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## Public and Publicity

### *Long-Term Changes in Religious Festivals during the Roman Republic*

*Jörg Rüpke*

Looking at the Roman Republic we are confronted with a wealth of very different complex rituals that each attracted a multitude. If I take 'complex ritual' and 'popularity' as some of the elements for defining a 'festival', the evidence would be too scanty to allow clear-cut borderlines between festivals and other rituals. Usually, neither the complexity of the ritual, nor the number of persons involved, whether participants or spectators, are attested with any sufficient degree of certainty. Thus, I am more interested in the variety of phenomena and the different strategies or implications of the selected place and time, in relation to human agents or the gods addressed. The typological interest is, however, combined with a historical one. As is commonly known, the mixture of Roman festivals altered from the fifth and fourth to the second and first centuries BC, with a 'long' third century BC being the turning point. How is this change related to the religious and political development of the Republic? I contend that the ritual changes are linked to the changing role of the senate and the nobility, which reflects the evolving notion of 'public' in the term *res publica*. As most of our sources stem from the last century BC of the Republic, the exceptions being Imperial, reconstructing historical change remains a notorious problem. And yet an attempt has to be made, helped by historico-critical approaches in relation to those texts available, non-textual evidence and models informed from

comparative research. In order not simply to supersede such difficulties, my analysis will not follow a chronological narrative, but focuses on different traits of the festivals.

## A MULTITUDE OF OCCASIONS

Political interpretations of festivals (such as I will refer to later on) frequently suffer from concentrating on a single event and its contents and meaning. This is not an apt way for describing the cultic reality of the Roman Republic. I start by taking a closer look at the *Fasti Antiaties maiores*, the only extant Republican calendar.<sup>1</sup> On the Idus Sextiles—remember, the calendar antedates the Augustan period and hence the month Augustus—several entries in smaller letters are found referring to the *dies natales* of the temples of Diana, Vortumnus, Fortuna Equestris, Hercules Victor, and Castor and Pollux, and to a sacrifice to the Camenae. The anniversaries of dedications would have been celebrated by opening the temples and performing sacrifices to these deities, who were frequently well known. We would expect that each of these events would attract pious venerators as well as spectators, that is to say, active participants in the ritual, as well as curious children or passers-by. Given the length of time necessary for sacrifices and the preparation of meat, it must be assumed that the rituals started roughly at the same time of the day; however, there is no evidence of detailed temporal coordination. As the locations involved included the Aventine, the Porta Capena and the Forum, people who wished to take a significant part in the ritual must have made a careful selection. Such a choice had to be made on many days.

One could argue that these were rather semi-public events. Many temples were built on the initiative of generals returning victoriously, even if built by public money and senatorial consent.<sup>2</sup> In choosing a day for the dedication, dedicators struggled to achieve maximum public awareness, and the Ides—free from a range of burdensome duties and everyday routines (like school)<sup>3</sup>—would offer a splendid opportunity to stage a number of additional attractive rituals. Nevertheless, we do not know how large a public gathered for these anniversaries. The rituals commemorating dedications of different temples were not the only ones to compete among each other for an

audience on a certain date. Competition was particularly marked on the Ides of March, for example, when the *flamen Dialis* (and some other non-specified priests)<sup>4</sup> would sacrifice a castrated ram to Jupiter. The same day was also *feriae Martis* according to later calendars, which would imply a sacrifice being made to Mars somewhere else. The popular rite of the Mamuralia, the Salian priests' beating of an animal's fur, was dated to the fifteenth of March by Joannes Lydus in the sixth century AD, but to the fourteenth of March by the mid-fourth-century BC *Fasti Filocali*; hence, any decision remains hypothetical.<sup>5</sup> Many people, however, decided not to spend the day in the centre of the city, but on the banks of the Tiber. Ovid describes the date as a popular outing with drinking of wine in honour of Anna Perenna, whose sanctuary has now been located in the north of the city.<sup>6</sup>

