

THE ANCIENT ROMAN ORIGIN OF THE SALVATIO ROMAE LEGEND

H. S. Versnel

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*.¹ Since then it has received the attention it deserves owing to several republications, among which especially G. Mc. N. Rushforth's² 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*³ and the tract *Mirabilia* included in it, which in a divergent version has come down to us independently.⁴ *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

¹ M. R. James, *The English Historical Review*, 32, 1919, 531-554.

² 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.

³ Text: *Codice topografico*, III, 77-110. Literature: *ibid.*, 67-76; F. Schneider, *Rom und Romgedanke 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.

⁴ 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.

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 clerici* 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 orbem 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.

³ The manuscripts of this treatise differ considerably. See: Schneider, 265. Editions: Migne, *Patr. Lat.* XC, 961 ff.; H. Omont, *Les sept merveilles du monde au moyen âge*, Biblioth. de l'Ecole des Chartes, 43, 1882, 47-49; text also included in Huygens, 41 f.

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 Horace¹ and Virgil,² 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.³ 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 *ioci militares*, mentioned by Livy,⁴ 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 victoriae 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*,⁵ the armour that *dux duci detraxit*,⁶ 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 Augustus⁷—much to his sorrow!

We could illustrate by many more examples what has already

¹ Carm. 1, 37, 30 ff: *invidens / privata deduci superbo / non humilis mulier triumpho*.

² Aen. 8, 709 f: *Illam inter caedes pallentem morte futura / fecerat Ignipotens*.

³ Gregorius, cap. 22; 398: *est archus ipse marmoreus*.

⁴ Liv. 3, 29, 5.

⁵ On the *spolia opima*: P. H. N. G. Stehouwer, *Etude sur Ops et Consus*, Thesis, Utrecht, 1956, 78 ff; H. S. Versnel, *Triumphus. An Inquiry into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph*, Thesis, Leiden, 1970, 304, where further literature is mentioned.

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 Schneider¹ 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 multitudo 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 inaccessibiles apparent. In hac quondam domo predictae imagines ex ordine stabant et quilibet imago nomen gentis illius, cuius imaginem tenebat, in pectore scriptum habebat et tintinnabulum argenteum, 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 ymaginibus consecratam miles eneus 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 sepius hostes antequam arma et impedimenta parassent prevenientes, facile et sine sanguine eos sibi subiugaverunt. Fertur autem in eadem domo ignem inextinguibilem fuisse. De hoc autem mirando opere artifex sciscitatus quam diu duraret, respondit illud duraturum donec virgo pareret.

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 extinctum 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 statues¹ 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 source⁴ 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 gospel⁵ 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 statues⁶ 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.

³ But not in all versions. Cf. Graf, I, 189 n. 13.

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 corrui*.

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 flammae*.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 sapientiae 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, 206 ff.

³ Ovid, *Fast.* 6, 258. Cf. Cic. *Leg.* II, 20.

⁴ On the cult of Vesta and everything connected with it: Wissowa, *Roscher Lex. s.v. Vesta*; A. Brelich, *Vesta, Albae Vigiliae*, N. F. VII, Zürich, 1949; C. Koch, *Art. Vesta*, RE VIII A, 1717 ff; *idem*, *Religio. Studien zu Kult*

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 *inextinctus*.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 δοκεῖ μηνύματα εἶναι τῆς οὐχ ὁσίως ὑπηρετούσης τοῖς ἱεροῖς, μάλιστα δὲ ἡ σβέσις τοῦ πυρός, ἣν ὑπὲρ ἅπαντα τὰ δεινὰ Ῥωμαῖοι δεδοίκασιν ἀφανισμοῦ τῆς πόλεως σημεῖον ὑπολαμβάνοντες.

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

und Glauben der Römer, Nürnberg, 1960, 1 ff; K. Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte*, München, 1960, 108 ff; P. Lambrechts, *Mededel. Vlaamse Acad. Bruxelles*, XII, 7, 1950, 1 ff; L. Deroy, *R.H.R.* 137, 1950, 26 ff; F. Bömer, *Ovids Fasten*, II, p. 353; 383; J. Bayet, *R.E.L.* 28, 1950, 452 ff; G. Radke, *Die Götter Altitaliens*, Münster, 1965, 320 ff; F. Guizzi, *Aspetti giuridici del sacerdozio romano. Il sacerdozio di Vesta*, Napoli, 1968.

