THE ANCIENT ROMAN ORIGIN OF THE
SALVATIO ROMAE LEGEND

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Oegstgeest

At an unknown point of time somewhere in the late 12th or the early 13th century a tourist, of whom we only know that he was called Magister Gregorius, visited the city of Rome. At the urgent request of his friends (multo sociorum meorum rogatu) he wrote an account of what he saw and learned there. The text has come down to us in a late 13th century copy, which was discovered in 1917 by M. R. James, who published it in The English Historical Review.\footnote{M. R. James, The English Historical Review, 32, 1919, 531-554.}

Since then it has received the attention it deserves owing to several republications, among which especially G. Mc. N. Rushforth's\footnote{G. Mc. N. Rushforth in: J.R.S. 9, 1919, 14-58; further: R. Valentini e G. Zucchetti, Codice topografico della città di Roma, III, Roma, 1946, 143-167; R. B. C. Huygens, Magister Gregorius, Narracio de mirabilibus urbis Rome, Leiden, 1970, whose text I follow.} should be mentioned on account of his archaeological commentary. Gregorius' Narracio owes its importance to various circumstances which make it more valuable to us than earlier guides to Rome, such as the Graphia aureae Romae\footnote{Text: Codice topografico, III, 77-110. Literature: ibid., 67-76; F. Schneider, Rom und Romgedanken im Mittelalter, München, 1925 (Photogr. reprint, Darmstadt, 1959), 171-178; R. Weiss, The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity, Oxford, 1969, 8; Manitius, Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters, III, 1931, 246.} and the tract Mirabilia included in it, which in a divergent version has come down to us independently.\footnote{Text: Codice topografico, III, 17-65; Literature: ibid., 3-16; Schneider, o.c. 172 ff; Weiss, o.c., 6 ff; Manitius, o.c., 245 ff; A. Graf, Roma nella memoria e nelle immaginazioni del medio evo, Torino, I, 1882, 56-77; H. Jordan, Topographie der Stadt Rom im Altertum, 2, 357-536.} Gregorius visited Rome and saw its wonders with his own eyes, which possibly distinguishes him from the authors of the other Baedekers mentioned, whose names are unknown to us. Of more importance to us is the fact that Gregory represents a tradition different from theirs: indeed, there is even no evidence that he...
knew the *Mirabilia*, which subsequently became so famous.¹ His sources were not primarily literary ones: next to the autopsy, he depended in the first place on the information by word of mouth which he could obtain on the spot. Added to this the *magister*, unlike his predecessors, gives evidence of a certain—though rudimentary—critical reserve towards his informants: thus, in the interpretation of antique monuments he clearly prefers the information he received from *cardinales et cleric* to the fables of *peregrini* or the *populus Romanus*.² He interlards these data with quotations from the antique authors whose writings he knows: Lucan, Virgil, Ovid, Horace and Juvenal, while for some parts of his work he bases himself on the only mediaeval work of which we are sure that he used it: the treatise *De septem Miraculis mundi*,³ a survey of the seven wonders of the world, which was at one time—erroneously—attributed to Bede, but at any rate dates back to before the 10th century, in the opinion of most specialists even to the 8th, and which was based on late antique thought.

In order to give an idea of what we may and may not expect from this author I have deliberately selected, not one of the most extreme examples of speculation and phantasy, but one in which both positive and negative aspects become evident. In *caput* 22 G. describes an *archus triumphalis Augusti Caesaris* that is said to have stood in the neighbourhood of the Pantheon, which is possible. First he gives the dedicatory inscription: *Ob orbe dem devictum Romano regno restitutum et r.p. per Augustum receptam populus Romanus hoc opus condidit*. It has long since been shown that this cannot have been the authentic text, as the term *regnum* for Augustan monuments is impossible. As other parts of the inscription seem genuine, we may assume with Rushforth "that we have here not the actual words, but a summary of the inscription, perhaps given to Gregory by one of his learned Roman informants." ⁴

