



A study of Roman religion during the Archaic/Regal period

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JOSEPH MANN (1600508)

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The ongoing discussion of the study of the origins of Roman religion in the archaic / regal period, is a lively one with much of the literary and tangible evidence being interpreted differently by various scholars. The writings of the ancient authors lead into questions of the reliability of the information that they present and modern scholarship presents interesting and differing views of the chronology surrounding the origins of the ancient city which makes the debates that can be had around the subject interesting. Can the origins of religion in Rome be determined, can we see where religion could have stemmed from, are the myths that surround helpful when looking at the religious beginnings of Rome in a period when not a lot was written down, and could the gods of ancient Rome be considered to have had played an integral part in Rome's religious origins. If so, can we tell whether the gods considered to be naturally Roman had a greater bearing on the subject or whether the deities that are considered imports from other cultures show a greater influence on the Religion of Rome in the archaic / regal period in the history of these Latin people. Also, in the case of 'foreign' deities can we determine their origins before they impacted the early Roman religious system.

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Introduction

In this piece of work, I shall be taking a look at the beginnings of the Roman religious system, particularly during Rome's archaic / regal period. During this study on Rome's early religious system I shall be attempting to identify what I believe to be the origins of religion within the Roman world. To achieve this aim I have chosen to focus the main portion of the work into looking at one deity in particular, the Roman god of doorways Janus. I have chosen to look more in depth at the god Janus, and his potential connection to Rome's religious beginnings, because he is widely accepted to have been a wholly Roman deity which means that there is no equivalent deity in any of the other religions of this period. However, because he is unique to Rome it does present the challenge of finding related ancient source material. Having said this, even though the main section of this work is dedicated to the study and impact of Janus on the origins of Roman religion, I shall also be making mention of other deities and these will be ones that I shall try to show that while they may not be completely Roman in their origins they have been adapted or 'Latinised' in such a way that they have had an impact on the earliest form of Roman religion.

I have planned on writing three chapters, the first one being a general introduction to the religion of Rome, the second being on the main discussion point of this piece of work, the god Janus, the third is a chapter looking at the etymology of the names of the gods which primarily focuses on the two triads of Roman gods that were worshipped in the Capitulum temple.

As I have already mentioned finding ancient sources for information on Janus is hard but finding ancient materials that are contemporary with the period that I will be discussing is almost as difficult as there is only one source that still survives that can be considered as such, that being the works of Rome's second king Numa and even then the work only survives as fragments within Plutarch's *Life of Numa Pompilius*. Modern scholarship

however, is more easy to come by, but the books that are most relevant to my work are quite dated as the majority of scholarly work involving this subject was written in the early to mid-twentieth century so with new discoveries being made the information that I will present is based on my interpretation of the slightly dated but still relevant works integral to the discussion of the subject area. On top of this I have had to analyse what little archaeological evidence that there is pertaining to this period in Rome's history, and whilst there might not be a lot of it what there is, is open to interpretation. This then means that even though the evidence itself does not and cannot change opinions of the evidence differ in the scholarly material that I have read, this is probably because this particular area that I have looked into as well as the time period that is being discussed are both areas that are still the subject of scholarly debate and discussion.

There is then a possible reason for the lack of archaeological evidence to discuss, which could potentially have something to do with the number of disasters, earthquakes, floods and fires, that Rome went through in both the republican period and the imperial period despite the best efforts of some (Augustus and Claudius) to preserve Rome's past as much of what there once was has probably been destroyed forever. One of the pieces of evidence that survives that I have chosen to talk about (Figure 6) in my final chapter is believed to have been of Etruscan origin, but even though it is partially damaged the image can still clearly be seen. In my main chapter on Janus Figure 3 shows the god as being half female. This is a representation of the god that I shall be questioning in the aforementioned paragraph as it is still debate, the subject of scholarly debate regarding its authenticity.

The ancient literary sources that I will be using can probably be said to all suffer from the problem of translation as they were probably translated into numerous variations of different languages before they were then translated into English during the medieval period.

Furthermore, this issue can be complicated as they would most likely have been written in old

English so, my interpretations would then be based on my understanding of these old English phrases. Additionally, a few of the sources that I will be using are books of poetry and so are full of the authors own embellishments as well as the influence of the leading figures within Rome's government at the time of their writing. As well as this almost all of the ancient sources that I have had to use are writing in the second-first century BC which means even the information that they provide could be full of inaccuracy or could simply be wrong as they would have had to source their information second or even third hand.

Chapter 1: The religion of Rome

According to Bailey¹ “The history of religion is the history of man’s search for God.” While this is true when talking about the modern era, according to Ferguson² there is no Latin word for the term religion. The closest translation is *cultus deorum* which is derived from the more concrete *colere deos* literally meaning ‘worshipping the gods.’

He then goes on to talk about how in the archaic period the three gods whose origins can be traced to the earliest stages of Roman religion are Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus. This claim is made because the priesthoods that honour them have been identified in the early phase of the Roman religious system. This triad of gods Ferguson³ claims was then replaced by a less masculine triad; Jupiter still held his place within the triad and became known as Jupiter Optimus Maximus (the best and greatest). In the place of Mars and Quirinus however, two female deities were exchanged, these were Juno (who is identified with the Etruscan Uni) and Minerva (the Etruscan Menrva). With these two female deities being identified with Etruscan divinities it gives a strong indication that part of the earliest form of Roman religion was either an amalgamation of the Etruscan religion or a variation thereof.

