Omnium Annalium Monumenta: Historical Writing and Historical Evidence in Republican Rome

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PART 5
History and Monuments

Visibility Matters. Notes on Archaic Monuments and Collective Memory in Mid-Republican Rome

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During the last three decades there has been a new and interesting debate on cultural memory in Early Rome. On a general level, this could be explained as the result of influential theoretical works on the genesis of collective or cultural memory and traditions published since the mid-1980s, such as *Les Lieux de Mémoire* by Pierre Nora, *The Invention of Tradition* by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Renger, and *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis* by Jan Assmann,[1] which have contributed to the widespread use of terms like 'cultural landscape' or 'landscape of memories' in the field of classical studies. However, as far the historiography of Early Rome is concerned, this debate took place in parallel with a series of sensational new discoveries regarding the archaeology of the whole of central Tyrrhenian Italy,[2] which re-opened the discussion on the formation of the myths and historical accounts of the origins of the cities.[3]

Among the scholars who have investigated the relationship between monuments and the Roman annalistic tradition, Peter Wiseman defined popular memory as simply an amalgam of what the Roman people saw and heard in their rich oral culture. While the landscape of memory served as a reminder of stories, he claims that a true account of the oldest monuments of the cityscape

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1 After the pioneering work of Halbwachs (1925), see Nora (1984–92); Hobsbawm – Ranger (1983); Assmann (1992).

2 For a review of recent archaeological discoveries concerning early and archaic Rome, see Cifani (2008) and Fulminante (2014) with bibliography. On the Latin sanctuaries, see Ceccarelli – Marroni (2011). For a review of the protohistoric landscape of settlements in central Tyrrhenian Italy, see Barbaro (2010) and Alessandri (2013) with bibliography.

3 Cornell (1995), 1–30; Id. (2005), with bibliography; Miles (1995). For a critical re-evaluation of the legends concerning the rise and the mythical foundation of Rome, see the provocative work by Carandini and his school: Carandini (1997); Carandini – Cappelli (2000); Carandini (2002); cf. Grandazzi (2003); Id. (2008). For a systematic review of the literary tradition on the foundation of the city, see Carandini (2006); Id. (2010); Id. (2011). Among reactions in the debate that ensued, see Wiseman (2001); Fontaine (2004); Forsythe (2005); Fraschetti (2007); Carandini et al. (2008); Wiseman (2008); Martínez-Pinna (2011); Ampolo (2013), with bibliography; Carafa (2014); Hall (2014), 119–143.

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probably did not survive until the beginning of the Roman historiographical tradition.[4] However, we cannot deny that urban monuments also played an essential role as public landmarks in the construction of a collective memory, and among these, religious sanctuaries were privileged places of collective and political identity; this is the case even before one takes into consideration that such public places could well have preserved written documents,[5] a phenomenon which was common in many ancient sanctuaries and also in central Tyrrhenian Italy, as shown for instance by the case of the gold tablets of Pyrgi.[6]

It is also debatable whether the original meaning and function of the monuments inside the city were unknown to the majority of citizens. Obviously there was a profound difference between the restricted elites of the Roman historians and the great mass of barely literate ordinary people in the level of critical attention,[7] but a general knowledge of the ritual and antiquity of the most ancient buildings and places of cult must be supposed, also because recent archaeological research has shown the long preservation or even continuity of use of the majority of the archaic period temples and public infrastructures into the late Republic.

As already clearly explained by Hubert Cancik, the sacred landscape of Rome was composed of a system of connected signs (monuments, spaces and rites), the knowledge of which represented the collective memory of the early Roman community,[8] and such a landscape also represented the most visible collection of *monumenta* for ancient historians.[9] According to K.-J. Hölkeskamp, the sacred topography of the city was one of the chief elements of the collective memory of Rome, and the ritual and commemoration linked to historical buildings represented one of the main sources for the history (or even the supposed history) of the community.[10]

For these reasons my contribution focuses on archaic sanctuaries and public buildings as landmarks of collective memory, which were still visible and even used in the late third century BCE, the age of the earliest Roman historian

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4   Wiseman (2014), 62; see also Wiseman (1986); Id. (2008), 8–14.

