A COMPANION TO THE
CITY OF ROME

EDITED BY
CLAIRE HOLLERAN
AND
AMANDA CLARIDGE

WILEY Blackwell

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Claire Holleran

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Amanda Claridge

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Notes on Contributors

Gregory S. Aldrete is the Frankenthal Professor of History and Humanistic Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. He is the author of *Reconstructing Ancient Linen Body Armor: Unraveling the Linothorax Mystery* (with S. Bartell and A. Aldrete, 2013), *The Long Shadow of Antiquity: What Have the Greeks and Romans Done for Us?* (with A. Aldrete, 2012), *Daily Life in the Roman City: Rome, Pompeii, and Ostia* (2009), *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome* (2007), and *Gestures and Acclamations in Ancient Rome* (1999), and is the editor of *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Daily Life Volume I: The Ancient World* (2004).

Leanne Bablitz is Professor of Roman History at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. She is the author of *Actors and Audience in the Roman Courtroom* (2007), as well as numerous articles on Roman law and social history.

Barbara E. Borg is Professor of Classical Archaeology at the University of Exeter. She has published widely on Greek and Roman art and archaeology. Her most recent publications include *Crisis and Ambition: Tombs and Burial Customs in Third-Century CE Rome* (2013) and her edited *Blackwell Companion to Roman Art* (2015). She is currently working on a Leverhulme-funded micro-history of a small part of the Roman *suburbium* from the first century BCE to the fourth century CE.

Andrew Burnett was Deputy Director of the British Museum. He is the author of *Coinage in the Roman World* (1987, reprinted 2004) and, with colleagues, of *Roman Provincial Coinage* (1992–continuing).

Amanda Claridge is Emeritus Professor of Roman Archaeology in the Department of Classics at Royal

Holloway University of London. She has also taught at the University of Oxford and Princeton University and was Assistant Director of the British School at Rome from 1980 to 1994. Her publications include *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide (*2nd edition, 2010) and many articles on Roman art, archaeology, architecture and topography.

Jon Coulston is Lecturer in Ancient History and Archaeology in the School of Classics, University of St. Andrews. He achieved a doctorate on the subject of Trajan's Column from the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. His publications concentrate on the Roman army, especially iconography and military equipment, Roman sculpture in Rome and the provinces, and on the archaeology of the city of Rome. With Mike Bishop he is the author of *Roman Military Equipment* (2006), and with Hazel Dodge he is the editor of *Ancient Rome. The Archaeology of the Eternal City* (2000).

Brian A. Curran was Professor of Art History at Pennsylvania State University. He was the author of *The Egyptian Renaissance* (2007) and co-author (with Anthony Grafton, Pamela Long, and Benjamin Weiss) of *Obelisk: A History* (2009). He died in 2017.

John Curran is Senior Lecturer in Romano-Jewish Relations at The Queen's University of Belfast. He is the author of *Pagan City and*

Christian Capital: Rome in the Fourth Century (2000) as well as recent studies of Roman Judaea and the family of Herod the Great. He is currently working on a study of Rome's relations with the Jews of Judaea from 63 BCE to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

Monica S. Cyrino is Professor of Classics at the University of New Mexico. Her research focuses on the representation of classical antiquity in popular entertainment media. She is the author of *Big Screen Rome* (2005) and *Aphrodite* (2010), and the editor of *Rome, Season One: History Makes Television* (2008), *Screening Love and Sex in the Ancient World* (2013), and *Rome, Season Two: Trial and Triumph* (2015). She has served as an academic consultant on several recent film and television productions.

Janet DeLaine was Associate Professor of Roman Archaeology at the University of Oxford, and is now Emeritus Fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford. Her research focuses on Roman architecture and urbanism in the Mediterranean, especially the Roman building industry, Roman baths, and the urban development of Ostia.

Harry B. Evans is Professor Emeritus of Classics at Fordham University. He is the author of *Water Distribution in Ancient Rome: The Evidence of Frontinus* (1994); *Aqueduct Hunting in the Seventeenth Century: Raffaello Fabretti's* De aquis et aquaeductibus veteris Romae (2002); and *Exploring*

the Kingdom of Saturn: Kircher's Latium *and Its Legacy* (2012), as well as articles on Roman topography and Latin literature.

Diane Favro is Professor Emeritus of Architecture and Urban Design at UCLA. She is author of *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome* (1998) and articles on research applications of digital simulations and women in architecture, and co-author of a forthcoming book on Roman architecture and urbanism. She served as President of the Society of Architectural Historians and is the 2017–18 Samuel H. Kress Professor at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC.

Richard Flower is Senior Lecturer in Classics and Ancient History at the University of Exeter. His main research interests lie in the field of Late Antiquity, focusing on the construction of authority, especially in rhetorical texts and encyclopedic literature. He is the author of *Emperors and Bishops in Late Roman Invective* (2013) and, together with Christopher Kelly and Michael Stuart Williams, he edited *Unclassical Traditions I: Alternatives to the Classical Past in Late Antiquity* (2010) and *Unclassical Traditions II: Perspectives from East and West in Late Antiquity* (2011).

Giovanni Geraci is ordinary (full) professor of Roman History and Papyrology in the University of Bologna. His main research field is

history of the political, administrative and economic systems, institutions, and structures of the Hellenistic and Roman world, with particular focus on Hellenistic, Roman, and Late Antique Egypt. He has also published critical editions of both Greek and Latin inscriptions and of Greek papyri of the Hellenistic, Roman, and Late Antique age. He is Director and General Editor of scientific periodicals and a series on relevant aspects of the study of administrative patterns and structures of the ancient world. He is a member of international research groups on supply of corn and on its preservation and storage systems in the Mediterranean countries from antiquity to modern times.

Penelope J. Goodman is Senior Lecturer in Roman History at the University of Leeds. She has a particular interest in the spatial characteristics of Roman urbanism. Her first monograph, *The Roman City and its Periphery: from Rome to Gaul* (2007), explored the demarcation of Roman urban centers and the uses of space just beyond their boundaries. She has also published articles on the locations of temples in Roman Gaul and Britain, the peripheries of Italian cities, and the spatial distribution of Roman urban industry.

Claire Holleran is Senior Lecturer in Classics and Ancient History at the University of Exeter. She is the author of *Shopping in Ancient Rome: the Retail Trade in the Late*

Republic and the Principate (2012), and co-editor of *Demography and the Graeco-Roman World. New Insights and Approaches* (2011) with April Pudsey, and *Diet and Nutrition in the Roman World* (forthcoming) with Paul Erdkamp.

Valerie M. Hope is a Senior Lecturer in Classical Studies at the Open University. She is the author of *Constructing Identity: The Funerary Monuments of Aquileia, Mainz and Nîmes* (2001)*; Death in Ancient Rome: A Sourcebook* (2007); and *Roman Death* (2009), as well as articles on the commemoration of Roman soldiers and gladiators, and Roman mourning rituals. She also co-edited *Death and Disease in the Ancient City* (2000), *Memory and Mourning: Studies on Roman Death* (2011), and *War as Spectacle. Ancient and Modern Perspectives on the Display of Armed Conflict* (2015).

Dennis Kehoe is professor in the Department of Classical Studies and the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities (2010–2013) at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana. His research interests focus on the role of law and legal institutions in the ancient economy, particularly in the Roman Empire.

Maria Kneafsey has recently submitted her PhD thesis at the University of Exeter. Her doctoral work traced the development of Rome's city boundaries between the third and sixth centuries CE through an examination of the art, archaeology, and text of the late antique city.

Elio Lo Cascio is Professor of Roman History at Sapienza Università di Roma. His main areas of research are the institutional, administrative and economic history of Rome, and Roman population history. His publications include *Il princeps e il suo impero. Studi di storia amministrativa e finanziaria romana* (2000); *Crescita e declino. Studi di storia dell'economia romana* (2009); and the edited volumes *Roma imperiale. Una metropoli antica* (2000); *Production and public powers in antiquity* (2000, with D.W. Rathbone); *L'impatto della "peste antonina"* (2012).

J. Bert Lott is the Matthew Vassar, Jr. Professor of Greek and Roman Studies at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York. He is the author of *The Neighborhoods of Augustan Rome* and *Death and Dynasty in Early Imperial Rome*.

Matthew Nicholls is Associate Professor of Classics at the University of Reading, having held a Junior Research Fellowship at the Queen's College, Oxford. He has written a number of articles on Roman libraries and related subjects, including the recently discovered *Peri Alupias* of Galen. He is also interested in digital

reconstruction of ancient buildings; his detailed digital model of ancient Rome is the basis of a free online course (or 'MOOC') taken by approximately 20,000 learners around the world so far. His popular work includes the books *30-Second Ancient Rome* and *30-Second Ancient Greece* for Ivy Press.

David Noy is the author of *Foreigners at Rome* (2000), several volumes of Jewish inscriptions, and a number of articles on Roman life and death. He is currently working on a study of Roman deathbeds. He is an Honorary Associate in the Arts Faculty, Open University.

Borden Painter is Professor of History, Emeritus, at Trinity College (Connecticut) where he taught European history for forty years. His book *Mussolini's Rome: Rebuilding the Eternal City* was published in 2005.

John R. Patterson is University Senior Lecturer in Classics at the University of Cambridge. He is the author of *Political Life in the City of Rome* (2000), and *Landscapes and Cities: Rural Settlement and Civic Transformation in Early Imperial Italy* (2006), and has reviewed recent publications on the city of Rome in *Journal of Roman Studies* 82 (1992), 186–215 and 100 (2010), 210–32. He is currently working on a book on the city of Rome for Wiley-Blackwell.

Elizabeth H. Pearson is an independent scholar who researches Roman Republican institutional and military topics. She completed her thesis, entitled "The Development of Army Administration in the Roman Republic," at the University of Manchester in 2016.

Hannah Platts is a lecturer in Ancient History and Archaeology at Royal Holloway, University of London. She is currently completing a book on Roman housing for I.B.Tauris, and a second book on Roman villas for Routledge, and has published numerous articles on housing and related subjects. She is also currently co-investigator on an AHRC-sponsored project on housing in Roman Britain.

David Potter is Francis W. Kelsey Collegiate Professor of Greek and Roman History, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor and Professor of Greek and Latin at the University of Michigan, where he has taught since 1986. His recent books include *The Victor's Crown: A History of Sport from Homer to Byzantium* (2011); *Constantine the Emperor* (2012) and *Theodora: Actress, Empress, Saint* (2014).

Boris Rankov is Professor of Ancient History and Head of Classics at Royal Holloway, University of London. He has published widely on the epigraphy of the Roman

army and is the author (with N.J.E. Austin) of *Exploratio. Military and Political Intelligence in the Roman World* (1995), (with J.S. Morrison and J.F. Coates) of *The Athenian Trireme. The History and Reconstruction of an Ancient Greek Warship* (2000), and (with D.J. Blackman et al.) of *Shipsheds of the Ancient Mediterranean* (2013). He is also an Associate Editor of *The Encyclopedia of the Roman Army* (2015).

Candace M. Rice is Assistant Professor of Mediterranean Archaeology at the University of Alberta, Canada. Prior to her appointment at Alberta, she was a Lecturer at the University of Edinburgh and a Senior Fellow at Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations. Her research focuses on Roman maritime trade and economic development and her publications include articles on Mediterranean ports, shipwreck cargoes and trading patterns, merchant communities, and Roman villas (from pottery to mosaics).

Jörg Rüpke is Permanent Fellow in Religious Studies and Co-director of the Max Weber Center for Cultural and Social Studies at the University of Erfurt, Germany. He is director of research groups on "Religious Individualization in Historical Perspective" and "Resonant Self–World Relations in Ancient and Modern Socio-Religious Practices." His research interests are in the history of religion of the ancient Mediterranean and the historiography of Religious Studies. With Wiley-Blackwell he edited companions on Roman religion and (together with Rubina Raja) the archaeology of religion in the ancient world, and is author of *On Roman Religion* (2016) and *Pantheon: A New History of Roman Religion* (2018).

Christopher Smith is Professor of Ancient History at the University of St. Andrews. He was Director of the British School at Rome from 2009 to 2017. He is author of *Early Rome and Latium c 1000 to 500 BC: Economy and Society* (1996), and other works on central Italy in the archaic period.