¹ "If Gregory knew of the *Mirabilia* he ignored it." (Rushforth, 14). Also: James, 539; *Codice topografico*, III, 138; Manitius, III, 253.
² *Cap.* 4; 15; 27; 29.
⁴ O.c.39.
Then follows a description of the triumph of Augustus represented on the arcus, and the scene of the death of Cleopatra, of whom Gregory says: *superba mulier moritura pallescit;* clearly a reminiscence of Horace and Virgil, and certainly not a fruit of Gregory's own observation, since the *pallor* of Cleopatra cannot have been more noticeable on the entirely marble arch than that of the other figures. Gregory knows many details of the Roman triumph. He cannot have *observed* that Augustus wore a *togam auro et gemmis intextam.* He must have learned from literary sources that: *Erant bella eius et actus strenui lingua omnium gentium que Rome habitabant composita, que legere et cantare in triumpho populus non cessabat.* The sentence: *Celebri itaque cantu et inenarrabili iocunditate ipsum in Tarpeiam rupem usque ad Capitolium perduxerunt* recalls the *loqui militares,* mentioned by Livy, who accompanied the *imperator* on his triumph.

However in the sentence that follows, Gregory slips. He tells us: *ipse arma, quibus in bello usus fuerat et que hosti manu propria detraxerat, obtulit et in tolis signum tante victorie suspendit.* Here, too, part of his report is based on tradition, but on one connected with a different ceremony: the rite of the *spolia opima,* the armour that *dux duci detraxit,* and which was indeed dedicated in a temple, that of Iuppiter Feretrius. These *spolia opima* were captured only three times in the history of Rome, but not by Augustus—much to his sorrow!

We could illustrate by many more examples what has already

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1 Carm. i, 37, 30 ff: *invidens / privata deduci superbo / non humilis mulier triumpho.*
2 Aen. 8, 709 f: *Iam inter caedes pallentem morte suam / fecerat Igniotens.*
3 Gregorius, cap. 22; 398: *est archus ipse marmoreus.*
4 Liv. 3, 29, 5.
6 Liv. 4, 20, 6. Varro reports that *opima spolia esse etiam, si manipularis miles detraxerit dummodo duci hostium* (Festus, 204, L). Of course this does not refer to Augustus.
7 With all the means at his disposal Augustus even prevented M. Licinius Crassus, who had killed king Deldo of the Bastarnes with his own hand, from dedicating the *spolia opima* to Iuppiter Feretrius. Literature: *Triumphus,* 307.
become sufficiently apparent: Gregory knows a great deal, and his knowledge is partly based on solid antiquarian tradition. However, he uses his knowledge rather freely so that facts that are correct in themselves appear in the wrong context.

We may say that for Magister Gregorius the opinion of Schneider\(^1\) on the author of the *Mirabilia* holds good: "Seine Ergebnisse sind durchaus wertlos. Nur die Tatsachen, die er als Unterlagen seiner Ideen überliefert, sind von Wert und zwar von allerhöchsten".

In this article I intend to investigate the antique "Unterlagen" of one of Gregory’s statements. First I shall give the text, *caput* 8, in the version of Huygens.

De multitudine statuarum. Inter universa opera monstruosa que Rome quondam fuerunt, magis miranda est multitud o statuarum que 'Salvacio civium' dicebantur. Hec arte magica fuit consecratio statuarum omnium gentium que Romano regno subiecte fuerunt. Nulla etenim gens sive regio subiecta fuit Romano imperio, cuius imago in quadam domo ad has consecrata non esset. Huius autem domus magna pars parietum adhuc restat et cripte eius horride et inaccessible vis apparent. In hac quondam domo predicte imaginex ex ordine stabant et quotibet imago nomen gentis illius, cuius imaginem tenebat, in pectore scriptum habebat et tintinnabulum argentem, quia omni metallo sonorius est, unaqueque in collo gerebat, erantque sacerdotes die ac nocte semper vigilantes, qui eas custodiebant. Et si qua gens in rebellionem consurgere conabatur in imperium Romanorum, protinus statua illius movebatur et tintinnabulum in collo eius sonuit et statim scriptum nomen illius ymaginis sacerdos principibus deportabat. Erat autem supra domum hiis ymaginis consecratam miles eunus cum equo suo, semper concordans motui imaginis lanceamque apud illam gentem dirigens, cuius ymago movebatur. Hoc itaque non dubio indicio premoniti, Romani principes sine mora exercitum ad rebellionem illius gentis reprimendam direxerunt, qui sepium hostes antequam arma et impedimenta parassent prevenientes, facile et sine sanguine eos sibi subiugaverunt. Furtur autem in eadem domo ignem inextinguibilem fusisse. De hoc autem mirando opere artifex sciscitatus quam diu duraret, respondit illud duraturum donec virgo pararet.

