

“ORIENTAL” DEITIES IN THE URBAN CONTEXT

John Scheid

Abstract

Researchers are used to studying cult places in isolation, and not in relation to other sanctuaries. As a result, they risk missing important testimonies and overlooking potential new insights to the *doxa* that are important in understanding cult sites. This is proven by the example of imperial Rome. In the neighbourhoods of the city and on the *Ager Romanus* one can find public temples and smaller, local sanctuaries. What is the connection between the different cult places in the neighbourhoods and in the *suburbium*? This paper examines the problem with the help of some examples from south-western Rome. These examples show that certain religious sites attracted different cultic communities, notably the so-called oriental cults, and that they did not exclude each other before the prohibition of the “pagan” cults.

Keywords: Rome – *compitum* – Isis – *Mithraeum* – Jupiter *Dolichenus* – *compitalia*.

Walking on the Esquiline along the *Vicus patricius* for a certain distance to the north, one arrives at the crossroads near S. Martino ai Monti, a church leaning against the ruins of what is considered to be the home of Pliny the Younger. In this place, various discoveries have brought to light testimonies of an interesting concentration of cult-places. The first is a group of two inscriptions belonging to a *compitum*;¹ they were discovered in the garden and near the apse of San Martino. One of these inscriptions, which is a fragment of an architrave and therefore comes from the *aedicula* of the *compitum*, addresses the *Lares Augusti* of the *Vicus Fagutal* and the *Genii* of the *Caesars*, and of the Emperor Trajan.² The second, dating from 203, is a dedication to the

1 *LTUR* V, 169 s.v. *Vicus Iovis Fagutalis*.

2 *CIL* VI, 452 (109 AD): [Laribus A]ugust(is) vici Iovis Fagutal[is et] / [Genis Caesarum I]mp(eratori) Nerva(e), Divi Nervae f(ilius), Traian}o / [Aug(usto) Germanico Dac]ico, Pont(ifice) Max(im)o, trib(unicia) pot(estate)

Lares Augusti of Septimius Severus and Caracalla.³ We learn that the four *magistri* of the *compitum*, all four of whom are freedmen, restored this *aedicula* of the third region at their expense in 109. The inscription mentions also that the *magistri* are those of the 121st year of the *compitum*, which dates its first restoration by Augustus in the year 12 BC. There is a good chance, if not absolutely certain, that these two inscriptions come from the same cult-place, that of Vicus Fagutal. This takes its name from the temple and grove of Jupiter Fagutal, the Jupiter of the beech grove, who is otherwise unknown. The Severan inscription is too mutilated to record anything beyond the survival of the institution of the *compitum*, and a restoration made by Septimius Severus and Caracalla (since they are mentioned in the nominative). On the other hand, the document of 109 provides some additional data. First, the reference to the central divinities, the Lares Augusti and the Genii of the Caesars. The chapel in question is called *aedicula regionis tertiae*, chapel of the third region, where it is located. So, the Fasti of the Esquiline,⁴ which were discovered along the apse of the same church, presumably are an equipment of this *compitum*. We will see below another example of a calendar drawn up in the *schola* of the *vicomagistri*.

Now with the *compitum* of the Vicus Fagutalis, we have found evidence of other cults. First, as often happens, the statues were offered by Augustus himself. At a short distance from our *compitum*, between the streets Giovanni Lanza and San Martino ai Monti, on the Clivus suburbanus, several inscriptions have been discovered. At first two boundary stones, which indicate that Augustus had recovered here a space of 41 × 21 metres that was occupied by private individuals. This recovery is evidence of Augustus's restorations. In this case, he restored the public nature of this space, and perhaps attributed it to the center of the neighbourhood's former collective cult. In addition, Augustus gave the *vicus* in question a statue of Mercury.⁵ The inscription relates that in 10 BC, he dedicated this statue, which was created or bought from the New Year gifts that the Roman people had offered him while he was absent.

Among the inscriptions found in the church of San Martino ai Monti, another *compitum*, there were also two altars dedicated to Aesculapius.⁶ These inscriptions were set up by Nicomedes, a doctor from Smyrna, and provide two different versions of a poem, the second of which is more elaborate, while the first, which is written in Doric dialect, may have been copied at Epidaurus, Cos or Corinth. Nicomedes dedicated an

(*tertia decima*), *imp(eratore) (sextum)*, [*co(n)s(ule) (iterum)*], / [*permissu ...*] *Pollionis, tri(buni) pleb(is), aed(iculam) reg(ionis) (tertia) vetusta[te]* / [*dilapsam a solo ma[gi]stro anni (centesimo uicesimo primo) sua impensa restitu[er](unt)*] / [- - -] *Phoebus, A(ulus) Nonius, A(uli) l(ibertus) Onesimus* / [- - -] *Callistus, L(ucius) Valerius, L(ucii) l(ibertus) Eutichus* (sic).