Diana Spencer is Professor of Classics at the University of Birmingham. She has published on a range of topics relating to cultural identity in ancient Rome, including Roman reception of Alexander the Great (*The Roman Alexander: Reading a Cultural Myth* (2002)). More recently, her work on topography and identity has resulted in *The Sites of Rome: Time, Space, Memory* (co-edited with David H.J. Larmour (2007)), *Roman Landscape: Culture and Identity* (2010), and *Varro's Guide to Being Roman: Reading de Lingua Latina* (forthcoming).

Geoffrey S. Sumi is Professor of Classics at Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts. He is the author of

Ceremony and Power. Performing Politics in Rome between Republic and Empire (2005) as well as articles that analyze the intersection of ceremony, ideology and topography in Rome.

Laurens E. Tacoma is Lecturer in Ancient History at the Department of History at Leiden University, The Netherlands. His field of interest is the social and economic history of the Roman world, with an emphasis on the first three centuries CE. In 2006 he published *Fragile Hierarchies*, a monograph on the urban elites of third-century Roman Egypt. His subsequent research has been devoted to Roman migration. His monograph *Moving Romans. Migration to the city of Rome* has appeared with Oxford University Press in 2016, and he is the co-editor of two volumes of essays on Roman migration that have appeared in 2016 and 2017 with Brill, Leiden. New research focuses on Roman political culture.

Pier Luigi Tucci was Assistant Professor of Roman Art and Architecture in the Department of History of Art, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore from 2010–2018. He has also held posts at the Scuola Normale Superiore of Pisa, the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici in Naples, and at Royal Holloway University and Exeter University in the UK. His research interests cross the boundaries between classics and archaeology and include Late Antiquity, the middle ages and the Renaissance.

T.P. Wiseman is Emeritus Professor of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Exeter. His books include *Remus: A Roman Myth* (1995), *The Myths of Rome* (2004), which won the American Philological Association's Goodwin Award of Merit, *Unwritten Rome* (2008), *Remembering the Roman People* (2009) and *The Roman Audience* (2015).

Preface

Claire Holleran and Amanda Claridge

This volume was first conceived in 2008 to provide a comprehensive and authoritative guide to current research on the development of the city of Rome from its legendary foundations as a settlement on the banks of the Tiber down to late antiquity. Fresh discoveries and innovative approaches have in recent years transformed our traditional picture of the city of Rome, and the intention was to produce a one-volume overview of new developments in the field, integrating the latest archaeological, topographical, and historical evidence to address aspects of the physical structure of the city and the lives of its inhabitants. It is aimed at undergraduate and postgraduate students, but is also intended to be appealing and accessible to general readers.

The volume is divided into ten thematic sections and all chapters are carefully focused on the city of Rome. The opening section discusses the source material available for the study of Rome, with leading experts in their fields addressing approaches to the archaeological, written, epigraphic, and numismatic material. Readers are also introduced to the marble plans of the city, and an essay tracing the history of Rome places the rest of the chapters into their wider historical context. The remaining sections all deal with a different aspect of the city, with original essays exploring central issues such as Rome's evolving urban landscape and fabric, the size and composition of the population, the development of urban infrastructure, the experiences of living and dying in the city, the local economy, civic life, including religion, law, entertainment, and politics, and the staging and commemoration of the local Roman triumph. A final series of essays examine the changing reception of ancient Rome from antiquity through to the present day. Extensive cross-referencing between chapters is intended to encourage readers to note the connections between different topics, and a guide to further reading is

provided at the end of each chapter to enable further exploration of key issues in more depth.

This volume has been a long time in the making, and the editors would like to thank all the contributors for their heroic patience, especially those who initially submitted their chapters some years ago; your continued understanding and good humor throughout has been much appreciated. It is with great regret that we note Brian A. Curran, who generously contributed a chapter on the "discovery" of ancient Rome in the Renaissance, sadly passed away before the companion went to press. Finally, we would also like to thank the editorial team at Wiley-Blackwell, and Clare Berrisford, a student intern at the University of Exeter, who provided invaluable help with copyediting and proof-reading.

Abbreviations

The abbreviations used in this volume for ancient authors and their works, as well as for collections of inscriptions, are as given in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (online edition), wherever possible. Abbreviations of journals may be found in *L'Année philologique*. Additional abbreviations are given below.

Chrest. Wilck. – U. Wilcken, *Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde*. Leipzig-Berlin: Teubner, 1912.

CIG – *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, 4 vols. Berlin, 1825–77.

ICUR – *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae*, Rome, 1922–

IGUR – L. Moretti, *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae*, 4 vols. Rome: Istituto italiano per la storia antica, 1968–90.

IvE – *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*. 8 vols. Bonn: Rodolf Habet, 1978-1984.

LTURS – A. La Regina *et al.* (eds.), *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae Suburbium*, 6 vols. Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2001–2013.

MAR - L. Haselberger *et al. Mapping Augustan Rome* [JRA suppl. 50]. Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2002.

Sel. Pap. – *Select Papyri*, 3 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932–1941.

Tab. Herac. – *Tabula Heracleensis*. M. Crawford, *Roman Statutes I*. London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1996, 355–91, No. 24.

TPSulp. – G. Camodeca, *Tabulae Pompeianae Sulpiciorum (TPSulp): Edizione critica dell' archivio puteolano dei Sulpicii*. Rome: Quasar, 1999.

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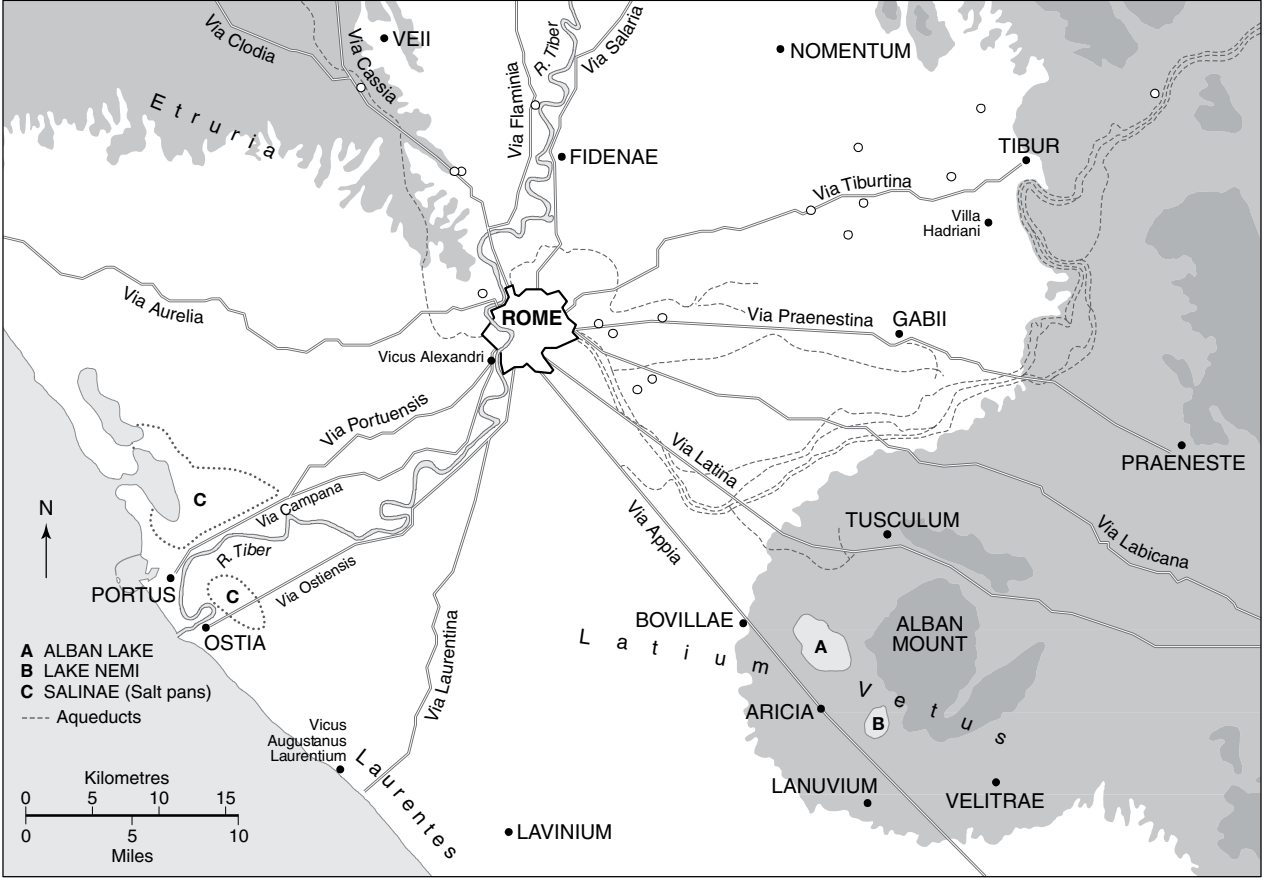
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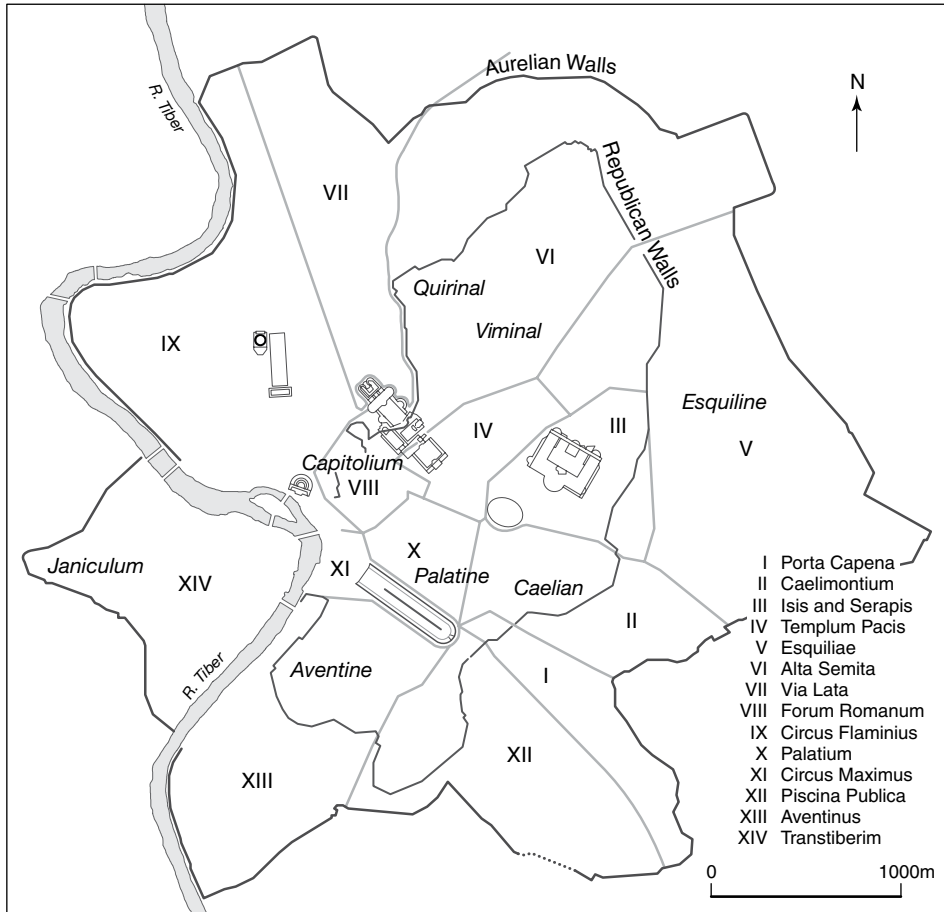
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N

