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1

Introduction

ONE STATE, UNDER THE GODS

WRITING TO THE RESIDENTS of Teos in 193 BCE, the praetor M. Valerius Messalla boasted that the Romans “have wholly and constantly attached the highest importance to piety towards the gods . . . our own high respect for the godhead has become manifest to everyone.”¹ Although it is not known what the Greeks of Teos made of Messalla’s swagger, we know of at least one Greek who quite enthusiastically bought into the notion of Romans as peculiarly and uniquely pious: Polybius. In a famous and much-commented digression in the *Histories*, Polybius praised the Roman state as “distinguish[ing] itself best of all in observance towards the gods” and trumpeted “religious scrupulousness” (*deisidaimonia*) as the practice that “held the Roman state together” (*sunechein ta Romaion pragmata*). “Among the Romans,” he added, “their magistrates handle large sums of money and diligently perform their duty because they have given their word on oath”; among the Greeks, by comparison, “men who hold public office cannot be trusted with the safekeeping of so much as a single talent.”² Many centuries later, Niccolò Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes separately mined this Polybian musing for insight into religion’s efficacy for securing collective obedience.³

It is customary nowadays to gloss Polybius’s remarks as a nakedly utilitarian reflection on the political and social utility of *Götterfurcht*, or what

1. SIG³ 601 = Sherk no. 8. The cultural politics of the letter: Ma 2000, 101–2; Driediger-Murphy 2014. The “empiricist system” foregrounded in the boast: Ando 2010, 62.

2. Polyb. 6.56 (trans. Scott-Kilvert with modifications), to be read with Walbank ad loc.; Pédech 1965; van Hooff 1977; and Vaahtera 2000. A similar note is sounded by one of Polybius’s intellectual heirs: Posidonius (fr. 266 Kidd = *apud* Athen. 6.107.274a). Religion in Polybius: Momigliano 1975a, 41 and 1975c, 73–77; Caygill 2011.

3. Machiavelli [1517] 1983, I.11–14; Hobbes [1651] 1994, I.12§§20–22.

Craige Champion in a recent monograph has pointedly branded “elite-instrumentalism.”⁴ One might also take these remarks, and late-republican and early Imperial glorifications of Roman piety, as the workings of a relatively straightforward ideological discourse for justifying Roman imperial domination. This book aims to show that there is substantive institutional content both to Messalla’s brag and to Polybius’s over-the-top praise. In separate but complementary ways, Messalla and Polybius were witnesses to a process: how the Roman state remade and retooled itself into a republic defined and organized around a specific brand of institutionalized ritual practices and commitments. This book argues that this process was a major driver of the Roman Republic’s state formation during the years c. 400–200 BCE, conventionally designated as the “middle Republic.” Periodization is important; I will come back in a moment to why these two centuries, which open with the ultimately successful siege of the Etruscan city-state of Veii at one end and conclude with the victorious resolution of the Second Punic War at the other, should be understood as a self-contained historical unit. The major focus of this book will be on the cultivation of religious mechanisms for soliciting and affirming internal cohesion, in ways that enabled and were in turn enabled by various forms of collective action. I will demonstrate that it was through these mechanisms that the middle Republic vaulted itself into a new kind of statehood.

At the outset, I should be forthright about what I mean by “state,” “statehood,” and “state formation,” all terms that have launched a thousand ships of scholarly enterprise. Following in the footsteps of Michael Mann and Charles Tilly, I define the state as a coercion-wielding organization that is clearly differentiable from households or kinship groups and that projects authority from a center over all other organizations within a demarcated territory.⁵ This definition is not without its critics,⁶ but it has the virtue of clarity. By statehood, I mean the attributes that combine to form a state, decomposable according to the definition just provided: organization, the capacity to wield coercion, recognition as different from households and kinship groups, and centralizing preeminence over a describable expanse of geographic space. Finally, state formation is the process whereby entities with these characteristics are “made and remade.”⁷

4. Döring 1978; Champion 2017; cf. Nelsestuen 2017, 233–34 on Polybian *deisidaimonia*’s socially coercive utilities.

5. Mann [1984] 1986, 112; Tilly 1990, 1. Survey and discussion of alternative definitions: Scheidel 2013; Davies 2018 on W. G. Runciman’s state-formation scheme, which has received less traction than its Tilleian counterpart.

6. Overview and dissection of the major definitional uncertainties: Abrams 1988.

7. Scheidel 2013, 9.

This terminology and its conceptual accessories have increasingly been brought to bear on the Roman Republic in recent decades, not without some dispute. Depending on the criteria used, the middle Roman Republic either does not make the cut as a full-fledged state, is a full-blown state with all the requisite appurtenances, or is too slippery to be shoehorned into taxonomies of statehood.⁸ Perhaps unavoidably, it has been objected that even to ascribe statehood to Rome is to court oversimplification.⁹ But while the notion of the “state” itself—with all its early modern Euro-American constructedness—does not necessarily correspond in whole or even in part to how premodern communities thought of themselves or their adventures in governmentality,¹⁰ the absence of statehood as a conceptual or experiential category in the cognitive universe of the middle Republic by no means vitiates the usefulness of statehood as a heuristic device, provided one is explicit about the heuristic’s fundamentally etic aspect.

Over the past two decades, some daylight has opened up between endorsers of Charles Tilly’s precept that wars make states, for whom warfare is the foundational catalyst of state formation, and students of the discursive and ideologically enactive mechanisms of statehood, for whom the frictions and gaps between the rhetoric of power and its quotidian realities stand out as most in need of investigation.¹¹ This book engages with both parties, attending equally to the significance of war’s dialogue with religious practice in the evolution of the mid-republican state and to the distance between the claims staked by this state and their material expression. At the same time, however, *Divine Institutions* contends that the payoffs of religious practice for the making of the Roman state should not be subsumed under those of constant

8. The papers collected in Eder 1990 for the most part shied away from explicit engagement with theories of statehood; for more theoretically versed treatments, Walter 1998 and the contributions to Lundgreen 2014; Bernard 2018c, 577–80 on the continuing dearth of engagement with statehood models in the study of archaic central Italy.

9. Purcell 2017, 113–14 for general comment on the propensity to oversimplify by appeals to “the state”; Capogrossi Colognesi 2014, xxii–xxiii, for objection to the terminology of the “state” on the grounds that it flattens “the notion of community” hardwired into the Roman *res publica*.

10. Thus Anderson 2018, following Quentin Skinner. I do not follow Anderson’s leap from this argument to the claim that statehood is not a viable category for the analysis of premodern communities.

11. War making and state making: Tilly 1985 and 1992; but cf. Tilly 2005 and 2010 for a turn to the explanatory power of trust networks. Roman historians mining the Tillean vein: see, e.g., Eich and Eich 2005; Scheidel 2019, chap. 2, some aspects of which were anticipated in Scheidel 2006. The gap between rhetorics of state power and reality on the ground: the papers in Ando and Richardson 2017.

warfare. Although religion penetrated Roman warfare at every step of preparation and campaigning to such a degree as to hinder their decoupling from each other for analytic purposes,¹² it acted separately to bring about results that could not be realized through warfare alone—much as warfare brought about results that could not be secured through religion alone. On this book’s reconstruction, the mid-republican state formation project is not fully reducible to a Tillean paradigm. Better-fitting models can be recovered from theorists of collective action and from anthropologists.

For many historians laboring in the shadow of Tilly, it made perfect sense to accord primacy to militarized coercion in studies of state formation and to assign ideological integration a secondary role, but the pendulum is now beginning to swing in the other direction as historical examples of “ritual polities” come to light or receive fresh consideration. In these states, religious mechanisms often shoulder the burden of social integration whenever states lack or, for whatever reason, cannot deploy capital- or coercion-intensive instruments.¹³ Even though its affinity for near-constant military campaigning make it an obvious candidate for designation as a coercion-intensive state, the imperializing Roman Republic did not generally leverage fiscal tools or an internal monopoly on violence to engineer social cohesion.¹⁴ What it did do, for the period under discussion in this book, was steadily direct resources toward the regularization of a complex system of ritual performances. *Divine Institutions* isolates this reliance on religious procedures for maintaining state unity—without having to press the lever on capital- or coercion-intensive procedures—as one of the middle Roman Republic’s primary strategies for bootstrapping itself into statehood.¹⁵

12. Religious ritual on military campaign: Rüpke 1990.

13. See the treatment in Goldstone and Haldon 2009, 10–15.

14. Fiscality: Tan in progress on the interpersonal dynamics of *tributum* will likely rewrite the conventional wisdom here, but for now it remains hard to pick up a clear signal of early Roman taxation’s socially integrative functions. Internal monopoly on violence as a stepping-stone to social cohesion: the obvious candidate here is the colonization program, whose violence is brought out powerfully in Jewell 2019; but cf. Pelgrom and Stek 2014 for new findings that call into question existing paradigms of colonization and Terrenato 2019, 219–26 for the argument that the colonies “were a far cry from a standardized imperial administrative tool.”