3 *CIL* VI, 30859 (202 AD): [- - - -] *l(iber) Larib(us) Aug(ustis)* [- - - -] / [*Imp(erator) Caesar L(ucius) Septimius Seueru[s] Pius Pertinax Au[g](ustus) Arabic(us) Adiabenic(us)*] / *Parthic(us) Max(imus), pontif(ex) max(imus), tri]b(unicia) pot(estate) (undecima), imp(erator) X[il] (undecimum), co(n)s(ul) tertium, proco(n)s(ul), p(ater) p(atriciae) et]* / [*Imp(erator) Caesar M(arcus) Aurelius Antoninus pijus felix Aug(ustus) tr]ib(unicia) pot(estate) (quintum), co(n)s(ul) proco(n)s(ul), p(ater) p(atriciae)*] / [- - - -].

4 Degrassi 1963, 85–89.

5 *ILS* 92 (10 BC): *Imp(erator) Caes[ar], Diui f(ilius), August(us), / pontif(ex) maximus, co(n)s(ul) (undecimum), / tribunicia potest(ate) (quarta decima), / ex stipe, quam populus Romanus / K(alendis) Ianuariis apsent(i) ei contulit / Iulio Antonio Africano Fabio co(n)s(ule), / Mercurio sacrum.*

6 *IGUR* 102; *IG* 14.968a.

image he had seen in a Greek temple, and had it reproduced in Rome in a cult space on the Esquiline.

Another inscription found in the church reports that "on the order of the gods, Gaius Valerius [- - -] restored the chapel for Hercules, Epona and S[ilvanus] ... for his well being" as well as that of other people whose names are no longer extant.⁷ So around the public chapel of the Lares Augusti and the Genius Caesaris, monuments of private devotion were gathered. The *compita* were sort of small public spaces in the neighbourhoods, where neighbourhood cults and families celebrated their devotions. Yet these were also social spaces, not only because of the annual festivals, one on August 1, the anniversary of the restoration of *compita*, and another towards the beginning of the New Year, during the Compitalia. There were also shops, as for example one on the Vicus Acili, close to the Colosseum. Already in 229 BC the doctor Archagathos, son of Lysanias, opened a cabinet at the *compitum* Acili in a shop bought by the State.⁸ One can also be reasonably certain that the booksellers who, according to Aulus Gellius and Galen, were holding shop at the Vicus Sandalarius, were also close to this *compitum*.⁹ We may add in the interest of completion that, according to a gloss of Servius' commentary on Aeneid, on certain days that are not known, the matrons gathered at the *compita* in clothes of mourning, with unkempt hair, striking their chest and with torches in hand, to express mournful lamentations to call Proserpina who had been abducted by Dis Pater.¹⁰ These few examples therefore reveal that the sanctuaries at the crossroads brought together a series of traditional cults, public and private, male and female.

Now, and this is what interests us here, not only traditional Roman cults are found there. At the *vicus* located near S. Martino ai Monti, judging from what has been found in the surroundings of the church, there was also a Mithraeum. An inscription records that a certain Fl(avius) Septimius Zosimus, a Roman knight, priest of Bronton and of Hecate, built a cave (*speleum*) for Sol invictus Mithra.¹¹ If our conclusions are correct, it would seem that Mithras also received, at a relatively late date to judge from the name of the dedicant, a place of worship near the *compitum*.

Unless it was one and the same, there may have been another Mithraeum there. In the courtyard of a late *domus*, now located at 128 via Lanza,¹² next to our *compitum*,

7 CIL VI, 293: *Iussu deaorum C(aius) Vale[r]ius - - -] / Herculi Eônae S[ilvano aedi]/culam restituit [sua pec(unia) pro] / salutem suam et [- - - - et] / Proculo muliis [- - - -].*

8 Plinius, nat. hist. 29, 6, 12: *Cassius Hemina ex antiquissimis auctor est primum e medicis venisse Romam Peloponneso Archagathum Lysaniae filium L(ucio) Aemilio M(arco) Livio co(n)s(ulibus) anno urbis (quingentesimo tricesimo quinto), eique ius Quiritum datum et tabernam in compito Acilio emptam ob id publice.* For the Compitum Acili, cf. LTUR I, 314–315.

9 Cf. LTUR V, 189.

10 Servius, Commentary of the Aeneid, 4, 609: *NOCTVRNIS : non triviis nocturnis, sed per nocturnum tempus. Sacra enim Hecatae in triviis frequentantur per noctem. Ideo autem Hecaten invocat, quasi quae tanti matrimonium fecerit, ut sperneret matrem. VLVLATV PER VRBES : Proserpinam raptam a Dite patre Ceres cum incensis faculis per orbem terrarum requireret, per trivium eam vel quadrivium vocabat clamoribus. Vnde permansit in eius sacris, ut certis diebus per compita a matronis exerceatur ululatus.*

11 CIL VI, 773 (church of S. Martino in Monte): *Deo Soli Invicto Mithre (sic) / Fl(avius) Septimius Zosimus u(ir) p(erfectissimus) / sacerdos (sic) Dei Brontonis /et Aecate hoc speleum / constituit.*