VII

VI

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IX

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V

IV

III

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VIII

X

Palatine

Caelian

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I

XIII

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0   1000m

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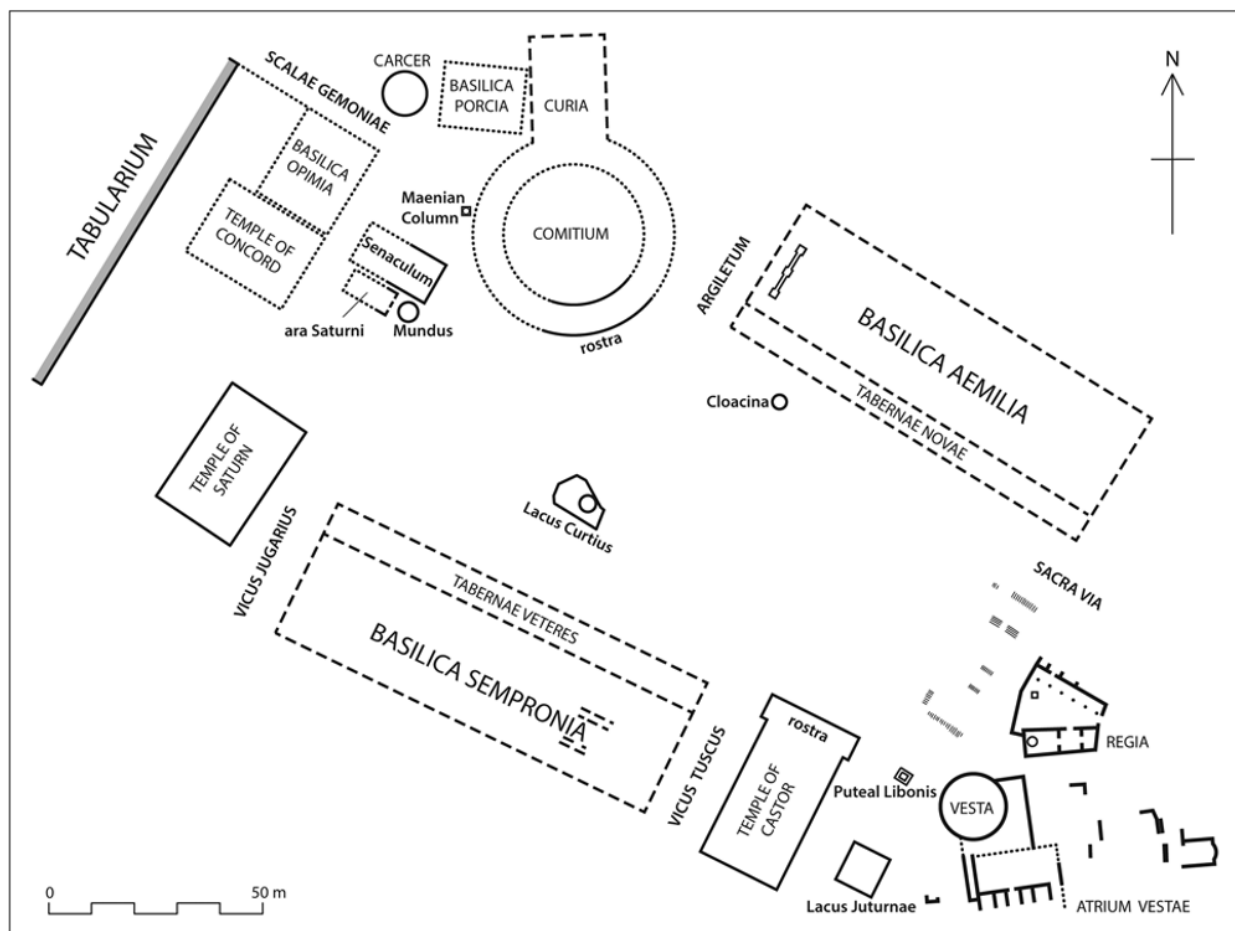
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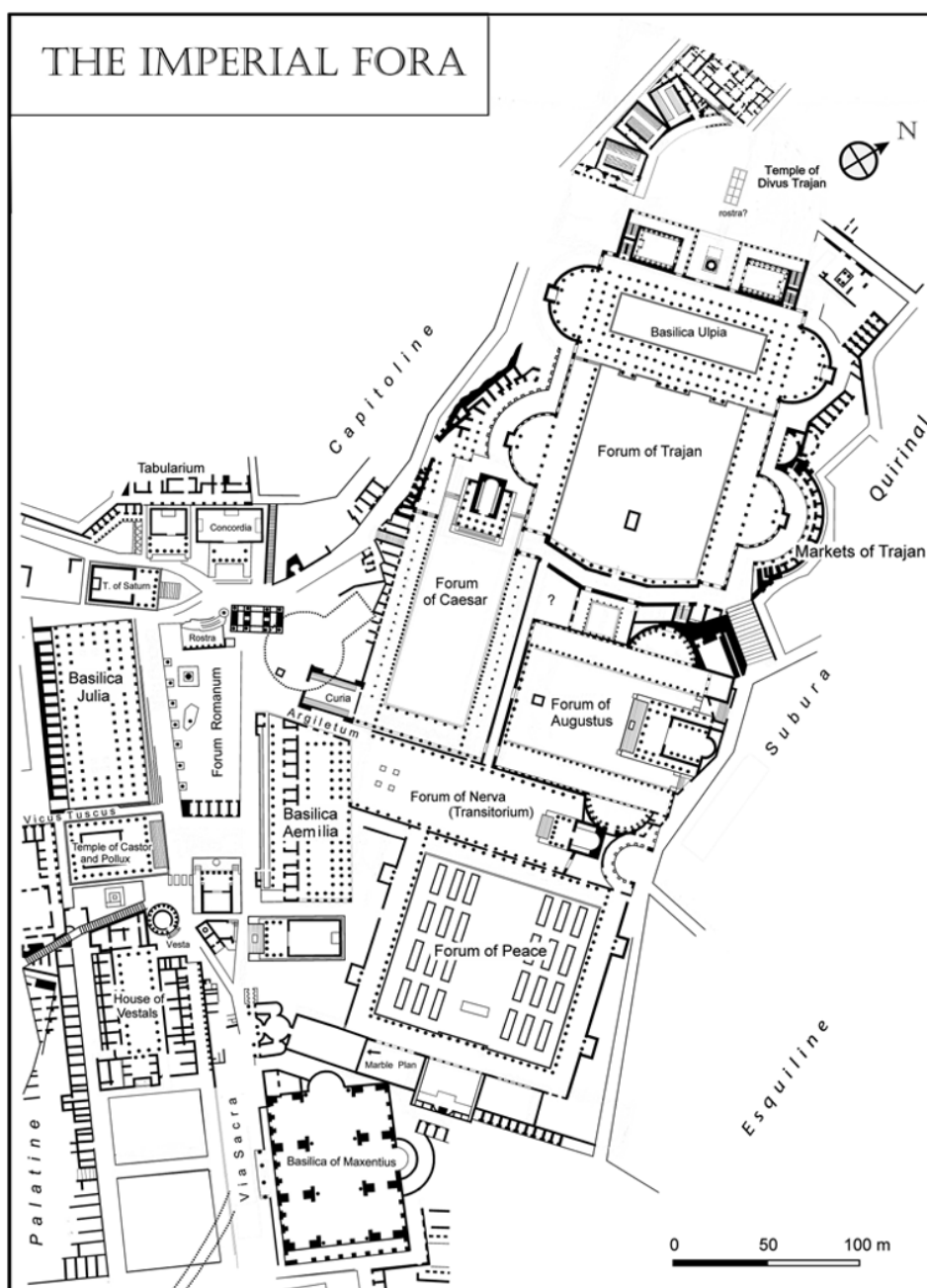
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PART I

INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER ONE

i Archaeological Sources

Maria Kneafsey

Archaeology in the city of Rome, although complicated by the continuous occupation of the site, is blessed with a multiplicity of source material. Numerous buildings have remained above ground since antiquity, such as the Pantheon, Trajan's Column, temples and honorific arches, while extensive remains below street level have been excavated and left on display. Nearly 13 miles (19 kilometers) of city wall dating to the third century CE, and the arcades of several aqueducts are also still standing. The city appears in ancient texts, in thousands of references to streets, alleys, squares, fountains, groves, temples, shrines, gates, arches, public and private monuments and buildings, and other toponyms. Visual records of the city and its archaeology can be found in fragmentary ancient, medieval, and early modern paintings, in the maps, plans, drawings, and sketches made by architects and artists from the fourteenth century onwards, and in images captured by the early photographers of Rome.

Textual references to the city are collected together and commented upon in topographical dictionaries, from Henri Jordan's *Topographie der Stadt Rom in Alterthum* (1871–1907) and Samuel Ball Platner and Thomas Ashby's *Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (1929), to Roberto Valentini and Giuseppe Zucchetti's *Codice Topografico della Città di Roma* (1940–53), the new topographical dictionary published in 1992 by Lawrence Richardson Jnr and the larger, more comprehensive *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* (*LTUR*) (1993–2000), edited by Margareta Steinby (see also *LTURS*). Key topographical texts include the fourth-century CE Regionary Catalogues (the *Notitia Dignitatum* and

Curiosum – see Flower, Chapter 1ii in this volume), the inscription on the Capitoline Base (*CIL* 6.975; *ILS* 6073), a dedication by the *vicomagistri* to Hadrian in 136 CE listing each *vicus* and its magistrates in five regions (I, X, XII, XIII, XIIII), and the numerous labels on the Severan Marble Plan (see Tucci, Chapter 1iii in this volume, and the list in Valentini and Zucchetti, vol. 1, 56–62).

Antiquarian maps, drawings, prints, engravings and *vedute* (views) of Rome survive from the early fifteenth century onwards, providing valuable information about the way the city looked in the early modern period, and in particular, unique records of ancient buildings or monuments that are no longer visible in Rome as the result of deliberate destruction or deterioration. Outstanding are those produced in the early sixteenth century by Antonio da Sangallo "the Younger" and Baldassare Peruzzi which document, for example, the lost roof and *spolia* colonnades of Old St Peter's basilica, originally built by the emperor Constantine in the fourth century CE and rebuilt in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Krautheimer 1977, 234). Similarly, Andrea Palladio's work remains our foremost evidence for the ground plans of the Baths of Agrippa, Titus, and Trajan (Claridge 2010, 33). Giovanni da Sangallo's drawings (1496–1548), those of Pirro Ligorio (c.1513–1583), Etienne Du Pérac's *Vestigi dell'Antichità di Roma* (1571), Giuseppe Vasi's *Delle Magnificenze de'Romani* (1747–1761), and Giovanni Battista Piranesi's *Vedute di Roma* (1747–1778) variously document the monuments, buildings, and archaeological discoveries of Rome from the Renaissance to the *Settecento* (eighteenth century).

Historical maps of modern Rome are also primary topographical tools, providing an additional glimpse of an almost unrecognizable city, before much of the archaeological and construction work of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries took place. The earliest is Leonardo Bufalini's, an orthogonal woodcut print of 1551 at a scale of roughly 1:2800 and in 24 joined sheets, which was used by generations of later cartographers as the basis for their own plans, notably Antonio Tempesta's etched plan of 1593 (in 12 sheets), Giovanni Maggi's in 1625 (in 48 sheets), and Giovanni Battista Falda's in 1676 (12 sheets). Giambattista Nolli's impressively accurate survey, *La Pianta Grande di Roma*, was published in 1748 and often includes indications (in black) of ancient walling within the fabric of the modern city (see Borsi 1986; 1990; 1993; Leuschner 2012). Rodolfo Lanciani's detailed reconstruction of the ancient city, the *Forma Urbis Romae* (1893–1901), is an essential resource which maps ancient and medieval buildings overlaid on the modern city. The accompanying publication *Storia degli scavi di Roma* provides a chronological record of finds and excavations (*scavi*) in the city. Lanciani's maps were reprinted in 1990, while the

Storia degli scavi was updated and completed in seven volumes in 2002, taking the story from the Middle Ages to 1870. New digital, GIS-based maps of ancient Rome have been developed by Roma Tre University for the local, municipal archaeological service (Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali), and in Germany by the AIS project based at Munich (LMU: Häuber and Schütz, 2004). Images of the fragments of the Severan Marble Plan are being made available with commentary online via the Stanford Digital *Forma Urbis Romae* Project.

The first photographic records of the city began in the 1840s, and depict Rome before, during, and after the Risorgimento and the events of 1870, as the city became "Roma Capitale" and changed beyond recognition (see Tucci, Chapter 33 in this volume). Robert MacPherson, Gioacchino Altobelli, Peter Paul Mackey, and John Henry Parker (whose photographic archive is available online via the British School at Rome) documented the city before and after 1870, while Thomas Ashby's work (also available from the BSR) presents a view of the city into the early twentieth century. For a general overview see the collections of Piero Becchetti.