\(^1\) Schneider, 177.
Dicunt autem ingenti ruina militem prefatum cum domo sua corruisse ea nocte, qua Christus natus fuit de Virgine, et lumen illud ficticium et magicum extunctum est iure, cum lux vera et sempiterna oriri cepisset. Credibile est et malignum hostem potenciam fallendi homines deseruisse, cum deus homo esse cepisset.

Two parts may be distinguished in this legend: 1. the description of the group of statues called Salvacio civium, 2. the mention of a fire that is extinguished when Christ is born. The link between these two elements is formed by the bronze horseman who on the one hand plays a part in the Salvacio civium and on the other hand causes the extinction of the fire by his fall.

The legend of the premonitory statues ¹ can already be found in the 8th century in Cosmas of Jerusalem.² From the same period dates the De septem miraculis mundi—one of Gregory’s sources as we saw—in which this group of statues for the first time bears the name of Salvatio Romae.³ However, there is (as yet) no mention of any fall of a statue or statues here. From a Syro-Christian source ⁴ we do know a legend relating that Cyrus had statues of gods in his palace, one of which foretold the birth of Christ and the downfall of the pagan gods. A pseudo-Matthew gospel ⁵ reports that in Egypt 365 statues prostrated themselves before Mary. This motif, which is found in many places, must have mixed with the purely Roman Salvatio Romae, and the 12th century Mirabilia represent an interim phase of this process. In this work we already find a description of the Salvatio-group of statues ⁶ which is practically identical with the one in Gregory’s account—in fact, both descriptions are based on the Septem miracula—and, separately, the an-

¹ Discussed extensively by Graf, I, 188-213; Schneider, 163-166; Cf. Rushforth, 24; Codice topografico, III, 35 f n. 1; Omont, 40-59.
² Commentarii in sancti Gregorii Nazianzeni carmina, Migne, Patr. Graeca, XXXVIII, 545-6.
⁴ E. Bratke, Das sogenannte Religionsgespräch am Hof der Sassaniden (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der alt-christlichen Literatur) N.F.IV, 3, 1899. Cf. Schneider, 165.
⁵ Pseudo-Mattheus, cap. 22. Schneider, 165.
⁶ Mirabilia, cap. 16: Codice topografico, III, 34; Graphia, cap. 29: Codice topografico, III, 87.
nouncement of the fall of a statue. ¹ This is the statue of Romulus, who on erecting it is reported to have said: non cadet, donec virgo pariat, and, as the text has it: Statim, ut virgo peperit, illa corruit.

The final phase of the blending-process is to be found in Gregory. He combines the Salvatio-group with the statue that falls when Christ is born, but it is no longer the statue of Romulus but that of a mysterious bronze horseman, who in his fall drags down the entire Salvatio.² However, Gregory adds one element which is not to be found either in the Septem miracula or in the Mirabilia: the mention of an inextinguishable fire which is also destroyed in the general Götterdämmerung. The surmise seems plausible that here Gregory followed a tradition of his clerici and cardinales and therefore, possibly, struck a purely Roman source. I hope to make it plausible that this is indeed a fact, and at the same time I shall endeavour, with the fire as the source of my inspiration, to answer the question as to the origin of this marvellous group of statues with its beautiful name.

It is remarkable that the identity of the legendary ignis inextinguibilis should not have been discerned by the various commentators. An inextinguishable fire in ancient Rome cannot but evoke immediate associations with the eternal fire of Vesta, burning in the Aedes Vestae, constantly guarded by the Virgines Vestales, the custodes flammarae.³ On closer inspection we find that in this case there is not only an association, but indeed an identity of the two fires. In discussing some features of the Vesta-cult I shall rigorously omit everything that is not relevant to our subject, nor shall I venture into the field of the interpretation of the nature of this goddess.⁴