¹ Festus, 296 (L).

² Ovid. *Fast.* 3, 143; Macrobius. *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.

³ Cicero, *Leg.* II, 20; Dom. 144.

⁴ Liv. 5, 52, 7; 26, 27, 14; Verg. *Aen.* 2, 296 f; Val. Max. 5, 4, 7.

⁵ Vell. Pat. 2, 131, 1; Lamprid. V. Heliog. 6, 7.

⁶ Ovid. *Fast.* 6, 297.

⁷ Hor. *Carm.* 3, 5, 5-12; Liv. 5, 54, 7. On this especially: Koch, o.c., 1770 f; Bömer, *Fasti*, II, p. 172.

⁸ Complete collection: G. Rohde, *Die Kultsatzungen der römischen Pontifices*, Berlin, 1936, 107 ff.

⁹ Symmach. *rel.* 3, 11.

¹⁰ Cicero, *Pro Font.* 48. Cf. Hor. *Carm.* 1, 2, 25 ff.

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 Marsskult 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 10th century, in chapt. 17 says of the sanctuary of Vesta: *Supra pinnaculum autem templi depicta erat ipsa Vesta in formam virginis infantem ipsum Iovem suo sinu fovens*. 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 Brelich 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 infantem suo sinu fovens*. 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

¹ Quoted by Brelich, 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 Iustinianus; cf. Suda s.v. Αἰγύπτου; Nicephorus, *Hist. eccl.* 1, 17; Schneider, 165; I. Guidi, La descrizione di Roma nei geografi arabi, in: *Arch. Soc. Rom.* 1, 1878, 173-218; RAC, I, 1002 f.

⁴ F. Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom im Mittelalter*, Darmstadt (Photogr. reprint 1954) II, 197 ff. Reference of E. Römisch, *Vergils vierte Ekloge im Unterricht*, Heidelberg, 1970, 33; Graf, I, 308 ff.



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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 annunciation 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 virginis*² 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 corruit quando virgo f(ilium) p(eperit)*. 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

¹ F. Gregorovius, *Wanderjahre in Italien*, München², 1967, 177 ff.

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 of the legend 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-piphania*, 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.*¹

This worldly *pax* or *salus* or *aeternitas*,² however, had to perish at the birth of Christ, to be replaced by the real, heavenly Peace, Salvation and Eternity.³ This became visible in the collapse of the *Salvatio Romae* and in the extinction of the *inextinguibilis ignis*, which like worldly salvation was *ficticius* 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 projections⁴ 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,⁵ built by Augustus: "il quale si chiamava anche 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.

¹ *De laud. sap.* 5, 209 f. F. Klingner, Rom als Idee, in: *Römische Geisteswelt*,⁴ 1961, 647: "Die *Pax Romana* sollte der *Pax Christiana* den Weg bereiten."

² J.-P. Ossner intends to deal with this and other concepts in a *thèse* on *Roma Aeterna*, as he announces in REL. 47, 1969, 492 f.

³ Even though, via a dialectical artifice, Rome remained the *Urbs Aeterna* for the Christians, too: F. Paschoud, *Roma Aeterna, Etudes sur le patriotisme romain dans l'occident latin à l'époque des grandes invasions*, Neuchatel, 1967, 329 ff.; C. Koch, *Roma Aeterna*, in: *Religio. Studien zu Kult und Glauben der Römer*, Nürnberg, 1960, 142 ff.; F. Klingner, o.c.; H. Fuchs, *Der geistige Widerstand gegen Rom in der antiken Welt*, Berlin, 1938, *passim*.

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 found¹ 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.² 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.³ 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*

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.