Many archaeological excavations and discoveries in Rome prior to the nineteenth century went either poorly documented, or entirely unrecorded. Specific information such as findspots, context, stratigraphy, and associated finds is often missing. Nevertheless, there are accounts of excavations from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, notably the manuscript *Memorie* of the sculptor Flaminio Vacca, written in 1594, and the various editions of those of Pietro Santi Bartoli (1630–1700), both reprinted together with other similar works in 1799/1836 by Carlo Fea (Claridge 2004, 37). Antonio Nibby (1792–1839) recorded finds and excavations in Rome and its wider periphery with close attention to detail, followed by Pietro Rosa (1810–1891), and, most importantly, towards the end of the nineteenth century the influential work of Rodolfo Lanciani (1845–1929) was published. Some of Lanciani's work has been noted above, but in addition to his contribution to mapping and documenting Rome, he was an indefatigable communicator to the general public, writing in both Italian and English (see References). News of archaeological discoveries since the late nineteenth century has been published in local and national archaeological journals: the *Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità*; *Atti* and *Memorie della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*; *Atti* and *Memorie della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*; *Bullettino della Commissione archeologica del Comune di Roma*; *Nuovo Bullettino di archeologia cristiana*, and the publications of Rome university and the many foreign academies and institutes based in the city: *Archeologia Classica* (University of Rome La Sapienza); *Mélanges de l'École Française – Antiquité*; *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts,*

Römische Abteilung; *Papers of the British School at Rome* (particularly "Notes from Rome"); and *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*. *Fasti archeologici*, now online, hosts reports of current excavation work in the city (see References).

Guide to Further Reading

Modern approaches to the city's archaeological remains can be found in Carandini (2017), Claridge (2010), Coarelli (2007), and Coulston and Dodge (2000). For the study of historical maps of Rome, Frutaz (1962) remains an invaluable resource comprising three volumes of images and discussion, now supplemented by the work of Bevilacqua and Fagiolo (2012). Campbell (2004, vol. 1, 19–33) presents a useful introduction to architectural drawing from ancient buildings and monuments in Rome before 1600.

Digital Resources

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ii Written Sources

Richard Flower

The city of Rome provides the backdrop to the events described in many works of Roman literature: the emperors of Tacitus and Suetonius glorified and terrorized its streets (e.g. Suet. *Aug.* 28.3–30.2; Tac. *Hist.* 3.70–72); Cicero appealed to the significance of the Capitoline temples and other great monuments that stood around him as he spoke (e.g. *Scaur.* 46–8); Livy provided historical information on the construction, destruction and reconstruction of notable buildings (e.g. 26.17.1–4, 27.11.16); Ovid wrote about amorous escapades among the many porticoes (e.g. *Ars am.* 2.2.1–8). For many classical authors, Rome was simply "the city" (*urbs*), unrivalled in the whole world. Yet, despite its significance, there are few sustained descriptions of the topography of the city in extant literature, with passing references to particular districts and monuments scattered throughout many different texts. The most accessible starting point for anyone wishing to locate information about a particular location is to consult a source book (e.g. Dudley 1967; Aicher 2004) or a topographical dictionary of the city (e.g. Platner 1929; Richardson 1992; *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* (*LTUR*)). This brief introduction will, however, discuss a few of the more extended ancient accounts of the appearance and monuments of Rome, as well as the ways in which they might be used by historians.

   Some texts explore the city not by enumerating its sights, but rather by characterizing the different types of people to be found in various locations. In *Curculio*, a comedy by Plautus dating from the early second century BC, the audience is told that perjurers are to be found in the Comitium, show-offs in the central part of the Forum and male prostitutes in the Vicus Tuscus

(Plaut. *Curc.* 462–86). Similarly, at the very end of the first century BCE, Ovid provided a candid exploration of the best haunts for picking up different types of women, moving through various locations within the city before eventually venturing out to the suburban Temple of Diana and off to the resort of Baiae (Ov. *Ars am.* 41–262). Some other passages take the form of a *periegesis*, a literary walkabout, listing places visited by the narrator while travelling through Rome. In some cases this journey is undertaken as part of an errand, such as Catullus's search for his friend Camerius (Catull. 55) or Martial's description of Selius searching desperately for a free dinner (Mart. 2.14), and the effect of these quick-moving passages is to convey a sense of an individual dashing about the city. In other cases, the account progresses in a more stately and directed fashion, as is the case with a famous passage from Ovid's *Tristia*, written after he was exiled to the Black Sea in 8 CE. In this poem, Ovid's book arrives in Rome after a long journey and is then shown around some of the city's monuments, including the Forum of Caesar, the Temple of Vesta and the Palatine Hill (Ov. *Tr.* 3.1; Edwards 1996, 119–20). The tour itself evoked Virgil's description of the visit of Aeneas to the future site of Rome, in which the hero was shown around by Evander, while the audience were invited to contemplate how much the rustic landscape had changed by their own day (Verg. *Aen.* 8.1–369).

Although these literary explorations of the city might provide routes that could be followed by a real visitor to Rome, they certainly do not provide an exhaustive guide to the monuments that could be seen on the way. The selection of buildings described in any given text reflects its own concerns: Ovid's book does not take in many sights, but, appropriately enough, it does visit three separate libraries (at the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine, in the Portico of Octavia, and the Atrium of Liberty), none of which is willing to allow it in. Similarly, Ammianus Marcellinus's account of the visit to Rome in 357 CE by the emperor Constantius II describes many famous buildings, including the Colosseum, the Pantheon and the Forum of Trajan (Amm. Marc. 16.10.13–17). While this might be taken to provide a good account of the monuments that were most celebrated in the city in the late fourth century, it is notable that Ammianus's account only includes buildings from the second century CE or earlier, omitting more recent additions, such as the Arch and Basilica of Constantine, as well as the great Christian churches that were starting to appear by this point. The result is a rather antiquarian vision of the city, harking back to a supposedly better time and studiously avoiding taking notice of unwelcome intrusions into the classical landscape.

Numerous individual references to Rome's topography are also to be found in ancient "encyclopedic" texts, most notably the *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder (e.g. *HN* 3.66–7 on the size of the city) and Varro's *De lingua*

Latina (e.g. *Ling.* 5.42 on the Capitoline Hill). In addition, the work *On the Aqueducts of Rome* by Sextus Julius Frontinus, who held the post of *curator aquarum* in 97 CE, provides a wealth of detail about the history, capacity and quality of the many aqueducts that supplied the city. One section of the work also describes the passage of each aqueduct into Rome and its many outlets in different urban districts, thereby supplying information about the number and distribution of military camps, public buildings, fountains and cisterns (Frontin. *Aq.* 2.78–86). Similar, but more detailed, enumerations of the city's buildings, both public and private, are to be found in two documents called the *Curiosum* and the *Notitia*, which are often referred to as the "Regionary Catalogues" or simply as the "Regionaries" (Latin text in Nordh 1949). These texts discuss each of Rome's fourteen districts in turn, in each case listing the important public buildings in that *regio*, before giving figures for the number of *vici* ("neighborhoods," with *Regio* XIV having many more than any other), shrines (*aediculae*, which are always equal in number to the *vici*), *vicomagistri* (neighborhood magistrates; always 48) and *curatores* (overseers), as well as *insulae*, *domus*, *horrea* (granaries), *balnea* (baths), *lacus* (cisterns), and *pistrinae* (bakeries). Each text also has appendices providing totals for each type of building, as well as extra information including the numbers of aqueducts, obelisks, brothels, and public lavatories. These superficially precise figures do, however, present many interpretive problems. Firstly, while the texts in their current state are widely regarded as dating from the fourth century, they cannot be assumed to present a snapshot of the city at a particular date, rather than an accumulation of material collected over time and only updated infrequently and incompletely. There are also debates concerning the relationship between the two documents and the purposes for which they were compiled, with the main suggestions being that they were either official documents kept by the Urban Prefect for distribution of the *annona* or tax collection, guides to Rome for tourists or primarily ideological works for glorifying the city (see Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 294; Hermansen 1978; Arce 1999; Behrwald 2006). Moreover, the numbers in both the *Curiosum* and the *Notitia* do not add up, with discrepancies between the two documents and also within each text, since the regional figures often do not correlate with the totals in the appendix (see the table at Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 295). The very large total figure of more than 40,000 *insulae* also cannot be correct if this term is taken to refer to individual, free-standing blocks, so it seems likely that it actually denotes individual units of property, either physical or legal (see Coarelli 1997; Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 294–9). While the most widespread view is that the Regionaries can be used cautiously for evidence about fourth-century Rome, it is clear that, like all literary descriptions of the city, they certainly cannot be taken at face value.

Guide to Further Reading

Edwards 1996 is an excellent discussion of different treatments of the city of Rome in ancient literature. The best starting points for accessing literary information concerning particular parts of the city of Rome are the major topographical dictionaries (e.g. Platner 1929; Richardson 1992; *LTUR*) and source books (e.g. Dudley 1967; Aicher 2004) mentioned above. Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 259–312 provides a good introduction to the evidence for the regions of the city, including discussing the Regionaries at 294–9.

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iii   The Marble Plans

Pier Luigi Tucci

The marble fragments known today as the Severan Marble Plan (or "Forma Urbis Romae," which is also a modern name) belong to a monumental plan of the city of Rome engraved under the emperors Septimius Severus and Caracalla sometime between 203 and 211 CE – most probably in 203. It covered the west wall of a large rectangular hall in the south-east wing of Vespasian's Temple of Peace, as rebuilt after a fire in 192 CE, probably replacing a similar Flavian plan. The plan was incised on 151 slabs of greyish white marble (from Proconnesos in the sea of Marmara), which were fixed to the brickwork of the wall behind with mortar and iron hooks, and measured some 13 meters high and 18 meters wide. It included nearly all of Rome within the Severan *pomerium* (the sacred boundary of the city), oriented with south-east at the top (placing *regio I* top center) and with the Capitoline hill in the middle (Carettoni, Colini, Cozza, and Gatti 1960). It has been suggested (Coarelli 2005) that the Forma Urbis had the same south-east orientation as the augurs' platform (*auguraculum*) on the Capitoline Arx – the augurs' main sight-line, as well as the vertical axis of the Marble Plan, would have been directed towards the sanctuary of Jupiter Latiaris on the Alban Mount (mons Albanus, modern Monte Cavo).

The plan depicted every building of the Severan city, generally at a scale of 1:240, although some of the major monuments were rendered in more detail and at a slightly larger scale. All the engraved lines, inscriptions and graphic conventions (such as the V staircase symbols indicating that a structure was multistoried) were probably picked out in red. On a recently discovered fragment a street is also painted red (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007,

14–15). The plan shows a great range of building types, including *domus*, *insulae*, warehouses, temples, basilicas, theatres and amphitheatres, porticoes, baths, fountains, and aqueducts (See Figure 1.1). Most of the public monuments and many of the larger buildings, including the warehouses, are identified by name. Natural features are omitted, except for gardens within monumental complexes (see Lloyd 1982); the Tiber, for instance, is left blank (but it may have been painted), defined only by the buildings and docks built along its banks.

The Marble Plan testifies to an extraordinary amount of work and care – it was surely the result of a general survey of the city, possibly recorded first in sections on bronze tablets which were then combined together – but its purpose remains unclear. Some scholars (Coarelli 2001; Gros 2001; Meneghini 2009) believe that it was an administrative document, necessary to the office of the *Praefectus Urbi* (the Urban Prefect), even though its height will have rendered most of it unreadable (indeed, the identification of the hall of the Forma Urbis with a cadastral office is not supported by archaeological and literary evidence). Others have suggested that it was merely decorative (Castagnoli 1948). Another possibility is that, both in an original Flavian version and in the Severan phase, its function was essentially celebratory – exalting the scale and complexity of the city, capital of the empire (Tucci 2007).

During the Middle Ages most of the plan fell from the wall, and while many fragments were scavenged, together with those still fixed to the wall, many remained at the foot of the wall to be dug out in 1562 (Carettoni *et al.* 1960). These passed to the Farnese family palazzo on the Campus Martius. Between 1570 and 1580 drawings now in the Vatican Library (codex Vat. Lat. 3439 fols 13–23) were made of 91 fragments which have since been partially or completely lost. Hundreds of other fragments which had been reused in the construction of the Farnese's Secret Garden, between the Via Giulia and the Tiber, were found in the course of works on the river embankment in 1888 and 1899. New fragments have been brought to light on other occasions, for instance in the excavation of the Temple of Peace (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007). An important fragment depicting the Circus Flaminius was found in 2000 in Palazzo Maffei Marescotti in via della Pigna. In 1741 the Farnese fragments were ceded to public ownership and displayed first along the staircase of the Museo Nuovo on the Capitoline Hill and later mounted on an exterior wall in a courtyard of the Capitoline Museums, where they were subject to weathering. In the 1930s they were moved under cover, to the Antiquarium on the Caelian Hill, and from there, in about 1960, transferred to the attic of the Palazzo Braschi. Since 2000 they have been stored in wooden crates in the Museo della Civiltà Romana at EUR, awaiting a final destination.