¹ Mirabilia, cap. 6: Codice topografico, III, 21; Graphia, cap. 17: Codice topografico III, 82.
² This theme is also found in De naturis rerum II, cap. 174 and De laudibus sapienciae divinae, IV, 309 by the 12th century author Alexander Neckam, and in Guillaume le Clerc, ed. V. Stengel, Mittheilungen aus französischen Handschriften der Turiner Universitätsbibliothek, Halle, 1873, 14 n. 18. In other sources the statues have been replaced by a magic mirror: Graf, I, 205 ff.
The focus of the Vesta-religion was the fire that burned in a *locus intimus in aede Vestae*,¹ and which represented the hearth-fire of the State. The fact that the fire was lit anew each year on the first of March² need in itself not be contradictory to predicates such as *sempiternus*,³ *aeternus*,⁴ *perpetuus*⁵ or *inexstinctus*.⁶ The essential thing was that this fire must not be allowed to go out by accidental circumstance, negligence on the part of the virgines Vestales, or as a sign of the *ira deorum*. For this fire was held to be a guarantee of the continuing existence of Rome⁷: the *ignis aeternus* was the symbol of a *Roma aeterna*. If it should be extinguished this was taken to be an omen of the downfall of the city, according to Dionysius Hal. 2, 67, 5: *πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλα δοξεῖ μεγάλα εἶναι τῆς οὖν όσίως ὑπηρετοῦσις τοῖς ιεροῖς, μάλιστα δὲ ἡ σβέσις τοῦ πυρὸς, ἣν ὑπὲρ ἄπαντα τὰ δεινὰ Ἡρωικοὶ δεδοίκασιν ἀφάνειμοι τῆς πόλεως σημεῖον ὑπολαμβάνουντες.*

The ritual acts of the Virgines Vestales were also closely connected with the welfare of the city and the state: the preparation of the *mola salsa*, the sacrifice to *Ops consiva*, the keeping of the purifying materials that were handed out on the *Parilia*.⁸ Symmachus⁹ expresses it very concretely: *saluti publicae dicata virginitas*; the prayer of the *Virgo Vestalis* was believed to be so powerful that: *cuius preces si di aspernarentur haec salva esse non possent.*¹⁰ In the

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¹ Ovid. Fast. 3, 143; Macrobi. Saturn. 1, 12, 6; Solin 1, 35. Various solutions of this problem: Wissowa, Rosch. Lex. 6, 254; Koch, RE, VIII A, 1753: Radke, o.c. 324.
² Liv. 5, 52, 7; 26, 27, 14; Verg. Aen. 2, 296 f; Val. Max. 5, 4, 7.
³ Liv. 5, 52, 7; 26, 27, 14; Verg. Aen. 2, 296 f; Val. Max. 5, 4, 7.
⁴ Ovid. Fast. 6, 297.
⁵ Liv. 5, 54, 7. On this especially: Koch, o.c., 1770 f; Bömer, Fasti, II, p. 172.
⁷ Symmach. rel. 3, 11.
words of C. Koch,¹ the virgines bore "Die Sorge um die Kontinuität der salus publica". What was the cause of the extinction of the fire? Apart from neglect, the ira deorum could in general bring about this disaster, as we saw. And there was one sin that was particularly considered to be the cause of this ira deorum. Ovid describes this very plastically in Fasti 3. 45 ff., where he relates the birth of Romulus and Remus of the Virgo Vestalis Rhea Silvia:

Silvia fit mater: Vestae simulacra feruntur
Virgineas oculis opposuisse manus.
ara deae certe tremuit pariente ministra,
et subiit cineres territa flamma suos.

With Ovid we may thus answer the question as to how long the fire would burn in the way Gregory formulated it: donec virgo pareret!² Two things are becoming clear now: in the first place how easily a Christian legend such as the one reported by Gregory could be constructed on the basis of this antique datum. Secondly how Gregory or his source has been able to link this ignis inextinguibilis with something called Salvatio Romae. The ignis Vestae guaranteed this salvatio = salus, as we saw. With the extinction of the fire the salvatio—taken in the abstract as it was in ancient Rome, or concretely as in Gregory—must also collapse. Added to this, the Virgines Vestales in antiquity had a duty that is comparable with that of the sacerdotes vigilantes in Gregory, who had to report a possible threat of war to their principes. On certain days the Virgines Vestales went to the rex and called him with the words: vigilasne rex, vigila!³ Unfortunately we do not know the exact meaning of this rite but in the light of the other functions of the Virgines Vestales it seems probable that it was connected with the salus publica.⁴