15. The language of the bootstrap calls for brief comment. My use of the term gestures to the practice of computational bootstrapping (by which a program is loaded through the execution of a few basic instructions for uploading the program from another source) and to the statistical technique of bootstrapping (which designates procedures that apply random sampling, usually for hypothesis testing). These impinge metaphorically on my selection of the term *bootstrapping*—inasmuch as the book envisions a new form of statehood being downloaded by the

In elucidation of this claim, I argue that during the fourth and third centuries BCE, Roman religious practice comes to the forefront in negotiations of what Richard Blanton and Lane Fargher in their work on early state formation term “quasi-voluntary compliance,” a conceptual instrument more sensitive to the gradations of statehood than Weberian models of domination.¹⁶ The Roman state’s effort to elicit and manage this compliance leaves a tangibly material footprint; much of this book therefore concentrates on what the material record of mid-republican Rome can be made to reveal about this strand of state formation and its distinctiveness relative to earlier and later periods of Roman history. However one classifies the states that flourished in Rome and Latium during the archaic and early-republican periods, not one of those predecessors is recognizable or legible as the classical Republic, for reasons to be detailed below. It is in the course of the fourth and third centuries that Rome develops the institutions and practices that would lend it coherence as a *res publica*—an entity held in common. This development is fostered by, and to a large degree dependent on, the adoption of public and high-visibility forms of religious experience. The aggregative effect of the sacred commitments under scrutiny in this book was the creation of two representations of statehood, each tightly welded to the evolving identity of the *res publica* during our period. The first, studied in the opening chapters, was prolific investment in monumental cult to the gods. The second, taken up in chapters 4 and 5, was the city of Rome’s evolution into an enticing place to visit in order to offer cult to the gods. These two representations of statehood will be shown ultimately to align less with a Tillean scheme of war-making as state-making and more with a Geertzian account of statehood as ritual theater.

Before proceeding to a more detailed exposition of my project, I will first lay out its historiographical and methodological stakes. After a brief tour of trends in Republican and specifically mid-republican historiography, I will then offer some comment on recent developments in the study of Roman religion and outline the contents and objectives of this book.

I. The Middle Republic: Era of Transformations

The archaeological turn of early Roman history has made it possible to surmount the difficulties posed by the literary evidence and compose histories of

Roman state through the simple code of a core set of religious observances, and inasmuch as this new form is described with the help of basic statistics—but only metaphorically.

16. Blanton and Fargher 2008 on quasi-voluntary compliance; Kiser and Levi 2015 for its significance to tax-dependent states. The heuristic limits of Weberian domination: Ando 2000, 24–25.

institutional and political transformation that are grounded in the material record of the centuries preceding our period. There is perhaps no clearer and more compelling example of the rewards of an archaeologically focused approach than John North Hopkins's recent book, whose title, *The Genesis of Roman Architecture*, belies its far more ambitiously encompassing program of tracking the formation of the early Roman state.¹⁷ In any case, the sheer abundance of material evidence unearthed in numerous excavations in Rome and its Latial environs from the 1800s onward has forced extensive interrogations—and on occasion outright dismissal—of the annalistic literary tradition around which modern historians such as H. H. Scullard, following in the footsteps of Niebuhr and other nineteenth-century historians, constructed their own Livian-style monolithic accounts. Unsurprisingly, however, the recourse to archaeology is not without its own controversies, chief among them the continuing and likely irresolvable debates about the appropriateness of reading material finds from the eighth through sixth centuries BCE through the testimony of those Roman historiographical and antiquarian traditions that crystallize centuries later.¹⁸ The dogged pursuit of one-to-one correspondences between textual hint and archaeological “proof” in the study of Rome's beginnings has not been without a whiff of fetishism.

Revealingly, despite the generally agreed-on differentiation of the Republic's history into early, middle, and late phases (recently critiqued by Harriet Flower), it is not until the past few decades that single-author monographs have taken up the middle Republic as an object of study in its own right.¹⁹ The most vibrant topic of conversation in recent years, “the beginnings of Latin literature” in or around 240, has been a major focus of disagreement among historians and philologists. Rome's turn to the adaptation and appropriation of a Hellenizing literature in the shadow of the First Punic War was a multi-causal phenomenon, having as much to do with escalating aristocratic competition as with geopolitical signaling and (crucially) the arrival of large numbers of enslaved Carthaginians and Greeks in central Italy.²⁰ The distinctiveness

17. Hopkins 2016.

18. Defending the basic reliability of the historiographic tradition: Cornell 1995, chap. 1. Skepticism: Forsythe 2005, chap. 3. Cf. Holloway 1994 for an attempt at approaching the study of early Rome and Latium's historical trajectory from a strictly archaeological perspective.

19. Flower 2010 for the critique. Among single-author studies I have found most helpful: the underappreciated Starr 1980; Rosenstein 2004 and 2012; Bernard 2018a. Of non-Anglophone treatments, Humm 2005 is important if problematic. For collaborative volumes, note *RMR* 1977—a game-changer—and the collection of papers in Bruun 2000 and Jehne and Pfeilschifter 2006. Note also the review of scholarship on the third century in Roth 2013b, 102–4.

20. Gildenhard 2010, 158–59 helpfully groups explanations for the Hellenizing takeover into

of the mid-republican period as a stage in the city-state's development has also been asserted in accounts of the historical development of Roman political institutions, and in studies of the major magistracies in particular.²¹ Representing a continuation of the Mommsenian tradition of constitutional history, these treatments are all to varying degrees concerned with the problems of the Republic's constitutional crisis and disintegration; the ghost of the first century BCE haunts them. Even the most significant recent contributions of German historical scholarship to the study of the middle Republic, for all their careful documentation of the mechanisms of consensus through which Rome's aristocracy and populace amassed the human, social, and economic capital that underwrote the city-state's successful expansion, are infected by a consciousness of the republican system's eventual demise.²² Nonetheless, the role granted to the enactment and promotion of consensus in this scholarship is relevant to the general program of this book. How and where this mid-republican formation of consensus took place—among aristocrats, within and through the *populus*, or somewhere in between—is a matter of ongoing and sometimes acrimonious debate, but it would not be a stretch to state that “locating the core of the consensus” is at the heart of contemporary historical work on the Republic.²³

My book is partly indebted to this work on consensus but strives to take it a step further. To say that consensus was not generated solely by political actors or through political mechanisms, but by religious actors and through religious mechanisms as well, is not a terribly novel insight for any Roman historian; for any period of Rome's history, and especially for the middle Republic, religion and politics prove extremely difficult if not impossible to disentangle. Most other attempts to “locate the core of the consensus” have eyed religious matters warily, approaching a Claude Nicolet-style level of unwillingness to reflect critically on the productive contribution of religion to the ontology of Roman civic life.²⁴ Moving in a new direction, *Divine Institutions*

three main paradigms. Feeney 2005 mapped a program for historicizing this takeover as a “translation project,” and Feeney 2016 realizes it; for the prominence of mass enslavement in this process see n. 34 below. But note Welsh 2011 on the fictivity of 240 as a “beginning.”

21. See, e.g., Bleicken 1967 on the tribunate; Brennan 2000 on the praetorship; Pina Polo 2011 on the consulate; Beck 2005 on the *cursus honorum*s.

22. Hölkeskamp [1987] 2011, with 1993 for a summary of some of the major ramifications and 2010 for a restatement and amplification of some of the major interpretive lines.

23. The phrase is the subtitle of Hölkeskamp 2010, chap. 8. Disagreement on whether to privilege the aristocracy or the *populus* as the arbiter of political and social power: cf. Millar 2002 and Hölkeskamp 2010. The theory, creation, and practice of consensus under the Empire: Ando 2000, chaps. 5–6.