12 Ensoli Vittozzi 1993; Ensoli 1997; Ensoli 2001, 280–282; LTUR III, 260–261 (Mithra, Speleum, via G. Lanza 128).



Fig. 1. The “Lararium” of the *Domus in via G. Lanza (Esquilina)*: the edicule (from Visconti 1885, pl. IV)

aristocracy, and this part of the Esquiline then was filled with large residences. Into one of these houses, the Mithraeum and the chapel were integrated. This Isiac chapel may well have been built by an individual in the imperial gardens, which at that time had succeeded the gardens of Maecenas. A similar situation may have occurred with the Mithraeum, whose statues are also dated to the 2nd century on stylistic grounds (fig. 2).

there is a chapel with a series of statues of gods and goddesses, and a staircase leading down to a Mithraeum. In the 4th century, the chapel, that archaeologists have named a Lararium, seems to be the collective place of worship of this house. The chapel included a main statue, placed in the niche at the bottom of the construction and identified as representing Isis – Fortuna, which scholars date to the 2nd century AD (fig. 1).¹³ On shelves to the right and left are located busts and statuettes of other deities,¹⁴ a mixture of traditional domestic deities, Lares or Genius, Hercules, Apollo, Jupiter, and Egyptian or Greek divinities, which gives us an idea of the domestic pantheon of a Late Antique *domus*. It has been proposed¹⁵ that this sanctuary should be identified as a sanctuary of Isis, surrounded by deities who are closely (Serapis and Harpocrates) or commonly (Apollo, Aphrodite, Hecate, bacchants) related to her; domestic deities would join these gods and goddesses.

In fact, things are more complicated and perhaps even more interesting, even if the excavation was not conducted with the precision we would require today. The so-called Lararium and its statues are dated by scholars to the middle of the 2nd century AD. In the 4th century, the imperial domains passed into the hands of the high

13 Cf. *LTUR III*, 115 (Isis-Fortuna, Lararium, via G. Lanza 128).

14 On the right side, a bust of a male god, maybe of Serapis (21), a statuette of Lar or Genius (14), another statuette (15); two hermai of Hercules (2–3), a statue of Serapis sitting with Cerberus (6); a statuette of Apollo (18), a statuette of Hercules (13). To the left, a statuette of Lar or Genius (14 or 15); a statuette of Hecate (7), a herm of Hercules (12), a herm of a bacchant (4); – below: a bust of Serapis (8), and two other statuettes. Also found at this location were a Harpocrates, a statue of a seated woman, a harpocratic stele, as well as another Hercules, three small bases, and a Mars (the identification is not certain).

15 Cf. n. 13.

This reconstruction, however, ignores the fact that in the 2nd century, rather than belonging to the imperial gardens, the chapel adjoined the *compitum* of S. Martino. It would therefore not be surprising if, in the 2nd century, the Isiac Chapel and the Mithraeum belonged to this group of cults located in the centre of the neighbourhood, close to the altar of the Lares. All the inscriptions relating to this *compitum* have been found in the church or in a small radius around it, and so it would be more satisfying to relate the chapel and the Mithraeum to this common place of worship. In the 4th century, as we can see, the religious topography and in any case the context of neighbourhood cults evolve, since large mansions now cover areas formerly public or imperial, including earlier cult places in new buildings. I do not mean to say that the entire compital sanctuary was transformed into a domestic sanctuary, but I do note that at least one part of it was. Certainly, as always in Rome, one could also assume that the cult place of the 4th century was equipped with statues taken from an older sanctuary, located in another neighbourhood. Given the lack of more accurate data, however, we will have to stop there. In order to check the hypothesis of the presence in the crossroads sanctuaries of cults recently arrived at Rome, we can examine two other examples.



Fig. 2. The *compitum* and the *schola* of the Via della Marmorata (Lungotevere) (personal modification of the map given by Almeida 1984)

At the via della Marmorata we find a *compitum* whose name is not known, but which is very well preserved (fig. 2).¹⁶ First, the excavators of the site discovered the *schola* of the *collegium compitalicium* of the inhabitants of this *vicus*. This consists of a little square, at the bottom of which an exedra opens out; it is one of those *scholae* about which we hear in inscriptions, perhaps closed by a grid. To get a more precise description, we may briefly consult an inscription, which is a little older and which was discovered on the opposite bank of the Tiber, in Transtevere.¹⁷ This concerns the setting up of the place of worship of the Pagus Ianicolensis, the equivalent in the Republican period to the *vici* of imperial times. An initial inscription recalls that a certain Pupius, son of Aulus, *magister* of the Pagus Ianicolensis, on the decision of the *pagus* constructed a portico, a chapel, a kitchen and an altar. The second text concerns other works, of which only the mention of the construction of a wall is preserved.

16 Almeida 1984, 98–106.

17 CIL VI, 2219: [P]upius, A(uli) f(ilius), Mag(ister) / [pa]gi Ianicol(ensis) porticu[m] / [ce]llam culinam / [ar]jam de pagi senten[tia] / [fa]ciundu(m) coiravit.

