoration of church property in regions of the West he controlled. At a meeting in Milan in February 313 he and his fellow emperor Licinius agreed on a general policy towards the church (though it is uncertain whether this was publicly proclaimed). When Licinius returned to the East and quelled a revolt, in June 313 he issued a letter to each provincial governor in the East on the basis of the policy agreed with Constantine (often erroneously called 'The Edict of Milan'). This letter (quoted in Lactantius), which presupposes the rights of both Christians and non-Christians, orders the restoration of church property.

See further: Baynes (1972) 10–11, 69–74*; Millar (1977) 582–3.

Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* 48.2–12

When I, Constantine Augustus, and I, Licinius Augustus happily met at Milan and had under consideration everything which related to public convenience and security, we thought that, among other matters which would benefit most people, arrangements particularly needed to be made to ensure respect for the divinity, so that we should grant both to Christians and to all people freedom to follow whatever *religio* each one wished, whereby whatever divinity exists in the celestial abode can be placated and propitious to us and all who are placed under our power. Accordingly, we thought that on sensible and most proper grounds this plan should be adopted, that we should not deny this right to anyone, whether he has devoted himself to the Christians' observance or to any *religio* which he considers most suitable for himself, so that the supreme divinity, whose *religio* we obey with free minds, can provide for us in every matter his accustomed favour and benevolence. Therefore it is proper that your Devotedness should know that we have decided that since absolutely all conditions which [were contained] in documents previously sent to your office about the Christian name have been rescinded, [those things which] seemed [to be entirely inauspicious and alien to our clemency should be repealed, and] that now each individual who shows the said purpose of worshipping the

Christians' *religio* should freely and openly hasten to do so, without suffering any anxiety or interference. We thought that these matters should be very fully spelled out to your Solicitude so that you may know that we have given to the said Christians the unrestricted and unfettered right of practising their *religio*. When you realize that we have granted this favour to the said people, your Devotedness perceives that a similar open and unrestricted authority has been granted also to others for their *religio* or observance as befits the peacefulness of our time, so that each person has the unrestricted right of worshipping what he has chosen; [this we have done that] no cult or *religio* [should seem to be diminished] by us.

And we have decided moreover with regard to the community of Christians that this should be ordained: if anyone is reported to have purchased in the past either from our Treasury or from anyone else at all those properties in which they used previously to gather, on which formerly a definite policy was laid out in a document sent to your office, they shall restore the said properties to the Christians without payment or any demand for money, without any question of obstruction or equivocation; those who have obtained properties as gifts, they too shall likewise give the said properties back to the said Christians as quickly as possible. Further, those who have bought or those who have obtained properties as gifts, if they have made any claim on our benevolence, shall apply to the Deputy Prefect who will look into their interests through our clemency. All these properties must be handed over through your intervention to the corporation of Christians immediately and without delay.

And since the said Christians are known to have had other properties in addition to those in which they used to gather, belonging in law to their corporation, that is to the churches, not individual people, you will order all those properties, in accordance with the law expressed above, to be restored to the said Christians, that is their corporation and assemblies, without any equivocation or argument; though the aforementioned condition shall be preserved, that those who restore the said property without payment, as we said, may hope for compensation from our benevolence. In all these matters you will be obliged to offer your most effective intervention for the aforesaid corporation of Christians, that our instruction be carried out as quickly as possible, so that in this matter too the interests of public order may be served through our clemency. In this manner it will come about that, as was expressed above, the divine favour to us, which we have experienced in the greatest matters, will continue for ever to prosper our achievements along with the happiness of our state.

But so that the character of this ruling [and] our benevolence can reach the notice of all, it will be appropriate for you to publish this document everywhere, followed by your own edict, and to bring it to everyone's knowledge, so that the ruling of this our benevolence cannot escape attention.

11.13b *Gift to African church and fears of schism (winter A.D. 312–313)*

This letter of Constantine (quoted by Eusebius) is the earliest evidence of imperial gifts to the Christian church. It also illustrates (in the second part of the letter) Constantine's concern with the 'true' church, which was to be influential in the establishment of 'orthodox' practice and belief within the church (see **12.7e**).

See further: Vol. 1, 367–8; Frend (1952) 141–68*; Millar (1977) 583–90.

Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* X.6

Constantine Augustus to Caecilian bishop of Carthage [greeting?]:

Since I have decided that in all provinces, namely of Africa, Numidia and Mauretania, something should be supplied for the expenses of some specific ministers of the legitimate and most holy catholic religion, I have sent a letter to Ursus, the most illustrious Financial Officer of Africa and I have indicated to him that he should be careful to pay 3, 000 *folles* to your Constancy.[1] Therefore, when you get receipt of the said sum of money, you should instruct that the money be distributed to all the specified people according to the brief sent to you by Ossius.[2] But if you find that anything is lacking to fulfil my policy in relation to them all, you must not hesitate to ask Heracleides the procurator of our estates for what you find to be necessary. For I ordered him in person, that if your Constancy asked him for any money, he should be careful to pay it without delay.

Since I have learned that some persons of unsound mind wish to pervert the people of the most holy catholic church with a foul seduction,[3] you should know that I have given instructions in person to Anulinus the Governor and also to Patricius the Deputy Prefect that they should pay due attention to this as well as to all other matters, and that they should not let themselves overlook something like this occurring. Therefore, if you should see any such people continuing in this madness, go without any hesitation to the said officers and bring this very thing to their attention so that, as I told them in person, they can correct them.

May the divinity of the great god protect you for many years.

1. The *follis* is a late Roman term of currency and accounting. The value of the gift is uncertain, but presumably quite considerable. For comparison, note a fine of 30 *folles* (*CTh* XI.36.2, A.D. 315) and alleged peculation of 20, 100 and 400 *folles* in the African church (*CSEL* XXVI.194, A.D. 311–20).
2. Ossius, bishop of Corduba in Spain, who advised Constantine on Christianity.
3. Constantine had been told, it seems, about the growing schism ('Donatism') which denied the legitimacy of the consecration of Caecilian as bishop of Carthage.

11.14 Theodosius' ban on sacrifices (A.D. 392)

From Constantine onwards Christian emperors issued a series of regulations against the traditional cults (many of which were later collected in the *Theodosian Code* XVI). The regulations are numerous and apparently repetitive – which may suggest widespread disobedience and repeated attempts to restate the ban on traditional practice. But overall they represent a progressive outlawing of the traditional cults, as the different specific aspects of these cults are, piece by piece, brought under the ban. The Emperor Theodosius acted against divination, secularized traditional temples, reformed the calendar (cf. **3.6**) and (in the ruling quoted here) issued a comprehensive ban on traditional sacrifices. Note how the language earlier used against illicit divination (**11.7**) is extended to cover the whole of the traditional rites, which in a striking reversal of terminology are now themselves seen as *superstitio*.

See further: Vol. 1, 386–8; **6.8** for Christians and sacrifice; Cochrane (1940) 318–57*; Noethlichs (1971) 166–82; Salzman (1993).

Theodosian Code XVI.10.12

Emperors Theodosius, Arcadius and Honorius to Rufinus, Praetorian Prefect: Absolutely no person of any class or order of men of rank, whether he holds a position of power or has held such office, whether he is powerful by chance of birth or lowly in family, station or fortune, shall in any place whatsoever or in any city slaughter an innocent victim to insensate images; nor shall he venerate by a more secret sacrifice his Lar with fire, his *genius* with wine or his Penates with incense, nor shall he light candles, burn incense or hang up garlands for them. But if anyone does dare to offer up a victim for the purpose of sacrifice or to consult the living entrails, he may be brought to trial, on the model of high treason, on the basis of information lodged by anyone and may receive the appropriate sentence, even if he has not made any plan against or enquiry about the well-being of the emperors. To constitute a serious crime it is sufficient to wish to undo the laws of nature herself, to investigate illicit things, to reveal what is hidden, to attempt what is forbidden, to enquire about the end of another's life or to have hopes based on someone else's death.

However, if a person, by the burning of incense, should venerate images made by human hand and destined to suffer the ravage of time, or should he, suddenly filled with absurd fear of what he himself has made, either garland a tree with sacred ribbons or erect an altar of turves, or attempt to honour vain images with an offering which, though humble, is nevertheless completely offensive to *religio*: he shall be found guilty of violating *religio* and have confiscated that house or property in which it is established he served a pagan *superstitio*. For we decree that <the ownership of> every location where it it is proven that the burning of incense has occurred, provided that the location is clearly the legal property of those burning the incense, shall be transferred to our Treasury. But if anyone attempts to perform this sort of sacrifice in public temples or shrines or in

buildings or land belonging to another, provided it is determined that the place was used without the knowledge of the owner, he shall be compelled to pay twenty-five pounds of gold as a fine; and anyone who abets this crime shall pay the same fine as the actual sacrificer.

We wish that these provisions be upheld by the judges, defenders of the cities and councillors of the individual cities: information gathered through them shall be reported to the courts promptly and the crimes so reported be punished by them. But if these officials believe that they may suppress anything through favouritism or neglect anything through inadvertence, they shall be subject to judicial indignation; if the judges on the other hand, once informed of the case, defer punishment through connivance, they shall be fined thirty pounds of gold; and their staffs shall be liable to the same penalty. Six days before the Ides of November at Constantinople when the consuls were Arcadius Augustus (for the second time) and Rufinus <8 Nov. A.D. 392>.

12 *Religious groups*

As Roman religion developed, religious pluralism became more important: individuals faced a wider range of religious choices, and increasingly joined groups which were specifically devoted to a particular god or goddess. These groups interacted with the civic cults and to an extent with each other. This chapter starts from the hostile reaction of the Roman senate to one of the earliest attested religious groups in the cult of Bacchus (12.1), and regulations that governed a very different kind of society – a burial 'club' under the patronage of Diana and Antinous (12.2). The bulk of the chapter concerns the group worship of a series of individual deities during the imperial period: Jupiter Dolichenus (12.3); Isis (12.4); Mithras (12.5); Jahveh (12.6); and the Christian god (12.7); documents relating to the cult of the Magna Mater are given elsewhere (2.7, 5.6 a–b, 6.7, 8.7). The focus of the selection is on the internal organization and social location of the cults, as well as their different cosmologies. We have drawn evidence from Rome where possible, though we have included some material from other places to illustrate regional spread and local differences.

See further: Vol. 1, 95–6, 215–16, 221–7, ch. 6 *passim*; North (1992)*; for further translated texts see F. C. Grant (1953) 116–23, M. Whittaker (1984) 229–68 and Meyer (1987).

12.1 The cult of Bacchus

The spread of the cult of Bacchus (in Greek, Dionysos) from southern Italy to Etruria and Rome triggered a violent reaction on the part of the Roman senate in 186 B.C. This is the earliest attested specifically religious group in the Roman world – though its exact nature is hard to understand, since the reports of its activities are uniformly hostile, stressing the immorality of the cult and its political threat to Rome.

See further: Vol. 1, 91–6, 98; Nilsson (1957); Henrichs (1978); North (1979)*; Pailler (1988).

12.1a *Roman discovery of the cult of Bacchus (186 B.C.)*

Livy's account of the discovery of the Bacchic cult enlarges on the danger of its practices: magic, theft, immorality, fraud, even murder. These were common

accusations against secret religious groups, being made later (for example) against the Christians (**11.11d**).

Livy, *History* XXXIX.8–14 (abridged)

The following year diverted the consuls Spurius Postumius Albinus and Quintus Marcius Philippus from the army and concern for wars and provinces to the repression of an internal conspiracy . . . The senate decreed that both consuls should undertake an enquiry into secret conspiracies. A lowborn Greek came first to Etruria, a man with none of the many skills which that most learned of all nations has introduced among us for the tending of mind and body, but a mere sacrificer and fortune-teller; nor was he even someone who fills minds with error by publicizing his *religio* and professing openly his business and teachings, but an overseer of secret and nocturnal rites. There were initiations which were at first imparted only to a few, but then began to spread widely among men and women. To *religio* were added the pleasures of wine and feasting, to entice more people in. When wine had inflamed them, at night with males mingled with females, young with old, and when all sense of modesty was extinguished, all types of indecency began to occur, since each person had to hand the pleasure to satisfy the cravings to which he was naturally most inclined. Nor was there just one type of vice, the promiscuous sex between freeborn men and women: false witnesses, forged seals, wills and evidence also emerged from the same workshop; also poisonings and domestic killings, of such a sort that sometimes not even the bodies remained for burial. Much was ventured by trickery, more by violence, which was concealed because the voices of those crying for help amid the sex and murders could never be heard over the wails and the beat of drums and clash of cymbals.

(9) The damaging effects of this evil spread from Etruria to Rome like a plague. At first the size of the city, which could accommodate and tolerate such evils, kept them hidden, but finally information reached the consul Postumius in the following manner.

<There follows a complex story in which a mother attempted to have her son (Publius Aebutius) initiated so that he could be blackmailed into not revealing the peculation of his stepfather; Aebutius' mistress Hispala, who had warned him of the dangers of initiation, ends up being questioned by the consul about the rituals.>

(13) . . . Hispala explained the origin of the rites: at first it was a rite for women, and it was the custom that no man should be admitted to it. They had had three fixed days per year in which women were initiated by day into the Bacchic rites; married women were customarily appointed priests in turn. Paculla Annia (she said), a priestess from Campania, had changed everything, allegedly on the basis of divine instructions; for she was the first to initiate men, namely her sons Minius and Herennius Cerrinius; and she transferred the ritual from day to night, and established five days for initiation per month, in place of the three per year. Ever since the rites involved the admission of men among the women, and with the added liberation of darkness, absolutely every crime and vice was performed there. The men had more sex with each other than with the women.

Anyone who was less prepared for disgrace and slow to commit crimes was offered up as a sacrifice. To consider nothing wrong was (she continued) the principal tenet of their *religio*. Men, as if insane, prophesied with wild convulsions of their bodies; married women in the dress of Bacchants with streaming hair ran down to the Tiber carrying burning torches, which they dipped into the water and brought out still alight (because they contained live sulphur mixed with calcium). People were said to have been carried off by gods; they had been strapped to a machine and snatched from sight to hidden caves. Those seized were people who had refused to join in conspiracy or participate in crimes or engage in sex. It was (she said) a great crowd, almost a second state, including some nobles, both male and female. Within the last two years it had been resolved that no one aged over twenty should be initiated; people of this age were sought as being inclined to both erroneous ways and sexual indulgence.

(14) . . . When both witnesses <Aebutius and Hispala> were thus under his supervision, Postumius reported the matter to the senate. He laid out everything in detail, starting with the first report and going on to what he himself had discovered. Great panic seized the senators, both in relation to the state, for fear that these conspiracies and nocturnal gatherings might produce some hidden treachery or danger, and also privately in relation to his own family in case any member might be involved in the crime. <Livy goes on to describe in detail the nature and scale of the repression of the cult in Rome and throughout Italy.>

12.1b *An inscribed copy of the senatorial decree (186 B.C.)*

The text of the senatorial decree against the Bacchic cult is preserved on an inscribed bronze tablet found in south Italy. The senate did not ban the cult entirely, but strictly regulated its organization and activities. This particular version, though it is evidently close to the original, was in fact addressed to the towns of Italy still at this date independent of Rome.

ILS 18; *ILLRP* 511

[Quintus] Marcius, son of Lucius, and Spurius Postumius, son of Lucius, consuls, consulted the senate on the Nones of October <7 Oct.> in the temple of Bellona. Present at the drafting <of the decree> were Marcus Claudius, son of Marcus, Lucius Valerius, son of Publius, and Quintus Minucius, son of Gaius.

(2) Concerning the Bacchic shrines they decreed that the following proclamation be issued to those who were bound <to Rome> by treaty: 'None of them shall seek to have a Bacchic shrine. But if there are some who say it is essential for them to have a Bacchic shrine, they should appear before the urban *praetor*[1] in Rome, and our senate, when it has heard their case, should pass a decree on this matter, so long as not less than one hundred senators are present when the matter is considered. No man, be he Roman citizen, of Latin status[2] or one of the allies, shall seek to be present among the <female>

Bacchants, unless presented to the urban *praetor* and he gives permission with a senatorial decree, so long as not less than one hundred senators are present when the matter is considered. Decided.

(10) 'No man shall be a priest. No man nor woman shall be a master. None of them shall seek to have money in common. No one shall seek to appoint either man or woman as master or acting master, or seek henceforth to exchange mutual oaths, vows, pledges or promises, nor shall anyone seek to create mutual guarantees. No one shall seek to perform rites in secret, not shall anyone seek to perform rites in public or private or outside the city, unless he has approached the urban *praetor* and is given permission with a senatorial decree, so long as no less than one hundred senators are present when the matter is considered. Decided.

(19) 'No one shall seek to perform rites when more than five men and women are gathered together, nor shall more than two men or more than three women seek to be present there, except by permission of the urban *praetor* and the senate as recorded above.'

(22) That you shall proclaim this in a public meeting for not less than three market days, and that you should be cognizant of the senatorial decision, their decision was as follows: Whoever acts contrary to what is recorded above, they decided should be tried for a capital offence; and that you should inscribe this on a bronze plaque, the senate also decided; that you should instruct it to be fastened up where it can most easily be read; and that any existing Bacchic shrines, unless there is anything sacred therein, as is recorded above, you shall ensure are dismantled within ten days of your receipt of the letter. In the ager Teuranus.[3]

1. The magistrate responsible for the administration of justice in Rome.
2. The Latins were privileged allies of Rome.
3. A region in Bruttium (in the 'toe' of Italy) where this surviving document was displayed.

12.1c *Regulations of a group of worshippers of Dionysos (second century A.D.)*

Under the Empire groups of worshippers of Bacchus existed in Italy and the Greek world. This Greek inscription from Physkos in central Greece shows both male and female members of the group or *thiasos* ('herdsmen' and maenads), as well as rites taking place outside the city, by night, on the mountains.

IG IX.1² 670; Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* no.181

Good Fortune. Regulations of the *thiasos* of Amandos have been ratified in two meetings: those in the association are to provide no less than fourteen obols;[1] the association is to provide three lamps. A maenad is not to attack or abuse a maenad. Similarly a herdsman (*boukolos*) is not to attack or abuse a herdsman. But if someone does this, they shall pay to the association for each utterance a fine of four *drachmae*.[1] And for anyone in town who does not attend a meeting, the same applies. Anyone who does not assemble on the mountain owes a fine to the association of five *drachmae*. If the chief maenad does not

bring on the holy night . . . for the other fifteen <maenads>, she owes a fine of five *drachmae* [to the association]. Similarly if a [herdsman] does not bring . . .

1 There were six obols to the *drachma*; ten *drachmae* were roughly equivalent to a month's subsistence for a poor peasant family.

12.2 Regulations of a society of Diana and Antinous

Numerous private societies, including those whose primary objective was to ensure decent burials for their members, met under the auspices of a god. Such societies were strictly regulated, as this inscribed text from Lanuvium (about 30 km. SE of Rome) shows. It records not only the local rules for this particular burial club, but also the terms of the Augustan decree of the senate which governed all such organizarions.

See further: Vol. 1, 272–3; Vol. 1, Map 5; **11.9**; Ausbüttel (1982); for illustration of the inscription see A.E. Gordon (1958–65) no.196.

ILS 7212; *FIRA* III, no.35

In the consulships of [Lucius Ceionius] Commodus and Sextus Vettulenus Civica Pompeianus 5 days before Ides of June <9 June, A.D. 136>.

<Column 1>

[At Lanuvium in] the temple of Antinous,[1] in which Lucius Caesennius Rufus, [patron] of the town, had ordered that a meeting be called through Lucius Pompeius . . . us, *quinquennalis*[2] of the worshippers of Diana and Antinous, he promised that he would [give] them from his liberality the interest on 1<6>,000 *sestertii*,[3] namely 400 *sestertii* on the [birthday] of Diana, the Ides of August <13 Aug.>, and 400 *sestertii* on the birthday of Antinous, 5 days before Kalends of [December] <27 Nov.>; and he instructed the by-laws passed by them to be inscribed on the inner side of the porch <of the temple> of Antinous as recorded below.

In the consulships of [Marcus Antonius Hiberus] and Publius Mummius Sisenna <A.D. 133>, Kalends of January <1 Jan.>, the Benevolent Society of Diana . . . and Antinous was constituted, Lucius Caesennius Rufus son of Lucius, of the Quirine tribe, being for the third time sole magistrate and also patron.

(10) Clause from the Decree of the Senate of the Roman People

The following are permitted [to assemble], convene and maintain a society: those who wish to make monthly contributions [for funerals?] may assemble in such a society, but they may not [assemble] in the name of such a society except once a month for the sake of making contributions to provide burial for the dead.

[May this be propitious, happy] and salutary to the Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian

Augustus and to the entire Augustan house, to us, to ours, and to our society, and may we have made proper and careful arrangements for providing decent funerals for the dead! Therefore we must all agree to contribute faithfully, so that we may be able to continue in existence a [long] time. You who wish to enter this society as a new member, first read the by-laws carefully before doing so, so as not to find cause for complaint later or bequeath a lawsuit to your heir.

By-laws of the Society

(20) [It was voted] unanimously that whoever wishes to enter this society shall pay an entry fee of 100 *sestertii* and an amphora of good wine, and shall pay monthly dues of 5 *asses* <=1.25 *sestertii*>.[4] It was also voted that if anyone has not paid his dues for six consecutive months and the common lot of mankind befalls him, his claim to burial shall not be considered, even if he has made provision for it in his will. It was also voted that upon the decease of a paid-up member of our body there will be due to him from the fund 300 *sestertii*, from which sum will be deducted a funeral fee of 50 *sestertii* to be distributed at the pyre; the obsequies, furthermore, will be performed on foot.

(26) It was also voted that if a member dies more than 20 miles away from town and notification is made, three people chosen from our body will be required to go there to arrange for his funeral; they will be required to render an account in good faith to the membership, and if they are found guilty of any fraud they shall pay a quadruple fine; they will be given [money for the funeral costs], and in addition a return trip allowance of 20 *sestertii* each. But if a member dies further than 20 miles [from town] and notification is unable to be made, then his funeral costs, less emoluments and funeral fee, [may be claimed], in accordance with the by-laws of the society, by the man who buries him, if he so attests by an affidavit signed with the seals of seven Roman citizens, and the matter is approved, and he gives security against anyone's claiming any further sum. Let no malice aforethought attend! And let no patron or patroness, master

<Column 2>

or mistress, or creditor have any right of claim against this society unless he has been named heir in a will. If a member dies intestate, the details of his burial will be decided by the *quinquennalis* and the membership.

(3) It was also voted that if a slave member of this society dies, and his master or mistress unreasonably refuses to relinquish his body for burial, and he has not left written instructions, a token funeral ceremony will be held.

(5) It was also voted that if any member takes his own life for any reason whatever, his claim to burial <by the society> shall not be considered.

(7) It was also voted that if any slave member of this society is liberated, he is required to donate an amphora of good wine.

(8) It was also voted that if any president, in the year when it is his turn in the membership list to provide dinner, fails to comply and does not do so, he shall pay thirty

sestertii to the fund; the man next on the list shall be required to give it, and he <the offender> shall be required to reciprocate when it is the latter's turn.

(11) Diary of dinners: 8 days before Ides of March <8 Mar.>, birthday of Caesennius . . . his father;[5] 5 days before Kalends of December <27 Nov.>, birthday of Antinous; Ides of August <13 Aug.>, birthday of Diana and of the society; 13 days before Kalends of September <20 Aug.>, birthday of Caesennius Silvanus, his brother; Day before Nones [of September?] <12 Sept.?> birthday of Cornelia Procula, his mother; 19 days before Kalends of January <14 Dec.>, birthday of Caesennius Rufus, patron of the town.

Presidents of the dinners in the order of the membership list, appointed four at a time in turn, shall be required to provide an amphora of good wine each, and for as many members as the society has, bread to the value of 2 *asses* <=0.5 *sestertii*>, sardines to the number of four, the setting, and warm water with service.

It was also voted that any member who becomes *quinquennalis* in this society shall be exempt from such obligations(?) for the term when he is *quinquennalis*, and that he shall receive a double share in all distributions. It was also voted that the secretary and the messenger shall be exempt from such obligations(?) and shall receive a share and a half in every distribution.

(20) It was also voted that any member who has performed the function of *quinquennalis* honestly shall receive a share and a half of everything as a mark of honour, so that subsequent *quinquennales* will also hope for the same by properly discbarging their duties.

It was also voted that if any member wishes to lodge any complaint or discuss any business, he is to do so at a business meeting, so that we may banquet in peace and good cheer on festal days.

It was also voted that any member who moves from one place to another so as to cause a disturbance shall be fined four *sestertii.* Any member, moreover, who speaks abusively of another or causes an uproar shall be fined twelve *sestertii.* Any member who uses any abusive or insolent language to a *quinquennalis* at a banquet shall be fined twenty *sestertii.*

It was also voted that on tbe festal days of his terms of office each *quinquennalis* is to conduct worship witb [incense] and wine and is to perform his other functions clothed in white, and that on the [birth]days of Diana and Antinous he is to provide oil for the society in the public bath [before] they banquet.

1. Favourite of the Emperor Hadrian, who died A.D. 130 and received cult in various parts of the empire, though not official deification in Rome; see also 11.5a.
2. The principal officer of the society, who served for a five-year term.
3. The capital sum was generous, higher than the median average of 10,000 *sestertii* attested for Italian foundations.
4. 40 *sestertii* was roughly equivalent to a month's subsistence for a poor peasant family.
5. Father of the patron, Caesennius Rufus.