The city’s origins in myth

The origins of Roman religion lay in the earliest days of the city of Rome, which is why I will be analysing the foundation myths of Rome.

The religious system of the Roman people first arises in 753 B.C with the city’s foundation. The origins of the city itself are shrouded in myth, with two different stories being presented to explain the city’s foundation. The first of these tales being that of the twin sons of Mars,

¹ Bailey 1932

² Ferguson 1987

³ Ferguson 1987

Romulus and Remus, that were raised by the she-wolf Lupa, which is often depicted in Roman art (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Wolf statue with Romulus and Remus

This statue depicts the two boys being suckled by the she-wolf and the fact that the statue exists helps give us an understanding of the origins of Roman religion as it shows something that the people believed in before they created the ideas of the other Roman divinities.

This story as well as being depicted in the artwork is also one that we get told about in modern publications, with the author Potter⁴ telling us that “*the foundation of Rome was accomplished with a spectacular act of violence. The Romans themselves believed that the twin brothers, Romulus and Remus, entered into a contest to see which of them would found a new city.*” If this were the case it would explain why the second king of Rome was so eager to distract his warlike citizenry with religious devotion which Livy⁵ tells us was the reasoning behind his religious reforms.

⁴ Potter 2014 p. 22

⁵ Livy 1.18

The historian Potter is not the only modern author to recount the tale of the twins, Cornell⁶ presents a version of the story. Cornell's version comes with the addition of the identification of the statue (above) as being made from Bronze and according to him being Archaic in origin dating to the sixth century B.C.

Both Potter and Cornell⁷ go on to talk about another possible origin story for the city of Rome. In this story Rome "was founded by a refugee named Aeneas, fleeing the sack of Troy by the Greeks." Like in the myth of Romulus and Remus, the story of Aeneas can



Figure 2: Aeneas on the Ara Pacis

also be seen in the art work of the Roman people. Perhaps one of the most famous depictions of Aeneas in Rome is on the Ara Pacis (Figure 2), which was a gift to Augustus from the senate. The reason for this image being present on the Ara Pacis is I think to make the people looking at it draw parallels between Augustus and Aeneas as 'fathers of Rome'.

In the ancient works we are told about this myth by the poet Virgil, who was writing under Augustus. When he talks about the poem Potter theorises that in the classic version of the story that was written by Virgil⁸ the story became a message of hope for the Romans who had survived the civil wars of the first century BC. As the Aeneid was written in the first century BC under Augustus it means that the poem and the story that it tells were undoubtedly crafted to coincide with his political agenda.

⁶ Cornell 1995 pp. 60-63

⁷ Cornell 1995

⁸ Virgil *Aeneid*

The difference between Greek and Roman myths

Roman mythology can be seen as both different and similar to the mythology of the ancient Greeks. I am going to be analysing how the similarities and the differences of the two separate mythologies can give an indication of the origins of religion in the Roman World.

In the Greek myths we get a lot of references to the fantastic due to the heavy influences of the writers of the subject like Homer⁹ in his *Odyssey*. These references to the fantastical include descriptions of monstrous other worldly creatures as well as descriptions of the god's antics when they change their forms.

An example of where the Greek world of myth and the Roman one intersects, is in the *Metamorphoses*, which is a book of poetry describing various Greek myths. The intersection comes in the form of the author, because even though the stories are about Greek legends it was written in the first century BC by the Roman poet Ovid¹⁰. As Ovid was writing under Augustus his work would most likely be influenced by Augustus' views of the world, and as Augustus was all about promoting wholesome living and family values, Ovid's portrayal of the Greeks in these stories as warriors and as monsters sends the message that to live a true Roman life the people must stay away from foreign influences like the Greeks.

It is not just in the poetry of Ovid where we can see evidence of intersections between the two mythologies, we can also see them when we look at the gods themselves as many of the Roman deities have been equated to the older Greek divinities. According to Beard¹¹ et al. archaeological evidence from the sixth century BC supports this claim as a dedication to the divine twins Castor and Pollux was found at Lavinium which uses a bastardisation of their

⁹ Homer *Odyssey*

¹⁰ Ovid *Metamorphoses*

¹¹ Beard et al. 1998

Greek title of the 'Dioscuri'. This then shows the similarities of the two religions as it shows the transference of gods from one culture to another.

More evidence that another Greek divinity was worshipped or at least known about in the sixth century BC is the crippled god Hephaestus. Evidence for the presence of the god during this century came from an excavation of the earliest levels of the Roman forum, where a sanctuary of the god Vulcan was found. The dating evidence that was found was a votive offering to the god in the form of an Athenian black-figure vase with a representation of the Greek god Hephaestus on it. Beard et al. proposed two different theories as to how a vase supporting the visage of a Greek god ended up in the earliest Roman forum. The first of these is that the vase was brought up to the city from the substantial Greek settlement in southern Italy. The second of the two theories that has been proposed is that the vase was taken to the temple by an Etruscan who had had trade dealings with the Greeks. This second theory while still being plausible is harder to see as even though the Etruscans were still around and trading, it cannot definitively be said that the person who placed the vase was of Etruscan descent but then again nor can it be said that they were of a Greek origin.

Priesthoods

It was during the reign of Rome's second king (Numa) that most of the priestly colleges were said to have been established as well as some of the city's other religious institutions. Numa was said to have been credited with not only the creation of the priests of Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus and the pontifices but also with the formation of the Salii priesthood. The Salii priests are known to be one of the oldest of the priestly colleges.