These documents provide an almost complete picture of this type of cult place. At first there was a wall, and inside it a chapel for the gods, a porticus for the members of the *pagus*, and for the rites which united men and gods, an altar and a kitchen. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood met under the portico, which may also have been the seat of the *magistri*, and the kitchen was intended to prepare sacrificial offerings and banquets. It should be noted that the *pagi*, as presumably later the *vici*, held meetings during which they decided on the equipment of the place and probably on the financing of the works.

In the *compitum* of via della Marmorata, we know only the *schola* and a piece of wall, but we can bet that the layout was almost the same as in the Pagus Ianicolensis a few decades earlier. The interior walls of the *schola* were lined with marble plaques on which were engraved the Fasti of the *magistri* of the *compitum*, as well as a calendar of the Roman year.¹⁸ This *schola* was both the seat of the annual presidents of the *compitum* and a place of worship. It is necessary to imagine that beside the building stood the aedicule with the Lares Augusti and the Imperial Genius, surrounded by statues, bases and altars of other deities. The title of the beautiful inscription of the Fasti tells us that the Emperor Augustus gave the Lares Augusti to the *magistri* of the *vicus* between the 1st of August and the 31st of December, 7 BC. This is how they commemorate the foundation of the new development of the *compitum*: Augustus officially gave the statuettes of Lares Augusti, and financed the reconstruction or construction of the cult site.

Besides the Lares and the Imperial Genius, the *compitum* also welcomed other deities. Thus, in our *compitum* stood the statues and altars of Apollo Augustus, Diana and Mercurius Augustus.¹⁹ The dedications to Mercury and Apollo were made by the magistrates of the *vicus*, which unambiguously establishes that they were part of our sanctuary. While the other inscriptions mention only the *magistri* of the *vicus*, one of the dedications is to Apollo, dedicated in the fifty-second year of the existence of the *compitum*, that is to say in 45 AD, by a *magister* and a *minister*, the first being a freedman, the second a slave. A fragment of a dedication to Diana belongs to the same context, as well as two dedications to Silvanus and Bona Dea Galbilla.²⁰ These two offerings were offered by imperial slaves of the Horrea Galbiana, in accordance with the usual devotions of the administrative staff. A final dedication discovered in the area is

18 Degrassi 1963, 90–98.

19 CIL VI, 34 (3/2 BC): *Mercurio Aug(usto) sacrum / mag(istri) anni (quinti) d(ono) d(ederunt) / M(arcus) Milionius, M. I(ibertus), Auctus, / P(ublius) Cornificius, (Publiorum) I(ibertus), Eros, / M(arcus) Pontius, M(arci) libertus, Eros, P(ublius) Sulpicius, P. I(ibertus), Felix*; CIL VI, 33 (2/1 BC): *Apollini Aug(usto) sacrum / mag(istri) anni (sexti) d(ono) d(ederunt) / Sex(tus) Trebonius, Sex(ti) I(ibertus), Philemo, / A(ulus). Cornelius, A(uli) I(ibertus, Nysus, / Q(uintus) Fufius, Q(uinti) I(ibertus), Epaphroditus, / C(aius) Sulpicius, Galb(ae) I(ibertus), Ragia*; CIL VI, 35 (45 AD): *Apollini Augusto / sacrum / magister et minister / anni (quingagesimi alterius) d(ono) d(ederunt) / L(ucius) Laberius, L(uci) I(ibertus), Felix, / Tertius (Quintorum) Nunniorum Lune(n)sis et Montani (seruus).*

20 BCom 1936, 79 no. 4: *Diana[– –] / [– – –]; CIL VI, 584: Silvano sacrum / P(ublius) Aelius, Aug(usti) I(ibertus), / Philumenus*; CIL VI 30855: *Bonae Deae / Galbillae / Zmaragdus, / Caesaris Aug(usti) seruus, / uillicus / Horreorum / Galbianorum / coh(ortium) trium d(ono) d(edit) / cum Fenia Onesime*; CIL VI, 588 (ILS 1624): *Silvano / sacr(um) / Anteros Caes(aris) seruus, horearius / c<o>hortis (tertia) / d(ono) d(edit) a(nimo) I(ibens).*

the initiative of four freedmen in Spes Augusta.²¹ The four dedicants do not mention their function, but it is probable that they were the *magistri* of the *vicus*. They do not indicate their function since the inscription may have been placed inside the space of the *compitum*, making their function clear. We can read that our four dedicants had to ask the *praetor urbanus*, in charge of the administration of this region of Rome, for authorization to dedicate this base, altar or statue, which seems to indicate that it was an important initiative. On the other hand, it is not certain that Claudia Syntyche's base for the Great Mother also comes from the *compitum*,²² because the information regarding its discovery places it further towards the Tiber. It could be related to the departing point of the procession of the Magna Mater on March 27th, which progressed by boat to the Almo river.