12.3 Jupiter Dolichenus

Jupiter Dolichenus was a god whose name proclaimed his origin in the small town of Doliche in northern Syria. About seventeen of his sanctuaries have been found, ranging from eastern Syria (Dura Europus) to Germany, and over 550 inscriptions, plaques and statues relating to the cult have survived. The best known sanctuary in the empire is that on the Aventine hill in Rome (Vol. 1 Map 2 no.12), and the two texts that follow illuminate the organization of the cult there. In other places, however, the cult may not have had such a complex structure.

See further: Vol. 1, 275, 281; Merlat (1960) 190–7; Hörig (1984).

12.3a *Patrons and Initiates (A.D. 200–250)*

This text presents a list of the initiates ('brothers') of the sanctuary. After the heading there follow six columns with the names of a patron and candidates. The terminology of the hierarchy is important. The candidates seem to form an intermediate category between the ordinary worshippers and the priesthood to which they aspire. The patrons, whose names were written in larger letters (immediately under the title 'Patron'), were themselves candidates, but of superior wealth and social status to those listed under them. The father of the candidates mentioned in the first paragraph was responsible for their initiation.

The names are the mixture of Roman, Greek and other (Semitic: Bacradis, for Barcadis; perhaps Celric: Aturmarurius) characteristic of Rome at this period (cf. Vol. 1, 245–7, 293–4). Three, with single names, were slaves, the rest citizens (whether freeborn or ex-slave is unclear).

AE (1940) 75; Hörig and Schwertheim (1987) no.373

Good Fortune

By order of Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus eternal preserver, Annius Julianus and Annius Victor, patrons of this place, put up a marble plaque as a gift in honour of their brothers, both patrons and candidates, through Marcus Aurelius Oenopio Acacius, priest and father of the candidates.[1]

Patron	Patron	Patron
Aurelius Magnesius	Aurelius Sarapiacus	Autelius Asclepiodotus
Lamrpias <sic>	Geminus Felix	Marcus Aurelius Eutyces
Patton	Vibius Eutycianus	Aturmarurius
Memmius Leo[2]	Cornelius Crescentianus	Titus Annius Nicevitus
	Aurelius Victorianus	Florus <?> Aelianus
	Aurelius Timotheus	Campanus Iunior

Patron	Patron	Patron
Suaetrius Clodianus	Flavius <?> Campanus	Aurelius Vitalio
Aurelius Antoninus	Suetrius <?> Exuperas	Aurelius Masculinus
Aurelius Antoninus Iunior	Suetrius <?> Primus	Aurelius Fortunatus
Gelasius the gilder[3]	Suetrius <?> Ampliatus	Bulcacius Festus
Aurelius Gelasius Acacius <?>	Aurelius Romanus priest[4]	
Granius <?> Deuterius	Aurelius Maximus priest[4]	
	Suetrius <?> Bacradis	

1. Oenopio, whose full name is given in **12.3b**, was probably responsible for dedicating the plaque. He has a Greek name (Oenopio), and his additional name Acacius (shared by Aurelius Gelasius), is also derived from the Greek, *akakios* 'without evil', and may be a 'speaking name'. Other devotees of the cult (in Austria) bear names which also may be moralizing: Justa (Just), Vera (True) and Victura (Conqueror).
2. This column includes the names of two patrons only, no candidates.
3. Gelasius probably gilded the religious monuments of the sanctuary.
4. The description of the two candidates as priests is surprising. They might have attained that rank in another sanctuary, but be only candidates in Rome (cf. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* XI.26–7). Or, Sac/Sacer might be abbreviations of the name Sacerdos, rather than the title 'priest' (= *sacerdos*).

12.3b *Divine Calling and the Hierarchy of the Sanctuary*

This inscription, which is a little later than **12.3a** (Oenopio has advanced to a higher level within the cult), amplifies the picture offered by the earlier text. It shows the involvement in the cult of a high-ranking Roman citizen, Lucius Tettius Hermes – whose benefaction to the sanctuary is recorded here; it mentions a wide range of religious offices, probably listed in (descending) hierarchical order, from 'recorder' down.

ILS 4316; Hörig and Schwertheim (1987) no.381

Good Fortune

By order of Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus Eternal, for the preserver of the firmament and for the pre-eminent divinity, invincible provider,[1] Lucius Tettius Hermes, Roman knight, candidate and patron of this place, for the welfare of himself, his wife Aurelia Restituta, his daughter Tettia Pannuchia and his family, and his dearest brother Aurelius Lampadus, and for the welfare of the priests and candidates and worshippers of this place: he presented a marble plaque with its setting and columns.

Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus chose the following to serve him:[2] Marcus Aurelius Oenopio Onesimus, called Acacius, as recorder[3] and Septimius Antonius called Olympius as father of the candidates; as patrons dearest brothers and most honourable colleagues: Aurelius Magnesius, Aurelius Serapiacus, Antonius Marianus, Marcus Iulius Florentinus as leaders of this place;[4] and Aurelius Severus Veteranus as guardian of the temple; and Aurelius Antiochus as priest. Geminus Felix and Vibius Eurychianus, litter-

bearers of the god, Cornelius Crescentianus . . . <the following names of candidates are lost.>[5]

1. Jupiter Dolichenus orders the dedication to himself as 'preserver of the firmament' (cf. 12.3a) and to the Sun, 'the pre-eminent divinity', who is several times associated with Jupiter Dolichenus in Rome. Cf. Speidel (1978).
2. Jupiter Dolichenus is said to choose those who served him in higher positions.
3. We do not know the role of 'the recorder', but he may have played a role in initiations.
4. 'The leaders of this place' seem to be a special set of patrons.
5. The last three names are grammatically distinct from the names of those chosen and probably mark the start of a list of candidates.

12.4 Isis

Isis was a deity traditionally worshipped in Egypt. She was known to the Greeks since at least the fifth century B.C., when she was identified with the Greek Demeter, and her cult is found in Greece from the fourth century B.C. onwards. Under the Roman Empire it spread to the Latin West (Italy, Africa, Spain and Gaul).

See further: Vol. 1, 264–6, 281–1, 287–8, 308–9; Witt (1971)*.

12.4a *Praise of Isis, first century B.C. or early first century A.D.*

Characterisric of the cult of Isis – and apparently peculiar to it – were formalized hymns of praise ('aretalogies') in which the achievements of the goddess were listed. The text that follows – from a sanctuary of Isis at Kyme on the western coast of Asia Minor – is the best preserved of these hymns. It is written in Greek, but the original model of the hymns was at the temple of Hephaistos (Ptah) at Memphis in Egypt and from this were derived the various versions discovered in Egypt and Greece and those known to the Greek literary tradition. There has been much discussion of the language of the prototype at Memphis (Greek or Egyptian?). Was it part of native Egyptian thought, or was it composed by a Greek-speaking Egyptian for a Greek public?

See further: Leclant (1984); Fowden (1986) 45–52*; Versnel (1990) 39–95.

IG XII Supp. 14; *Inschr. Kyme* no.41

Demerrios son of Artemidoros, also called Thraseas, from Magnesia on the Maeander, fulfilled his vow to Isis.

The following texr was copied from the inscription in Memphis which is positioned in front of the temple of Hephaistos: I am Isis the tyrant of the whole land. I was educated by Hermes and with the help of Hermes devised both sacred and secular scripts, so that everything should not be written in the same script. I established laws for humans, and created legislation which no one has the power to change. I am the eldest daughter of Kronos. I am the wife and sister of King Osiris. I am she who invented crops for humans.

I am the mother of King Horus. I am she who rises in the Dog Star. I am she who is called God by women. By me was the city of Boubastos built. I divided earth from heaven. I appointed the paths of the stars. I regulated the passage of sun and moon. I invented fishing and seafaring. I made justice strong. I coupled woman and man. I arranged that women should bring babies to the light (20) after nine months. I legislated that parents be loved by their child. I inflicted punishment on those who are not affectionately disposed towards their parents. I, with my brother Osiris, ended cannibalism. I showed initiations to humans. I taught them to honour images of the gods. I founded sanctuaries of the gods. I ended the rule of tyrants. I ended murders. I forced women to be loved by men. I made justice stronger than gold and silver. I legislated that truth be considered a fine thing. I invented marriage contracts. I assigned languages for Greeks and barbarians. I made good and evil be distinguished by nature. I made nothing more respected than the oath. I delivered the person plotting unjustly against another into the hands of the person plotted against. I inflict punishment on those acting unjustly. I legislated mercy for the suppliant. I honour those who avenge themselves with justice. By me justice is mighty. I am mistress of rivers, winds (40) and sea. No one is held in honour without my assent. I am mistress of war. I am mistress of the thunderbolt. I calm and agitate the sea. I am in the rays of the sun. I accompany the passage of the sun. Whatever I decide is actually accomplished. To me everything yields. I free those in chains. I am mistress of seamanship. I make the navigable unnavigable whenever I decide. I built the walls of cities. I am she who is called Thesmophoros.[1] I raised islands from the deep to the light. I am mistress of rainstorms. I conquered fate. To me fate listens.

Hail Egypt who nourished me.

1. 'Lawgiver', an epithet normally applied to the Greek goddess Demeter.

12.4b *The revelation of Isis to Lucius*

This extract from Apuleius' novel (see also **5.6c** and **8.8**) describes first the appearance of Isis, with a promise of rescue, to the hero Lucius – who has been turned into an ass; and second Lucius' subsequent initiation into the cult of Isis at Corinth. The conversion of Lucius is the culmination of the search for knowledge that permeates the whole work (though we must remember that it is a work of fiction, not an autobiography); the passage clearly bears some relationship to cultic practice (cf. the hymn in **12.4a**) and evokes the intense relationship between a deity and worshippers in the cult.

See further: Nock (1933) 138–55*; Griffiths (1975); Winkler (1985).

Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* XI.5–6, 23–5

'Lo I <Isis> am at hand moved by your prayers, Lucius, I the parent of the nature of things, mistress of all the elements, initial begetter of the ages, supreme of divine powers, queen of the shades of the dead, first of heavenly beings, the uniform countenance of gods

and goddesses. I, who control at my will the luminous points of the sky, the salubrious breezes of the sea and the lamented silences of the underworld. My unparalleled divine power is worshipped by the whole world in varied forms, with different rites and diverse names.[1] The first-born Phrygians call me Mother of the Gods at Pessinus; the indigenous Athenians, Minerva, daughter of Cecrops; the wave-washed Cypriots, Venus of Paphos; the archers of Crete, Dictynna Diana; the trilingual Sicilians, Stygian Proserpina; the Eleusinians, the most ancient goddess Ceres; different peoples call me Juno, or Bellona, or Hecate, or Rhamnusia; those warmed by the first rays of the rising god of the sun, the Ethiopians, Arians and Egyptians, steeped in their ancient learning, worship me with my own rites and call me by my real name: Queen Isis. I am at hand from pity for your situation, I am at hand to favour and aid you. Cease your tears and weeping now, dispel your sorrow; now by my benevolence the day of well-being dawns on you . . .

(6) 'You shall live a blessed life, you shall live under my protection a life of glory, and when you have reached the end of your time and go down to the underworld, there too you will often worship me (who will be favourable to you) in the semicircular space beneath the earth, seeing me shining in the darkness of Acheron and ruling in the Stygian depths, when you yourself are living in the Elysian fields. But if by diligent attention, devout service and continuing purity you will be worthy of our divine power, you will know that I alone can extend your life beyond the span laid down by fate.'

<Lucius then watched the Isiac procession (5.6c), at which he was transformed back into a man, and in turn attached himself to the goddess.>

(23) . . . In due course, as the priest said, he escorted me in the company of a group of devotees to the adjacent baths. Once I had been washed in the usual manner, he cleansed me with a sprinkling of purest water, praying for the gods' forgiveness. He led me back to the temple, now that two parts of the day were over, set me before the very feet of the goddess, gave me in secret certain instructions which could not be spoken out loud, and ordered me openly in the presence of all the witnesses to abstain for the next ten days from dietary pleasures, in particular to avoid eating any meat or drinking wine. Once I had duly observed the sacred fasting, there now arrived the day selected for my divine appointment, and the sun passed through the sky and led on the evening. Then hordes of devotees gathered from all quarters, each person presenting me with different gifts according to an ancient custom. Then, once all the uninitiated were sent away, the priest clad me in a new linen garment and took me by the hand and led me to the heart of the actual sanctuary.

You may perhaps, attentive reader, ask anxiously what was then said and done. I would tell you, if I could; you would find out, if you could be told. But your ears and my tongue would be equally punished for such rash curiosity. However, I will not any longer keep you on tenterhooks if you are inspired by religious longing. So listen, but believe, it is the truth. Having reached the boundary of death and having stood on the threshold of Proserpina, I was borne through all the elements and returned. In the middle of the night I saw the sun shining with a brilliant light. I approached the gods below and the gods

above and worshipped them close to. There, I have reported to you things which, even though you have heard them, you must fail to understand. So I shall tell you only what can be reported without sin to the minds of the uninitiated.

(24) The curtains were suddenly drawn and the people crowded in to gaze on me dressed like the sun and standing like a statue. Then I celebrated this most happy day, marking my birth as an initiate, with pleasant dinners and lively company. Then on the third day there were similar rituals, a sacred breakfast and the proper conclusion to the initiation. I then spent a few days there enjoying the unutterable pleasures of the goddess' statue, and because I was bound to her by a gratitude that I could never repay.

But at last on the goddess' instructions, once my thanks had been paid, if not completely, at least to the best of my ability, I began finally to prepare to go home, though I had hardly broken the chains of my burning desire. Finally, prostrate in front of the goddess' image, whose feet I long washed with my face, I said, with tears welling and choking my words:

(25) 'You are the holy and continual saviour of the human race, always a benefactress who nourishes mortals, you offer the loving feelings of a mother to the afflictions of the distressed. Neither day nor night interrupts your beneficence: you protect people by land and sea, and scattering the storms of life you stretch out your right hand to save them; with this hand you unravel the hopelessly tangled knots tied by fate, you make the storms of Fortune abate and you prevent dangerous conjunctions of the stars. The gods above worship you, those below respect you. You turn the globe, light the sun, rule the world, trample on Tartarus. For you the constellations move, the seasons return, the divine powers rejoice, the elements obey. At your wish the winds blow, the clouds nourish the earth, seeds sprout, buds grow. At your majesty the birds of the sky tremble, and the wild beasts in the mountains, the snakes in the ground, the monsters of the deep. But my talent is lacking for offering you praise, and my wealth is inadequate for providing sacrifices; nor do I have fluency for uttering my thoughts about your majesty. Even a thousand mouths and tongues, speaking in an unbroken and unwearying series, would not be enough. So I shall make sure I do the things a religious but poor person can: I shall for ever guard your sacred appearance and most holy divine power in the depth of my heart and gaze upon it.'

1. The identification of Isis with other deities is paralleled in other cults of the period, e.g. a hymn to Attis in 12.7e(iv). Cf. Vol. 1, 339–48 on 'syncretism'.

12.4c *The public standing of the cult (A.D. 251)*

An inscription in Latin from Ostia (see Vol. 1, Map 5) on the base of the statue of a priest of Isis shows how members of the local elite were prominent in the cult there; here, in fact, it was a Roman senator who had the statue erected. The language of the inscription also recalls that of Apuleius (**12.4b**).

See further: Vol. 1, 291–3.

ILS 6149; Vidman, *Sylloge* no.536

To Drusus Fabius Florus Vera[n]us, son of Drusus, of the Palatine tribe, priest of the holy queen <sc. Isis>, by verdict of her majesty chosen as a devotee of Anubis,[1] councillor in the Augustan village of the Laurentines, chief magistrate,[2] having filled all positions and functions in the fifth shipping corporation of the lighter-men of Ostia, fellow member of the corporations of the five regions of the *colonia* of Ostia. To him Flavius Moschylus of senatorial rank, an Isiac of this place, remembering his reverence and chastity, ordered in his will the statue to be put up by his heirs, to an elegant <?> patron who well deserved it. The spot was given publicly by decree of the town council.

<On the side> In honour of the day he was made priest, it was dedicated 17 days before the Kalends of A[pril/August] <16 March/16 July> [the Decii being] consul for the third and first time <A.D. 251?>. The spot was given by Julius Faustinus *pontifex* of Vulcan and the sacred shrines, by permission of the agent of Flavius Moschylus, during the five-year period of the censorship of Quintus Vetutius Firmus Felix Socrates and Lucius Florus Euprepes.[3] For the dedication he gave to the councillors 3000 *sestertii*, along with the officials of the basilica.

1. On Anubis see **12.4d** n.3.
2. The offices of councillor and chief magistrate were inscribed subsequently in place of a line that was erased.
3. The proper local procedures were followed for putting up the statue in a public place.

12.4d *The attraction for women*

Roman writers often claim that women were particularly atttracted to the cult of Isis. In the famous (or infamous) satite devoted to the failings of women (see also **8.7b** and **13.4**), Juvenal criticizes all kinds of female religious excesses: involvement with the Magna Mater (Cybele), with Judaism, with illicit divining and with magical practices. In this passage he is characterizing – venomously – the devotion of a particular woman to the rituals of Isis.

It goes without saying that we should be chary of accepting uncritically the views of a male satirist about female religiosity. If ancient critics mean to imply that women predominated in the cult, they are in conflicr with the epigraphic evidence. The subscrihing inscriptions suggest: (a) that women did not outnumber men in the cult at all (**12.4f** for example, refers only to men – though this is, admittedly, an extreme case); (b) that the principal offices in the cult were generally held by men not women. The seeming discrepancy between Juvenal and the epigtaphic evidence may be explained in various ways: for example, Juvenal might be expressing the anxiety felt by Roman upper-class men resulting from *any* independent religious activity on the part of their wives; alternatively, it could be that the cultural misogyny of the authors made them particularly associate women with marginal religious groups, on the lines of the Bacchic women. (See Vol. 1, 96 and n.88; **11.4**, **12.1**.)

It needs to be emphasised, however, that the passage, whether or not it reflects the reality of women's religious experience, provides us with important evidence about changing religious attitudes and assumptions in the period. Whether Roman women really broke the ice and jumped into the Tiber is less important to us than the fact that Juvenal associates the Isis cult with a series of novel features: the devotee receives personal instructions from the goddess herself; fanatical commitment requires her to undergo physical torture and deprivation – even to go on a pilgrimage beyond Egypt if so instructed; if she breaks the sex-rules of the cult, even with her own husband, she has to seek forgiveness from Osiris through his priests. Juvenal's hostility may arise at least partly because control of the body and of sexuality had played such a limited part in traditional Roman religious life, normal though the association is for us today.

See further: Vol. 1, 287–8, 296–300; Courtney (1980) 328–32; Henderson (1989).

Juvenal, *Satires* 6.522–41

In winter she'll break the ice, enter the river, be immersed three times in the morning Tiber and wash her trembling head in the swirling stream; then she'll crawl, naked and shaking, on bloody knees, across the whole field of the proud king[1]. If white Io so orders, she'll go to the ends of Egypt and bring the required water from hot Meroe,[2] so that she can sprinkle it in the shrine of Isis which stands next to the ancient sheep pens. For, she believes, she is instructed by the voice of the mistress <i.e. Isis> herself – being, no doubt, just the sort of person, in soul and mind, to whom gods would speak in the night! That is why the one who deserves the special, highest honours is Anubis, since he runs about jeering amongst the linen-clad, bald crew of people lamenting <the death of Osiris>.[3] And it's he <Anubis> who begs forgiveness for a wife, whenever she fails to abstain from sex on the forbidden sacred days and incurs the great penalty fixed for wrong-doing between the sheets, and whenever the silver snake is seen to move his head.[4] His <Anubis'> tears and practised mutterings do the trick: Osiris does not refuse forgiveness for her guilt – bribed, of course, by a fat goose and a fine sacrificial cake.

1. The Campus Martius is referred to twice: once as the field which the proud king (Tarquinius Superbus, i.e. Tarquin 'the Proud') gave to the Romans; once as near the 'sheep pens', i.e. the Saepta, the voting 'pens' for meetings of the assembly.
2. The Greek Io, who was turned into a white bull and came to Egypt, was identified with Isis, who was also sometimes depicted in bovine form. Meroe was well south of the southern frontier of the empire, but the background to the satire was the claim that water from the Nile was brought to Rome for use in the Isis cult.
3. The reference is to a priest dressed as Anubis (the dog-headed attendant of Isis and her husband Osiris). Juvenal implies that Anubis has the role of of jeering at the mourning for Osiris, presumably as part of the ritual performance. Juvenal's satire depends on taking this jeering literally – and suggesting that Anubis is worthy of some respect since he actually laughs at the ridiculous cult.
4. The snake is the sacred animal of Isis. The prodigy of the silver snake's moving head is presumably meant to give away the fact that the woman has broken down the sex-rules, and must be punished unless Osiris can be persuaded otherwise.

12.4e *Isiac ceremonial (c. A.D. 50–75?)*

One of a pair of frescoes (each 0.80 × 0.85 m.) of Isiac scenes found at Herculaneum, probably in a private house. Though there was a temple of Isis in that town, the paintings, with their Egyptian ibises and palm trees, depict an ideal version of Isiac ceremonies, rather than what happened in Herculaneum. There are numerous parallels between this painting and Apuleius' story (extracts in **5.6c** and **12.4b**); both may evoke the same spring festival, the Sailing of Isis.

See further: Tran Tam Tinh (1971) 29–49, 83–4; **5.6d**.

1. Temple with pair of sphinxes in front.
2. Priest, with shaven head, in white robe carrying golden vase, as described in Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* XI.11, which may have contained Nile water symbolizing Osiris (cf. **5.6d** n.2; **12.4d** n.1). On either side a priest and priestess carrying Isiac 'rattles'.
3. Altar whose flame is tended by a shaven priest.
4. A priest, also shaven, seemingly conducting the singing of the faithful, both male and female. Note that he, like one of the figures on the temple steps, is black, i.e. from southern Egypt.

12.4f *An Isiac fraternity in Rome*

These graffiti, dating to the second half of the second century A.D., were found in a house on the Aventine hill (Vol. 1, Map 2 no.28). They were scratched on

the walls of a corridor leading to what was probably the meeting-place of an Isiac confraternity. Wall-paintings found with them show Isiac scenes.

The graffiti illustrate both the divine support gained by Isiac initiates and their social status. Those named, all male (see **12.4d**), have Greek-sounding names charactetistic of slaves (a fact made explicit in one case); only one Roman citizen (Oppius Rufus) is mentioned, and that in an obscene context.

See further: Vol. 1, 266; Wild (1984) 1815 (plan); Darsy (1968) 45–50 (paintings).

Darsy (1968), reprinted in Malaise (1972a) 142 whose numbering (a-m) is used here; substantially improved by Solin (1982) and Volpe (1982)

a <illegible>
b Initiate[1] of the god <sc. Isis>.
c <illegible>
d You, Isis, you are salvation to yours.
e Phosphor.
f Believe in her, do not succumb. Provided that you are not guilty, be of good cheer.
g I am beard through the initiate.[2]
h Amphio the initiate[1], . . . <possibly 'may you be lucky'>.
i I have made the vow; if I leave <sc. the shrine> safely, they will look inside their bottles of wine.[3]
j Daedalus . . .[4]
k <illegible>
l <Sc. Cure> the sickness of Theonas.

Epaphra, boy, sharer.[5]
Agrianus neos.[5]
Sotericus <slave of> Oppius.
Pamphilus.

m I fuck Faustus [and] Oppius Rufus. I ask you, bugger me. <written in reverse>

1. The term 'initiate' (a Latin transliteration of the Greek word) seems to refer to the faithful as distinct from the priests.
2. This is obscure.
3. The writer seems to envisage celebrations after his successful initiation.
4. The name is followed by an unintelligible word.
5. The epithet 'sharer' seems to refer to initiation in the cult. Neos ('young') may be a name.

12.4g *The cult of Osiris in A.D. 417*

In this passage a traveller from Rome to Gaul nored the practice of traditional rites, the so-called 'discovery' of the god Osiris, on the wesr coast of Italy opposite Elba. Theodosius had by this date banned sacrifice (11.14), but ancient cults continued in Rome to this period (5.2e).

See further: Vol. 1, 287; Alan Cameron (1967); Malaise (1972b) 221–8.

Rutilius Namatianus, *On his Return* 1.371–6

We halted our weary way at nearby Faleria, although Phoebus had scarcely reached mid-point in the sky. As it happened, happy villagers were easing their weariness with joyful rites at the crossroads in the countryside; it was indeed on that day that Osiris was at last restored to life and arouses the seeds readily to yield new crops.