5   Cornell (1995), 15.

6   Pallottino et al. (1964); Maras (2009), 349–354.

7   On the audience of early Roman historians: Walter (2011), 283–284. See Pina Polo (this volume) for a skeptical view of popular knowledge of history.

8   Cancik (1985). On the nature of history and historical imagination in the Roman Republic, see also Walter (2004) and now Galinsky (2014), 1–14 with bibliography.

9   On the concept of monumentality in the early mid Tyrrhenian communities, see Meyers (2012). On the relationship between landscape and ethnicity, see Cifani – Stoddart (2012).

10   Hölkeskamp (2004), 137–168; Id. (2006), 481–492 and also his contribution to this volume.

Fabius Pictor, whose work was used by Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus.[11] We know that some archaic sanctuaries and many areas of Rome were completely rebuilt or drastically modified in the mid-republican period. Examples include the important sanctuary of Fortuna and Mater Matuta in the Forum Boarium, some very ancient sanctuaries including the Regia, the Volcanal, or the Temple of Vesta and the inaugurated areas consecrated as *templa*, such as the Comitium (Cic. *rep.* 2.11) and the Rostra (Liv. 2.56; Cic. *Vatin.* 24); all of these were continuously transformed through the centuries.[12] However, there are also many other cases of archaic sanctuaries that were not rebuilt, but were still well preserved and in use until the third century BCE or later. In fact, as rightly observed recently by Mario Torelli, the religious reforms of the age of the Tarquinii were of such importance that it can probably be considered as the most important and durable phase in Rome before the Constantine period and the spread of Christianity.[13] Such a landscape, replete with memories, was still visible for instance at the time of M. Terentius Varro, who hoped for a religious reform.[14] Recent archaeological research can help us to reconstruct this landscape of memory, mainly based on *monumenta* like temples and smaller places of cult, archaeologically attested as votive deposits.

1   The Monumental Sanctuaries

The Temple of Iuppiter Capitolinus was the largest temple in archaic Rome. Livy, Dionysius and Tacitus describe the temple as completed by the last king of Rome, Tarquinius Superbus, and inaugurated in the first year of the Republic (that is in 510 BCE).[15] According to the literary sources the temple was rebuilt no less than four times between the end of the Republic and the early Empire, but it always preserved the same dimensions (Dion. Hal. 4.61.4: Tac. *hist.* 3.72.3). The temple has been investigated since the second half of the 19th century, but it was only at the end of the 1990s that the first stratigraphical

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11   On the chronology of Q. Fabius Pictor: *FRHist* I, 160–178. On that of Ennius' *Annales*: Flores et al. (2000–09); Fabrizi (2012); Elliot (2013); Cornell (2013), 160–178.

12   Cifani (2008), nn. 35, 40–43, 67. On the Forum Boarium, see Brocato – Terrenato (2012); on the Sanctuary of Vesta, Arvanitis (2010); for the transformations of the Forum in the age of Plautus, Sommella (2005); on the transformations of the area of the Forum Iulium, Delfino (2014) with bibliography.

13   Torelli (2010), 312.

14   Cancik (1985), 261; Binder (this volume).

15   Cifani (2008), 80–109; Carandini (2012), tav. 8; Cifani (2016b).

data were obtained.[16] Archaeological excavation has shown that the temple was built on a large, square, stone podium of about 62 metres × 53 metres. The podium was composed of a grid of massive walls of *opus quadratum* of grey granular tufa; the walls were large, between four and six metres; the complete walls were almost 12 metres deep, in order to go beyond the clay surface and reach the solid tufa bedrock of the Capitol Hill. The spaces in the grid of the foundation walls were filled by the clay surface soils from the excavations of the building site. The plan of the grid of the podium highlights the plan of the temple, which had three *cellae*; the main and central one was dedicated to Iuppiter, the others to Iuno and Minerva. As a result, the façade of the temple had six high columns, while the sides of the temple also had no less than six or seven columns, presumably made of tufa. The huge dimensions of the temple and the wide *intercolumnia* meant that a wooden roof composed of trusses was required. It was an exceptional building, which would remain the biggest temple in the city until Hadrian's time. The recent excavations carried out (in 1999) in the temple area investigated the foundation trench of the eastern side of the podium and found many sherds of pottery, of which the most recent pieces cannot be dated after the end of the sixth century BCE.