With the *compita*, we thus encounter cult places, public cult-places, that also expressed the intentions of the common population, and so reflected in a way the connection between the senatorial and equestrian elite and the people of Rome. We thereby learn that these small public squares at the *compita* were of great importance in the social and religious life of the neighbourhood. Obviously, neighbourhood politics were discussed here, and it is here that one tried to shine if one had some charisma, it is here that one appeared and presented oneself, and here that social prestige in the district was created. Furthermore, the location was a summary of all the important cults in the neighbourhood.

Nevertheless, the list of religious documents discovered around the via Marmorata *compitum* is not complete. Because of the division of studies, one sanctuary has always escaped the attention of those who made the maps or wrote the history of this *compitum*. In the same place, on the slope of the Aventine, three Mithraic inscriptions written in Greek and two anepigraphic stelae were brought to light.²³ They were addressed to Zeus Helios megalos Mithras aniketos, who, on one of the stones, was even likened to the Orphic god Phanes. The excavations also produced an anemoscope, that is to say a disc about 60 cm in diameter, which is adorned on the edge by sixteen summarily carved heads in frontal view, each carrying a name. These inscriptions, whose summary engraving also suggests a late date, represent the major winds: one recognizes Favonius, Auster, and Africus. It has been proposed that a workshop of anemoscopes, near the *emporium*, was located here, whence they would have been exported. The suggestion is attractive, but one wonders if it is not, instead, an object from the *compitum* plot.

In other words, in the heart of the neighbourhood, where locals gathered for their collective devotions, initiates of Mithras had also built a Mithraeum, the darkness of which was probably illuminated by the two six-headed lamps offered by dedicants. Like the synagogue of the Porta Capena which adjoined the grove of the Camenae, the Mithraeum was located in the cult site of the district.

21 ILS 3772: *Spei Aug(ustae) sacr(um)*. / *Cn(aeus) Geminius, Cn(aei) I(ibertus), Nymphius, / Q(uintus) Granius, Q(uinti) I(ibertus), Eutactus, / A(ulus) Cornelius, A(ulorum) I(ibertus), Epagathus, / A(ulus) Cornelius, A(uli) I(ibertus), Conditus / sua pec(unia) d(onum) d(ederunt), / permissu T(iti) Catii Catullini / Sest(imi) Secundini, pr(aetoris) urb(ani) reg(ionis) (duodecimae)*.

22 CIL VI, 492.

23 IGUR 196–198.

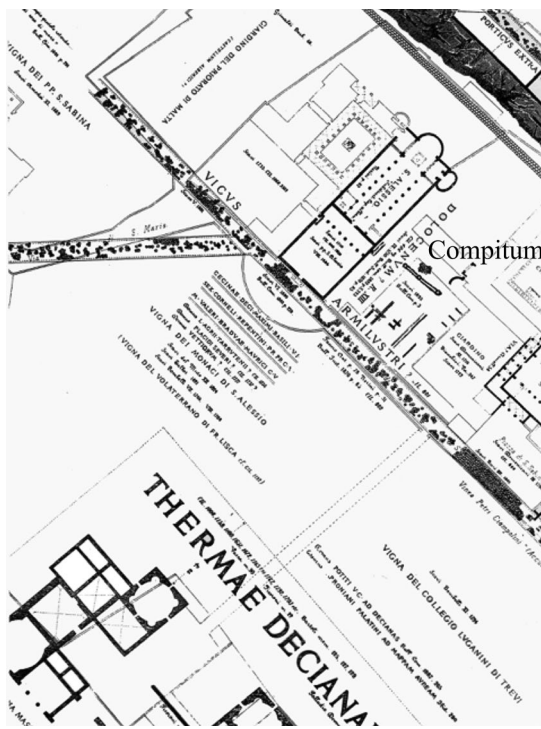


Fig. 3. The compitum Vici Armilustri (Aventine)
(copy of part of the Aventine map, Lanciani 1893–1902, pl. 34)

If we cross the via della Marmorata and ascend the western slope of the Aventine, following the via di S. Sabina, we arrive at a *compitum* which has been discovered near the church (fig. 3). Evidence is provided by two inscriptions emanating from *magistri* of the Vicus Armilustri.²⁴ One of the inscriptions is fragmentary, while the other is addressed to Volkanus Quietus Augustus, and Stata mater, his companion: Quiet Vulcan was a regular guest of neighbourhood places of worship, for reasons that one can easily imagine. The Vicus Armilustri took its name from the neighbourhood of an old cult place, about a hundred yards to the east, called Armilustrum, which should be translated as a “parade of arms”, “circumambulation of arms”, or some similar expression. Space here does not allow a lengthy discussion, but it was a public place of worship, as one can read in the dictionary of Paulus Diaconus: “The armilustrum was for the Romans a festival on which armed men offered sacrifices and sounded trumpets while they sacrificed.”²⁵