However, competition was even sharper on the Ides of October. Again, the *flamen Dialis* sacrificed a ram. Whereas the *ludi Capitolini* attracted Romans to the Capitoline summit,<sup>7</sup> the rites of the Equus October took place on the field of Mars, after staging a horse race, an equine sacrifice and an ensuing running race to the Forum (passing by the foot of the Capitoline Hill). The ritual contest between the inhabitants of the Subura and the via Sacra would finish in the Regia, within the centre of the Forum Romanum.<sup>8</sup> Whereas the Capitoline Games were organized by a college, the sacrifice of the October horse seems to have been performed by the *flamen Martialis*. The complex topographic and calendrical structure of Roman religion employed a large number of priesthoods and agents who were coordinated rather than subordinated, i.e. they acted alongside each other without any hierarchical prerogatives. Lists of ritual dates, *ferialia*, for every group or priesthood<sup>9</sup> would regulate activities that were too complex to find adequate expression in the *fasti*.

Despite the heavy ritual demand on the Ides (and Nones and Calends), around 30 per cent of the triumphs of both the third and second centuries BC were also staged on these days (concentrating on the first and last month of the year). Here, clearly, individual strategies for optimizing the public turnout led to the choice of the date—despite events temporally clashing. It has to be added that the same dates, Calends and Ides in particular, were used to celebrate one's birthday.<sup>10</sup> Thus, another substantial portion of the urban population potentially had alternative venues for merrymaking.

## MONOPOLY BY PROCESSION

Judging by the size of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Rome must have been a large city already by the beginning of the Republic in the late sixth century BC, ‘la grande Roma dei Tarquini’. A city of about thirty thousand inhabitants,<sup>11</sup> Rome was large enough to house several festivals at public temples and hundreds of private parties at the same time. Conditions would have improved (or, from another perspective, worsened) with the growth of the city to several hundred thousand by the time of the Punic Wars, and reaching perhaps half a million by the end of the first century BC.<sup>12</sup> How could a ritual gain the attention of a significant portion of this population? The answer, given in ancient Mesopotamia and Archaic Athens alike, was processions.

The same solution flourished in Rome. In the first half of the second century BC, Cato describes the ritual of the *lustratio agri*, where some sacrificial animals were led around the property.<sup>13</sup> One would imagine that the *lustratio urbis* comprised a similar procession, copying the annual *amburbium* as a crisis rite to cope with *prodigia*. Yet, the evidence to corroborate Paulus Diaconus’ etymological definition, ‘amburbiales hostiae dicebantur, quae circum terminos urbis Romae ducebantur’—‘the victims that were led around the boundary markers of the city of Rome were called “amburbiales”’ (5.3–4L)—is weak. What the ancient authors say to ‘describe’ the *lustratio* does not exceed the phrase *urbe lustrata* or *urbem lustrat*.<sup>14</sup> The route is difficult to reconstruct: for the *amburbium* Strabo gives a precise location, six miles out of Rome; the *luci* of Robigo and Dea Dia were about 5 miles away from Rome; according to Ovid, the Terminalia were celebrated at the sixth milestone on the via Laurentia.<sup>15</sup> A processional route on this periphery would have had a length of at least 30 kilometres. This is unimaginable for a one-day procession with animals being led around and intermittent rituals. A circumambulation of Rome, of the so-called Servian wall, including the Capitoline Hill, Porta Collina, Porta Caelemontana, and Raudusculana (that is, the Aventine), would be at least 10 kilometres as well; hardly imaginable for a large-scale procession, while difficult even for a small group of religious specialists with all their apparatus.

Scattered evidence suggests that the priesthood of the Salii did cover distant parts of the city with their dancing processions and

changing the public location for their—perhaps even daily—dinners.<sup>16</sup> Yet these movements, underlining the unity of the city, covered the whole of March. Apart from a few topographical focuses (such as the *Quinquatrus*, a special ritual on the seventeenth of March that included other religious agents), spectators would only be involved occasionally, perhaps by chance.

