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# APPROPRIATING AND SHAPING RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

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## SUMMARY

The important role of religion for the functioning and stability of the Roman republic(s), in particular from the late fourth century onwards, has been stressed in recent scholarship. The possibilities of distinction and competition in the field of religious practices have been acknowledged, too. However, such differences are not accorded any relevancy for the history of republican religion. The colloquium dedicated to the prosopographer Friedrich Münzer offers the instigation to look more closely at a particular field of elite competition in religious matters, i.e. the foundation of temples. However, not the questions of competition and political strategies are in the focus, but the problem of religious change.

### 1. A STARTING POINT: P. LICINIUS P.F.P.N. CRASSUS DIVES

When one of us started working on a project in 1990, which never came to become his habilitation thesis, as it took him fifteen years to finish it,<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Münzer's *Römische Adelsparteien und Adelsfamilien* were his standing companion in sketching the religious biographies of Roman republican priests. In many instances arguments being tainted by this reading survived later revisions and made it into the final publication. Wherever *Römische Adelsparteien* did not make it into the notes, Friedrich Münzer crept into the short biographies in the skin of *Pauly-Wissowa's* biographical lemmata. At the same time another view on Friedrich Münzer developed, when work was done on a little book on Eduard Norden's work on Roman religion, analyzing and editing some of Norden's letters.<sup>2</sup> Norden, likewise born in 1868 and of Jewish origins, unlike Münzer managed to emigrate to Zürich late in 1938, but he died in 1941, a broken man.<sup>3</sup> Münzer died at Theresienstadt.<sup>4</sup>

But let us return to Münzer's prosopographical research and Rüpke's use of it. Publius Licinius Crassus Dives is a case in point.<sup>5</sup> Born in the early 230s BC he

1 RÜPKE 2005.

2 RÜPKE 1993.

3 Cf. KYTZLER u.a. 1994; FITZGERALD 1999; RÜPKE 1994a and 1994b; KYTZLER 1990; PAWLICZEK 2011; SCHRÖDER 1999.

4 See the paper of Josef WIESEHÖFER in this volume.

5 Cf. RÜPKE 2008: no. 2235; on him MÜNZER 1920: 182–191.

was elected *pontifex maximus* in 212 being in his mid-twenties, soon after his co-optation as *pontifex*, which not necessarily antedates 216. He became curule aedile in the same year 212, was elected censor in 210 (for 209) and reached a consulate in 205. His long period of office as supreme pontiff was characterized by a number of conflicts and innovations, forcing priests into offices, consuls into repeating major sacrifices, trying to establish rules about the definition of the monetary value of a vow in advance or to force certain priests to stay within Italy. All these episodes are well-known. Münzer has interpreted most of them as conflicts over the space of legitimate political action of adversaries, usually defined by the fact, whether the office holders are patricians or plebeians like Licinius himself.

Given the rules of office-holding and the importance of relationships within and between families, such an interpretation retains a high degree of plausibility. This is first of all a narrative plausibility. The construction of a rational agent, maximizing his (or her) profit – in terms of offices reached, wealth gained, even symbolic capital accumulated – within the rules of a society makes for a narrative, which is easy to follow and plausible judged by readers who themselves entertain a self-image of being such utility maximizers. Of course, such individual strategies might clash, resulting in a narrative of sufficient contingency to introduce affections and pathos into the plot.

Religion has held a special place in such narratives throughout the twentieth century – and beyond. “Roman religion was national and civic, and its practice was a political issue since it concerned the entire community. Most religious activities were performed in public following stringent rules, and their main purpose was to maintain or to restore the peace of the gods (*pax deorum*).”<sup>6</sup> The quotation is from a book, which appeared in 2011 and introduces a chapter on “Consuls and civic religion”. The language betrays its purposes. The Latin quotation introduces the exotic element: The actions of the observed are informed by a tenet, which we, the observers, do not share. However, it is rule-based, hence far from our own concept of religion as irrational belief, and as such as fully intelligible as national, civic, and political practice. As long as the gods do not interfere – and they are very, even exceedingly often reluctant to do so (which is fully consonant with our expectations about figures like bearded Jove or helmeted Mars) –, religious practices are a freely available resource for national, civic, and political action. They are, to quote from the index of Münzer’s *Adelsparteien*, “Leichenfeiern”, “Priesterstellen”, “Sibyllinische Sprüche”, “Tempelweihen”, and “Triumphe” apart from all the different priesthoods and “Vestälinnen, Prozesse der”. That is a wide field of rituals, but does not pay any attention to central religious concepts of the presence and activity of the most important religious signs, the gods, concepts of *deus* and *numen*, of religious identities or the role accorded to religion in society and individual lives. Within the approach chosen, there was no necessity to do so. This chapter’s claim is similarly limited, but follows the opposite direction. From the perspectives of History of religion and Archaeology the claim will be proffered that the approach sketched so far needs a supplement. We will start by some more general considera-

tions (2). On the basis of some important temple foundations of the second century BCE it will be argued that architectural change implied and indicated religious change (3). The role of individual decision in such activities is argued for in the final paragraph (4).