12.5 The mysteries of Mithras

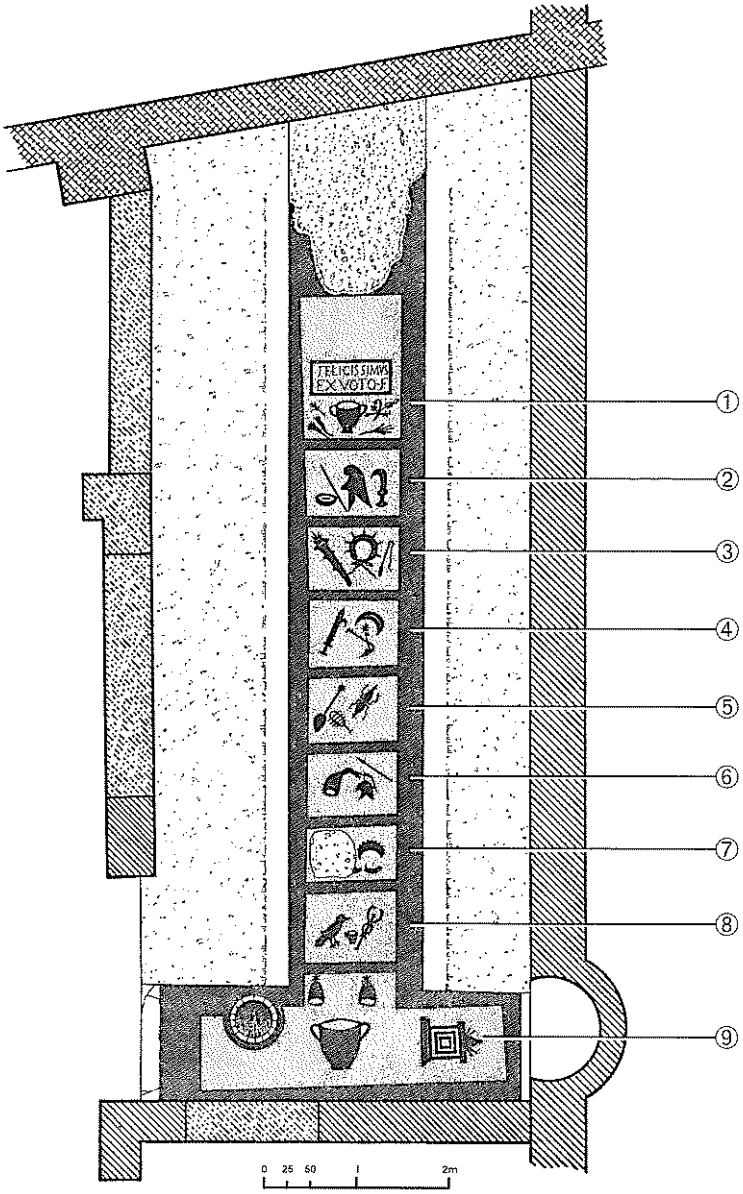
The cult of Mithras was widely known throughout the Roman world from around A.D. 100 onwards – though the evidence for its organization and beliefs is complex and often obscure. The surviving remains of the Mithraic sanctuaries, their design and decoration offer a starting-point, but interpretation is often problematic (**4.6a**; **12.5a–b**). There is no surviving writing on the cult from its members themselves, except for some inscriptions and enigmatic painted graffiti and a fragment of a papyrus book seemingly used in Mithraic initiations (see **12.5c** and **h** where we show how this material might be used to help our understanding of Mithraism). Otherwise all surviving writing on Mithras and his worship comes from outside the cult, from those with their own axes to grind; and it is often hard to see how much of what they say is 'really Mithraic'. Porphyry, writing as a neo-Platonic philosopher, devotes considerable space to Mithraism – but is using it as part of his own philosophical agenda (**4.6c**, **12.5d** and **g**); the so-called 'Mithras liturgy' took over aspects of the cult of Mithras for magical purposes (**11.6**); Celsus described Persian mysteries (Mithraism was believed to have originated in Persia) in his polemic against Christianity (**12.5f**); and Christian writers referred to the cult in their defence of Christianity (Justin, **12.7a** #66; Tertullian, **12.5e**; Firmicus Maternus, **4.6b**).

See further: Vol. 1, 277–80, 282–3, 285–8, 293–5, 300–1; Vermaseren (1963); Beck (1984); Hinnells (1985) 74–90*.

12.5a *The sanctuary of Felicissimus at Ostia and Mithraic grades*

The mosaic on the floor of a sanctuary of Mithras at Ostia (dating to the middle of the third century A.D.) illustrates both the sequence of the 'grades' of initiation in the cult and the tutelary deities associated with each grade. The standard sequence of grades through which the initiate passed is (from bottom to top): Raven, Male Bride, Soldier, Lion, Persian, Sun-runner, Father. Of these the Lions were a crucial grade and the Fathers (as the most senior grade) very prominent in our evidence.

See further: Becatti (1954) 105–12; *CIMRM* 299; Vermaseren (1963) 138–53*; R. L. Gordon (1976) on astrological symbolism and (1980a) on the grades. Cf. **4.6** for other Mithraic sanctuaries.



1. Mixing bowl, with branches around. 'Felicissimus made it to fulfil his vow'.
2. Father's staff and bowl, with Mithras' cap and Saturn's sickle (cf. **12.5b** n.7).
3. Sun-runner's torch, with whip and halo of the Sun.
4. Persian's sickle and scythe, with the Moon's crescent.
5. Lion's fireshovel (cf. on Lions **12.5c(v)** and **12.5h(xiv)**), with sacred rattle (*sistrum*), and thunderbolt of Jupiter.
6. Soldier's kitbag, with lance and helmet of Mars.
7. Male bride, with a lamp and diadem of Venus.
8. Raven, with cup and the staff (*caduceus*) of Mercury.
9. Mixing bowl, *krater* (as in **12.5g**); flaming altar; two Persian hats with stars, symbols of Cautes and Cautopates (**12.5g** n.9).

12.5b *Mithraic iconography*

A depiction of Mithras slaying a bull was a standard feature of all Mithraic sanctuaries and was perhaps associated with the idea of salvation. This relief, dating to A.D. 172 (cf. *CIMRM* 648), stood at the far end of the Mithraic sanctuary at Nersae in central Italy (height 0.81 m., width 1.04 m.). Flanking the central image are six side panels, apparently depicting mythological scenes. These are a common feature of the main Mithraic 'icon' and scholars have often tried to use them to produce a narrative of the life of Mithras. However, the selection of such scenes is always different on different monuments and there was no standard sequence – which makes the reading of a single, orthodox narrative impossible.

See further: Vol. 1, 285–6, 302–4, 307; 4.6a; *CIMRM* 650; Vermaseren (1963) 67–106*; R. L. Gordon (1980b).

1. Mithras killing bull, with raven on cloak.
2. Dog, snake and scorpion below bull, perhaps symbols of constellations.
3. Figure of the sun with whip of charioteer.
4. Figure of the moon with crescent moon and quiver.

5. Cautes (with raised torch) and Cautopates (with lowered torch). Cf. **4.6a** n.4; **12.5g** n.9.
6. Jupiter fighting two snake-footed giants.
7. Saturn with sickle (as in **12.5a** n.8) dreaming under a fig tree.
8. Birth of Mithras from rock; two shepherds adoring him.
9. Mithras on the back of a bull.
10. Naked Sun kneeling on left with downturned dagger, grasping hand of Mithras holding Persian sickle (as n.7); flaming altar in centre.
11. Mithras dubs kneeling Sun with shoulder of bull (cf. Hinnells and Gordon (1977–8) 213–19).
12. 'Apronianus the civic treasurer made it at his own expense'.

12.5c *Mithraic inscriptions*

This selection of texts illustrates various aspects of the Mithraic cult: the social standing of members (**12.5c(i)**, **(ii)**, **(vii)** imperial ex-slaves; **12.5c(v–vi)**, **(viii)** soldiers); the grades of initiation (**12.5c(ii–iv)**, **(vi)**); the theology of the cult (**12.5c(i)** Persian word; **12.5c(viii)** sacred cave); and its history (**12.5c(ii)** is the earliest extant text which presupposes a graded structure of iniriation, **12.5c(iv)** illustrates the revival of the cult in the fourth century).

12.5c(i) Mithras' order to an imperial slave. A marble plaque found near Hadrian's villa outside Tivoli.

ILS 4237; *CIMRM* 214; *Insc. Italiae* IV.67

To Sun unconquerable Mithras, just as he himself ordered in a dream his image (?) to be repaired, Victorinus a slave steward of our emperor undertook its repair for the ever present deity at his own expense and dedicated it. Hail <*Nama*[1]> to all. The attendant was [. . .]lius Magnus.

1. *Nama* is the one certainly Persian word attested in the cult (the other probable one is *nabarze*, 'victorious'). The cult claimed its origins in Persia (cf. **12.5d**).

12.5c(ii) An imperial ex-slave and his Father. On an altar (?) from Rome, possibly as early as A.D. 100.

See further: R. L. Gordon (1978) 151–3.

CIMRM 362; *IGUR* 179

<in Latin> To Sun unconquerable Mithras, donated by Titus Flavius Hyginus Ephebianus, freedman of the emperor. <in Greek> To Helios Mithras Titus Flavius Hyginus, through Lollius Rufus, his own Father.

12.5c(iii) Ravens, Fathers and Lions. On a marble slab from Rome (Vol. 1, Map 3 no.36)

CIMRM 473; *IGUR* 106

<in Greek> To Zeus Helios great unconquerable Mithras and the deities dwelling with him were given two bronze lamps, each with six wicks, by Casrus father and Castus son,[1] holy 'Raven', and dedicated with the following attendants: Lucius Saturius Sporus and Pactumeius Lausus Fathers, Modestus, Paralius, Agathemerus, Felix, Apamenius, Keloidi (?) Lions.[2]

1. Castus and Castus seem to be kin, though the first Castus might also be a Mithraic Father.
2. 'Lions' is in larger letters, indicating that the previous six men were all members of this important grade.

12.5c(iv) One of a series of inscribed altars and bases from a sanctuary in Rome recording initiations performed between A.D. 357 and 376 by a father and son, each of them also Mithraic Farhers.

See further: Vol. 1, 383–4 (on involvement in the cult by senators); Vol. 1, Map 3 no.22; **8.9**; Gallo (1979).

ILS 4267b; *CIMRM* 401

In the consulships of Datianus and Cerealis <A.D. 358> Nonius Vicror Olympius, of senatorial rank, Father of Farhers, [and] Aurelius Victor Augentius, of senatorial rank, Father, transmitted the symbols of the Persian grade <sc. to the initiates> on the day before the Nones of April <4 April> with good fortune. In the above mentioned consulships rhey transmitted the symbols of the Sun's grade <sc. to the initiates> 16 days before the Kalends of May <15 April> with good fortune.

12.5c(v) The building of a Mithraic shrine by Lions. On a marble plaque from San Gemini in the territory of ancient Carsulae 80 km. north of Rome (A.D. 250–300?).

See further: Ciotti (1978).

Ciotti (1978) 234

The Lion Place,[1] adorned with sculpture and other fittings, by permission of the most holy council,[2] was made from scratch at their own expense by the Lions, who had heen 'consummated'[3] by Egnatius Reparatus legitimate priest and contributor: Titus Lepidius Honorinus, Alexander and Amicus imperial <slaves>, Watchmen <of water supply>, the two Lucii Vicrii – Severus and Speratus – Titus Satrontus <an error for Satronius> Sabinianus, Publius Vatinius Iustus, Lucius Iulius Felix, Lucius Longinius Stachys Engineer for 5, 000 *sestertii*.[4] The place was given by decree of the town council.

1. 'Lion Place' (Leonteum) seems to be a term for the whole Mithraic sanctuary, derived from the importance of the Lion grade: Brashear (1992) 27–8.
2. I.e. the local town council, not as Burkert (1987) 42, a central authority of the cult.

3. I.e. initiated. See 12.5h(xiv) on the Lions and on initiation.
4. This sum falls at the lowest end of the range of attested figures for building works in Italy.

12.5c(vi) Soldiers and Mithras. On a small altar from a Roman military base at Bingium (modern Bingen, near Mainz in Germany).

CIMRM 1243; E. Schwertheim, *Die Denkmäler orientalische Gottheiten im römischen Deutschland*, EPRO 40 (Leiden, 1974) no. 108c.

In honour of the imperial house, to the unconquerable god Mithras the altar was estahlished as a result of a vow to the god[1] at their own expense by Aulus Gratius Iuvenis Father of the rites and Aulus Gratius Potens, soldier of the XXII legion, Fire Officer. The brothers dedicated it when Africanus was consul <A.D. 236>.

1 'As a result of a vow to the god' was inscribed on top of an earlier text which read 'and temple'. This may suggest that the couple had originally hoped to pay for both an altar and a temple.

12.5c(vii) Customs officials and Mithras. On an altar from Virunum (north-east of Klagenfurt in Austria), the original administrative centre of the province of Noricum (formerly a client kingdom), where there was an important imperial customs post. The cult of Mithras is often found among customs officials in the Danube region.

See further: Beskow (1980); Piccottini (1994).

ILS 4198; *CIMRM* 1438

For the well-being of the emperor, in honour of the divine house, to Sun unconquerable Mithras, Hilarus, ex-slave of the emperor, customs officer of the steward of the Norican kingdom and Epictetus, cashier of our emperor, repaired the temple which had collapsed through age at their own expense, along with its painting, when the emperor our master Gordianus Augustus and Aviola were consuls <A.D. 239>, with the priest Licinius Marcellus as father [of the rites?]. Dedicated eight days before the Kalends of July <24 June> . . .

12.5c(viii) The building of a Mithraic sanctuary in the Greek world. On a marble slab from Istros, modern Histria in Romania (A.D. 159–60?). The men, though mainly lacking the three names of Roman citizens, seem to have belonged to the local elite. Though the cult was not common in Greek cities, here at least it was of high standing.

See furrher: Pippidi (1978).

CIMRM 2296; *SEG* XXVII.369; *Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris* I.137

<in Greek> Good Fortune. To Sun unconquerable Mithras. In the priesthood of Iulios Severos governor[1] the following contributed to the building of the sacred cave and displayed their piety, through the service of the pious Father Meniskos son of Numenios:

Markos Ulpios Artemidoros, high priest of the Pontic League; Hippolochos son of Pythion; Karpos son of Apollodoros; Kallistratos son of Apollodoros; Ailios Dionysios son of Demokrates; Ioulios Bassos governor's orderly; Aurelios Aimilianos; Ailios Firmos; Dionysios son of Dionysodoros.

1. The inscription is dated by the year in which the governor of the province of Lower Moesia held the principal civic priesthood of the town.

12.5d *Persia and initiation into the cult of Mithras*

The cult of Mithras in the Roman empire claimed its origin in Persia. So, in this passage, Porphyry starts his discussion with the *magi* of Persian religion and moves directly on to the cult of Mithras in the Roman empire. His main point is a philosophical attack on a carnivorous diet; hut, in citing the initiates of Mithras as examples of those who adhere to vegetarianism, he provides important evidence on Mithraic initiation and symbolism, especially in relation to the Lion grade.

See further: Vol. 1, 277–8, 303–7; Vermaseren (1963) 129–53*; Beck (1984) 2090–3; Brashear (1992) with Vol. 1, 000 for a probably Mithraic initiatory catechism from Egypt.

Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food* IV.16

Indeed among the Persians those who have wisdom about the divine and serve it are called *magi* (this is the meaning of *magus* in the local language), and this class is held hy the Persians to be so great and venerable that Darius, son of Hystaspes, actually had this, among other things, engraved on his tomb, that he had been a teacher of the learning of the *magi*.[1] They were divided into three classes, as Euboulos recorded in his multi-volume history of Mithras:[2] the first and most learned class do not eat or kill any living thing, adhering to the ancient abstinence from animals; the second class eat some, but do not kill any domesticated animals; similarly, the third class do not lay hands on any animals. For they share a primary belief in the transmigration of souls, which they <sc. the initiators> seem also to reflect in the mysteries of Mithras. There, in order to demonstrate our kinship with animals allegorically, they are accustomed to image us by means of animals. Thus they call those who are initiated into their rites 'Lions', women 'Hyenas', and the attendants 'Ravens'. And witb respect to the Fathers <tbe same is true>; for they are called 'Eagles' and 'Hawks'.[3] The person who is initiated into the grade of Lion <literally, 'receives the Lion things'> is invested with all sorts of animal forms. The reason for this is given by Pallas in his work on Mithras;[4] he says that the common opinion is that these things refer to the circle of the zodiac, but that the real and accurate explanation is that they state allegorically something about human souls, which they <sc. the Mithraists> say are incarnated in all sorts of bodies . . .

1. Darius I, king of Persia 522–486 B.C. The surviving inscriptions from the tomb do not say this.

2. The date of Euboulos is unknown, but his work was used by Numenius and Kronios writing on Platonic philosophy perhaps *c.* A.D. 160–80.
3. R. L. Gordon (1980a) elucidates the animal symbolism, and shows that women, despite their title 'Hyenas', were not initiated into the mysteries (cf. Vol. 1, 298). On Lions see further **12.5c(v)** and **12.5h(xiv)**.
4. Pallas wrote in or after the reign of Hadrian.

12.5e *The soldier of Mithras*

Here the Christian writer Tertullian makes play with the word 'soldier' – which referred not only to a member of the Roman army and a follower of Christ, but also to the third Mithraic grade (**12.5a**). He is emphasizing that the soldier of Christ is the only true soldier. The passage is drawn from a treatise written in defence of a Christian soldier who had recently displayed disloyalty by refusing to wear the customary crown at a distribution of imperial bounty to the troops, perhaps in A.D. 211.

See further: Vol. 1, 288, 294–5; Vermaseren (1963) 144–6*; R. L. Gordon (1975) 234–6; Clauss (1992).

Tertullian, *On the Soldier's Crown* 15.3–4

You should be ashamed now, fellow soldiers <of the soldier of Christ>, not of being judged by him but by some soldier of Mithras. When he is initiated in the cave, in the real camp of darkness, he is offered a crown on a sword point, a sort of mockery of martyrdom, which is then fitted on his head, but he is instructed to remove it with his hand from his head and to transfer it, if possible, to his shoulders, saying that Mithras is his crown. And from then on he never wears a crown, and has that as a mark of his initiation: whenever he is put to the test at the oath-taking, and is immediately recognized as a soldier of Mithras, if he rejects the crown, if he says that in his god he has his crown. Let us recognize the devices of the devil, especially when he creates imitations of divine rites so as to shame and condemn us with the faith of his followers.

12.5f *The Mithraic ascent of the soul*

Celsus, as part of his now lost critique of Christianity, had occasion to refer to 'some Persian mysteries', apparently part of Mithraic rituals. The passage, which is part of the Christian Origen's reply to Celsus (cf. **11.11c**), gives a unique account of the ascent of the soul through the seven planets. However, we do not know the source of Celsus' list nor its context in Celsus' original work. There is therefore room for debate about how far it is strictly Mithraic. The sequence of seven planets assumed here is not confirmed in other texts, nor evidenced by any monument. But the layout of some buildings does play with similar ideas. In Germany some have seven entrance steps *down* into the building; the mithraeum at Dura Europus in Syria has a seven-stepped staircase *up* to the cult niche. At Ostia one sanctuary (Sette Sfere) depicts on the

aisle floor seven successive arches, though these may refer not to the planets but to the regions of the earth governed by different planets and zodiacal signs; another sanctuary (Felicissimus) depicts a seven-runged ladder with the symbols of each grade (12.5a). But these are not the same as the sequence of this passage. There are also two further peculiarities about it: (a) it uses the sequence of planets associated with the days of the week, a *time* sequence, to establish a *spatial* sequence, through which the soul passes; (b) it presents the planets in the reverse order of the days of the week, as it were from Saturday backwards. In other words, this passage and the one that follows (12.5g) raise for us the problem of knowing the limits of speculation acceptable within the cult. Are the following ideas authoritative within the Mysteries, or just individual, eccentric elaborations?

See further: Chadwick (1953) 334–5*; R. L. Gordon (1976) 142–5; Beck (1988) 73–85.

Origen, *Against Celsus* VI.22

Next, wanting to display his erudition in his attack on us, Celsus also describes some Persian mysteries where he says: These things are allegorically stated both by the teaching of the Persians and by Mithraic initiation which is practised by them. In the latter there is a symbol of the two celestial revolutions, one fixed and the other assigned to the planets, and of the soul's passage through them. The symbol is like this: a ladder with seven gates, topped by an eighth. The first gate is of lead, the second of tin, the third of bronze, the fourth of iron, the fifth of an alloy, the sixth of silver and the seventh of gold. They associate the first gate with Kronos <Saturn>, symbolizing with the lead the slowness of the star; the second with Aphrodite <Venus>, comparing her with the brightness and softness of tin; the third with Zeus <Jupiter>, as the gate has a bronze base and is solid; the fourth with Hermes <Mercury>, as both iron and Hermes are reliable for all actions, make money and are hardworking; the fifth with Ares <Mars>, the gate which as a result of the alloy is uneven and variegated; the sixth, silver, with the Moon and the seventh, gold with the Sun, these metals resembling their colours.

12.5g *Mithraic cosmology*

Many modern interpretations of the mysteries are based on Porphyry's allegorical interpretation of Homer's description of the cave of the nymphs (*Odyssey* XIII.102–12):

> At the head of the harbor, there is an olive with spreading
> leaves, and nearby is a cave that is shaded, and pleasant,
> and sacred to the nymphs who are called the Nymphs of the Wellsprings,
> Naiads. There are mixing bowls and handled jars inside it,
> all of stone, and there the bees deposit their honey.
> And therein also are looms that are made of stone, very long, where
> the nymphs weave their sea-purple webs, a wonder to look on;

> and there is water forever flowing. It has two entrances,
> one of them facing the North Wind, where people can enter,
> but the one toward the South Wind has more divinity. That is
> the way of the immortals, and no men enter by that way.
> (tr. R. Lattimore)

Porphyry interprets the description in terms of the cult of Mithras, for example seeing the honey in relation to Mithraic initiation and stressing the astronomical importance of the cave. The passage is imbued with allegory, but it does seem to relate to Mithraic practices and theology.

See further: Vol. 1, 277–8; Buffière (1956) 419–59; R. L. Gordon (1976) 120–38; Beck (1984) 2053–4; Beck (1988) 40–2, 84, 93–4; Lamberton (1986) 54–77, 108–32, 318–24*. For section 6 see 4.6c.

Porphyry, *On the Cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey* 15–16, 17–18, 24–5

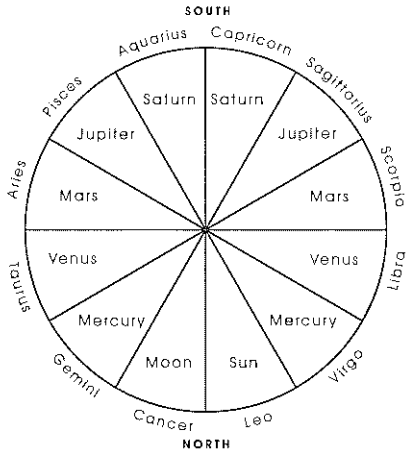
The theologians <i.e. Numenius, Kronios and their sources?[1]> have used honey to symbolize many different things since it combines multiple powers, both purificatory and preservative.[2] Honey preserves many things from rotting, and cleans out lingering wounds. It is sweet to taste and is gathered from flowers by bees, who it so happens are born from an ox. So when they <i.e. Mithraic initiators> pour honey instead of water on the hands of those being initiated into the Lion grade to wash them, they instruct the initiates to keep their hands pure from everything painful, harmful and foul <or 'sinful'>; since he is an initiate of fire, which is a means of purification, they make the appropriate ablutions, rejecting water as inimical to fire. They also clean the tongue from all sin with honey. But when they bring honey to the <grade> Persian as guardian of crops, they employ the preservative symbolism of honey[3] . . .

(17) . . . Water shares <with honey> in being <*genesis*>. That is why bees store honey in *kraters* and amphoras. The *kraters* signify springs – just as the *krater* is set beside Mithras to stand for a spring – as do the amphoras which we use to draw water from the springs.[4] Springs and streams are appropriate to the water nymphs and even more for the nymphs that are souls, whom the ancients specifically called bees, because of their diligence in the pursuit of pleasure. So Sophocles said of souls not inappropriately, 'the swarm of the dead buzzes and rises up' <fr. 879 Radt>. The ancients called priestesses of Demeter bees as initiates of the chthonic goddess; and they called Kore herself 'Honey-like' and the Moon who presides over creation 'Bee', especially because the Moon is a bull, in as much as Taurus is in the Moon's exaltation; and bees are born from cattle.[5] Moreover, souls coming into creation are bull-born, and the god who secretly furthers[6] creation is called 'ox-stealer' . . .

(24) . . . This is why Homer has put the cave's entrances neither at east and west nor at the equinoxes, that is at Aries and Libra, but facing the south and north, indeed at the southernmost and northernmost gates, because the cave is consecrated to souls and to water nymphs, and these points are appropriate for creation <*genesis*> and departure <*apogenesis*> in relation to souls.[7]

They <i.e. Numenius and Kronios> assigned the equinoxes to Mithras as his proper seat. For this reason he carries the dagger which belongs to Ares <the god of war, but also the planet Mars>, whose 'house' is in Aries; and rides on a bull – Taurus is the 'house' of Venus, [and Libra], like Taurus, <is her 'house'>.[8] Mithras, as maker and lord of creation, is placed on the line of the equinoxes <facing west>, with the north on his right and the south on his left. [Cautes] they assign to the south because it is hot, and [Cautopates] to the north, because of the coldness of the <north> wind.[9] (25) They naturally assign winds to souls coming into creation and departing from it because souls carry spirit with them, as some have believed, and have a similar nature. But the north wind is the appropriate wind for souls coming into creation, and therefore the breath of the north wind revives those who are about to die, while that of the south wind dissolves their souls.