After an initial study by Giovan Pietro Bellori in 1673 (Muzzioli 2000), in 1874 Heinrich Jordan published the first scientific monograph, but this was
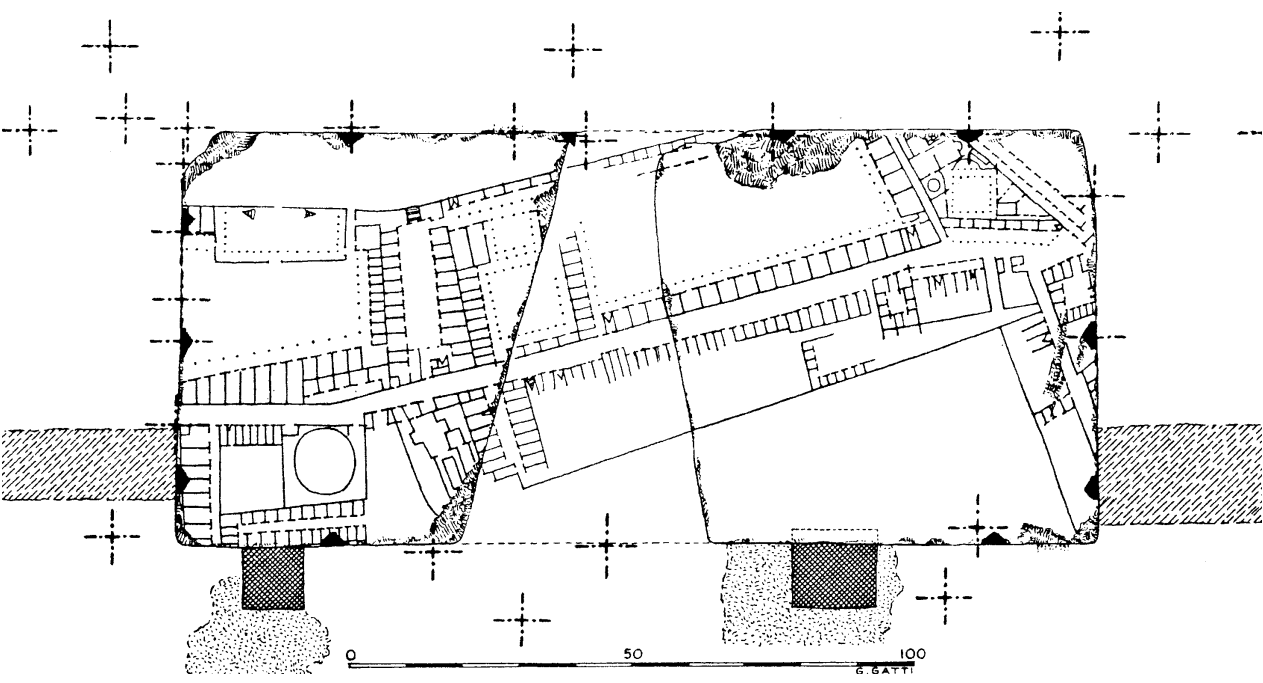
Figure 1.1 Fragment 28 of the Severan Marble Plan depicting the right bank of the Tiber in the Transtiberim region.

soon outdated by the rediscovery of the reused Farnese fragments and the discovery of other new pieces in further excavations. In 1948 Lucos Cozza undertook a detailed examination of the wall on which the slabs had been mounted (which still stands as part of the monastery of SS. Cosmas and Damian) determining for the first time their actual arrangement. There were originally 150 or 151 slabs placed horizontally and vertically in eleven rows, whose height ranges from 37 to 208 centimeters. In the late 1950s Cozza also excavated the rest of the hall, and a complete photographic documentation of all the engraved fragments was published at ¼-scale (Carettoni *et al.* 1960). Emilio Rodríguez Almeida subsequently produced a comprehensive supplement (1981), with drawings of all the fragments, proposing many new joins and identifications. New identifications and reinterpretations of securely positioned fragments continue to be made (e.g. Tucci 2004; 2006; 2013–2014; Tucci and Cozza 2006) together with research on the character and significance of the document as a whole (Rodríguez Almeida 2002), the contribution that it can make to our understanding of Roman urbanism, mapmaking (Reynolds 1996) and ways of seeing (Trimble 2006; 2007; 2008) – although the latter approach (what the Forma Urbis signified to the viewer) has not been particularly fruitful so far. The preserved portions of the Forma Urbis approximate to some 10% of the original surface of *c*. 235 square meters. Of this roughly half (5% of the whole) can be securely identified, whereas the other half – consisting of hundreds of fragments – represents topography of unknown location. The surviving fragments vary in size, from small lumps to nearly complete reconstituted slabs. The thickness of the fragments ranges from 37 to 96 mm, some having rough backs and some smooth; these differences are very useful in efforts to reunite or associate separated fragments. Other clues which can aid in the reconstruction process are the traces of slab edges, holes for metal hooks, and the direction of the natural grain of the marble. Such criteria are then combined with consideration of plans or inscriptions of recognizable buildings, literary sources, and archaeological investigations. An approach to the digitization of the evidence was developed recently by Stanford University, although only a few minor fragments were newly identified and no critical analyses have been attempted (http://formaurbis.stanford.edu/ Accessed January 6, 2018).

Other plans incised on marble are known (Carettoni *et al.* 1960, 206–10; Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007, 26–36), though most are small or isolated fragments and unlikely to have belonged to complete plans of the city. The plans now in Urbino and Perugia relate specifically to tombs, recording their layout and dimensions for posterity (a provenance from Rome is attested only for the former plan). Other partial marble plans – from the Colle Oppio/Via della Polveriera, the Isola Sacra necropolis (badly damaged), the city of Amelia (just a drawing), and the one discovered in 1997 under the

Domitianic floor of the Forum of Nerva (thus dating to the years before 98 CE) – depict unidentified sectors of a city, presumably Rome. These plans are very likely older than the Severan one, and appear more detailed: the thickness of the walls is indicated by double lines, and often the names of the proprietors are given together with the length of the facades in Roman feet. The best example is provided by the plan from Via Anicia in Trastevere, found in 1983 and showing the plan of the temple of Castor and Pollux in the Circus Flaminius as well as some warehouses along the Tiber's bank, with the lengths in Roman feet of their façades and the owners' names (Tucci 2013). This plan depicts the same area visible on some fragments of the Forma Urbis, in particular a sort of platform built on the river bank which might be the shed which housed the "ship of Aeneas" described by Procopius (*Goth.* 4.22). Also a new fragment found in 1999 in the Temple of Peace, with the partial plan of the Forum of Augustus, shows the same topography visible on fragments 16a–d of the Severan Marble plan (the Temple of Mars Ultor and the south-east portico and exedra of the Forum of Augustus), thus permitting a direct comparison (Tucci 2007). The drawing of the right-hand portico as portrayed on the new plan, with a circle for the column, a square for the base and four lines for three steps, becomes highly simplified on the Severan plan, which shows a dot for the column and a single line for the stair-case, without the square bases. A section of the south-east hemicycle is also visible on the Severan version: its wall is rendered with double lines and is recessed, but the niches that adorned it are not visible.

Guide to Further Reading

The best starting point for accessing detailed information concerning the Forma Urbis is still Carettoni *et al.* 1960. See Kleiner and Kleiner 1982 for comments on Rodríguez Almeida's updated edition of 1981. Reynolds 1996 is a very useful discussion (in English) of different aspects of the marble plans of Rome. The essays published in Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007 provide information on recent findings and suggestions for new avenues of research (but cf. Tucci 2007 for a review). See also Forma Urbis Severiana 2016.

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iv The Epigraphic Record

Boris Rankov

In Rome, the practice of inscribing on stone and other materials goes back to the regal period, when the Greek alphabet was first adapted for the writing of Latin. Several literary sources of the first century BCE claim that laws and treaties of this period, inscribed on bronze or even on wood, could still be seen preserved in or attached to various temples of the city, including that of Diana on the Aventine and the great temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline.

Although a number of earlier Etruscan and Greek inscriptions are known from the vicinity of Rome (Moretti 1968–90), our earliest surviving inscription from the city itself is the Forum Cippus (*CIL* 1².1 = 6.36840), which may date from the late sixth century BCE. This tuff stone was found in the area of the Comitium in the Forum, immediately in front of the Senate House, and is sometimes mistakenly referred to as the *lapis niger* from the black paving which overlaid it. The inscription was cut to be read vertically up and down in alternate lines, and although it was certainly in Latin, its meaning remains obscure. After this time, pottery inscribed in Latin begins to be found in and around the Forum and the Palatine, and from the third century inscribed votive objects in pottery and bronze were deposited in the river in the vicinity of the Tiber Island where a sanctuary of the healing god Aesculapius had been founded in 298 BCE.

A sarcophagus found in the tomb of the Scipios near the Porta Capena and now on display in the Vatican Museums, marks the beginning of an epigraphic habit which continued throughout antiquity. A carved inscription on the front (*CIL* 1².6–7 = 6.1284) identified the occupant as L. Cornelius

Scipio Barbatus, the consul of 298 BCE, listed the magistracies he had held and described his career. Such *elogia*, as they were known, gradually became more widespread and detailed, the most elaborate of all being the *Res Gestae* of Augustus, written in the first person and originally inscribed on two bronze pillars set up in front of his Mausoleum (Suet. *Aug.* 101.4).

Simpler epitaphs, recording little more than the name of the deceased and, from the later first century BCE, information such as age of death, together with formulaic expressions of grief, were inscribed on the tombs and grave *cippi* which lined the roads leading out of the city, and on the small slabs marking the niches for ash-urns in underground *columbaria* and the inhumations in Rome's catacombs. Even on these epitaphs, however, and especially on those for soldiers, the influence of the aristocratic *elogia* is evident.

Elogia also appeared on honorific statue bases from the late Republic onwards. As with other forms of inscription, these became much more common from the reign of Augustus, who decorated his new forum with statues and *elogia* of Roman military heroes. At about the same time, marble became the favored stone for these and most other inscriptions.

As the spoils of empire flooded into Rome in the second century BCE, her new-found wealth was used by an increasingly competitive senate to adorn the city with temples, basilicas and other public buildings. These were inscribed with the name and offices of the dedicator, such as a temple of Hercules Victor vowed and built by L. Mummius, the consul who had destroyed and looted Corinth in 146 BCE (*CIL* 1².626 = 6.331), or the bridge linking the Tiber island with the Campus Martius constructed by L. Fabricius as *curator* of roads in 62 BCE (*CIL* 1².751 = 6.1305). Several of the building inscriptions carved in Rome under the Principate are considered by stonecutters to be amongst the finest ever made, including the dedication by the Senate and People of Rome at the foot of Trajan's Column (*CIL* 6.960), whose lettering has inspired many modern typefaces. From the first century CE, many building inscriptions were composed of letters cast in bronze which were fixed into slots cut into the stone. Often the slots survive even though the original letters have long since been melted down, as with the dedications on the Arch of Titus in the Roman Forum (*CIL* 6.945), or on the Pantheon (*CIL* 6.896) where the bronze letters currently visible are nineteenth-century replacements. Under the Principate, the habit of making religious dedications also spread to more humble members of society, who erected small shrines and altars of all sizes in temple precincts throughout the city. These altars were often decorated with sculptural reliefs depicting the deity on the front, and sacrificial vessels on the sides.

In contrast with building inscriptions and private dedications, public and official documents were usually inscribed on bronze tablets. These were often nailed to walls in and around temple buildings, especially on the Capitoline. Suetonius (*Vesp.* 8.5) tells us that some 3,000 such documents were destroyed on the hill by the fire of 69 CE. Because of the value of the bronze, relatively few such documents have survived, a notable exception being a tablet found in St John Lateran by Cola di Rienzo in 1344, and now in the Capitoline Museum, which bears part of the law granting imperial powers to Vespasian in 70 BCE (*CIL* 6.930).

More than 50,000 of the 400,000 Latin inscriptions surviving from antiquity have been found in Rome, together with several thousand more in Greek and other languages, and more come to light each year. Inscriptions were on view throughout the city: the emperor Constantine is said to have referred to Trajan as the "wall-creeper" (*herbam parietariam*) because his name could be seen everywhere (*Epit. de Caes.* 41.13). They were, indeed, so common that standardized abbreviations (such as *SPQR*) could be used and be readily understood. Today, the inscriptions provide us with detailed information about the names and careers of individuals of all ranks, from senators to bakers and from empresses to slaves; they can tell us when and why buildings were erected, which gods were worshipped, what statutes were enacted.