Numa was also known to be a peaceful person so, it then follows that he was the one who founded the temple to Janus, whose doors were to be shut whenever the city was not at war. Even though Numa founded the temple dedicated to Janus he did not organise a priesthood

for the god, therefore all dedications to the god were done by the Rex Sacrorum. The fact that the Rex Sacrorum was the one who performed the offerings to Janus shows how long the cult to the god had been around, as the Rex Sacrorum was a position that fell out of use in Rome's republican period due to the creation of the Pontifex Maximus position.

Phases of Roman religion

Bailey¹² says that "even before the early agricultural settlement had become the city of Rome there was an inward shifting in the conception of the divine beings." He then goes on to say that when comparing the Roman religious system to other early religions, it seems to be a normal progression for animism to turn into polytheism. From Bailey's explanation we can assume that this transition is quite normal when dealing with early religions. This can therefore give us an insight into how Roman religion became less about the *divine presence of being*, and more about the people's relationships with the numerous Roman deities.

Ferguson¹³ talks about how the religion of the Roman farm and home was not the same as the religion of the Roman state. While this statement that Ferguson makes does not say anything about how the phases of Roman religion change from one period in their history to the next, it does however, overtly imply that there were different belief systems held by the city and farm dwelling Romans than was accepted by the Roman state.

Ferguson then goes on to discuss Ceres and some of the other divinities that she is associated with. He talks about how about how the powers of these divine beings are rather impersonal. He names some deities like Neptunus, Portunus, Saturnus and Pales, when he does this, he says that their names are all in an adjectival form and that they seem to relate to the power of the divine being in question. The gods as just a power is an idea that is also thought up in the

¹² Bailey 1932

¹³ Ferguson 1987

ancient works by the warrior turned politician Julius Caesar¹⁴ where he talks about the gods as being just *Numina*, or the divine *presence of being*.

As I have previously said according to Bailey throughout its history the religion of Rome went through different phases. Bailey however says that it is not possible to date when the Romans stopped thinking of these divinities as *numen* and started to think of them as *deus*. He does, however, theorise that this change happened during the period before the Greek and Italian races separated from their Indo-European stock. This theory comes about because of two divinities that are seen in both the Greek and the Roman religions at opposite ends of the numen/deus spectrum.

The first of these being the hearth spirit Vesta (Greek: Hestia) who under either of these two similar religions never achieved the status of goddess. While Vesta was not perceived as a goddess in the archaic period, we know that she attained this status in the republican period, this reluctance to make her a goddess shows us how Vesta was seen by the people of archaic Rome. The second divinity, who is at the other end of the spectrum, is Jupiter (Greek: Zeus). According to Bailey both the Greek and the Romans identified him as clearly being the sky god, this is the case as far back as we can trace him. Jupiter has also been given the title *pater* (father) but according to Fowler¹⁵ this does not show “any physical fatherhood but rather the dependence of the human citizen on his divine protector.”

This division between the two divinities could then raise the question, *was there any religious gender segregation amongst the Roman deities?* I feel that this is a valid question as during my research every time that a male divinity was mentioned it was made very clear from the tone of the authors work that he was clearly a god. then when a female divinity is mentioned the tone is a little vaguer as to how she fits into the grand scheme of things. This can be seen

¹⁴ Caesar *De Bello Gallico* 16.3

¹⁵ Fowler 2018

in the archaic period when discussing the triad of gods with the original being very clearly male centric with Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus making up the trifecta. Then with the second triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva we see the introduction of two female divinities who are very clearly goddesses. So, it could be said that female divinities did not identify as goddesses until the introduction of this second triad.

Chapter 2: The divine Janus

Origins of Janus

The description of Janus' appearance and his sphere of influence in the ancient works comes mainly from Ovid and then is recounted in various modern publications, including Clayton, Schmidt and Bernes.¹⁶ The works of these historians have such similar descriptions when talking about the god Janus which suggests that their works are just a retelling of Ovid's work but with a modern spin to them.

The description given by Ovid,¹⁷ which is by far the most known and accepted, describes Janus in the following way: "*Two-headed Janus, origin of the quietly gliding year, who alone of the gods above can see your own back.*" This description is taken from the first couple of lines of the prayer to Janus. If we were to examine these lines in further detail, we can see three different things. The first is a physical description of the god as "*Two-headed*," the second, Janus' association with the month of January which is the month at the beginning of the year and the third is that he was unlike any of the other gods in his appearance.

We are told by Ovid¹⁸ that the god was carrying in one hand a staff and in the other a set of keys, which then leads into a description of his role amongst the gods. Janus, we are told by Ovid¹⁹ was known to have been the god of openings and closings, we can interpret this to mean beginnings and endings, which is what the god is most noted as representing (by Rose; 1948, Schmidt; 2004 and Clayton; 2017). Ovid goes on to expand on his description of the spheres in which Janus had influence by adding that as the god of openings Janus was also the gatekeeper to the gods and as such controlled all communication between the mortals

¹⁶ Clayton 2017, Schmidt 2004, Bernes 2015

¹⁷ Ovid *Fasti* 1.64-70

¹⁸ Ovid 1.99-254

¹⁹ Ovid 1.117-32

down below and the gods up above, which Ovid tells us is the reason that Janus is invoked first at every Roman religious gathering, so that he might allow the words of the mortals to reach their intended god or goddess.