In addition, under S. Alessio a very well-preserved sanctuary of Jupiter Dolichenus, the Jupiter of Dolichè in Commagene, in northern Syria, with many associated gods and a large number of *cultores* also came to light.²⁶ Once again, we note that a cult place, generally classified among foreign or exotic cults, is celebrated in the midst of the ancestral Roman cults. The sanctuary of the god, like the Mithraeum in the via della Marmorata, stands next to the chapel of the Lares Augusti as well as the altars of other deities that were found around this chapel. The relations between this cult and the neighbourhood were tangible. The oldest dedication at the Dolochenum was erected by the Collegium of Hercules of the Wheat Measurers, who, on the orders of Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus, dedicated an altar to Sol and Luna.²⁷ The new

24 CIL VI, 31069: [– –] *sacrum (vacat) / mag(ister, -tri) uici Armilustri*; CIL VI 802: *Volcano Quieto Augusto / et Stata Matri Augustae / (vacat) sacrum (vacat) / P(ublius) Pinarius Thiasus et / M(arcus) Rabutius Berullus / mag(istri) uici Armilustri anni (quinti)*; AE 1838, 62 (CCID 356): *Pro salute / Imp(eratoris) T(iti) Ael(ii) Hadriani Antonini / Aug(usti) Pii p(atris p(atriciae) et M(arci) Aureli Caesaris / et liberorumq(ue) }a}eorum*.

25 Paulus Diaconus, *Excerpta ex libris Pompei Festi De significatione verborum*, p. 17 edit. Lindsay: *Armilustrum festum erat apud Romanos, quo res diuinas armati faciebant, ac, dum sacrificarent, tubis canebant*.

26 Cf. *LTUR* III, 133–134; Chini 2001.

27 Kan 1943, no. 171 (3): a. (on the upper part) : *Pro salute / Imp(eratoris) T(iti) Ael(i) Hadriani Antonini / Aug(usti) Pii, p(atris) p(atriciae), et M(arci) Aureli Caesaris / et liberorumq(ue) }a}eorum*; b. (on the base): *lusu numinis iouis / Dolochini posuer(unt) / colleg(ium) Herculis / metretarior(um) quod consistit ad salicem cura/nite Q(uinto) Domitio Philumen(o) / immunae*; c. [on the right side]: *Posit(ae) M(arco) Squill(a) / Gallikano / et Carminio Vetere co(n)s(ulibus)*.

god therefore hosted a *collegium* which officiated at the grain markets and which was probably installed in the area of the granaries at the edge of the Tiber, at the foot of the Aventine, to participate in the cult of Dolichenum. Another image represents Artemis and Iphigenia. The torch could allude to the anthropomorphic celestial light, found in Dolichenian shrines, when it would be an attribute of Jupiter Dolichenus. Given the neighbourhood, and admitting that the god and its *cultores* maintained relations of hospitality with the other gods and goddesses of the place, one can just as easily think of a dedication to the neighbour Diana Aventina. To this we may add that in S. Alessio we find a dedication of the *schola* of the *uiatores* (agents) of both the capital *triumviri* and the *quattuorviri viarum curandarum* charged with the maintenance of the roads.²⁸ The assistants of an official body of Roman magistrates had therefore also installed their seat at the *compitum* of the Armilustrum.

In any case, once again, the *compitum* is a place of meeting where a wide variety of cults are juxtaposed which do not have equal status but which acquire a social legitimacy in the district by their participation in the collective religious life. It is likely that the installation of these sanctuaries, chapels and altars near the place of worship of the Lares Augusti and the Imperial Genius was made under the appropriate authorizations of which we are only rarely informed. In the *compitum* of the via della Marmorata, it was the installation of the altar or the chapel of Spes Augusta which received public authorization, yet there are indeed other examples. This authorization, almost certainly granted by the *vicus* and by the magistrate administering the region, shows how all the religious manifestations were integrated into the life of the city.

In front of the present church of S. Bartolomeo on the Tiber island was also the *compitum* of Vicus Censorius with its chapel. Two altars dedicated to the Lares Augusti have preserved the memory of the first *ministri* of the *compitum*, who took office on August 1, 7 BC.²⁹ The only difference between the two altars is the order of the four slaves who performed the function of *ministri*. The altar(s) of the *magistri* are not preserved. Does this difference imply that there were two different periods of service in the year, which would have resulted in a different division of roles in the *collegium* of the four *ministri*, subsequently resulting in the dedication of two altars? It is indeed possible. One example is that each altar recalled the celebration of one of the obligatory rituals of the annual calendar of the *compitum*, on the one hand the anniversary of its founding, usually on August 1, the date of the fall of Alexandria in 30 BC and the end of the civil war between the future Augustus and Mark Antony, on the other hand the very feast of the Compitalia, towards the New Year. The altars would be considered as confirmations that the ritual

28 CIL VI, 1936: *In honorem Domus Aug(ustae), / T(iberius) Claudius Secundus coactor cum Ti(berio) Claudio, Ti(berio) [f(ilio), / Quir(ina) tribu], Secundo f(ilio), uiatoribus (trium)uir(orum) et (quattuor)uirum / scholam cum statutis et imaginibus ornamentisque omnibus sua impensa fecit.*