It is, however, all too easy to forget that the disembodied stones on display in the splendid epigraphic galleries of the Museo Nazionale Romano or the Capitoline or Vatican Museums were hardly ever free-standing. Inscriptions were meant to be seen and interpreted as one element of a funerary monument, or beneath a statue, or labelling a major building, or fixed to a wall with hundreds of other documents. While the extent of ancient literacy is a matter of dispute, even those who could not read them would have been able to interpret the words and the monuments on which they were inscribed together as professions of status, piety, or power. It is only by considering them in these original contexts that Roman inscriptions can be fully understood.

Guide to Further Reading

The Latin inscriptions of Rome are published in the sixth volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (abbreviated as *CIL*), where more than 40,000 have appeared to date. Greek inscriptions of the city are published in the four volumes of *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae* (abbreviated as *IGUR*).

An excellent introduction to Latin epigraphy in general may be found in Keppie (1991). For those who wish to study inscriptions in greater depth, Gordon (1983) is a superb primer with detailed commentaries on selected examples (with photographs) drawn mainly from the city of Rome, while Cooley (2012) provides by far the most comprehensive and up-to-date handbook in English. For those who wish to see Rome's inscriptions for themselves, Lansford 2009 now provides a guidebook to the city's visible inscriptions from all periods. The essays in Bodel (2001) provide useful discussions of how inscriptions are to be exploited by ancient historians.

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v   Coins

Andrew Burnett

The role of both monuments and coinage as part of the memory of the Roman state has been adduced as the reason for the appearance of architectural designs on coins from the late second century BCE (Meadows and Williams 2001). Coins do indeed seem an obvious source for supplementing our knowledge of lost buildings, but they are not straightforward to use. First, a number of modern forgeries have been made (e.g. some specimens depicting the Colosseum, or some of Domitian's building coins of 95–6 CE). But, even when we can be confident that a coin is genuine, there are a number of difficult questions of methodology before we understand what it may contribute to the building history of ancient Rome (Burnett 1999; Elkins 2015). We may think that coins are like a modern archaeologist's photos, but they are not.

A first problem is whether or not the coin is intended to depict a monument or a die engraver's visualization? A particular case concerns the question of how many monuments the four representations of Octavian on horseback are supposed to represent. Similarly, how many temples of Mars Ultor do the two very different depictions of Augustan coins illustrate (Simpson 1977) – and are they compatible with the surviving remains in the Forum? All one can really do, as suggested by Bergemann (1990), is to list out the evidence. A second problem is whether or not a building depicted on a coin ever existed (Prayon 1982). There are a number of examples of buildings shown on coins which never existed. A limiting case is the temple of the *Clementia Caesaris*, shown on coins of 44 BCE. In a similar way the new Flavian Temple of Capitoline Jupiter, destroyed in the fighting of 69 and rebuilt in 70–75, was already shown as complete on coins of 71.

Figure 1.2   Sestertius of Nero, mint of Rome. London, British Museum, CM BMC 187. Photograph: A Burnett.

Figure 1.3   Sestertius of Nero, mint of Lugdunum. London, British Museum. CM BMC 329. Photograph: A Burnett.

Different representations of the same monument may appear. In the case of the (now lost) Arch of Nero on the Capitol, we have representations on coins minted both at Rome and Lugdunum (Figures 1.2 and 1.3). They vary widely in detail, both at the different mints and within each mint. Kleiner (1985) provided a convincing reconstruction of the sequence in which the various different dies were made; and argued that the first dies at Rome were "more carefully cut and more detailed than the later dies," and differed substantially from the slightly later dies used at Lugdunum. His study was based on a very careful study of the coins themselves and their "conventions." He suggested that the earliest dies from Rome were most likely to be most

accurate. His conclusion seems plausible, but a certain amount of doubt about the arch's appearance cannot be dispelled.

But what do we mean by "conventions"? The phrase embodies ways in which structures were commonly depicted, though it would be a mistake to think this was according to any clear canon of conventions, since much variation is possible; perhaps "habits" might be a better term. Two habits that can regularly be observed are variations in the number of columns (any number may appear on a coin, however many a building actually had) and the way that the column facade is opened up to reveal the cult statue which would normally be concealed in the internal cella.

Faced with all these problems, one might be forgiven for just giving up and saying that the coin evidence is more or less worthless, and skepticism, particularly about the coin evidence for buildings outside Rome, is understandable. But sometimes depictions are accurate, as we can see in those rare cases where we have coins and a surviving structure, e.g. the Colosseum (Elkins 2006) or the Arch of Severus. A case could perhaps be made for adopting a more optimistic attitude towards representations on coins made at Rome as opposed to the provinces, but it is hard to see how we could ever avoid any lingering uncertainty. It is only when we can combine a detailed study of the coins with the results of excavation that we can really feel on solid ground.

Perhaps this all shows that we are really looking at the coins in the wrong way – why is it that they are not "accurate"? The very existence of these discrepancies is sufficient to show that the die engravers were not trying to reproduce the actual appearance of individual buildings, but to celebrate the idea of the building. Clearly, for this purpose, the depiction on the coin had to bear some relation to the actual building, but this need not have been a very close one. The coins illuminate what was thought to be important to the people who produced them, and information about such contemporary perceptions is actually at least as interesting as the real appearance of the buildings themselves.

We can take two examples. The first arises from the simple point that monuments and buildings appear almost exclusively on coins of the Romans, of all ancient cultures, whether in the Mediterranean or further east, and shows that they were a natural part of the cultural outlook of the Romans. The Roman empire depended almost entirely on the cities for its stability and coherence, and the celebration of buildings and urban space is consequently a common theme. In contrast, the earlier Greek preoccupation with the natural world explains why so much of Greek art, be it poetry, coin designs or jewelry, is dominated by animals or plants.

Yet, buildings were not dominant. The majority of coins do not depict buildings: even in the first century they account for only about 5%. These figures fluctuate, as construction fluctuated. There is a rough correlation between the number of equestrian statues on coins and the numbers we know from other sources were actually set up, and the same is true of buildings: the concentration of monumental coin designs at the end of the Republic and the reign of Augustus (Fuchs 1969), followed by a lull which picks up again in the late first century, falls away in the second century and rises again in the Severan period, thereby reflecting the actual level of building activity in Rome. By the third century, external threats were once again a dominant theme, and the economic wealth of the empire began to falter. Public building was reduced, and new concerns appeared. Depictions of buildings on coins decline, to be replaced by new concerns with security, for example, such as the "camp-gate" design of the fourth century. These seem unspecific, and are probably only generic representations of the defenses which the emperors had to provide to secure the empire.

Guide to Further Reading

Modern study begins with Donaldson (1859), and since then there have been many treatments of specific periods or buildings, such as Fuchs (1969) or Bergemann (1990). More comprehensive treatments have been given by Price and Trell (1977), which covers the whole of the Roman world, and Hill (1989), although the latter is rather disappointing. A review of the topic was published by Burnett (1999), but Kleiner (1985) remains the best methodological case study.

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Historical Overview: From City-state to Christian Center

Christopher Smith

This chapter charts a huge arc of history from the early days of Rome to the end of the Western Roman Empire. This is a story that has often been told, and whose contours are relatively well established, but the focus here is on the role of the city of Rome itself. The relationship between the city and the empire is what concern us: how did the city encourage the foundation of the empire, and how did the creation of that empire impact on the city?

Beginnings

The Romans had two accounts of the foundation of their city, and they were joined with difficulty. One, which appears to be the local story, is of the twins Romulus and Remus, cast away by an evil relative but miraculously saved, suckled by a wolf, and brought up by strangers, arriving at manhood to take their kingdom, but then fighting on the day of foundation. Romulus kills Remus, but Rome is founded. Traditionally this was dated to 753 BCE, but there was another story available in which Aeneas fled the city of Troy on the night of its destruction by the Greeks, traditionally in the twelfth century BCE, and made his way westwards, landing at Lavinium, and settling at Alba Longa. The two versions can both fit a divinely inspired, fateful history, but they look in different directions, one largely local, the other facing east to the

Greek world. In their uneasy coexistence, the two stories symbolize the nature of the Roman experience, both rooted in its local identity and facing outwards to the empire.

   Traditionally, the sources (for example, Livy, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch) tell us that Romulus, having founded the city, expanded its citizen body by admitting outlaws and stealing women from the neighboring tribe of the Sabines. To Romulus is also attributed a set of constitutional reforms, highly anachronistic, but which were taken to offer the underpinnings for the state – i.e. a senate, an assembly and a formal relationship between the assembly and the conferment of power, *imperium*, which should be seen largely in a military context. Romulus, whose death comes at the hands of the senators (according to sources which have been influenced by the much later death of Julius Caesar – see for instance Livy 1.16), was succeeded by a Sabine king, Numa, who pursued a predominantly religious program. This completed the fundamentals of the Roman state, a state based on political structures with a strong religious framework which has a very substantial capacity to wage war on its neighbors. The next two kings, Tullus Hostilius and Ancus Marcius, were successfully belligerent. The fifth king of Rome is an outsider; Tarquinius Priscus was said to be related to Demaratus, one of the aristocratic group, the Bacchiads, who were exiled from Corinth. He had settled in Etruria, north of Rome, and this can be seen in the name of Tarquinius (related to the settlement of Tarquinia).

   Servius Tullius, the sixth king of Rome, is one of the most intriguing, because of the dense clusters of stories that mark him out. His birth is miraculous; many important constitutional reforms are attributed to him; and his death is the product of vicious familial intrigue, which brings another Tarquin to the throne. It is also interesting that there was a story in the sources about Macstrna, a figure identified with Servius Tullius, who was associated with the Vibenna brothers from Vulci in a military exploit (the key passage is Tac. *Ann.* 4.65). On the inside of a tomb at Vulci from the fourth century we see a painting with some of these individuals shown in a dramatic engagement, which implies that however confused the details, elements of sixth-century Roman history were known at quite an early stage, and not just in Rome. As we assess the influence and significance of Rome in the sixth century, this complex but intriguing evidence at least suggests that Rome's history was being discussed on both sides of the Tiber. The reign of Servius Tullius's successor, Tarquinius Superbus, was characterized by repression and brutality, but also by expansion and a substantial building program, the most significant elements of which included the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitol and the Cloaca Maxima, Rome's storm drain. His attack on Lucretia, the virtuous wife of a man called Lucius Junius Brutus,

which led to her suicide, was the catalyst for his expulsion. Shortly afterwards, Lars Porsenna, an Etruscan adventurer, may briefly have held the city. However, for the sources it was the expulsion of Tarquinius Superbus, the Proud, which brought the beginning of the Republic, and the role of a Brutus, allegedly ancestor of Caesar's assassin, was both the inspiration for and product of that act.

The archaeological realities of the city do indeed suggest Rome's development of central institutions, complex religious associations, and hierarchies to support the political structures, which were heavily aristocratic. For the earliest period, we rely on burial evidence such as that from the Forum necropolis. Such evidence is patchy for Rome, but what we have is entirely comparable to burial evidence from the area around Rome to the south (Latium) and the north (Etruria), with local variations. Broadly, the pattern is of cremations in the tenth and ninth centuries, then inhumations, and by the later seventh century, some very wealthy burials. We find gender-specific items, and probably indicators of status, such as weaponry for men. At Rome, and at large sites like Veii, we can see contemporary burials across a wide area – there are burials on several hills at Rome as well as in the Forum.

From the eighth century, we begin to see evidence of construction and manipulation of space. There appears to have been some fortification or boundary marking, such as the wall on the slopes of the Palatine which Carandini found. In addition, increasingly from the eighth to the sixth centuries, the lower part of the Forum is raised by landfill, monumentalized, and the Forum necropolis closes. This may all suggest that Rome has developed a central political space in which the communities on the separate hills can join. Early in the sixth century, there is temple building in the Forum Boarium, right by the Tiber river – this is one of the earliest temples we know in central Italy, but the trend develops rapidly and culminates, in one sense, in the vast construction of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline, perhaps one of the largest temples at the time in Italy and Sicily. Infrastructure such as the Cloaca Maxima and domestic building has also been found, and it is likely that Rome developed at least a partial fortification for the city in the sixth century. Dating these various constructions is not easy – in some instances we rely on associated pottery; in others, on the nature of the tuff stone which is used (Rome only begins to use Grotta Oscura tuff after the conquest of Veii in 396 BCE). Individual aspects of the archaeology might be doubted, but taken as a whole, there is now an impressive amount of evidence for the development of archaic Rome.