## 2. DIMENSIONS OF ANCIENT RELIGION

There is more to ancient religion than fixed rules,<sup>7</sup> divine compliance, and a huge field of instrumentalised practices. For the period under consideration (but probably in many other instances, too) religion should be conceived of as a whole field of practices,<sup>8</sup> ideas, and institutions. These phenomena are loosely held together by a logic of their own, a tradition, which articulates and solves much more problems than only answering to the question, how religious capital is acquired and how it is transformed into political power. This logic is not simply given as a predetermined logic *sui generis*, but it is shaped by repetition and variation, discourse of participants as well as, at least from the second century BCE onwards, intellectual reflection in the form of antiquarian literature.<sup>9</sup> Many deities introduced during the middle and late republic, from gods embodying social values like concord or virtue<sup>10</sup> to healing and tutelary gods like Asclepius and Isis, illustrate the wide range of religious concerns.

Logic implies a set of related rules, and I am not fully satisfied by the term, thinking of the precarious nature and many contradictions of and within this “logic”. If social rules should be working, however feebly, they must be felt to be binding norms of behaviour. Whether tacit or explicit, such a set must defy obvious inconsistency.

The age of Crassus Dives was facing new challenges to existing rules. Since the end of the First Punic War and the conceptual definition of *provinciae*, religious logic had to deal with the new problem of a not only contingent, but conceptual discrepancy. On the one hand holding some offices implied duties in the city of Rome or its surroundings (which have always proved to be open to temporary replacement or postponement). On the other hand the possibility had developed of holding an office formally excluding presence in the city. The solution was looked for in another complex of problems, that is, the claims of patricians to specific religious competences. Without ever spelling out a clear rationale, plebeians and patricians cooperated in defining only such religious offices as unsuitable for foreign services, which by default demanded a patrician officeholder. To find such a solution took about half a century, two generations, and included manifold shifts, a sequence of *flamines* losing their priesthoods on account of minimal ritual mistakes,

7 See for a fruitful application of the concept of rules LUNDGREEN 2011.

8 For the primacy of practices see SCHEID 2003 and 2005.

9 E.g. FEENEY 1998; BENDLIN/RÜPKE 2009; RÜPKE 2012b.

10 These were no ‘mere personifications’, but were fully integrated into a wide range of religious practices: CLARK 2007, similarly for Greece: STAFFORD 2000.

the office of *rex sacrorum* being opened to plebeians and closed again, the *flamen Dialis* being denied of provincial offices and gaining a seat in the senate, a *pontifex maximus* voluntarily opting for an Italic region as a consular area of office, in Latin: *provincia*.<sup>11</sup>

We suggest “shaping” and “appropriating” as a pair of verbs, which might help to conceptualize the interaction of individual and society, or better: the action of an agent in a society, the culture of which is formed by these very agents. Even past agents are present only by memories held and repeated, by institutions reproduced, by monuments kept and reinforced by the present’s agents. We have to clearly admit that such a formulation, which seems to be tinged by presentism, intentionally has a polemical ring for a society, which is permanently arguing on the basis of what its *maiores* have done – a group of people always left in a helpful, shadowy plural and mist.<sup>12</sup> It is adequate in particular for a society, which is characterized by a huge realm of oral practices and permanent demographic change also among its elite. Obviously, “appropriation” is taken from Michel de Certeau’s reflections on every day practices, the “arts de faire”.<sup>13</sup> This implies the reception as well as modification of religious norms and traditions. For religion, such a statement might seem surprising. Frequently, religion is judged to be graspable as collective phenomena only. For historical religions, individual practices are easily reduced to ephemeral “religiosity”. Thus, we feel it important to clarify the bidirectional relationship between the agent and tradition by adding a second verb, “shaping”, even if this notion would be implied in the concept of *appropriation*. Shaping points to the fact that religious institutions in a broad sense are not only continued or modified, but frequently developed in individual practice.