24. Nicolet 1976a, 26: “la matiere . . . est étrangère à mes goûts comme à mes compétences.”

explores how religious ritual and performance generated a consensus that was grounded in trust—with the prospect of force humming away in the background.

In its orientation toward the forging and maintenance of civic consensus, this book owes much to Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp's publications on the rise of the patrician-plebeian *nobilitas*.²⁵ Exceptionally well aligned with the program of *Divine Institutions* are Hölkeskamp's descriptions of religious spectacle as acting on "the imperative of immediacy," through which "an intensified degree of visibility, personal presence, public performance and sheer physicality" all became staples of civic and institutional life at Rome.²⁶ However, even though *Divine Institutions* studies religious projects that are synergistic with and dependent on the formation of a consensus-driven and meritocratic elite culture, it does not endorse the idea that religion is defined by the same parameters of aristocratic presentation and communication as other aspects of political life.²⁷ That the same people could be and often were magistrates and priests does not justify conflating the two domains of their activity.²⁸ Conceding up front that religion and politics are for our period nested firmly within each other, I nonetheless hope to demonstrate why the demands and outcomes of religious practice in the fourth and third centuries amount to more than merely communication and discourse among elites themselves, or between elites and the *populus*. The meritocratic discourses whose lineaments Hölkeskamp has skillfully traced were never entirely self-sustaining; rather, these were constantly subject to external checks and critiques, of the sort that the action and intervention of the gods were held to supply. Far from simply being folded into the accumulation of honors and "lifelong dedication to the *res publica* alone,"²⁹ elite (and for that matter nonelite) commitments to reli-

25. Most influentially, Hölkeskamp [1987] 2011, whose new introduction offers a useful survey of scholarship on the "classical Republic" since the original publication.

26. Hölkeskamp 2011, 162 for the quoted phrases and discussion; I revisit this idea in chapter 4.

27. Religious practice through monumental temples and public rituals as one element of a "symbolischer Politik" (activated and replicated in the interactions of *nobilitas* and *populus*, patrons and clients, magistrates and assemblies, etc.): Hölkeskamp 2000, 224–25; cf. 1993, 28 for temple dedications as mirrors of the "new value system" in fourth- and third-century political culture. The theoretical backdrop to his notions of symbolic politics and political culture: citations collected at Hölkeskamp 1993, 16 n. 9a and 2000, 223 nn. 1–2; 2010, chap. 5 for the full exposition.

28. The tendency to conflate is not limited to Hölkeskamp: see, e.g., Mitchell 1973, 38–39, insisting that priestly activity "was made the instrument of the aristocrat's political appetite and the token of his dignity."

29. Hölkeskamp 1993, 30 for the quoted phrase.

gious practice maintained the fabric of the civic by gesturing to something beyond the civic.

This book's interest in exploring the consensus-weaving relations between the constitutional-political apparatus on one end and the social matrix of religious commitments and activities on the other did not arise solely from reflection on dominant trends in scholarship of recent vintage. Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges's *La cité antique* (1864), a classic exploration of the interrelationships between religious and political institutions in ancient Greece and Rome, has been an inspiration for my methodological eclecticism. Rarely read or consulted nowadays, *La cité antique* left a lasting mark on the development of several modern disciplines that inform the design of this book—especially the sociology of religion, born with the publication in 1912 of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* by Fustel de Coulanges's most famous student.³⁰ For all its warts, *La cité antique*'s central idea—that the development of political institutions ought to be framed in relation to religious institutions and vice versa—has retained the capacity to inspire. In the 1970s, Sally Humphreys and Arnaldo Momigliano pursued a joint research program that sought to build on some of Fustel de Coulanges's main insights; more recently, his work has reentered the picture in comparative studies of ancient urbanism.³¹ This latter-day reanimation of Fustel de Coulanges is one reason why this book concentrates on the transformation of Rome's urban texture through temple construction as both index and catalyst of state formation. Although cities and state formation are not in absolute lockstep throughout the premodern historical record, it is rare to find an imperial structure that does not have a city or set of cities as its home base or institutional and infrastructural pump.³² Any history of state formation that does not center Rome's monumental urban transformation in the period under discussion would be incomplete. What I hope to underscore is why this transformation became so dependent on building religious structures, and how that dependence interfaced with the generation and maintenance of consensus.

Rome's ascent to peninsular and Mediterranean empire was the decisive factor behind this transformation. It is not for nothing that Polybius memorably opened his history by wondering aloud who would be so clueless as *not* to want to learn how Rome had attained its hegemonic status. The interplay be-

30. Fustel de Coulanges's influence on Émile Durkheim: Momigliano 1975b, 175–77. Usefully on the historian's work and legacy see Yoffee and Terrenato 2015, 6–10.

31. Momigliano 1980; Yoffee 2015.

32. Gutiérrez et al. 2015, 532–33. But the relationship is bidirectional: on empire's elevation of cities into infrastructural pumps—and the privileging of an urban political economy of religion in the process—see Ando 2017.

tween Roman bellicosity and its institutional formation has received a great deal of attention in the scholarly literature, from claims that militaristic aggression was built into Roman institutions and stoked through aristocratic rivalry to studies of conquest's role in the shaping of Rome's financial and economic morphology and of military service as a mechanism for integrating Italian allies into the city-state's ideological and cultural fabric.³³ Then there is the fraught question of how military conquest precipitated and structured that cultural process—or bundle of processes—traditionally characterized under the label “Romanization,” both through the hard power of state-organized population transfers to colonies and through the soft power of cultural appropriation and emulation.³⁴ Whereas in the past this process was taken to be a device for Rome's intentional assertion of cultural as well as political dominance, lately more self-reflexive and self-interrogating models of recent vintage seek to understand the cultural nuances of Rome's relationship to its spear- and alliance-won conquests, especially in those centuries when “Romans encroached on Italy almost as much as Italians encroached on Rome and on each other.”³⁵ However, despite the sophistication of these new models, some of which have called for abandoning the terminology of Romanization (as we shall see), the staging and orchestration of mid-republican Rome's cultural dialogues with the rest of Italy through urban religious spaces and ritualized activities remains in need of further study. This book proposes to remedy that deficit.

So far in this exposition of the scholarship, I have taken it more or less for granted that the middle Republic is a stable chronological target. In this respect I am reaffirming the conventional view that there is a “middle Republic”—different in kind from its “early” predecessor or “late” successor—to speak of. But the idea of a Republic that moves from youth to middle age to tottering senescence has come under fire. Harriet Flower has called for the replacement of this one Republic with several, each defined by a contingent

33. Bellicosity and the aggression of Rome's elite: Harris 1979, with North 1981 on the religious underpinnings; cf. Eckstein 2000 and 2006 on Hellenistic interstate relations. Warfare and Roman state formation: Eich and Eich 2005; Rosenstein 2009 and 2012; Scheidel 2019, chap. 2. Integration of the allies: Jehne 2006 and Scheidel 2006.

34. Colonization and (forced) migration: compare Scheidel 2004b and Jewell 2019; note also Isayev 2017b, 29 on private migration. Enslavement, migration, and appropriation: Richlin 2014 and 2017b.

35. Scopacasa 2016, 35 for the quotation. Besides David [1994] 1996a, notable treatments include Morel 1991; Lomas 1993; Dench 1995; Torelli 1995; Williams 2001; Curti 2001; Bispham 2007a; Bradley et al. 2007, especially the last chapter; Stek 2009; Scopacasa 2015a. Dench 2018 fuses synthesis and critique. The impact of archaeology on the study of Romanization: Curti et al. 1996; the essays in part 1 of Keay and Terrenato 2001; Stek 2018.

constellation of political innovations and practices.³⁶ In response to this summons, John North has put pressure on the traditional prioritization of politics and political history as the primary means of sorting out one incarnation of the Republic from another—an auspicious gesture for my own project, which sees in the originality and inventiveness of Roman religious practice during the middle Republic an important marker of difference.³⁷ I reference this back-and-forth not only because it has implications for the conventional formatting of Republican history, but also because it is my cue to outline the assumptions that are folded into my own practice of periodization more explicitly. It is to that subject that I turn next.