Another possible candidate for an old processional rite is offered by the dedication of the *spolia opima*, a procession attributed already to Romulus that featured the armour and arms of a hostile general. It is impossible to isolate a clear image of an earlier ritual beneath the assimilation to the later triumph in the Augustan sources. However, the probably fictitious sacral regulation applying to the ritual implies different temples as destinations, including the Temple of Mars on the *Campus Martius*. The latter would not have made a grand procession nor point to the importance of the procession in the case of *Jupiter Feretrius* on the *Capitol*.<sup>17</sup>

In order to find a ritual that not only conveys the idea of one city, a monopoly, but actually tries to achieve ‘mon-opsy’, the attraction of the whole city’s interest, one has to wait for the *pompa circensis*. Here, obviously, the older type of competitive races and other types of competition (the *ludi circenses* to be) were combined with a long procession that did not only involve a large number of marching participants. The many deities displayed in the form of statues, busts or symbols, at least implied the idea that many temples were involved (as the natural places to store such items), even if the procession proper started from the *Capitol*. It is significant that the starting days of games in the Late Republic do not compete with other spectacular events, but rather create such an event in a monopolistic manner.

When did these processions originate? The author of the most detailed description, the Augustan *Dionysius of Halicarnassus* (7.72.1–14), claims to base his description on *Fabius Pictor*, hence an author of the late third century BC. Despite the fact that *Dionysius* is particularly interested in the Greek elements of Roman religion, the many elements of the *pompa* that clearly parallel or even imitate Greek practices are plausible for the time of *Fabius*.<sup>18</sup> I follow the sceptical position of *Mommsen* in postulating annual games only from 367/6 BC onwards; *Frank Bernstein*’s arguments for an earlier beginning (following *Livy*’s dating to the Regal period)<sup>19</sup> rely heavily on the *Varronian* theory that anthropomorphic cult statues were an invention of the Late Regal period only, and hence related to the cult

of Jupiter Optimus Maximus and his Capitoline Temple. The lack of an annual ritual that included cult statues from many temples does not exclude the possibility that ritual agents or high-ranking spectators were transferred by chariots (as perhaps depicted on an architectural frieze from the Capitoline Temple), but makes a fully fledged procession for the earlier phase less probable. The conversion of the *pompa circensis* into a spectacular procession would have been a development of the fourth and third centuries BC. Such dating would explain their rise as an attempt to compete with contemporary Hellenistic rituals. As I have argued elsewhere, the triumphal procession and—following Harriet Flower—the *pompa imaginum* of noble funerals hardly antedate the second half of the fourth century BC.<sup>20</sup>

The description by Dionysius at the end of the seventh book reveals how spectators were attracted:

(7.72.1–2) Before beginning the games the principal magistrates conducted a procession in honour of the gods from the Capitol through the Forum to the Circus Maximus. Those who led the procession were, first, the Romans' sons who were nearing manhood and were of an age to bear a part of this ceremony, who rode on horseback if their fathers were entitled by their fortunes to be knights, while the others, who were destined to serve in the infantry, went on foot, the former in squadrons and troops, and the latter in divisions and companies, as if they were going to school; this was done in order that strangers might see the number and beauty of the youths of the commonwealth who were approaching manhood. These were followed by charioteers, some of whom drove four horses abreast, some two, and others rode unyoked horses. After them came the contestants in both the light and heavy games, their whole bodies naked except their loins . . . (5) The contestants were followed by numerous bands of dancers arranged in three divisions, the first consisting of men, the second of youths, and the third of boys. These were accompanied by flute-players, who used ancient flutes that were small and short, as is done even to this day, and by lyre-players, who plucked ivory lyres of seven strings and the instruments called *barbita* . . . (6) . . . The dancers were dressed in scarlet tunics girded with bronze cinctures, wore swords suspended at their sides, and carried spears of shorter than average length; the men also had bronze helmets adorned with conspicuous crests and plumes. Each group was led by one man who gave the figures of the dance to the rest, taking the lead in representing their warlike and rapid movements, usually in the proceleusmatic rhythms . . . (10) But it is not alone from the warlike and serious dance of these bands which the Romans