³ H. H. Scullard, *The Etruscan Cities and Rome*, London, 1967, 80, without testimonia. I have not been able to find them either. Plin. n.h. 34, 21, does mention *columnae*, but no bells. Cf. Jordan-Huelsen, *Top. d. Stadt Rom*, I, 3, 1907, 172.

fastigium aedis redimiit, quod ea fere ianuis 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: *septem 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

¹ G. Widengren, *Religionsphänomenologie*, Berlin, 1969, 216; F. Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion*, Stuttgart, 1961, 177; A. A. Wheeler, A. F. Chamberlain, Gongs and Bells, in: E.R.E. 6, 313-318; Perkmann, Glocke, in: H.W.D.A. 3, 868 ff; Chamberlain, Läuten, in: H.W.D.A. 5, 938-950; Stegemann, Wetterbeschwörung, H.W.D.A. 9, 508 ff; J. Pesch, *Die Glocke in Geschichte, Sage und Volksglaube, -brauch und Dichtung*, Dülmen, 1918; E. Erdmann, *Die Glockensagen*, Wuppertal, 1931.

² Testimonia: Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, 3, 250. On *pignora imperii*: K. Gross, *Die Unterpfänder der römischen Herrschaft*. Neue Dt. Forsch. 41, 1935, 108 f; Bömer, *Fasten*, II, p. 160 and 369; Viedebannt, RE, Supp. 4, 475; Wissowa, RuK², 159 n. 5; Radke, o.c. 325.

³ Literature on the *palladium*: Vollgraf, Bull. Ac. Roy. de Belg. Cl. d. Lettr. 5e sér. 24, 1938, 34-56; A. Alföldi, *Die Trojanischen Urnahmen der Römer*, Basel, 1957, 14 ff; Bömer, *Fasten*, II, 367 f; Gross, o.c. 69 ff; Brelich, *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 mas sive femina."*

³ Serv. Aen. 8, 3; Obsequens, 44A; Plut. Rom. 29, 1; Gell. 4, 6, 2. Discussion on this *sacrarium*: M. van Doren, *Les sacraria. Une catégorie méconnue d'édifices sacrés chez les Romains*. Ant. Class. 27, 1958, 31 ff, especially: 35 f; U. W. Scholz, o.c. 27 ff; G. Dumézil, *Les cultes de la regia, les trois fonctions et la triade Iuppiter, Mars, Quirinus*. Latomus, 13, 1954, 129 ff; J. Balkestein, *Onderzoek naar de oorspronkelijke zin en betekenis van de Romeinse god Mars*, (Diss. Leiden 1963) Assen, 1963, 95 ff.

⁴ On the *regia*: L. Deubner, *Regia*. R.M. 36/37, 1921/22, 17 ff; Dumézil, o.c.; F. E. Brown, *The Regia*. M.A.A.R. 12, 1935; *idem*, *New soundings in the Regia. The evidence for the early republic*. *Entretiens Hardt*, 13, 1966, Genève, 1967, 47 ff; On the relation of *regia* and *Vesta*: G. Rohde, RE, 18, 1939, s.v. *Ops*, 750 ff; Koch, RE, 2e Reihe, 8, 1958, s.v. *Vesta*, 1760 ff and 1729; Rose and Euing in the works mentioned below.

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*.¹ After this introduction we direct our attention to the *pignora* of the *regia*: the *ancilia*² and the *hastae Martis*,³ 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 dynamistic 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, uti 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.⁴

What was the nature of the threat predicted by the moving of spears or shields? Although this is not explicitly intimated, yet Latte⁵ 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 217 B.C. produced a lot inscribed: *Mavors telum suum concutit*,⁶ but particularly *ān* observance reported to us by Servius.⁷

¹ H. J. Rose, *Primitive culture in Italy*, London, 1926, 83; L. Euing, *Die Sage von Tanaquil*, Frankfurt, 1932, 29; Koch, RE, 2e Reihe 8, 1958, s.v. *Vesta*, Abschn. F.1.

² Literature on the *ancilia*: Bömer, *Fasten*, II, 160; Deubner, A.R.W. 8, 1905, Beih. 75, 71 ff; Wissowa, RuK², 556; Gross, o.c. 108 ff; Dumézil, *La religion romaine archaïque*, Paris, 1966, 37-40.

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; Balkestein, 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, 1, 11.

⁷ Aen. 8, 3. Cf. Serv., Aen. 7, 603.

Is qui belli suscepit 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 source¹ 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 sources² 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 Vestae*: Plutarch, Numa, 13, 2, states that the *ancilia* were ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ 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 accomodation¹ 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 inaccessibiles 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.