The methodological difficulty remains that, whilst one can interpret the archaeological record through the evidence of the sources, to do so is profoundly problematic, because the sources postdate the evidence by several

hundred years (Fabius Pictor around 200 BCE being the first Roman narrative historian). Whilst one can construct mechanisms by which some evidence survived – oral tradition, drama, inscriptions, and records of magistrates all being possibilities – these means do not give a reliable chronological account of the earlier period; consequently we must assume that some of the apparent confirmations of an archaeological record that we can read and date by literary sources, which had largely invented the chronology of the regal period to fill gaps between various fixed points, are fortuitous. This means that studying the history of the regal period is, to a large extent, an exercise in studying the invention of tradition – but perhaps not wholly. The story of Macstrna, and of Porsenna too, reminds us that Rome was implicated in broader traditions, and that there was a general sense of a sequence of powerful individuals in the sixth century who were at the limits of their constitutional power, or who held power by the fragile bonds of charisma and violence. Historians debate at length some of the immensely technical issues surrounding this period, but the general account of the passage from monarchy to annual magistracy around the beginning of the fifth century BCE is probably correct.

Similarly, there is no doubting that Rome had attained an extraordinary level of power within the Italian context by the early fifth century; the temple of Jupiter is the best index of this. It is tempting, therefore, to accept the tradition we find in Polybius 3.22–5, that Rome was sufficiently significant in 509 BCE to have been party to a treaty with the main power of the western Mediterranean, Carthage. We may argue about how original or derivative Roman artistic culture was, but it is less easy to deny the economic and political power that was able to mobilize labor to create the urbanscape of early fifth-century Rome.

To a degree this also supports the historical account which indicates that Rome had grown at the expense of her nearest neighbors, the Latins. One set of facts that might have survived from an early period may have been lists of victories, which subsequently became the lists of triumphs of the Roman magistrates. Another interesting indicator is that most of the Roman tribes (that is one of the divisions of the Roman people) have the names of aristocratic families. This might lead to the argument that the leading families of Rome were involved in the conquest of neighboring areas, or were incorporated into the city. The Claudii from the Sabina are therefore said by Livy (2.16) and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (5.40) to have been incorporated into the Roman citizen body, and allowed to settle an area outside the city limits. Finally, the tradition is clear that Rome used her conquests to increase the size of her own army by processes of integration. If Rome had already begun such a process by the fifth century, this would assist us

in understanding how she had become so significant, and how she was able to withstand the challenges that were to come.

To conclude, Rome, by the beginning of the fifth century, had left behind a history of kings, and begun to be characterized by annual magistracies (that is to say, a Republic), had a substantial urban settlement with clearly demarcated public spaces and several temples – one of which was one of the largest known in Italy – and had expanded her territory, resources, and population through conquest of her neighbors.

The Consequences of Growth

This was not, however, an entirely straightforward process, and the sources preserve and dwell on aspects of the difficulty of Rome's early history. Domestic strife and foreign threats are the characteristic leitmotifs of the narrative account. The Romans recalled a division between the aristocratic patricians, made up of distinguished families linked by marriage and bound by inheritance rules, and the plebs (a collective noun) made up of plebeians, who formed the rest of the population. As early as 494 BCE, the plebeians won concessions by their secession – that is, their temporary withdrawal from the city – which threatened Rome's capacity to exist. One such concession was the appointment of annual tribunes of the people who were granted sacro-sanctity, and thus offered the people a degree of direct protection. In response, the patricians tried to tighten their exclusivity, but were unsuccessful. By the fourth century, the existence of a written law-code (the Twelve Tables), and the gradual admission of plebeians into political, military, and religious office had led to the near-complete erosion of the formal privileges of the patricians (with the exception of a few highly symbolic priesthoods), although birth continued to count for much. The class of the descendants of office holders, the *nobiles*, had a tight grip on power throughout the Republic; power in the hands of those who had no office-holders in their family, the new men or *novi homines*, was always the exception.

The desire of the plebeians to gain access to office might indicate that the movement was about the mobility of a relatively small group just outside the patriciate, and this would seem to be part of the truth, but there were other grievances. Debt, and the failure to allow the plebeians to benefit from the increasing Roman territory, were also aspects of what moderns term the "Struggle of the Orders." This relates to the second theme in Roman history. The fifth century was characterized by a grim struggle to defend against an increasing number of incursions from neighboring tribes, the Hernicans, Aequians, and Volscians. These tribes seem to have been in search

of territory in the Latin plain, and so another part of this story is the negotia-
tion of appropriate relations between Romans and the Latin League. Roman
successes, culminating in the destruction of Rome's nearest Etruscan neigh-
bor, Veii, led to demands by the plebeians for direct compensation for their
military contribution in the form of distribution of land. This itself seems to
derive from concerns over increasing plebeian indebtedness, and may also
relate to the consequence of the demands made by more or less constant
warfare. The Roman army reflected the Roman economic realities, with
the heavier demands falling on the upper classes, but even so, there seem to
have been enough Romans being forced to fight, especially in this turbulent
century, to cause problems.

This is a complex picture, but it seems to hang together. Unfortunately
there is a further difficulty caused by the persistence of this nexus of prob-
lems throughout the Republic. This means that later writers will inevitably
have used their own experiences to color the ways in which they wrote
about the more distant past. Whilst there is some truth in this, the fact that
there is relatively little major architectural advance in the city in this period
is suggestive of a period of genuine difficulty. This would be explicable by a
period of some internal and external strife. Although we hear of a few tem-
ple constructions in the fifth and fourth centuries, and there is no reason to
doubt them particularly, we see far less development than is visible in sixth-
century Rome. Burials were few (a trend shared with Latium, and again
perhaps indicative of wider problems). One of the lowest points was the
sack of the city in 390 BCE by the Gauls, a band of northern marauders.
Damage may have been limited but the memory was a strong and fearful
one. It is therefore striking that one of the major developments of the
fourth century seems to be the return to whatever sixth-century fortifica-
tions existed, and the development of a proper enceinte wall. The fragments
of this wall that we see, which are collectively termed the Servian Wall after
Servius Tullius, are therefore best interpreted as a mixture of sixth through
to fourth century constructions. Yet the wall is also an exceptional index of
Rome's strength, even in adversity; the area it encloses, about 426 hectares,
makes Rome one of the largest urban settlements in the western
Mediterranean.

It is clear that the fourth and third centuries were the crucible in which
Roman identity was forged. By 338 BCE, Rome had established secure control
over the Latins, and this created the basis of their empire. The Latins were
given specific privileges that separated them from other subjugated peoples,
and contributed their manpower to the growing Roman army, which was con-
structed in a manner which permitted its extension. Latins and Romans were
both enrolled in colonies, cities that had a watching brief over foreign territory.

Rome itself was beginning in the later fourth and third century to recommence programs of public monumentalization. We can see this in a number of parts of the city, and in a number of kinds of construction. Rome's first aqueduct (the Aqua Appia of 312 BCE); the remodeling of the public space around the Comitium in the Forum area; the erection of the speaker's platform, the Rostra, so named after the beaks of ships captured in war; the victory column of C. Duilius of 260 BCE (the triumphal arch as a monumental form would follow shortly); triumphal temples, which continue in sequence from around 300 BCE into the second century BCE, roads, and the port infrastructure, which seems to be the purpose of the huge Porticus Aemilia of 193 BCE. Rome's architecture therefore reflects military success, population growth, and increased commercial activity. What underpinned this growth?

Rome was beginning to engage with neighbors further afield – the Etruscans to the north and the Samnites to the south. As Roman ambition and territory began to expand, Rome came necessarily into contact with the major cultures of the south, the Greeks and the Carthaginians. One of the major catalysts for Rome's determination may have been the invasion by Pyrrhus, who seems to have sought a western empire to match the famous exploits of his relative, Alexander the Great. Pyrrhus's invasion was startling but, in the long run, ineffective. However, his reliance on support from Sicily in the end made that island pivotal in the long battle for supremacy with the Carthaginians; in the First and Second Punic Wars, Sicily was critical.

This long history of warfare was draining for Rome and for Roman manpower, but the city was never sacked – Hannibal famously turned away. Consequently, the city grew, and victory over southern Italy and Sicily brought riches, new styles of architecture, and new decorative schemes to Rome. Increasingly, the city became the home to competitive building, as victorious generals marked their achievements with the dedication of temples, and Greek statuary became more visible. Just as the Romans incorporated the manpower of defeated enemies, and imitated foreign weaponry and armor when it was advantageous, so the Romans also absorbed, incorporated and imitated foreign architecture and art, symbolically bringing the conquered enemy within the walls. What started as the solemn evocation of a tutelary deity of a defeated city (an event we can identify in only a few cases, for instance at Veii in 396 BCE (Livy 5.22), becomes, when Rome moves into the Greek world, the plundering of an artistic inheritance. When Marcellus conquered Syracuse in the Second Punic War (212 BCE) he carried off much of its wealth to Rome. When Fulvius Flaccus stripped the roof of the temple of Juno Lacinia in southern Italy to adorn his temple in 174/3 BCE, the

Senate ordered the restitution, and Flaccus died shortly thereafter, allegedly of Juno's anger; but no such scruples prevented L. Mummius's dismemberment of Corinth in 146 BCE. Rome's increasing involvement in the Greek East after the Hannibalic War exaggerated the disjunction between Roman distaste and desire for Greek luxury. This cultural divide was a leitmotif running throughout Roman history.

The challenges and opportunities of warfare solidified the Roman political system. In the face of overwhelming odds, Rome became briefly more unified, and developed a strong militaristic ethos which carried over into its politics. Rome was governed by a relatively small group of families who had already had some success in office-holding. The numbers of elected posts (two consuls, rising numbers of praetors, aediles, and quaestors, ten tribunes of the plebs, and a host of other magistracies, coupled with the prorogation or annual extension of the consuls and praetors to meet military necessities) was allied to a more or less firm sequence, and an expectation hardened into law of the minimum ages at which these offices could be taken (which was of course flouted by the most able). There was thus a genuine career structure, but whilst a few tried to make their way through politics alone, the expectation was always that those elected to office would then lead in military affairs. In the Punic Wars, the result was a high death toll amongst officers as well as men, but in times of greater success, war brought booty, and thus a greater opportunity to enrich oneself and the city, meaning that office became more competitively sought after. Consciously or not, the Romans constructed a cycle in which the desire for office fueled the need for military success, which raised the stakes in electioneering, forcing yet more expansion (see Table 2.1). There are signs of this in the second half of the second century BCE, for instance with the simultaneous sack of both Carthage and Corinth, and the intervention in Pergamum after 133 BCE. The spoils of empire went largely to citizens, which, in time, became a problem, since the empire itself was won and run by a mixed population. As internal politics at Rome continually pushed politicians to support, sustain, and rely upon the growing urban population, either by enhancing the expanding city, or by facilitating a return to the countryside at the expense of those living there, Rome's external politics increasingly relied on the collaboration of Italians. The Social War of 91–87 BCE was a complex affair and not reducible to simple aims, but the outcome at any rate was the spreading of Roman citizenship throughout Italy; the consequence was both the influx of new competitors for at least the lower ranks of political office, and the increasing participation by the towns of Italy in the definition of "Romanness." This process, which starts from the moment of Roman conquest, is often described with the shorthand term Romanization, but the term must be understood not as the active imposition of Roman

Table 2.1 Rome's major wars (mid-fourth century to the end of the first century BCE).

First Samnite War (343–341 BCE)	Third Celtiberian or Numantine War (143–133 BCE)
Latin War (340–338 BCE)	Numidian War (111–106 BCE)
Second Samnite War (327–321, 316–304 BCE)	Cimbrian War (105–101 BCE)
Third Samnite War (298–290 BCE)	First Mithridatic War (88–85 BCE)
War with Pyrrhus (280–275 BCE)	Second Mithridatic War (83–82 BCE)
First Punic War (264–241BCE)	Third Mithridatic War (74–66 BCE)
First Illyrian War (229–8 BCE)	Pompey's Eastern Settlement (65–62 BCE)
Second Illyrian War (219 BCE)	Gallic War (58–50 BCE)
Second Punic War (218–201 BCE)	Parthian War (54–53 BCE)
First Macedonian War (214–205 BCE)	Civil War (49–48 BCE)
Second Macedonian War (200–196 BCE)	Egyptian or Alexandrine War (48 BCE)
War with Antiochus (192–189 BCE)	Antony's Parthian War (40–33 BCE)
First Celtiberian War (181–179 BCE)	Illyrian War (35–28 BCE)
Third Macedonian War (172–169 BCE)	Battle of Actium (31 BCE)
Lusitanian War (154–138 BCE)	Cantabrian Wars (26–19 BCE)
Second Celtiberian War (153–151 BCE)	Gallic Settlement (16–13 BCE)
Third Punic War (149–146 BCE)	Pannonian War (16–12 BCE)
Sack of Corinth (146 BCE)	German War (12–9 BCE)

ideas on an unwilling subjugated population, but as the intricate playing out of cultural, political, and social ideologies of identity and power, in which the very nature of what it was to be Roman was itself questioned and reshaped. This process can be detected, at each chronological and geographical point and with its own individual and complex dynamic, throughout the Roman Empire.