employed in their sacrificial ceremonies and processions that one may observe their kinship to the Greeks, but also from that which is of a mocking and ribald nature. For after the armed dancers others marched in procession impersonating satyrs and portraying the Greek dance called sicinnis. Those who represented Sileni were dressed in shaggy tunics, called by some chortaioi, and in mantles of flowers of every sort; and those who represented satyrs wore girdles and goatskins, and on their heads manes that stood upright, with other things of like nature. These mocked and mimicked the serious movements of the others, turning them into laughter-provoking performances . . . (13) After these bands of dancers came a throng of lyre-players and many flute-players, and after them the persons who carried the censers in which perfumes and frankincense were burned along the whole route of the procession, and also the men who bore the show-vessels made of silver and gold, both those that were sacred to the gods and those that belonged to the state. Last of all in the procession came the images of the gods, borne on men's shoulders, showing the same likenesses as those made by the Greeks and having the same dress, the same symbols, and the same gifts which tradition says each of them invented and bestowed on mankind. These were the images not only of Jupiter, Iuno, Minerva, Neptune, and the rest whom the Greeks reckon among the twelve gods, but also of those still more ancient from whom legend says the twelve were sprung, namely, Saturn, Ops, Themis, Latona, the Parcae, Mnemosynê, and all the rest to whom temples and holy places are dedicated among the Greeks; and also of those whom legend represents as living later, after Jupiter took over the sovereignty, such as Proserpina, Lucina, the Nymphs, the Muses, the Seasons, the Graces, Liber, and the demi-gods whose souls after they had left their mortal bodies are said to have ascended to Heaven and to have obtained the same honours as the gods, such as Hercules, Aesculapius, Castor and Pollux, Helen, Pan, and countless others . . . (15) After the procession was ended the consuls and the priests whose function it was presently sacrificed oxen; and the manner of performing the sacrifices was the same as with us . . .<sup>21</sup>

I have already pointed out the advantages of any procession ritual. The lengthy description shows in detail how such an event is made attractive, clearly ritualized by its mixture of excessive order and rather anarchic elements. Many people are involved as actors or attracted as spectators. Young participants guarantee the participation of their families, while the potential for a close-up look at the drivers and athletes attracts the athletically minded crowd (1) and the dances the aesthetically minded. The level of noise marking this event

must have been quite boisterous, with every sense being served: unusual dresses in bright colours (6); odours (13); music, even played on archaic instruments (5), thus giving additional ceremonial qualities to the procession. There is a close interaction between actors and spectators, whose laughter is provoked by improvised performance (10). And last, but not least, the ritual assembles a large number of deities, including the most important ones according to Greek and Roman standards. The use of standardized representations of these deities, clearly stressed (13), ensures intellectual as well as religious satisfaction.<sup>22</sup>

### DURATION AND INTENSIFICATION

Processions must be judged as an effective means of creating publicity for a ritual and centralizing a highly diverse urban sacral topography. Otherwise, the attractiveness of the triumph for many—but by no means all<sup>23</sup>—republican generals would be difficult to understand. However, watching a procession along a route—even if the latter was more and more monumentalized in itself<sup>24</sup>—implied certain limits and deficits.

The first is a temporal limit. The importance of a procession could be stressed by its length, but the velocity and the duration of natural light can put limits on that. Triumphal processions experimented with two-day events from the early second century BC and reached a maximum of three days in the first century BC. However, normal reactions of the crowds seem to have taught the organizers to create successions of thematically varying booty and war representations (triumphs over different peoples and regions), rather than indefinitely prolonging a unified parade of people and images.<sup>25</sup> Prolongation of competitions or scenic spectacles of the games was easier. By the time of the calendar of Antium, nine days each were marked for the *Ludi Magni* in September and the *Ludi Plebeii* in November.

Another type of ritual reached even greater lengths, namely the supplications. These were decentralized rituals, which involved opening all (or at least, many) temples to enable sacrifices and ensuing banquets throughout the city, in the second century BC, and even throughout Italy.<sup>26</sup> An exceptional ritual of petition or thanksgiving, with a length usually of one to three days in the Middle Republic

(again the annalistic historiography is not reliable enough to determine an exact starting point), exploded during the last century of the Republic. Three supplications of fifty days in the years 45, 44, and 43 BC mark the very acme of this development. Obviously, such a duration does not allow a sufficient distinction between an exceptional ritual status and everyday life. Thus, it is easy to see why this form lost its importance from Augustus onwards. Yet the perspective on pragmatic and political aspects (the change of inter-nobility competition) has made us forget the permanent consequences of this ritual strategy. I would maintain that the phenomenon of a daily cult in the form of a small sacrifice, hymns or lamps, known from some temples and of growing importance for the Imperial period,<sup>27</sup> has one of its origins in this idea of enlarging ritual efficacy by an ever-prolonged cult at the same temples.