### 3. CHANGE

A few examples of such change illustrate the general point developed so far. Analyses of the conflicts between priests and their diverse understanding of their roles and duties, to which we have referred in the beginning, have been offered elsewhere.<sup>14</sup> The instances from the end of the third down to the first century BCE point to the shaping of rules on the patrician-plebeian distinction and on strategies of filling – and also emptying – of priesthoods. The successful or unsuccessful attempts at modifying rules of priestly behaviour or of priestly institutions can be seen within this framework as individual radicalizations of religious roles. A good example is P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus, a Salian priest, who refrained from military operations for the full month of March in Asia minor.<sup>15</sup> Other recent studies

11 Cf. RÜPKE 2012a.

12 Cf. WALLACE-HADRILL 1997 and 2008.

13 CERTEAU 2007; for the use in contemporary “historical anthropology” cf. LÜDTKE 2009.

14 RÜPKE 1996, 2010 and 2012c.

15 Pol. 21,13,7–14 (drawing on Herakleides of Byzantion); see RÜPKE 2010.

have dwelled on the history of specific rituals, notably the triumph<sup>16</sup> or theatre festivals and the role of individuals in those processes.<sup>17</sup> The long list of deities introduced into Rome from the end of the fourth century onwards is another important phenomenon. What is misleadingly called “Roman pantheon” is shaped on the basis of decisions made by generals in the field and reflecting individual and situational motifs rather than familial or public institutions. The result is, however, not a wide array of exotic divine figures, but in particular in the case of Roman generals a list of well known, even if individually stressed deities.<sup>18</sup> These decisions are one of the main factors defining religious infrastructure and hence public as individual religious practice in the city of Rome.

Livy's and others' evidence of temple dedications could be seriously enlarged by a view onto the archaeological evidence of sanctuaries which reveals to which extend prevailing social norms and legal regulations could be bent. Showing this is possible since the construction of a temple presented far more than an action out of piety or gratitude towards a god. Employing a particular shape, spatial conception, decoration and equipment for a sanctuary were means to communicate specific messages and express a personal attitude towards the cultural, social, and all the same political contemporary environment. The round temples erected in and around Late Republican Rome illustrate that little has been left to chance when it came to defining one's position within the social sphere of those ruling and owning the *urbs*.

For instance, during the later second century BCE, a round temple alluding to Greek architectural traditions has been built at the left bank of the Tiber River in Rome. Situated to the south of the Temple of Portunus and just outside the Republican city wall, the round temple lacked both a podium as well as a front which would have introduced central-italic elements into its composition. Instead, the superstructures of the building raised above a set of low steps running around the outer of two circular foundation walls which carried the columns and the cella of the temple building.<sup>19</sup> The columns had been placed on attic bases composed out of two tori and a hollow scotia in between them. Corinthian capitals crowned the fluted column shafts and led over to the entablature of which only few fragments of the coffers, the architrave, and cornice have been preserved.<sup>20</sup>

Even though little can be said about the precise looks of the entablature and the original form of the roof,<sup>21</sup> the remaining nineteen of once twenty columns still allow for a comprehensive visual idea of the architectures' appearance in antiquity.<sup>22</sup> Distributed with an intercolumniation of little more than one column's diam-

16 ITGENSHORST 2005; ÖSTENBERG 2009; and less convincing PELIKAN-PITTENGER 2008.

17 MANUWALD 2011.

18 Cf. ORLIN 1997.

19 RAKOB/HEILMEYER 1973: 3; BRATENGEIER 2010: 14.

20 Fragments of the antefix and shingles made out of Lunesian marble belong to the second phase of the temple. Cf. RAKOB/HEILMEYER 1973: 10, 30.

21 BRATENGEIER 2010: 21 f.

22 Ten of these nineteen columns have been made out of Pentelian marble, whereas the other nine

consist out of marble from the quarries in Luna which only have been exploited from the second half of the first century BCE onwards. The use of Lunesian marble for these columns indi-

eter – Rakob and Heilmeyer state that the distance from one column to the next equalled the lower diameter of the attic bases<sup>23</sup> –, the columns concealed the cella behind them like a curtain. Being each 10.41–10.44 metres<sup>24</sup> high, they also possessed exceedingly slender proportions as they would not have appeared in the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the entrance to the cella and the two windows flanking it could not be seen from a distance and any sign of frontality was avoided.