Later in his work Ovid²⁰ recounts to us a conversation that took place between him and Janus, during which Janus reveals that “*The Ancients – I am a primitive phenomenon – used to call me Chaos*”. From this we can presume that Janus was indeed an old god as it was said that all life began with Chaos, so for Janus to have once been called Chaos it can then be inferred that not only is Janus important when discussing the origins of Roman religion, but he is also important for Rome’s universe creation myth. Ovid telling us that he was told this during a conversation with the god, can just be interpreted as him using his poetic licence. The concept of Janus being a personification of Chaos is a concept that we are also told about by Paul the Deacon²¹ who was writing during the 8th century A.D. This work comes with two drawbacks when discussing the origins of Roman religion. The first of these is that he is writing so much later than Ovid or any of our other ancient sources (none of which are contemporary with the period under discussion anyway) so the information that he gives us is very unreliable. The second drawback is that Paul gives us a different view into early Roman religion by looking at it from a Christian perspective. This while being a good thing in terms of varying sources, is also problematic as it means that Paul’s work should be viewed as though it has been heavily influenced by his own religious biases.

One intriguing hypothesis about Janus’ origin has been put forward by Berens²² and that is that Janus was once a Latin king, who was blessed by the god of agriculture (Saturn) when he arrived in Rome. This is an idea that stems from the work of Macrobius²³ and it shows a link

²⁰ Ovid 1.103

²¹ Paul the Deacon

²² Berens, 2015

²³ Macrobius 1.9

between the established religion of the Greeks and the origins of religion in Rome. This is because in ancient Greece Saturn was known as Cronos who in the myth of the Olympian gods was either killed by his children or exiled from their heavenly court.

Another interesting idea has been proposed by Nigidius Figulus²⁴ (98-45 BC) he says that Janus was an amalgamation of the god Apollo and his sister Diana, who were worshipped as personifications of the sun and moon. On the other hand, Schmidt²⁵ says that Janus was associated with the goddess Jana, who was both his wife and his sister. And Jana according to Macrobius²⁶ was just a variation of the goddess Diana, it could be from this that Nigidius Figulus came up with the idea that Janus was both Apollo and Diana rolled into one, or it could be that that Figulus misinterpreted his source and that it was Janus along with Jana who were viewed as versions of Apollo and Diana. Even though Ovid's work is one of the main sources of information for the origins of Roman religion he does not once mention Jana. As a follow up from this when searching for Jana in the modern works there are not many modern publications that mention Jana, apart from Ketutar Jensen²⁷ who says that Jana was the goddess of doorways, initiations, journey's and divination. In the description that Jensen gives about the goddess's physical appearance he says that she looks exactly the way that both the ancient and modern authors describe Janus, so this could mean that in making his assertions about Jana, Jensen has confused the goddess with the god. Then on the website raex.com²⁸ we get another description of the goddess's duties, she is still the consort of Janus, but it is claimed that she is the goddess of secrets, mysteries and hidden things, it is also claimed on this site that both Jana and Janus were Etruscan deities.

²⁴ Nigidius Figulus

²⁵ Schmidt, 2004

²⁶ Macrobius 1.9

²⁷ Jensen, 2010

²⁸ <http://web.raex.com/~obsidian/RomPan.html>



This image [Figure 3] shows a first century Bronze representation of Janus. The notable difference between this statue and others that exist is that one of the faces is clearly female, so, could this female face be the goddess Jana as described by Macrobius and Jensen.

As I have previously stated in Jensen's description of

Jana, he equates the goddess with Diana but what was not said is that he also says that Jana

Figure 3: Janus statue with female face

was likened to Juno. He claims that the month of June,

which many presume to have been renamed in honour of the goddess Juno was in actuality renamed in honour of Jana.

The previous concept as put forward by Nigidius Figulus was then reiterated in a fashion by the modern scholar Matt Clayton²⁹ who says that Janus was a combination of two different deities. In his version Clayton, disagrees with Figulus when it comes to which deities Janus was a combination of. As according to him Janus was the combined form of the Etruscan deities Ana, the goddess of beginnings, and Aita, the god of endings as well as the underworld. In my opinion, I feel that this theory of Clayton's that Janus was the combination of the two Etruscan deities holds more credence than that put forward by Figulus, as the spheres of Ana and Aita equate to the spheres of influence held by Janus.

Festivals and celebrations

In this section of the chapter, I aim to introduce the idea of the Roman calendar and the problems that we have when interpreting the earliest versions of said calendar. This section will also look at some of the key religious festivals that were said to have taken place in the

²⁹ Clayton 2017

month of January, then using critical analysis I have to look at the evidence for the existence of these festivals and their potential relationship to the god Janus.

Speaking further regarding the Roman calendar, the month of January was said to have been named after the god Janus, as it was the beginning of the year and he was the god of beginnings. Within the month there are days set aside for different religious celebrations, the first of these being dedicated to Janus on the 9th of the month. Further, according to both



Figure 4: Fragments from one of Rome's early calendars

Scullard³⁰ and Altheim³¹ this day of celebration is also known as the Agonalia which is also celebrated at other points throughout the year, with each occasion being in honour of a different deity.

We can also see evidence of the Agonalia festival in the epigraphy, we have this inscription [Figure 4] which shows fragments of the pre-Julian Roman

calendar. According to tradition, the calendar we are told,

was originally set up by Rome's second king, Numa.

Looking at the inscription we can see the letters AGON next to the 9th January, so we assume that they refer to the Agonalia festival, there is however, nothing on the inscription that can link the festival to the god Janus.