Processions imply a second deficit: interaction between participants is limited, though of course spectators did interact among themselves. Ovid knew about this, when the teacher of the *Ars amatoria* recommended to his male audience that theatres, circuses, *munera*, and triumphs were the places to make new female acquaintances, imagining the verbal interaction in such situations.<sup>28</sup> The prologue of Plautus' comedy *Poenulus* (1–45) gives an even livelier picture:

I have a mind to imitate the Achilles of Aristarchus from that Tragedy I'll take for myself the opening: 'Be silent, and hold your tongues, and give attention.' The head-manager it is who bids you listen, that with a good grace they may be seated on the benches, both those who have come hungry and those who have come well filled. You who have eaten, by far the most wisely have you done: you who have not eaten, do you be filled with the Play. But he who has something ready for him to eat, 'tis really great folly in him, for our sakes, to come here to sit fasting. Rise up, cryer! bespeak attention among the people: I'm now waiting to see if you know your duty. Exercise your voice, by means of which you subsist and find your clothes; for unless you do cry out, in your silence starvation will be creeping upon you. Well, now sit down again, that you may earn double wages. Heaven grant success! do you obey my commands. Let no worn-out debauchee be sitting in the front of the stage, nor let the lictor or his rods be noisy in the least; and let no seat-keeper be walking about before people's faces, nor be showing any to their seats, while the actor is on the stage. Those who have been sleeping too long at home in idleness, it's right for them now to stand contentedly, or

else let them master their drowsiness. Don't let slaves be occupying the seats, that there may be room for those who are free; or else let them pay down the money for their places; if that they cannot do, let them be off home, and escape a double evil, lest they be variegated both here with scourges, and with thongs at home, if they've not got things in due order when their masters come home. Let nurses keep children, baby-bantlings, at home, and let no one bring them to see the Play; lest both they themselves may be athirst, and the children may die with hunger; and that they mayn't be squealing about here, in their hungry fits, just like kids. Let the matrons see the piece in silence, in silence laugh, and let them refrain from screaming here with their shrill voices; their themes for gossip let them carry off home, so as not to be an annoyance to their husbands both here and at home. And, as regards the managers of the performance, let not the palm of victory be given to any player wrongfully, nor by reason of favour let any be driven out of doors, in order that the inferior may be preferred to the good ones. And this, too, besides, which I had almost forgotten: while the performance is going on, do you, lacqueys, make an onset on the cookshops; now, while there's an opportunity, now, while the tarts are smoking hot, hasten there. These injunctions, which have been given as the manager's command, Heaven prosper them! troth now, let every one remember for himself.<sup>29</sup>

The Circus Maximus offered seats, but theatres, due to a more intimate size—which for most of the Republic were temporal structures, sometimes within a circus—enabled more intensive communication among the audience as a whole. I would like to contend that the enormous growth of the *ludi scaenici* during the second century BC may not be separated from this communicative truth. Even if the theorizing about the political functions of dramatic performances mostly rests on Ciceronian observations, every unbiased description must state that the intensity of thematic communication exploded in this kind of ritual.

Rituals in smaller circles, not identical with primary groups like families,<sup>30</sup> offered even more intensive forms of communication. Banqueting was sought after and the proliferation of villas in the surroundings of Rome offered a growing space for dining. Professional poets like Ennius offered attractive and envied forms of entertainment, and this was no purely secular form of celebration. Literary dialogues usually selected religious dates as the opportunities for their fictive banquets, such as the newly introduced cult of the 'Great Mother of the Gods', which gave birth to *mutitationes*, mutual