II. Periods and Periodicity

This book's starting point of 400 BCE looks to the resolution around that time of the siege of Veii and the tidal wave of agrarian, technological, and economic change that swept through Roman society in its aftermath.³⁸ Archaic central Italy and Rome have received their fair share of book-length studies recently, several of which are concerned with religious practice.³⁹ The early republican fifth century, on the other hand, continues to be a source of historiographic and archaeological vexation, although a number of recent publications suggest that the period is on the cusp of reappraisal.⁴⁰ Whatever the nature and scope of the “fifth-century crisis,” a clear shift in Roman culture and politics occurs at the beginning of the fourth century, a period punctuated not only by the spectacular success at Veii but also by the immiseration of the Gallic Sack—an event of sufficiently seismic import to be registered by Aristotle and Theopompus several decades later.⁴¹ One of the most conspicuous signals of this

36. Flower 2010, differentiating the period 400–180 BCE into three distinct Republics.

37. North 2010. For the middle Republic as a self-contained unit of Rome's religious history note also Curti 2000—which packs the punch of a monograph in a few pages.

38. Cornell 2000b for the main changes to the city itself in the decades after the siege; Bernard 2016 for a stimulating account of the economic impact. Acknowledgment of Veii as a watershed paired with caution against taking the siege's outcome as representative of mid-republican Rome's expansionist practice: Terrenato 2019, 114.

39. See, e.g., Hopkins 2016 and Potts 2016.

40. Talk of a fifth-century “crisis”—see the papers in *Crise et transformation* 1990—is now yielding to a more flexible assessment of the austerity regime that may have prevailed in Rome and central Italy during this era of warlords and *condottieri*: Armstrong 2016; Smith 2017; for warlords and *sodalitates* note also Maras 2018b. Artistic production in central Italy during the “crisis”: Papini 2015, 99–100.

41. Aristotle fr. 568 Rose and Theopompus *FGH* 114 F 317; Cornell 1995, 312–14 and Humm 2016, 88–89 for analysis.

shift is a monumental investment in urban fortification, probably triggered by the Sack. The extant remains of the “Servian Wall” that was erected during these years convey an impression of the pools of labor available to the state in this period and are for that very reason significant as an index of state formation; with the wall’s construction, Rome entered a new phase in its capacity to leverage both human muscle power and artistic and engineering skill, exploiting new sources of stone in the process.⁴² Chapter 2 of this book will track the meaning of this newfound infrastructural capacity for temple construction, another major monumental undertaking of the fourth and third centuries. The mushrooming of temples across Rome’s cityscape is tied to other region-wide shifts in material culture that accelerate in the years after 400, from alterations in the patterning of cult sites and urban settlement throughout Latium to the popularization of new types of votives; these changes form the focus of chapter 5.⁴³

So much for the beginning of this book’s story, but why does that story stop at the end of the third century? Although one could cite Roman awareness of an early to mid-third-century dividing line in the city’s religious history as justification for backing up this book’s *terminus* by some decades,⁴⁴ the arguments for extending the period under scrutiny to the middle of the second century or even later may seem even more compelling. A newly published survey of Roman republican history and the “making of a world state” takes 150 BCE as its point of departure.⁴⁵ One could even contend that the most consequential rupture occurs several decades later, as Rome moves from being “in a position of cultural receivership” to propagating a distinctive material culture that fuses Hellenizing practices with endogenous innovations such as concrete.⁴⁶ This book’s determination to fasten onto the fourth and third centuries is prompted by several considerations. The overriding one is the significance of the Second Punic War and specifically Rome’s victorious conclusion of it as a watershed moment without equal. The fact that most recently published accounts of the urban and rural demography and economy of Roman Italy commence with the state of affairs circa 200 discloses an aware-

42. Quaranta 2017 and (in detail) Bernard 2018a are necessary reading on this topic. Italian wall construction in the final centuries BCE: Gregori and Nonnis 2013.

43. The late fifth- and early fourth-century transformation of Latium’s sacred landscape: Bouma and Lindenhout 1996.

44. Pliny *NH* 11.186 with Rüpke 2014b, 249 on the introduction of a new procedure for haruspicy during L. Postumius Albinus’s tenure as *rex sacrorum* in 275 or 274.

45. Osgood 2018.

46. Terrenato 2015, 524 for ~100 BCE as the dividing line in the history of the city’s urban infrastructure. The quotation is taken from Terrenato 2016.

ness of this bright line.⁴⁷ The wealth that flowed into Rome after the Second Punic War precipitated cultural, political, and demographic changes whose magnitude were difficult to appreciate at the time and remain controversial today.⁴⁸ Modifications to the institutional and fiscal morphology of the Roman state simply did not keep pace with the sheer volume of wealth pouring into the second- and first-century Republic—the corrosive effects of which became a commonplace in literary critiques of elite ostentatiousness in the decades after the Second Punic War.⁴⁹ One literary phase change in the years after 200 that is uniquely attuned to this influx is the emergence of historical narrative, whose “scripting of all of Roman history from a single point of view” Ingo Gildenhard has smartly contrasted “to the centrifugal *memoriae* of individual families” that had previously held sway over the commemorative routines of Roman culture.⁵⁰ Although the mythistorical and aetiological machinery for Rome’s expansionist and multicultural designs was assembled during the fourth and third centuries,⁵¹ it was not until the opening decades of the second century that its operations kicked into high gear—thanks in large part to Roman historiography’s appearance on the literary scene. The impact of the post-Hannibalic dispensation is discernible in other cultural-cognitive domains as well; to mention only one, it is striking how quickly Roman notions of space and territoriality are retooled in the aftermath of the Second Punic War.⁵²

Shifts in technology likewise justify a sharp differentiation of the fourth and third centuries from the second. Urban construction veered in new directions, as signaled not only by the cresting popularity of Hellenizing portico arrangements but also by the adaptation of the arch into a signature commemorative form.⁵³ Also proliferating during the early decades of the second

47. Morley 1996; Launaro 2011; Hin 2013.

48. Silver’s influx into the second- and first-century Roman economy and its institutional reverberations: Rowan 2013b, to be supplemented with 2013a, 115–16 on the movement of silver away from the Greek East and toward Rome; Kay 2014 is comprehensive. Demography and mobility: Isayev 2017b.

49. See Tan 2017, chap. 3 on fiscal morphology. Early signs of “a counter-discourse that placed positive value on architectural refinement”: Nichols 2010 on Plautus’s *Mostellaria*.

50. Gildenhard 2003, 112 for the quotations.

51. Wiseman 1995 on Romulus and Remus is foundational; cf. Stucchi 2018 on one curious component of this machinery.

52. Carlà 2017, 120–21 for comment.

53. Pietilä-Castrén 1987 on these projects generally; Russell 2016, chap. 5 on porticos and Hrychuk Kontokosta 2013 on the arch (decoupled in her account from any votive or primarily religious function). To the evidence reviewed by the latter, add Tucci 2018 on the recent find of a false arch on the Arx datable to the fourth century.

century, both throughout Rome and other Italic cities, are *tabernae*—lead indicators of what Steven Ellis has arrestingly termed “the first retail revolution.”⁵⁴ But it was one specific technological innovation that so decisively altered Rome’s urban morphology in the final two centuries BCE as to render the city radically different from its mid-republican predecessor. Although the adoption of marble for decorative purposes marked a departure from centuries of reliance on easily weathered tufas, it is the introduction and popularization of concrete whose revolutionary repercussions cannot be emphasized enough.⁵⁵ Combined with the growing appetite (and resources) for requisitioning high-quality stone over long distances for decorative purposes,⁵⁶ the turn to concrete ushered in a new era in Roman monumentalism. Penelope Davies must be correct to insist on concrete as a catalyst not only of the “new language of political architecture” in the late Republic but also of the transgression of mid-republican building mores that this new language enabled. Interacting with this technological innovation and with the extraordinary infusion of wealth into second-century Rome was the decision of members of the Roman elite to initiate or underwrite sacred building projects outside of Rome, either in the communities from which their families hailed or at sanctuary locations whose interest to pilgrims ensured their monumental interventions a steady stream of admirers.⁵⁷

A third reason more specific to the shape and rhythms of religious observance brings us back to this book’s primary concern with cult practice as a means of grounding and perpetuating civic consensus. By the early third century, disputes over plebeian access to the *sacra* that had previously rested in the hands of the patriciate give way to a homeostatic equilibrium that proved remarkably accommodating of new divinities and their associated cultic practices. Even if this equilibrium is to some extent a mirage, the repeated recourse to exempla from the third century in later Roman tradition looks to be a function not only of the century’s subsequent idealization, but also of a status quo

54. Ellis 2018, chap. 4, crediting this development to the post–Second Punic War “influx of wealth” streaming into Italy’s urban centers.