29 CIL VI, 451 (ILS 3619) 100 AD: *Laribus augustis et Genis Caesarum, / Imp(eratori) Caesari, Diui Neruae filio, Neruae Traiano Aug(usto) Germ(anico), pontifici maximo, trib(unicia) pot(estate) (quarta), co(n)s(uli) (tertium), desi(gnato) (quartum), / permissu C(aii) Cassi Interamnani Pisibani Prisci praetoris, aediculam reg(ionis) (quartae decimae) uici censori magistri anni CVI[1] (= centesimi septimi) / uetustate dilapsam impensa sua restituerunt. Idem pr(aetor) probauit. L(ucius) Cercennius L(ucii) lib(ertus) Hermes, M(arcus) Liuius (Caiae) lib(ertus) Donax, / P(ublius) Rutilius P(ublili) lib(ertus) Priscus, L(ucius) Coranius L(ucii) lib(ertus) Euaristus. / Dedicat(um) / (ante diem quartum) k(alendas) Ian(uarias) (29 December) // L(ucio) Roscio Aeliano / Ti(berio) Claudio Sacerdotae (!) co(n)s(ulibus).*

had been carried out, with the names of those who had celebrated it, in the manner of the records of the Roman magistrates and priests. If we compare these data with those of the unknown *vicus* in via della Marmorata, we could thus understand this set of epigraphic documents, which were transcribed on stone, to make them visible to all and to guarantee their survival, data noted in records of the *magistorum compitum*, written on wax-tablets. The *compitum* would have had on the one hand the Fasti of the Roman people, that is to say a general calendar of the year and the annual lists of the consuls. These formed the sort of chronological and institutional backdrop on which the institution of the *compitum* rituals was grafted. The regional cults and their annual leaders also belonged to the Roman institutions, and this is what these general documents affirmed.

The date of the founding of the chapel and the cult could thus be inscribed on the calendar, on August 1st. Under the consular Fasti, the annual list of *magistri* could be drawn up. In this way, everything was in its place in the daily history of Rome. On the other hand, altars could attest to the celebration of annual ritual duties. The public priesthood of the Arval Brethren, for example, inscribed these attestations beside consular Fasti and a general calendar of the State, first in the form of a report on the proclamation of the mobile dates of the Dea Dia sacrifice, and on the co-optations of priests, then, from Tiberius on, as a description of all the acts performed by the aruales during the year.³⁰ Such a documentary ensemble of the *compita* is never entirely preserved; sometimes, as in via della Marmorata or via dei Serpenti, we know Fasti, while sometimes we have altars of *magistri* and / or *ministri*. In some *compita*, or at certain times, the data concerning the life of the institution were perhaps not or no longer transcribed, or they were only painted on wooden tables, a highly perishable support; perhaps they were even incised on bronze, a precious support, which was hardly more likely to survive than wood.

According to the otherwise excellent book of Ittai Gradel on imperial worship, compital worship was not a public cult.³¹ As evidence, the author argues that the constructions and restorations of religious buildings were always financed by *magistri vici*. It would therefore be a private cult of the *collegium* of the *magistri*, which should be assimilated to other *collegia* or associations. This judgment is in my opinion wrong. Admittedly, the worship is not celebrated by a magistrate or a priest of the Roman people, and the cult buildings are financed by magistrates of the *vici*. But by being satisfied with these data, the author of this work forgets several aspects. The Compitalia were a public holiday that was also celebrated in private homes. They were a mobile festival of the public calendar, as evidenced by the annual announcement of its date by a *praetor*, presumably the urban *praetor*, shortly after the Saturnalia of December 17. This information is useful in understanding how this cult works. Let us, for example, read the formula by which the *praetor* proclaimed the date of the Compitalia: "The feasts of the crossings will take place for the Roman people, for the Quirites, on the ninth day (after this proclamation); when they have begun the day will be *nefas* (without official business)."³² Thus the celebration of the Compitalia belongs to the duties of the Roman people of the Quirites, in other words, to the Roman State. Only, like a certain number

30 Scheid 1998.

31 Gradel 2002, 128–129.

32 Gellius, *Noctes atticae* 10, 24, 3: *Die noni populo Romano Quiritium Compitalia erunt, quando concepta fuerint, nefas.*

of other festivals, this one is celebrated at the *compita* by the *magistri*, elected each year by the inhabitants of the *vicus* or named by an unknown instance.

The burden of the public celebration of the Compitalia lay with the *magistri* of the *vici*, and in the private residences, the festival was celebrated by the household. Added to this is the fact that the constructions, although sometimes financed by the *magistri*, were entirely under the control of the urban *praetor*.³³ This is never done for a private building. The *aediculae* in question are necessarily public buildings, belonging to the State, and not only to the *collegium* of *magistri*. The fact that the *praetor* officially validates the construction works done in the *compita*, indicates that he represents in this activity the Roman people. Compital worship was thus a form of public worship in Rome, and it was through this cult, for example, that the subordinate layers of the population, the freedmen, the slaves and also the ordinary citizens, were integrated into the collective religious life of the State. And as always in this kind of society, these local dignitaries were wealthy men, or dependent on well-to-do families.