Whenever opened, the door and windows let fairly much daylight into the room, which must have served to illuminate the cult statue placed into its centre. The position of the latter is implied by two foundation walls traversing one another within the circular foundation wall of the cella. The weight of a large statue would have been best supported at the intersection of both walls, indicating its central position.<sup>26</sup>

But also the material used for those parts of the architectures visible from the outside presented a new feature in the context of the later second century BCE. The columns including their bases and capitals, the entire entablature as well as the outer shell of the cella wall had all been erected out of white Pentelian marble from Attica, whereas indigenous stones have been employed for the other parts of the round temple. Even though itself only a fairly new building material – not employed before the mid second century BCE –, Travertine has been used for the blocks of the inner mantle of the cella wall, whereas the foundation structures were made out of Grotta Oscura tufa which was well known throughout the Republican period and in use until the late second century BCE.<sup>27</sup>

The lack of any technically more advanced structures in *opus incertum* or *opus caementicium* as well as the employment of both Travertine and Pentelian marble place the round temple temporally into the second half of the second century BCE.<sup>28</sup> A *terminus post quem* is available in Velleius Paterculus' statement that

cates a second building phase for which there is further evidence (in detail cf. RAKOB/HEILMEYER 1973: 7–9). Despite these later reconstruction works, the plan of the building, the number, and distribution of the columns have never been changed. The building thus kept its original appearances throughout Roman times.

23 RAKOB/HEILMEYER 1973: 6; Vitruv refers to the pycnostyle rhythm of an intercolumniation of 1,5 diameters as the smallest in his ideal conception of architectures (Vitr. 3,3,1–3).

24 The measurements of the ten Pentelian columns including their capitals are given here. The Lunesian columns of the second building phase differ in height by approximately 16–20 cm. The large variances in height are due to the subsidence of the ground preceding and necessitating the second building phase. The height of the building, however, remained the same during all the building phases. Cf. RAKOB/HEILMEYER 1973: 17; BRATENGEIER 2010: 16.

25 The Vitruvian ideal of column proportions is 1:10, whereas we find here proportions of 1:11: RAKOB/HEILMEYER 1973: 6, 18, 39.

26 BRATENGEIER 2010: 23.

27 RAKOB/HEILMEYER 1973: 35.

28 Rakob and Heilmeyer go so far as to narrow the date of the temple's construction down to the years around 100 BCE, respectively the beginning of the first century BCE (RAKOB/HEILMEYER 1973: 23–31, 38; based on the style of the corinthian capitals). In general, nothing speaks against this view and a construction in temporal vicinity to Temple B of the Area Sacra di Largo Argentina cannot be excluded. However, the lack of *opus incertum* (or even *opus caementi-*

the Temple of Jupiter Stator was the first temple erected out of marble in Rome.<sup>29</sup> It had been vowed in 146 BCE and was dedicated three years later.

The use of marble in large scale for buildings during the later half of the second century must have engaged people's attention, since the material did not just display a preference for Greek culture but above all the financial means to afford the high costs of the transport from the Eastern Mediterranean, here, the Greek mainland. Even though the identity of the dedicator of the Round Temple at the Tiber is disputed,<sup>30</sup> the desire to visualize economical wealth by means of the building is evident. The decision for the round instead of a rectangular layout furthermore presents a conscious consideration about what kind of form would and could be appropriate for a temple building in general and this case in particular.<sup>31</sup> Despite the fact that this temple is not the first of circular shape in Rome as it is antedated, for instance, by the Temple of Vesta on the Forum Romanum,<sup>32</sup> it still stands out from most temple buildings known till then in the *urbs*. Particularly in light of its design, the lack of a podium and any signs of frontality as well as in regard to the execution of the capitals, many modern scholars referred to the building as an architectural stranger.<sup>33</sup>

However, the building cannot simply be labelled as "Greek". Not only are the building materials employed in parts of central-italic origin. Also the details of the plan, ornaments, and the closer look at technical aspects show that the round temple may have been planned by a Greek architect, but was realized in larger parts by – presumably local – carvers unfamiliar with marble as a building material.<sup>34</sup> The

*cium*) has never been taken into account in the discussion of the date and *opus incertum* has in fact been employed heavily in the foundations of Temple B. Thus, in view of the sole use of blocs made of Grotta Oscura tufa for the foundations of the Round Temple at the Tiber, a slightly earlier date than the one of Temple B and thus a construction between approximately 140 and 100 BCE seems justified in my opinion. The recent observations of LaRocca concerning the Temple of Mars *in circo*, in particular to the rhythm of the columns and the material, Pentelian (and not Parian) marble, used for these, as well as his remark to the "pressoché coevo" Round Temple at the Tiber (LARocca 2011: 11) appear interesting. They hint at the question of a possible attribution of both temple buildings to the same architect, Hermodoros, who is known to have constructed the Temple of Jupiter Stator (vowed in 146 BCE) and is also attested to have planned the Temple of Mars *in circo* (vowed in 133 BCE).