55. Mogetta 2015 for the dating of this innovation to the mid-second century; Davies 2017c for the technology’s sociocultural impact; Bernard 2018a, chap. 7 on the nature and extent of technological innovations prior to the advent of concrete.

56. To studies of imperial requisitioning, add now Russell 2017 on nonimperial demand for stone and the parameters of that demand’s satisfaction.

57. For consular involvement in the monumentalization of a sacred complex outside of Rome see the work of M. Cornelius Cethegus, *cos.* 160, at Gabii: *CIL* I².3092d (heavily restored) with Ceccarelli and Marroni 2011, 184. Elite competition and the refurbishment of second- and first-century Italic sanctuaries: Carini 2016; Maschek 2016b for tabulation and explication of regional trends in monumental construction.

that appealed sufficiently enough to warrant idealization⁵⁸—though I reserve the right to take this claim back if Livy’s second decade finally reemerges from the rolls of Herculaneum or the dust mounds of Egypt. The more important issue, however, is that this status quo does not last. Domestically, the short-lived equilibrium yielded to an era of accelerated institutional innovation, peaking in the first two decades after the Second Punic War with a series of disputes over rules and norms that quickly attained exemplary status in their own right.⁵⁹ The long-term outcome of these disputes and their resolution was the late republican move toward systematization, practiced by an elite whose encounters with Mediterranean multicultural and ecological variety motivated an epistemic revolution and hastened the advent of a “market” for religious goods.⁶⁰ Significantly, the deployment of religious practice as a means of positioning the Roman state in relation to non-Romans shifted in the years after 200. Whether or not M. Valerius Messalla’s boasting to the citizens of Teos conformed to Hellenistic standards of cultural self-fashioning or represented a uniquely Roman swagger, the decades after the Second Punic War saw the emergence of a variety of discursive and political tactics to differentiate more cleanly (and violently) between Romans and Others. This response to the rewards of empire and to the influx of free and enslaved people into the city of Rome appears to have checked the “accumulative civic polytheism” that had fueled the introduction of new gods to Rome in the two centuries prior.⁶¹

The increasing prominence of slavery at Rome during the middle Republic has other consequences for Roman religious practice, one of which will come to the fore in chapter 4: the urgency of devising a religious system that vindicated Roman conquest *and* Roman mass enslavement. The language of theodicy is present in Plautine comedy, whose performance in sacred spaces will

58. The core chapters of Roller 2018, the most focused treatment of Roman exemplarity to date, scrutinize the third-century lives and afterlives of Ap. Claudius Caecus, C. Duilius, and Q. Fabius Maximus Cunctator. That exempla were steeped in “exemplary timelessness” (thus M. Roller) does not preclude historicizing them as products of a specific sociocultural formation.

59. See Lundgreen 2011, chap. 5 on *Regelkonflikte* in the religious realm and chap. 8 for the concentration of these conflicts in the years 200–180; Arnhold and Rüpke 2017, 415–16 for a concise account of the highlights.

60. Late republican systematization and/as textualization: Rüpke 2012b; MacRae 2016, to be read with the generative critique of Mackey 2018. Ecological variety and its religious processing: Padilla Peralta 2018b. The rise of a market in religious goods: Bendlin 2000.

61. The phrase: Champion 2017. For the “sense of unease” among Rome’s elite in the second century and its religious ramifications see Bendlin 2013, 472–73; on the emergence of a distinctive “slave religiosity” in this period, Padilla Peralta 2017c.

have resonated jarringly and harrowingly with the anguish of the enslaved. Within Roman religion, the drive to render slavery intelligible and apprehensible took on other features as well, and the co-optation of slave bodies into Roman elites' performance of ritual exactitude was among the most important. To my knowledge this observation has not been stressed nearly enough. The Roman elites whose actions and beliefs have been elaborated so painstakingly in Craig Champion's 2017 study of elite religiosity were not disembodied minds—but they were not the direct agents behind much of the ritual performance of Roman religion either. Their doing relied, not infrequently, on the labor of slave bodies. The move from a set of religious observances handled directly by members of an elite family *before* the era of mass enslavement to a system of state-managed cult entrusted to slaves *during* the era of mass enslavement receives recognition as an exemplary episode at the intersection of legend and annalistic history: the transfer of the oversight of the cult of Hercules at the Ara Maxima from the Potitii and Pinarii to public servants, the work of a censor whose activity in the sacred realm (chapter 3) came to be perceived as transgressive enough to have cost him his eyesight.

Having now introduced some of the major conceptual and historical perspectives behind the periodization of this book, I wish next to position this study within the landscape of scholarship on Roman religion before turning to the organization of the book's chapters and their anticipated interventions.

III. Mid-Republican Religion as Stand-Alone Category

The study of Roman religion has progressed considerably since the time of William Warde Fowler and Georg Wissowa, producing a bibliography far too vast to summarize here.⁶² Religion's status in early Latin literature has been methodically probed over the past three decades, with striking results.⁶³ The workings of the mid- and late republican priesthoods, composed of both male and female religious actors, have been scrutinized intensively.⁶⁴ While much ink has been spilled on elite religiosity and elite ritual practice, nonelite obser-

62. For Forsythe 2005 to claim in a footnote that Fowler remains the best treatment of "archaic Roman religion" is impish. For coverage of trends and publications see the bibliographic essays in *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*.

63. See, e.g., Feeney 1991 and 1998; Biggs 2017a.

64. Beard 1980 and 1990; DiLuzio 2016. For the prosopography of the major priestly colleges see now Rüpke 2008.

vances are finally receiving some consideration.⁶⁵ It is now impossible to overlook the importance of place to religious practice after the publication of the two-volume synthesis coauthored by Mary Beard, John North, and the late Simon Price.⁶⁶ The assumption, prevailing for much of the twentieth century, that Roman religious observance was strictly about ritual orthopraxis and only minimally about belief has been contested and sharply qualified.⁶⁷ Long in need of sustained critical engagement, issues of gender and gender politics in Roman religion are now at the forefront.⁶⁸ Finally, a sharpened focus on lived experience and communication, prominent themes in the writings of Jörg Rüpke, has played up very effectively the intersubjective and epistemic components of elite and nonelite religious sensibilities in Roman republican culture.⁶⁹

My research draws on many of the new approaches flagged above, taking to heart their shared concern with conceiving of religious phenomena as broadly and flexibly as possible. But my book also seeks to improve on them by arguing for a new methodology that more cleanly and effectively sets apart mid-republican religious practice as an accelerant of state formation. This methodology is driven, first, by the conviction that we can tell a detailed and reasonably coherent story of change over time by looking at the archaeological and literary testimony available to us for the mid-republican city. One major dimension of this story is the unprecedented channeling of resources into temple construction at Rome; another is the reorganization of festival culture and sacred mobility that follows on the heels of this resource allocation. Mid-republican Rome is hardly the first or the last premodern state to resort to the intensification of certain types of religious practice in periods of imperial expansion; one need only turn to its great adversary Carthage to see a broadly analogous escalation at work.⁷⁰ The Roman case stands out because the Republic more or less stumbles into a bootstrapping formula that proves to be unusually felicitous: high-visibility monumental enterprises are paired with

65. Champion 2017 for elite practice; on nonelite observances see the bibliography cited in Padilla Peralta 2018a.

66. Beard et al. 1998.

67. Bendlin 2001; Davies 2004; Mackey 2009.

68. Kraemer 1992, chap. 5 on Roman matrons; Schultz 2006b and Carroll 2019 on women's religious lives in the middle and late Republic.

69. Strictly, e.g.,: Rüpke 1995a, 2012a and b, and 2018b.

70. Quinn 2018: chap. 5 on "the circle of the tophet," esp. 98 for the likelihood that child sacrifice crested in popularity as the pace of Carthage's conflicts with Greek *poleis* quickened; 106–12 for the prominence of its sanctuaries in the "tophet network" of the fourth and third centuries.

new incentives for human mobility in ways that dramatically and enduringly reorganize the rhythms of civic and communal experience.