1. On Numenius and Kronios see **12.5d** n.2.
2. Porphyry is commenting on the mixing bowls (*kraters*) in the Homeric cave, filled with honey.
3. 'The Persian' means the sixth grade, 'Persian', which was under the protection of the moon: Vermaseren (1963) 149–51.
4. *Kraters* or vessels like punch bowls, which are in the Homeric passage, appear in Mithraic reliefs, especially in Germany (e.g. *CIMRM* 1275, 1292, 1306); a *krater* also appears in one of the Santa Prisca paintings, carried by a Lion (*CIMRM* 481,5) and in a mosaic in a sanctuary at Ostia (**12.5a**). Cf. **4.6c** n.3. The motif is also connected with Mithraic teaching about salvation and fate of the soul. R. L. Gordon (1976) 122–4; (1989) 58–9.
5. For bees born from cattle, see Virgil, *Georgics* IV.548–58. For the astronomy, see Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos* I.19; Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food* IV.16 (= **12.5d**).
6. 'Furthers' is a conjectural emendation of a corrupt word: Beck (1984) 2054. 'Oxstealer' may refer to the notion of Mithras stealing a bull and dragging it by its hind legs before sacrificing it (e.g. **4.6b**; *CIMRM* 42, scene 10, Dura; 1494 fig. 380, Ptuj).
7. The doctrine appealed to here is that of 'planetary houses', which was a means of linking the 7 planets to the 12 zodiacal signs. Apart from sun and moon, each planet has two houses, which read off in each direction (clockwise and anticlockwise) starting from the links Leo–Sun and Cancer–Moon (Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos* I.17).



The organization arranges the planets according to their distance from the earth. Porphyry ingeniously links Mithraic iconography with arcane astrological theory: the secrets of the heavens are signs for the secret truths of the Mysteries. For an astrological table from France see Vol. 1, fig. 5.2.

Genesis refers to this world of becoming, *apogenesis* to the dissolution of the soul into the 'real' life of the other world. Cf. also **11.6**.

8. This passage is notable for its casual assumption that the figures on the Mithraic relief could be interpreted as having astronomical reference, and second for its use of astrological doctrines. This translation of a corrupt passage accepts Beck's (1976) emendation which inserts the crucial link between Taurus, which is not an equinoctial sign, and Libra, which is.
9. Cautes and Cautopates, restored to the text by brilliant emendation, are the beings who presided over the soul's entry to and departure from creation. In the iconography, Cautes has a raised torch, Cautopates a lowered one. See Beck (1977–8a). Cf. **4.6a**; **12.5b** n.5 and **12.5h(v)**.

12.5h *Mithraic graffiti from Rome*

These texts were painted onto the walls of the Mithraic sanctuary below the church of Santa Prisca (Vol. 1, Map 3 no.37). They belong to two different periods. The lower layer (**12.5h(i–xiv)**) dates to *c.* A.D. 202; the upper layer (**12.5h(xv–xvi)**) to *c.* A.D. 220. **12.5h(iv–xiv)** are all in verse, but they are not continuously placed nor, generally, do any two lines seem to go together. Many are desperately obscure, especially **12.5h(viii–x)**, which may indicate that the obscurities of Porphyry are to some extent true to the cult. They are our only substantial body of texts from a Mithraic sanctuary and are very varied in character. The metrical texts may actually he the openings of Mithraic hymns or prayers. The others are acclamations either to all seven Mithraic grades or to the new initiates to the Lion grade. For the importance of initiation to this grade see **12.5d**.

See further: Vol. 1, 282, 303; Betz (1968) presents New Testament parallels; for colour photographs of the associated paintings, see Bianchi (1979) App.I, pls. 1–12, and for photographs of the texts, see Bianchi (1979) App.II, pls. 13–25.

12.5h(i) Graffito on side wall of cult niche. It may be the horoscope of the dedication of the sanctuary (Guarducci (1979)), but it seems an odd way of referring to it.

CIMRM 498; Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 118

Born at dawn in the consulship of the two Augusti, Severus and Antoninus, twelve days before the Kalends of December <20 Nov. A.D. 202>. On the day of Saturn, on the eighteenth day of the moon.

12.5h(ii) On left wall below fresco of Lions. The names are mainly of Latin formation, their owners of uncertain status. The upper layer of paintings has similar texts, though this time with names of Greek origin (which we have not included in our extracts).

Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 165–7

[Hail[1]] to Salutius Lion. [Hail] to Marianus (?) Lion. Hail to Steturstadius Lion. Hail to Ianuarius Lion.

On right wall. The first text is lost.

Hail to Tinetlius Lion. Hail to Saturnius Lion. Hail to Florentius [Lion].

1. For Hail (*Nama*) see **12.5c(i)**.

12.5h(iii) Beneath fresco of the seven grades. The texts below the image of the Father, at the beginning, and the Raven, at the end, are missing; cf. **12.5h(xv)**. For the association of grades and tutelary deities, see **12.5a**.

Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 166–9

Hail to Sun-runners under the protection of Sun. [Hail to Persians under the protection of Moon.] [Hail to Lions] under the protection of Jupiter. Hail to the fierce (?) Soldiers [under the protection of Mars]. Hail to the Male brides under the protection of Venus.

12.5h(iv) Start of hymn to Earth

Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 187

Fertile earth, through whom Pales[1] procreates everything. <*Or* Fertile earth Pales who procreates everything>.[2]

1. For Pales and the festival of the Parilia see **3.3a** n.6; 5.1; Vol. 1, 50, 53 and 174–6; Betz (1968) 65; Hackethal (1968) 237–8.
2. After this line there follow indecipherable traces of two further lines.

12.5h(v) According to the iconography of the cult, Mithras shot an arrow at a rock, which caused a spring to flow. This line is the only indication of a Mithraic commentary on this event.

See further: *CIMRM* index s.v. 'Mithras' water miracle'.

Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 193

You rock-bound spring that fed the twin brothers[1] with nectar.[2]

1. The twin brothers are Cautes and Cautopates (**12.5g** n.9).
2. There follow traces of two further lines.

12.5h(vi) Mithras' capture of the bull was represented (in stucco) on the right wall of the cult niche in this sanctuary. This graffito seems to offer a commentary on that scene.

Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 200

This young bull which he carried on his golden[1] shoulders according to his wont (?).

1. The adjective 'golden' may also have been picked up visually (cf. the thick gilding on the face of Mithras on the marvellously preserved relief from below S. Stefano Rotondo:

Lissi-Caronna (1986) pl.9; a loose stucco polychrome and gilded head of Mithras was found in the same site (pl.1)).

12.5h(vii) A line is lost after **12.5h(vi)**, but this passage seems to be in the mouth of Mithras. The notion of submission is basic to the cult: R. L. Gordon (1972) 106–7.

Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 204

And to the end I have borne the greatest things of the gods on my shoulders.

12.5h(viii) The following line may express a contrast between material pleasures and grim reality.

Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 206

Sweet are the livers of birds, but care reigns.[1]

1. Merkelbach (1984) 99–100 offers a slightly different restoration of one word (fi[ceta] for fi[cata]) and a quite different translation: 'Sweet are the figtrees, but care controls one who has lost his way', which he takes to refer to a wandering of Mithras in the wilderness.

12.5h(ix) The spiritual 're-birth' took place at one stage in the hierarchy of initiation, perhaps to tbe Lion grade. This line and **12.5h(viii)** might go togetber.

Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 207

Him who <*or*, that which> is piously reborn and created by sweet things.

12.5h(x) Perhaps an exhortation to the initiates.

Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 211

You must all sustain clouded times through the rite.

12.5h(xi) This is an astronomical line, presumably the first in a sequence on the zodiac which was probably repeated ritually, presumably in connection with Mithras' role as orderer (Betz (1968) 74–6; R. L. Gordon (1975) 240).

Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 213

And here the Ram <Aries[1]> runs in front exactly on his course.

1. Some lists of zodiacal signs begin with Cancer, but starting with the Ram became common: A. Le Boeffle on Germanicus, *Phaenomena* 532. For the connection between Mithras and Aries see **12.5g** sect.24.

12.5h(xii) This line used to be thought the only explicit mention of 'salvation' in Mithraic texts, but the texr is in doubt. Only the words for 'shed' and 'blood' are certain; 'eternal' and 'you saved' are doubtful: Panciera (1979) 103–5.

Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 217

[And you saved us] having shed [the eternal] blood.

12.5h(xiii) Offerings magnify Mithras

Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 221

I bring offerings in order that the great powers of Mithras [be shown].

12.5h(xiv) This couplet illustrares the connection of the Lions with fire, purification and mediation: Vollgraff (1960); R. L. Gordon (1972) 99–100; (1980a) 36–7. The speakers are probably those of lower grades.

Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 224

Accept, o holy Father, accept the incense-burning Lions, through whom we offer the incense, through whom we others are consumed.[1]

1. The word 'consumed' here probably means 'initiated', as does the word 'consummated' in 12.5c(v).

12.5h(xv) Below a painting representing the seven grades on the upper layer. Cf. **12.5h(iii)**.

Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 155–8, 179

Hail [to the Fathers] from east to west under the protection of Saturn. Hail to the Sun-runners under the protection of Sun. Hail to the Persians under the protection of Moon. Hail to the Lions under the protection of Jupiter. Hail to the Soldiers under the protection of Mars. Hail to the Male brides under the protection [of Venus]. [Hail to the Ravens under the protection of Mercury.]

12.5h(xvi) The following texts appear on a fresco depicting a procession of Lions. The first is painted above the Lion leading a boar in procession. The second coupler may refer to Mithras' power and the last line may allude to the singing of hymns in the cult.

Vermaseren and van Essen (1965) 232, 239, 240

Hail to the Lions for many new years.

Two lines above rhe Lion leading a ram. . .

to nobody . . . I bring . . . of all mortal and of all eternal beings.

A line above the Lion leading a bull and the Lion with a cock. . .

render in song.

12.6 The Jews

This section moves from texts by non-Jews which are sympathetic to Judaism to Jewish claims about Roman privileges for the Jews, especially in Rome, and on to evidence from the Jewish catacombs in Rome. We also give three texts from elsewhere (Asia Minor, Alexandria and Palestine) that illuminate the relations between Jews and their neighbours. There are further texts on Judaism in other chapters: **4.14** features the synagogues at Dura Europus and Ostia, and **11.8** is devoted to the negative image of the Jews among some Romans.

See further: Vol. 1, 267–8, 270, 275–6, 280, 298, 304, 309; Schürer (1973–87); M. Stern (1974–84) for texts by non-Jews, with translations and commentaries; Lieu, North and Rajak (1992)*.

12.6a *Identification of the Jewish god with Jupiter*

The hostile stance towards Judaism of certain writers examined earlier (**11.8**) was matched by the positive stance of others. Various writers, both Roman and Greek, were sufficiently interested in Judaism to discuss it within their own terms of reference. In this passage Augustine quotes Varro's discussion of the Jewish god as part of his attack on the foolish identifications by the gentiles of this god with Saturn and Jupiter (an identification also made in **11.8a**); see also more generally **1.1a**.

Augustine, *The Harmony of the Evangelists* I.22.30; Varro, Cardauns fr.16; M. Stern (1974–84) no.72b

Some <gentiles> say that he is Saturn, I think because of the sanctification of the sabbath in that they assign that day to Saturn. But their own Varro (and they can find none of their people more learned than he) thought that the god of the Jews was Jupiter, judging that it makes no difference by what name he is invoked, so long as the same thing is understood: he was daunted, I believe, by his sublimity. For because the Romans customarily worship nothing superior to Jupiter, as is sufficiently clearly attested by their Capitolium,[1] and consider him to be king of all the gods, when he observed that the Jews worshipped a supreme god, he could not imagine that he was anything other than Jupiter.

1. Temple to Jupiter, Juno and Minera. Cf. Vol. 1, Map 1 no.25.

12.6b *Incorporation of Judaism into Greek thought*

Many Greek writers of the Roman empire treated Jewish teaching as comparable with Greek philosophy. Here Galen, a philosopher and doctor (writing in Rome, A.D. 165–75) appeals to Moses alongside Plato and other Greek philosophers in his discussion of the design of the human body – in this passage an explanation of the unvarying length of the eyelashes.

See further: Vol. 1, 277; Walzer (1949) 11–13, 23–37; Wilken (1984) 83–93*.

Galen, *The Usefulness of the Parts of the Body* XI.14 [III p.904 Kühn; II p.158 Helmreich]

Did our creator order these hairs alone always to keep the same length, and do they obey this order from fear of the master's command or from respect for the god who gave the order or because they are sure it is better to do this? Is not this Moses' way of treating nature and is it not better than Epicurus'?[1]

The best answer, however, is neither of theirs, but to maintain with Moses the principle of the creator as the origin of every created thing, while adding to it the principle of matter. For our creator wrought in the hairs a need to maintain a constant length because this was better. When he had decided to make them like this, he set under part of them <the eyelashes> a hard body as a kind of cartilage <the tarsus>, and under another part <the eyebrows> a hard skin attached to the cartilage through the brows. For it was certainly not sufficient simply to will them to be like this; he could not, even if he wanted, suddenly turn a stone into a human being.

On this issue our position, that of Plato and that of the other Greeks who followed the right method in natural science, differs from that of Moses. For him it is sufficient that god willed the arrangement of matter, so that matter was immediately arranged. For he believes that everything is possible for god, even if he wishes to turn ashes into a horse or bull. We do not hold this. Some things are impossible by nature, and god does not actually attempt them at all, but chooses what is preferable out of what could come into being.[2]

Therefore our view is that, since it was better that the eyelashes should always be equal in length and number, god did not instantly will them into being; for, even if he willed it countless times, they would not have come into being like this out of soft skin, and in particular it was completely impossible for them to stand erect unless implanted in something hard. So our view is that god is responsible both for the choice of the better in the actual products of creation and for the selection of matter. For, since it was necessary that the eyelashes stand erect and that they should always maintain the same length and number, he implanted them firmly in a cartilaginous body. If he had fixed them in a soft and fleshy substance, he would have been worse off, not only than Moses but also than some wretched general who places a wall or camp in swampy ground.

1. The Greek philosopher Epicurus (341–270 B.C.), a pet hate of Galen's, who denied the precise claim that Galen is making here: that Nature was perfectly designed.
2. This difference of opinion over the power of god in fact already existed within Greek philosophy, as the Stoics (like Moses) maintained that god was omnipotent.

12.6c *Roman privileges for the Jews*

Official Roman attitudes to the Jews were not consistently hostile. Some emperors and officials granted them particular privileges.

12.6c(i) Julius Caesar and the Jews.

The Jewish writer Josephus collected a series of documents (of which one follows) illustrating Roman favour towards the Jews. His aim was to prove a Roman tradition of generous treatment of his own religion. But there is in fact no reason to suppose these documents had any general application; as in this case they probably arose as reactions to particular circumstances and did not automatically have general application.

See further: **11.9**; Baumann (1983) 238–61; Rajak (1984).

Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XIV.213–16

Julius Gaius[1] consul of the Romans to the magistrates, council and people of Parium,[2] greetings. The Jews in Delos and some Jews from other places in the area, in the presence of certain of your ambassadors, have petitioned me and declared that you are preventing them by decree from following their ancestral customs and rites. Now it displeases me that such decrees should be passed against our friends and allies, and that they should be prevented from living in accordance with their customs and contributing money to common meals and rites, as they are not prevented from doing this even in Rome. For example, Gaius Caesar,[3] our consul, prohibited by edict religious associations from assembling in the city <sc. of Rome>; only these people were not prohibited from collecting contributions of money and holding common meals. Similarly, I too prohibit other religious associations, but allow these people alone to assemble and hold meals in accordance with their ancestral customs and conventions. And, if you have passed any decree against our friends and allies, you will be well advised to annul it, because of their assistance and goodwill towards us.[4]

1. The man is a provincial governor (of Asia?) of the Caesarian period, though this combination of names, in this order, does not follow normal practice. It may arise from a mistake by Josephus or from a corruption of his text.
2. Parium was in north-west Asia Minor. Some emend the text to read 'Paros', an island near Delos.
3. Julius Caesar.
4. Two Jewish leaders had helped Caesar in Egypt, which may have encouraged Caesar to favour the Jews in Rome. The provincial governor follows Caesar's lead.

12.6c(ii) Jewish settlement in Rome.

Philo, who served on an embassy to the emperor Gaius Caligula on behalf of the Alexandrian Jews, contrasts Gaius' pretence to divinity and hostility towards the Jews with Augustus' approval of Judaism.

See further: Vol. 1, 362; **10.6b**; **12.6f**.

Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 155–8

<Augustus> knew that the large district of Rome across the river Tiber was owned and inhabited by Jews. Most of them were Roman ex-slaves; brought to Italy as war captives, they had been set free by their owners, without being forced to alter any of their ancestral customs. So he knew that they had synagogues and assembled in them, especially on the sabbath, when they received, in public, instruction in their ancestral philosophy.[1] He knew too that they collected sacred money from their tithes and forwarded it to Jerusalem through envoys who would offer sacrifices there. But in spite of this he did not drive them out of Rome or strip them of their Roman citizenship on the ground that they remembered their Jewish citizenship as well;[2] he took no forcible measures against the synagogues nor did he prevent them from gathering for the exposition of the laws, nor did he oppose the collection of tithes. In fact, he showed such respect for our customs that he, and nearly all his family, enriched our temple with lavish offerings; he ordered regular sacrifices of holocausts to be made each day in perpetuity at his own expense, as an offering to the most high god.[3] These sacrifices continue to this day, and will always be offered, as evidence of truly imperial behaviour. Moreover, at the monthly distributions in his native city, when the whole people receive money or grain in turn,[4] he never deprived the Jews of this bounty, but if the distributions happened to fall on a sabbath, when it is not allowed, especially for the breadwinner, to receive or give anything, or do any of the ordinary things of life, he instructed those in charge of the distributions to carry over to the next day the Jews' share of the universal largesse.

1. On synagogues in Rome see **12.6d(ii)**; on worship in the synagogue see Schürer (1973–87) II.447–54. See also Vol. 1, Map 1 n.26.
2. Slaves set free by Roman citizens themselves received Roman citizenship.
3. That Augustus himself paid for the sacrifices in the temple at Jerusalem is contradicted by Josephus, *Against Apion* II.77, who says that the sacrifices were at Jewish expense (so Schürer (1973–87) II.312). Philo has perhaps been carried away by his apologetic purpose. Cf. **10.6b**.
4. This is not quite accurate. At Rome, money was distributed to the people irregularly, while grain was distributed only to a limited number of Roman citizens.

12.6d *Jewish catacombs in Rome*

There were seven Jewish catacombs in Rome, dating from the third (or perhaps the second) century A.D. onwards. Tombstones from them illustrate aspects of Jewish life in Rome.

See further: Vol. 1, 270 and Map 4 nos. 62–8; Leon (1960) 46–66*; Vismara (1986).

12.6d(i) A woman's virtues.
Carved on a sarcophagus, probably from the Via Nomentana catacomb.

CIL VI.29758; *CIJ* 72

A due tribute to Julia Irene Arista, his mother, preserved by the power of god and the devotion of her offspring,[1] a dutiful observer of the law, from Atronius Tullianus Eusebius, most excellent man, her son. She was aged 41.

1. This may allude to an earlier recovery from illness, but the text is uncertain.

12.6d(ii) A female convert to Judaism.
Carved on a sarcophagus, now lost; many details of the text are uncertain.

CIL VI.29756; *CIJ* 523

Veturia Paulina daughter, consigned to her eternal home; she lived 86 years, 6 months, a proselyte for 16 years,[1] given the name of Sarah, mother of the synagogues of the Campus and Volumnius.[2] In peace may she rest.[3]

1. On proselytes see 12.6e. Note her additional, Hebrew, name.
2. The title (parallel to 'father of the synagogue') is one of various positions held by women (Schürer (1973–87) III.1, 107). The first synagogue was in the Campus Martius; the second, also in Rome, was named after Volumnius procurator of Syria *c.*10–7 B.C., and the community may originally have consisted of the family's slaves and ex-slaves.
3. The last sentence is written in Greek, but transliterated into the Latin alphabet.

12.6d(iii) The hope of resurrection.
This elaborate, verse inscription from the Monteverde cemetery gives a picture of Jewish hope of resurrection, as reward for virtue. The script seems to date to the turn of the third and fourth centuries A.D.

See further: Vol. 1, Map 4 no. 68; Leon (1960) 133–4, 248–9; Schürer (1973–87) II.539–44.

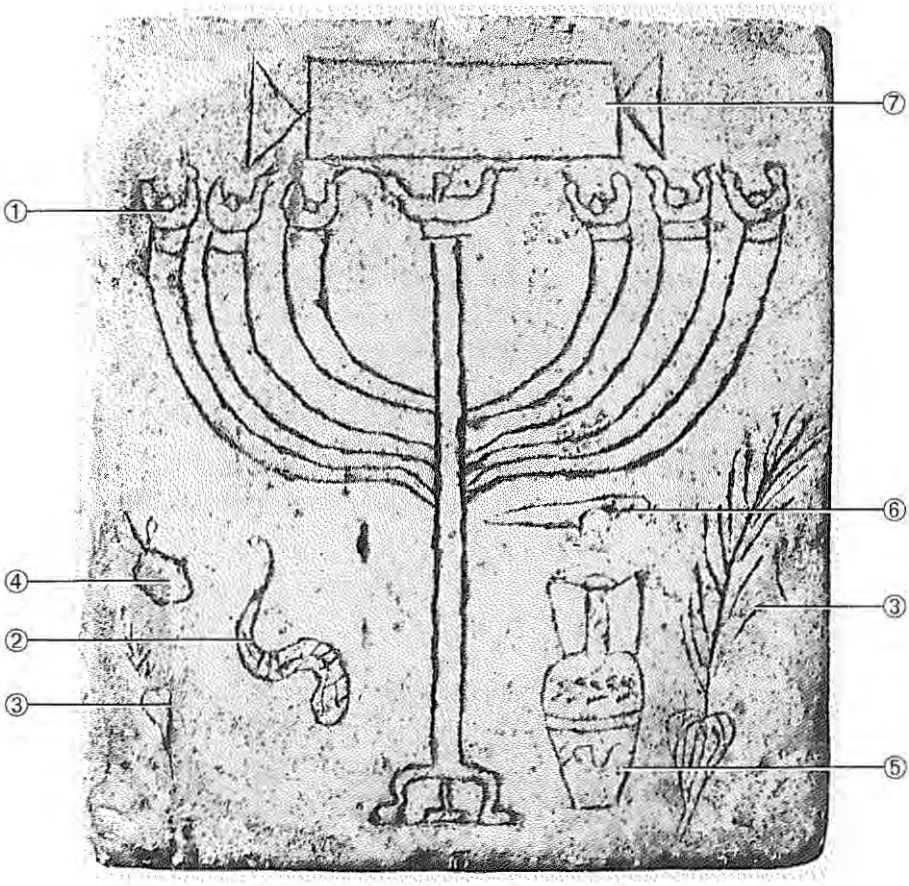
CIL VI.39086; *CIJ* 476

Here lies Regina covered by such a tomb which her husband erected as appropriate to his love. She spent 21 years and 4 months less 8 days with him. She will live again, return to the light again, for she, a true pledge, can hope that she will rise to the life promised to the worthy and pious, for she has deserved to have an abode in the hallowed land. You <sc. Regina> are assured of this by your piety, your chaste life, your love for your people, your observance of the law, your devotion to your marriage, the glory of which was dear to you. For all these deeds your hope of the future is assured; in this too your grieving husband seeks comfort.

12.6d(iv) Jewish symbols.

A tombstone from the Vigna Randanini catacomb (Vol. 1, Map 4 no.66) deploys a typical range of objects, all probably associated with the cult in the temple at Jerusalem, though the temple had by now been destroyed by the Romans. Date, third to fourth century? Height, 0.30 m.; width, 0.27 m.

See further: **4.14b**, Dura synagogue paintings; Goodenough (1952–68) IV; Leon (1960) 195–228.



1. Menorah, 7-branched candlestick (cf. Vol. 1, fig.5.3).
2. Shofar, ritual ram's horn.
3. Lulab (on left and right), the branch used at the Feast of Tabernacles.
4. Ethrog, a citrus fruit used at the same Feast.
5. Amphora, for wine?
6. Knife, for sacrifices?
7. Painted inscription with the name of the deceased, now illegible.

12.6e *A Jewish community in Aphrodisias (perhaps early third century A.D.)*

This inscription from a city in the province of Asia (western Turkey) gives a unique vignette of a private Jewish association, devoted both to the Law and to prayer, which contributed money, perhaps for the building of a soup kitchen. The presence of, and distinction between, 'proselytes' and 'god-fearers' is important. 'Proselytes' were full converts to Judaism (marked either by ritual immersion alone, or also by circumcision); 'godfearers' were (it seems) gentiles who followed aspects of the Jewish Law and way of life. The text, in Greek, is inscribed on a stone pilaster, which perhaps originally stood beside a doorway. The translation of the first eight lines is very uncertain. Some words are rare or unique; in other cases it is unclear whether they should be read as part of the technical vocabulary of Palestinian Judaism or simply as 'ordinary' Greek usage. This difficulty of translation relates to the problem of how far Judaism showed wide local variation and how far its norms were determined by Palestinian practice.

See further: Vol. 1, 275–6, 293; **11.8** for hostile views of proselytes; **12.6d(ii)** for a tombstone of one; Schürer (1973–87) III.1, 160–76; Reynolds and Tannenbaum (1987); Trebilco (1991)*.

Reynolds and Tannenbaum (1987) 5–7

God our help, a [building?, gift?] for the dish.[1] The below-listed members of the association of lovers of learning who also wholly praise <the Lord> (?) erected for the relief of suffering in the community from their own resources this memorial <building?>: Jael the patron with his <her?> son Joshua the official; Theodotos Palatinos[2] with his son Hilarianos; Samuel leader of the association (?), a proselyte; Joseph son of Jesse; Benjamin the psalm-singer; Judas the good-natured; Joseph, a proselyte; Sabbatios son of Amachios; Emmonios, a god-fearer; Antoninos, a god-fearer; Samuel son of Politianos; Joseph son of Eusebios, a proselyte; and Judas son of Theodoros; and Antipeos son of Hermeas; and Sabathios the sweet; [and] Samuel the elder, priest.