invitations for dinner among the nobility, according to the *Fasti Praenestini*. Sumptuary laws from the same period limited expenditure and tried to force banqueting groups into the open, i.e. in spaces that could be more easily controlled and observed.<sup>31</sup> This development started long before the 190s BC. As I have argued in an article about the *Fasti sacerdotum*, the reforms of the priestly colleges by the *lex Ogulnia* in 300 BC transformed the colleges into 'banquetable' circles of nine persons (three to each *triclinium*); the longest extant fragment of the pontifex maximus' protocols gives details of a pontifical dinner.<sup>32</sup> When in 196 BC a new priesthood was created, the only one to reach the prestige of the augurs, pontiffs and (*quin*)*decimviri*, was the *tresviri epulorum*, who were basically responsible for the senatorial banquets connected with the great Jupiter festivals in September and November.

#### DONATION AND APPROPRIATION

The dinner occasion of the greater *collegium pontificum* just referred to was the inauguration of a *flamen Martialis*. What we would classify as religion offered an important framework for facilitating intensified societal communication. That is not to say that 'secular' alternatives did not exist. The drawing of lots to determine the first voting unit did not render *comitia* religious meetings; *contiones* existed too. Yet the organization of splendid games was considered to leave a greater impression on the voters than a grandiloquent speech. The rise of the games and public processional rites are as intensively connected to the euergetic habit as seemingly private dinners. What is the mechanism at work?

Religious occasions meant actions involving the gods. Despite the negligence of the religious factor by many ancient historians, the gods were not superfluous or merely traditional paraphernalia. They were the primary addressees and unmistakably present by place, time, or images—usually by all three. Even the gladiatorial spectacles—neither classified as games nor public during the Republic and long after—were organized with a view towards future elections, but labelled as *munera*, i.e. as duties owed to a dead ancestor. The great men of the final Republic took pains to identify such forebears and did not refrain from construing long temporal bridges, connecting

actual *munera* to a death which occurred years before.<sup>33</sup> The audience that was thus created—and an introductory *pompa*, of course, helped to create such an audience<sup>34</sup>—did not constitute a private meeting, but rather a semi-public party offering cult to a being, i.e. the dead person, that was considered to create a *locus religiosus* (if not *sacer*).

The situation was even clearer for the technically public rituals that were addressed to deities venerated by the *res publica*, that is, at its expense. Already by co-financing these spectacles, the polity left no doubt about its role. The gods present were the guarantors that the citizens not only consumed the magistrate's donation, but made it a public donation. In this way the public appropriated it. Hence, in the ritual the gods were honoured not only by the leading magistrate, but by the citizenship as a whole.

#### DISTINCTION AND CONTROL

Obviously, the possibility of the distinction on offer was an important driving force behind the multiplication and enlargement of certain types of audience-oriented rituals. As far as we can see, the dynamics of the process were characterized not by the intense modification of traditional races, sacrifices, and the like but by the creation of new rituals that opened up opportunities for new agents, usually magistrates, to distinguish themselves. The formation of the new nobility, from the end of the fourth century BC onwards, demanded an intensified communication among their members, as well as between nobles and the populace. The development of a 'literary culture' of drama and epics is a consequence of this need for communication and its ritual forms of banquets and *ludi scaenici*.<sup>35</sup> The populace needed space for communication among itself for other purposes too. There was hardly a strong need to corroborate the notions of citizenship or alliance—there were enough blood-soaked possibilities for that. Other problems needed alternative modes of integration: as the Plautine prologue quoted above demonstrated, the audience included females and slaves too.

There was a reverse to the obverse 'distinction', namely control. Opportunities were at the same time 'channels'. As the magistrates' formalized careers channelled the possibilities for martial success, the spectrum of rituals channelled public communication. Control was

produced by forcing the members of the nobility to employ the framework of public rituals and by restricting access to them: the organization of games was restricted to specified magistrates or returning generals; the triumph had to be individually approved by the senate after discussing the achievements of the preceding campaign. Control was exerted by the long delay of permanent theatre structures, thus causing high costs in terms of new infrastructure for a single ritual, as well as by new debates about the placing of temples.<sup>36</sup> In order to prevent evasion on the part of the peers, the rituals had to be allotted high prestige, such as the opening of the most prestigious temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus for a triumph, the use of the Circus Maximus, or longer periods for games. However, that was always precarious: generals organized a *triumphus in monte Albano* without the consent of the senate; put up a large number of statues in the city; attributed an excessive amount of booty to their soldiers; or gave lavish *munera*, gladiatorial shows, for the people.