¹ O.c. col. 1771.
² The connection between the "incest" of the Vestal virgin and the extinction of the fire is also indicated by other sources, i.a. Dion. Hal. 2, 67, 5 (vide supra).
³ Serv. Aen.10, 228.
⁴ Thus Koch, o.c. 1771; Radke, o.c. 323; different versions: Brelich, o.c. 30 ff; cf. U.W. Scholz, Studien zum altitalischen und altrömischen Marskult und Marsmythos, Heidelberg, 1970, 29 n. 50.
The association between the antique virgo who becomes a mother, and the Christian virgo inviolata, together with the extinction of the fire, is strengthened further by a remarkable, early mediaeval report. A treatise by Albericus: De deorum imaginibus libellus,\(^1\) probably from the 11th century, in chapt. 17 says of the sanctuary of Vesta: Supra pinnaculum autem templi depicta erat ipsa Vesta in formam virginis infante ipsum Iovem suin sinu foven. Naturally, the reliability of this author should not be overrated, though against the authenticity of his report we cannot bring forward the perennial argument that there were no statues in the cult of Vesta.\(^2\) This certainly did not apply to the period of the emperors, and with Brellich and Radke I deem it possible that there was such a picture in the late empire. But even if this were not so, it would remain important to our subject that Albericus knew of such a Vesta virgo cum infante, for in this way a link is made with the Madonna, the stock theme of whose mediaeval iconography is exactly the virgo infante suo sinu foven. It is the vision of this Madonna with the child which in early sources is connected with the collapse of the Salvatio Romae. The oriental legends on Cyrus and the Egyptian statues referred to above find a parallel in a legend first found in Johannes Malalas and related to Rome.\(^3\) It tells us how the Pythia announces to the emperor Augustus the birth of a Jewish child and the imminent downfall of gods and oracles. Upon this Augustus founds the altar primogeniti Dei on the Capitol. Probably the legend reaches back to an inscription in the Santa Maria Ara Coeli, the church on the Capitol that was built over this altar. In other versions it is not the Pythia, but the Tiburtine Sibyl who utters the prophesy, a version that must have chrystallized as early as the 6th century.\(^4\) The Sibyl announces to Augustus the coming of a divine child, a prince of peace, upon which the Madonna with the

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\(^1\) Quoted by Brellich, o.c. 62, and Radke, o.c. 333.

\(^2\) Radke, o.c. 327.

\(^3\) Chronographia, X (PG 97, 357), where Malalas refers to Timotheus, a chronologer who lived before Justinianus; cf. Suda s.v. Αὐγουστος; Nicephorus, Hist. eccl. I, 17; Schneider, 165; I. Guidi, La descrizione di Roma nei geografi arabi, in: Arch. Soc. Rom. I, 1878, 173-218; RAC, I, 1002 f.

child appears to Augustus in a vision, and a voice is heard, saying: 
haec est ara Primogeniti Dei. Then Augustus founds the altar.

Gregorovius¹ reports that with his own eyes he saw this annuncia-
tion depicted in the wax figures of the famous Christmas-stall in the Aracoeli. It seems unnecessary to point out that here we have 
a direct reminiscence of Virgil’s 4th eclogue: iam nova progenies 
caelo demittitur alto.

Now, the correlation between the vision of the Madonna with the 
puer, qui stat in sinu virginis² and the collapse of a pagan temple 
also finds its expression in plastic art: in a 15th century Venetian 
painting³ (Plate I) the vision of the Madonna with the child 
is represented with underneath three miracles announcing her 
coming in pagan times: 1. Augustus and the Sibyl of Tibur pointing 
at the Madonna, 2. the well that on the day before Christ was born 
produced oil instead of water,⁴ 3. a crumbling temple with the 
legend: templum pacis in eternum edificatum coruit quando virgo 
f(ilium) p(erpet)it. Thus, not only the Salvatio Romae but also the 
temple of Pax, built by Augustus, collapses in the Christmas night: 
an event that has come down to us also in many literary sources.⁵ 
But are not all these divergent legends ultimately based on one 
prototype? It seems more than probable to me. In this connection 
it is important that the pax-ideology, which began in the reign of 
Augustus or, indeed, as early as Caesar’s time, was always attended 
by ideologies of deified conceptions such as Salus publica (already 
in the days of Augustus), Securitas (on 1st century coins) and 
Aeternitas imperii (since Augustus, especially important in Nero’s 
days).⁶ It is these notions which to the Augustan Roman were the