When it was celebrated on the 9th January to honour Janus, a ram would have been ritually sacrificed. It is not made clear however, why a ram was chosen as the sacrificial animal as there does not seem to be any correlation between the animal and the god. We do have a written record of one of these sacrifices as it occurred at the ritual of Arval Brethren, a

³⁰ Scullard 1981

³¹ Altheim 1938

priestly order who made these ritual sacrifices to both the Lares and to other deities in order to guarantee a good harvest. There are other celebratory festivals in January and while the link to Janus is tenuous at best if we analyse what the festivals celebrate, we can see a sort of link back to the god of beginnings.

We know from Ovid that the Agonalia festival was presided over by the Rex Sacrorum (king of the sacred rites). The presence of the Rex Sacrorum at the festival shows us how old the festival is, as we know that during the republican period there were many priestly colleges as well as a pontifex maximus to oversee them. This fact shows us not only how old the festival is but also what it means for the origins of the sacred rites in the archaic period as well as Rome's religious origins.

One of these other festivals falls on two separate days in the month that being on both the 11th and the 15th January and it is called the Carmentalia festival³². The festival was dedicated to the goddess Carna (originally Cranae), who Ovid³³ tells us was the goddess of technological innovation as well as childbirth and prophecy. The festival occurs during the month of January because in my opinion in her role as the goddess of childbirth her sphere of divine influence overlaps with that of Janus as after all, every new life is a new beginning. Scullard³⁴ goes on to theorise as to why the festival was held on two separate days with an intervening three days between them, he postulates that the separate days for celebrating is a holdover from when the people of the Sabine 'tribe' and the people who would become the Romans lived on hills right beside each other (the Palatine hill and the Quirinal hill).

In the ancient texts however, Ovid³⁵ states that the two dates for the festival comes from the early Roman senate bowing to the demands of women after they refused to give birth again

³² Scullard 1981, Altheim 1938

³³ Ovid 6.101-28

³⁴ Scullard 1981

³⁵ Ovid 1.467-538

until they were given the permission of the senate to ride in carriages, a right which had been denied them up until then. There is another reason for the Carmentalia festival being linked to Janus and that is the festival's physical location regarding the oldest temple of Janus, which Altheim³⁶ tells us "lay in front of the Porta Carmentalis." We are told that there are a couple more festivals that are celebrated in January, with the next major festival taking place on the 27th of the month. This festival was the festival of sowing known as the *feriae sementivae*, (belonging to the *feriae conceptivae*). This festival like with the Carmentalia is concerned with the celebration of beginnings, in this case of earthly growth.

The type of festival that is celebrated during this month seems indicative of a deliberately devised order or shaping of ritual festivals, which seems to suit definite conceptions of the ordering of Roman festivals throughout the calendar year. This then helps us to get a sense of the origins of religion in general within the earliest settlements of Rome, as it shows us what the first Roman people thought was important enough to be presided over by the *numina* of a god. However, the previous statements can only be considered true if there was a conscious decision made in the way that they have arranged the festival dates. Otherwise having the two festivals that seem to have a strong connection to Janus (for whom the month is named) would be just happenstance and if that were the case then what we can learn from their occurrence within the year becomes less than if they were deliberately scheduled to be this way.

Relationship to other deities

After talking about Janus and how through his sacred month he is linked to certain festivals as well as the other deities mentioned with varying degrees of strength behind the links between them, I am now going to discuss some other divinities to which Janus has a more

³⁶ Altheim 1938

substantial relationship and how these relations affect how the earliest forms of Roman religion are perceived in the modern day. Even though Ovid does often make his works sound fantastical to entice his first century B.C audience, he is still one of the better sources of information pertaining to Rome's religious history.

The first of these divinities that relate to Janus that I will be discussing is the god of agriculture, Saturn. Saturn is the deity who had the closest connection to Janus, as he was said to have been received by Janus when he was still a mortal man and bestowed upon him his divine visage. This idea that Janus was once a mortal man is another potential origin story for the god that we get from some of the modern scholars writing in this field (e.g. Bernes,³⁷Schmidt³⁸ and Wiseman³⁹) who are probably drawing on the work of the ancient writer Macrobius⁴⁰ who is one of the earliest sources of information regarding this proposed origin story.

The next of these entities that I will discuss will be the goddess Juno, who has become equated with the Greek Hera. According to Ovid Janus was nervous around the queen of the heavens. Ovid⁴¹ then tells us that Janus “feared to start a fight with so powerful a deity”, which is supposedly why he was nervous of her. In the lines leading up to this Janus explains that he is referring to Saturn's oldest daughter, this is how we equate Juno with Hera, as Saturn in his Greek form was Cronos, the father of the Olympians. These lines can also be used to show the goddesses origins within Roman religion as well as the two-faced god. However, we know this because Ovid is once again recounting a conversation that he

³⁷ Bernes 2015

³⁸ Schmidt 2004

³⁹ Wiseman 1995

⁴⁰ Macrobius 1.9

⁴¹ Ovid 1.267

supposedly had with a god, which as I have previously stated was probably done to entice his readers.

A third divinity, who has close ties to Janus is the nymph Cranae who according to Ovid⁴² was made goddess of hinges by Janus. Ovid tells us in this passage that Janus made her into a goddess as a reward for sleeping with him. Ovid also explains that as a nymph Cranae would often lead men into the darkest and most remote of caves and then when the man that she was with was not looking, she would hide but as Janus can see what is behind him, he saw her attempt to hide. This passage that describes Janus' romantic entanglement also gives another description of both the god's appearance and how his two faces function. The passage also gives an insight into the Roman religious system as it shows a possible way for a new god to come into being. There is a slight problem with the story of how the two divine creatures came together, which Ovid alludes to when he talks about Cranae and how she got her power he says that *"From where she has the powers given to her is a story that time has made rather obscure."*

In this section of my chapter on the divine Janus I have shown Janus' relationship to some of the other divinities of the period, to do this I have critically engaged with both ancient and modern takes on the god's relationships. I have also expressed my opinions of the strength of the arguments made by some of the authors that I have taken evidence from.