Control had a religious element too. Neither the war reports and displays of booty from a triumph nor the funeral processions and laudatory speeches were ritually directed towards the gods. They were aimed at the spectators—and hotly contested. Villages were made into cities and skirmishes turned into decisive battles, heroes transformed into ancestors and ancestors were made heroes, raising doubts and instigating debates, as passages in Plautus and Cicero demonstrate.<sup>37</sup> The same does not apply to the games. In the Middle and Late Republic, nobles performed neither as actors nor as sportsmen. Competition was entirely left to professionals, something which, at least for the races and athletic competitions, implied a change from the earlier practices; previously nobles from Rome and the surrounding areas participated. However, for real competitions in large public rituals, a foreigner's victory or the defeat of a consul's son could not have been acceptable any longer for the patricio-plebeian elite of the Middle and Late Republic. At the same time and into the Empire, the *luperci* and the *Sacravienses* still fought for 'victory', even if in mock competitions only. Thus, the outcome was without personal consequences for the organizing magistrate, even if popular favour for a champion might be disappointed in the event.

The gods did exert censorship nevertheless. Being the primary addressees of the rituals, they enjoyed both the quality of the offering itself and the human spectators. The latter—as second-order spectators—watched the gods watching. Thus, they could be sure

that they were witnesses of elaborate cultural products. The gods received the Greek or Greek-style culture that the nobles opted for in their villas and Italian municipalities; indeed, nobles and gods even seemed to share the same taste. How could the populace not partake? There were many adaptations of Greek comedies and tragedies to suit local tastes. However, the elaborate level and enormous presence of Greek languages and cultures was astonishing. To explain it by the gods' trendsetting seems to be the easiest hypothesis.

### PUBLIC AND PUBLICITY

My short survey of changes in the ritual portfolio of the Republic is necessarily focused on processes that are visible in our sources or at least relate to prominent rituals. Only public rites received sufficient publicity. Most of the rituals hinted at in the Late Republican or Augustan calendars are almost never mentioned in historiographic texts or speeches. One has to assume continuity at least from the foundation of the respective temples onwards. Of course, the idea of a Numan list of festivals is no longer tenable.<sup>38</sup> Many of the rites that might go back to the Early Republic, or even beyond, were performed by the priests gathered in the larger pontifical college, including the *flamines* and Vestal Virgins. The monthly sacrifice of a sheep to Jupiter (*ovis idulis*), for example, might not have attracted any spectators; nobody, however, complained about that. The actual attraction of many rituals remains obscure, though 'popular' rites might indicate popularity. A list of 'popular rites' might be rather short, but would be led by the Saturnalia together with Kalendae Januariae and the Septimontium, the festival of the Seven Hills, celebrated likewise from northern Africa to the Gallia Transpadana. Such a list would also include the Lupercalia (15 February), perhaps the sequence of Feralia, Parentalia, Quirinalia, certainly the Matronalia (1 March, including a rite of reversal), and perhaps Anna Perenna (15 March). Attestations for the Liberalia (17 March) are astonishingly vague, whereas the Parilia (21 April) might have been popular. The temple of Mater Matuta also would have attracted women on 11 June, the Vestalia (15 June) some matrons, while the birthday of the temple of Fors Fortuna (24 June) was popular with the *plebs* according to Ovid's *Libri Fastorum*. The popular character of the Poplifugia (5 July)

remains difficult to assess. More certainty is attributable to the festivals of the Neptunalia and Volcanalia, including the construction of temporary huts and bonfires (celebrated on 23 July and 23 August, respectively). Subsequently, one could consider the festivals of fountains and new wine (Fontinalia, Meditrinalia), though the evidence is meagre. Most of these festivals were characterized by decentralized commemorations; in fact for the majority no centralized rite is known.