<Added in the left-hand margin, to replace the final entry which was deleted.> Samuel the elder, of Perge.[3]

<There follows, on face (b) of the pilaster, a further list of names, presumably not members of the association, who also contributed money. The first fifty-three are Jews, who have biblical names, as do most of those on face (a); the remaining fifty-two, who rarely have Jewish names, are all god-fearers, of whom the first nine were city councillors, about thirteen craftsmen or workmen, and two possibly slaves.>

1. Interpreted by the editors as metaphorical for a soup kitchen, a charitable institution enjoined by contemporary texts from Palestine, but not otherwise attested at this date in Judaism elsewhere.
2. Possibly a former employee of the imperial court (on the Palatine hill at Rome).
3. A city on the south coast of modern Turkey.

12.6f *Jews and Greeks in Alexandria (Egypt)*

The relations between Jews and Greeks in Alexandria were tense, with a long-running dispute about the status of the Jewish community there: how far were the Jews to be regarded as full citizens of Alexandria, sharing in all the privileges that marked out the Alexandrian Greeks from the native Egyptians. These disputes came to Roman attention most prominently in the reigns of the emperors Gaius and Claudius, when Greek and Jewish embassies went to Rome to present their opposing cases (see **10.6b** and **12.6c(ii)** for part of a text presenting the Jewish case). But Greek and Jewish rights remained an issue until the third century; and from this later period there survive papyrus fragments of an extensive literature, written in Greek, about the Greek heroes who stood up to the emperor in defence of their rights against the Jews.

The following text dates from the third century, but is a (largely fictional) account of an embassy to the emperor Trajan (A.D. 98–117). This account claims Roman favouritism towards the Jews and (in the voice of one of the ambassadors) urges that the Romans should support their own kind (i.e. the Greeks).

See further: Vol. 1, 362; Musurillo (1954) 161–78; Schürer (1973–87) I.389–94, 398, 529–33, III.1.92–4, 127–9; for the literary form compare the Christian versions of trials of Christians (**12.7f**).

CPJ II no.157; *Acta Alexandrinorum*, ed. H. Musurillo (Leipzig, 1961) 32–5

<Column 1> [. . .] Dionysios who had served in many procuratorships, and Salvius, Julius Salvius, Teimagenes, Pastor a gymnasiarch,[1] Julius Phanias, Philoxenos a gymnasiarch-elect, Sotion a gymnasiarch, Theon, Athenodoros, Paulos originally from Tyre, who volunteered as advocate for the Alexandrians. When the Jews learned this <that the Greeks were sending an embassy to Rome>, they too elected ambassadors from their own race: Simon, Glaukon, Theudes, Onias, Kolon, Iackoumbos, and Sopatros, originally from Antioch, as advocate for the Jews. So they set sail from the city <of Alexandria>, each bearing their own gods, the Alexandrians [a bust of Sarapis,[2] and the Jews their sacred books? . . .]

<Col. 2> [. . .] He < ?the governor of Egypt> conversed with their companions, and when winter was over they arrived at Rome. The emperor <Trajan> learned that the ambassadors of the Jews and Alexandrians were present, and appointed the day on which he would hear both sides. Plotina <his wife> lobbied the senators to oppose the Alexandrians and support the Jews. The Jews, who entered first, hailed the emperor Trajan, and the emperor hailed them very warmly, as he too had already been won over by Plotina. The ambassadors of the Alexandrians entered after them and hailed the emperor. But, instead of going to meet them, he said: 'How dare you greet me, like people who merit a greeting from me in spite of all the trouble you have ventured to cause the Jews. But proceed and [. . .']

(Col. 3) [. . . Trajan said: '. . .] You are asking to be killed, having such conrempt for death that you replied so insolently even to me.'[3] Hermaiskos said: 'But we are upset that your council[4] is filled with impious Jews.' The emperor said: 'Look, this is the second time I am telling you, Hermaiskos. You are answering me insolently, taking advantage of your birth.' Hermaiskos said: 'In what way do I answer you insolently, greatest emperor? Tell me.' The emperor said: 'Because you claim my council is full of Jews.' Hermaiskos: 'So the name of the Jews is offensive? In that case you should support your own kind and not be the advocate for the impious Jews.' While Hermaiskos was saying this, the bust of Sarapis which the ambassadors were bearing suddenly broke into sweat. Trajan was amazed at the sight. And soon crowds gathered in Rome, numerous shouts rang forth, and everyone began to flee to the highest parts of the hills [. . .]

(Col. 4) [. . .] Claudius Athen[odoros? . . .] 'under Claudius the god . . .'. He said: 'They are unworthy [. . .] being [im]pious [. . .][5]

1. The gymnasiarch was an annual magistrate, responsible for the running and financing of a gymnasium where the sons of the Greek elite received the final stage of their education. Cf. 10.3a.
2. The name of the Alexandrian god Sarapis is plausibly restored here, to form the basis for the miraculous intervention of the statue at the end.
3. The text has moved on to dialogue between Trajan and Hermaiskos, one of the Alexandrian Greek ambassadors.
4. That is, the *ad hoc* group of senators advising the emperor.
5. In this very fragmentary section the speakers probably refer to the earlier hearings before the emperor Claudius, and the alleged unworthiness of the Jews.

12.6g *The boundary with non-Jews in Palestine*

Jewish law as given in the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament) was elaborated and extended in a series of rulings by experts in Jewish Law (rabbis) living in Palestine. The rulings from A.D. 70 onwards (when the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem began the shift of focus of Judaism from temple sacrifices towards rabbinic teachings) were compiled and reworked *c.* A.D. 200 in the *Mishnah* ('teaching of the law'). One section of the part of the *Mishnah* on 'Damages' is devoted to the problem of contact with non-Jewish cults ('Alien worship'). This extract concerns 'idolatry' (image worship) of three types: general public festivals, private festivals and public festivals in particular towns. Similar problems arose througbout the empire, but these injunctions apply only to Syria and Palestine. The extract cites three rabbis who taugbt in the first half of the second century A.D., and 'the sages', that is other rabbis unnamed by the editor of the *Mishnah.*

See furrher: Elmslie (1911); Schürer (1973–87) I.70–7, II.339–46; Lane Fox (1986) 486–7 on Jews and Dionysos at Smyrna.

The Mishnah on Alien Worship [Avodah Zarah] 1.1–4

For three days before the festivals of the idolaters it is forbidden to do business with them, to lend to them or to borrow from them, to repay them or to be repaid by them. Rabbi Judah says, 'One may be repaid by them, because it is vexatious to the payer.' They <sc. the sages> answered him, 'Although it is vexatious to him at the time, later he will be glad.' Rabbi Ishmael says, 'The prohibition applies not only for three days before them <sc. the festivals> but also for three days following.' The sages however say, 'It applies before the festivals, but not after them.' The following are the festivals of the idolaters: the Kalends, the Saturnalia, Empire Day, the Anniversaries of the Emperors, the day of their birth and the day of their death.[1] This is the opinion of Rabbi Meir. But the sages say, 'At every death at which burning takes place, there is idolatry, but when burning does not take place there is no idolatry.' But on the day when one cuts off one's beard or a lock of hair, on the day when one returns from a sea-voyage, or on the day when one comes out of gaol, or when an idolater holds a party for his son, <business> is not forbidden, save on that day and only with that man. In the case of a city in which idolatry is going on, <business> is permitted outside it; if the idolatry is outside, then it is permitted inside. What about going there? If the road leads solely to that place, it is forbidden; but if one would be able to go by it to another place, it is permitted. What about a city in which idolatry is going on, and in which some shops were decorated and some were not? This was the case in Beth Shean, and the sages said, 'Those which are decorated are prohibited but those which are not decorated are permitted.'[2]

1. The Kalends, i.e. the first of January when sacrifices on behalf of Rome were made; Saturnalia, a Roman festival in late December widely celebrated (5.3); Empire Day (*Kratesim*), perhaps anniversaries of the creation of the province; Anniversaries (*Genusia*), perhaps of the emperor's accession, as days of birth and death are mentioned separately.
2. The decorations envisaged are probably garlands. Tertullian, *On Idolatry* 15 reports a story of a Christian in Carthage whose servants (in his absence) had garlanded the door to his house on the sudden announcement of imperial good news; that same night the man was chastised by God in a dream.

12.7 The Christians

The following selection of texts is designed to locate Christianity in the context of contemporary society and religious options. The texts are grouped thematically, though some texts relate to more than one theme: **12.7a** critique of Greek and Roman cults; **12.7b** the spread of Christianity; **12.7c** the social composition of Christianity; **12.7d** the practices of Christianity; **12.7e** the pluralism of early Christianity; **12.7f** trials of Christians.

See further: Vol. 1, 269–71, 276–7, 283–5, 295–6, 299–300; for a fuller collection of sources, see Stevenson (1987).

12.7a *Critique of Greek and Roman cults*

In the second century A.D. Christian writers began to define explicitly the relationship between Christianity and the cults and deities of the pagan Graeco-Roman world. The earliest of these writers came (like Justin and Tatian quoted below) from the eastern Roman empire and wrote in Greek. Works written in Latin, from the western empire, date from the end of the second century onwards.

12.7a(i) Justin condemns Greek mythology.

The most important Greek defence of Christianity of the second century was written by Justin. Addressing the emperor Antoninus Pius in his *First Apology* (that is, Defence of Christianity), he argues for the unique validity of Christianity and claims that demons were responsible for pagan myths mimicking Christianity and for the scandalous allegations against Christians. Justin, who had earlier written a treatise *Against all Heresies* (referred to in section 26 of this passage), assumes that Christian 'heresies' were also the result of evil demons.

See further: Vol. 1, 310; Chadwick (1965)*; (1966) 9–23; Pagels (1988) 32–56*; Lampe (1989) 219–45.

Justin, *First Apology* 24–6, 66

In the first place, our argument is that, though we say things similar to the Greeks, we alone are hated for the name of Christ and that, though we do no wrong, we are put to death as criminals. Various people in different places worship trees, rivers, mice, cats, crocodiles and many irrational creatures; and different things are respected by people in different places, so that everyone seems impious to each other because they do not worship the same things. This is the only accusation you make against us, that we do not worship the same gods as you, and do not offer to the dead libations and the savour of fat, crowns for the tombs and sacrifices. And yet you know very well that the same animals are considered by some to be gods, by others to be wild beasts, and by others to be sacrificial victims.

(25) Secondly, we alone in the world used to worship Dionysos the son of Semele and Apollo the son of Latona (who in their affairs with males did unmentionably shameful things) and Persephone and Aphrodite (who were driven wild by Adonis, and whose mysteries you celebrate), or Asklepios or any other of those called gods; although we are threatened with death, through Jesus Christ we have come to despise these deities, and have given ourselves to the unbegotten and impassive god. We believe that he was not driven wild by Antiope or other such women nor by Ganymede; that he was not rescued by the hundred-handed giant <Briareus> through the offices of Thetis, nor did he for this reason plan that Achilles the son of Thetis would destroy many Greeks for his concubine Briseis. We pity those who believe these stories and we recognize that demons are responsible for them.

(26) Thirdly, even after the ascension of Christ to heaven, the demons brought

forward certain people who said that they were themselves gods; not only were they not prosecuted by you, but were actually thought worthy of honours. One Simon of Samaria, from a village called Gitta, in the reign of Claudius Caesar performed magic acts through the skill of demons operating in him and in your royal city Rome was called god and honoured by you as a god with a statue – the statue was erected on the river Tiber between the two bridges with the following Latin inscription: 'To Simon holy god.'[1] And almost all the Samaritans and some even of other peoples worship him and acknowledge thar he is the first god. And one Helena, who travelled round with him at that time, having previously worked in a brothel, is said to be the first Idea generated by him.[2] One Menandros, another Samaritan, from the village of Kapparetaia, a pupil of Simon's and also under the influence of demons, while in Antioch we know deceived many through his magic art; he persuaded those who followed him that they would not die, and to this day some people profess this view of his.[3] One Marcion of Pontos is at present teaching his disciples to believe there is another god greater than the creator; with the assistance of demons he has persuaded many of every country to utter blasphemies and deny that god is the maker of this world, and to profess that some other greater being has done greater works than him.[4] Everyone who follows their views, as we said <in section 7 of this work>, are called Christians, just as philosophers who do not share the same views are still called by one common name. Whether they also perform those scandalous and fabled acts – the overturning of the lamp, promiscuous intercourse, and eating human flesh – we do not know,[5] but we do know that they are not persecuted and executed by you, at least for their opinions. But I have written a treatise denouncing all the heresies that have occurred, which if you wish to read I will send you.

(66) . . . The wicked demons have arranged for this <sc. the Eucharist> to be imitated also in the mysteries of Mithras; as you know or can learn, bread and a cup of water are put out in the rites of one being initiated with some words said over them.[6]

1. This story probably results from Justin's confusion of the traditional Roman deity *Semo* Sanco Dius Fidius (who had a statue on the Tiber island in Rome – *ILS* 3474) and the name *Simon*. See Scullard (1981) 146–7; on Simon see Vol. 1, 227; Jonas (1963) 103–11; Filoramo (1990) 147–52. He and the following people are important in the history of 'gnosticism', on which see **12.7e(i)**.
2. On Helena, see R. M. Grant (1966) 74–85. Idea (*Ennoia*) is a technical term of gnostics: **12.7e(i)**.
3. On Menandros see R. M. Grant (1966) 15–17, 93–4.
4. On Marcion, who taught in Rome, see Vol. 1, 309; Jonas (1963) 137–46.
5. On these accusations see Vol. 1, 225–7 and **11.11**. **11.11d** explains the overturning of the lamp.
6. The words referred to are 'This is my body, this is my blood', the words of the Eucharist. Cf. **12.5g**.

12.7a(ii) The rejection of the gentile world and conversion to Christianity.

The critique of Graeco-Roman cults offered by Justin was extended by his pupil Tatian and presented as a motivating force behind his own conversion to

Christianity (in the middle of the second century A.D.). Tatian's treatise expounds Christian cosmology and demonology, totally rejects Greek religion and culture and explains the antiquity and moral values of Christianity.

See further: R. M. Grant (1988) 113–32*.

Tatian, *Address to the Greeks* 29

So, when I saw these things <the stupidity of Greek religion and culture>, I also took part in mysteries and tested the rituals performed everywhere by effeminates and androgynes; I found that among the Romans their Zeus <i.e. Jupiter> Latiaris relished human gore and the blood of slaughtered men; while Artemis <i.e. Diana>, not far from the great city, was engaged in the same type of actions, and different demons in different places were busy inciting the perpetration of evil.[1] Retiring on my own, I began to ask how I could find out the truth. While I was thinking seriously about the problem, I happened to come across some barbarian texts, much older than the Greek doctrines, and quite divine in comparison with their errors.[2] As a result, I was convinced by these texts, because of the simplicity of their expressions, the artlessness of the authors, the very accessible account of the creation of the world, the foreknowledge of the future, the extraordinary nature of the precepts, and the idea of a single ruler over all things. As my soul was taught by god, I realized that some things are subject to condemnation, and that others end slavery in the world and liberate us from many rulers and countless tyrants; they give us not something we had not received, but something which we had had but were prevented by our error from keeping.

1. On Jupiter Latiaris see **2.1d** n.5. With Diana, Tatian presumably alludes to the cult at Aricia (1.5c) where the priest of Diana was said to obtain office by killing his predecessor.
2. As becomes clear in the subsequent chapter, Tatian here refers to the Old Testament.

12.7b *The spread of Christianity*

After the picture in Acts of the Apostles (12.7b(i)) for the middle of the first century A.D., the evidence for the spread of Christianity becomes patchy. But we know that it had made an impact in Pontus by the early second century (11.11b; cf. Lucian, *Alexander the False Prophet* 25, 38) and it can be traced sporadically elsewhere in the second and third centuries. The spread and cohesiveness of Christianity is illustrated in 12.7b(ii).

See further: Lane Fox (1986) 265–93*.

12.7b(i) Paul in Rome, A.D. 61–63?

The Acts of the Apostles ends with Paul brought captive to Rome and awaiting trial. This artful ending emphasizes both Paul's mission to the gentiles, which had been the main thrust of his career, and also Rome, which was to be a new centre for the church.

See further: Vol. 1, 305, 376–7; Haenchen (1971) 717–32*.

Acts of the Apostles 28.14–31

And so we came to Rome. And the brothers there having news of us came out to meet us as far as Forum Appii and Tres Tabernae <the Three Taverns>, and when Paul saw them he thanked god and took courage.[1] When we entered Rome, Paul was permitted <by the Roman officer> to lodge on his own with a soldier guarding him.

(17) Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had come together, he said to them: 'I, brothers, have done nothing against the people or the ancestral customs, but I was handed over from Jerusalem to the hands of the Romans as a prisoner. After investigating the case, they wanted to release me because there was no capital charge against me. But because the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any charge to bring against my people. This is why I have asked to see you and talk to you; it is for the hope of Israel that I have this chain around me.' They said to him: 'We have received no letters about you from Judaea, nor has any of the brothers arrived with any report or gossip to your discredit. We should like to hear from you what your views are; all we know about this sect is that everywhere people speak against it.'

(23) They fixed a day and came in large numbers to his lodgings. He spoke urgently of the kingdom of god, trying to persuade them about Jesus, with reference to the law of Moses and the prophets, from dawn to dusk. Some were persuaded by what he said, but others disbelieved. Without reaching agreement with each other, they began to disperse, when Paul made one more statement: 'How well the holy spirit spoke to your fathers through the prophet Isaiah when he said, "Go to this people and say: You will hear and hear but not understand; you will look and look but not see. For this people's heart has grown gross of understanding; their ears have heard dimly and their eyes are closed. Otherwise their eyes might see, their ears might hear and their hearts might understand and they might turn again, and I would heal them." <Isaiah 6.9–10> So let it be known to you that this salvation of god has been sent to the gentiles; they will listen.'

(30) He stayed there for two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who travelled to him, proclaiming the kingdom of god and teaching the truth about the lord Jesus Christ quite openly and without hindrance.[2]

1. See Vol. 1, Map 5. There was already a Christian community in Rome which Paul had addressed in the Epistle to the Romans.
2. The last sentence of Acts is very surprising given that Paul's martyrdom followed, but the ending suggests the ultimate 'success' of Paul's mission. The final years of Paul's life are in fact unclear: Nock (1938) 142–4.

12.7b(ii) Epitaph of bishop Aberkios, of Hieropolis in Phrygia, before A.D. 216

The epitaph of the Christian bishop Aberkios offers striking evidence of the spread of Christianity in the East by the end of the second century A.D. It refers to Aberkios' travels within the Roman empire, from Phrygia (in modern Turkey) to Rome, Syria and beyond the river Euphrates – all places where he claims to have found fellow Christians ('kindred folk'). The language of the

epitaph is allusive – partly using quite traditional formulae to express the new Christian faith. It would have made sense at one level to anyone who might read it, but its deeper significance would have been understood only by fellow Christians.

The text printed here is a composite, from the original (fragmentary) inscription, a later inscription (also fragmentary), and quotations from the whole text in a *Life* of Aberkios.

See further: Wischmeyer (1980); Llewellyn (1992) 177–81*.

SEG XXX.1479

As a citizen of the chosen city, I have made this [in my lifetime] so that I should have there a prominent place for my body. My name is <Aberkios> a pupil of the holy shepherd [who feeds the flocks of sheep on mountains and plains, and who has powerful eyes that see everywhere. He taught me < . . . > trustworthy writings]; he [sent] me to Rome [to view] the royal city and [to see] the queen with [golden] robe and golden [shoes]. And I saw here a people with a [bright] seal[1] and I [saw] the plain of Syria and all the cities, crossing the Euphrates [to Nisibis]. Everywhere I had kindred folk, with Paul as my vehicle. Faith everywhere [preceded me] and served [food] everywhere, fish from the [spring] mighty, pure, which the [holy] virgin caught and gave to her friends to eat for ever; she had excellent wine and gave the fish with bread. I, Aberkios, ordered these things to be written in this manner in my presence. I have truly lived 72 years. May everyone in agreement who understands this pray for Aberkios. However, let no one put anyone else in my tomb; if someone does, let him pay 2,000 gold pieces to the treasury of the Romans and 1, 000 gold pieces to my own excellent city of Hieropolis.[2]

1. Aberkios here seems both to use traditional language of Rome and to refer to the Christian church, with its seal perhaps of baptism.
2. This type of penalty was normal on non-Christian tombs. Cf. 4.13 on tombs.

12.7c *The social composition of Christianity*

The early church comprised a very wide range of social groups; it was not (as used commonly to be assumed by scholars) a collection of social outcasts. The following texts illustrate this diversity – ranging from high ranking ex-slaves and slaves at the imperial court (12.7c(i)) to men and women of senatorial families (12.7c(ii–iii)). See also 11.11c (humble Christians), 12.7d (wealthy adherents).

See further: Vol. 1, 276, 295–6; Lane Fox (1986) 293–335*.

12.7c(i) Christians at court (early third century A.D.)

This sarcophagus from Rome has two inscriptions: one a traditional epitaph detailing the career of the dead man; the second inscription, in a different hand, explicitly Christian in phrasing. It shows the existence of Christian ex-slaves at the imperial court, as already in the time of Paul (Philippians 4.22;

Romans 16.10–11); presumably both the deceased and at least one of his own ex-slaves were Christian.

See further: Vol. 1, 295; **2.10b** for evidence of Christianity among the imperial household; Instinsky (1964); Bovini and Brandenburg (1967) no. 929; Lampe (1989) 278–82.

ILS 1738; *ILCV* 3332; *ICUR* VI.17246

<On front in central frame held by two Cupids> To Marcus Aurelius Prosenes, ex-slave of the emperors, chamberlain of the emperor <Caracalla>, steward of the treasury, steward of the imperial property, steward of the gladiatorial shows, steward of the wines, appointed by *divus* Commodus to the court, his ex-slaves paid for the carving of the sarcophagus from their own money for their most pious master who well deserved it.

<On right side of sarcophagus, and hardly visible in the upper border> Prosenes was received unto god five days before the Nones of [March] at S[. . .]nia when Praesens and Extricatus were consuls, the latter for the second time <A.D. 217>. Ampelius his ex-slave on his return to the city from the campaign inscribed this.[1]

1. He had been with the emperor Caracalla in Mesopotamia.

12.7c(ii) Christians in Carthage (A.D. 212)

In this extract of a speech to the governor of Africa Terrullian claims that Christians were a large cross-section of the city of Carthage (the capital of the province) by the early third century A.D. But this claim may have been largely motivated by the purpose of the speech – which was a plea to the governor not to persecute Christians in his province.

See further: Barnes (1971) 67–70.

Tertullian, *To Scapula* 5

When Arrius Antoninus was pressing hard <on the Christians> in Asia, all the Christians of that state presented themselves openly before his tribunal.[1] Then, having ordered a few to be taken off for execution, he said to the rest <in Greek>: 'Wretched people, if you want to die, you have cliffs or ropes.' If we decided to do this here too, what would you do with all these thousands of people, so many men and women, every sex, every age, every rank, offering themselves to you? How many pyres, how many swords you would need! What will be the suffering of Carthage itself, whom you will decimate, when each person recognizes their relatives and friends, when one sees there perhaps men and women even of your own <senatorial> rank, and some leading people, and relatives and friends of your friends? Spare yourself, even if not us. Spare Carthage, if not yourself. Spare the province, which, once your intention was known, has been subject to the extortionate demands both of soldiers and of individual private enemies.

1. Tertullian starts with a corroborating example from the province of Asia, where Arrius was governor *c.* A.D. 188.

12.7c(iii) Upper-class women in Rome

The presence of upper-class women in the church is illustrated by this section of Hippolytus' attack against Callistus, bishop of Rome (A.D. 217–22). Callistus had apparently allowed highborn Christian women to live with Christian men without formal marriage. This was a means of protecting the status of the women who (according to Roman law) would have lost all senatorial privileges by marriage to men of lower rank; while (inconveniently) highborn women probably outnumbered highborn men in the church at this date. However, Hippolytus saw this as 'laxity' and was so shocked that he broke with the church, calling it the 'school of Callistus'.

See further: Vol. 1, 299–300 (with references); **12.7e(ii)** on Valentinus and women; R. M. Grant (1970) 180–3*; Averil Cameron (1980); Lane Fox (1986) 308–9.

Hippolytus, *Refutation of all Heresies* IX.12.20–5

<So> the imposter <Callistus> after venturing on such opinions set up a school, issuing the following teachings against the church. He was the first to decide that people were permitted [sinful] pleasures, on the ground that he could forgive everyone their sins. With any Christian member of someone else's congregation who commits some sin, according to him, the sin is not held against him, if he runs off to the school of Callistus. Many people with no sense of conscience were pleased by his proposition, some who had actually been expelled by many heresies, others who had been formally expelled by us from the church; they went over to him and filled up his school . . .

His hearers, delighted with his tenets, continue deluding themselves and many others. Crowds of them flock to his school. So their numbers do grow, rejoicing at the crowds flocking in for the pleasures which Christ did not permit. Despising him <Christ>, they do not prevent anyone from sinning, saying that he pardons those in good standing with him. For women who were unmarried and were passionately attracted [to a man], those of high status who did not wish to annul their status through a legal marriage, he <Callistus> actually permitted to take any man they chose, household slave or ex-slave, as their bedfellow, and permitted a woman, though not legally married, to consider him as her husband. Then the so-called Faithful women began to make use of abortive drugs and bindings to remove what had been conceived, because they do not want to have a child by a slave nor by a worthless man, on account of their good birth and extreme wealth. See what a pitch of impiety the lawless man has reached, teaching adultery and murder at the same time. And in addition to these brazen acts, these shameless people endeavour to call themselves a catholic church, and some people, thinking they do well, run over to join them.