To these cults we should also add not only certain synagogues, as I have already mentioned, but also, maybe even in a later period, Christian sanctuaries. The compital chapels that we have previously mentioned are often buried under churches, or have been discovered in their surroundings. The reason for this proximity can be found in the prohibition of the public cults, the free space being given or being bought by Christian communities. Perhaps, however, they already previously gathered around these places, as the *cultores* of other religions did before the prohibition of pagan cults by the sons of Constantine and by Theodosius. An example for such a phenomenon is given by the catacomb and basilica of Generosa in the Roman suburb.³⁴ On the fifth mile towards Fiumicino, on a hill situated on the right bank of the Tiber, along the via Campana, since the beginning of the 3rd century BC a temple of Fors Fortuna was located, and subsequently, since the years 32–30 BC a grove of Dea Dia. Both were public, the first being frequented by the *collegia* of flower-merchants or butchers, as well as by the youth of Rome, on June 24, the other one being a cult celebrated at the highest level by public priests, the Fratres Arvales. The grove of Dea Dia had been constructed by Augustus and amplified by his followers; a last reconstruction falls in the years 210 to 224. So, two very visible public sanctuaries existed at the point where the Tiber and the roads on both sides of the river entered the plain of Rome. The sanctuary of Dea Dia was closed somewhere around 340, but it was not destroyed. The destruction probably occurred only when the Vandals or Goths took Rome, in 410 or 550. But what is very important is the fact that a pozzolano cave situated on the top of the hill, overlooking the pagan sanctuaries, in which there existed a catacomb since the 3rd century AD, was christianized in the middle of the 4th century. Some years later, Pope Damasus built a martyrion on the top of the hill, near the catacomb. It is evident that he used the situation and the renown of the pagan site to signify his claims in front of the bishop of Ostia, whose territory began at this precise point and in front of other competitors in Rome. There was plenty of empty space in this part of the *suburbium*. If Damasus chose this precise spot, it was only because he followed an old tradition of cult gatherings in and around certain public sanctuaries.

33 See e.g. n. 27.

34 Loretti and Martorelli 2003, 367–397, in particular 379–389.

Bibliography

Almeida 1984

E. Rodríguez Almeida, *Il Monte Testaccio. Ambiente, storia, materiali*, Roma 1984.

Chini 2001

P. Chini, *Il santuario di Giove Dolicheno*, in S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (eds.), *Aurea Roma, dalla città pagana alla città cristiana*, Roma 2001, 288–294.

Degrassi 1963

A. Degrassi, *Inscriptiones Italiae XIII. Fasti et Elogia Fasciculus II. Fasti anni Numani et Iuliani*, Roma 1963.

Ensoli Vittozzi 1993

S. Ensoli Vittozzi, *Le sculture del 'larario' di S. Martino ai Monti. Un contesto recuperato*, in *BCom* 95 (1993) 221–243.

Ensoli 1997

S. Ensoli, *Culti isiaci a Roma in età tardo-antica tra sfera privata e sfera pubblica*, in E. A. Arslan (ed.), *Iside. Il mistero, la magia*, Catalogo della mostra a Milano, Palazzo Reale, 22 febbraio–1 giugno 1997, Milano 1997, 576–589.

Ensoli 2001

S. Ensoli, *I santuari di Iside e Serapide a Roma e la resistenza pagana in età tardoantica*, in S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (eds.), *Aurea Roma, dalla città pagana alla città cristiana*, Roma 2001, 267–287.

Gradel 2002

I. Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, Oxford 2002.

Kan 1943

A. H. Kan, *Juppiter Dolichenus. Sammlung der Inschriften und Bildwerke*, Leiden 1943.

Lanciani 1893–1902

R. Lanciani, *Forma urbis Romae consilio et auctoritate regiae Academiae Lyncaeorum formam dimensus est et ad modulum 1:1000 delineavit Rodolphus Lanciani romanus*, Milano 1893–1902.

Loretti and Martorelli 2003

E. M. Loretti and R. Martorelli, *La via Portuense dall'epoca tardoantica all'età di Gregorio Magno. Continuità e trasformazione*, in P. Pergola, R. Santangeli Valenzani and R. Volpe (eds.), *Suburbium. Il suburbio di Roma dalla crisi del sistema delle ville a Gregorio Magno*, CEFR 311, Roma 2003, 367–397.

Scheid 1998

J. Scheid, *Commentarii fratrum arvalium qui supersunt. Les copies épigraphiques des protocoles annuels de la confrérie arvale (21 av.–304 ap. J.-C.)*, Roma antica 4, Roma 1998.

Visconti 1885

C. L. Visconti, *Del Larario e del Mitreo scoperti nell'Esquilino presso la chiesa di S. Martino ai Monti*, in *BCom* 13, ser. 2 (1885) 27–38.

John Scheid
Collège de France
11, place Marcelin-Berthelot
75231 Paris Cedex 05
France
john.scheid@college-de-france.fr