While monumental religious commitments are certainly evident before and after the middle Republic, what is different for the years 400–200 BCE is the shape the commitment takes, the contexts in which it is processed, and the specific mechanisms through which its symbolic and ideological affordances are scaled. Temples and their anniversaries subsequently become focal points for festivals; through these festivals, Rome becomes integrated into a sacralized ecology of annual movements to and from sanctuaries, and this pulsating network begins the work of binding together the Italian peninsula more tightly. In the long term, at both the microlevel of person-to-person interactions and at the macrolevel of Rome's interactions with allied and nonallied states, mid-republican religion evolves into an important and efficacious means for negotiating and securing communal trust. To a large extent, this trust was elicited through the confidence game of persuading Romans and non-Romans that the *res publica* was more powerful than it actually was.

As Seth Richardson has argued with reference to early Mesopotamia, the expressly formulated claims of many premodern states to power and authority regularly outstripped state capacity to substantiate those claims; much of the brilliant sheen of premodern statehood turns on closer inspection to be a hallucination, successful in deceiving audiences under certain conditions of “strategic ambiguation.”⁷¹ In the world of the middle Republic, this ambiguation ensued directly from the collapsing of boundaries between the expectation of divine support for the Roman state—solicited and maintained through the construction of temples and the correct performance of ritual in their immediate proximity—and the practical realities of human support for the Roman state, with the latter being increasingly and purposefully assimilated to the former. “Trust” took the form of collective buy-in into the fiction that the social praxis of earning and maintaining human support was actually about earning and maintaining the backing of the gods. Styled as a literary fiction from the very beginnings of Latin literature, whose thematic and discursive parameters are configured in direct dialogue with questions of divine involvement and concern,⁷² this fiction is apparent in Rome's monumental and architectural enterprises as well. The rise and consolidation of religiously mediated trust through the physical labor of engineering new temples and new circuits of mobility around them not only

71. Richardson 2017.

72. E.g., the *Bellum Punicum*'s characterization of the gods in/and Roman history: Feeney 1991, chap. 3; cf. Leigh 2010, 272–77 for the epic's encoding of the naval traumas of the First Punic War into its representations of Aeneas's struggles.

resolved a coordination problem in the short term—how to organize and discipline bodies in motion—but also promoted quasi-voluntary compliance in the long term.

Although cognitively premised research into religious awareness and experience undergirds some of this book's analysis,⁷³ I rely for the most part on methods harvested from the social sciences to pursue and refine my claims. Sociologists of religion have regularly documented religion's capacity to catalyze social and symbolic bonds.⁷⁴ These bonds have been studied either as they emerge within and work to define particular religious communities (intragroup) or as they structure the relationship of religious communities to the larger social entities of which they form part. Ultimately these bonds are predicated on social trust, but a small but significant fissure in the literature has opened up between scholars who would ascribe to religion a crucial role in the maintenance of this trust and scholars who see religious commitments as an alternative to mainstream social trust.⁷⁵ Michael Welch and his colleagues have scrutinized "the ambivalent role of religion in shaping dimensions of social trust";⁷⁶ the creation and reinforcement and bonds within the religious group may come at the expense of (or detract from) bonds between the group's members and members of other groups and/or society at large. The sociopsychological aspects of this trade-off have been most exhaustively researched in connection with modern cults. More germane to this book is work on the interrelationship of religious observance and social capital.⁷⁷ Almost without exception, these studies have tended to hone in primarily on contemporary religious practices—usually those of the United States or other first-world nations—and without much engagement with the record of pre-modern and early modern states, a rather far cry from the historical sweep and cross-cultural ambition of first-generation sociologists of religion such as Émile Durkheim.

Inspired in part by sociological inquiry, however, new research into the origins and evolution of social institutions and the rule of law has begun to engage more closely with the range of religion's social utilities as observable in

73. See Bendlin 2001, 193 for a call to embrace the cognitive study of religion; Mackey 2009 for a cognitive approach to Latin literature's representation of religiosity.

74. Welch et al. 2007, 26 for a concise overview; note also Uslaner 2002, 87–88.

75. Statement of the second position: Putnam 1993, 107.

76. The title and subject of Welch et al. 2004.

77. See, e.g., Wuthnow 2002 on the relationship between religious observance and "status-bridging" social capital; Beyerlein and Hipp 2005 on the link between religiously mediated social capital and neighborhood crime; Welch et al. 2005, 464–65 on the entwinement of "interpersonal trust, civic engagement, and confidence in governmental institutions."

the historical archive, foremost among them its ability to solve collective action problems “by presenting rewards and punishments that greatly reinforce the gains from cooperation in the here and now.”⁷⁸ This line of research is especially pertinent to my book’s concern with bringing into clearer focus mid-republican religion’s success at promoting forms of consensus that held together the rapidly expanding Roman city-state.

Clarifying precisely how religious beliefs and activities incentivize coordination has been the task not only of sociologists and political scientists but of economists as well. Awareness of the economic dimensions and payoffs of religious practice is crucial to this book’s exposition. The basic outline of an “economics of religion” was first sketched in Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations*, but only in the past two decades has the field truly come to life.⁷⁹ Broadly speaking, the study of the economics of religion has encompassed two research agendas: first, the interpretation of an individual or a communal choice for, or against, the espousal of a particular faith as a fundamentally economic phenomenon, with “competing” religious options understood as operating within a religious “marketplace” that is analyzable according to basic incentive and preference rubrics; second, the assessment of the impact that religion and religiosity have had and continue to have on economic behaviors of various kinds.⁸⁰ As was the case for the sociological study of religion, much of the research started along these lines has taken contemporary societies as its primary focus—hardly surprising given the wealth of modern data available to the enterprising economist.⁸¹ But interest in the first of these topics is also gaining momentum among scholars working on the proliferation of cultic and religious choices available to inhabitants of the ancient Greco-Roman Mediterranean.⁸² As for the second, ancient historians have come to recognize that religiously motivated or framed activities such as pilgrimage, festivals, and games have substantial economic implications; in the case of Rome, we even have one ancient writer speaking to this issue directly.⁸³ However, classical scholarship on the rhythms and patterns of religiously motivated economic

78. Fukuyama 2011, 50, building on Olson 1965.

79. For an outline of the discipline’s history, see Witham 2010, chap. 6.

80. On the first of these, see Iannaccone 1991; Chaves and Cann 1992; Finke and Iannaccone 1993. On the second, and with exposition of the empirical and methodological distinctions separating these two subfields: Iannaccone 1998.

81. For the burgeoning literature, not all of it innocent of ideological or discriminatory taint, on certain kinds of religious preferences and economic growth note, e.g., Barro and McCleary 2003; Barro 2004; Brañas-Garza et al. 2004; McCleary and Barro 2019.

82. See, for example, Stark and Finke 2000 and Bendlin 2006, both mainly concerned with the Roman Empire.

83. Cassius Dio 52.30.4 and 7, to be read with Rüpke 2010a, 761–62. On the interaction of

consumption lacks systematic and methodologically explicit articulations of how religion and economics interact.⁸⁴

This book will make use of quantification as one technique for visualizing and documenting the interaction of the mid-republican economy and mid-republican religion under the auspices of an imperialistic state. Since not all ancient historians have embraced the gospel of numbers, I should be clear here that my intention is not to succumb uncritically to what one modern anthropologist has charmingly termed the “seductions of quantification,” but to exploit relatively simple quantitative and statistical models as a means of more crisply rendering the middle Republic’s profile as a state in formation.⁸⁵ The contribution of religion to this phenomenon will be worked out over the course of four main chapters, the respective contents and objectives of which I survey next.

IV. The Road

To the end of demonstrating that religious activity structures and drives the middle Republic’s social and economic transformation at several different tiers—from interpolity exchanges to person-to-person transactions—I concentrate on the materiality of cultivating and projecting trust. I argue through four interlocking chapter-long case studies that religious practice in mid-republican Rome promoted greater cohesion and trust through shared and repeated ritual practices, and that this cohesion underpinned both the rise of new collaborative cultural institutions and the authoritative coercion-wielding apparatus of the Roman state.