Returning to the architecture of the city, the second century BCE continues trends identified earlier. We begin to see already in the second century, and accelerating in the first century BCE, how the temples, vowed from the spoils of victory by individual commanders and situated lining the route whereby the Roman triumphal procession entered the city, became themselves part of the competitive atmosphere, as individuals restored temples built by their own ancestors, thus proclaiming both individual and inherited virtue. The population of the city appears to have exploded in the first century BCE, with

all the attendant problems of infrastructure. It is also a time of architectural innovation, of experimentation with space and decoration, and of the increasing influence of Greek models, whilst we also see architectural reflections of a growing regard for (and indeed perhaps invention of) the Roman past. M. Fulvius Nobilior's temple of Hercules and the Muses, sometime after 189 BCE, celebrates both the Roman past through the alleged preservation of a shrine from the time of King Numa in the eighth century BCE. As the temples of Victoria and Magna Mater (an imported eastern deity) began to occupy parts of the Palatine, older hut foundations may have been carefully moved, and then become part of a story of Roman continuity. Both the earliest basilicas and the series of up to a dozen porticoes along the lines of Greek *stoai* show a different cultural affinity, and the best index of how architecture now represented a focus of display and disagreement is shown by the continuing refusal by the Roman authorities to permit the construction of a permanent stone theatre, which was an architectural form often associated with democracy.

The intensity of political conflict dominates the last century of the Republic, but it rested on the combination of a military dynamic and a massive urban population, as Rome's demographic soared towards one million people. We see the conflict at an incredibly detailed level through the works of Cicero, an eyewitness to, and a player in, the key moments. Roman history becomes the history of a few individuals. Caesar and Pompey each strive for supremacy on the back of vast military conquests (Pompey in the east, Caesar in Gaul) and reshaping of the city of Rome (Pompey's theatre, Caesar's reconstructions in the Forum and Campus Martius, and ultimately a completely new Forum). Caesar's victory was short-lived; he was assassinated in 44 BCE, heralding a struggle over his legacy, which was won by his nephew, Octavian, who was renamed Augustus. For our understanding of the city, this late-Republican phase tends to be most marked by the huge building projects, which were themselves partly encouraged by a somewhat dilapidated and inadequate city infrastructure; what we tend to miss archaeologically is the huge growth of the city's lower-class accommodation. We know that jerry-built ramshackle insula-type buildings, with several floors of accommodation above shops must have spread rapidly through the city, leading to fire hazards, increased demands on infrastructure such as water, and the general crowding of the city. Whilst to the north, gardens and open space remained, some part of the larger villa complexes of the elite, areas like the Subura not far from the Forum were, by all accounts, crowded and tense. This growing contrast between sophisticated urban spaces, such as the Forum or the great Campus Martius complexes, expensive if cramped town houses for the elite near the great political spaces of the Forum and Palatine, villas in the countryside, and

slums in the center, is the product of the social and political forces of the late Republic, but characterized the imperial city too, and it is what makes Rome seem so modern in its urban form.

Towards Monarchy

The apparent inevitability of the Roman political descent into monarchy is often assumed; the Republic has been described as a "crisis without alternative," and its last century as a sequence of crises, each one sapping away a little more of the capacity of the Republic to survive. This is partly the result of having the Ciceronian evidence. This political narrative is important and, of course, to some extent true, but it is also vital to incorporate three key story lines. First, the growth of the city population, and especially the growth of the numbers of citizen voters within it, rendered traditional politics increasingly less plausible. Second, the importance of Italy cannot be overlooked. Each of the great leaders looked to Italy: Pompey claimed to have been able to summon legions by stamping his foot; Caesar's veterans came from all over Italy; Octavian garnered huge support from Italy, which Antony squandered in his eastern adventures with Cleopatra. Third, the empire was an essential component of the future. In their own way, each of the great leaders of the late Republic realized that the empire was a problem that needed to be solved. Caesar and Pompey sought to expand the empire – it was alleged that Caesar had the east in his sights before his death. The Alexander-like obsession with conquest masked the nervous contemplation of the consequence of retraction, and arguably it was Augustus who saw this most clearly; by all accounts a reluctant fighter, he spent much of his early life pacifying and bringing the empire to heel, and much of his later life preventing others from benefiting from it. Augustus brought to an end both the pursuit of conquest for its own sake, and the concept of the empire as the property of the *res publica*. His brilliant solution of making parts of the empire the emperor's own property (amongst them the immensely wealthy province of Egypt) not only removed temptation, but also shored up his own position. It was a solution which endured long beyond his own dynasty.

If Roman history changes after the Republic it is not just because we lose Cicero (executed by Mark Antony in revenge for his too-successful oratorical destruction of Antony's character). It is also because, to some extent, politics was never the same again. The Senate continued to meet, and elections continued to be held, for a while, but meant less; one of the reasons for Augustus's early unpopularity was that he held a consulship repeatedly, and one of his early reforms was to acquire consular power, which left the office

open to two people a year, as in the past. There was still an elite at Rome who sought advancement for personal pride and recognition, but the stakes were lower. Henceforth, and perhaps to the relief of many, the whole empire had only one person to look to, the emperor. Italy became more peaceful, and Rome became more predictably understandable. Prosperity did indeed follow.

Nowhere perhaps was this more true than in the city of Rome, and here again we see how inextricably linked were the fortunes of the city and those of the empire. From Augustus on, Rome became the focus of imperial expenditure and attention, and within the city, the emperor became the focus of popular expectation. Famously, Augustus claimed to have found the city made in brick and left it marble (Suet. *Aug.* 28.3); his intervention in the city was pervasive and highly visible, from his massive mausoleum to his envelopment of the old civic spaces with self-referential Augustan architecture and architectural restoration. Even when he did not act (his restoration of the Basilica Aemilia was said to have left it recognizably Aemilian; his house was, allegedly, humble) it was conspicuous. The impact of Augustus was enormous. By the end of his reign, one could stand in the old Republican Forum, and look down at an Augustan-period pavement, and around at basilicas, two imperial fora, one explicitly celebrating the Julian clan, triumphal arches, a monument to the Divine Julius Caesar, a portico for Augustus's grandchildren, a restored Rostra and Curia, and a clutch of restored temples, all of which could be regarded as Augustan, whilst on the Palatine, Augustus's humble house, sat flanked by temples of Victory and Apollo, as well as a preserved hut which allegedly once housed Romulus. Out in the city, the largest mausoleum known in the ancient world, a broad piazza which functioned as a celebration of Augustan achievements, obelisks reflecting the victory over the east, infrastructural developments such as the Stagnum Agrippae which appears to have contributed to water distribution, and a rash of statuary and other decorative architecture such as the Ara Pacis, all proclaimed the new world.

Imperial Rome

Augustus's successors were less encumbered by the past. The length of Augustus's reign secured more than anything else the absence of a viable alternative. Throughout the first century CE people talked about the Republic, but it was never really clear what that meant or how it might have been achieved. When a crisis came with the end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, the answer was a bloody battle to find a new emperor. That emperor, Vespasian,

heralded another dynasty. Interestingly, part of Vespasian's story would be the rejection of the urban design of Nero, which focused on his house, in favor of the architecture of urban infrastructure, notably the Colosseum.

For the Julio-Claudian emperors, the focus seems to have been on the development of an architecture of power and palatial splendor. It is important to remember that Claudius also built the great harbor at Portus, and that investment and support for the provinces was also taking place, but for senatorial and hostile historians it was the excessive splendor of private architecture at Rome that attracted attention and censure. Tiberius built the first great palace, but it was Nero who took this to its furthest extreme. His vast complex, which stretched from the Oppian to the Palatine and included suites of rooms, a lake, statues, artificial landscaping and so on, raised resentment; perhaps even more so because it was possible in part because of the great fire of 64 CE which left much of the city in ruins. At the same time, it does appear to have been one of the greatest and most remarkable collections of art and display; the surviving fragments of marble opus sectile and other indications are stunning. It is all the more noticeable, therefore, that when the dynasty fell, Vespasian destroyed much of the Golden House, transforming the huge statue of Nero into one of Apollo, and creating a huge amphitheater for the entertainment of the Roman people. Whilst the Flavians were also capable of displays of dynastic achievement (Temple of Peace, Arch of Titus) and personal power (Domitian's palace on the Palatine), they represent the constant tensions between the need to support the city's infrastructure, and to sustain Rome's appearance.

Whilst the empire united around the system which delivered stability and anchors of security, and identified with Rome, so Rome became increasingly diverse and complex as it reflected the vast wealth and heterogeneity of empire within its own boundaries. Anything could be found at Rome from anywhere in the empire. Opus sectile floors with marble from across the Mediterranean, markets with produce from Africa, India, and all places in between, slave markets, spectacles of gladiators and animals, were all to be found at Rome, and Roman writers like Pliny the Elder gloried in enumerating the variety that came with empire. The diversity of temples and religious customs grew to match the diversity of the population, which itself brought an unmatched array of interesting illnesses. Galen, the great medical writer, could find almost every remedy at Rome, and more or less every disease.

In the third chapter of his great work on the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, Gibbon declared the period between Domitian and Commodus to be one in which "the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous." The provinces were more or less secure, and the city of Rome was securely provisioned through the great harbor at Portus, revisited by Trajan

who constructed the still-visible hexagonal harbor. Together with Ostia, Portus was part of a vast infrastructure of supply, and Italy was, more or less, prospering. The evidence from Pompeii and Herculaneum, destroyed in 79 CE, is our best guide to urban life outside the center; it shows a combination, both touching and vivid, of municipal taste (and perhaps the absence of it, from time to time), of local adaptation to specific conditions, the damage caused in this instance by earlier seismic activity in 62 CE, and intriguing hints as to the role of freedmen in society. Local patrons, individual storylines, and the interaction of slaves and free are the bedrock on which imperial society developed from Narbonne to North Shields, from Brindisi to Begram. The city of Rome acquired under the Severans some of its most impressive monuments, for instance the baths of Caracalla.

The monumental architecture of the second and third century CE, coupled with the spread of statuary, original or copied, the widespread use of inscriptions on public monuments and personal funerary contexts, and the export of a Roman model of urbanism across a largely settled empire, makes this one of the most interesting periods for the development of urban form. It is also a highly diverse and adventurous period, both in terms of particular monuments – Trajan's Column, with its elaborate internal staircase, in the enormous Trajanic Forum, the great dome of the Pantheon, the vast world in miniature of Hadrian's villa, the astonishing physical achievements of the Baths of Caracalla (which, it has been estimated, required between 12,000 and 20,000 men over four to six years, moving half a million cubic meters of clay to create the artificial terrace, and moving columns that weighed as much as 100 tons) – and in terms of the subjects. This is the period when eastern and Egyptian deities in particular begin to receive particular attention; Isis, Sarapis, Sol Elagabalus to name but three. For all the turmoil and unrest, Rome remained a remarkably rich and imposing city – a symbol of power. Just one building might stand for all; the Severan Septizodium, a vast three-storey edifice near the Palatine, monumental and no doubt fantastically decorated, which, as far as one can tell, had no real function at all except to be a decorative and imposing fountain in the contemporary eastern Greek fashion.

This narrative is important because it helps us to understand the most challenging feature of Roman imperial history: how, when in the third century the challenges to the empire become so fierce, and when the emperors came and went with bewildering rapidity, did the whole thing hang together (see Tables 2.2 and 2.3)? One can write a narrative of insecurity and decline. There are clear signs of economic difficulty in the debasement of coinage, for instance, and of imperial retrenchment and retreat, perhaps best symbolized by the emperor Valerian serving as the footstool for the Sasanid king, Shapur I.