Temple of Janus

Going back to the temple of Janus, we get told about the temple and its significance in the ancient works by Livy.⁴³ He tells us that the temple of Janus was built by the second king of

⁴² Ovid 6.119-30

⁴³ Livy 1.19

Rome, Numa, as a way of distracting the warlike citizens of the ‘city’, as well as promoting some of the various priesthoods that existed such as the Salii priesthood and those dedicated to the first triad of gods. Livy then informs us that the construction of the temple to Janus was one of Numa’s most famous architectural undertakings. The problem with what Livy tells us is that he does not tell us about any of the other religious architectural projects that Numa oversaw during his reign as king. Although by not telling us about the other temples this could highlight how important the temple of Janus really was.

It is not just Livy who describes the temple to Janus. Plutarch⁴⁴ in his life of Numa also gives us a description of the temple. Plutarch calls the temple “*the gates of Janus*” which refers to the idea that the temple was really two sets of gates at the opposite end of a corridor with a statue of the god in between them. Plutarch then refers to the meaning behind the gates of Janus, saying that they are opened in times of war so that Janus can aid the Roman soldiers in combat. He then says that when there is peace throughout the Roman world the gates of Janus are closed to symbolise the cities state of peace.

Coarelli⁴⁵ in his archaeological guide gives a description of the temple’s location within the city when he says that the temple of Janus stood alongside the Argiletum which was a street that ran between the Basilica Fulvia – Aemilia and the Curia towards the Subura. He then goes on to explain that the small building originally housed the oldest and most important sanctuary that was dedicated to the god. When describing the temple, the description that is given is much the same as the one in Plutarch with the temple being just a corridor with a statue of the two-faced god in its centre. Coarelli as a modern archaeologist who draws on the works of others in his field to make the statement that:

⁴⁴ Plutarch *Plutarch’s Lives vol.1* pp 74-93

⁴⁵ Coarelli, 2007 p.51

“some have suggested that this monument was an ancient gate of the city, enlarged to include the Capitoline; others maintained that it functioned as a kind of bridge on the Velabrum.”



Figure 5: Roman coin with image of the gates of Janus on it.

He then goes on to say that this coin [Figure 5] preserves the only image of the building, whose doors were opened in times of war and closed in times of peace. A statement much like the ones taken from the ancient authors.

Speaking more on this claim about the symbolism of the

doors being opened and closed depending on the state of

peace throughout the Roman world. I have, in my research,

found three mentions of the gates of Janus being closed, although not in the archaic period.

Plutarch⁴⁶ dates the first two closings to 29 B.C and 25 B.C which are the dates for Augustus' defeat of Mark Anthony at Actium as well as the consular reign of Marcus Atilius and Titus Manlius (respectively).

The dating of the third closing is a little trickier, the only ancient source to mention it, is the writer Orosius,⁴⁷ who equates the closing to the birth of Christ in A.D. 1, the problem with this is that it is never explained how the birth of Christ would have impacted the Roman people.

As I said Orosius was the only ancient writer to date the third closing of the gates, but there are three modern scholars who have speculated on the date of this closing. Both Inez Scott Ryberg⁴⁸ and Gaius Stern⁴⁹ believe the closing to have occurred in 13 BC after Augustus and Agrippa returned from pacifying Rome's imperial provinces. Sir Ronald Syme⁵⁰, however,

⁴⁶ Plutarch *Plutarch's Lives vol 1*. pp. 74-93

⁴⁷ Orosius

⁴⁸ Ryberg 1949

⁴⁹ Stern 2004

⁵⁰ Syme 1978

dates the closure to 7 BC to coincide with the triumph of Tiberius as well as his second consulship. Syme's dating could be considered flawed as we know from other historical documentation that Augustus reigned as the *princeps* from 27 B.C until his death in 14 AD. These dates presented by the three modern scholars is problematic as the dating of all the closings requires there to be records of the gates opening and closing. The dating of all these closings, however, are almost inconsequential as they do not relate to the archaic period. Although they maybe, relevant as it proves the claims of Ovid, Livy, Plutarch and the modern scholars that the gates of Janus were to be closed in times of peace and opened in times of war.

Coarelli also states that at the time he published his work a hypothesis was made that claimed that "the small brick structure on the southwestern corner of the basilica is to be identified as the temples last reconstruction, following the fire of 410 AD." A problem with what Coarelli says is that he does not reference his work, apart from the bibliography, so it is impossible to say where he sources his information.

Coarelli⁵¹ then goes on to suggest that during Rome's republican period, in the forum Holitorium, there are visible ruins of three republican temples. These temples are believed to have been dedicated to the divinities Janus, Spes and Juno Sospita. It is difficult to determine which of the temples belonged to which divinity, but the temple that was closest to the theatre of Marcellus was believed to have been the one built by C. Duilius during the first Punic war in honour of Janus. Another problem with Coarelli's work, in particularly when he refers to Rome's republican period, is that he does not analyse the relationship of the gods / goddesses he writes about. Nor does he explain their relationships to one another or why these gods were chosen to be worshipped in this location at this time.