Religion’s role in the imperializing middle Republic did not consist solely (or primarily) in greasing the wheels for more efficient rent extraction on the part of the elite, although that process would be firing on all cylinders by the late Republic.⁸⁶ In fact, as I will argue in the first two chapters, the quasi-voluntary compliance regime that emerges during the middle Republic is

religious tourism and economic activity during the Roman Empire see Koeppel and Künzl 2002, which I revisit in chapter 5.

84. Tackling this problem is one of the objectives of Collar and Kristensen 2020.

85. The phrase: Merry 2014, in a study of the use of quantitative indicators by modern human rights organizations; cf. the pointed comments of Smith 2018 on the perversities of “dataism.” For the continuing aversion to quantitative models in some sectors of ancient history note Ober 2018, and Lerouxel 2017, 204–5 on Francophone Roman historians; cf. De Callatay 2014, 15–20 on the past and present of quantification in ancient history, and Morley 2014 on its prospects and limits.

86. Religion as a rent-extraction device in the “natural state”: North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009, 38–39 and *passim*. For a fresh take on fiscality, rent extraction, and elites see Tan 2017.

rooted in (partial) redistribution of the proceeds of warfare through religious practices, which went a long way toward maintaining consensus. As part of my application of quasi-voluntary compliance to the study of mid-republican religion, I also document the success of ritual practice at bringing people together at Rome. I hope to show why it is not merely the fact that people came together but the fact that they came together *for the purposes of religious activity* that mattered. Trust was forged by coming and spending time together—over and over again, year after year after year, in the sacred spaces of Rome and through the mediation of Roman religious structures. It was this structured coming-together that enabled the social intervisibility through which communal self-recognition was augmented and enhanced, channeling the “common knowledge” that Michael Chwe and other theorists of collective action have examined.⁸⁷

These interrelated arguments thread through the four main chapters of the book, which is organized into two parts. Part I, composed of chapters 2 and 3, opens with a quantitative reconstruction of temple building during the fourth and third centuries, evaluating the scale of the monumental intervention into the city’s topography and the labor demands that it triggered. Chapter 3 describes and analyzes the secondary effects of temple construction, specifically the distribution of public goods and the consequences of that distribution for the production and reproduction of trust and quasi-voluntary compliance. In their emphasis on monumental construction and its cultural aftershocks, these chapters respond to the call of recent scholarship to attend more critically to world-historical trends in the interaction between state formation and infrastructural power.⁸⁸ Moreover, both chapters make heavy use of those encyclopedic publications that have digested and distilled centuries of archaeological investigation on the city of Rome. The peerless *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* is exploited often; my undertaking also taps the lusciously illustrated *Atlas of Ancient Rome* and numerous other works.⁸⁹

The second part of this book takes up Rome’s festival culture and the phenomenon of pilgrimage, as two interactive and synergistic developments that follow on the heels of the mid-republican city’s monumental improvements. Chapter 4 concentrates on the forms this festival and pilgrimage culture took as mirrored in the literary tradition, while chapter 5 shifts gears to concentrate on the far more abundant archaeological and votive material. Much like chapter 2, chapter 5 makes much of its argument through quantitative models and closes with a test run of social network analysis in order to generate new ques-

87. Chwe 2001.

88. Note, e.g., the essays in Ando and Richardson 2017; Scheidel 2018.

89. Carandini 2017.

tions and posit some provisional answers about the relationship between religiously motivated mobility and the exchange of knowledge and information. Common to both chapters 4 and 5 is an emphasis on those feelings of trust and cooperation that were elicited in the course of many decades of ritualized cultic observance. One consistent theme in both parts I and II is the importance of defamiliarizing those generally recognized components of mid-republican religion and those conceptual and pragmatic binding agents that held it together. The institutional morphology of the Greco-Roman city in its period of monumental transformation and expansion should not be taken for granted or as self-evident. Comparative research has brought to light numerous examples of civilizational complexes whose urban designs and sacromonumental interfaces were plotted along entirely different axes; Emma Dench has encouraged us to keep our eye on the other end of Eurasia if we need a reminder of the paths toward scalable performance and ceremonial that Rome did not take.⁹⁰ A second consistent theme is the commitment to reading the material record not as a transparent record of institution-building—or as an assortment of “static props of ceremonial dramas through which Romans . . . endlessly enacted their roles in the cultural script”—but as a dynamic participant in the enactment of those processes that held the *res publica* together.⁹¹

Unifying all of these chapters is a vision of the pluripotency of ritual experience in engendering the collective buy-in at the core of state formation. This book subscribes to the notion that Roman religious activity was simultaneously infused by and stimulative of psychological states. Ritual activity marks and communicates intentionality, as Jacob Mackey has stressed in a recent (2017) call for reclaiming belief as a feature of Roman religion. Taking a page from Richard Blanton, we might interpret the intentional religious practices under study in this book as “rites of governmentality” that actively contributed to disseminating a broader understanding of the governance—divine and aristocratic—of the *res publica*: “rites of inclusion,” those collective acts of worship (and the historical memory of collective acts of worship) that brought members of the urban community from all walks of life into more regular contact with one another; “discursive rites” such as the *ludi scaenici* that not only incentivized physical co-presence but also supplied an interpretive scaffolding for it; and “morality rites” that in ludic and nonludic contexts

90. See Lewis 2015 for a study of public space in Han China and ancient Rome; Dench 2018, 32 for a snapshot of major divergences in public ritual. For more on religion and state formation in Qin and Han China see Robinson 2016 and Marsili 2018.

91. The quotation is from Ando 2000, 210–11. On reading artifacts as enactive and not simply as mirrors of institutional processes see the comments of Knappett 2011, 26–27.

exalted a certain set of virtues for the appreciation and edification of the *populus Romanus*.⁹² The conclusion to this book, in addition to recapitulating my findings and outlining directions for future investigation into the interplay between religion and state formation, demonstrates the cumulative weight of religious rites on Roman social life by quantifying the amount of civic time consumed by them. Centuries before any official text formulated an “absolute link between the realization of the *sacra* and membership in the Roman community,”⁹³ Rome’s mid-republican transformation impressed on Romans and non-Romans alike the vitality of the relationship between religious practice and political identity by embarking on a species of temporal colonization.

Each of the book’s chapters keeps an eye on considerations of robustness and proper inference. In the preference for a case-study arrangement, I have aimed for something like a wigwam, to borrow Tim Cornell’s metaphor: even if “each strut is relatively weak and can barely stand on its own,”⁹⁴ in the aggregate the case studies bolster one another to a degree that make the cumulative argument for religious practices as institutionally productive and consensus-building behaviors that much more compelling. By opting for a case-study format, I have elected against incorporating a narrative emplotment of the kind that normally features in historical analyses of the Republic. One of the reasons for this decision is that there are excellent narrative and thematic histories of the middle Republic now in print.⁹⁵ Even though, as Josiah Ober affirms in concurrence with Deirdre McCloskey, “there is no inherent conflict between social scientific and narrative approaches to history,”⁹⁶ I have also chosen to avoid narrativizing emplotments in order to register a measure of exasperation with how religious change is normally integrated into narrative histories of the Roman state. Works that are nimble when it comes to political or economic matters resort to curiously awkward or ham-handed expedients when religious issues roll around—losing the thread of religious history after an initial discussion and picking it up only intermittently as the narrative lurches forward, or shoving much of the religious material into a chapter-length unit that is artificially severed from politics or economics. The loss of faith in the old sweeping narratives of steady religious decline followed by an Augustan rejuvenation may have something

92. The taxonomy and its justification: Blanton 2016.

93. Moatti 2018, 394 on Caracalla’s Edict: “le premier texte officiel à formuler le lien absolu entre l’accomplissement des *sacra* et l’appartenance à la communauté romaine.”

94. Cornell 2000b, 224, gleaned from Hopkins 1978, 20.

95. Rosenstein 2012 is an invigorating read.

96. Ober 2018, 9.

to do with this habit.⁹⁷ More in line with historical-sociological investigations into Roman history, I have eschewed a narrative frame to focus primarily on social structures.