29 Vell. 1,11,15.

30 The temple itself has been identified convincingly as sanctuary of Hercules Victor *ad porta trigeminam*. As possible dedicators L. Mummius and M. Octavius Herennus/Hersennus have been discussed with preference for the latter: COARELLI 1988: 185 f.

31 Compare Seiler's similar remark concerning the introduction of the peripteral *tholos* and the last decades of the fifth century BCE: SEILER 1986: 151.

32 Cf. CAPRIOLI 2007.

33 Among others: RAKOB/HEILMEYER 1973: 38.

34 This becomes particularly evident in the design of the lower ends of the column's fluting. The oblique, circular disc which can be found at the end of each flute would make sense if tufa or Travertine would have been used that would have been covered with stucco. Here however marble was employed and the discs remained oddly visible. Another sign of lacking experience in the use of marble has been noted for the bracing of the blocs of the Cella walls. Cf. RAKOB/HEILMEYER 1973: 6, 12, 38.

dedicator and builder of the round temple thus heavily alluded to the idea of a Greek architectural model, but employed proportions for the elevating structures that resemble best those of more or less contemporary peripteral *tholoi* in and around the city of Rome.<sup>35</sup> The Round Temple at the Tiber in Rome thus belongs into the row of architectures which Eugenio LaRocca recently referred to as products of an experimental phase.<sup>36</sup>

The erection of two round temples followed shortly after the one at the Tiber. In both cases, however, marble played a less prominent role as building material, even though the revetment with marble plaques cannot be excluded. Whereas one of these round temples has been built in Tivoli during the early first century BCE and appears comparatively moderate in its design, the round temple known as Temple B of the Area Sacra di Largo Argentina presents a particularly unconventional composition which reminds of squaring a circle.

The temple in Tivoli stood next to a rectangular podium temple on a specifically constructed platform which enlarged the acropolis of the small town in the vicinity of Rome. This position guaranteed the general visibility of the peripteral tholos from the surrounding hills and the valley of the Aniene River. What could be seen, was a round temple of Corinthian order elevated by a podium that was 2.39 metres high<sup>37</sup> and which added a decisive central-Italic element to the architectures. The eighteen fluted columns were set on attic bases and reached, including their Italic-Corinthian capitals, a height of 7.10 metres.<sup>38</sup> The spaces in between them correspond to the double value of their lower diameters rendering the temple systyl according to the Vitruvian principles.<sup>39</sup> In contrast to the composition of the Round Temple at the Tiber, an appearance of fairly slender proportions and light architectures, here, has been realized by means of a smaller number of columns and lower diameters of their shafts.<sup>40</sup> If especially intended to be seen from a distance, this was perhaps the better solution for this context than the dense curtain of columns of the Round Temple at the Tiber which shielded the view at the cella wall more than it allowed for it. Creating the *most* slender proportioned building however was certainly not the intention of the builders. More probably, a certain idea associated with the form of the peripteral *tholos* was alluded to. For that it sufficed to imitate the building type without the achievement of entirely new architectural innovations. In view of the site of this round temple the major aim may have been the reference to a certainly well-known building type from the city of Rome and thus to the social environment of the *urbs*. With the Round Temple at the Tiber, the

35 The metrics of the elevating architectures have been addressed as Roman in: RAKOB/HEILMEYER 1973: 17, 39; BRATENGEIER 2010: 16. – For examples of *tholoi* with contemporary proportions in Rome and vicinity, see the cases of the round temple at Tivoli and the Largo Argentina-Temple B discussed below.

36 LARocca 2011: 11–17.

37 BRATENGEIER 2010: 52.

38 BRATENGEIER 2010: 53 f.

39 BRATENGEIER 2010: 54.

40 The Round Temple at the Tiber presented shaft diameters of c. 96 cm. The 20 columns stood on a stylobat with a diameter of 16.52 m: BRATENGEIER 2010: 14–16.

temple in Tivoli certainly alluded to one of the most prominent architectures in Rome, even though it had been realized much more in sense of a central-italic interpretation as is apparent in the addition of a podium, the italic-Corinthian form of the capitals as well as the number of the columns and the flutes of the shaft counting both eighteen.<sup>41</sup>

The fragmented state of preservation of the dedicatory inscription on the architrave of the round temple in Tivoli does not allow for a precise identification of the cult or the dedicator of the building<sup>42</sup>. However, the use of *opus caementicium* in the podium and *opus incertum* for the construction of the cella walls indicate a date in the early first century BCE.<sup>43</sup> If the temple building has been erected contemporaneously or a few years after Temple B of the Largo Argentina can only be assumed.