12.7d *The practices of Christianity.*

Christian practices were the object of curiosity, ridicule and admiration from non-Christians; and the object of pious accounts from Christians themselves. The following passages offer a Christian and a (positive) non-Christian view of Christian practice. See also **11.11b** (Pliny's investigation of Christian rituals), **11.11d** (an account of non-Christian attacks).

12.7d(i) Christian worship.

Justin's account is the earliest detailed Christian description of their rituals.

See further: Dix (1945); R. M. Grant (1970) 284–312*.

Justin, *First Apology* 67

We afterwards <sc. after baptism and first eucharist> continually remind each other of these things. The wealthy among us help all those in need, and we always keep together. For everything we receive we praise the maker of all things through his son Jesus Christ and the holy spirit. On the so-called Sunday everyone in town or countryside gathers together in one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read out, for as long as time permits.[1] Next, when the reader has finished, the president in an address admonishes and exhorts us to imitate these good examples. Then we all stand up together and offer prayers; when we have finished praying, as I said before <in section 65>, bread, wine and water are brought out, and the president also offers prayers of thanks, to the best of his ability; the people assent, saying Amen, and each person receives and shares in that over which thanks have been given, and a portion is taken by the deacons to those not present. The wealthy and willing each gives what he wants as each sees fit, and what is collected is deposited with the president. He helps orphans and widows, and those in need through sickness or any other reason, those in prison, foreigners staying with us; in a word, he takes care of everyone in distress.

On Sunday we make our common gathering since it is the day on which god changed darkness and matter and made the world, and on which Jesus Christ our saviour rose from the dead; he was crucified on the day before that of Saturn <i.e. on Friday>, and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, he appeared to his apostles and disciples and taught them what we have put to you for your consideration.

1. A fuller account of what may be the Roman liturgy *c.* A.D. 220 is given in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus (tr. G. Dix, 2nd edn 1968); cf. Klauser (1979) 10–18.

12.7d(ii) Contemporary observation of the Christian life

In this passage (preserved only in an Arabic paraphrase of Galen's Summary of Plato's *Republic*) Galen compares the behaviour of Christians with that of philosophers – stressing particularly the ascetic aspects of Christian practice.

See further: **12.6a** for admiration of Jewish practices; Walzer (1949) 57–74; Köhert (1956); Wilken (1984) 68–93*.

Galen, *Summary of Plato's Republic* III in Walzer (1949) 15–16

Most people are unable to follow the thread of demonstrative arguments; hence they need allegories to benefit from (and he <Galen> means by allegories tales of rewards and punishments in the next world[1]). Thus we now see the people called Christians, though they have drawn their faith from mere allegories, sometimes acting like true philosophers. For their lack of fear of death and of what they will meet thereafter is something we can see everyday, and likewise their restraint in cohabitation.[2] For they include not only men but also women who have refrained from cohabiting all through their lives; and they include people who, in self-discipline and self-control in matters of food and drink, and in their keen pursuit of justice, have attained a pitch not inferior to that of true philosophers.

1. The Arabic text includes this comment on Galen's writing.
2. On the theme of sexual restraint, see P. Brown (1988) 33–64.

12.7e *Pluralism of early Christianity*

Early Christianity included a wide diversity of practices and beliefs, as professed Christians attempted to think about the relationship between Christianity and Judaism and Greek gods and philosophy. The nature of these 'heresies' can be gleaned partly from surviving texts written by and for the widely diverse Christian groups (12.7e(i)). From the middle of the second century on there survives an extensive tradition of Christian writings which attempted explicitly to define some of these beliefs as unacceptable – 'heresies'; though it was not until the reign of Constantine (A.D. 307–37) that the church had any effective mechanisms for imposing 'orthodoxy' on its members. But, as these 'heretical' groups were gradually excluded from what was to become the 'orthodox' Christian tradition, another important source are the treatises written against them. There follow extracts from two of the major anti-heretical writers of the second and early third centuries, Irenaeus and Hippolytus, and from the church historian Eusebius.

See further: Vol. 1, 248, 284–5, 307–8; 12.7a(i), Justin, possibly the first author of a treatise attacking 'heresies'; 12.7c(iii), another extract from Hippolytus.

12.7e(i) A Gnostic cosmology

The following complete treatise encapsulates aspects of early Christian thinking later deemed 'heretical'. Central to many of its ideas is the notion of *gnosis* ('knowledge' or, better, 'spiritual insight' or 'redemption of the inner man' (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.21.4)). This word gave rise to the term 'gnostic' which was applied to many of these early Christian groups. The treatise has four sections: (1) invocation of the fundamental trinity of Father (Adamas), his first (female) emanation Ennoia ('Thought'; Nous 'Mind' dwelling in the Heights; First Nous), and their son Upright Nous ('Mind', elsewhere called Logos 'Word', Autogenes 'Selfborn'). (2) This invocation, now stated to be by

Norea, daughter of Adam and Eve according to the Gnostics, leads to her restoration to her proper place, the Pleroma ('Fullness', the sphere of perfection), and union with the godhead. (3) While in the Pleroma, Norea has a saving role in speaking 'words of Life'. (4) Here her (future) salvation is identified with the salvation of her spiritual descendants, by integrating them into the divine.

The treatise was composed in Greek, probably in the late second or third centuries, but is known to us only in a Coptic translation of the fourth century A.D. The text is heavily restored.

See further: Jonas (1963) 174–205 on other Gnostic cosmologies; Pagels (1979) 57–83*; Filoramo (1990).

B. A. Pearson (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices* IX–X (Leiden, 1981) 94–9

(1) Father of the All, Ennoia of the Light, Nous dwelling in the heights above the regions below, Light dwelling in the heights, Voice of Truth, upright Nous, untouchable Logos, and ineffable Voice, incomprehensible Father!

(2) It is Norea who cries out to them. They heard, and they received her into her place forever. They gave it to her in the Father of Nous, Adamas, as well as the voice of the Holy Ones, in order that she might rest in the ineffable Epinoia, in order that she might inherit the First Nous[1] which she had received, and that she might rest in the divine Autogenes, and that she too might generate herself, just as [she] in like manner has inherited the living Logos, and that she might be joined to all of the Imperishable Ones, and [speak] with the Nous of the Father.

(3) And [she began] to speak with words of Life, and she remained in the presence of the Exalted One, possessing that which she had received before the world came into being. She has the great Nous of the Invisible One, and she gives glory to her Father, and she dwells within those who [exist] within the Pleroma, and she beholds the Pleroma.

(4) There will be days when she will [go to] the Pleroma, and she will not be in deficiency, for she has the four holy helpers who intercede on her behalf with the Father of All, Adamas, the one who is within all the Adams, because he possesses the thought of Norea, who speaks concerning the two names which create a single name.[2]

1. The highest god in Platonism of the second century A.D.
2. The two names are Adamas and Norea, and their union constitutes the spiritual human.

12.7e(ii) Alleged immorality of 'heretics'

The first 'heretic' whose beliefs Irenaeus expounded in detail was Valentinus, who taught in Rome in the middle of the second century A.D. Irenaeus claims that the followers of Valentinus performed un-Christian acts as a result of their theological beliefs. Whatever the truth of his claim, it illustrates a concern within Christianity to define 'proper' Christian behaviour.

See further: Vol. 1, 248, 284–5, 305–7, 371; 6.8b on sacrifice; Jonas (1963) 174–205; Pagels (1979) 33–56*; P. Brown (1988) 116–21 on asceticism.

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.6.2–4

So they assert that good works are necessary for us <sc. ordinary Christians>; otherwise salvation would be impossible. But they hold the doctrine that they themselves will be completely saved because they are spiritual not by works but by nature . . . For this reason the most 'perfect' of them do without fear everything that is forbidden, of which scriptures assure us that 'those who do them will not inherit the kingdom of god' <Galatians 5.21>. For instance, they eat with indifference meat sacrifices made to idols, imagining that they cannot be polluted by them. And they are the first to gather at every gentile festivity performed in honour of the idols for the sake of pleasure, while some of them do not keep away from the murderous spectacle of gladiators fighting with beasts or each other, which is hateful to god and humans. Some who are intensely addicted to the pleasures of the flesh say that they render things of the flesh to the flesh, and things of the spirit to the spirit. And some of them secretly seduce women who are taught this doctrine; women who were seduced by some of them, but then returned to the church of god, have often confessed this along with the rest of their error. Others brazen it out quite openly – they detached from the husbands any women they were in love with and treated them as their own wives. Others again who pretended, effectively to start with, to live with women as with sisters were found out as time passed, when the 'sister' was made pregnant by the 'brother'. And committing many other odious and godless deeds, they accuse us as being uneducated and ignorant, we who from fear of god avoid sinning even in thought or word, while they extol themselves, claim to be 'perfect' and the 'seed of the elect'.

12.7e(iii) Jewish Christianity

The definition of both Christianity and Judaism was extremely problematic. Christians who believed in a very close relationship to Jewish practices have often been seen as a single movement of 'Jewish Christians', but it seems certain that there was no such single group. It is preferable to see such Christians as a number of different groups who closely associated themselves with particular (and different) Jewish practices or doctrines. The Ebionites are one of the best known of these groups.

See further: Daniélou (1964) 55–64*; Klijn and Reinink (1973) 19–43, 68–73; Klijn (1992); A. F. Segal (1992)*.

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.26.2

Those who are called Ebionites agree that the world was made by the true god, but their opinions concerning the Lord are similar to those of Cerinthus and Carpocrates.[1] They use only the gospel according to Matthew and reject the apostle Paul, saying that he was an apostate from the Law. As for the prophetic writings, they attempt to expound them in an excessively diligent manner. They practise circumcision, and persist in those customs which are according to the Law and in a Jewish way of life, so that they even worship Jerusalem as the house of god.

1. As Irenaeus has just explained, these two 'heretics' held that Jesus was the son not of god but of Joseph. The name of the group was derived from the Hebrew word *ebyon* 'poor'.

12.7e(iv) 'Heresy' and the traditional gods

Hippolytus condemned the gnostic sect of the 'Naassenes' for their 'heretical' theology, which allegedly led them to participate in the Greek cult of Magna Mater and Attis.

See further: 2.7, 5.6a and b, 6.7, 8.7 on Magna Marer and Attis; 12.7e(ii) on participation at festivals; Casey (1925–6)*; Frickel (1984).

Hippolytus, *Refutation of all Heresies* v.6.3–7, 9.7–11

Now the time has come for us to proceed with the business before us, and to begin with those who have had the nerve to praise the serpent, who was the origin of sin, because of some arguments invented through his inspiration. The priests and leaders of the sect were initially those called Naassenes, so-called after the Hebrew word (*naas* means serpent); but subsequently they called themselves 'gnostics', claiming that they alone understood 'the depths' <Romans 11.33; I Corinthians 2.10>. Many have split off from them and formed a heresy that is fragmented, though it is one, presenting the same points in different words . . .

These people according to their own doctrine honour [before] all others Human and the son of Human. Their Human is bisexual, and is called Adamas by them. There are many, varied hymns to him, which, in brief, use the following sort of language: 'From you, Father, and through you, Mother, the two immortal names, parents of the Aions <'Eternals'>, Citizen of heaven, Mighty-named Human'. They divide him like Geryon[1] into three parts: the intellectual, the spiritual and the earthly. They also consider that knowledge of him is the beginning of the ability to know god; as they say, 'The beginning of perfection is the knowledge of Human, but the knowledge of god is complete perfection'. All these parts, he <the Naassene> says, the intellectual, the spiritual and the earthly, have crossed over and descended together into one human, Jesus born of Mary, and these three humans, he says, talked together at the same time, each from his own substance and in his own words; because there are three types of being, the angelic, the spiritual and the earthly; and three churches, the angelic, the spiritual and the earthly, whose names are 'the chosen', 'the called' and 'the enslaved' . . .

(9.7) These are the assertions they make, [interpreting] everything said and done by anyone in the light of their own theory, saying that everything happens in accordance with the spirit. Hence they say that even the performers in theatres do not speak or act without providential guidance. Therefore, he says, when the people assemble in theatres, someone enters in a special robe, playing the lyre he is carrying, and sings of the great mysteries as follows, without understanding what he says:

> Be you of the race of Kronos, or blessed child of Zeus
> Or of Rhea, hail mighty [god], Attis, sad message of Rhea.

The Assyrians call you thrice desired Adonis, all Egypt, Osiris,
Greek wisdom, the heavenly crescent of the Moon,
The Samothracians venerate Adamna, the people of Haemus, Korybas,
The Phrygians, sometimes Papas, sometimes [again] the Dead, God,
The Unfruitful, the Goatherd, the green Ear that is harvested,
Or the Man playing the flute, the Fruitful, born of Almond.[2]

So this is the nature, he says, of the many-shaped Attis, whom they describe as follows in a hymn:

I will sing of Attis, son of Rhea,
Not with the clang of bells,
Nor with a roaring pipe
Of the Kouretes of Ida,
But I shall join the song of Phoebus
With the lyre. Hail,
Hail, as Pan, as Bacchus,
As shepherd of the shining stars.

Because of these and similar words, they attend the so-called mysteries of the Great Mother, considering that they can actually observe [their own] whole mystery in those rites. They have nothing beyond those rites, except that they are not castrated, but only perform the role of those who are castrated. For they urge most severely and carefully that one should abstain, like castrated men, from intercourse with women; in general, as we have fully explained, they act like castrated men.

1. A three-headed or three-bodied giant of Greek mythology.
2. For this type of language see 12.4b.

12.7e(v) Christian logicians.

In the late second century A.D. one Theodotus taught in Rome that Christ was a mere man who was made divine only at his baptism. An anonymous treatise written in Rome perhaps in the 230s A.D. (partially preserved by Eusebius) attacks his followers for their textual emendations of scripture and for their use of contemporary logic.

See further: Ghellinck (1948) III.289–96; Walzer (1949) 75–86*; Lampe (1989) 290–4.

Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* V.28.13–14

They have without hesitation falsified the divine texts and have rejected the rule of the primitive faith. They are ignorant of Christ: rather than seek out what the divine texts say, they have diligently set out to find a figure of syllogism as the basis of their godlessness. And if someone puts before them a saying from the divine text, they try to see whether a hypothetical or a disjunctive form of syllogism can be made out of it.[1]

Abandoning the holy writings of god, they study geometry, since they come from the earth, talk of the earth and do not know him who comes from above.[2] Some of them diligently learn the geometry of Euclid and admire Aristotle and Theophrastus. Similarly by some Galen is actually revered.[3]

1. The writer here refers to two terms which originated in Stoic logic. A hypothetical syllogism is an argument in the form: 'If P, Q; P; so Q' or 'If P, Q; not-Q; so not-P'. A disjunctive syllogism: 'P or Q; not-P; so Q', or 'P or Q; P; so not-Q'. Normally, however, 'hypothetical' and 'disjunctive' were applied to propositions, not to argument-forms.
2. An allusion to John 3.31.
3. Galen had a considerable reputation not only as a doctor but also as a logician. Followers of Theodotus could have attended Galen's lectures in Rome, where he lived from A.D. 169 onwards (he may have died as late as the 210s). Galen in his turn knew of Christians (12.7d(ii)).

12.7f *Persecution*

As the Romans persecuted the Christians, so the Christians developed their own ideology of martyrdom (*martyr* in Greek means 'witness'). The account of the suffering of those tried and condemned by the Roman authorities was a central theme of Christian writing (12.7f(i-ii)); and memorials to marryrs became a focus of piety (12.7f(iii-iv)).

See further: Vol. 1, 236–44; Lane Fox (1986) 419–92.

12.7f(i) The denunciation of a woman and her Christian teacher (middle of the second century A.D.)

Justin's *Second Apology*, addressed to the senate (see 12.7a(i)), begins with the account of a recent trial in Rome. It illustrates the apparently arbitrary effects of personal friendship and enmity on the treatment of Christians. A woman, who had converted to Christianity, had divorced her husband for his sexual promiscuity, against the advice of her Christian friends who hoped for improvement by the husband.

See further: Lampe (1989) 200–3.

Justin, *Second Apology* 2

The fine husband of hers ought to have been pleased that she had given up the acts of drunkenness and vice which she used to delight in and commit unhesitatingly with servants and hirelings, and which she wanted him to give up, but when she separated from him without his consent, he denounced her as a Christian. She presented a petition to you, the emperor, requesting that first she be permitted to put her affairs in order and then make her defence against the accusation; you granted this request. Her former husband, as he could for the moment no longer prosecute her, turned on one Ptolemaios, her teacher in Christian doctrine.[1] He did this in the following way: he persuaded a centurion friend of his to imprison Ptolemaios and, when arresting him, to ask just one question, was he a Christian. When Ptolemaios, a lover of truth and not of a deceitful or

false disposition, admitted that he was a Christian, the centurion had him bound in chains and imprisoned him for a long time. Finally when the person <sc. Ptolemaios> came before Urbicus,[2] he was again asked just this one question, whether he was a Christian. And again, conscious of the good which he owed to the teaching which proceeded from Christ, he confessed the doctrine of divine virtue. For he who denies anything either denies it because he has condemned it, or shrinks from confessing it because he knows himself to be unworthy of or alien to it; neither of these courses of action is appropriate for the true Christian.

When Urbicus ordered him to be taken away to execution, one Lucius, who was also a Christian, seeing the arbitrary nature of the judgement, said to Urbicus: 'What is the basis for this? Why have you sentenced this person who is not an adulterer, a fornicator, a murderer, a thief, a robber, who has in short not been convicted of any crime? He has simply admitted that he is called by the name of Christian. Your verdict, Urbicus, does not befit the pious emperor nor the philosopher son of Caesar nor the sacred senate.'[3] He simply replied to Lucius: 'You too seem to me to be one of them.' When Lucius replied that he was, he ordered him too to be taken away. Lucius expressed his thanks that he was released from such wicked rulers and was going to the father and king of heavens. A third one who came forward was also condemned to be executed.[4]

1. On such teachers, see **12.7f(ii)** n.2.
2. Lollius Urbicus, prefect of the city of Rome.
3. The pious emperor is Antoninus Pius; the philosopher son, Marcus Aurelius.
4. On this phenomenon of 'voluntary martyrdom', see de Ste. Croix (1963).

12.7f(ii) The trial of Justin (A.D. 162–167)

Justin himself was martyred under the emperor Marcus Aurelius. The following account of the trial of Justin and his associates is typical of many so-called Martyr Acts: they consist of a pithy dialogue and they have the form of Roman trial records. We cannot however be certain how far they represent an accurate verbatim account of the proceedings. In the case of Justin's trial, in fact three different versions are extant. We have translated the simplest, though even this may well have been to some extent rewritten.

See further: Barnes (1968b) 515–7; Bastiaensen (1990) 47–57, 391–6; for the form of the documents see **4.15b; 6.8b; 12.6f.**

Musurillo (1972) no.4 Recension A

The Witness of the holy Justin, Chariton, Charito, Euelpistos, Hierax, Paion, Liberianos, and their Community.

At the time of the wicked decrees of idolatry, the holy persons mentioned above were arrested and brought to Rusticus the prefect of Rome.[1] (2) When they had been brought in, the prefect said to Justin: 'What sort of life do you lead?'
Justin said: 'One that is blameless and without reproach in the eyes of all.'

Rusticus the prefect said: 'What sort of doctrines do you practise?'
Justin said: 'I have tried to get to know all doctrines, but I am an adherent of the true doctrines of the Christians, even though they may not please those who hold false beliefs.'
Rusticus the prefect said: 'Are these the doctrines you favour?'
Justin said: 'Yes, since I follow them on the basis of belief.'
Rusticus the prefect said: 'What sort of belief?'
Justin said: 'That which we piously hold concerning the god of the Christians, whom we hold to be the one creator from the beginning and maker of the whole world, and concerning the son of god, Jesus Christ, who has also been proclaimed by the prophets as one who was to come to the human race as herald of salvation and teacher of good learning. My words are trivial in comparison with his divinity, but I acknowledge the power of prophecy, because proclamation has been made of him whom I said just now was the son of god. For your information, the prophets from the beginning foretold his coming among humans.'
(3) Rusticus the prefect said: 'Where do you meet?'
Justin said: 'Where each chooses and can. Perhaps you think that we can all meet in the same place?'
Rusticus the prefect said: 'Tell me, where do you meet, in what place?'
Justin said: 'I have been living above the baths of Myrtinos during the whole of this my second visit to Rome.[2] I do not know any meeting-place other than that. I would share with anyone who wanted to come to me the words of truth.'
Rusticus said: 'So you are a Christian?' Justin said: 'Yes, I am a Christian.'
(4) Rusticus the prefect said to Chariton: 'Chariton, are you too a Christian?'
Chariton said: 'I am a Christian by god's command.'
Rusticus the prefect turned to Charito <a woman> and said: 'What do you say, Charito?'
Charito said: 'I am a Christian by the gift of god.'
Rusticus the prefect said to Euelpistos: 'And what are you?'
Euelpistos said: 'I too am a Christian and share in the same hope.'
Rusticus the prefect said to Hierax: 'Are you a Christian?'
Hierax said: 'Yes, I am a Christian, worshipping the same god.'
Rusticus the prefect said: 'Did Justin make you all Christians?'
Hierax said: 'I have long been a Christian.'
Paion stood up and said: 'I too am a Christian.'
Rusticus said: 'Who taught you?'
Paion said: 'I received it from my parents.'
Euelpistos said: 'I listened gladly to Justin's teaching, but I received Christianity from my parents.'
Rusticus said: 'Where are your parents?'
Euelpistos said: 'In Cappadocia.'
Rusticus the prefect spoke to Hierax: 'Where are your parents?'

Hierax said: 'They are dead. It is a considerable time since I was dragged off from Phrygia.'[3]
Rusticus the prefect said to Liberianos: 'You are not also a Christian, are you?'
Liberianos said: 'I too am a devout Christian.'

(5) The prefect spoke to Justin: 'If you are flogged and beheaded, do you believe that you will ascend to heaven?'
Justin said: 'I have confidence in my powers of endurance, if I stand firm. I know that those who have lived well are assured the divine gift until the final conflagration.'
Rusticus the prefect said: 'So you think that you will ascend?'
Justin said: 'I don't just *think*, I am absolutely convinced of it.'
Rusticus the prefect said: 'If you do not obey, you will be punished.'[4]
Justin said: 'We pray that if we are punished, we shall be saved.'
Rusticus the prefect passed judgement: 'Those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods are to be scourged and executed in accordance with the laws.'

(6) The holy witnesses went out to the usual place glorifying god, and fulfilled their witness in their profession of our saviour, to whom is glory and power with the father and the holy spirit now and for ever. Amen.

1. Q. Junius Rusticus, prefect of the city from around A.D. 162 to 167. His opening question may be asking Justin if he was a Christian, but it would allow Justin to reply that he was simply a philosopher.
2. The text is corrupt. Note that Justin, though an influential teacher, holds no ecclesiastical office; for the importance of such teachers and their study-circles, see P. Brown (1988) 103–21.
3. Hierax seems to have been sold into slavery.
4. The longer versions include here a demand for Justin to sacrifice to the gods.

12.7f(iii) Monument of the martyrs in Rome.

The tombs of the martyrs became an increasingly important focus for Christians. In the fourth century, churches were built on their sites (e.g. St Peter's in Rome: **4.15c-d**; Vol. 1, 376–7, Map 4 no.61), and the anniversaries of martyrdoms commemorated (**3.6**). In this passage Eusebius refers to a debate in the early third century A.D. in which the monuments of Peter and Paul were used to support the authority of the 'orthodox' church at Rome.

See further: P. Brown (1981)*.

Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* II.25.5–7

So, this man <sc. Nero>, who had been proclaimed above all as the first antagonist of god, went so far as to murder the apostles. Under Nero Paul reportedly was beheaded in Rome itself, and Peter similarly was crucified; the story is confirmed by the names 'Peter' and 'Paul' given even now to the cemeteries of Rome. In addition, confirmation is given by a member of the church, one Gaius, who lived under Zephyrinos, bishop of Rome.[1] In debate with Proclus, the leader of the Phrygian sect,[2] he wrote the following words about the places where the sacred tabernacles of these two apostles were laid: 'But I can point

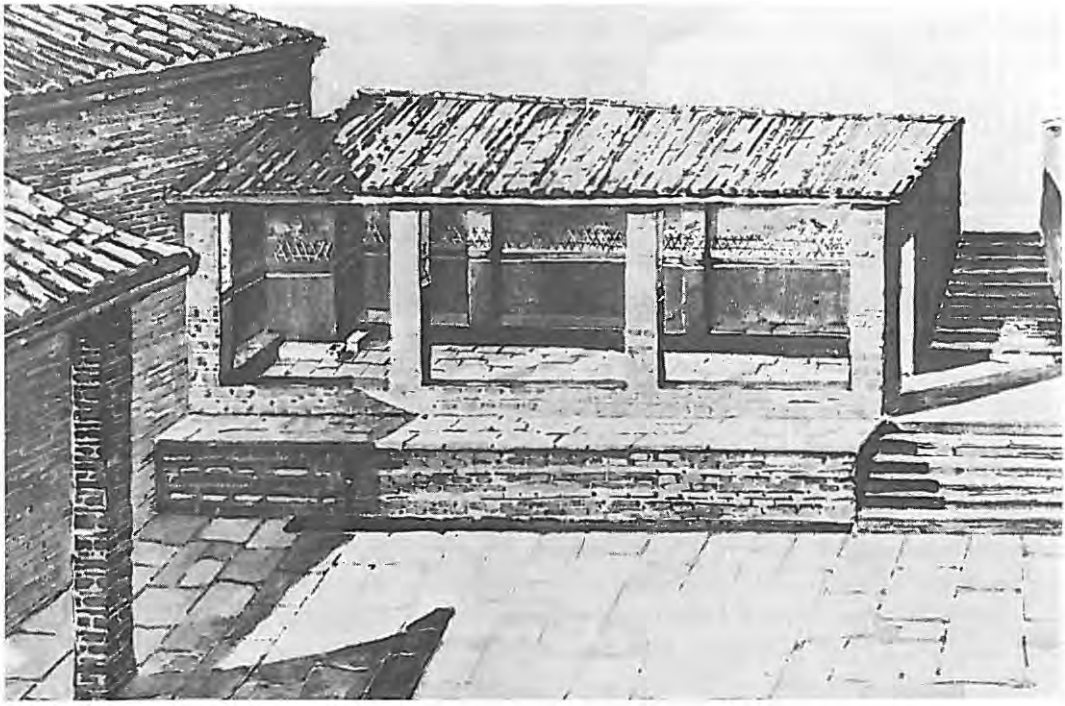
out the trophies of the apostles. If you choose to go to the Vatican or on the road to Ostia, you will find the trophies of those who founded this church.'