The disavowal of continuous historical narrative as an organizing structure for this book has its roots in another choice that calls for comment here. Although *Divine Institutions* selectively taps literary evidence to model the birth and evolution of institutions (chapters 2 and 3) and to describe the messages that these institutions propelled into general circulation (chapters 4 and 5), its primary preoccupation is with the testimony of material culture, for two reasons. The first is that literary sources contemporaneous with the structural transformations of interest to this book are few and far between. Overreliance on the testimony of the annalistic tradition that is preserved in Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus—or refracted in other authors who wrote two or more centuries after the middle Republic's heyday—carries with it the obvious risk of distorting anachronism.⁹⁸ Those Roman and Greek works that line up chronologically with these transformations do receive attention below, though given their usually fragmentary nature I have tried not to make a mountain out of a molehill. Second, it is worthwhile to center the material evidence, not so much to avoid having to take sides in the conflict between Cornell-style optimism and Forsythe-style pessimism regarding the merits of the literary tradition,⁹⁹ but to clear a space for a rethink of mid-republican institutions that does not answer exclusively or primarily to the expectations and demands of late republican and early Imperial Roman writers. It is quite possible that Romans of later periods only dimly grasped the middle Republic's institutional patterning; it is less possible though not completely implausible that Romans of later periods got much of that patterning wrong in those retrospective historical and antiquarian accounts that have long driven and continue to drive scholarship on Roman religion. If "Rome after Plautus fades into something rich and strange,"¹⁰⁰ then a fortiori the Rome of Plautus would have been profoundly strange to the Rome(s) that succeeded it.

I round off this introduction to the book's scope and ambition with three closing remarks on methodology and terminology. First, I will not be terribly concerned in what follows with drawing a bright line between Roman Italy on the one hand and the Hellenistic Greek poleis and kingdoms on the other.

97. Writing the religious history of the Republic after the debunking of this old emplotment: North 1986.

98. Further on problems and issues in the historiography of Hellenistic Italy: Dench 2003, 295–96.

99. Compare Cornell 1995, chap. 1 and Forsythe 2005, chap. 3.

100. Richlin 2017b, 193.

Whatever the merits of Heraclides Ponticus's designation of Rome as a *polis hellenis*, it is obvious that by the end of the fourth century at the latest the mid-republican city-state was actively seeking a place in the greater world of Greek and Hellenizing Mediterranean communities.¹⁰¹ I will not, therefore, invoke or belabor essentializing distinctions between Romans and Greeks—though I will duly note, beginning with the next chapter, instances where Romans appear to depart self-consciously from or innovate on contemporaneous Hellenistic practices.

Second, I have characterized this book as concerned with cohesion and consensus, in the process steering clear of the lexicon of unity. An emphasis on cohesion is in my view more faithfully responsive to the connectivity that came to define Roman ritual practice. Whether we can speak of cultural unity in any meaningful sense before the Social War is not a question this book will attempt to answer. That Romans fashioned and projected a discourse of *religious* unity is evident enough, but one should not confuse discourse with reality.¹⁰² As Filippo Marsili's comparative study of Roman and early Chinese religious observances crystallizes quite effectively, premodern imperial systems could and did embark on projects of unification without having recourse to a "shared religion" that organized and actualized itself in exactly the same ways in the mind of every individual practitioner.¹⁰³ *Divine Institutions* capitalizes instead on the proposition that the repetition of communally orchestrated religious practices—temple construction, festival celebration, and regular pilgrimage—conduced to greater cultural cohesion over time. On my reconstruction, the fastidiousness of cult that Marcus Valerius Messala and Polybius (and, a century later, Cicero) trumpeted as distinctively Roman is best understood as the end outcome of a repetitive dynamic through which Roman identity became increasingly entwined with a specific bundle of group-forming religious technologies.

The maintenance of social cohesion through the cultivation of trust does not presuppose or mandate a blanket cultural unity or homogeneity. What the type of trust under investigation in this book simply requires is a willingness to place "valued outcomes at risk to others' malfeasance, mistakes, or failures"—a willingness conspicuously showcased in the Roman state's long-term adherence to the collective action of military expansion.¹⁰⁴ My use of the term *consensus* should not be taken to signal or imply agreement, unity, or

101. *FGH* 840 F 23 with Momigliano 1975a, 13; Curti 2000, 77–78 on incipient Roman awareness of Greek civic institutions and practices.

102. Cf. De Cazanove 2007 on "the impossible religious unity of the Italian peninsula."

103. Marsili 2018.

104. See Tilly 2005, 12 for this quoted definition.

unanimity; I have in mind a mode of coming together that valorizes and routinizes “assent, consent, and collaboration” even while accommodating disagreement.¹⁰⁵ Without attempting to minimize the occasionally frictive and fractious outcomes of the middle Republic’s religious practices,¹⁰⁶ I will outline at the end of chapter 2 and again at the beginning of chapter 4 some reasons why the religious apparatus for holding the Roman state together maintained public trust and consensus while keeping explosive social crises to a minimum during our period. Where and as appropriate, I will also gesture to those incentives for cultic systematization that culminated (after our period) in the game-changing works of Varro, whose attention to local Italic religious variety was mediated at least in part by his lived experiences during and after the Social War.¹⁰⁷

Finally, the alert reader will have noticed my studious avoidance of definitions for the term *religion*. Having recently chastised a fellow traveler in mid-republican history for failing to engage the prodigious amount of critical scrutiny expended on this term,¹⁰⁸ I will seem the very embodiment of hypocrisy if I do not make clear what I mean by the word. I take religion to consist of a set of ritual practices by which humans acknowledge, honor, and negotiate with superhuman agents. Purely in the interests of argumentative economy, this book will sidestep the question of when and how Roman culture develops an understanding of and a lexicon for religion as a discrete social category, although it seems to me more probable than not that the epistemic revolution (or rupture) responsible for the conceptualization of Roman ritual practices and their attendant affective components as a “religion” had as one of its prerequisites the monumentalization of the city during the middle Republic.¹⁰⁹ Again in the interests of argumentative economy, this book privileges public or public-facing religious activity, not out of a desire to slight the force of private ritual observance but out of recognition that full justice to the (mostly)

105. I quote from and follow the suggestion of Flower 2013b, 9.

106. Cf. Dench 2018, 34–35 criticizing belief/consensus models of Roman imperial rule for falling into this habit.

107. Cf. Rüpke 2014b, 264 on Varro and “the problem of the unification of Italy.”

108. Padilla Peralta 2018a, xxxix–xl; to the bibliography cited therein, add M. Flower 2017, 425–26. Cf. Marsili 2018 for a confrontation with the epistemological limits of “religion” in comparative religious studies; Anderson 2018, 63 on “religion” in the wake of the ontological turn; Driediger-Murphy 2019, 47–50 on the value of keeping the term *religion* in histories of Roman cultic practice.

109. On the nature of this epistemic and cognitive revolution compare Ando 2008 and Rüpke 2012b; specifically on temple construction and *ludi* as mediating agents, Rüpke 2010b, 35–38 = 2012b, 28–31; on Varro’s isolation of a “religious” sphere as innovative, North 2014; chap. 3 n. 140 for additional bibliography.

obscure dynamics of familial and gentilician *sacra* in the fourth and third centuries would necessitate another monograph.¹¹⁰ At the same time, and once again in the interests of argumentative economy, my book will glide past the religious personhood and authority of individual Roman priests and of the major priesthoods—topics that have benefited from ample treatments lately—to concentrate instead on the built structures that gave tangible expression to that authority.¹¹¹ Lastly, my attention to public religion as a group-centered activity will preclude meaningful engagement with the brewing controversy over Roman religion’s capacity to foster individualization—although it should be noted that none of the positions advanced in this book is necessarily incompatible with capacity-building of this kind.¹¹²

110. Private *sacra*: Cic. *De leg.* 2.46–53, to be read with North 2014, 229–31. Important studies: De Marchi [1896–1903] 1975; Fiorentini 1988 and 2008. For private cult and/as “domestic medical practice” in mid-republican Italy—a development taken up in chapter 3—note now Draycott 2019.

111. The evolution of the major priesthoods: Beard 1990. Differentiation between priests and magistrates in Republican Rome: Scheid 1984.

112. The controversy: see Scheid 2018, reviewing Rüpke 2013. Chap. 4 below comments on the rejection of the ritual individuality of the enslaved; on assertions of religious personhood triggered in response see Padilla Peralta 2017c.

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