⁵¹ Coarelli, 2007 p. 314

Chapter 3: The etymology of the names of Roman gods

In this chapter, I will be attempting to analyse the etymology of the names of Roman deities and how they have been influenced by the religions of foreign lands as well as the influences of the Etruscan society, that was dominant in Italy prior to the founding of Rome.

When looking at the general problems involving etymology, we can be somewhat reassured that “ancient etymology is such a well-established modern scholarly interest.”⁵² Which means that there should be a lot of work done in the field, but just how much of it pertains to the archaic period in Rome’s history is the question that is most relevant to my work within this chapter, as I will be questioning the validity of the information that is presented to me concerning this subject area. Having established that ancient etymology is a recognised field of study I will now state some of the more general problems I feel surround the subject area. Firstly, one of problems relates to both change and the evolution of language, to explain as civilisations exist for centuries it is likely that the language they use will evolve and mutate so much so that it may be unrecognisable from the first time the language was spoken aloud. This means that we have to be cautious of the usefulness and accuracy of our Latin dictionaries. Secondly, when researchers in this area chose to publish their works onto generic websites, they do not have to provide references, so it is hard to verify the information that has been provided. Speaking now, on a of the problems that arrive when looking into the etymologies of the names of the Roman deities, because some of the deities are believed to appear in more than one ancient religious system it is very hard to find the true root meaning of their names, so, in this chapter I have chosen to present likely name origins as given by the Romans, Etruscans and the Indo-Europeans.

⁵² Cairns 2013

The first name that I shall be analysing is that of the god Janus, who is the main subject of my research. In the Latin Janus is actually spelt Ianus and, according to the Oxford Pocket Latin Dictionary,⁵³ the name of the god stems from the root word 'ire' meaning 'to go'. The root word for Ianus' name being the Latin term for 'to go' makes sense as it describes one of the possible functions for a doorway, for which Ianus was responsible in the ancient Roman religious system.

I shall now be looking at the deity to whom he had the closest association with, the god Saturn whose name is thought to have been derived from the Latin word Saturnus. Even though this is a common conception in the readings that I done there is no clear consensus as to where the word originally comes from beyond it being an old Latin term. Having said that Ovid⁵⁴ says that when the god Saturn arrived on the shores of the land that would become Latium the people came up with the word Saturnian, which in terms of the origins of the gods name makes me wonder if the word was in honour of the god or whether the god was named so, because of this new word.

I will be analysing the names of the gods belonging to the first and second triad of Roman gods. I will be starting with the first triad, Mars, Quirinus and Jupiter, the first of these three gods that I will be analysing will be the god Mars.

Mars was arguably the most important deity in the Roman pantheon of gods, as he was the supposed father of the semi-divine mythical twins and the founders of Rome Romulus and Remus. The origin of Mars' name, according to the website BehindtheName.com⁵⁵, was the Latin root word 'mas' which means 'male'. Mars, unlike Janus, was said to have appeared in other mythologies, in other forms, the most notable of these appearances in other mythologies

⁵³ Oxford Pocket Latin Dictionary 1994

⁵⁴ Ovid 1.237-9

⁵⁵ BehindtheName.com, 2017

is when he is equated with the ancient Greek god of war, Ares. The connection between these deities can be traced through both of the root words from which their separate names are derived. This is because just as Mars could be considered to be derived from the Latin word for 'male' Ares could possibly be derived from the Greek word 'arsen' which also means 'male' in the English translation of the word. This connection between the two gods and the transliteration of their names also makes sense when looking at their characters within the ancient myths, in the Roman myths involving Mars he is portrayed as a father figure as well as a protector which in the ancient Roman world were very masculine qualities. Ares in the ancient Greek myths is also portrayed in a very masculine way he, however, is portrayed as being quite hostile and always up for a fight, which helps to explain his link to Sparta as the Spartan men were considered to have been the greatest warriors in the ancient Greek world. This connection Ares had to the Greek polis of Sparta could then be used to explain why in the republican period Mars became even more warlike than a protector of the city, as elite Romans would often visit Sparta to look around, treating the polis as we in the modern day treat would treat museums, they would often take back momentos of their trips. Therefore, it could be plausible that around the time this started to happen one of the elite Romans might have seen how the god Ares' name was derived from the word for male in the ancient Greek and decided to equate him to the god Mars. However, according to Ovid⁵⁶, Mars was worshipped in Rome from very early on which he conveys through a speech made by Rome's founder Romulus where he says "Ruler of arms, from whose blood I am believed to be born from you we name the start of the Roman year (March). The first month shall be from my father's name." this shows that Mars was worshipped from the start of Rome's history but

⁵⁶ Ovid 3.74-76

Ovid⁵⁷ then goes on to say that earlier people also worshipped Mars as a god of war and according to him that is because the early inhabitants of Italy were a war-like people.

The second god in the triad that I will be analysing is the god Quirinus. Quirinus, would in the later period become so similar to the god Mars that he started to be identified as Mars and stopped being a separate divine being. Having spoken about his later life I should go on to talk about the origins of his name. Quirinus, according to the Behind the Name website⁵⁸, stems from the Sabine word '*quiris*' which is believed to have meant 'spear'. Quirinus, name could have also come from the Quirinal hill, on which he had his temple. In the mythology of Rome Quirinus was believed to be the name under which Romulus was worshipped as a god and protector of the city armed with his spear, which is probably where the Sabine root for the gods name comes from.