Temple B, identified as Temple of Fortuna Huisce Diei which has been vowed in 101 BCE by Q. Lutatius Catulus, differs in many respects from the two examples described above. Its architecture can be referred to as extravagant since an entirely new architectural conception of a tholos has been created for the building. Elevated by a podium of 2.50 metres height,<sup>44</sup> the round temple presented eighteen columns standing on attic bases with doubled *scotia* in between the two *tori*. The shafts were crowned with Corinthian capitals. Together with these, the columns reached a height of about eleven metres.<sup>45</sup> Each of them presented a lower shaft diameter of 1.10 metres.<sup>46</sup> The proportions of this building did not reach the slender looks of the Round Temple at the Tiber, which was also due to the smaller number of columns. But also here, the proportions were not the main focus of this temple's builder as can be seen in the following.

Access to the podium could be gained by means of a broad stairway placed in front of the east side of the building where it corresponded with an enlarged intercolumnium that gave way to the cella entrance<sup>47</sup>. Inside the cella, the cult statue had not been placed into a central position as was most likely the case for the Round Temple at the Tiber, but had here been moved to the side opposing the cella entrance.<sup>48</sup> Parts of the colossal statue of Fortuna have been found next to the temple building where they had been deposited at a later period.<sup>49</sup> They comprise the head, right arm and feet fragments of the cult image and consist of white marble, once having belonged to an acrolith image. The lost body parts as well as the attributes of the statue consisted of other materials such as bronze, which displayed not

41 Cf. BRATENGEIER 2010: 52–55.

42 BRATENGEIER 2010: 62 f.

43 Cf. BRATENGEIER 2010: 62 f., for a summary of the debate concerning the construction date. On the building techniques: BRATENGEIER 2010: 52, 57.

44 COARELLI 1981: 19.

45 COARELLI 1981: 18.

46 COARELLI 1981: 18.

47 BRATENGEIER 2010: 36.

48 For the foundation of the cult base, cf. MARCHETTI-LONGHI 1956–1958: 51.

49 MARCHETTI-LONGHI 1956–58: 66–69. – Rome, Centrale Montemartini: Inv. nos. MC 2779–2782.

only various artistic skills but also financial means.<sup>50</sup> The pierced earlobes of the statue head alone indicate that the image had been adorned with real earrings which must have been of enormous size since the colossal head itself was already 1.46 m high.<sup>51</sup> The total height of the statue, which presented the goddess standing, can be estimated with around eight metres<sup>52</sup> and must have filled more or less the entire height of the *cella*. With its circular shape the room framed the colossal image of the goddess which must have been visible from the forecourt whenever the *cella* doors stood open.<sup>53</sup> The enlarged *intercolumnium* in front of the *cella* entrance, the frontal stairway which created the impression of an actual *pronaos* as well as the forecourt of the building contributed to the *mise-en-scène* of the statue. Presenting Catulus' Fortuna Huiusce Diei, it celebrated the dedicator's personal luck on a particular past day and gave it a presence that hardly could have been surpassed.<sup>54</sup> The architectures were entirely designed as framework for this image and the meaning attributed to it by means of the specific epithet. More than any of the other described round temples has Temple B of the Largo Argentina been composed to articulate the individuality, extravagant self-esteem, and aspiration of its dedicator. If the strong allusion to Greek marble architectures of the dedicator of the Round Temple at the Tiber had already been unheard of, the *mise-en-scène* of Catulus' Fortuna Huiusce Diei was outrageously provocative. The temple at Tivoli appears comparatively moderate in contrast.

The three buildings briefly described here, thus illustrate various possibilities to articulate differing intentions and display one's own person and attitude. This must always have happened within the set norms, as the buildings after all have been realized. But particularly the last of the three outlined cases indicates that the range of possibilities of what was acceptable was expandable to a certain extent. The selected examples are not the only round temples known to have existed in and around Rome,<sup>55</sup> but illustrate the options of the later second and early first century BCE.