The building of the Temple of Iuppiter Capitolinus was not a matter of mere local history, since it marked out Rome as one of the most important cities of the Mediterranean. It was also the largest temple in central Italy in the sixth century BCE and was probably the prototype of the Tuscan temples. However, if we consider the plan of this temple with the triple line of columns in front of the cellae, it also shows strong influence from Ionic architecture found in Greek cities in Greece and Asia Minor, above all the Artemision at Ephesus, the Heraion at Samos and the Olympieion at Athens. The podium of the temple does not seem to have changed across the centuries, but it shows two layers of *opus coementicium* reinforcement. The earliest layer is made of concrete and tufa and was clearly made in the late republican period, more or less between the second and the first century BCE; historians and archaeologists tend to date this re-building of the temple to Quintus Lutatius Catulus to between 69 and 60 BCE.[17] The second phase of restoration of the podium used an *opus coementicium* made of concrete and fragments of basalt and it can be dated generally to the early Imperial period.

I think that both layers of *coementicium* reinforcements were linked to the changes in materials used in the reconstruction of the late republican phase, which is when the previous archaic columns of tufa were replaced by heavier

16   Mura Sommella et al. (2001).
17   Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.69; Liv. *per.* 98.

marble columns, and in the reconstructions of the early imperial phases. Nevertheless, what is worthy of note is that the planimetry of the podium of the temple never changed, which may be due not only to the religious character of the building but also to the complexity of carrying out modifications to the temple whilst keeping it in line with the grid of the podium. After examining these details we can be sure that the Temple of Capitoline Iuppiter of the third century BCE was still the same building as that of the archaic phase, except perhaps for the placement of decorations or votive monuments in the sanctuary. It represented the most important urban landmark and was linked ideologically with the events of the late regal period.

The other important sanctuary of the age of Tarquinius Superbus was the Temple of Saturn. According to the literary tradition, this temple was vowed by Tarquinius Superbus and was completely reconstructed only in 42 BCE by L. Munatius Plancus.[18] Archaeological stratigraphic excavations carried out in the 1980s revealed an early podium built of square tufa blocks which was still in use until the late republican phase, when the whole structure was restored by means of concrete and travertine.[19] Also in this case we can say from stratigraphic data that the archaic podium was still in use until the first century BCE and this gives a vivid idea of the continuity of one of the most important urban sanctuaries.

The third most important temple of the archaic period was the Temple of the Dioscuri in the Forum. According to the literary sources this temple was promised or vowed in 495 BCE by Postumius Albinus and was completed and dedicated by his son in 484 BCE. The archaic temple was restored in 117 BCE by L. Caecilius Metellus Dalmaticus and later completely rebuilt by the emperor Tiberius.[20] The archaeological excavations carried out by a Scandinavian team between 1983 and 1985 confirmed the foundation date of this temple as the beginning of the fifth century BCE, and a first modification of the plan of the temple during the course of the second century BCE by means of reinforcement of the podium with concrete.[21] Regarding the archaic phase, many fragments of its podium and foundations are preserved. Undisturbed earth-fill of the archaic temple was found nearby and inside the podium and some pottery,

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18   Varro ap. Macr. *Sat.* 1.8.1; Dion. Hal. 6.1.4; Suet. *Aug.* 29.5.

19   Maetzke (1991); Cifani (2008), 109–111 n. 32; Carandini (2012), tav. 11.

20   Dedication: Liv. 2.20.12; 2.42.5; Dion. Hal. 6.13. Restoration: Cic. *Scaur.* 46. Imperial phase: Suet. *Tib.* 20. See *LTUR* I (1993), 242–245 *s.v.* 'Castor, *aedes, templum*' (I. Nielsen).