The third member of this first Roman triad whom I shall be discussing the etymology of is the only one of the three to appear in both triads, the god Jupiter or Iupiter in the Latin. Jupiter is thought to be inspired by the Indo-European Dyeus-Pater. Dyeus is believed to be translated to mean either 'sky' or 'shine', which makes sense as Jupiter was the Roman god of the sky. The pater in the Indo-European name translates from Latin as 'father' which like with the Dyeus fits in with the character of the god as he was considered to be the supreme authority figure amongst the gods and the father of a Roman family was seen as the authority figure within a particular family unit.

The next god in the second triad is the female deity Juno. The exact meaning behind Juno's name is currently unknown, but it has been suggested that her name stems from the Indo-European word for 'youth'. This idea is however, contested by the argument that her name is actually of Etruscan origin as she has been equated with the goddess of love, marriage and

⁵⁷ Ovid 3.80-1

⁵⁸ Behindthename.com

supreme goddess of the Etruscan religion, Uni, who herself formed a triad in their religion with her husband Tinia and daughter Menrva. Livy⁵⁹ states that Juno was the Etruscan goddess of Veientes, who he says was adopted into the Roman pantheon of gods in 396 BC after the sacking of the Etruscan city of Veii.

The final deity whose name etymology I will be analysing is the third member of the second Roman triad of gods, Minerva goddess of wisdom. Minerva's name possibly stems from the Latin word 'mens' which means 'intellect' and as the goddess of wisdom this explanation for her name makes sense. Her name, however, is so similar to that of the Etruscan deity Menrva that I wonder whether her name was just a Latinised version of the Etruscan name. To support my theory if we look at the character of the Etruscan deity we can see that she is also revered as the goddess of wisdom by the Etruscan people, and if we look and compare the archaeological evidence for the Etruscan goddess, [Figure 6] which shows two crude 'coins' with the goddess' face on them from Populonia in the third century BC, to the archaeological evidence for the Roman deity Minerva [Figure 7] we can see that the headdresses on the two images are so similar that they could be one in the same. This then aids my argument that the goddess Minerva is just a Latinised version of the Etruscan Menrva.



Figure 6: Menrva 3rd century coins



Figure 7: Statue of Minerva from 263/2 BC

⁵⁹ Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* Book V

Conclusion / Summary

Throughout this piece of work, I have tried to show how the religious system of Rome's archaic / regal period developed. To do this I have used and critically analysed source material that is as close to the period in Rome's history that has also been a part of the discussion of Rome's religious beginnings. Not only have I analysed the ancient literary sources, but I have also examined the archaeological evidence that survives from this period, although this was done by looking at photographic evidence of the surviving material. The evidence that I have engaged with includes but is not limited to town plans, temple structures, statuary evidence as well as coinage that dates from the Etruscan occupation of Rome in its very early years. My engagement with this evidence involved the discussion of scholarly debate surrounding some of these artefacts, as research into this topic area is still ongoing and new discoveries and interpretations are still being made. Also, in this piece of work I set about to write three chapters that show, in my opinion, different things that could be used to answer the question, what are the origins of Roman religion in the archaic / regal period?

The first chapter that I wrote was on the origins of religion in Rome, this chapter was a general introduction to the subject of Roman religion. The chapter is then split into different subheadings that each portray an aspect of what religion seems to have been made up of in the ancient Roman world. One of these sub-sections is on the mythical foundation of Rome and although I have shown the two most widely accepted myths about Rome's foundation I have not mentioned the possibility that Rome might have been a city founded by the Etruscans who had settled in Italy before the founding of the city of Rome. The main point from this chapter I feel though comes at the beginning when I quote Ferguson saying that there is no equivalent word in the language of the ancient Romans for religion, so their

concept of religion would be different to our own modern preconceptions of the word / concept.

The second chapter that I wrote, is the main section of my work, is on what I have coined the ‘divine Janus.’ I made the decision to focus my research on Janus above all of the other Roman deities because I felt like that as a god that was considered to be completely Roman he would provide a rather unique case study, as I could go into more detail about the origins of religion in Rome, than any of the other deities who were considered to have had equivalent deities in other religions of the same period. Also, in this chapter, like the previous chapter, I split it into different sub-headings each of which I believe contribute to the discussion of the god. It is in this chapter that the discussions about the archaeology from the period happens as I talk more in depth about the physical evidence that still survives, while engaging with modern scholars and their interpretations of the artefacts, to which I have added my own beliefs based on the research I have done. When talking about the artefacts I have tried to question the authenticity of some of these artefacts as almost all of them date to periods after the archaic / regal period which is a part of the topic of discussion in my work. There is one challenge with this chapter however, and that has to do with the ancient source material, the main source of information being Ovid who writes so much later, with a lot of what he has written being subject to his poetic licence. Added to the issues surrounding the ancient source material is the conflict that appears in modern scholarship, which although being good for critical analysis and debate makes it hard to come up with a definitive answer on the subject e.g. they differ on the dates of closing of the ‘gates of Janus’.

In the third chapter I discuss the etymology of the names of some of the different Roman gods, I do once again mention Janus, but since I have just dedicated an entire chapter to a study of the god in this chapter I chose to focus on some of the other divinities that were worshipped in Rome. The divinities I focused on mainly were the five deities that made up

the two triads of gods in the early Rome (which in itself was a concept taken from the Etruscans). I focused on the two triads because they were thought to have been worshipped in the Capitolium on the Capitoline hill which is believed to have been one of the oldest temples in Rome. The triads can also give an insight into the origins of Roman religion as they are seen to evolve from an entirely male, and very warlike triad of Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus, to a more feminine and more family centric triad involving Juno, Minerva and to show his importance to the Romans Jupiter, who makes an appearance in both of the triads.

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