Developments as outlined in these three examples would easily fit into a narrative of a *history* of art. Surely, such building activities are first of all traditional artisanship, following and applying technical, architectural, and aesthetic norms. And yet, we are accustomed to conceive of art as being produced by individuals, wishing to experiment, to express themselves and impress others. In such a perspective, art is feeding on change. Religion is not usually seen in the same perspective. Religion, and Roman

50 ARNHOLD 2011: 81.

51 MARTIN 1987: 108; ARNHOLD 2011: 81.

52 Cf. MARTIN 1987: 108 for the estimated height. The goddess must have been depicted standing as the pose of the right arm and the fingers of the right hand reveal. The arm supported an elongated object, perhaps a scepter that lay on the upwards turned inner side and passed the crook to the right where a hole can be found near the crook.

53 ARNHOLD 2011: 81.

54 ARNHOLD 2011: 81.

55 A second round temple in vicinity to the Ara Maxima Herculis in Rome existed to the north of the monumental altar and was destroyed under Sixtus IV. Furthermore a round temple was dedicated to Vesta at the Forum Romanum, another one to Hercules Musarum surrounded by the Augustan Porticus Philippi.

religion in particular, is regarded as feeding on tradition and repetition from time immemorial. Such is not the evidence just cited. It is significant religious change, if people are encouraged to visit a god on account of unusual architecture. It is significant religious change, if the statue is not just a visual reminder of a divine proprietor, but offers an overwhelming presence, dwarfing its visitors or appearing in the middle of the interior in bright light. It is significant religious change, if religious architecture sticks out of ordinary building not by a crowd of figures on its roof or the height of a podium, but by the quality and colour of its surface. Churches becoming museums is taken as one of the major indication of contemporary processes of secularization.<sup>56</sup> Altering the height of a podium is forcing a major change on ritual. As we all have learned, the choreography of ritual, the closeness or distance of certain groups of participants to central ritual acts, and the visibility of this participation is of central importance for the social function of this very ritual.<sup>57</sup> A high podium of differing size defines very different groups of close participants and heightens their visibility, reducing further bystanders on the ground to mere spectators. A ritual system which – from an unknown point in time onwards – differentiated between Roman and Greek modes of sacrifice within its own practice (and without correct ethnological reference) must have been very sensible to Greek forms and materials of temples and statues like the chryselephantine Iuppiter of L. Catulus of the Sullan rebuilding of the Capitoline temple. A history of Roman republican religion is far more than a narrative of different types and instances of instrumentalising religion at Rome.

#### 4. HOW TO NARRATE ROMAN RELIGION

Appropriating technical and architectural standards and shaping social and religious norms as illustrated in temple buildings is not the only challenge in describing religious changes. Two further examples shall illustrate this, a longer and a shorter one. Both concern methodological problems of a history of religion in the Roman republic.

Norms reflect expectations, but expectations can change. They did so already in antiquity. Livy narrates in 26,19,3–6 about Scipio Africanus maior:

*fuit enim Scipio non ueris tantum uirtutibus mirabilis, sed arte quoque quadam ab iuuenta in ostentationem earum compositus, (4) pleraque apud multitudinem aut per nocturnas uisa species aut uelut diuinitus mente monita agens, siue et ipse capti quadam superstitione animi, siue ut imperia consiliaque uelut sorte oraculi missa sine cunctatione exsequerentur. (5) ad hoc iam inde ab initio praeparans animos, ex quo togam uirilem sumpsit nullo die prius ullam publicam priuatamque rem egit quam in Capitolium iret ingressusque aedem consideret et plerumque solus in secreto ibi tempus tereret. (6) hic mos per omnem uitam seruatus seu consulto seu temere uolgatae opinionum fidem apud quosdam fecit stirpis eum diuinae uirum esse.*

“For Scipio was remarkable not only for his real abilities, but thanks to a certain skill also had from his youth adapted himself to their display, doing most of his actions before the public either as if they were prompted by visions in the night or inspired by the gods, whether because

56 Cf. BRÄUNLEIN 2004; BRÄUNLEIN 2009.

57 Cf. RAPPAPORT 1999.

he also was possessed by a certain superstition (*capti quadam superstitione animi*), or in order that men might carry out without hesitation his commands and advice, as though emanating from an oracular response. More than that, preparing men's minds from the very beginning, from the time when he put on the manly gown, there was not a day on which he did any business public or private without going first to the Capitol, and after he had entered the temple, sitting down and usually passing the time there alone in seclusion. This custom, which he maintained throughout his lifetime, confirmed in some men the belief, whether deliberately circulated or by chance, that he was a man of divine race" (trans. F. Gardner Moore).