21   Cifani (2008), 119–123 n. 38; Carandini (2012), tav. 12.

roof tiles and painted plaster fragments were collected, none of which seem to indicate a date later than the beginning of the fifth century BCE.[22]

On the basis of its extant remains it is possible to reconstruct the plan of this temple quite accurately. It had a high podium; its width was 27 metres and its length 40 metres. Antefixes of a Silenus and a head of Iuno, found during previous excavations, can be identified as roof decorations of this late archaic temple. So the archaeological evidence reveals not only the continuity of a cult from the fifth century until the second century BCE, but also that the Temple of the Dioscuri in the Forum maintained the archaic podium and foundations for at least three centuries and that the whole early republican structure was still clearly visible at the end of the second century BCE.

2 The Evidence from Votive Deposits

The landscape of memory, linking mid-republican Rome to the earliest phases of the city, was completed by small shrines and local cults which show a long continuity across the centuries. The first is the well-known votive deposit of the Protomoteca, on the Capitol Hill.

This votive deposit, which has been only partially excavated, contains material from the eighth to the third century BCE and reveals the long continuity and conservative nature of some of the most archaic cults.[23] Another very ancient cult was on the Quirinal, as shown by the votive deposit found in front of the Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria, which contained objects that can be dated to between the eighth and the third centuries BCE.[24]

A further example of a long term cult is the circular shrine of squared blocks and votive deposit found on the Esquiline (Oppius), which was a site of worship between the sixth and the fourth century BCE.[25] A cult of long duration was also found on the north-western slopes of the Palatine, in a place known in the literary sources as Curiae Veteres. In this area the archaeological excavations carried out by the University of La Sapienza of Rome found evidence of two places of cult which were sites of worship from at the latest the middle of the sixth century BCE to the earlier imperial phase or possibly later.[26] In addition, a votive deposit which was in use from the archaic period until the middle

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22   Nielsen – Poulsen (1992); Guldager Bilde – Poulsen (2008); Slej – Cullhed (2009).

23   Mazzei (2007), 168.

24   Gjerstad (1960), 149 figg. 99: 9–26.

25   Cordischi (1993); Coarelli (2001); Cifani (2008), 74 n. 25.

26   Zeggio (2005); Ead. (2013), 28; Panella et al. (2014), with bibliography.

of the Republic was found not far away. Another important cult location has recently been found on the northern slope of the Palatine; it is a shrine which started in the eighth century, followed by an altar of tufa which was built in the archaic period, surrounded by votive objects the latest of which can be dated to the third century BCE.[27]

3   The Evidence from Public Infrastructures and Private Contexts

Ancient public infrastructures also represented landmarks for the collective memory. We may recall, for example, the great drainage work of the Cloaca Maxima, often attributed to the last kings,[28] but probably the most important monument for the collective memory of the city was the urban walls, the so-called Servian Walls. They constituted a line of fortifications of about eleven km in length and enclosed an area of at least 365 hectares that corresponds to the traditional Seven Hills of Rome.[29]

This huge fortification was originally built of square tufa blocks in the second half of the sixth century BCE. The walls of the late regal period can be dated by the analysis of building techniques and of the metrical system adopted, but also by means of stratigraphical and topographical observations made on some single segments. This line of fortification of archaic Rome survived until the late Republic, even if many sectors of the walls were heavily restored or rebuilt in the fourth century BCE. The city walls played a crucial role in the identity and collective memory of the community, a fact which was acknowledged by many authors of the late Republic also by means of different literary genres.[30]

Other places of public and private memories were probably the cemeteries of the city, of which the main one was located from the eighth century BCE in the Campus Esquilinus;[31] despite the well-known funerary austerity found in Rome in the archaic period,[32] we must also note that this area was preserved

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27   Carandini et al. (2013); Carafa et al. (2014).

28   Bauer (1989); Id., *LTUR* I (1993), 288–290 *s.v. 'cloaca, cloaca maxima'*; Antognoli – Bianchi (2009); Bianchi (2010); Palombi (2013). In the present paper I do not consider the many buildings and public works which were used from the archaic period onward, such as wells and cisterns. For a list of such structures, see Cifani (2008), 305–318 with bibliography.