Evidently, from the mid-fourth century BC onwards, these festival practices were supplemented rather than supplanted by complex rituals, characterized by centralized rites. These additional rituals were destined to attract a larger share of the population (that is not to say around an eighth to a quarter of the inhabitants of Rome, but rather only a few per cent), as well as spectators from the surrounding towns.<sup>39</sup> Large processions and competition among professionals characterized the events. The number of days dedicated to these 'games' reached eleven by the end of the third century BC and thirty during the second BC. At the end of the second century BC, up to twenty-eight days might have been regularly reserved for scenic performances (including mime),<sup>40</sup> a type of ritual that even dominated the circus games.<sup>41</sup> These rituals enabled and enforced a complex communication, the necessity for which seems to have been due to the enormous territorial expansion and military strain, as well as internal processes of social differentiation and conglomeration. With the Imperial era, the type of ritual described became the standard language of religious communication between the emperor and the population of Rome, and also thematically it concentrated on the emperor. Hence, religion acquired a specific political role that it had not manifested quite so clearly at the start of the period analysed.

## NOTES

1. Reconstructed in Rüpke (1995), 40, on the basis of Mancini and Gatti.
2. See Orlin (1997).
3. See Rüpke (2004a), 220 n. 39, for references.
4. Festus 372.8–12L; Ov. *Fast.* 1.56, 587; Macrobr. *Sat.* 1.15.16.
5. Lydus, *Mens.* 4.49; Chronograph of 354: *Inscr. Ital.* 13.2.243.
6. Ov. *Fast.* 3.523–42. Piranomonte (2002).
7. Enn. *Ann.* 1, test. 51 (Skutsch); Liv. 5.50.4; 5.52.11; Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 53.

8. Main sources: Festus 190L; Paul. Fest. 246.21–24L; 71.20–2L; Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 97; Polyb. 12.4b.1–3.
9. See Rüpke (2005), 1419–39, for the equivalence of normal and priestly colleges.
10. Rüpke (2004a), 216; Mart. 4.66.3; 8.64.2–4; 9.52.2; 10.87.1.
11. Cornell (1995), 207.
12. Storey (1997).
13. Cato, *Agr. Orig.* 141.
14. Livy, 21.62.7; 35.9.5; 39.22.4; Tac. *Ann.* 13.24; *Hist.* 1.87 (see Wissowa (1912), 391 n. 4, for further references).
15. Amburbium: Strabo 5.130; Terminalia: Ov. *Fast.* 2.679–84; see Rüpke (1990), 33.
16. See Rüpke (1998), 203–6.
17. See Rüpke (1990), 217–23, for the evidence and its historicity.
18. Bernstein (1998), 254–67, esp. 260 ff.
19. Bernstein (1998), 117–18; 50–78; Livy, 1.35.7–9.
20. Rüpke (2006); Flower (1996).
21. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 7.72.1–2, 5, 6, 10, 13, 15 (trans. E. Cary, Loeb Library).
22. See Rüpke (2010).
23. See Itgenshorst (2005).
24. See, e.g., Hölscher (2001).
25. See Künzl (1988) and Bodel (1999) for the optical impression (the latter for the funeral procession).
26. Livy, 40.19.5; 40.37.3.
27. See Nilsson (1945).
28. Ov. *Ars am.* 1.89–228; *Am.* 3.2.43–58.
29. Trans. Henry Thomas Riley (Perseus project).
30. See Rüpke (2004b) for cultic groups.
31. See the sequence in Gell, *NA* 2.24.
32. Rüpke (2005), 1423, 1436; see Macrob. *Sat.* 3.13.10–12.
33. Wiedemann (2001), 14–17.
34. Wiedemann (2001), 102–3.
35. See Rüpke (2000; 2001).
36. See Orlin (1997).
37. For Plautinian comments on the triumph, see Itgenshorst (2005), 45–55; for critique of gentilician stemmata claims, see Hölkeskamp (1996), 322, drawing on Cic. *Brut.* 62; Livy, 4.16.4.
38. Demonstrated by Rüpke (1995).
39. Thus Hubert Cancik in a colloquium on ancient festivals in March 2006 at Erfurt.
40. Blänsdorf (1978), 115. See Taylor (1937).
41. Bernstein (1998), 245–6.

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