Livy's narrative betrays a sceptical distance, but leaves open the possibility of a genuine belief. A generation later, Valerius Maximus quotes the example again. Unfortunately, instead of his wording we only read later excerpts. Iulius Paris, less critical of ancient religion, reports in a factual tone:

*Scipio Africanus non ante ad negotio private vel publica ibat quam in cella Iovis Capitolini moratus fuisset, et ideo Iove genitus credebatur.*

"Scipio Africanus did not go to any private or public business before he had spent a time in the innermost chamber of Iuppiter Capitolinus, and thus he was believed to have been fathered by Iuppiter" (Val. Max. 1,2,2).

What is important, however, is the place in the composition. The anecdote is placed in the second chapter later entitled *De simulata religione*, which is introduced by Numa's supposed talks with the goddess Aegeria (Val. Max. 1,2,1). Thus, the contents of the following narratives are introduced under the notion of dubious religious pretensions, followed by a chapter on persons and groups who had crossed the threshold to illegitimate superstition (1,3). In Valerius' view of Republican religion, adherence to strict rules is the basis characteristic of the period and its exemplary protagonists:

*Non mirum igitur, si pro eo imperio augendo custodiendoque pertinax deorum indulgentia semper excubuit, quo tam scrupulosa cura paruula quoque momenta religionis examinari uidentur, quia numquam remotos ab exactissimo cultu caerimoniarum oculos habuisse nostra ciuitas existimanda est.*

"It is not surprising that the gods have constantly watched over us, and have had the kindness to protect and expand our empire, since we seem to pay careful attention to the tiniest details of religious observance. It must not be imagined that our state ever allowed its eyes to wander from the strictest observance of religious ceremonies" (Val. Max. 1,1,8; trans. H.J. Walker).

With pleasure, however, Valerius points to Valerius Flaccus, one of the priests supposedly forced into service by P. Licinius Crassus Dives. He is reported as a case of conversion. In the book *De mutatione morum aut fortunae* (Val. Max. 6,9,3) he is praised for being *postea modestiae et sanctitatis specimen*, a model of modesty and sanctity. Again, Livy is consonant, trying to stop less positive evaluations of the change in a careful logical connection instead of mere juxtaposition of this to a second action of Flaccus:

*is ut animum eius cura sacrorum et caerimoniarum cepit, ita repente exiit antiquos mores ut nemo tota iuuentute haberetur prior nec probator primoribus patrum, suis pariter alienisque, esset. (7) huius famae consensu elatus ad iustam fiduciam sui rem intermissam per multos annos ob indignitatem flaminum priorum repetiuit, ut in senatum introiret.*

“As soon as the charge of rites and ceremonies took possession of his mind, Gaius so suddenly put off his old character that no one among all the young men stood higher in the estimation and approval of the leading senators, both of his own family and of strangers alike. By the unanimity of this good report he was raised to a well-founded self-confidence, and claimed what had been in abeyance for many years owing to the unworthiness of former flamens, namely, that he should be admitted to the senate ...” (Liv. 27,8,6-7; trans. F. Gardner Moore).

It is not political ambitions, but religious practices, that are held responsible. It is *cura sacrorum* rather than *superstitio*. And yet, it is the example of Scipio, which is being followed, by politicians like Marius, who opted for a German seer, or, as we learn from Seneca, by ordinary men. Shaping practices is not equivalent to determining tradition.

But there is a second element, we would like to stress. Francesco Pina Polo, on whose definition of Roman religion we started, lists religious duties of consuls for a whole chapter. These duties appear as time consuming, hindering, and frequently uncomfortably placed in space and time.<sup>58</sup> Religion is demanding and expensive. In a systemic view, this might be the price for its authority in other instances, national, civic, political. The reference to the gods, the ritual and financial expenditure to guarantee their support of the Roman people, that is, the *pax deum* implored in so many instances, renders such authority plausible. Much, and much successful work on the elite’s dealing with religion in the late Roman republic has been based on such a basis, the older and more recent prosopographical works cited in the beginning comprised. For an explanation of the variations described above, this is hardly sufficient. In a cognitive or better, to avoid misunderstandings, intellectual view, the belief level of Roman religion might simply have comprised much more than the single tenet of keeping the *pax deum* for the benefit of the community. But what? We do not offer a solution to this question, but an appeal to give a place to that kind of questions in our research on the Roman republic.

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