1. Zephyrinos was bishop of Rome from A.D. 199–217.
2. Proclus, the leader of the Phrygian (i.e. Montanist) Christians at Rome had argued that the graves of the apostle Philip and his charismatic daughters in Hieropolis in Phrygia gave authority to Montanism (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* III.31.4; cf. **7.6b** on Montanism).

12.7f(iv) The Memorial of Peter and Paul

In addition to the simple, individual monuments of Peter and Paul recognized in the second century (Vol. 1, 268–9), there was also a later memorial to them jointly on the Appian Way south of Rome . The popular veneration of the martyrs here probably began in A.D. 258 (cf. the calendar in **3.6**), and lasted until the early fourth century. Subsequently, the story developed that the martyrs were originally buried at the Appian Way site and their relics later transferred to the two separate sites. The Memorial here is, along with the church at Dura Europus (**4.15a**), the only substantial extant Christian building of pre-Constantinian date. It appears to have been an important focus of private devotion – as shown by the numerous graffiti scratched on its walls. Length 12.5 m., width 6.5 m.

See further: Vol. 1, 376–7; Map 4 no.39; Chadwick (1957); Snyder (1985) 98–104, 141–4*.



Paul and Peter pray for Victor.

13 *Perspectives*

This final chapter concentrates on a series of specifically self-conscious critiques of Roman religion. They cover more than six hundred years, from the second century B.C. to the fifth century A.D. and are written both by Romans and by outside observers. The piety of the Romans, claimed by the Romans and denied by a Greek contemporary (**13.1**), became the subject of philosophical debate in the first century B.C. (**13.2** and **3**), while some religious practices could also be the victim of Roman satire (**13.4**). The issue of the relationship between religion and philosophy recurs when the emperor Marcus Aurelius expressed his personal views of the role of the gods in relation to his Stoic philosophy (**13.5**). Christianity added a new element to the debates. Tertullian (writing at the very end of the second century A.D.) denied that the Roman empire was due to Roman piety (**13.6**). From the fourth century we quote a traditionalist writer describing Rome as a pagan city, with no mention of Christianity and its monuments (**13.7**), followed (**13.8**) by a Christian poet, Prudentius, arguing that Christianity had already in the late fourth century A.D. supplanted the traditional cults. Augustine, writing a generation later, also rejected the old gods of Rome, but asserted the profound theological difference between the earthly city and the heavenly city of god (**13.9**).

For other passages of commentary and critique on Roman religion, see especially: **2.4c**, **2.7e** and **9.6a** (Lucretius' philosophical critique); **1.1a**, **12.6a** (Varro's treatise on *Human and Divine Antiquities*); **9.5d** (Seneca's treatise on 'superstition'); **2.1d**, **2.10c**, **8.10a** (Minucius Felix's Christian critique of Roman religion).

See further: Wardman (1982) 52–62* (a review of late republican 'perspectives').

13.1 Roman piety?

Roman success (particularly in foreign conquest) was commonly ascribed – not only by the Romans themselves, but also by some of those they conquered – to their scrupulous piety towards the gods. Though there was room for debate on how 'sincere' that piety was.

See further: Vol. 1, 73–4; Brunt (1978); Harris (1979) 118–25, 166–75.

13.1a *Roman piety advertised*

This letter (of 193 B.C.), from the Roman authorities to the Greek city of Teos (in Asia Minor, on the Aegean coast of modern Turkey), was inscribed on a stone in the temple of Dionysos in Teos. It was one of a series of thirty extant documents in which various communities agreed to respect the rights and privileges of the Teans. The text shows how the Romans could parade their own religiousness in dealings with foreign states – claiming that it was partly at least for religious reasons that they were agreeing to the Tean requests. But the last clause makes the continuation of Roman favour, towards gods and men alike, conditional on something more mundane – the good conduct of the men of Teos.

See further: Sherk (1969) 214–16; Errington (1980).

IGR IV.1557; *Sylloge*[3] 601

From the Romans[1]

Marcus Valerius, son of Marcus, *praetor*,[2] and the tribunes and the senate <of Rome> send greetings to the *boule* <council> and the *demos* <people> of Teos. Your decree was delivered to us by Menippos, the envoy of King Antiochus, whom you had also selected as your envoy and who spoke to us enthusiastically in accordance with your decree.[3] We received him well because of his previous repute and current good standing and looked on his requests with favour. The fact that we have, absolutely and consistently, placed reverence towards the gods as of the first importance is proved by the favour we have received from them on this account. In addition, we are quite certain for many other reasons that our high respect for the divine has been evident to everybody. Because of these considerations, and because of our goodwill towards you and towards the envoy who presented your request, we declare your city and its territory holy – as it is already – inviolable and free from taxation by the Roman people; we will seek to improve both honours towards the god <Dionysos> and privileges for you, so long as you are careful to maintain your goodwill towards us in the future. Farewell.

1. Heading added by the Teans, not part of the original text.
2. M. Valerius Messalla was *praetor* in 193 B.C.
3. King Antiochus III, king of the Seleucid empire, was at this date still on friendly terms with the Romans and the Teans evidently felt it safe to use his representative for their own diplomacy. Shortly afterwards, relations broke down leading to war between Rome and Antiochus in 191 B.C.

13.1b *The view of a Greek historian*

Some Greek observers regarded Roman piety as exceptional. But here Polybius offers a different Greek interpretation of Roman religion. He treats it principally as an elite device for manipulating the superstitious masses; although he then strikingly contradicts his own theories by showing that pious behaviour

was also characteristic of leading members of the ruling elite themselves. The passage from which this excerpt comes is a comparison between Rome and Carthage, intended to explain Rome's ultimate victory; but after the first sentence, it is clear that Polybius slips into a comparison with the Greek world he knew so much better.

See further: Vol. 1, 108–9; Walbank (1957–79) 1.741–3; Liebeschuetz (1979) 4–5*.

Polybius, *The Histories* VI.56.6–14

The respect in which the Roman constitution is most markedly superior is in their behaviour towards the gods. It is, I think, the very thing that brings reproach amongst other peoples that binds the Roman state together: I mean their superstitiousness. For nothing could exceed the extent to which this aspect both of their private lives and of their public occasions is dramatized and elaborated. Many would find this astonishing. To me at least it seems clear that all this has been done for the sake of the common people. For if you could form a state entirely out of wise men, then perhaps it would not be necessary to adopt this course. But since the mass of every people is fickle and full of lawless desires, irrational anger and violent impulses, it is essential that they should be restrained by invisible terrors and suchlike melodramas. That is why I do not accept that the ancients were acting irrationally or at random when they introduced the notion of the gods or ideas about the terrors of Hades; it is rather our contemporaries who are being rash and unreasonable in banishing these. The result apart from anything else is that those in authority amongst the Greeks are unable to keep their faith, even if only entrusted with a single talent <of money>, and given ten copyists, as many seals and twice as many witnesses; whereas Roman magistrates and legates behave properly, even when they are dealing with huge sums of money, simply because they have pledged their faith by oath.

13.2 Roman philosophical critique

As Rome became more and more familiar with the traditions and arguments of Greek philosophy, Roman thinkers came to examine their own religion from an explicitly philosophical perspective. In his dialogue *On Divination* Cicero presents arguments both in support of the principle of divination (from a Stoic point of view) and against the practice (from a sceptical standpoint). Here the omens Julius Caesar received from his sacrifices just before his murder are discussed from both sides: the question is *how* it could be possible for the entrails of a sacrificial animal to indicate future events (7.4).

See further: Vol. 1, 116–7, 149–51; Rawson (1975) 241–5*; Linderski (1982); Momigliano (1984); Rawson (1985) 298–316; Denyer (1985); Beard (1986); Schofield (1986); Timpanaro (1988); Brunt (1989). For other passages of Cicero's theological debate, see **2.3a**; **2.4a** and **b**.

13.2a *Arguments for divination*

The speaker in this extract is Quintus, Cicero's brother. The idea he expresses of a divine force suffused through the world is a characteristically Stoic philosophical position.

Cicero, *On Divination* I.118–19

Assuming this proposition be granted, that there is a divine force embracing human life – then it is not difficult to infer how it is that those things,[1] which we certainly observe happening, do in fact happen. For it may be that an intelligent force, which is diffused through the whole world, controls the choice of a sacrificial victim; and it could also be that at the very moment when you choose to make the sacrifice a change in the entrails takes place – so that something is added or something taken away. The clearest proof of this fact – such that it is impossible to have any doubt on the matter – is provided by the events that took place just before the murder of Caesar. It was the day when for the first time Caesar sat on a golden throne and appeared in a purple robe;[2] and when he was sacrificing there was no heart in the entrails of the sacrificial victim. Surely you do not imagine that any animal that has blood can exist without a heart? Caesar was unmoved by this extraordinary discovery, even though Spurinna[3] advised him to beware lest he lose all reason and life; for both those things come from the heart. On the next day there was no lobe on the liver.[4] These omens were sent to him by the immortal gods so that he should have foreknowledge of his murder, not that he should avoid it. When, therefore, those parts of the entrails are found to be absent, without which the victim could not have lived, it must be understood that the missing parts disappeared at the very moment of sacrifice.

1. That is, signs giving warning of future events.
2. Ostentatious symbols of monarchy.
3. The *haruspex*.
4. See also 7.4c; 6.6a.

13.2b *Arguments against divination*

Later, in the second book of the dialogue, the character of Marcus Cicero himself takes up the arguments made by Quintus.

Cicero, *On Divination* II.36–7

But your argument was that when Caesar was sacrificing there was no heart in the entrails of the sacrificial bull; and, as it could not possibly be that the victim had no heart when it was alive, then the heart must be deemed to have disappeared at the moment of sacrifice. How does it come about that you understand one principle – that a bull could not have lived without a heart – and that you do not see the other – that a heart could not suddenly have flown off somewhere? As for me, possibly I do not understand the vital function of the heart; but I can guess that the bull's heart had been afflicted by some

disease, and so was wasted away, tiny, shrivelled and not like a heart at all. But what reason do *you* have for thinking that the heart suddenly disappeared at the moment of sacrifice – if a little while before it had been in the sacrificial bull? Or perhaps, do you think, the bull lost his heart when he saw that Caesar, in his purple robe, had lost his.[1] Believe me you <Stoics> betray the very citadel of philosophy, when you waste time defending some little bastion. For by insisting on the truth of soothsaying, you destroy the whole of physiology.

1. The heart was thought to be the centre of reason (see **13.2a**); Cicero implies that by aping monarchy Caesar had (in our terms) 'lost his head'.

13.3 Cicero's ideal Roman religion

Cicero's dialogue *On the Laws*, like his *On the State*, to which it provides a sequel, is ostensibly a work of political theory. But it is effectively a discussion of Roman practices and traditions in the light of Greek philosophical ideas. In this extract Cicero (speaking as a character in his dialogue) offers a 'religious constitution' of his ideal state – which amounts to an idealized version of the Roman religious institutions of his own day. Because of that idealization it is probably an unreliable guide to day-to-day contemporary religious practice; but it shows how a Roman commentator could reflect on his own religious system as a whole.

See further: Goar (1972) 78–96; Rawson (1973b); (1975) 154–6*.

Cicero, *On the Laws* II.19–22

Let them approach the deities chastely, let them show piety, let them set aside their wealth. To anyone who acts otherwise, the god himself shall be the avenger.

Let no one have gods of their own, neither new ones nor from abroad, unless introduced to Rome publicly; let their private worship be for those gods whose worship they have duly received from their fathers.

In towns let them have shrines. In the countryside, let them have groves and places for the Lares.[1]

Let them preserve the rituals of their families and of their fathers.

Let them worship as deities those who have always been recognized as heavenly beings; and those who have won a place in heaven through their merits, such as Hercules, Liber, Aesculapius, Castor, Pollux and Quirinus[2]; and those qualities through which men may gain access to heaven – Mens <Mind>, Virtus <Virtue>, Pietas <Piety>, Fides <Faith>[3]; of these virtues let there be shrines, but none of any of the vices.[4]

Let them observe the established religious ceremonies.

At the festivals, let them refrain from litigation.[5] Let them celebrate these with their slaves after their work is finished. Let the cycle of festivals be so established that they fall at annual intervals. Let the priests offer publicly the prescribed grains and fruits

according to prescribed rituals on prescribed days; (20) let them also keep for other days the rich surplus of milk[6] and of animal births. And so that nothing should be omitted of these rites, let the priests determine the system for their annual rotation; let them also define which victims shall be proper and pleasing to each deity.

Let there be priests for the different deities, the *pontifices* for all of them, the *flamines* for single ones.[7] Let the Vestal Virgins in the city guard the eternal flame of the public hearth.[8]

By what means and by what rite sacrifices, whether private or public, should be performed, let those who do not know, learn from the public priests. Of these, let there be three types: the first, who shall preside over the ceremonies and the sacrifices <i.e. *pontifices*>; the second, who shall interpret the obscure utterances of prophets and soothsayers, such as have been approved by the senate and people.[9] And then let the interpreters of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, the public *augures,* (21) look to the signs and the auspices, and preserve their discipline. Let the priests <i.e. *augures*> perform inaugurations both for the vineyards and the orchards and the safety of the people; let those who act for the state whether in war or in public affairs, take note of the auspices and obey them. Let the priests foresee the gods' wrath and bend to it; let them take note of lightnings in defined regions of the sky; and maintain the city and the fields and the *templa* freed and unimpeded.[10] And what the *augur* has declared to be improper, forbidden, faulty or ill-omened, let those things be null and voided. Let the penalty for the disobedient be death.[11]

For treaties and for peace and war, truces and embassies, let the judges and messengers be the fetial priests.[12] Let them arbitrate in regard to war. Prodigies and portents shall be referred, if the senate orders so, to the Etruscan *haruspices*[13]; let Etruria teach the discipline to her leaders. Let placatory offerings be made to whichever gods the *haruspices* prescribe; similarly with piacular offerings for lightning strokes and the places struck by lightning.

Let there be no nocturnal sacrifices by women except for those offered in proper form on the people's behalf.[14] Nor let there be initiations except into the Greek cult of Ceres.[15]

Let sacrilege committed that cannot be expiated be deemed impious. Whatever can be expiated, let the public priests expiate.

At the public games,[16] those that do not involve chariot racing or bodily conflict, let them regulate the provision of public pleasure with moderate song and the music of harps and flutes, and let that be conjoined with the honouring of the gods.

From the ancestral rites, they shall cultivate the best.

Except for the servants of the Magna Mater – and they only on their fixed days – let no one beg for contributions.[17]

He who steals or takes away what is sacred or in trust in a sacred place, let him count as a parricide.

For perjury, the punishment is destruction from the gods, shame from men.

The *pontifices* shall punish incest with the capital penalty.

Let not the impious man dare to placate the gods' anger with gifts.

Let them fulfil vows scrupulously; let there be a penalty for violation. Let no one consecrate a field; of consecrating gold, silver or ivory, let there be a limit.

Let the religious rights of families be maintained in perpetuity.

Let the rights of the Di Manes <Gods of the Underworld> be respected. Let them treat their dead kinsfolk as divine. Let there be limits to expenditure and mourning for them.[18]

1. For sacred groves, see **4.11**; for the Lares, **2.2a**; **4.12**.
2. For Romulus/Quirinus, see **2.8a**.
3. See **2.3**.
4. Later (II.8), Cicero claims that the cult of Febris (Fever) and Mala Fortuna (Bad Fortune) should therefore be abolished.
5. See **3.1**.
6. Ceres, for example, received offerings of milk, wine and honey.
7. See **8.1**.
8. See **8.4**.
9. The *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*; see **7.3a**; **7.5**.
10. For *templa*, see **4.4**; 'freed and unimpeded' are literal translations of technical augural terms, implying spaces defined by religious rite.
11. Cicero here enhances the role of his own priestly college, the *augures*.
12. See **1.4a**.
13. See **7.4**.
14. The nocturnal sacrifices of Bona Dea (**8.2b**; **13.4**) were offered 'on the people's behalf'.
15. The meaning is not very clear, but it is likely that the ban on initiations is intended to apply only to women, since the Greek cult of Ceres was a cult of women.
16. See **5.7**.
17. For the Galli, the servants of Magna Mater, see **8.7**.
18. In the chapters that follow, through the rest of the book, the speakers discuss the provisions of this code in detail.

13.4 Satirizing women's religion

In his satire on women, Juvenal turns on women's religious festivals (in particular the rites of the Bona Dea, see **8.2b**) representing them as a thinly disguised excuse for an orgy. Juvenal probably knew little more than we do about the details of these rituals (for no men were allowed entry); but it is important, nevertheless, to see that even some of the most traditional Roman rituals could be the object not of reverence, but of humorous, satiric and – in this case – wildly obscene attack.

See further: Henderson (1989).

Juvenal, *Satires* 6.314–41

The rites of Bona Dea are secret – and notorious: the flute gets their hips moving and Priapus' Maenads[1] are carried away by the sound of the horn, as much as the wine; all in a frenzy they toss their hair and howl. How fiercely they're burning with a passion to get laid! How they shriek as their desires soar! What a vast torrent of pure vintage wine

drenches their drunken thighs! Off with her wreath, Saufeia challenges the call-girls to a contest and takes the prize for an arse that can really move. But even she has to admire the neat rhythm of Medullina – whose bum is always on the grind. The trophy stays with the ladies[2] – their talent equal to their birth. And there's no play acting here; everything's done for real – enough to put some warmth into poor old Priam, or even into Nestor's balls.[3] This lot have got the itch, and won't put it off; they're women pure and simple. So from every corner of their den a shout goes up – 'Now is the appointed time – bring in the guys'.[4] Suppose one of the paramours is asleep – why then she tells another to get wrapped up in his cloak and hurry round. If it's no go with the boyfriends, there's a run on the slaves. And if there's no hope of slaves – well the water-carrier gets paid to come. If he can't be found and there really are no men – they don't waste a moment before getting a donkey in and stuffing their bums with that. Oh would that our ancient rituals, and our public celebrations at least, were kept free of these ills! But every Moor and every Indian knows who that 'lute girl'[5] was – the one who brought a prick bigger than both of Caesar's 'Anti-Catos' into the place where even the mice are so embarrassed by their balls that they scuttle away;[6] the place where every picture that shows the opposite sex has to be covered up.

1. The Maenads are the (chaste) female followers of Bacchus; here the joke is that they are made into the far from chaste followers of the phallic god, Priapus.
2. The high-born ladies (Saufeia and Medullina are names associated with the traditional Roman upper class) beat the prostitutes at their own game.
3. These aged heroes would be thought long past sex.
4. The joke in this instruction lies in the clash between the formal religious opening – and the crude ending.
5. A reference to Clodius, who infiltrated the ceremonies in 61 B.C. disguised as a female musician (**8.2b**).
6. The size of Clodius' penis is here measured against the size of Caesar's tracts against Cato!

13.5 Philosophy and religion as a way of life

The emperor Marcus Aurelius towards the end of his life composed, in Greek, the *Communings with Himself*, a series of philosophical reflections. They are not a diary in the modern sense, but a traditional form of philosophical self-scrutiny in which Marcus tried to relate his Stoic philosophy to his actual life. The following selection illustrates his views of the role of the gods, and also of unacceptable superstition.

See further: Farquharson (1944), whose translation is adapted here; Brunt (1974); Rutherford (1989) 178–224.

13.5a *Magic as an 'idle enthusiasm'*

Here Marcus lists 'magic' among a range of characteristics he had learnt to avoid.

Marcus Aurelius, *Communings with Himself* I. 6

From Diognetus[1]: to avoid idle enthusiasms; to disbelieve the utterances of miracle-workers and magicians about incantations and exorcisms of spirits and suchlike; not to be a quail-fancier or be excited about such things; to put up with frank speaking; to become familiar with philosophy and to listen first to the words of Baccheius, then of Tandasis and Marcian[2]; to write dialogues in childhood; to long for a camp bed and a pelt and the other things which are part of Greek training.[3]

1. This section of the *Communings* acknowledges lessons he had learned from different influences in his life. Diognetus was Marcus' painting teacher.
2. Baccheius was a contemporary Platonic philosopher; the other two are unknown.
3. I.e. marks of an ascetic philosophical lifestyle.

13.5b *Doctrines for a good life*

In this section (one of the introductory chapters to the second book of *Communings*) Marcus reviews some of the main elements of Stoic philosophy: providence, fortune, necessity, nature – and the gods.

Marcus Aurelius, *Communings with Himself* II.3

The gods' work is full of providence: the work of fortune is not divorced from nature or the spinning and winding of the threads ordained by providence. Everything flows from the other world; and there is in addition necessity and the well-being of the whole universe, of which you are a part. To every part of nature a good is brought by the nature of the whole, and preserves that nature; the world is preserved as much by the changes of the compound bodies as by those of their individual elements. Let this be sufficient for you; let these always be your doctrines. Put aside your thirst for books, so that you may not die mumbling, but truly reconciled and grateful from your heart to the gods.

13.5c *Living with the gods*

Marcus Aurelius, *Communings with Himself* V.27

'Live with the gods.' He is living with the gods who continuously displays his soul to them, as content with what they have apportioned, and as doing what is willed by the spirit,[1] the portion of himself which Zeus has given to each person to lead and guide him. And this spirit is each person's mind and reason.

1. The Greek word is 'daimon', the equivalent of the Latin *genius*.

13.5d *The role of the emperor*

Marcus Aurelius, *Communings with Himself* VI.30

Take care not to be Caesarified, not to be dipped in the purple dye; for it does happen. So preserve yourself simple, good, pure, dignified, unaffected, the friend of justice, religious, kind, affectionate, strong for your proper work. Strive to continue to be the sort of person philosophy wanted to make you. Revere the gods, preserve people . . .

13.5e *On prayer*

Prayer, Marcus argues, is properly concerned with our own attitudes, not particular benefits or rewards.

See further: Rutherford (1989) 200–5.

Marcus Aurelius, *Communings with Himself* IX.40

The gods are either powerless or powerful. If they are not powerful, why do you pray? But if they are powerful, why not rather pray for the gift of not fearing any of these things, or of not desiring any of them, or of not feeling grief for any of them, rather than that any one of them should be absent or present? For surely, if the <gods> can co-operate with humans, they can co-operate to these ends. But perhaps you will say: 'The gods put these things in my power.' Then is it not better to use what is in your power with a free spirit than to be concerned with what is not in your power in a spirit of slavery and abjection? And who said to you that the gods did not co-operate with us, even in relation to things in our power? Begin at least to pray about these things and you will see. This man prays: 'How may I sleep with that woman?' You should pray: 'How may I not desire to sleep with that woman?' Another prays: 'How may I be rid of that man?' You should pray: 'How may I not wish to be rid of him?' Another prays: 'How may I not lose my child?' You should pray: 'How may I not be afraid of losing him?' Turn your prayers round in this way and observe what happens.

13.5f *That the gods exist*

Marcus here provides two answers to a question commonly raised in Stoic philosophy: how can you prove the existence of the gods?

See further: Rutherford (1989) 209–12.

Marcus Aurelius, *Communings with Himself* XII.28

To those who ask 'Where have you seen the gods, or from where have you learned that they exist, that you worship them as you do?' First, they are visible even to the eyes;[1] secondly, I have not seen my own soul and yet I honour it. And so too with the gods, I experience their power every moment, from which I apprehend that they exist, and I revere them.

1. Perhaps a reference to the Stoic doctrine that the beauty of the universe was proof of the existence of the gods, or a reference to divine epiphanies. See e.g. 9.5c.

13.6 Religion and empire

The argument that Rome rose to grandeur because of her religious piety (see 13.1) was confronted by the Christian writer Tertullian. His defence of Christianity sought to show the illogicality of the argument, and so also the pointlessness of persecuting Christians.

See further: Barnes (1971) 107–12*.

Tertullian, *Apology* 25.2–6

However, since the name of Rome happens to have been mentioned specifically, I do not pass up the challenge which is issued by the assumption of those who say that the Romans, as a reward for their especial *religio*, have been lifted to the peak of pre-eminence, indeed to world dominion, and that their gods are so divine that those who honour them more than others do prosper more than others.

So this is the bonus payment made by the gods to the name of Rome! Sterculus, Mutunus and Larentina[1] have each extended the empire! For I could not imagine that foreign gods have been inclined to show more favour to an alien race than to their own, nor that they have given their native land, in which they were born, grew up, gained fame and were buried, to invaders from overseas.