² Text on a Venetian painting mentioned infra.
³ Ill. Römisch, o.c. Tafel 6; Katalog der Stuttgarter Staatsgalerie, Abb. 72. General discussion on the tradition in plastic art: E. Mâle, 
L’art religieux en France de la fin du Moyen Age, Paris, 1949, 253 ff; Lexikon 
der christl. Ikonographie, Rom/Freiburg/Basel/Wien, I, 1968, 226, s.v. 
Augustus, where literature and a picture can be found.
⁴ On this legend: Graf, I, 325; Cecchelli, Fons Olei, in: Capitolium, I, 1925, 
538.
⁵ Jac. de Voragine, Leg. Aur. cap. 6; Armannino Giudice, Fiorita, Cod. 
Laur. pl. LXII. For the events in the night of Christ’s birth see: RAC, s.v. E-
piphanie, 841.
⁶ Testimonia: Wissowa, RuK ², 334 f.
expression of a diesseitige happiness, notions which were shifted to the Jenseits by early Christianity, but which kept functioning. Of this familiar process a 12th century author, Alexander Neckam, bears eloquent witness:

_Salvator voluit sub tanto principe nasci_  
_Nam pax sub pacis principe nata fuit._

This worldly pax or salus or aeternitas, however, had to perish at the birth of Christ, to be replaced by the real, heavenly Peace, Salvation and Eternity. This became visible in the collapse of the Salvatio Romae and in the extinction of the inextinguibilis ignis, which like worldly salvation was ficticus and extinctus est iure, cum lux vera et sempiterna oriri cepisset. This leads me to the thesis that essentially the crumbling of the templum Pacis is identical with the collapse of the Salvatio Romae, and that both are projections of the idea of a dying antique paganism, which has never been expressed more concretely than in the extinction of the fire of Vesta. Of this relation there, too, is proof. In his "Fiorita" Armannino Giudice says of the crumbling temple of Pax, built by Augustus: "il quale si chiamava anch'io il tempio di Vesta"! The nonsensical explanation he gives for it: "ma tucto era uno nome, pero che Vesta in greco viene a dire pace" proves that he did not fabricate the Vesta-version, but found it in tradition.

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2 J.-P. Ossner intends to deal with this and other concepts in a _thèse_ on _Roma Aesterna_, as he announces in REL. 47, 1969, 492 f.


4 That antique elements have been absorbed into this legend is proved by the well yielding oil when Christ is born. In origin this is a pagan legend. On the day on which Augustus had conquered Lepidus and returned in Rome, a well producing oil sprung up in the _Taberna meritoria_: Oros. Hist. 6, 20.

5 _Cod. Laur. cit._ 260 f.
With this we may conclude the first part of our investigation. The fire mentioned by Magister Gregorius is a reminiscence of the eternal fire of Vesta, which is extinguished when a virgin gives birth to a child, and which disappeared for ever when the Virgin gave birth to her Son. With the guarantee of the *salus publica* this *Salus* or *Salvatio* itself also disappeared, which finds expression in the connection of the fire and the *Salvatio Romae*.

Our second object was to find out where the origin of this group of statues with the tinkling bells is to be found. Some preliminary work has already been done here. Modern commentators have looked for antique monuments which might be the models for these legendary statues. It was found that generally—though not by Gregory—the *Salvatio* was situated on the Capitol. That was where in antiquity stood the statues of Rome's former kings. We further hear of statues of 14 subjugated peoples near the theatre of Pompey: the name *Porticus ad nationes* was connected with these. The supposition that the *Salvatio* came into being by a contamination of these two groups of statues is tempting. Thus the origin of the *imagines gentium* has been traced, but not that of the silver bells and their premonitory function. A search for bells in antiquity yielded the following data: Pliny, n.h. 36, 19, describes the tomb of Porsenna. On this there were five pyramids, and on top of these an *orbis aeneus et petasus unus omnibus (sit) impositus, ex quo pendeant exapta catenis tintinnabula quae vento agitata longe sonitus referant, ut Dodonae olim factum*. Scullard alleges that small bells also hung from the *columna Minucia* in Rome, but he does not give a reference. Cassius Dio (Zonaras 7, 21, 9 = Tzetzes, Epist. 97) states that amongst other things a bell hung underneath the triumphal chariot. Finally, Suetonius, Aug. 91, relates that Augustus characterised Iuppiter Tonans as door-keeper of Iuppiter Capitolinus: *ideoque mox tintinnabulis*

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1 Graf, I, 202 ff; Rushforth, 24 n. 3; *Codice topografico*, III, 36 n. 1.
2 Graf, I, 202 ff Serv. Aen. 8, 121; Suet. Nero, 46; Plin. n.h. 36. 4. 27; Cicero, Imp. 56. Cf. S. Weinstock, *Divus Iulius*, Oxford, 1971, 39 n. 5 and 51 ff.
fasisigium aedis redimit, quod ea fere ianus dependebant. These examples, though not numerous, nevertheless show with a fair degree of certainty the purpose of the bells: they were apotropaea, objects to avert evil, which by their sound kept evil spirits, and thus all evil, at a distance.¹ This has taken us one step further, for, though there is no record of statues with bells in antiquity, the tintinnabula on the Capitol are sufficiently near to the group of statues for us to assume that they may have passed into the legend of the Salvatio. One question remains: where is the origin of their specific premonitory function when war threatened?