29   Cifani (1998), 359–389; Id. (2008), 45–73; Id. (2016a), 82–93. On the fortification line along the slope of the Quirinal Hill, see Coarelli (2013).

30   For a list, see Begni (1952).

31   On the early Roman necropolis: Colonna (1996); Bartoloni (2010) with bibliography.

32   Colonna (1977); Bartoloni (2010) with bibliography.

for funerary use until the first century BCE[33] and we can suppose that it was also a place of preservation and transmission of memory at least for some of the most notable families, as shown for instance by the Esquiline chamber tomb CXXV which was used at the beginning of the seventh and certainly still in the fourth century BCE.[34]

Last but not least among private areas, we should consider the extraordinary preservation and continuity of the domestic quarter at the northern Palatine slope, between the end of the sixth century BCE and the end of the third century BCE, which also leaves open the possibility of the preservation of private archives from the archaic period until the mid-Republic.[35]

To conclude, the examples illustrate that the shaping of the urban landscape started in the course of the eighth century BCE, when the first public cults and the main suburban cemetery were organized. They became places of memory and identity; the archaic phase marked a new and profound organisation of the city by means of monumental temples in parallel with the new fortification line, the so-called Servian Walls. This new landscape survived and was clearly visible until the late Republic and even later.[36] There is enough evidence to assume that mid-republican Rome was a place where many elements of the public landscape of the archaic city persisted, and which was ritualized and preserved as a religious landscape, and that the historians of mid- and late-republican Rome were still able to observe in their own times a wide range of archaic *monumenta.*

We must also conclude that in the second half of or late in the third century BCE, the age of the historian Fabius Pictor, the urban landscape of Rome still retained substantial elements of continuity with the archaic phase (sixth century BCE), or even earlier phases, and that there was a collective knowledge of the antiquity of many buildings. The main landmarks such as the Temple of Iuppiter on the Capitoline Hill, or the Temple of the Dioscuri in the Forum, still had the same perimeter and possibly also the same shape as in the archaic period; in addition, many early religious shrines from the eighth to the seventh century onwards were still used for worship. Obviously, we cannot assume that the religious rituals of such cults were completely preserved through the centuries, nor can we imagine early Roman society as something fixed and static,

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33   Häuber (1990), with bibliography. See also Carandini (2012), tavv. 123, 126.

34   Pinza (1905), cc. 194–195; Bartoloni (2010), 167, with bibliography.

35   Carandini – Carafa (1995/2000), 215–282; Carandini – Papi (1999/2005), 17–54, 199–224; Cifani (2008), 139–145.

36   For the long duration of cults in the *suburbium* of Early Rome: Colonna (1991); Cifani (2005).

given the well-known dynamics of social mobility which characterized the civic body from the earliest phases.[37]

However, we should consider the importance of the long continuity of a cultural landscape as an aspect of the collective memory and identity of the Roman community through the centuries, and we should also reflect more on the highly probable preservation of written documents before the beginning of the annalistic tradition.[38] Indeed, in the Augustan period for example, historians like Livy and Dionysius were able to describe with high precision the foundation dates of the Temple of Iuppiter and the Temple of the Dioscuri, which have now been dated independently by recent archaeological investigations to the end of the sixth century and the first quarter of the fifth century BCE. In this case we must presuppose the preservation or transmission of written documents thanks to which the foundation dates of both Roman sanctuaries were known up to the first century BCE, even if such survivals are insufficient to support the historical accuracy of the events surrounding the foundation of the Republic.[39]

In 1963 Arnaldo Momigliano stressed the peculiarity of the history of Early Rome and the importance of an interdisciplinary approach which included literary and non-literary evidence, most notably the archaeological data.[40] Fifty years later, despite scepticism and neo-hypercriticism, this lesson seems even more valid and fruitful.

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37 See for instance the transformation of the urban and collective memory by the end of the Republic: La Rocca (2012).

38 Cornell (1995), 12–16.

39 See, for instance, Hall (2014), 145–165.

40 Momigliano (1963), 98.

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