Let Cybele <Magna Mater> see to it, if she really loved the city of Rome in memory of the Trojan race, her own descendants whom she guarded against the arms of the Greeks – if she foresaw her transfer to the avengers whom she knew would subdue Greece, the conqueror of Phrygia.[2] And so she has presented actually in our own time a strong proof of her majesty transported to Rome: after the death of Marcus Aurelius at Sirmium[3] sixteen days before the Kalends of April <17 March>, the most sacred *archigallus* on the ninth day before the same Kalends <24 March>, in offering a libation of tainted blood from emasculation of his arms, instructed the customary prayers for the well-being of Marcus, who had already passed away! O slow messengers, O sleepy despatches! It is your fault that Cybele did not learn sooner of the death of the emperor, to prevent the Christians from laughing at such a goddess.

1. Tertullian chooses some obviously inappropriate native Roman deities here: Sterculus (though sometimes associated with the god Saturn) was connected with manure (*stercus*); Mutunus was a phallic deity; Larentina (Acca Larentina), according to some Roman stories, had been a prostitute.
2. Tertullian ironically suggests that Cybele is a good candidate for a divine protector of Rome – always supposing that she had the foresight to see that the Romans would one day defeat the Greeks, who had themselves defeated Cybele's native Trojans.
3. Just south of the Danube, over 1,000 km. from Rome. (See 8.7.)

13.7 A traditionalist description of Rome

A geographical survey of the Roman empire written in the middle of the fourth century A.D. includes in its description of individual cities their ancestral cults. As in other traditionalist writings of the time, Christians and their buildings are excluded and Rome is still represented as a city defined by its traditional religion.

See further: Vol. 1, 382; Rougé (1966) 299–306.

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So Italy is abundant in everything and has the following supreme advantage: the greatest, most distinguished imperial city, which demonstrates its merit in its name, that of Rome; they say that it was founded by the young Romulus. It is adorned to the greatest possible extent with buildings worthy of the gods:[1] every earlier emperor, as those of the present, have wanted to found something there, and each of them has created some monument in his own name. If you want [to call to mind] Antoninus, you will find innumerable monuments; similarly there is also what is called the Forum of Trajan, which has a remarkable and celebrated basilica. It <the city> also has a circus, well positioned and decorated with many bronze statues. There are also in Rome itself seven virgins of free birth and of senatorial family, who for the well-being of the city perform rites for the gods in accordance with ancestral custom; they are called virgins of Vesta.[2] <There follows a description of the Tiber.> It also has the greatest senate composed of rich men: if you wanted to examine them individually, you would find that all had been, or would be, or could be governors, but that they do not want offices because they prefer to enjoy their wealth in peace. They worship the gods too, especially Jupiter and Sol; apparently in addition they perform rites for the Mother of the Gods, and they certainly have *haruspices*.[3]

1. The sense is perhaps ambiguous – between buildings worthy of the deified emperors who built them, or worthy of the gods in whose honour they were.
2. See 8.4. There were, in fact, only *six* Vestals
3. See 7.4.

13.8 Christianity as the real religion of Rome

A Latin poem by Prudentius written *c.* A.D. 382–95, perhaps in Spain before the author visited Rome, presents the martyrdom of Lawrence as a turning-point in the conversion of Rome to Christianity. Lawrence, who was killed in Rome in the persecution of A.D. 258, was a popular saint in the city: he appears in the calendar of the Roman church (**3.6**); bishop Damasus (A.D. 366–84) had just built a church to him (S. Lorenzo in Damaso); and on decorated gold glass from Rome he is depicted beside or even between Peter and Paul (on whom see **12.7f(iii-iv)**). The poem exemplifies the dominant position of Rome

for western Christians, the developing cult of the martyrs, and the refocussing of the city round new holy people and places.

The extract begins with part of the prayer Lawrence uttered while being burnt alive.

See further: Delehaye (1933b); A.-M. Palmer (1989) 125–39, 243–5, 258–60; more general bibliography given at **6.7a**.

Prudentius, *Crowns of Martyrdom* 2.433–536

(433) 'Grant, Christ, to your Romans that the city through which you have granted that all other cities shall be of one mind in worship may be Christian. All the parts of the empire are allied in faith; the world it has subdued grows gentle. May its capital too grow gentle. May she see that lands far apart are uniting in one state of grace; may Romulus become one of the faithful and let Numa himself now believe. The mistaken doctrine from Troy still confounds a senate of Catos,[1] worshipping at secret altars the Penates exiled from Phrygia <i.e. Troy>.[2] The senate worships two-faced Janus and Sterculus[3] (I cannot bear to mention all the monstrosities of the senators) and celebrates the festivals of old Saturn. Erase, Christ, this shame, send forth your Gabriel, that the mistaken blindness of Iulus[4] may recognize the true god. Already we possess the most reliable sureties of this hope, for already there rule here the two chief apostles, one who called the gentiles <Paul>, the other who occupies the foremost chair and opens the gates of eternity which were entrusted to him <Peter>. Depart adulterous Jupiter, defiled with sex with your sister,[5] leave Rome free and flee from its people who are now Christ's. Paul exiles you from here, the blood of Peter drives you out, and the deed of Nero,[6] for which you put the sword in his hand, rebounds on you.

(473) 'I see that one day there will be an emperor who as the servant of god does not allow Rome to serve foul and filthy rites, who will close and bar its temples, will block the ivory doors, will condemn the accursed entrances, making them fast with bolts of brass. Then finally will the marble works gleam, clean of all blood, and the bronze statues, now worshipped as idols, will remain as innocent objects.'[7]

(485) This was the end of his prayer, and with it the end of his bodily imprisonment; his soul gladly departed on the heels of his words. Certain senators, whom the man's extraordinary independence had persuaded to seek the favour of Christ, carried his body on their shoulders. A new spirit had inflamed their hearts and compelled them from love of the supreme god to hate their ancient follies. From that day the worship of the shameful gods went cold; the people were not commonly at the shrines; there was a rush to the tribunal of Christ. In this fight Lawrence did not arm himself with a sword, but turned back the enemy's weapon against its bearer. While the devil fought the unconquered witness of god <i.e. Lawrence>, he himself was stabbed through and fell, and lies prostrate for ever. The death of the holy martyr was really the death of the temples; on that day Vesta saw the Palladian Lares abandoned, with no retribution following.[8] All the Romans accustomed to venerate Numa's *simpuvium* crowd the halls of

Christ and raise high the martyr's name in hymns. The very luminaries of the senate, once *luperci* or *flamines*,[9] kiss the portals of the apostles and martyrs. We see distinguished families, noble on both sides, offering their most illustrious children as pledges in their vows. The *pontifex* who once wore the fillets is admitted to the sign of the cross, and the Vestal Claudia enters your shrine, Lawrence.

(529) O three, four, and seven times blessed is the inhabitant of the city who pays homage in person to you and the abode of your bones, who can kneel beside them, who sprinkles the spot with his tears, who presses his chest to the ground, who quietly pours out his prayers.

1. Cato is here taken as a type figure for a traditional Roman senator.
2. Troy, the home of Aeneas, is taken as the origin of Roman religion.
3. See **13.6** n.1.
4. Son of Aeneas, ancestor of the Romans.
5. On the immoralities of Roman gods see **2.1d** and **12.7a(i)** and **(ii)**.
6. I.e. the execution of Peter and Paul (see **12.7f(iii)**).
7. Lawrence here 'prophesies' the reign of Theodosius, on whom see **3.7**, **11.14**, Vol. 1, 374–5, 387–8.
8. In the temple of Vesta at Rome (see **4.7** n.11) was a statue of Athena known as the Palladium. Here it is used as an epithet for the household gods (see on Lares **2.2a**) supposedly lodged in the temple.
9. See **5.2**, **8.1**.

13.9 The old and the new cities of god

Reacting in part to the sack of Rome by the Goths in A.D. 410, for which the Christians were blamed, Augustine, the Christian bishop of Hippo in North Africa, wrote a massive treatise, *The City of God*, explaining the difference between the earthly city and the heavenly city of god. He thus implicitly rejected two earlier Christian views of Rome: that it was satanic, and (as argued by Prudentius (**13.8**) among others) that it was the fulfilment of god's will.

The first half of the work was a critique of traditional Roman religion. As Augustine explained in a letter, 'in the first five books I write against those who maintain that the worship of the gods – I would rather say, of the evil spirits – leads to happiness in this life. The next five books are written against those who think that suchlike deities are to be worshipped by rites and sacrifices in order to secure happiness in the life to come.'

In this passage, from Book VI, he discusses the scholar Varro's theories of religion, attempting to use Varro's words themelves as an argument against traditional Roman religion. For us, this provides a clear example of how complicated (indeed impossible) it is entirely to disentangle the separate strands of traditional thought and Christianity. Augustine's views are inevitably influenced by the traditional scholarship on which he had been brought up; while we are in the position of having to reconstruct Varro's reflections on his own religion from Augustine's Christian polemic.

See further: Vol. 1, 8, 151–3; P. Brown (1967) 299–329*; Markus (1970) 45–71. Other extracts from *The City of God*: **1.1a, 2.2c, 9.5d.**

Augustine, *The City of God* VI.5, including Varro frr. 7–10 (Cardauns)

Then what is the meaning of Varro's division of theology, that is the systematic exegesis of the gods, into three types: mythical, physical and civil?[1] If Latin usage permitted, I would call his first type 'fabular', but let me call it 'fabulous', since 'mythical' is derived from fables, 'mythos' being the Greek for fable. Let us call the second type 'natural', in accordance with customary usage <'physis' is the Greek for 'nature'>. For the third category 'civil' Varro himself used a Latin word.

He <Varro> continues: 'The name "mythical" applies to the theology used chiefly by poets, "physical" to that used by philosophers, "civil" to that used by the peoples. My first type,' Varro says next, 'contains much fiction that is inconsistent with the dignity and nature of the immortals. In this category we find that one god was born from a head, another from a thigh, another from drops of blood;[2] that gods have been thieves, adulterers, or slaves of a human being;[3] in short, in this category everything that can befall a human being, even the most contemptible one, is attributed to the gods.' In this passage at least when he could, when he dared, when he thought he could speak with impunity, he pointed out, without any obscurity or ambiguity, what injustice is done to the nature of the gods by such utterly false fables. For he was discussing not 'natural' or 'civil', but 'fabulous' theology, which he thought demanded frank criticism.

Let us see what he says about the second category. 'The second type I have defined is the subject of many books left to us by philosophers; there they discuss the identity of the gods, their location, their type and nature; whether the gods came into being at a particular moment or have always existed; whether they are made up of fire, as Heraclitus believes, or of numbers, as Pythagoras holds, or of atoms as Epicurus says.[4] And there are other similar points which our ears can tolerate more easily within the walls of a school than outside on the street-corner.' He found nothing to criticize in this type, 'physical' theology, which is the preserve of philosophers. All the same he mentions their mutual disagreements, which have resulted in a host of feuding sects. However, he removed this type of theology from the street-corner, that is from ordinary people, and indeed confines it within school walls. But he did not remove the first type from the cities, despite all its lies and filth. How sensitive are the ears of the people, including in these matters the Romans! They cannot tolerate the discussions of philosophers about the immortal gods. But they not only tolerate, they actually enjoy listening to the fictions composed by the poets and performed by actors which are inconsistent with the dignity and nature of the immortals, because they can befall not just a human being but the most contemptible one. More than this, they have decided that these tales are pleasing to the gods themselves and must be employed to gain their favour.

<Augustine then rejects the possibility of abandoning 'mythical' and 'natural' theologies in favour of the 'civil'.>

Let us now in any case investigate 'civil' theology too. 'The third type', he says, 'is that which citizens and especially priests in cities must know and put into practice. It tells us which gods are to be worshipped officially, and the rites and sacrifices appropriate to each.' We should pay particular attention to the following statement: 'The first type of theology most pertains to the theatre, the second to the world, the third to the city.' It is easy to see to which he gives first prize. Surely it is the second, which he said earlier was the preserve of philosophers. This he argues relates to the world, which is, in the opinion of philosophers, the most important of all things. As for the other two theologies, the first (of the theatre) and the third (of the city), has he distinguished between them or has he conflated them? We can recognize that what pertains to the city does not necessarily pertain to the world, although we recognize that cities are in the world, because potentially in a city false opinions can lead to the worship of, and belief in, beings which do not correspond to reality anywhere, in the world or outside it. But where is a theatre except in a city? Who established a theatre except a state? Why did it establish a theatre except for stage shows? Where do stage shows belong except classified in 'divine affairs', which are treated with such skill in this treatise <of Varro's>?

1. Augustine has already introduced these three categories at IV.27. There he appears to attribute the division to the *pontifex*, Quintus Mucius Scaevola (early first century B.C.); and so scholars used to imagine that this tripartite theory went back to a treatise by Scaevola himself, and was simply taken up again by Varro. But, as a careful reading of that passage suggests, it is more likely that Scaevola was a character in a philosophical dialogue by Varro, was used as a mouthpiece for the theory and was not necessarily its originator. (Cicero also used historical characters as interlocutors in some of his dialogues – see **9.1d.**) In addition, Augustine may well be distorting the argument for his own purposes – thus making it doubly unsound to treat this tripartite division (as some historians have) as a canonical theory of traditional theology.
2. Athena born from the head of Jupiter; Bacchus from the thigh of Semele; (more obscurely) Pegasus the winged horse born from the blood of Medusa.
3. Theft: Mercury; adultery: Jupiter among others; slavery: Apollo and Neptune under Laomedon, Apollo again under Admetus.
4. Heraclitus and Pythagoras: Greek philosophers who flourished *c.* 500 B.C.; for Epicurean theology, **2.4.**

Glossary

aedes house; commonly referring to the house of a deity, i.e. a temple-building.

aedilis, pl. *aediles* middle-ranking Roman magistrate(s); with charge of public buildings, markets etc., and (in the Republic) games and corn supply.

ancile, pl. *ancilia* one shield reputed to have fallen from heaven in reign of King Numa; others made as replicas; carried in procession by *Salii*.

apex distinctive head-dress worn by Roman *flamines*.

archigallus 'senior' *gallus*

archon, pl. *archontes* common title of magistrate(s) in Greek cities; e.g. the nine *archontes* at Athens.

area open space, courtyard – commonly around a temple-building.

as, pl. *asses* Roman copper coin(s); from late third century B.C. = ¼ *sestertius*.

atrium central court of Roman house.

augur, pl. *augures* Roman priest(s) with special expertise in determining the will of the gods, the science of divine signs and defining sacred space on earth; 9 in 300 B.C, 16 by end of Republic.

Augustalis, pl. *Augustales* see *sevir*.

aureus, pl. *aurei* Roman gold coin; = 100 *sestertii*.

camillus, fem. *camilla* attendant of Roman priest; normally below the age of puberty, freeborn, with both parents alive.

cella room in temple-building, housing cult statue.

colonia, pl. *coloniae* settlement of Roman citizens outside Rome (normally ex-soldiers or landless poor of Rome itself; though title and privileges of *colonia* came to be granted as honour to some provincial communities).

comitialis, pl. *comitiales* day(s) marked on Roman calendar on which popular assemblies (*comitia*) might be held.

comitium place of assembly in Roman Forum.

contio public meeting (sometimes referring specifically to a meeting summoned by a Roman magistrate).

curia, pl. *curiae* (a) 30 subdivisions of the Roman people, reputedly established by Romulus; (b) building used for meetings of senate.

decemviri (sacris faciundis) see *quindecimviri.*

denarius, pl. *denarii* Roman silver coin; = 4 *sestertii.*

divus, fem. *diva* title applied to deified Roman emperors (or deified members of the imperial family).

drachma, pl. *drachmae* Greek silver coin.

duoviri (iure dicundo) literally, 'two men for administering justice'; title of chief magistrates in Roman towns and *coloniae.*

duoviri (sacris faciundis) see *quindecimviri.*

endotercisus, pl. *endotercisi* day(s) marked on Roman calendar as 'split', i.e. half-festivals (*nefastus* in the morning; *fastus* for the rest of the day).

evocatio literally 'summoning away'; the ritual by which the Romans won over the protecting deity of an enemy city, so depriving it of divine aid.

fasces bundle of rods carried in front of Roman magistrates.

fastus, pl. *fasti* day(s) marked on Roman calendar on which specific types of legal action might take place.

feriae days assigned to religious rituals; civil courts closed and some agricultural work restricted – e.g. *f. Latinae* (annual festival of Jupiter Latiaris at Alban Mount); *f. sementivae* ('sowing' festival).

fetialis, pl. *fetiales* priest(s) concerned with Roman relations with outside world, treaties and declaration of war; 20 in number.

flamen, as in *flamen Augusti*, pl. *flamines* Roman priest(s) assigned to the cult of an individual deity; 3 'major' – *Dialis* (of Jupiter), *Martialis* (of Mars), *Quirinalis* (of Quirinus); 12 'minor' of lower status; came to be used (both in Rome and provinces) for priests of the imperial cult.

flaminica wife of *flamen.*

fratres Arvales Arval Brothers; Roman priests concerned with the cult of goddess Dea Dia; 12 in number.

gallus, pl. *galli* castrated priest(s) of Magna Mater.

genius guardian spirit of a man (for a woman, 'Juno' was used).

gens Roman clan or group of families sharing same family name.

haruspex, pl. *haruspices* Etruscan diviner(s) consulted by Rome on interpretation of divine signs; the term was also used in Rome for a wide range of other soothsayers and diviners.

immolatio act of sprinkling victim with meal before sacrifice; can be used as a general term for animal sacrifice.

imperator title of Roman military commanders; also special title assumed by generals after formal acclamation by troops after a victory; becomes part of standard titles of emperor (where we have regularly translated it as 'emperor').

imperium supreme executive power of Roman magistrates.

lararium household shrine of Lares.
lectisternium pl. *lectisternia* banquet in honour of gods, at which statues of deities themselves reclined on couches; see *septemviri.*
lictor, pl. *lictores* attendant(s) of Roman magistrates, priests and others.
lucus woodland clearing, commonly site of shrines and temples.
ludi games as part of festivals of the gods, either *circenses* (chariot racing) or *scaenici* (theatrical).
lupercus, pl. *luperci* officiant(s) of festival of Lupercalia.

magus, pl. *magi* learned priest, originally Persian; pejoratively 'magician'.
menorah seven-branded candlestick, symbol of Judaism.
mundus world; heavens; pit in the Roman Forum, thought of as gateway to the underworld.

nefastus, pl. *nefasti* day(s) marked on Roman calendar; technically those neither *fastus* nor *comitialis*; popularly thought of as ill-omened.
numen, pl. *numina* divine power(s).

patera shallow bowl, often used for pouring libations of wine.
pomerium religious boundary of Rome.
pontifex, pl. *pontifices* Roman priest(s) with wide-ranging religious and administrative duties (including the administration of the calendar and tomb-law); 9 in 300 B.C.; 16 by end of Republic; the *pontifex maximus* was head of the college.
popa, pl. *popae* attendant(s) at sacrifice, who killed the animal.
praetextati those wearing *toga praetexta.*
praetor, pl. *praetores* Roman magistrate(s) immediately below the rank of consul, with chiefly judicial functions; *p. urbanus*, responsible for administration of justice in the city of Rome.
proconsul originally an ex-consul granted *imperium* to command an army in a province; under the Empire the regular title of governor of certain provinces.

quaestor, pl. *quaestores* junior Roman magistrate(s); from 81 B.C. (the dictatorship of Sulla) the quaestorship was the automatic qualifying office for membership of the senate; many of the duties of the *quaestores* were financial.
quindecimviri (sacris faciundis) 'fifteen men for the performance of rites'; Roman priests with responsibility for Sibylline Books, and some supervision of foreign cults; originally 2 (*duoviri*), 10 (*decemviri*) from 367 B.C., 15 by 51 B.C.; number later increased further, though the title remained 'fifteen'.
Quirites ancient collective title for Roman citizens.

religio religion; we have sometimes (esp. chap. 11) retained the Latin word, to emphasize a Roman contrast between

religio (proper religious observance) and *superstitio* (improper, excessive or illicit observance); see Vol. 1, 215–27.

rostra speakers' platform in Forum.

Salii Roman priests who performed a ritual song and dance in March and October; in charge of *ancilia*.

septemviri epulonum Roman priests; 'seven men in charge of feasts for the gods' (*epulum Iovis*); originally 3, 7 under Sulla, 10 by the end of the Republic, though the title remained 'seven'.

sestertius, pl. *sestertii* Roman alloy (orichalchum) coin; Augustus made the financial qualification of senatorial status 1, 000, 000 *sestertii*; in the second century A.D. a legionary soldier earned 1, 200 per year.

sevir (Augustalis), pl. *seviri* (one of a) board of 'six men'; regularly ex-slaves, found in towns of Italy and western provinces, with general public duties and honours (inc. *lictores*), and sometimes an official role in local imperial cult. They were not restricted to small groups. In some towns, *Augustales* (not *seviri*) might number several hundred; see Vol. 1, 257–8.

simpuvium (or *simpulum*) earthenware ladle, used in religious rituals.

solitaurilia multiple sacrifice, perhaps identical with *suovetaurilia*.

suovetaurilia sacrifice of pig, ram and bull.

superstitio see *religio*.

supplicatio, pl. *supplicationes* offering of incense and wine to deity; thanksgivings after victory.

taurobolium sacrifice of bull in cult of Magna Mater.

templum, pl. *templa* an area of sky within which divine signs were observed; a place on earth from which signs in heavens might be observed; a piece of ground formally marked out by the *augures*.

toga, pl. *togae* official dress of Roman citizens; with a purple border (*praetexta*) worn by some magistrates, and by boys, before taking the plain toga (*virilis*) on reaching maturity.

victimarius, pl. *victimarii* assistant(s) at sacrifice, handling the victim.

virgines Vestales virgin Roman priestesses; charged with tending sacred hearth of city in Forum; 6 in number appointed by *pontifex maximus* for 30 years; subject to death penalty for breaking vow of chastity.

votum, pl. *vota* vow(s) made to a deity.

Deities and their epithets

Roman and Greek deities

Greek writers regularly referred to Roman deities under Greek names; and by the late Republic, at least, it was assumed that each major Roman god or goddess had a Greek 'equivalent' (Aphrodite for Venus; Ares for Mars, etc.). The most common are listed here:

Roman	*Greek*
Aesculapius	Asclepius
Apollo	(Phoebus) Apollo
Bacchus	Dionysus
Ceres	Demeter
Diana	Artemis
Fortuna	Tyche
Juno	Hera
Jupiter	Zeus
Magna Mater	Cybele
Mars	Ares
Mercurius	Hermes
Minerva	Athena
Neptunus	Poseidon
Pluto	Hades
Venus	Aphrodite
Vesta	Hestia
Vulcan	Hephaestus

In our translations we have sometimes used the standard English equivalents of Roman names (e.g. Mercury for Mercurius); and have sometimes retained Greek spellings (e.g. Asklepios for Asclepius).

Divine epithets

Some of the best-known deities of Roman religion were given additional titles, or epithets, that referred to a particular aspect of their power or to a particular form of their cult. This list explains the most important, or puzzling, of those that occur elsewhere in the book. It omits the epithets *Mater* and *Pater* ('Mother' and 'Father'), which were applied to a wide variety of deities, sometimes in combination with the epithets given below (e.g. Mars Pater Victor).

Diana: Tifatina – of the town of Tifata, near Capua (S. Italy)

Fortuna: Primigenia – Primordial; particularly associated with Fortuna at the oracular shrine of Praeneste, near Rome (see **4.9**)
Publica – of the state
Redux – of safe returns; in her role of ensuring safe return home
Virilis – of men

Juno: Lucina – title of Juno in her role as protectress of women in childbirth
Regina – Queen; title of Juno at a famous temple on the Aventine hill, Rome (see **2.6a**)
Sospita (Sospes) – Saviour; particularly associated with the cult of Juno at the town of Lanuvium, near Rome (see **2.4b**)

Jupiter: Capitolinus – of the Capitoline hill, Rome (where Jupiter's greatest temple was located)
Dolichenus – of the town of Doliche, Syria; for the cult of Jupiter under this title, see **12.3**
Feretrius – ancient title of Jupiter, associated with a temple on the Capitoline hill, said to have been dedicated by Romulus; exact meaning unknown
Grabovius – ancient title of Jupiter at the town of Iguvium, central Italy
(H)ammon – as identified with Hammon, a North African deity
Latiaris – of the Latin people, worshipped at the Alban Mount, near Rome; sometimes seen as the deified form of King Latinus, founder of the Latins
Libertas – as god of 'Freedom'
Optimus Maximus – Best and Greatest
Sempiternus – Everlasting
Victor – Victorious, or Giver of Victory

Lares: Augusti – of the emperor (see **8.6a**)
Compitales – of the crossroads (see **8.6a**)

Mars: Grabovius – ancient title of Mars at the town of Iguvium, central Italy
Gradivus – ancient title of Mars, perhaps associated with 'stepping out' or 'marching'
Ultor – Avenger (see **4.2**)
Victor – Victorious, or Giver of Victory

Venus: Erucina – of the town Eryx, in Sicily
Genetrix – Ancestress; a title applied to the goddess in her role as ancestress of the Roman people – or, more specifically, of the Julian *gens*
Lubentina – Delightful; Bringer of Pleasure
Verticordia – Turner of Hearts; sometimes explained by Romans as 'turning the hearts of women to chastity'
Victrix – Victorious, or Giver of Victory

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