In order to find an answer to this we must once more return to the aedes Vestae. We have seen that the fire and the sacra performed by the virgines maintained the salus publica. Some objects which were kept in the aedes Vestae—in the penus, the “store-room”—and which were called pignora fatalia or pignora imperii had the same function: they were pledges for the survival of Rome.² The most famous is the Palladium,³ which, according to a legend, protected Rome from the Gauls, and which was recovered from a fire by L. Caecilius Metellus in 241 B.C. There are more pignora. For a later period Servius⁴ mentions seven: sepiem pignora, quae imperium Romanum tenent: lapis (mss. aius) matris deum, quadriga fictilis Veientanorum, cineres Orestis, sceptrum Priami, velum Ilionae, Palladium, ancilia. It is true that some of these are products of late, antiquarian speculation and on the other hand we know of other


³ Literature on the palladium: Vollgraf, Bull. Acad. Roy. de Belg. Cl. d. Lettr. 56 sér. 24, 1938, 34-56; A. Alföldi, Die Trojanischen Urahnen der Römer, Basel, 1957, 14 ff; Bömer, Fasten, II, 367 f; Gross, o.c. 69 ff; Brellich, Vesta, 8; Bömer, Rom und Troia, Baden-Baden, 1951, 61 f; C. Koch, Gymnasium 59, 1952, 196 ff; Latte, R.R.G. 292 n. 5. Later the Palladium was associated with Vesta: Koch, Religio, 160.

⁴ Aen. 7. 188.
pignora not mentioned by Servius: the lituus of Romulus, recovered after many centuries,¹ and the hastae Martis.² The pignora were not all kept in one place: the quadriga was on top of the façade of the temple of Iuppiter O.M., the stone of Cybele in the temple of this goddess on the Palatine Hill.

The ancilia, the famous ancient shields, one of which had fallen out of the sky, and the hastae Martis were in the sacrarium Martis in the regia,³ the office of the pontifex maximus.

In the Middle Ages the location of the regia and the aedes Vesta was no longer known, but even in antiquity we encounter confusion in the reports on the functions and the properties of these two buildings and their contents.⁴ The cause of this lies in the remarkable, and by no means accidental, religious link between the sanctuary of Vesta and the regia, between Virgines Vestales and the pontifex maximus. It would take us too far, nor is it necessary, once more to recount all the records of this relation. There is no difference of opinion as to the fact that there was a relation. Its interpretation may be a bone of contention, but it is not important to us. I shall only mention one remarkable point: not only the Aedes Vestae, but also the regia had its focus ⁵ which by the same right may be called the "hearth fire of the state", and which has

¹ Cic. Div. 1, 30; Val. Max. 1, 8, 11; Plut. Cam. 32; Bömer, Fasten, II, p. 364.
² Scholz, o.c. 79 n. 2, also points out Serv. Aen. 2, 351: in Capitolio fuit clipeus consecratus, cui inscriptum erat "genio urbis Romae sive ma sive femina."
⁵ Scholz, o.c. 27 n. 40 also points out another reference in Livy, Per. Oxyrr. 50 (ed. O. Rossbach, Leipzig, 1910): sacrarium (Opis et laur)us foci maximo incendio (inviolata).
been characterised by some scholars as a preliminary stage of the *ignis Vestae*. After this introduction we direct our attention to the *pignora* of the *regia*: the *ancilia* and the *hastae Martis*, leaving aside once again anything immaterial to our subject, particularly the increasing literature on the interpretation of the *hasta* or *hastae Martis* in connection with dynamic or animistic genetic theories. Concerning the year 99 B.C. we learn from Aulus Gellius, 4, 6, 2: *quod C. Iulius L.f. pontifex nuntiavit in sacrario in regia hastas Martias movisse, de ea re ita censuerunt, ut M. Antonius consul hostiis maioribus Iovi et Marti procuraret et ceteris dis quibus videretur lactantibus*. Evidently the spears of Mars could begin to move, which was considered a *prodigium*, which necessitated *procuratio*. The text does not inform us how this movement was caused. Other testimonies are explicit, e.g. Obsequens, 44A: *hastae Martis in regia sua sponte motae*. The same thing is reported of the *ancilia* (*ibidem*): *ancilia cum crepitu sua sponte mota*. We learn further that this movement and the sound it produced was taken to be a *prodigium*, and that each time the *pontifices* reported this to the magistrates, who then took measures.

What was the nature of the threat predicted by the moving of spears or shields? Although this is not explicitly intimated, yet Latte thinks: "Bewegten sich die Schilde von selbst, so galt das für ein unheildrohendes Vorzeichen. Es bedeutet Krieg." It is true that some data seem to support this idea: an oracle at Falerii, which in 277 B.C. produced a lot inscribed: *Mavors telum suum concutit*, but particularly an observance reported to us by Servius.

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3 A summary of the enormous amount of literature on the significance of the lance and the *hasta(e) Martis* can be found in: Scholz, o.c. 28 ff and particularly 41 n. 39; A. Alföldi, *Hasta, summa imperii*. The spear as embodiment of sovereignty in Rome. A.J.A. 63, 1959, 1 ff; Bälkestein, o.c. 122 f.
4 Cf. Gell. 4, 6, 1 ff; Liv. 40, 19, 2; Obsequ. 6; 36; 44; 47; 50. Cf. Cass. Dio, 44, 17, 2; Liv. 24, 10, 10.
5 R.R.G. 114 n. 5.
6 Liv. 22, i, 11.
Is qui belli susceperat curam, sacrarium Martis ingressus primo ancilia commovebat, post hastam simulacri ipsius dicens: Mars vigila. This relates the moving of the spears to war: if the weapons moved of their own accord, a war was imminent; if the Roman army went to war on its own accord, Mars had to be activated with the cry vigila, and this activation was given concrete form in the moving of the weapons.

In my opinion a comparison of these data with the Salvatio-legend permits the following conclusion: as the pagan fire described by Gregory preserved the memory of the ancient Roman fire of Vesta, the Salvatio Romae also shows features of the ancient Roman belief in the meaning of the moving ancilia and hastae. It is certain that the Salvatio was modelled upon the group of statues of the gentes subjugated by Augustus. But this is only part of the truth. Another root is to be found in the tradition concerning the sacred weapons in the regia. The resemblances are striking: both the tintinnabula in the Salvatio-legend and the ancilia and hastae in the antique tradition move sua sponte. This movement is accompanied by sound. Movement and sound mean danger, and in particular danger of war. In both instances it is the duty of the priests to inform the magistrates. It is significant that according to a mediaeval source the warning is not given by bells, but by a statue of the rebellious tribe aiming an arrow at a central statue, a Reina incoronata—not mentioned in Gregory—and that according to other sources the statues produce sound by the clattering of shields! It might therefore not be too presumptuous on my part to see the mysterious bronze soldier with his lance, on the roof of the building that housed the Salvatio, as a far descendant of lance-bearing Mars in his sacrarium. This theory is further supported by the fact that the close link between the aedes Vestae with its contents and the regia can be found in a concrete form in Gregory inasmuch as he places the fire and the Salvatio in one domus. The Salvatio not even owes its name exclusively to the salus publica maintained by the ignis Vestaes: Plutarch, Numa, 13, 2, states that the ancilia were eti σωτηρία τῆς πόλεως, or, translated: salutis causa!

Of the topography of ancient Rome Gregory only knew as much

1 Armannino Giudice, Fiorita, Cod. Laur. pl. LXII, 12, 233 f.
2 Testimonia in Graf, I, 197.
as he could see. The temple of Vesta and the *regia* were gone.

Therefore he tried to find a new accommodation\(^1\) for *ignis* and *Salvatio* in the ruin which could be seen in his day as it can today, and of which the *cripte horride et inaccessibles apparent*. Scholars agree that with this the *Tabularium* is meant. We should forgive Gregory this inaccuracy and we should not forget that he received a great part of his information from *clerici et cardinales*. And who believes everything these gentlemen tell us?

\(^1\) In later sources the *Salvatio* has been situated in countless places: the Pantheon, the Colosseum, the temple of Janus, San Giovanni in Laterano. *Testimonia*: Graf I, 191-196.